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**REMINISCENCES  
OF  
A SOUTHERN HOSPITAL.  
BY ITS MATRON.**

**NUMBER ONE.**

Soon after the battle of Manassas, the want of hospitals, properly organized and arranged, began to be felt; and buildings, adapted for the purpose, were secured by Government. Richmond, being nearest the scene of action, took the lead in this matter, and the former hastily contrived accommodations for the sick, were soon replaced by larger, more comfortable; and better ventilated buildings.

The expense of keeping up small hospitals had forced itself upon the attention of the Surgeon General, who afterwards gradually incorporated them into half a dozen immense establishments, situated around the suburbs. These were called Camp Jackson, Camp Winder, Chimborazo Hospital, Stuart Hospital, and Howard Grove; and were arranged so that fourteen or fifteen wards formed a division, and generally five divisions a hospital. Each ward accommodated from thirty to forty patients, according to the immediate need for space. Besides the sick wards, similar buildings were used for official purposes, for in these immense establishments every necessary trade was carried on. There was the carpenter's, blacksmith's, apothecary's, and shoemaker's shops; the ice house, commissary and quarter master's departments, offices for surgeons, stewards, baggage masters, and clerks. Each division was furnished with all these, and the whole hospital presented to the eye the appearance of a small village.

There was no reason why, with this preparation for the wounded and sick, they should not receive all the benefit of good nursing and food; but rumors began to be prevalent that there was something wrong in the hospital administration, and, soon after; Congress passed a law by which matrons were appointed. They had no official recognition, ranking even below stewards. The pay also was almost nominal, from the depreciated nature of the currency. There had been a great deal of desultory visiting and nursing, by the ladies, previous to this law being passed, resulting in more harm than good to the patients; and now that the field was open, a few, very few ladies, and a great many uneducated women, hardly above the laboring classes, applied and filled the offices.

The women of the South had been openly and violently rebellious from the moment they thought their State's rights touched. They incited the men to struggle for their liberties, and whether right or wrong, sustained them nobly to the end. They were the first to rebel, the last to succumb. Taking an active part in all that came within their sphere, and sometimes compelled to step beyond it, when the field demanded as many soldiers as could be raised; feeling the deepest interest in every man in the gray uniform of the Confederate service, they were doubly anxious to give comfort and assistance to the sick

and wounded. In the course of a long and harassing war, with ports blockaded and harvests burnt, rail tracks constantly torn up, and supplies of food cut off, and sold always at exorbitant prices, no appeal was ever made to the women of the South, individually or collectively, that did not meet with a ready response. There was no parade of generosity, no long lists of donations, inspected by public eyes. What was contributed was given unostentatiously, whether a bag of coffee or half of the only bottle of wine in the giver's possession.

About this time one of the large hospitals above mentioned was to be opened, and the wife of the then acting Secretary of War offered me the chief matron's place in one of the divisions—rather a startling proposition to a woman brought up in all the comforts of luxurious life. Foremost among the Virginia women, Mrs. R\_\_\_ had given all her resources of mind and means to the sick, and, her graphic and earnest representations of the good an educated and determined woman could effect in such a place, settled the matter. The common idea that such a life would be injurious to the delicacy and refinement of a lady, that her nature would become deteriorated and her sensibilities blunted; was rather appalling. But the first step only costs, and that was taken very soon.

A preliminary interview with the surgeon-in-chief restored all necessary confidence—for, the first day as the last, he was the energetic, capable manager, the careful, liberal financier, the skilful, penetrating physician, and the kind, courteous gentleman. Always attentive and thoughtful, however harassed with business, he had the faculty of having oil always ready for troubled waters. Difficulties melted away beneath the warmth of his ready interest, and mountains became molehills after his quick comprehension had surmounted and leveled them. However troublesome daily increasing annoyances became, if they could not be removed, his few but ready words sent applicants home; satisfied to do the best they could. Wisely he decided to have only *ladies* at the head of the female departments of his division, and having succeeded, never forgot that fact.

The hour after my arrival in Richmond found me at headquarters, the only two-story building on hospital ground, occupied by the chief surgeon and his clerks. He had not yet arrived; and while waiting in the office many of his corps, who had expected in horror the advent of female supervision, came and went. There was at that time blissful ignorance on all sides, except among hospital officials, of the decided objection to the carrying out of a law which they prognosticated entailed “petticoat government;” but there was no mistaking the stage whisper on the outside of the office that morning, as the little un-informed contract surgeon passed out and informed a friend at the door, in a tone of ill-repressed disgust, that “*one of them had come!*”

To those not acquainted with hospital arrangements, some explanations are necessary. To each hospital is assigned a surgeon-in-chief; to each division of the hospital a surgeon-in-charge; to each ward of the division an assistant surgeon; but when the press is great, contract doctors are put also in charge of wards. The surgeon-in-chief of a large hospital can seldom attend to more than the financiering part, the proper supply of food and necessary articles, and a general supervision of everything under him. The surgeon-in-charge attended in the same way to his division, but went through his wards daily, consulting with his assistant surgeons and reforming abuses. He made his report, each day, to the surgeon-in-chief. The assistant surgeon had only his ward or wards to attend, seeing the sick and wounded twice a day, and prescribing for them. In case of danger, he called in the surgeon-in-charge for advice or to share responsibility. The contract

surgeons performed the same duties as assistant surgeons, but were not commissioned officers, and received less pay. Each ward had its corps of nurses, unfortunately not practiced or perfect in their duties, as they were men convalescing after illness or wounds, and placed in that position till strong enough for field duty. This arrangement was very hard upon all interested; and harder on the sick, entailing constant supervision and endless teaching; but the demand for men in the field was too imperative to allow any of them to be detailed for nursing purposes.

Besides these mentioned, the hospital contained an endless horde of stewards' clerks, surgeons' clerks, commissary clerks, quartermasters' clerks, apothecaries' clerks, baggage-masters, forage-masters, wagon-masters, cooks, bakers, carpenters, shoemakers, ward inspectors, ambulance drivers, and many now-forgotten hangers-on, to whom the soldiers gave the name of "hospital rats," in common with *would-be* invalids, who resisted being cured from a disinclination for field service. They were all so called, it is to be presumed, from the difficulty of getting rid of both species. A portion of the noncommissioned officials were men unfit for the field, but there were many exceptions.

Among these different elements, all belittled by long service away from the ennobling influences of the field, and all striving, with rare exceptions, to gain the little benefits and petty luxuries so scarce in the Confederacy, I was introduced, one day, by the surgeon of my division. He was a cultivated, gentlemanly man, kind-hearted, when he remembered to be so, and, very much afraid of any responsibility resting on his shoulders. No preparations had been made by him for his female department. He escorted me into a long, low, whitewashed building, open from end to end, called for two chairs, and with entire composure, as if surrounding circumstances were most favorable, commenced a conversation on belles lettres, female influence, and the first, last, and only novel published in the Confederate States. A pretty compliment finished the interview, with a promise to see about getting the carpenter, to make partitions and shelves for the kitchen. The steward was sent for, and my small reign began.

A stove was unearthed, very small, very rusty, and fit only for a family of six. There were then about three hundred men upon the diet list, which was to be sent daily to the matron's kitchen for food for the patients – the very sick ones being supplied from my kitchen and the convalescents from the steward's, called, in contradistinction to mine, the "big kitchen." At that time my mind could hardly grope through the darkness that clouded it as to my special duties, but one spectrum always presented itself, and intuitively kept its place, - "chicken soup."

Having heard of requisitions, I then and there made my first in very unofficial style-a polite request sent through "Jim," a small black boy, to the steward, for "a pair of chickens." They came ready dressed. Jim picked up some shavings, kindled up the stove, begged, borrowed, or stole, a large iron pot from the big kitchen; for the first time I cut up a raw bird – and the Rubicon was passed.

My readers must not suppose that this picture applies generally to hospitals, or that means and appliances for food and comfort were at that time so meagre in all such establishments. This state of affairs was only the result of accident and some misunderstanding. The surgeon naturally thought that I had some experience, and would use the power the law of Congress gave me to arrange my own department; and I, in reading the bill passed for the introduction of matrons into hospitals, could only

understand that the position was one which dove-tailed the offices of housekeeper and cook nothing more.

In the meanwhile the soup was boiling, and was undeniably a success from the perfume it exhaled. Nature may not have intended me for a Florence Nightingale, but a kitchen proved my worth. Frying pans, griddles, stew pans and coffee pots

became my household gods – the niches had been prepared years previously, invisible to the naked eye, but still there. Gaining courage from, familiarity with my position, a venture across the street brought me to a ward (they were all separate buildings, it must be remembered, with long low cabin windows that pushed back upon the wall,) and under the first I peeped in, extended on a bed, lay the shadow of a man, pale, wan and attenuated.

What woman's heart would not melt and make its home where so much needed.

His wants were inquired into, and (like almost all the commoner class of men who think, unless they have been living upon “hog and hominy,” they are starved) he complained of not having eaten anything for “three mortal weeks.”

In the present state of my kitchen larder, there certainly was not much of a choice, and I was yet ignorant of the capabilities of the steward's department. However, soup was suggested as a great soother of “misery in his back,” and a large supply of adjectives added for flavor – “nice, hot, strong, good chicken soup.” The suggestion was concurred in. If it was very good he would take some, “though he was never much of a *hand* for drinks.” My mind rejected the application of words; but matter, not mind, was the subject under discussion.

All a cook's experience revolted against soup without the sick man's parsley, and “Jim,” my acting partner, volunteered to get some at “the Dutchman's;” and at last, armed with a bowl full of the composition, duly salted, peppered and seasoned, I sought my first patient.

He rose deliberately – so deliberately that I felt sensible of the great favor he was conferring; he smoothed his tangled locks with a weak hand, took a piece of well masticated tobacco from between three or four solitary teeth, but still the bowl was unappropriated, and it was evident that some other preliminaries were to be arranged. The novelty of my position and a lively imagination suggested fears that he might probably think it necessary to arise for compliment sake, and hospital clothing being made to suit the scarcity and expense of homespun, the idea was startling. But suspense did not continue long; it was only a brown covered tract he needed.

Did he intend to read a grace before meat? No, he simply wanted a pocket handkerchief; which cruel war had rendered almost a luxury; so without comment a leaf was abstracted from those left and applied to the nose. The result was satisfactory, for the next second the first spoonful of soup was transferred to his mouth.

It was an awful moment! My fate seemed to hang upon the fiat of that uneducated palate. A long painful gulp, a “judgmatical” shake of the head, not in the affirmative, and the bowl slowly travelled back to my extended hand.

“My mammy's soup was not like *that*,” he whined, “but I might worry a little down if it was not for them weeds in it!”

Well, why feel aggrieved? There may not be any actual difference between weeds and herbs!

After that first day improvements rapidly progressed. Better stores were put up, closets enclosed, china, or its substitutes, tin and pottery, supplied. The coffee, tea, milk and all the delicacies provided for the sick wards, turned over to the matron's department; also a co-laborer with Jim, whose disposition proved to be like our old horse, who pulled steadily and well in single harness, but when tried in double, left all the work to the last comer. However, honor to whom honor is due. He gave me many hints which my higher intelligence had overlooked; comprehended by him more through instinct than, reason, and was as clever at gathering trophies for my sick as Gen. Butler was – for other purposes.

Still my office did not rise above that of chief cook, for I dared not leave the kitchen unattended, till Dr. M., passing the window one day, and seeing me seated on a low bench, peeling potatoes, appeared much surprised and inquired where my cooks were? Explanations followed, a copy of hospital rules were produced, and instructions found to supply the matron's kitchen with necessary attendants. A gentle, sweet tempered lady, extremely neat and efficient, was appointed as assistant matron; as well as two cooks and an experienced baker. Jim and his companion were degraded into “hewers of wood and drawers of water,” that is to say, these were to have been their duties, but their occupation became that of walking gentlemen. With their out-door work their allegiance ceased, and the “trophies” which formerly swelled my list of dainties, were afterwards nightly, carried off down the hill.

Then began the proper routine of hospital life. Breakfast at seven in summer and eight in winter. Coffee, tea, milk, breads of two or three kinds and butter, (towards the end of the war we were not able to be so luxurious,) and also whatever could be saved from the dinner of the day before. The relishes would be impartially divided among the fifteen wards, so that each could furnish from five to ten sick men with some delicacy.

The Ward Masters, attended by their nurses, gathered three times a day around the little office window, adjoining the kitchen, with their large wooden trays and supplies of plates, waiting to receive the food, each being helped in turn to a fair division. If an invalid craved any particular dish, the nurse mentioned the want, and if not contrary to the surgeon's orders, it, or its nearest approximation, was given to him.

After breakfast the assistant surgeons visited their wards, making out diet lists for each, or rather filling them up, for the form had already been printed, and only the invalid's name, number of his bed and diet – light, half or full – were required to be specified. Also the quantity of whiskey desired for each.

Dinner and supper were served in a similar way. At one o'clock the nurses came for the dinner or the very sick, denominated the light diet, supposed to mean tea and toast, beef soup, eggs, etc., as well as nutriment concocted from those tasteless and starchy compounds of wheat and corn which are so thick and heavy to swallow and so little nutritious. They were served hot from the fire, or congealed from the ice, (for after the deprivation of ice during the first summer of the war, had been felt, each hospital was provided by the next season with a full ice house.) By two o'clock the regular dinner of poultry, beef, ham, fish, vegetables and salads was distributed. Supper, like breakfast, at five. The chief matron sat at her table, with the diet lists arranged before her each day, so that no particular ward should invariably be first served, and then read out to her assistant the necessary directions of the surgeon's, making sometimes, it is true, very imprudent observations, not always complimentary towards the assistant surgeons.

The orders ran somewhat in this fashion – “chicken soup for five – beef tea for eight – tea and toast for one.” A certain Mr. Jones, who had expressed his abhorrence of that diet. So I asked the nurse why it was ordered?

He did not know. Jones said he would not touch such food, he never ate slops, and therefore had been without nourishment for nearly two days.

“What does he wish?”

“The doctor says tea and toast.”

“Did you tell the doctor that he would not eat it?”

“I told the doctor and *he* told the doctor.”

“Perhaps he did not hear, or understand you?”

“Yes, he did, but he only said he wanted that man particularly to have tea and toast, though I told him Jones threw it up regularly; but he put it down again and said, Jones was out of his head, and Jones says the doctor's a fool.”

My remark on this was, that Jones could not be very much out of his head, an observation that entailed consequences afterwards. That habit so common among the surgeons of insisting upon particular kinds of diet to be taken, irrespective of the patient's tastes, was a peculiar grievance which no complaint for four years ever remedied.

By three all the food has been distributed, the nurses returning for a larger supply if necessary, or for some dish the patient had, craved.

Although visiting my wards in the morning for the purpose of speaking words of comfort to the sick, and remedying any apparent evils which had been overlooked or forgotten by the surgeons in their rounds, the fear that the nourishment furnished had not suited the taste of men debilitated, to an extreme, not only by disease or wounds, but also by the privations and exposure of camp life, would again take me there during the afternoon. Then would come heart sickness and discouragement, for out of twenty invalids, six on an average would not allow that they had taken any nourishment whatever. This was partly habit and imitation of others, and partly the human desire to enlist sympathy. The common soldier has a horror of a hospital, and with the rejection of food comes the hope that weakness will increase and a furlough become necessary. Besides this, the human palate requires education as well as any other organ. Who knows a good painting till the eye is trained, or fine harmony till the ear is taught, and why should not the same rule apply to tongue and taste? Men, who never in their lives before had been sick, or swallowed those starchy, flavorless compounds young surgeons are so fond of prescribing, repudiate them invariably, besides being suspicious of the terra incognita from which they spring, and suspicion always engenders disgust.

Daily inspection convinced me that great evils yet existed. The barrel of whiskey was still kept at the dispensary under the charge of the apothecary and his clerks, or rather assistants; and pints or quarts were issued according to the orders of attending surgeons. There were many suspicious circumstances connected with this institution, for the monthly barrel of whiskey is an *institution*, and a very important one in a hospital. If it is necessary to have a hero for this bare narrative of facts, the whiskey barrel will have to advance and make his bow.

A further reference to the bill passed by Congress proved that liquors, as well as luxuries, belonged to the matron's department, and in an evil moment such an impulse as tempted Pandora to open the fatal casket assailed me, and I despatched the bill with a formal requisition for the barrel. An answer came in the form of the head surgeon. He

courteously told me that I would “I find the charge very onerous;” that “whiskey was required at all hours, sometimes in the middle of the night,” and he would not like me to be disturbed – “it was constantly needed for medicinal purposes” – “he was responsible for its proper application;” but I was not convinced and withstood all argument. Dr. A. was proverbially sober himself, but there were reasons why both commissioned as well as non-commissioned officers opposed so violently the removal of the liquors to my quarters. However, the printed law was at hand for reference; it was like nailing my colors to the mast; and that evening *all* the liquor was locked up in my own pantry, and the key in my *own* pocket!

The first restraints of a woman's presence had now worn away, and the thousand petty miseries of my position began to make itself felt. The young surgeons (not all gentleman, though their profession should have made them aspirants to the name,) and the nurses played into each others hands. If the former were off on a frolic, the latter would conceal the absence of necessary attendance by erasing the date of the diet list of the day before, substituting the proper one, duplicating the prescription also, thus preventing inquiry. In like manner the assistant surgeons, to whom the nurses are alone responsible, would give leave of absence and conceal the fact from the surgeon-in-charge, which could easily be effected; the patients would suffer, and complaints from the matron be not only obnoxious and troublesome, but entirely out of her line of business. She was to be cook and housekeeper; nothing more. Added to other difficulties was the dragon-ship of the Hesperides, the guarding of the golden fruit to which access had been open to a certain extent before her arrival; and for many, many months the petty persecution exercised and endured from all the small fry around, almost exceeded human patience. What the surgeon-in-charge could do, he did; but with the weight of a hospital on his mind, and very little authority delegated to him, he could hardly reform or punish silly annoyances: so small in the abstract, so great in the aggregate.

The eventful evening that Mr. Jones revolted against tea and toast, my unfortunate remark, intended for one ear alone, but caught by the nurse – to the effect that the patient could not be confused in his intellects if he said his surgeon was a fool – brought forth a recriminating note to me. It was from that maligned and incensed gentleman, and proved the progenitor to a long series of communications of the same character, a family likeness pervading them all, commencing with “the chief matron and Dr. \_\_\_\_\_,” continuing with “Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_ and I,” and ending with “you and him.” They were difficult to understand and more difficult to submit to. Accustomed to be treated with extreme deference and courtesy by the highest officials connected with the Departments, moving in the same social grade I always occupied when beyond the hospital bounds, the change was appalling.

The inundation of notes that followed for many months could not have been sent back unopened, the last refuge under such circumstances; for some of them might have related to the well-being of the sick. My pen was ready enough, but could I waste my thunder in such an atmosphere?

The depreciated currency, which purchased only at fabulous prices; the poor pay the government (feeling it necessary to keep up the credit of its paper) gave to its officials; the natural craving for luxuries that had been but common food before the war, caused appeals to be constantly made to me, sometimes for the applicant, oftener for his wife,

family or sick friend, so that even if I had given one-tenth demanded, there would have been nothing left for the patient.

It was hard to refuse, for the plea that it was not mine, but merely a charge confided to me, was looked upon as a pretext, and outsiders calculated upon the quantity issued to my Department, losing sight of the quantity consumed.

Half a dozen men missed their poor dinner at the steward's table daily, and sent for "anything," which generally meant turkey and oysters. Others had "been up all night and craved a cup of coffee," and as for diseases among both commissioned and non-commissioned men, caused by entire destitution of whiskey, and only to be cured by it—their name was legion. Every pound of coffee, every ounce of whiskey, bushel of flour, or basket of vegetables, duly weighed before delivery, was intended for their particular consumers, who, if they could not eat or drink what was provided for them, watched their property zealously and claimed it too: - so how could I give?

The necessity of refusing the live-long day to naturally generous tempers, makes them captious and uncivil, and the soft answer to turn away wrath becomes an impossibility. Demands amounted soon to persecution, when the refusals became the rule instead of the exception, and the breach thus made grew wider, day by day, till I began to feel like Ishmael, "my hand against every man and every man's hand against me."

There is little gratitude felt in a hospital, and none expressed. The mass of patients are uneducated men, who have lived by the sweat of their brow, and gratitude is an exotic, planted in a refined atmosphere, kept free from coarse contact and nourished by unselfishness. Common natures look only with astonishment at great sacrifices, and cunningly avail themselves of them, but give nothing in return, not even the satisfaction of allowing one to suppose that the care exerted has been beneficial; - *that* would entail compensation of some kind, and in their ignorance they fear the nature of the equivalent which might be demanded.

Still pleasant episodes often occur to vary disappointments and lighten duties.

"Could you write me a letter?" drawled a whining voice from a bed in one of the wards, a cold winter day in '62.

The speaker was a Georgian, lean, yellow; attenuated, with wispy strands of hair hanging over his high thin cheek bones. He put out a hand to detain me, and I noticed the nails were like claws.

"Why do you not let the nurse cut your nails?"

"Because I aint got any spoon, and I use them instead."

Will you let me have your hair cut then? You can't get well with all that dirty hair hanging about your ears and eyes."

"No, I can't git my hair cut, kase as how I promised my mammy that I would let it grow 'till the war be over. O, it's onlucky to cut it."

"Then I can't write for you. If you will do what I want I will do what you want."

This was plain talking. The hair being cut, I brought in my portfolio, and sitting by the side of the bed, waited for further orders. They came without more formal introduction, "for Mrs. Marshy Brown."

"My dear Mammy -

"I hope this finds you well, as it leaves me well, and I hope I shall get a furlough Christmas and see you, and I hope you will keep well and all the folks be well by that time as I feel well myself. This leaves me in good health as I hope it will finds you and —"

But here I made a pause, as his mind seemed to be going around in a circle, and asked him a few questions as to his home, his position during the last summer's campaign; how he got sick, and where his brigade was then stationed, etc. Thus furnished with some material to work on, the letter proceeded rapidly. Four sides were filled up, for no soldier would think a letter worth sending home which had any blank paper. Transcribing his name – the number of his ward and proper address, so that an answer might reach him safely, the composition was read to him. Gradually his pale face brightened; a sitting posture was assumed with evident interest. I folded it and directed it, contributed the expected five-cent Confederate stamp, and handed it over.

“Did you write all that,” he said with great emphasis.

“Yes.”

“Did *I* say all that.”

“I think so.”

A dead pause ensued of undoubted admiration - astonishment. What was working in that poor mind? Could it be that Psyche had stirred one of the delicate plumes of her wings, and the dormant soul was-touched?

“Are you married.” The harsh voice dropped very low. “No.”

He rose still higher in bed, pushed desperately away the tangled hay on his brow; a faint color fluttered over the hollow cheek, and stretching out a long bone with a talon attached, he touched my arm, and with mysterious voice whispered imperiously – “*You wait!*”

And readers, I am waiting; and I here caution the male portion of creation who may love through their mental powers, to respect my confidence and not seek to shake my constancy.

Sometimes the compliments paid were pretty from their novelty and originality, but they were rare. Expression was not a gift with the common class of soldiers. “You will run them little feet of you'rn off – they aint much to boast of any way,” said a rough Kentuckian. Was not this as complimentary as the lover who compared his mistress' foot to a dream; and much more comprehensible?

At times the lower wards would be filled with rough men from camp, who had not seen a female face for months, and though too much occupied by business to notice it much, their partly concealed, but determined regard, would become embarrassing. One day while talking with a ward master, my attention was attracted by the pertinacious staring of a rough-looking Texan. He walked round and round me, examining every detail of my dress, face and figure; his eye never fixing upon any particular part for a moment, but travelling incessantly all over me. It was the wonderment of the mind at the sight of a new creation. I moved my position; he shifted his to suit the new arrangement – again a change was made, so obviously to get out of his range, that with a delicacy the roughest men treated me with always, he desisted from his inspection so far, that though his person made no movement, his neck twisted round to accommodate his eyes, till I supposed some progenitor of the family had been an owl. The men began to titter, and patience became exhausted.

“Well, my man, did you *never* see a woman before?”

“Laws sake!” he ejaculated, making no move towards withdrawing his determined notice, “I never did see such a nice one; you's pretty as a pair of red shoes with green strings.”

These were the two compliments laid upon the shrine of my vanity during four years contact with thousands of patients, and I commit them to paper, to give some idea of the portrait wanting for a frontispiece, and to prove to all readers that a woman, with a face like a pair of red shoes with green strings, must have some claim to the apple of Paris.

Scenes of pathos occurred daily-scenes that wrung the heart and forced the summer rain of pity from the eyes. But feeling or sentiment that enervated the mind and body was a luxury that could not be indulged in. There was too much work to be done, too much active exertion required, and both mental and physical energies were severely taxed each day. Perhaps they balanced and so kept each other from sinking. Besides, there was not sufficient leisure time to think, the necessity for action being ever present.

After the battle of Fredericksburg, while waiting in a sick ward for brandy for a dying man, a low, pleasant voice said, "Madame." It came from a youth looking very ill, but so placid. He had that earnest, far away gaze, so common to the eyes that are looking their last in this world. Perhaps God in his mercy gives a glimpse of coming peace, past understanding, which reflects itself in the dying eyes into which we look with such strong yearning to fathom what they see. He shook his head in negative to all offers of food or drink, or suggestions of a softer pillow, or lighter covering.

"I want Perry," was all he said.

On inquiry I found that Perry was the friend and companion who had marched by his side in the field, and slept nearest him in camp, but whose present whereabouts he was ignorant of. Armed with a requisition from our surgeon, I sought and found his name at the receiving hospital, from which he had been transferred to Jackson. He was soon seated by my side in my ambulance, and on arrival at our hospital, we found my patient had dropped asleep. A bed was brought and put by his side, and Perry, only very slightly wounded, laid upon it. Just then the sick man awoke wearily, turned over and the half unconscious eye fixed itself. He must have been dreaming of the meeting, for he still distrusted the reality. Illness had spiritualized the poor boy's face; the transparent forehead, the delicate brow so clearly defined, looked more like heaven than earth. As he recognized his comrade, a lovely smile curved his lips, heretofore so wan and expressionless; the angel of death had brought the light of summer skies to that pale face. "Perry," he cried, "Perry!" and throwing himself into his friend's arms with an effort, the radiant eyes closed, but the smile still lingered around the lips-the golden bowl was broken.

There is little sensibility exhibited by soldiers for their comrades in a hospital, and whatever feeling might have yet lingered in my heart was dispelled by a drawling voice from a neighboring bed - "I say there, could you give me such a thing as a sweet per-r-ta-a-a-tu-ur; I b'long to the twenty second Nor Ka-a-a-li-i-na regiment." I told the nurse to remove his bed away from proximity to his dead neighbor, thinking that in the low state of his health it might affect him, but he treated the suggestion with contempt. "Don't make no sort of difference to me, they dies all around me a fighting in the field, - don't trouble me."

The complaints of wounded men still continued as to the theft of the liquor issued, and no vigilance on my part could check the appropriation, or discover the thieves in the wards. There were so many drawbacks to having proper precautions taken. Lumber was so high that closets were out of the question, and locks not to be found for any money. The liquor, therefore, when it had left my kitchen, was open to any passer-by who would

watch his opportunity; so although I had the strongest objection to female nurses, the supposition that whiskey would not be a temptation to them, and would be more liable to reach its proper destination through their hands, determined me to try them.

Unlucky thought, born in an evil hour!

There was no lack of applications for the office, but my choice hesitated between ladies of the best rank in the Confederacy and the commonest class of respectable servants. The latter suited better, because it was to be supposed they would be more amenable to authority. Three were engaged and taught that the fifteen wards were to be divided among them, five to each matron. They were to keep the bed clothing in order, receive and dispense the liquor, carry any little delicacy of food to their respective wards for their sick, and do anything they were told, that was reasonable. The last was an express stipulation.

The next day my new corps were in attendance, and the bottle of whiskey, the egg-nogg, and different stimulants for her ward delivered to No. 1. She was a cross-looking woman from North Carolina, painfully ugly, or rather what is termed "hard featured," and very taciturn, the last rather an advantage. She had hardly left my kitchen when she returned with all the drinks, and a very indignant face.

In reply to inquiry made, she proved her taciturnity was not chronic. She said she was a decent woman, and "was not going anywhere in a place where a man sat on a bed in his shirt and the rest laughed – she knew they laughed at her." The good old proverb that talking is silver but silence is gold had impressed itself on my mind long since, so I silently took her charge from her, and told her a hospital was no place for a person of her delicate sensibilities, at the same time bringing forward Miss G. and myself, who were almost young enough to be her daughters, as examples for her imitation.

She said very truly that we did as we pleased, and so would she; and that was the last we saw of her.

What her ideas of hospital life were, I never enquired and perhaps will never know.

No. 2 came gallantly forward. She was a plausible light-haired, light-eyed and light-complexioned Englishwoman; very small, with a high nose! She had arrived at the hospital with seven trunks, which ought to have been a warning tome, but she brought such strong recommendations that they weighed down in the balance. She received the pitcher of punch with averted head, and nose completely turned aside, held it at arms length with a high disdain mounted on her high nose, Her excuse was that the smell of liquor was "awful," she "could not abear it and it turned her stomach." This was suspicious, but we waited for further developments.

Dinner was given out, and No. 2 was vigilant and attentive, carrying her portion with the assistance of the nurses to her wards. No. 3, an inoffensive woman, did the same and all was well.

That afternoon as I sat in my little sanctum, adjoining my office, Miss G. put her head in with an apprehensive look and said, "the new matrons wanted to see me." They came in, and my high-nosed friend, after a few preliminaries, said with a toss of her head and a sniff, that *I* was very comfortable. I thought so too! She continued the conversation, saying that "other people were not, who were quite as much entitled to be so." This was also undeniable. She said, "they were not satisfied, for I had not invited them into my room, and they considered themselves quite as much of ladies as I was." I rejoined, "I was very glad to hear that and hoped they would always behave in a way suitable to that

title." There was an evident desire on her part to say more, but what was it to be? They finished by requesting me to inspect their quarters, which they were not satisfied with. An hour later I did so, and found them all sitting around a sociable spittoon, with a friendly box of snuff-dipping!

It was almost impossible to persuade these people that the government alone was answerable for their not being provided with other and better quarters; they persisted in holding me responsible.

The next day on entering No. 2's ward, I found a corner of the building of about eight feet square portioned off, a rough plank partition dividing this temporary room from the rest of the ward.

Seated comfortably within was the new matron, entrenched behind her trunks. A neat little table and chair, abstracted from my kitchen added to her comforts. Choice pieces of crockery, remnants of more peaceful times, that had remained for ornament of my shelves, were placed tastefully around, and the drinks issued for the patients were at her elbow. She explained that she kept them there to prevent theft. Perhaps the nausea arising from their neighborhood had tinted the high nose higher, and there was a defiant look about it as if she had sniffed the bottle afar.

It was very near though, and had to be fought, however disagreeable, so my explanation was short but polite. Each patient being allowed a certain amount of space, every inch taken therefrom was so much ventilation lost, and the abstraction of eight feet of ground for improper purposes was a serious matter, contrary to the laws of the hospital. Besides this, no woman could be allowed to live in the wards for many reasons. She was a sensible person, for she did not waste her breath in talking; she merely kept her place. An appeal made by me to the surgeon of the ward did not result favorably; he said I had engaged her, and she belonged to my corps and was under my supervision; so I sent for the steward.

The steward of a hospital cannot tell you exactly what his duties are the difficulty being to find out what they are not. Whenever it has to be decided who has to perform a disagreeable office, the choice invariably falls upon the steward. So to his quarters a message was sent to request him to make No. 2 evacuate her hastily improvised premises. He hesitated long, but engaging at last the services of his assistant, a broad-shouldered, fighting character, proceeded to eject the new tenant.

His polite explanations were met in a startling manner. She arose and rolled up her sleeves, advancing upon him as he receded down the ward. The sick and wounded men roared with laughter and cheered her on, and soon she remained mistress of the field. Dinner preparations served as an interlude, and, calm as summer seas, she made her entree into the kitchen, received the food for her ward and vanished. In half an hour the ward master of the ward in which she was domiciled made his report, and indeed recounted a pitiful tale. He was a neat, quiet manager, and kept his ward beautifully clean. No. 2, he said, "divided the dinner, and whenever she came across a bone, in hash or stew, she became displeased and dashed it upon the floor." With so little to make a hospital gay, this peculiar episode was a god-send to all lookers on except myself. The surgeons stood in groups laughing, the men crowded around the window of the belligerent power, and a coup d'etat was necessary.

"Send me the carpenter." (I felt the courage of Boadecia.) The man stepped up; he was always quiet, civil and obedient.

“Come with me to ward E.”

A few steps brought us there.

“Knock down that partition instantly, and carry those boards out.”

It was un fait accompli.

But the victory was not gained, only the fortifications stormed and taken, for almost hidden by flying splinters and dust, No. 2 sat among her seven trunks, enthroned like Rome upon the seven hills.

The story is not interesting enough to dwell on longer, but the result was very annoying. She was put in the ambulance with all her baggage, and sent away, very drunk by this time. The next day, decently dressed, she managed to get an interview with the medical director, enlisted his sympathy with a plausible tale she trumped up of her desolate condition, “a refugee who was trying to make her living decently,” and receiving an order to report again at our hospital, was back there by noon, Explanations had to be written, and the surgeon-in-chief to interfere with his authority before we could get rid of her. About this time an attack on Drewry's Bluff was expected, and was made before the hospital was in readiness to receive the wounded. The cannonading could be distinctly heard in the city, and the dense smoke seen rising above the battle field. The Richmond people had been too often, if not through the wars, at least within sight and sound of their terrors, to feel any great alarm.

The hospital people, lying in groups, crowded the eastern brow of the hill, discussing the probable results of the struggle, while the change from the dull boom of the cannon to the sharp rattle of musketry could be easily distinguished. The sun set among stormy, purple clouds, but when low upon the horizon sent long slanting rays of yellow light athwart the battle scene which, with its black outline of clouds, was thrown in strong relief. The shells were bursting in the air above the fortifications at intervals, and with the aid of glasses, dark blue uniforms could be seen moving in bodies, though how near the scene of action could not be guessed.

About seven o'clock the slightly wounded commenced to straggle in, with a bleeding hand, or contused arm, or head bound up with a scrap of cloth, or pocket handkerchief.

Their accounts were meagre, for men in the ranks never know anything of general results – but they all concurred in the fact that “we druv em nowhere.”

By half-past seven vehicles of all kinds crowded in, and yet no orders had been sent to make preparations for the wounded. Few surgeons were in the hospital, the proximity of the battle field inducing them to accompany the ambulance committee, or ride to the scene of action, and the single officer left in charge naturally objected to receive a large body of men when no arrangement had been made for their comfort; and but himself in attendance. I was just preparing to leave for my home, to which I returned every night, when the pitiful sight of wounded soldiers in ambulances, carts, drays, furniture wagons, carriages, and every kind of vehicle that could be impressed, met my sight. To keep them suffering while sent from hospital to hospital was useless torment, and the agonized outcry of a wounded man to take him in “for God's sake, or kill him,” decided me to countermand the order of the chief clerk, to the effect that they must find other accommodations, as we were not prepared to receive them.

I sent for the officer of the day. He was a kind-hearted, indolent man, but efficient in his profession and a gentleman, and seeing my extreme agitation, tried to reason with me, saying the wards were full, except the vacant and unused ones, for which we had no

comforts till we made requisitions. Besides being the only surgeon on the place, he could not possibly attend to all the wounds at that hour of the night. I proposed, in reply, that the convalescent men should be placed upon the floor on blankets, and the wounded take their place, and construing his silence into consent, gave the nurses the proper orders, eagerly offering my services to dress simple wounds, and extolling the strength of nerves (which had never been tried.) He allowed me to have my own way (may *his ways* be of pleasantness and his paths of peace) and so, giving Miss G. directions to have an unlimited supply of toddy and hot coffee – armed with lint, bandages, castile soap and a basin, I made my first essay in the surgical line. The doctor was engaged in ward A; so entering ward B, the first object that needed care was an Irishman. He was seated upon a bed with his hands crossed, wounded in both arms by the same bullet. The blood was soon washed off, wet lint applied, and no bones being broken, the bandages speedily arranged.

“I hope that I have not hurt you much,” was my apology; “these are the first wounds that I ever dressed.”

“Sure and they be the purtiest pair of hands that iver touched me and the lightest, and I’m all right now.”

From bed to bed, till long past midnight, the work continued. Fractured limbs were bathed, washed free from blood, and left for the surgeon's care. The men were so exhausted by forced marches, lying in entrenchments and want of sleep, that few awoke during these operations. If even roused to take nourishment, they received it with closed eyes, and a speedy relapse into unconsciousness. The next morning but very few had any recollection of the night before.

There were not as many desperate wounds among those brought in that night as usual. Strange to say, the ghastliness of wounds varied very much in the different battles, perhaps from the distance or nearness of contending parties. One man attracted my attention, and enlisted my warmest sympathy. He was a Marylander, though serving in a Virginia company. There was such calm resignation in his large, mild blue eye!

“Can you wait a moment on me?” he said.

“What can I do for you?”

“Give me something to strengthen me, that I do not die before the doctor attends to me.”

His pulse was strong, but irregular, and telling him that stimulants might produce fever, and ought only to be administered by a surgeon's directions, I enquired where he was wounded. Right through the body. Alas!

The doctor's opinion was “no hope ; give him anything he asks for,” but for five days and nights I struggled against this decree, fed my patient myself, using freely from the small store of brandy in my pantry, and cheering him by words and smiles. The sixth morning on my entrance he turned an anxious eye on my face – the hope had died out of his, for the cold sweat stood there in beads useless to wipe off, so constantly was it renewed.

What comfort could I give? Only silently open his Bible and read to him, without comment, the ever-living promises of his Maker – glimpses of that abode where “the weary are at rest.” Tears stole down his cheek, but he was *not* comforted.

“I am an only son,” he said, “and my mother is a widow. Go and see her if you ever get to Baltimore, and tell her I died in what I consider the defense of civil rights and

liberties. Say how kindly I was nursed, and that I needed nothing. I cannot thank you, for I have no breath, but I will meet you up there.”

He pointed to the sky and seemed to fall asleep, but he never woke in this world.

[*To be continued.*]

**REMINISCENCES  
OF  
A SOUTHERN HOSPITAL.  
BY ITS MATRON.**

NUMBER TWO.

While hospitals were still somewhat unorganized, soldiers were brought in from camp, or field, and placed in divisions irrespective of rank or State, but soon the officers had better quarters provided for them, apart from the privates, and separate divisions were also appropriated for men from different sections.

There were so many good reasons for this change, that explanations are hardly necessary. Chief among them was the ease through which, under this arrangement, a man could be quickly found by reference to the books of any particular division. Schedules of where the patients of each State were quartered were published in the daily papers, and besides the materials furnished by government, States and associations were thus enabled to send very large quantities of food and clothing for private distribution. The immense contributions coming weekly, from such sources, gave great aid, and enabled us very often to have a reserved store when the Government commissary failed to supply us.

To those who were cognizant of these exertions and their results, it appeared as if the old men and women of the Confederacy had worked as hard, and exercised as much self-denial at home, as the soldiers in the field. There was an indescribable pathos lurking at times at the bottom of those heterogeneous home boxes, put up by anxious wives, mothers and sisters; a sad and mute history shadowed in the making of rude, coarse homespun pillow cases, or pocket handkerchiefs, adorned even amidst the turmoil of war and poverty of means, with an attempt at a little embroidery, or a simple fabrication of lace for trimming. The silent tears that dropped over these tokens will never be sung in song or told in story. The little loving expedients to conceal the want of means which each woman resorted to, thinking that if *her* son failed to profit by the care, other mothers' might reap the advantage, is a history ill itself.

Piles of sheets, the cotton carded and spun at home in the one room where the family perhaps ate, lived and slept, in the back woods of Georgia. Bales of blankets-called so by courtesy, but only the *drawing room* carpets, the pride of the heart of thrifty housewives-perhaps their only extravagance in better days, but now cut up for field use. Dozens of pillow slips, not made of the coarse product of home looms, which would be too harsh to the cheek of the invalid, but of the fine bleached cotton of better days, suggesting under-clothing sacrificed to he sick. Boxes of woolen shirts, that looked like Joseph's many colored coat, created from almost every dressing gown, or flannel skirt, in the country.

A thousand evidences of the loving care and energetic labor of the poor patient ones at home, told an affecting story that knocked hard at the door's of the heart, were the portals ever so firmly closed; and with them often came letters written by those who had no knowledge of how to direct communications to the absent.

These letters, making inquiries concerning patients from anxious relatives at home, directed to my office, and not my name, came in numbers and were queer mixtures of ignorance, bad grammar, horrible spelling, and simple feeling. However absurd the style, the love that filled them chastened and purified them. Many are stored away, and though irresistibly ludicrous, are too sacred to give to the public for amusement.

In them could be detected the prejudices of the different sections. One old lady in Georgia wrote a pathetic appeal for attention for her son she called me "my dear sir," while still retaining my feminine address and though hoping for her son's restoration to health, entreated, in moving accents, that in case anything occurred by which his life could not be saved, that he should not be buried in "Virginny dirt;" rather a derogatory term to apply to the sacred soil of the Old Dominion. Almost all told the same sad tale of destitution of food and clothing-even shoes of the roughest kind being too expensive to be indulged in. For the first two years after the commencement of the war, privations were lightly dwelt upon, and courageously borne; but when want and trouble pressed heavily, there was a natural longing for the stronger heart and frame to bear part of the burden. Desertion is a crime and meets generally with the same contempt as cowardice: and yet how hard for the husband or father to remain inactive in winter quarters, knowing his wife and little ones were literally starving at home-not even *at home*; for how many homes were left?

Our Hospital had till now, for over a year, been appropriated to Georgians, when an order came to transfer them and make it entirely Virginian. The cause of this change was unknown to me, but was highly agreeable, for the latter were the very best class of men in the field-intelligent, manly and reasonable, with civilized tastes and some knowledge of what was conducive to health. Besides this, they were a hardier race, and were more inclined to make up their minds to live than die-a very important matter in a hospital; and when there was no fighting going on, the wards, for this reason, would be very empty. The health of the army had improved wonderfully when the soldiers had become accustomed to field life, and learned to take proper precautions. Time was now left to me for winter operations, and curiosity carried me around to see how my neighbors managed *their* duties and responsibilities. While on the search for improvement, I found a small body of Marylanders who, having no distinct hospital of their own, were sent wherever circumstances made it convenient to lodge them.

There had been much petty criticism, privately and publicly expressed, on the conduct and bearing of the Marylanders in the Confederacy, and a great deal of ill-feeling engendered. Sister States are never amicable, but it was not until my vocation drew my attention to the fact, that I became aware of the antagonism existing. The Virginians complained that the Marylanders had come South only to install themselves in the comfortable clerkships, and take possession of the lazy places; while those filling them, defended their position on the ground that honest and efficient men were required as strictly in the Departments as in the field, and that their capacity, as clerks, was recognized without any desire on their part to shun field duty. They labored, also, tinder the disadvantage of harboring, as fellow citizens, every gambler, speculator, or vagabond, anxious to escape military duty, who managed to procure, always in some way, the exemption papers proving him a native of some portion of their State. This adverse feeling to them, report said, extended to the hospitals through which they were scattered: and, with the aid of one of Maryland's warmest friends, every effort was made to induce

the Surgeon-General to consent to the inauguration of some building for their use. But Dr. Moore was averse to any arrangement of the kind-not from unkind feeling-but from a conviction of the expense and trouble of small establishments of that nature.

Failing in effecting this, a personal application was made to the Surgeon-in-Chief of our own hospital, to allow me to have a certain number of wards apportioned for Marylanders, and with the ready courtesy and kindness always displayed by him, he immediately gave his consent.

In the decided objections expressed by the surgeons, generally, to having charge of the Marylanders, there was something more amusing than offensive, and the dismay exhibited by the head of our division, when he heard of this arrangement, was ludicrous in the extreme; but our opinions were hardly reconcilable in this matter, from our different standpoints. To a woman, there was a touch of romance in the self-denial exercised, the bravery displayed, the hardships endured by a body of men, who were fighting on an abstract question, as far as they were concerned. (No one with any reflection, ever supposing Maryland in any event, could ever become a sister State of the Confederacy.) Besides this, the majority of them were very young men, and, in many instances, had been accustomed to the luxuries of life; well born, well nurtured, and well bred serving contentedly to the end as privates, when other men, who had commenced in the ranks, had long since made interest and risen, more through political favor than personal bravery. Luxuries that came from all other States for their soldiers, which, though trifling in themselves, were so gratifying to the recipients, never came to them; the furlough – the El Dorado of the sick soldier-was like the cup held to the lips of Tantalus, for the water could not be quaffed. There was no home waiting them; even letters, those electric conductors from heart to heart, came sparingly, after long detention, and told, perhaps, of the loss of the beloved at home, months after the grave had closed over them.

In antagonism to this feeling, were the strong objections of the head surgeon to this new arrangement, and they were reasonable enough. The very fact of there being an unusual amount of intelligence and independence among these men, made them more difficult to manage, and less submissive to orders. They knew what they were entitled to in food, surgical attendance, and general attention; and were not afraid to speak openly, and often loudly, of any neglect or incapacity; so that, whether ragged, or helpless, or sick, they bore a striking resemblance to Hans Andersen's leather soldier, who, though lame of a leg, minus an eye and an arm, a mashed head, all the gilt rubbed off his back, and lying in the gutter, had his own opinion, and gave it on all occasions. This made them awkward customers, and the result was a pretty general objection to them as patients. I might whisper, an aside, very low and very confidential, of sick men, who should have followed the wholesome old rule of "early to bed and early to rise," taking their physic quietly in the morning, and disappearing after sun set – "dew in the morning and mist at night:" and also tell of passes altered, and furloughs lengthened – all very wicked, but nothing unmanly or dishonorable. They never lingered around the hospital when there was field work calling them away, and their record needs no additional tribute from my humble pen; praise, when not necessary, is an impertinence. When petty sectional feelings have died away, and the history of the Confederate struggle is written, they will find their laurel leaves fresh and green.

But to return to home affairs. The wards were prepared, and first occupied by the sick and wounded of the First Maryland Cavalry; and for the first time, during their stay did I experience the pleasure of ministering to the wants of grateful and satisfied soldiers. They brightened a short interval of a laborious and harassing labor of nearly four years, and left a sunny spot for memory to dwell on. After them, many of their State came and went, but there were still difficulties to smooth. It was almost impossible to give them their due share of attention, so great was the jealousy existing. If an ill man required special attention, and he proved to be a Marylander, though, perhaps, ignorant myself of the fact, many eyes watched me, and complaints were made to the nurses, and from them to the surgeons, till a report of partiality to them on my part, made to the Chief Surgeon, compelled his notice, and was followed by a command that all patients should be treated alike. There was constant bickering and dissatisfaction shown. Fearful that I might be in the wrong, I was careful at last not to inquire as to what corps an invalid belonged.

A courier of General A. P. Hill's, very badly wounded, had been a patient for some time, and by way of offering him some inducement to bear his fate patiently, I had asked him to dine at my office as soon as he could use his crutches. An invitation of this kind was often extended to men similarly situated, not that there were any other delicacies retained in my kitchen than were sent to the wards, but the invitation was a courtesy, and the food was hot and more comfortably served. Unfortunately, he proved Maryland born, and that something had been reported was shown by an order attached to my window during the day, to the effect that none of the patients would be allowed to enter the matron's department under any circumstances, on penalty of certain punishment. This was galling and disagreeable, so hard to be borne that I carried my complaint to the Surgeon-in-Chief. No one ever applied to him in vain, for either courtesy or kindness. He naturally was unwilling to countermand this order, but told me significantly that, though the division was under entire control of the surgeon-in-charge, and subject to his orders, the private room that opened out of my kitchen was my room. As a woman will always sacrifice her comfort, convenience, pleasure and privacy, to have her own way, the result must be evident. My sleeping room became a dining room, and for the future I generally made use of it for that purpose, and returned home at night.

The next trouble was the entire disappearance of all the Maryland patients, the wards being found empty one day when I went through them, and "no man living could tell where they had gone." The dinner hour had hardly commenced when a small group of the missing made their appearance with cup and plate at the window. They belonged to the infantry, and if even able to bear their exile, were not willing to give up the flesh pots of Egypt. This continued for a couple of days, the applicants increasing at each meal, till a second visit to Dr. M., with a representation of the impossibility of feeding men for whom no rations had been drawn, brought about the rescinding of the first order, and from that time till the end of the war they were not further molested.

Feminine sympathy being much more demonstrative than masculine, particularly when surgeons are in question – who, inured to the aspect of suffering, have more control over their professional feelings, – the nurses often came to me when only the Doctor was needed. One very cold night in December, while sleeping at the hospital, in answer to my demand as to who was knocking and what was wanted, a nurse said that something was the matter with Fisher. Telling him to go for the Doctor, and putting on some

clothing, for Fisher was an especial favorite, I hurried to the ward. He was a young man, hardly twenty years old, who had been wounded ten months previously, very high on the leg, near the hip; and who, by dint of good nursing, good food and plenty of whiskey, had been given a fair chance of recovery. The bones of the broken leg had lapped, and nature had thrown out a ligature between the severed parts; but his side curved out, and the wounded left leg was half a dozen inches shorter than its fellow. He had been the object of sedulous care on the part of all-surgeons, ward-masters, nurses, and matron; and the last effort to assist him was by the aid of an open cylinder of pasteboard, made at my kitchen, of many sheets of coarse paper, cemented together with very stiff paste. This was to clasp, by its own prepared curve, the deformed hip, and to be a support for it should he be able to use crutches.

He was a stout, fresh, hearty young man, interesting in appearance, and so gentle mannered and uncomplaining that all had learned to love him. Supported by the nurse, he had walked up and down his ward once or twice for the first time, this day, on his crutches, and all seemed well. That night he turned over and uttered, for the first time, an exclamation of great pain.

Following the nurse to his bed, the covering was turned down, when a small jet of blood spirted upward; the sharp edge of one of the splintered bones had severed the artery. I put my finger in the little orifice and awaited the surgeon. He speedily came – took a long look and shook his head. The explanation was easy; the artery was embedded in the fleshy part of the side, and could not be taken up. No earthly power could save him.

What could it avail for Dr. \_\_\_ to remain? He required his time and his strength, and I sat by the boy, himself almost unconscious that any particular accident had happened. The hardest trial of a woman's duty laid before me, the necessity of telling a man, in the prime of life, perfectly ignorant of the danger, that his life was ebbing away – that there was no hope!

It was done at last, and the information received patiently and courageously – some directions given to me by which his mother would be informed of his death, and then he turned his questioning eyes upon my face.

“How long can I live?”

“Just as long as I hold my finger on this artery.”

A long pause ensued. God alone knows what thoughts passed through that heart, called so suddenly – so unexpectedly from all earthly ties. He broke the silence at last:-

“You can let go –”

But I could not. Not if my life had depended on the action. Hot tears rushed to my eyes – a surging sound was in my ears, and a deathly coldness around my lips. The pang of obeying him was spared me-for the first and last time during my hospital sojourn, I fainted away.

No words can do justice to the uncomplaining nature of the Southern soldier. Whether it arose from resignation, or merely passive submission, when shewn in the aggregate, in a hospital, it was sublime. Day after day, lying wasted by disease, or burning up with fever; torn with wounds, or sinking from debility, a groan was seldom heard. The wounded wards were noisily gay with singing, laughing, fighting battles o'er and o'er again, and playfully chaffing each other by decrying the troops from the different States, each man applauding his own. One would think in listening to them, that the whole army,

with the exception of a few men from the speaker's section of country, were cowards. The up-country soldiers, born in the same State, went farther, and decried "them fellows from the sea-board who let us do all the fighting." The Georgians would tell how the Carolinians laid down at such a battle, refusing to charge, and how they charged over them. The Mississippians, of the backwardness of the Tennessee troops, who never would go into action unless *led* by their commanding general. The Virginians romanced of the rowdyism of the Maryland volunteers, who were always spreeing it in the city and "dancing attendance on the women;" and the North Carolinians caught it on all sides, though their record undoubtedly is a most gallant one. As a mass, the last certainly were rather forlorn specimens, and their drawl was insufferable. Besides this, they never in any instance would give me the satisfaction of knowing that they ever ate anything that issued from my kitchen. "Can I have some sweet soup?" whined a voice on one side, and "can I have some sour soup?" came from a neighboring bed. The sweet soup was stirred custard, the sour, a mystery as yet. Applying for the receipt, it was given in the following words: "You put a pot of buttermilk on the fire and let it git hot, and come to a bile; then mix up the yaller of an egg with some corn flour to make a paste; then punch off pieces of the dough and bile them with the soup and put salt and plenty of pepper." The buttermilk, as it may be supposed, resolved itself in boiling into curds and whey. I took the saucepan to his bedside to show him the result of his directions. He merely shook his head, and said his "Mammy's soup did not not look like that !"

Many would not eat unless they were furnished with the food to which they had been accustomed at home, and, as unreasoning as brutes, resisted nutriment and became weaker day by day; and whatever was new to the eye and taste was received suspiciously. Liquids in the form of soup, tea or coffee, they turned from with disgust, so that the ordinary diet of sick people was inefficient in their case. Buttermilk seemed specially created by nature for wounded patients; they craved it with a drunkard's thirst, and great, tall men have absolutely cried like children for sweet milk. We had a very short supply of this during the last year of the war, and I remember a Kentuckian, one of Morgan's men, insisting upon refusing everything but this, to him rare luxury. He had been on a raid far out of the Confederate limits, and had no idea of the want of forage that made our cows so dry. His pleading was really affecting, till at last, rallying, I told him – "why, man, the very babies of the Confederacy have given up milk, and here you, six feet two, are crying for it!" We heard no more about milk from him.

Little poetical effusions would sometimes be put under my cabin door, and notes of all kinds from patients; among them was a very prettily worded request from a young man, who was slightly indisposed with that most hateful of all annoyances to our soldiers, the "itch" - "that shirt of Nessus," which, when once attached to the person, clings there forever. It begged me to call at his ward, when at leisure, giving his name and bed. He proved to be an educated man and a gentleman, from the upper part of Alabama, which had been, colonized by the best class of South Carolinians, and wanted to enlist any influence my position gave me to secure him a furlough. His story was interesting. Engaged to a young girl, the preparations all made, the ring even bought, (he wore it on his little finger,) and the marriage day fixed; they heard the first rumors of war, and patriotism urging him to enlist, the parents of his sweetheart refused to let them consummate the engagement till peace was restored. The desire to see her was almost

unbearable and feeling sincere sympathy for the hardship of the case, I tried, but in vain, to get him a furlough. The campaign had opened, and every man was needed in the field.

The finale of the story was a sad one, as are almost all stories in time of war. He was killed in repelling the attack on Petersburg and the little history confided to me resolved itself into a romance, which that night found shape and form.

ICH HABE GELEBT UND GELIEBT.  
(LOVED AND LOST.)

The bride's robe is ready, the bridesmaid s are bid,  
The groom clasps the circlet, so cautiously hid;  
For a home is now waiting a mistress to claim,  
A lover, a wife for his house, heart and name.  
There is peace in the homestead and mirth in the hall-  
The steed idly stands at the rack and the stall;  
The whole land is teeming with prosperous life,  
For past are all memories of carnage and strife.  
With rich golden harvests the ripe bills are blest,  
And God's Providence stands revealed and confessed.

No priest blessed that union, no ring wed that band;  
With anger and discord soon rang the whole land;  
Through all its wide domains the dread tidings ran  
Of bloodshed - the lover was first in the van.  
My dearest! I leave thee, those fond arms unfold,  
Would'st wed with the timid, the doubtful, the cold!  
No union can bless till our country be free,  
So onward for liberty, glory and thee!

Right bravely fought he, till sunlight lying low,  
Discovered a field that had left him no foe;  
But when in the flush of a victory gained,  
Deep in thoughts of his love-his honor unstained  
He wended his way to the home of his heart,  
From her side ne'er to swerve, from her love ne'er to part:  
Hastening on with the tidings he knew she would prize-  
His heart on his lips and his soul in his eyes;  
Laid low by a shot courage could not repel,  
At the feet of a mightier victor-he fell!  
And the bride that he left? What needs it to say,  
Her doom was a woman's - to watch, wait and pray.  
The heat of the struggle nerves man for the strife,  
But bitter at home is *her* battle of life  
When far from the conflict, unheeded, alone,  
Her brain in a flame, but her heart like a stone-

She patiently waits to hear one life is won,  
Or silently prays to say-God's will be done!

The whiskey barrel, as I mentioned in a previous page, had been a bone of contention from the beginning, and as it afterwards proved, remained so to the end. Liquor commanded an enormous price in Dixie, and if even its lovers had the means to purchase, they had not always the chance of doing so, the hospital being some distance from the city. When first installed, the desire to conciliate, and the belief that I had to deal with men with some conscience, led me to yield to solicitation for drink from many quarters; but the demand increased fearfully. A reference to Dr. M. on the subject settled this matter in my own mind; would that it had had the same effect on the suppliants. The doctor said the liquor was exclusively for the use of patients, and should only be given by a prescription, and through a written order; also, that I was responsible for the quantity confided to my care, and must each month produce the surgeons' receipts to balance with the number of gallons received from the Medical Purveyor. There were at different times about a half dozen surgeons and officials who absolutely made my life wretched, and yet who could not be gotten rid of except in a military way, by charges being preferred and proved against them. I had no recognized rank to make charges, and if I had, they were ludicrously petty in detail, though distracting as mosquito bites.

There were many modes adopted to outflank me – some of which can be recalled. A quart bottle of whiskey would be ordered for night use by the surgeon of the day, so that in case any of the patients should be taken ill, it would be at hand. The next morning, on inquiry being made, there had been no call for the surgeon during the night, but the bottle would be empty, and a complaint on my part would be met with an explanation that the rats, who *were* very troublesome, had knocked the bottle over. On refusing to honor the next demand of the same kind, the Surgeon-in-Charge was appealed to, heard both sides and took neither. This was just what I needed, for my first few months having been spent in, mental terror of violating any rule, however bad the results of obeying, during all the rest of my sojourn there I did as I thought right, and braved the consequences, preferring to be attacked to attacking. One mode of annoying me became particularly offensive – sending a negro boy with a cup and a request for so many ounces of whiskey. At first a polite written refusal would be the answer, but if this had been kept up a private secretary would have been necessary; so in time it was replaced by a decided “No.” A few minutes after this answer would be sent, the boy would again stand before me with the same message and same results, and this would occur half a dozen times consecutively. The boy could not be subjected to punishment, for he was compelled to obey; and sometimes, stung to irritation by this senseless pertinacity, I would write a note to the offending party, brief but sharp; the rejoinder was invariably the same foolish question so often put to me – did “Mrs. \_\_\_\_ consider herself a lady when she wrote such notes?” “No!” was always the perverse answer, “not so long as she was brought in contact with such elements.” It was strange that with so little self-assertion, dressed in a calico frock, sometimes the worse for wear, leather shoes, woolen gloves, and half the time with a skillet or pitcher in my hand, that all the common class around me should contest my right to a title to which I never aspired in words. The fact, which must have been patent to them from the active persecution it entailed, seemed to be a crying grievance. My life away from my sick was exclusive, both from inclination and prudence. Living alone, in a

solitude that was unbroken after dark, it was better that no preferences should be shown, and in a place where Argus eyes were always watching, a woman could not be too careful.

Still, the wars of the whiskey barrel continued. One day the men of one of the lower wards sent for me, and in the absence of their wardmaster, complained that the liquor sent to them was never administered. All agreed as to the fact, and said the champagne bottle, in which it was received, was brought in and hid behind a certain vacant bed. A search, on my part, brought it to light, still full, though the hour for giving it had long passed. The ward-master was summoned, the full bottle exhibited – and expressing my surprise at the want of faith in one I thought so honest heretofore – I told him plainly, that the facts of the case should be reported to the Surgeon-in-Charge.

His protestations were so earnest, that he never drank, and had not tasted liquor for eighteen months, that I could hardly disbelieve him.

What, then, became of the quantity issued? “Had he sold it?”

The inquiry was met by indignant surprise.

The truth began to dawn upon this puzzling question. That he had been false to his charge and his patients, if even he had not drunk the liquor, was undoubtedly true, and I told him calmly, that on the facts being represented to the proper authorities, he would certainly be sent to the field. An hour after this, the assistant surgeon of his ward entered my kitchen with rather a belligerent aspect.

“Did you say, Madam, that you intended sending my ward-master to the field?”

“I said I intended laying the facts concerning the disappearance of liquor before the Surgeon-in-Charge.”

“I consider myself responsible, Madam, for that liquor, after it leaves your kitchen.”

“Perhaps you may, but still it does not reach your patients; so I intend to make it my business to see, in future, that it does.”

“Do you mean to insinuate that my ward master has drunk it? – That man has not tasted a drop of liquor for a year.”

“I know he has not,” I said, “and I also know where it has gone,” looking him full in the face.

He changed color, but would not give in; so quietly passing him, I walked into my sanctum-my own little room adjoining the office. To my astonishment, he followed.

“Doctor \_\_\_\_\_, this is my private room, in which only my friends are admitted; will you be kind enough to leave?”

“No, Madam, not till you explain what you mean,” and he threw himself at full length upon my little couch.

This was going rather far, so drawing out my watch, I placed it upon the table beside him.

“I give you five minutes,” I said, “to leave my room. If you are not gone by that time, commissioned officer, as you are, and gentleman, as you ought to be, I will send for a guard have you taken to the guard house, and then explain to the Surgeon-General why I have acted in this way.”

He waited about three minutes, during which time he soliloquised audibly, to the effect that I “fancied myself the Surgeon-in-Chief,” and “did not know my position,” but at last, made up his mind that discretion was the better part of valor, and left. Proper measures to punish such conduct were, no doubt, taken, for after a few weeks he

disappeared, perhaps sent to that military Botany Bay - "the front." He took leave of his associates, with hints that his talents demanded a larger sphere of action than a hospital.

But the tables were about to be turned. Not forever was I allowed to carry war into the enemy's country, to defend that friend, whom I had stood by and fought for. The whiskey barrel-was destined soon to be turned into a weapon of offence.

The bold man who ventured to declare hostilities, and by a *coup de guerre* change the whole nature of the warfare from defensive to offensive, had been bar-keeper in a Georgia tavern; afterwards apothecary in a hospital at Macon, to avoid the field. In Richmond he passed the Surgeons' Board by a process only known to themselves – a process which sometimes rejected tried and clever practitioners, and gave appointments to apothecary boys.

Fate sent him to \_\_\_\_\_ Hospital, where the brilliant idea struck him, of reforming abuses, and checking thefts in the feminine department. He commenced proceedings, by ordering a half pint of whiskey for one of his patients.

The etiquette of a hospital enjoined that no one should interfere with the surgeon's prescriptions, so I carried up the order to Doctor M., the chief surgeon, received his instructions not to give so much raw liquor, without a requisition signed by the Surgeon-in-Charge, and wrote to the assistant surgeon, a few lines, explanatory of my instructions. The matter being arranged I forgot all about it, but the next day the *coup de guerre* was struck, the following note being handed me

“ \_\_\_\_\_ HOSPITAL, RICHMOND, Aug. 3d, 1863,

“CHIEF MATRON: - Is respectfully asked to state the amount of water used, as compared with amount of whiskey, in making toddy. If the strength of toddy has been uniform since the 1st of May, 1863. If any change has taken place in diluting the whiskey, in the within period.

“She will, also, please state what the change has been; also when the change has been made, and by whose authority.

“Respectfully,

“

\_\_\_\_\_

”Assistant Surgeon-in-Charge.”

These questions were simply absurd. With a couple of hundred men having drinks ordered them each day, by different surgeons, each prepared to suit different stages of disease; no day bringing the same orders, how could any kind of a statement be made. And if, even, it could, by what authority had my little friend assumed the right to question? Perhaps, axle seemed so much in earnest, it would be better to turn the whole affair into a comedy, instead of a tragedy, so, the day being rainy, too wet to go to the wards, I answered in full-feeling, very charitably, that he was welcome to all the information he could extract from five pages of foolscap.

In this document, polite, officially formal and as officially obscure, I told my correspondent that, not only his questions, could not be answered satisfactorily, but that he had not the slightest right to ask them, Diplomacy was certainly a failure, for an hour's delay brought the following:

“ \_\_\_\_\_ HOSPITAL, 3d August, '63.

“CHIEF MATRON: - Is respectfully called upon to state, what amount of whiskey has been given to each patient, when amount has not been expressed by Surgeon, or Assistant Surgeon, upon the rolls, but instead, “whiskey three times a day,” as ordered upon the rolls which, *I send you.*

“Respectfully,

“\_\_\_\_\_”  
“Assistant Surgeon-in-Charge.”

No solemn five pages were sent this time. The rejoinder was short and to the point: -

“\_\_\_\_\_ HOSPITAL, 3d August, '63.

“The Chief Matron is too much occupied to make any more voluminous explanations, being, at the moment, up to her elbows in gingerbread.”

The next was certainly very alarming; the sleeping lion was roused.

“\_\_\_\_\_ HOSPITAL, 3d August, 1863.

“CHIEF MATRON: - Is hereby informed that if she willfully, or contumaciously refuses to give me such information as she is possessed of, and demanded by me, thereby obstructing the duty I have been called upon to perform, the responsibility must rest upon her own shoulders.

“Respectfully,

“\_\_\_\_\_”  
“Assistant Surgeon-in-Charge.”

A serious but short rejoinder sent to this gentleman, to the effect that he had not the right or authority to propound those questions (which were in fact unanswerable) closed the paper war, and I had forgotten all about this foolish little episode; when the correspondence was returned folded in official style, and endorsed at the Surgeon-General's office, to the effect that it was “referred respectfully to the Surgeon-in-Chief,” through whose hands alone official etiquette required all reports should pass to the head of the department. But not long did this document remain in my correspondent's hand. Having failed to interest the Surgeon General in his cause, he drew up a statement of the case accusing me of disrespect to my superior officer, and sent this with the obnoxious notes up to the office of the military governor of the department of Henrico, who read the correspondence with some curiosity, if, not interest. Back, however, it came without response in a few days, and by this time, some of the waggish surgeons having got wind of the matter, persuaded my disappointed friend to try the Secretary of War. Whether he ever did so I did not inquire, getting tired of the foolish business. My correspondent disappeared one day, the last I saw of him were his pantaloons of Georgia clay embrowning the landscape adown the hill.

A better and more highly educated class of surgeons were sent soon after to fill vacancies, and this made my duties more agreeable. There would be nothing distasteful in such a life as mine was, if a proper discretion would be exercised, or rules enforced, so that no demands should be made upon the matron for what she has no right to furnish. These demands were the beginning and end of my troubles; for in all else I tried hard to

keep within the bounds of my position, and succeeded so far that no temptation induced me to interfere with the medical treatment, even to giving the slightest alleviation to a suffering man. During the first month, when quite a novice, yielding to a poor fellow's prayer for something to wash his mouth with, I gave him a little myrrh in water to use for gums frightfully excoriated by calomel, and suffered the annoyance of seeing the pompous assistant surgeon throw it out of the window. From that time my mind was made up to resist all such impulses and persevere in such a course of conduct to the last.

But this antagonism was not always the rule. There were many sensible, kind-hearted, efficient men among the surgeons, who gave all their time and talents to further the comfort and well being of their patients. Men who would let me work hand in hand with them, the nurse with the doctor, and listen kindly and respectfully to my suggestions, if ever they were irrelevant. As I said before, Dr. M., the Surgeon-in-Chief; was an unfailing refuge in times of distress, and whenever broken down by work and small miseries, I sought his advice and assistance, the first was not only the very best that could be secured, but unlike most of its kind palatable; and the last entirely efficient. The surgeon, too, of my own division, though eccentric and wanting much in decision of character, sustained me during sore trials as ably as he could, for the authority delegated to him was not great, and his dread of responsibility almost a disease. He never intended to be unkind or unjust, but self-examination and investigation of characters round him was not his forte. He certainly withstood a vast amount of complaint directed against his chief matron; and, while we had our Pleasant little differences occasionally, that we still preserved "amicable relations," was due more to his amiable temper than my proper submission. I *think* he had many faults, but I am *sure* I had more, and if the popular remark, which has become a maxim, that "a man must be very clever to keep an hotel" be true, it certainly ought to apply to one that can govern a hospital.

[*To be continued.*]

**REMINISCENCES  
OF  
A SOUTHERN HOSPITAL.  
BY ITS MATRON.**

NUMBER THREE.

Now, for the first time, began to be felt what was really meant by "war;" for privations had to be endured, which tried the temper and patience. A growing want of confidence was constantly forced upon the mind, and with doubts which, though unexpressed, were felt as to the ultimate success of our cause, came into play the antagonistic qualities of many around us.

The money worthless, and a weak financier and weaker Congress, failing to make it worth the paper it was printed on, the latter refusing to the last to raise the Hospital fund to meet the depreciation. Everything furnished through Government contracts of the very worst of its kind, perhaps necessarily so from the difficulty of supplying at all.

The railroads constantly cut, so that what had been carefully collected in the country by Hospital agents, in the form of poultry and vegetables, would be unfit for use by the time the connection was restored; the inducements for theft in this season of

scarcity of food and clothing; the appeals made for the coarsest meal by starving men, all wore upon the health and strength of those exposed to the strain, and made life in a Hospital weary and hopeless at times. The rations became so small towards the end of the war, that every ounce of flour was valuable, and I can remember the times when it has been necessary to refuse, with heart aching and eyes filling, the request of decent, manly-looking fellows for a small piece of dry corn bread. If given, it would have robbed the rightful owner of part of his scanty rations. After the flour, or meal had been weighed and made into bread, it was almost ludicrous to see with what painful solicitude Miss G. and myself would count the rolls, or hold a council over the pans of corn bread, measuring with a piece of string, how large we could afford to cut the squares, so that they should hold out. Sometimes when, from the causes stated, the supplies did not come as usual, invention had to be taxed to an extreme, and every available article in the pantry brought into requisition. We had constantly to fall back upon dried fruit and rice for the convalescing appetites, and tea or arrow root for the very sick. There was only one way of making the latter at all palatable and that was by destroying its consistency and flavor, or rather flavorlessness, by drenching it with whiskey. Long abstinence in the field from everything that could be considered a delicacy, exaggerated the fancy of sick men for any particular article of food into a passion, and they expressed wishes for such peculiar dishes, that surgeons and nurses might well be puzzled. One of the greatest difficulties in gratifying these desires, was that tastes became contagious, and whatever a patient asked for, his neighbor, and the one next to him, and so on, all through the ward, wanted also, and it was impossible to make a difference. No one unacquainted with the state of the Southern country, can appreciate the difficulties under which we labored. Stoves, in any degree of usefulness, we did not have; they were rare and immensely expensive. As may be supposed, they were not the most convenient articles in the world to pack away in small blockade-running vessels, and the trouble and expense of land transportation also seriously affected the quality of the wood furnished us. Timber which had been passed over before this time as unfit for use light, wet and soggy, became the only quality received. The bacon, too, cured during the first year of the war, when salt commanded an enormous price, in most cases was very bad, from the economy practised in the use of that article, and bacon was one of the sinews of war. We kept up brave hearts, and said we could eat the simplest fare, and wear the simplest clothing, but there was absolutely *nothing* to be bought that did not rank as a luxury. It was useless to attempt to economize, and one felt in full force the submissive precept, "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." There really was a great deal of heroism displayed, in looking back, at the calm courage with which Miss G. and myself learned to count the number of mouths to be fed daily, and then contemplating the food, calculate, not how much, but how little each man would be satisfied with. War may be glorious in all its panoply and pride, when in the field opposing armies meet and strive for victory; but battles fought by starving the sick and wounded, by crushing in, by main force, day by day, all the needs of human nature, make victories hardly worth the name.

The rats, too, had felt the times, and waxed strong and cunning, defying all our skill to entrap them, and levying black mail upon us day by day and night by night. Hunger must surely have educated their minds and sharpened their faculties. Other vermin the change of seasons would rid us of, but the coldest day in winter and the hottest in summer made no difference in their vivacious movements. They examined traps with the air of

connoisseurs, sometimes springing them from a safe position; and kicked over the bread spread with butter and strychnine, to show their disapproval of such an underhand warfare. The men told wonderful rat stories, not well enough authenticated to put on record; but they certainly ate all the poultices applied during the night, and dragged away the pads stuffed with bran from under the arms and legs of the wounded. One rather ludicrous operation they did perform, which entitled the operators to pass the board of surgeons. A Virginian had been wounded right through the instep. The hole made was large, and the wound sloughed fearfully, while a great lump of flesh formed in the centre like an island. The surgeons feared to remove this mass, as it might be connected with the nerves of the foot, and lock-jaw might follow. Poor Patterson used to sit all day looking at his lame foot and bathing it, with a very rueful face which had brightened amazingly one morning when I paid him a visit. He exhibited the foot with great glee, a deep hollow left, but the little island gone and the wound washed clean and looking healthy. Some skillful rat-surgeon had done this good service, and he only knew that, on awakening, he had found the operation performed. I never had but one personal encounter with them; an old grey gentleman, who looked a hundred years old, both in years and depravity, would eat nothing but butter, when that article was twenty dollars a pound; so finding all other means of getting rid of him fail, by his superior intelligence, I caught him with a fish-hook, well baited with a lump of his favorite butter, dropped into his domicile under the kitchen floor. Epicures sometimes managed to entrap them, and get a nice broil for supper, declaring that the flesh was superior to squirrel meat, but never having tasted it, I cannot give my testimony. They staid with us to the last, nor did I ever see any signs of their having changed their politics.

One of the most remarkable features of the war, was the perfect good nature with which the rebels discussed their foes. In no instance, up to a certain period, did I ever hear any remark made that savored of individual hatred. They fought for a cause, and against a power, and spoke perhaps in depreciation of a corps or brigade; but "they fit us and we fit them," was the whole story generally, and till the blowing up of the mine at Petersburg there was a gay, *insouciant* style in their descriptions of war scenes. But after that day the sentiment changed, from an innate feeling the private soldier had that mining was "a mean Yankee trick," as he expressed it. They did not recognize the stratagem that is fair in war, and what added to their indignation was the pouring in of the *negro* soldiers when the breach was opened. Incensed at the surprise, they wanted foes worthier of their steel, not caring to dampen it in the black cloud that issued from the crater. The men had heretofore been generally calm and restrained, particularly before a woman, never using oaths or improper language; but the wounded, that came in from that fight, emulated Uncle Toby's Army in Flanders, and eyes gleamed and teeth clenched as they showed me the locks of their muskets to which the blood and hair still clung, when after firing, without waiting to reload, they had clenched the barrel and fought hand to hand. If their accounts can be relied on, it was a gallant strife and a desperate one, and ghastly wounds bore testimony to the truth of many a tale then told.

Once again the bitter blood showed itself, when, after a skirmish, the foe cut the rail track so that the wounded could not be brought to the city. Of all the monstrous crimes that war sanctions, this surely is the most sinful. Wounded soldiers without the shelter of a roof, or the comfort of a drink of water, left exposed to sun, dew and rain, with hardly the prospect of a bed to lie on for days, knowing that comfort able quarters awaited them,

all ready prepared, but rendered useless by what seems a fiendish act. Is it any wonder that their habitual indifference to suffering gave way, and the soldier cursed loud and deep at this causeless inhumanity, which in a civilized age was worse than savage. When the sufferers reached the hospitals, their wounds had not been attended to for three days, and the sight was indeed fearful. Busy in my kitchen, seeing that the supply of necessary food was in preparation, I was spared the sight of much of the suffering, but in passing to and from the wards, among the ambulances, there, seated up in one of them, was a dilapidated figure, both hands holding his head, which was tied up with rags of all descriptions. He seemed incapable of talking, but nodded, and winked, and 'made motions with head and feet. In the general confusion he had been forgotten, so I took him as my especial charge. He was taken into a ward, and one rag after another unbound without any sensitiveness on my part, for there was no flinching and his eye was merry and bright, but when the last came off, what a sight!

Two balls had passed through the cheek and jaw within a half inch of each other, knocking out the teeth on both sides and cutting the tongue in half. The inflammation caused the swelling to be immense, and the absence of all previous attendance, in consequence of the detention of the wounded till the road could be mended, had aggravated the symptoms. There was nothing fatal to be apprehended, but fatal wounds are not always the most trying. The sight of this was the most sickening my long experience had ever seen. The swollen lips turned out, and the mouth filled with blood, matter, fragments of teeth, from amidst all of which the maggots in countless numbers swarmed and writhed, while the smell generated by this putridity was unbearable. Castile soap and soft sponges soon cleansed the offensive cavity, and he was able in an hour to swallow some nourishment drawn through a quill. The following morning I found him reading the newspaper, and entertaining every one about him by his abortive attempts to make himself understood, and in a week he actually succeeded in this. The first request distinctly enunciated was to the effect that he wanted a looking-glass to see if his sweetheart would be willing to kiss him when she saw him. We all assured him that she would not be worthy of the name if she did not.

An order came about this time, to clear out some of the wards for the reception of improperly vaccinated patients, who soon arrived in large numbers. They were dreadfully afflicted objects many of them with sores so deep and thick upon the arms and legs, that amputation had to be resorted to. As fast as the eruptions would be healed up in one place, they would break out in another, for the blood seemed entirely poisoned. The unfortunate victims bore the infliction as they had borne everything else painful, with calm patience and indifference to suffering. Sometimes a comparison would be made between this and the greater evils of losing limbs. No one, who was a daily witness to their agonies from this cause, could help feeling indignant at charges made of inhumanity to Federal prisoners of war, who were vaccinated with the same virus; and while on this subject, though it may be outside of "hospital reminiscences," I cannot help stating, that on no occasion was the subject of rations and medicines, to be issued for prisoners, discussed in my presence, (and circumstances placed me where I had the best opportunity of hearing the truth) that good evidence was not given, that the Confederate Government issued to them the same rations it gave its soldiers in the field, and only when reductions of food were made in our army, were they also made in the prisons. The question of supplies for them, was an open and a vexed one among the people generally, and angry

and cruel things were *said*, but every one, at all cognizant of facts in Richmond, knows that even when Gen. Lee's Army lived at times on corn meal, that the prisoners were still supplied with their usual rations.

My hospital was now entirely composed of Virginians and Marylanders, and the nearness to the homes of the former, entailed upon me an increase of annoyance in the shape of wives, sisters, cousins, aunts, and sometimes whole families, down to the baby at the breast. They came in troops, and, hard as it was to know what to do with them, it was harder to send them away. Sometimes they brought provisions, but not often, and even when they did, there was no place to cook the food provided by them. It must be remembered that everything was reduced to the lowest minimum, even fuel. They could not stay in the wards all day with men around them, and if they were willing to, do so, the restraint on wounded, restless men, who wanted to throw their limbs about with freedom during a hot summer day, was too great. Generally their only idea of kindness was giving any patient the food he would take in any quantity, and of every quality, and in the furtherance of then desires they were pugnacious in the extreme. Whenever rules harassed them they abused the Government, then the hospital, and then all in it, including myself. Many ludicrous incidents happened daily, and I have, often seen the harassed ward master, heading away a pertinacious female, who, failing to get in at one door of his ward, would try the other three perseveringly. They seemed to think it was a pious and patriotic duty, not to be ashamed under *any* circumstances. One sultry day, I found a whole family, accompanied by two young lady friends, seated round a wounded man's bed; as I passed through, six hours later, they held the same position. Some appeal was necessary.

“Had not you all better go home?”

“We came to see my cousin, who is wounded.”

“But you have been here almost all day, and it is a restraint upon the other men. Come to-morrow.”

A consultation was held, but when it ceased they only lit their pipes and smoked in silence. “Will you come back to-morrow?”

“No! *you* come in the wards when you please and so will we.”

“But it is my duty to be in them, besides I always ask if I can enter, and never stay longer than fifteen minutes.”

Another unbroken silence, which was a trial to any patience left, and finding no move made, I handed some clothing to a patient near.

“Here, Mr. Wilson, is a clean shirt and pair of drawers for you, put them on as soon as I get out of the ward.”

I had hardly reached my kitchen when the whole procession, pipes and all, passed me, solemnly and angrily; but for many days, and even weeks, there was no ridding the place of this large connection. Their sins were manifold. They overfed their relative, who was recovering from an attack of typhoid fever, and even defiantly took the food for the purpose from under my very nose. They marched on me *en masse* at ten o'clock at night, with a requisition from the boldest, for sleeping quarters. The steward was summoned and said he “did not keep a hotel,” so in a weak moment of pity, I housed them in the Laundry. They entrenched themselves there for six weeks, making predatory incursions into the kitchen during my temporary absence, ignoring Miss. G. completely. The object of their solicitude recovered and went to the field, but still, finding my writs of ejection

were scorned, an explanation was demanded in person. The same spokeswoman, alluded to above, answered my inquiries to the effect that hearing a battle was shortly expected, she had determined to remain, as her husband *might* be wounded. In the ensuing press of business, I forgot her, and strange to say, her husband was brought in sick the following week. The back is surely fitted for the burden, so I contented myself with re-taking my Laundry and letting her shift for herself while a whole month slipped away. One morning, my arrival at the hospital was the signal for a general burst of merriment from Miss G., and the servants, black and colored. Experience had made me sage, and my first question was-

“Where is Mrs. Daniells?” she who had always been spokeswoman.

“In Ward G. She wants you.”

“What is the matter?”

“You must go and see.”

There was something either amusing, or amiss. I entered Ward G, and walked up to Daniells' bed. One might have heard a pin drop in the ward.

I had supposed up to this time that Miss G. and myself had been called upon to suffer every ill that humanity and the state of the country could inflict, but here was something in addition, for lying composedly in her husband's bed (he had relinquished it on the occasion,) lay Mrs. Daniells and her baby, just one hour old.

The conversation that ensued is not worth repeating. The poor little wretch had indeed come into a bleak and comfortless world, for its inhuman mother had not provided a rag to cover it with. No woman could scold her at such a time; but what was to be done? I went in search of the surgeon of the Division, and our conversation on the subject was didactic but hardly satisfactory.

“Doctor, Mrs. Daniells has a baby. She is in Ward G. What shall I do with her?”

“A baby? Ah, indeed; you must get it some clothes.”

“What must I do with *her*?”

“Move her to some comfortable place and send her a cup of tea.”

This was done, but Mrs. D. said she would wait till dinner for some bacon and greens.

The baby was a sore annoyance. The ladies of Richmond made up a wardrobe by subscription, and at the end of the month, Mrs. D., the child and a basket of provisions were sent off in the ambulance. My feelings of satisfaction can be imagined, but the end had not come. An hour after the ambulance stopped at the kitchen door, apparently empty, and the black driver lifted a bundle out with some trepidation, and laid it silently on the dresser. Mrs. Daniells' baby!!

The unnatural woman had deserted it, leaving it in the railroad depot; but, fortunately, the father was still with us, and to him I appealed. A short furlough was obtained, and at last I was relieved from the fear that the mother would have to be sent for again. Had such been the case she would surely have still been there. It may be remarked, *en passant*, that it was the first, the last, the only baby named after me.

There were no means of keeping the relations of patients from coming to them. There had been a rule made to that effect but it was impossible to send away a wife from her husband; and, besides, the common, and even better class of people looked upon care and attendance; at a hospital as a farce. They resented the detention there of men who in many instances could lie in bed and point to their homes, sometimes even in sight, and agreed that they would have more attention and better food if allowed to go to their

families. That *maladie du pays*, called by the surgeons “nostalgia;” the homesickness which wrings the heart and impoverishes the blood, killed many a brave soldier, and the matron who, day by day, had to stand powerless, helpless by the bed of the sufferer, knowing that a week's furlough would make his heart sing for joy and save his wife from widowhood, learned the most bitter lesson of endurance that could be taught. This homesickness recognized no palliation. However carefully the appetite might be pampered, or stimulants be prepared and given, the food never nourished, the drink never strengthened; the decay would be gradual, but death was inevitable. Perhaps when recovery seemed hopeless, a statement of the case might procure a furlough from the examining board of surgeons, but the patient would then be generally too weak and ill to profit by the concession. It was wonderful to see how long the poor, broken machine would hold out in some case's; for months I have watched a victim, motionless, helpless and hopeless receive into his mouth a few spoonful of nourishment daily, making no other movement; the skin barely covering the bones, and the skeleton of the face as sharply defined as it might be after many weeks dissolution. The answer to cheering words seldom exceeding a slight movement of the eyelids. Towards the end of the war, this detention of ill men and many other abuses were reformed by allowing a “board” to be convened of three of the oldest surgeons at the hospitals, who would dispose of such cases without deferring to higher authority. There had been so much imposition practised by men who wanted to get out of the service, that abuses had crept in despite the stringency of rules, making severity necessary.

The spring campaign again opened with the usual “on to Richmond.” Day after day and night after night would the sudden boom of cannon strike upon the ear. The enemy were always coming, and curiosity seemed to have usurped the place of fear among the women. In the silence of night the alarm bells would suddenly peal out, till the order to ring them at any sudden alarm was modified to a command that they should only be sounded in case of positive attack. The people became so accustomed to the report of fire arms, that they scarcely interrupted their conversation at the corners of the streets to ask in what direction the foe was advancing, or if there was any foe at all. There was such entire reliance in the military power which guarded the city, and former attacks had been so promptly repelled, that whatever was ultimately to be the result of the war, no one trembled for Richmond. So the summer of 1864 passed, and early in September we were gladdened by the tidings that the exchange of prisoners was to be renewed. The sick and wounded of the hospital (but few in number at that time) were transferred to other quarters, and the wards put in order to receive our own men from Northern prisons. About the 20<sup>th</sup> of September they began to come.

Can any pen or pencil do justice to those squalid pictures of famine and desolation? These gaunt, lank skeletons with the dried, yellow flesh clinging to bones enlarged by dampness and exposure? The pale, bluish lips, and feverish eyes, glittering and weird when contrasted with the famine-stricken faces. That piteous, scared, flitting smile which greeted their fellow creatures (those they had left could hardly claim the name) will live forever before the mental gaze that witnessed it.

Living and dead were taken from the flag-of-truce boat, not distinguishable save from the difference of care exercised in moving them. The Federal prisoners we had released were in many instances in the same state, but our ports had been blockaded, our harvests burnt, our cattle stolen, our country wasted. Even had we felt the desire to give, how

could the wherewithal have been found? But the foe – the ports of the whole world were open to them. They could have fed their prisoners on milk and honey and not have missed it.

No tears will drop from the recording angel's eye to blot out one line of the piteous tale. Of what importance is the vice or sin condemned daily which in most cases hurts the sinner only, compared to the infliction of this horrible wholesale misery. What is murder - sudden, violent murder – which extinguishes life, and with it, suffering and sorrow, but a mercy far above the daily torture of systematic starvation and careless cruelty, and this perpetrated by good people, pious people, who every

Sunday meet together to hear the doctrine of universal love. If this was Christianity, then the atonement has failed, and Christ has lived and died in vain.

But it was no time for vague reflections. With heart beating with indignation, throbbing head and icy hands, I went among this army of martyrs and spectres whom it was impossible to realize were human beings, powerless to speak to them, choking with burning hate against their oppressors, but striving to aid and comfort. There was no variety of appearance, from bed to bed the same picture met the eye. Hardly a vestige of humanity left in one single man.

The passion of intense loathing against those who had reduced them to this, caused my hand to shake too strongly to give the bread soaked in wine into their mouths. Many laid with their limbs extended, but some had drawn up their knees, a position they never changed till they died. Their more fortunate comrades said that the attitude had become familiar, as it reduced the feeling of hunger and relieved the pang from which they never felt respite day or night. The Federal prisoners were starved in the South; we cannot deny this; but we starved with them; we did not have the food to give diem. May the vengeance that belongs to the Most High fall when it is deserved. Tales may be told to listeners that stir the blood, arouse a gentle pity or a mild indignation, but the Southern woman who has seen the sights that landed from the flag-of-truce boat and forgets them, deserves that God should forget her in her need.

One in particular among them lingered in silence the usual three days. He was a Marylander, heir to name renowned in the history of his country, the last of seven brothers; brought up in luxury and affluence, but presenting the same starved bloodless appearance they all showed. There was some chance of his rallying, perhaps, with judicious nursing and good brandy. Every precaution was taken, but on the evening of the third day fever supervened, and the little strength he had failed rapidly. He gave me the trinkets he had brought from Point Lookout to send to his family, and one souvenir for myself, begged that he might be buried apart from the crowd in some spot where those who knew and cared for him might find him some day, and died that night. The next morning was the memorable 29<sup>th</sup> of September, when the enemy made a desperate attack, taking Fort Harrison, holding it and placing Richmond in jeopardy for three hours. The alarm bell summoned the citizens together, and the shops being closed there was no means of getting either a decent coffin, or a hearse. There was no time to lose as it was against the rules to keep the body in the hospital, so the carpenter knocked together a rude coffin, and having the seats taken from my ambulance, the body was enclosed and put in.

The enemy were in sight as, seated on the coffin, I started in the ambulance for Hollywood Cemetery, while from every high point the masses of manoeuvring soldiers

and flash of the enemy's cannon, could be distinguished. Only stopping to buy a piece of ground from the Cemetery agent, we reached Hollywood by eleven o'clock. On the way, meeting the Rev. Mr. McCabe, his presence was requested, and we stood by while the sexton dug the grave. The rain was pouring in torrents, while the Minister repeated from memory, the burial service. Besides ourselves, there were but two poor women of the humblest class of life - Catholics, who, passing, stopped, and dropping on their knees, paid their humblest tribute of respect to the dead. He had all the honors of a soldier's burial paid to him, for the cannon roared and the musketry rattled, mingling with the thunder and lightning above. The sexton held his hat over the little piece of paper on which I inscribed his name, to be put on the head-board to protect it from the driving rain; and with a tear of pity for the solitary grave we left, we drove back to the city. The Reverend gentleman was taken to his home, and perhaps to this day, does not know who was his companion during that sad hour. At mid day the city was in the same state of excitement, for no news had been received, except perhaps in official quarters, and it was well known at the time of the attack, there were no troops in the vicinity. Instead of returning to the hospital, I drove to the house of one of the Cabinet ministers, where I was engaged to dine, and found the mistress of the establishment, surrounded by her trunks and servants, preparing for a hasty retreat should it be necessary. Some persuasion induced her to desist, and the situation of the house, commanding an extensive view of the surrounding country, we watched the advance of the enemy at the extreme northeast, for with the aid of opera glasses we could distinguish the color of their uniforms.

Slowly onward moved the bodies of dark blue, emerging from and disappearing into the woods, seeming to skirt around but never to diminish the distance between, but becoming more distinct, which proved their advance, while a not one single Confederate jacket could be seen over the whole sweep of ground. Half an anxious hour passed and then one single horseman in the beloved gray appeared, like a phantom, far to the northeast, leader of many that followed, winding round and cutting off the foe. Then a peal at the bell, and a courier brought the news that Wade Hampton and his cavalry were in the rear of the enemy. There was no fear after this, for Hampton was the Montrose of the Southern army-he, who could make any cause glorious with his sword and famous with his pen. The dinner was put in course of preparation, and was seasoned, when served, by spirits brightened by reaction.

The horrors that attended, in other and past times, the bombardment of a city, were experienced to a great degree in Richmond during the fighting around us. The close proximity to the scenes of strife; the din of battle, the bursting of shells, the fresh wounds of the men hourly brought in, were daily occurrences. Walking home after the duties of the Hospital were over, often when evening had well set in, during this time, the pavement around the railroad depot would be lined with wounded men, laid there to wait for ambulances to take them to the receiving hospital; some on stretchers, others on the bare bricks, or a thin blanket, suffering from wounds hastily wrapped around with the coarse, galling, unbleached homespun bandages, in which the blood had stiffened till every crease cut like a knife. Women, passing like myself, would put down their basket or bundle, and ringing at the bell of any neighboring house, ask for basin and soap, and a few soft rags, and going from one sufferer to another, alleviate, with what skill they had the pain of wounds, change the uneasy position and allay the thirst. Many passing, would stop and look on, till the labor appearing to require no particular skill, they too would

follow the example set them, and asking occasionally a word of advice, do their part carefully and willingly. Idle boys passing, would get a pine knot, or tallow candle, and stand quietly as torch bearers, till the scene, with its gathering accessories, formed a strange picture, not easily forgotten. Persons passing in vehicles would sometimes alight, and, choosing the patients most in want of surgical aid, put them in and send them to the Seabrook Hospital, continuing their way on foot. There was very little conversation carried on, no necessity for introductions, and no names ever asked. This last was a peculiarity strongly exhibited in the Hospitals, for after nursing a sick or, wounded patient for months, he has left very often without any curiosity as regarded my name, whereabouts, or anything else concerning me. A case in point was related by a friend. When the daughter of our General had devoted much time and care to a sick man, he seemed to think so little about the attention paid, that her companion, to rouse him, told him that Miss Lee was his nurse. "Lee, Lee," he said, "there are some Lees down in Mississippi who keep a tavern, does she belong to them?" Almost as uncomplimentary was the remark of one of my sick, a poor fellow who had been wounded in the head, and though sensible enough when in the ward, would feel the effect of the sun in his brain whenever he was exposed to its influence. After advising him to wear a wet paper in the crown of his hat, more from a desire to show some interest in him than from any-belief in its efficacy, I stopped at the door, and heard him ask the ward master "who that was?" "Why, that is the matron of the Hospital, she attends to having everything nicely done for you." "Well," said he, "I always did think this Government was a confounded sell, but now I am sure of it, when they put a little fool like that at the head of such a big Hospital as this."

Their ingenuity was wonderful in making little toys and trifles, and a great deal of mechanical talent displayed. Every ward had its draught board and draughtmen cut out of hard wood, and stained with vegetable dyes; and sometimes chessmen would be cut out with a common knife, in such an ornamental way that they would not have disgraced a drawing room. One man carved pipes from ivy root, with exquisitely cut shields on the bowl, bearing the arms of the different States and their mottos. He would charge and easily get a hundred and fifty dollars for his work, and only used his well worn knife. Playing cards were difficult to imitate, so that any original packs had a hard time of it. They were, as may be supposed from the hands that dealt them, very dirty, and the corners by no means in a respectable condition, but after the diffusion of the Oxford bound books of the Bible, the soldiers took a lesson, and rounded the corners in imitation. A pack of cards, after four years use in a Southern Hospital, was beyond criticizing. The men had their fashions too, sometimes insisting upon drawing light blue pants, and at other times preferring gray; but while the mania for either color raged, they were dissatisfied with the other. When the Quartermaster issued canvass shoes, there was general dissatisfaction and grumbling, till some original genius changed the whitish hue of the material by a liberal application of poke berries. He was the Brummel of the Hospital, and for many months crimson shoe's were the rage, and long rows of unshod men would sit under the eaves of the wards, all diligently employed in the same labor and up to their elbows in red juice.

This fashion died out, and gave place to a, button mania. Men who had never had a hope or a thought beyond horn ones, saved up their means to replace them with gilt, and made neat little wooden shelves, with a slit, through which the buttons slid, so that they

could be cleaned without soiling the jacket. With the glitter of buttons came the corresponding taste for gilt bands and tinsel around the battered hat.

The duty, of all others, that pressed most heavily upon me, and which I could not perform, was that of telling a man he could not live, when he was perhaps unconscious that there was any danger in his wound. The idea of death so seldom occurs, when disease and suffering has not wasted the frame and destroyed the vital energies, that there is little opening, or encouragement, to commence such a subject, unless the patient suspects the result ever so slightly. In many cases, too, the yearning for life was so strong, that to destroy that hope was beyond humanity. Life was a furlough with him – family and friends once more around; a future was all he wanted, and considered it cheaply purchased, if for only a month, by any wound, however painful or tiresome.

There were long discussions among soldiers and outsiders during the war 'concerning unnecessary amputations on the field, and often when a fine-looking, hearty young man would be brought in with a leg or arm cut off, I would feel that it might have been saved; but experience taught me the wisdom of these prompt measures. Poor food and exposure had thinned the blood and broken down the system so much that all secondary amputations performed in the hospital almost invariably resulted in death. The blood lost on the battle-field when the wound would be first received, would pull down the already impaired system and render it incapable of further endurance. Once we received a strong, stalwart soldier from Alabama, and after five days finding the inflammation from the wound in his arm too great to save the limb, the attending surgeon requested me to feed him on the best I could command, by that means to try and give him strength to undergo amputation. Irritability of stomach, as well as indifference to food always accompanying wounds while the fever continued, it was necessary to give him as much nourishment in as small compass as possible as well as easily digested food that would assimilate with his system. Beef tea he could not, or would not take, or anything that would give strength, so asking him if he would drink some "chemical mixture," and receiving his consent, I prepared the infusion. Chipping up a pound of beef and pouring upon it a pint of water, it was stirred until all the blood was extracted and only the white fibre left, and with a little salt added, favored by the darkness of the corner of the ward in which he laid, I carried it to him. He drank the infusion without suspicion, and fortunately liked it, so that by the end of a week, his pulse was as strong as that of a healthy man, and there had been no accession of fever. Every precaution was taken, both for his sake and the benefit of the experiment, and the arm taken off by the most skillful surgeon we had. An hour after the amputation he looked as bright and well as before, and so on for five days, but then the usual results followed. The system proved not strong enough to throw the "pus," or inflammation, and this mingling with the blood produced that most fatal of all diseases from wounds, called pyaemia, from which no man ever recovered. He was only one of numerous cases; so that my heart beat twice as fast as ordinarily whenever there were any arrangements progressing for amputations, after there had elapsed any time, or any efforts had been made to save the limb. The only cases that survived were two Irishmen; and it was really so difficult to kill an Irishman that there was little room for boasting on the part of the officiating surgeons. One of those mentioned had had his leg cut off in pieces, amputation having been performed three times, and the last heard from him was that he had married a young wife and settled down on a profitable farm in Macon. He had

touched the boundary lines of the “unknown land,” had been given up by the surgeons, who left me with an order to stimulate him if possible. The priest was naturally angry at my disturbing what he considered were the last moments of a dying man, which ought to have been devoted to less earthly temptations than mint julips, and a rather brisk encounter was the result; but if he was responsible for the soul, so was I for the body, and I held my ground firmly. It was hard for an Irishman and a good Catholic to have to chose at such a moment between whiskey and religion, but though his head was turned towards good Father T\_\_\_, his eyes rested too lovingly on the goblet held so near his lips to allow any mistake as to his ultimate intentions. The interpretation put on that look was, to my mind to the effect that Callahan thought as long as brandy and mint lasted in the Confederacy, that this world was good enough for him, and the result proved that I was not mistaken. He always gave me the credit I have awarded to the julips, and till the evacuation of Richmond kept me informed as to his domestic happiness.

*[To be continued.]*

**REMINISCENCES  
OF  
A SOUTHERN HOSPITAL.  
BY ITS MATRON.**

NUMBER FOUR.

Though my health had withstood up to this time all the effects of exposure and exertion, the strain had become too great, and the constantly recurring agitation excited each day on receiving the returned prisoners, broke me down completely. A visit to the Surgeon-General, with a request for a month's leave of absence, met with a ready acquiescence. The old gentleman was very urbane, even making one or two grim jokes, and handed me not only permission to leave, but the necessary transportation. Very necessary in this case, as traveling expenses were enormously high at this time, and the Government had also seized, for the whole month of October, the railroad for military use, putting a complete stop to private travel.

It had been like tearing body and soul apart when necessity compelled me to leave the Hospital, from which I had not been separated but one day in three years; and when all the arrangements for departure had been completed; Miss G. urged, implored, entreated and commanded to keep a sharp look out on the whiskey, and be alike impenetrable to stratagems, feints or entreaties, my heart began to sink. A visit to the wards did not tend to strengthen my resolves. The first invalid to whom I communicated the news of my intended departure, burst into a passion of tears, and improved my wavering intentions by requesting me to kill him at once, for he would certainly die if left. Standing by his bedside, unsettled and irresolute, all the details of my daily life rose before me. The early morning visit to the sick, after their feverish, restless night, when, if even there was no good to be effected, every man's head would be uncovered as by one impulse, and jealousy evinced when a longer pause by one bed-side than another would arouse the feeling. Often has the ward-master of “A” recalled me when a quarter of a mile distant from his ward, at the request of a patient, and when going back to find out what was

wanted, a hearty convalescent would explain that I had passed through and omitted to speak to him.

Farewells were exchanged at last, and the 6<sup>th</sup> of October found me at the railroad station. A search at the last moment for my keys, discovered that they, together with my watch, were still at the Hospital; while, as an equivalent, remained in the bottom of my basket half of a salt mackerel (a rare luxury in the Confederacy,) begged for a sick man the day before, and forgotten in the hurry of departure; so the start had to be postponed till the 7<sup>th</sup>.

There is some school day's reminiscence hanging around Hannibal, and the softening of a rugged journey by the use of vinegar, but what acid could soften the rigors of that trip to Georgia! They can hardly be recounted. With the aid of two gentlemen and every disengaged man on the road, a safe and happy termination was effected, and a delicious nineteen days passed in idleness and "Confederate" luxury, free from the wear and tear of feelings constantly excited; then came the stern reflection of Dr. Moore's face when he accorded but the soldier's furlough of thirty days. A useless search after an escort for immediate use, resulted in advice unanimously given, to "go alone," on the grounds that "women had grown so independent during the war, and no man knowing the object of your return would fail to give you all the assistance in his power."

Fired with this Quixotic sentiment, an early start was made. Finding that, in the confusion of adieu making, no checks had been given me for trunks, I ventured while the afflatus lasted to touch a man on the arm who sat in front of me, and request that he would call the conductor. "I am sorry that I am not acquainted with him," was the answer; and down I went to zero, never rising again till my journey was accomplished.

Perhaps the details of my progress may give an idea of the state of the country. At West Point, which it took an hour and a half to reach, we had to sleep all night. There were no bed-rooms and no candles, and female travelers sat in the little bar of the tavern (the leading hotel being closed,) only brightened by a pine knot, and at what they had provided themselves with out of their baskets. Another two hours travel to Opelika the next day, and another detention of half a dozen hours. At Columbus, a rumor that the cars had been seized for Government transportation was very alarming; so, long before starting time, I was waiting in the depot, seated on my trunk, half amused and half mortified at the resemblance thus offered to an emigrant Irish servant woman. The depot was crowded with invalided soldiers, for the Government was moving the hospitals from upper Georgia and Tennessee, and passers-by seeing my evident alarm, volunteered all kinds of irrational advice. A suggestion was made, that by seeking the most helpless among the wounded, and passing .as his nurse, my object would be effected but every man to whom I opened my proposals seemed alarmed at the idea. The confusion became terrible towards .the last; everybody calling for the conductor, who having no power, the cars being under military control, first denied his identity and then hid himself. Help came at the last moment, in the shape of a red-faced, half-tipsy Irish porter. "Lit me put yer trunks on," he said, "and thin go to Col. Frankland at the back of the ladies' car; sure he will help the faymales."

The forlorn hope, Col. Frankland, was standing on the platform at the extreme rear of the cars, surrounded by a semi-circle below, about twenty-five deep, all pressing on to get seats which were already too full, he screaming and gesticulating like a madman. The lame, the halt and the blind stood around-crutches, splints, huge sticks – green blinds

over eyes, faces peeled from erysipelas, and still leaving variegated hues of iodine, gave picturesqueness to the scene; had he borne Caesar and his fortunes he could not have been more in earnest. For four hours he had been stemming this living tide.

I had met and fraternized with a lady and gentleman who appeared as anxious as myself to get forward, so telling her not to move until I had achieved my object and then join me, I essayed a first faint call upon the Colonel. The sound died away in my throat, but my Irish friend (I am sure he took me for one of his countrywomen) was by my side and repeated the call; a hundred voices took up the refrain – “A lady wants to speak to the Colonel,” and universal curiosity as to the subject of my business being exhibited by a dead silence, I raised my voice, as Manse Headrigg said, “like a pelican in the wilderness.”

“Col. Frankland, I *must* get on to-night. Government business requires me to be in Richmond by the 30<sup>th</sup>.”

“Impossible, madam. I would like to oblige you, but it is against my orders, the cars are for the use of the wounded and sick alone.”

“But, Col. Frankland, seven hundred men are waiting for their dinner, breakfast and supper in Richmond. I am the matron of a hospital.”

“Cannot help it, madam. – If you men do not keep off I will put the front rank under arrest.”

“Cannot you let me stand on the platform, if there are orders against our using the cars?”

“No, madam-very sorry to refuse.”

“Let me go in the freight train?”

“There is no freight train, madam.”

“Well, in the box cars?”

“They are crowded, madam, crowded. – Keep off, men! keep off, there!”

The steam whistled fearfully and the bell clanged an uproar of sound.

“Oh! Col. Frankland, let me go in the mail car, I won't even open my eyes to look at the letters!”

“Against the law, cannot be done; you must not expect me to infringe on my orders. - Will no one keep those men off?”

“*I will*, Col. Frankland, if you will let me stand by you on that platform. I wear very long hair pins.”

“Thank you, madam, thank you. Now, men, this lady wears long hair-pins, so you had better keep off.”

My friend, the red-nosed Irishman, had never left my side. He whispered that the trunks were all right, and helped me to get on the stand. Another moment and my female companion was by my side.

“This is not fair,” said the Colonel, “you promised that you would not let any one come in.”

“Oh, no, I promised that not a single *man* should do so; this is a woman. Will you let her husband join her? He is not a *single* man for he has a wife and nine children.”

The result may be imagined; our party, very much relieved, were soon inside, where we found four comfortable seats reserved for Gen. Beauregard and staff, which were unoccupied, those gentlemen being detained at Macon.

At that city, where we were compelled to pass the night, the same state of things existed, and with depressed spirits I drove to the cars to see if any arrangement could be made by which I could still get further. As the road would not be thrown open to the public for a month, an effort had to be made. An appeal to the authorities resulted in defeat, so I tried the former manoeuvre of appealing to subordinates.

Baffled in all my attempts, and again seated emigrant-like on my trunk, the mail agent caught my eye, as he stood in the door-way of his car. Improving the opportunity, I commenced a conversation, ending in an insinuating appeal to be taken in the mail box. Success and installation in his little square domicile followed and my friend passing out immediately locked the door on the outside. There were no windows and no light whatever; the hour six o'clock. Seated in loneliness and darkness till the town clock struck eight, every fear that could arise in the brain of a silly woman assailed me. Did the train I was in go to Augusta, and if not, would I be where I was all night? Was the man who locked me in really the mail agent? If he came back and robbed and murdered me, would any one ever miss me? Having eaten nothing but a biscuit or two for twenty-four hours, my brain being proportionably light, imagination seized the reins from common sense, which fled in the presence of utter darkness and loneliness.

At last the lock turned, and a lantern dispelled some of my terrors. The cars started, and the agent commenced sorting his letters, first locking us in securely. A couple of hours passed, and my mind was gradually losing its tone of unpleasant doubt as to the wisdom of my proceedings, when my busy companion knocked off work and essayed to play the agreeable. He was communicative in the extreme, giving me his biography, which proved him a Connecticut man, and very much dissatisfied with the Confederacy, particularly the state of the money market. As long as he kept to his personal recollections all was right, but he soon claimed a return of confidence, and grew hourly more patronizing and conversational. The tone and manner, the loneliness of the position, and the impossibility of any fortunate interruption became unbearable at last, and there is no knowing what I might have been tempted to do in the way of breaking out, if the cars had not fortunately run off the track. On we bumped, happily on level ground for ten minutes or more. The engineer entirely unconscious of the fact, and no way of communicating with him, as the soldiers were lying over the rope on the top of the cars, so that pulling was in vain. At last a pause, and then a crowd, and then a familiar name was called, most welcome to my ears. I repeated it till its owner was by my side, and the rest of the night was spent in asking questions and exchanging information. At daylight he left me to rejoin his command, while we continued on to Augusta. As usual, no vehicle of any kind at the depot, but being the only woman to be seen, the mail driver offered me a seat on the mail bags, and in this august style we reached the hotel by breakfast time. All military suspension ceased here, but there was two hours detention, and this was enlivened by an amusing episode.

Directly in front of me sat an old Georgia up-country woman, placidly regarding box cars full of men waiting, like us, to start. She knitted and gazed, and at last inquired "who those were in the parallel cars, and where were they going?" The explanation that they were Yankee prisoners startled her considerably. The knitting needles ceased abruptly, (all the old women in the Confederacy knitted socks for the soldiers in the cars) the cracker bonnet of dark brown homespun was thrown back violently, for her whole system

seemed to have received a galvanic shock. Then she caught her breath, lifted up her thin, trembling hand, accompanied by the trembling voice, and made them a speech

“Ain't you ashamed of youans,” she said, “a coming down here a spiling our country and a thieving in our hen-roosts? What did we ever do to you that you should come a killing our husbands and brothers and sons? Ain't you ashamed of youans? What do you want us to live with you for, you poor white trash. I ain't got a nigger that would be so mean as to force himself where he war'nt wanted, and what do weuns want with you? Ain't you –” But here came a roar of laughter from both cars, and, trembling with anger and excitement, the old lady pulled down her spectacles, which, in the excite meat, she had pushed up on her forehead, and tried in vain to resume her labor with shaking hands.

From here to Richmond there occurred the usual detentions and trials of railroad travel under the existing circumstances. The windows of the cars were more or less broken, sometimes no stoves for fires, and the nights very chilly; all in utter darkness, for the lamps had been broken; could they have been replaced, there was no oil. We crawled along, stopping every now and then to tinker up some part of the car or the road, getting out at times, when announcements were made that the travellers must walk a mile or more, as the case might be. Crowds of women were getting in and out all the way, the male passengers grumbling half aloud that “the women had better stay at home—they had no business to be running around in such times.” This was said so often that it became very unpleasant, till the tables were turned early one morning at Gainsborough, when a large-sized female made her way along the centre of the car, looking from the right to the left in vain search of a seat. None being vacant, she stopped short and addressed the astonished male passengers: “What, for pity sake, do you men mean by running all around the country instead of staying in the field, as you ought to do? You keep filling up the cars so that a woman can't attend to her business, when your place should be opposite the Yankees.” This diversion in our behalf was received silently, but many seats were soon vacated by their possessors on the plea of “taking a little smoke.”

The thirtieth of October found me, weary, hungry, cold, exhausted, and with that most terrible of scourges, a very bad, nervous headache, at the Richmond depot, four hours after the schedule time. The crowd was immense, so that when it had opened or dispersed sufficiently to let me get through, every vehicle had left, if any had waited there till that hour. As usual, my telegram had not been received, so that there was no one to meet me; and pain rendering me indifferent to everything, I quietly laid my shawl upon a bench in the station-house, and myself on it. For how long I cannot say, but at last a voice asked what was wanted. “Any kind of a vehicle.” After a few moments my new friend returned with the information that there was only a market cart, which, if I was willing to use, was for hire. If it had been a balloon or a wheelbarrow, it would have been all the same. My trunks were put on, and then I was deposited on them: the hour, eleven o'clock at night.

I looked first at the horse; he had a shadowy, grey skin stretched over his prominent bones, and, in the dim, misty light, seemed a mere phantom. The driver next came under observation. A little, dried-up black man, with a brown rag tied around his head for shelter; but, like all of his species, he was kind and respectful. Directions were given him to drive to a friend's house, but he said that his horse was too tired; if I was willing, he had another at “his place,” where he would like to go and change.

Quite willing, or rather too weary to assert any authority, on we rumbled and rattled twice the distance I was first bound, changed one skeleton for another, and started for my

friend's house. At last the blessed haven was reached, but the sight of a new face in answer to our summons made my heart sink. "Moved yesterday."

"Drive to Miss G.'s house," was the next direction, for we were by this time out of the way of hotels or boarding houses. The same answer, and very near twelve o'clock. Had all Richmond moved?

The fresh air, to say nothing of the novelty of my position, had improved my headache and given me courage to make a proposition I dared not attempt before: "Could not you drive me to the Hospital?" was the next demand in a most ingratiating tone.

The old man untied the rag off his head and smoothed it on his knee, by way of ironing the creases out and assisting reflection; replaced it, taking up the reins before he answered, for we were now at a standstill at the foot of the hill in Broad street.

"Missis," said he, "de way is long, and de bridges is mighty bad; if you will drive over dem and let me git out, and pay me fifty dollars, de ole horse might go up de hill."

The bargain was struck and the Hospital reached after midnight; the key of my apartment sent for, when the last hair that broke the camel's back was laid upon mine.

"Miss G. had taken it away with her."

The key was gone but the carpenter was not, and with his help the door was broken open. When a fire had been made, a delicious piece of cold, hard corn bread eaten, and the covering of the first bed I had slept in for ten days drawn around me, all the troubles of a hard world melted away, and the only real happiness on earth, entire exemption from mental or bodily pain took possession of me.

There was now a great difference perceptible in the manner of living between Virginia and the more Southern States. Even in the best and most wealthy houses in Richmond, many every-day comforts had become luxuries, and been dispensed with early in the war. Farther south, they still sent to Nassau for what they needed, taking the risk of blockade running. Tea and coffee were first dispensed with, at the Capital then many used corn flour exclusively, wheat was so high. Gradually butter disappeared from the breakfast table, and even brown sugar when it reached twenty dollars a pound shared the same fate. But farther south, no such economy appeared necessary. The air of the people in the cars and around the railroad stations was still that time hopeful and courageous to an extreme; there was no fear ever expressed even as late as this as to the ultimate success of the Southern cause.

The Hospitals though, did not compare with those I had left, either in arrangement, cleanliness, or attendance. Long before this, the matrons' places in Virginia had been filled with ladies of the very first class of life, but this had been the case alone in Virginia, and such supervision made a very great difference, as may be supposed.

During my absence, all the patients left a month before had either recovered or died, so that it was irksome to resume my usual duties, a few days visiting rectifying this, however. The happiest person to see me was Miss G., as she resigned the key of the liquor closet with a sigh that spoke volumes. From what could be gathered she had been equal to the occasion, and summoned determination to suit the exigencies of her position, though naturally of a very gentle, yielding nature.

The health of the army was now so good, that except when the wounded came in there was but little to do. That terrible scourge, pneumonia, so dreadful in its typhoid form, had almost disappeared. The men had become hardened and inured to exposure.

Christmas passed pleasantly. The Hospital fund, from the depreciation of the money, being too small to allow us to make any festive preparations, the ladies of the city drove out in carriages and ambulances laden with good things. The previous year, we had been able to give out of our own funds a bowl of egg-nogg and slice of cake to every man in the Hospital, as well as his turkey and oysters for dinner, but times were now more stringent.

Just after New Year, one of the Committee on Hospital Affairs in Congress called to see me, wishing to get some information on the subject before any appropriation had been made for whiskey for the ensuing year. There were doubts afloat as to whether the benefit conferred upon the patients by the use of stimulants, counterbalanced the evil effects it produced upon those surgeons who were in the habit of making use of them.

It was a hard question to answer, particularly as a case in point had just come under my observation. A man had been brought into our Hospital with a crushed ankle, the cars having passed over it. It had been dressed and put in splints before he was sent to us; so the surgeon in attendance ordered that he should not be disturbed. The nurse came over to say, in a few hours, that the man was suffering intensely. He had a burning fever, but complained of the fellow v leg instead of the injured one. The common idea of sympathy was suggested, and a narcotic given, which failed in producing any effect. On my second visit he induced me to look at it, and finding the foot and leg above and below the splints, perfectly well, the natural thought suggested itself of examining the other. It was a most shocking sight – swollen, inflamed and purple – the drunken surgeon had set the wrong leg! The pain produced low fever, which took a typhoid form; and the man eventually died. With this instance still fresh in my memory, it was hard to give an opinion. However, the appropriation was made.

The poor fellow was the most dependent patient I ever had, and though entirely uneducated, won his way to my sympathies by his entire helplessness and dependence upon my care and advice. No surgeon in the Hospital could persuade him to swallow anything in the shape of food, unless he first sent for and consulted me; and a few soothing words or an encouraging nod would satisfy and calm him. His ideas of luxuries were very peculiar, and his answer to my daily inquiries as to what I should give him to eat, was invariably the same – he would like some “scribbled eggs and flitters.” This order was carried out till the surgeon prescribed stronger food, and though beef steak was substituted, he always called it by the same name, leading me to suppose that scribbled eggs and flitters were a generic term for food generally. I made him some jelly: Confederate jelly, with the substitution of whiskey for Madeira wine, and citric acid for lemons, but he said he did not like it, there was no chewing in it, and it all went he did not know where; so there was no use trying to tempt his palate.

It was very awkward visiting the wards after my return. Before this, the departure of old patients and the arrival of new, was hardly noticeable, as there were always enough men left to whom I was known to make me feel at home, and to inform the last comers why I came among them, and what my duties were. I now found the Hospital filled with a very superior set of men, Virginia cavalrymen, and many of the Maryland infantry. They were not as considerate as my old friends had been, and rather looked with suspicion upon my daily visits. One man amused me particularly, keeping a portion of his food every day for my particular and agreeable inspection, as he thought, and my particular

annoyance as I felt. Everything unpalatable was deposited under his pillow awaiting my arrival, and the greeting given was invariably:

“Do you call *that* good bread?”

“Well, no not very good; but the flour is very dark and often musty.”

Another day he would send for me, and draw out a handful of dry rice.

“Do you call *that* properly boiled ?”

“That is the way we boil rice in Carolina, each grain to be separated.”

“Well, I didn't wish mine to be boiled that way.”

And so on through all the details of his food, somebody, he felt, was responsible, and unfortunately he determined that I should be the scape-goat. His companion, who laid by his side, was even more disagreeable than he was. He was a terrible pickle consumer, and indulged in such extreme dissipation in that luxury, that a check had to be put upon his appetite. He attacked me on the subject the first chance he had, and listened to my explanations without being convinced that pickles were luxuries to be eaten sparingly, and used carefully. “Perhaps,” he said at last, sulkily, “we would have more pickles if you had not so many new dresses.” There was no doubt as to my having on a new calico dress, but what that had to do with the pickles was rather puzzling. However, that afternoon, came a formal apology, written in quite an elegant style, and signed by every man in the ward, (except the pickle man) in which they laid the fault of this cruel speech on the bad whiskey.

All this winter the city had been unusually gay. Besides parties, private theatricals and tableaux were inaugurated. Wise and thoughtful men disapproved openly of this mad gaiety. There was, certainly, a painful discrepancy between the excitement of music and dancing, where one could hear in a momentary lull the rumble of the ambulances carrying the wounded to the different Hospitals. Young men advocated this state of affairs, arguing that after the fatigues and dangers of a campaign in the field, that some relaxation was necessary on their visit to the Capital.

To thinking people this recklessness was ominous: and, by the end of February, 1865, I began to feel that all was not as well as might be. The incessant moving of troops through the city from one point to another shewed weakness, and the scarcity of rations issued told a painful tale. People spoke of the inefficiency of the Commissary General, and predicted that the change made in that Department would make all right. Soon afterwards, the truth was told to me, in confidence, and under promise that it should go no farther. Richmond was to be evacuated in a month or six weeks. The time might be lengthened or shortened, but the fact was established.

Then came the packing up, quietly but surely, of the different departments. Our requisitions on the Medical Purveyor were returned unfilled, and an order from the Surgeon-General required that herbs should be used in the Hospitals. There was a great deal of merriment elicited over the “yarb teas” drawn during the time by command of the surgeons, without any one knowing why the substitution had been made.

My mind had been much harrassed as to what I should do, but my duty seemed to be to remain with my sick, as no general ever deserts his troops; but to be left by all my friends amidst the enemy, with every feeling antagonistic to them, and the prospect of being turned away from the Hospital the day after they city surrendered, was not a cheering one. Even my home would no longer be opened to me, for staying with one of the Cabinet Ministers, he would certainly leave with the government. I was spared the

necessity of decision by the sudden attack of Gen. Grant and the breaking of the Confederate lines. This necessitated the evacuation of Richmond sooner than was expected, and before I had time to think about the matter at all, the government and all its train had vanished.

On the 2d April, 1865, while the congregation of Dr. Hoge's church in Richmond, were listening to the Sunday sermon, a messenger entered and handed a telegram to Mr. Davis, then President of the Southern Confederate States, who rose immediately, without any visible signs of agitation, and left the church. No great alarm was exhibited by the congregation, though several members of the President's Staff rose and followed, till Dr. Hoge brought the service to an abrupt close, and informed his startled flock that Richmond would probably be evacuated very shortly, and they would only exercise a proper degree of prudence by going home immediately, and preparing for that event.

This announcement, though coming from such a reliable source, hardly availed to convince the Virginians that their beloved Capital, assailed so often, defended so bravely, surrounded by fortifications on which the engineering talents of their best officers had been expended, was to be surrendered. Some months before a few admitted behind the veil of the temple had been apprised that the sacrifice was to be accomplished; that Gen. Lee had again and again urged Mr. Davis to give up this Mecca of his heart to the interests of the Confederacy, and resign a city which required an army to hold it, and pickets to be posted from thirty to forty miles around it, weakening the comparatively small force of the army – and again and again had the iron-will triumphed, and the foe beaten and discomfited retired for fresh combinations and fresh troops.

But the hour had come, and the evacuation was but a question of time. Day and night the whistle of the cars told the anxious people that brigades were being moved to strengthen that point, or defend this, and no one was able to say where exactly any part of the Army of Virginia was situated. That Grant would make an effort to strike the South-side railroad – the main artery for the conveyance of food to the city – every one knew; and that Gen. Lee would be able to meet the effort and check it, everybody hoped, and while this hope lasted there was no panic.

The telegram that reached Mr. Davis that Sunday morning, was to the effect that the enemy had struck, and on the weakest side of the Confederate forces. It told him to be prepared in case a repulse failed; and two hours after came the fatal news that Grant had forced his way through, so that the city must be evacuated that night. What is meant by that simple sentence, “evacuation of the city,” few can imagine. The officers of the different Departments hurried to their offices, speedily packing up everything connected with the Government. The quartermasters' and commissary's stores were thrown open, and thousands of the half-clad and half-starved people of Richmond rushed to the scene. Delicate women tottered under the weight of hams, bags of flour and coffee. Invalided officers carried away little articles of luxury for sick wives or children at home. Every vehicle was in requisition, commanding fabulous prices, and gold or silver were the only currency that would pass. The immense concourse of strangers, Government officials, speculators, gamblers, pleasure and profit lovers of all kinds that had been attracted to the Capital, were “packing,” while those who had determined to stay and await the chances of war, tried to look calmly on and draw courage from their faith. in the justness of their cause.

The wives and families of Mr. Davis and his Cabinet had been fortunately sent away some weeks previously, so no provision was made for the transportation of any particular class of people. All the cars that could be collected were at the Fredericksburg depot, and by three o'clock the trains commenced to move. The scene at the station was one of indescribable confusion. No one could afford to leave any article of wear or household use, going where they knew that nothing, ever so trifling, could be replaced. Baggage was almost as valuable as life, and life was represented there by wounded or sick officers and men; helpless women and children – for all that *could* be with the Southern army were at their post.

Hour after hour passed, and still the work went on. The streets were strewn with torn papers, records and documents of all descriptions, and people still hurried by with the stores, until then hoarded by the Government and sutler shops. The scream and whistle of the cars never ceased all that weary night, and was perhaps the most painful sound to those left behind, for all the city seemed flying; but while the centre of Richmond was in the wildest confusion, the suburbs were very quiet, and even ignorant of what scenes were enacting in the heart of the city. Events crowded so quickly upon each other that no one had time to spread reports.

There was no change in the aspect of the city till near midnight, and then the school ship, the “Patrick Henry,” formerly the “Yorktown,” was fired at the wharf in “Rocketts,” the extreme east end of the city. Her magazine blowing up seemed a signal for the work of destruction to commence. Explosions followed from all points. The blowing up of the large magazine at Drewry's Bluff was most terrific. The warehouses of tobacco were fired next and communicated the flames to the adjacent houses and shops, which were soon in a flame along Main street. The armory, which was not intended to be burnt, either caught accidentally or was fired by mistake, the shells exploding and filling the air with their hissing sounds of horror, no one knowing how far they would reach. Fortunately, Col. Gorgas had had the largest rolled into the canal before he left, or the city would have been leveled with the dust.

No one slept during that night of horror, for, added to the present scenes were the anticipations of what the morrow would bring forth. Daylight dawned upon a wreck of desolation and destruction. From the highest point of Church Hill and Libby Hill, the eye could range over the whole extent of city and country – the fire had hardly abated and the burning bridges were adding their flame and smoke to the scene. A single, faint explosion could still be heard at long intervals, but the Patrick Henry was low to the water's edge, and the Drewry but a column of smoke. The whistle of the cars, and the rushing of the laden trains still went on—they had never ceased, but clouds hung low and draped a great part of the scene as morning advanced.

Before the last star had faded from the sky, two carriages rolled along Main street, and passed through Rocketts, carrying the Mayor and Corporation to the Federal lines with the keys of the city, and half an hour afterwards, over to the east a single Federal blue jacket rose above the hill and stood still with astonishment; another and another sprung up, as if out of the earth, and still all was quiet. At seven o'clock, there fell upon the ear the steady clatter of horse's hoofs, and under Chimborazo Hill, winding around Rocketts, came a small but compact body of Federal cavalymen, on horses in splendid condition, riding closely and steadily along; they were well mounted, well accoutred,

well fed – a rare sight in Richmond streets; the first of that army that for four years had knocked so hopelessly at the gates of the Southern Capital.

They were some distance in advance of the infantry, who came on as well appointed and well dressed as the cavalry. Company after company, battalion after battalion, regiment after regiment, brigade after brigade, pouring into the doomed city – they seemed an endless horde. One detachment separated from the main body, and marching to Battery No. 2, raised the United States flag, their band playing “The Star-Spangled Banner” – then they stacked their arms. The rest marched along Main street, surrounded by fire and smoke, over burning fragments of buildings, emerging at times when the wind lifted the dark clouds like a phantom army; while the colored population shouted and cheered them on their way.

Before three hours had elapsed, the troops had been quartered and were inspecting the city. They swarmed in every high-way and bye-way, rose out of gullies and appeared on the top of hills, emerged from narrow lanes and skirted around low fences. There was hardly a spot in Richmond not occupied by a blue coat, but they were quiet, orderly and respectful. Thoroughly disciplined and careful of giving offense, they never spoke unless addressed first; and though the women of Richmond contrasted with sickness at the heart the difference between the splendidly equipped army and the war-worn, wasted aspect of their own defenders, they were grateful for the consideration shown to them; and if they remained in their homes with closed doors and windows, or walked the streets with averted eyes and veiled faces, it was that they could not bear the presence of invaders, even under the most favorable circumstances.

Before the day was over, the public buildings were occupied by the enemy, and the citizens entirely relieved from all fear of molestation. The hospitals were attended to, the ladies allowed to nurse and care for their own wounded; but rations were very scarce – in a few days they arrived and were issued generally. It had been a matter of pride among the Southerners to boast that they never had seen a greenback, and the entrance of the Federal army had also found them almost entirely unprepared with gold or silver currency. People who had piles of Confederate money, and were wealthy a day previously, looked around in vain for wherewithal to buy a loaf of bread. Strange exchanges were made on the street of tea and coffee, flour and bacon. Those who were fortunate in having a stock of household necessaries were generous in the extreme to their less wealthy neighbors, but the destitution was terrible. The Sanitary Commission stores were opened and commissioners appointed to visit the houses to distribute tickets to draw food, but to draw from the first named place required so many appeals to different officials, that decent people gave up the effort, and the rations issued of musty corn-meal and codfish were hard on Southern stomachs – few gently nurtured could live on such unfamiliar food.

In the meanwhile, there had been no assimilation between the invaders and the invaded. There had appeared in the daily paper a notice that the military bands would play in the beautiful capitol grounds every evening, but when the appointed hour came, except the musicians, officers and men, not a white face was to be seen. The negroes crowded every bench and path. The next week brought out another notice, that “the colored population” would not be admitted; and the absence then of everything in the shape of a bonnet or female hat was appalling the entertainers went to their own entertainment. The third week and still another notice appeared, “colored nurses were to

be admitted with their white charges,” and, lo! each fortunate white baby was the cherished care of a dozen finely dressed black ladies – the only drawback being that in two or three days the music ceased, the entertainers feeling at last the ingratitude of the subjugated people.

Despite the courtesy of manner – for however despotic the acts, the Federal authorities maintained a respectful manner – the new comers made no advance towards fraternity. They spoke openly and warmly of their sympathy with the sufferings of the South, but advocated acts that the hearers could not recognize as “military necessities.” Bravely dressed Federal officers met their former old class-mates from college and military schools, and enquired after the families, to whose home they had ever been welcome in days of yore, expressing intentions of “calling to see them,” while the vacant chairs, rendered vacant by Federal bullets, stood by the hearth of the widow and bereaved mother. They could not be made to understand that their presence was offensive, that the acts they excused as “military necessities,” were the barbarous warfare of midnight burnings and legal murders. There were few men in the city at this time, but the women of the South still fought their battle; fought it silently, resentfully but calmly! Clad in their mourning garments, overcome but not subdued, they sat within their desolate houses, or if compelled to leave that shelter, went on their errands to church or Hospital with veiled faces and swift steps. By no sign or act did the possessors of their fair city know that they were even conscious of their presence. If they looked in their faces they saw them not; they might have almost supposed themselves a phantom army. There was no stepping aside to avoid the contact of dress, no feigned humility in giving the inside of the walk; they simply ignored their presence.

Two particular characteristics followed the invaders – the circus, and booths for the temporary accommodation of petty venders. These small speculators must have thought there were no means of cooking left in Richmond, from the quantity of “canned edibles” they brought. They inundated the city with pictorial canisters at exorbitant prices, which no one bought. Whether there was a scant supply of greenbacks, or the people were not disposed to trade with the new-comers, the stores remained empty of customers. The most remarkable fact was, that from the shop-keeper to the lowest private, none were Northern – they all sympathized with the South. They carried their sympathy, it may be supposed, in their army trains, it was so very cumbrous. The officers had all been in the regular army, and staid there to prevent by their influence any bloodshed the first year, afterwards they were too poor to resign, but they “felt so much for the Southern people, and despised the Administration, Black Republicanism, and volunteer commission holders.” The shop-keepers had all come from Baltimore, and aided the South to the extent of their power, though unable to get across the Potomac. The soldiers had all been forced into the invading army, being too poor to hire substitutes. Even the black allies, when questioned, involuntarily spoke of the “Yankee men and the Southern gentlemen,” and paid the deference of habit to the one not accorded to the other; never was there so much sympathy on one side and such black ingratitude on the other.

By this time, steamboats had made their way to the wharves, though the obstructions still defied the iron-clads, and crowds of curious strangers thronged the pavements, while squads of mounted pleasure-seekers raced along the streets of the city. Gaily dressed women began to pour in, with looped-up skirts, very large feet and a very great preponderance of spectacles. The Richmond ladies, sitting by desolated fire-sides, were

astonished by the arrival of former friends, people moving in the best classes of society, who had the bad taste to make a pleasure trip to the mourning city, calling upon their former friends in all the finery of the last New York fashions, and in many instances forgiving their entertainers the manifold sins of the last four years, in formal and set terms.

From the hill on which my Hospital was built, I had sat all the Sunday of the evacuation, watching the turmoil and bidding friends adieu. Till twelve in the day on Sunday, many were still unconscious of the events which were transpiring; and as night set in, I wrapped my blanket shawl around me and continued my lonely watch, seeing all that is here related. An early visit to the wards found them comparatively empty. Every man who could walk or crawl away had gone. Beds in which paralyzed, rheumatic and helpless patients had lain for months were empty. The miracles of the New Testament had been re-enacted. Those poor fellows who were left were almost wild at the idea of getting again into a Northern prison, having only been exchanged, in many instances, the month before. They received all the comfort in my power to give, and with it their usual breakfast, while the shouts of the invading army and their negro sympathizers were filling the air just below. There was a great deal of difficulty in managing matters, for all the nurses, with very few exceptions, had followed Gen. Lee's army. We made the sick wait upon those in worse condition, and waited the turn of events.

At eleven o'clock on Monday morning, the fourth of April, the first blue uniform appeared at our office – three surgeons walking around inspecting the Hospital. There was an amiable understanding apparently as our surgeon was with them. One of the divisions was required for the new comers and cleared out, the patients divided among the different wards, and soon wagons arrived laden with necessaries for their own sick. We still had commissary stores on hand of our own, and no change was made. Three days afterwards an order came that all the patients should be transferred to Camp Jackson, the Surgeons going with them, so that the Hospital should be empty in four hours. Driving over to Camp Jackson, in the ambulance, I found the Confederate Surgeon-in-charge, and stating who I was and what I wanted, merely to remain with my sick and nurse them, was received so rudely, that his conduct combined with the excitement and annoyance of the day, was more than I could bear. Discourtesy from our invaders was to be expected, but that a Confederate gentleman should fail at such a time to render a kindness under the circumstances, was very hard. He took no measures to assist me, so that all I could do was to take a sad farewell of my sick, returning again to my old quarters at my own Hospital till other arrangements could be made.

It was fortunate that this result followed for there were still left in the wards many very sick men, too ill to be removed even on a bed. To them I devoted my time, for the surgeons, obedient to orders received had left hours before, and the place looked deserted; Miss G., myself and the old black cook only remaining. They also left at dark and I sat in my room, endeared by retrospection and the knowledge that in a few days I should have to leave forever.

The Federal authorities had as yet placed no guards around, and our own had been withdrawn, or rather had left, being under no control or direction, and not a sound broke the stillness and solitude around. This quiet was interrupted suddenly by a crash in my adjoining pantry, and passing into it instantly, I came upon a group of seven men, who had burst in the outer door which opened upon the yard. As my eye travelled slowly from

face to face I recognized them as a set of "Hospital rats," who had never been gotten rid of, for if even sent to the field one week they would be sure to be back the next, on some trifling pretext of sickness or disability. The ringleader was an old enemy who had stored up many a grievance against me, but many acts of kindness paid to his sick wife had naturally made me suppose his wrath had been disarmed. He was the spokesman, and the trouble was the same old one. Thirty gallons of whiskey had been received into my pantry the day before the evacuation.

"We have come for that barrel of whiskey!"

"You cannot and shall not have it."

"It does not belong to you?"

"It is in my charge and I intend to keep it. You must go out of my pantry: you are all drunk now!"

"Boys?" he said "pick up that barrel and carry it down the hill, I will attend to *her*."

But the habit of obedience still had its effect on the "boys," for they did not move except in a retrograde direction.

"Wilson," I said, "you have been in this hospital for four years; do you think from what you know of me that I will allow you to take that barrel away without my consent?"

He became very insolent.

"None of your domineering," he said, "all your great friends have gone and we won't stand it now; move out of the way."

He walked up to the barrel and so did I, only being in the inside, I interposed between him and the object of intention. The ungovernable temper blazed up in his face, and catching me roughly by the arm, he called me a name which a decent woman seldom hears, and even a wicked one always resents.

Fortunately, I had a little friend, which had been kept quietly in my pocket since the evacuation more from a sense of protection than from any idea that it ever would be called into use; and before he had time to push me one inch from my position, or to see what kind of an ally was in my hand, that sharp click-a sound so peculiar and so different from any other – struck upon his ear, and sent him back among his friends, very pale and much shaken.

"You had better leave," I said very composedly, considering all the circumstances, "for if even the first shot misses you, which it is very likely to do, I have five more here ready, and the place is too small for even a woman to miss six times."

He could hardly speak from rage, but after some conversation with the rest, concluded to leave, but turned wrathfully at the door.

"You think yourself very brave now," he said, as he left, "but wait until to-night, perhaps others may have pistols, too, and you won't have it all your way."

My first act was to take the round head of a barrel and nail the door as tightly as I could, using a two-pound weight for a hammer, and then still warm with excitement and victory gained, I sat down by my Whiskey barrel, and felt the affection which we all have for what we have cherished and defended, but as my blood cooled, affairs wore a different aspect. There were no fastenings on either doors or windows, and as my little bed was just under one of the latter, which was only four feet from the ground, unpleasant memories beset me of a fairy picture I had once seen of a fire-cloud griffin dragging an enchanted princess through just such an opening by the hair of her head. This idea was so absurd, that it produced a strong inclination to laugh, and having once got to laughing,

nervous terrors became dispelled, so putting a candle, a box of matches, and the pistol within reach of my hand, I went quietly to bed, and what is more, to sleep, never waking until the sun was high, and hearing nothing more of my visitors. The next day the hospital was guarded by Federal-sentries. Perhaps in telling my story (and it is not every woman who has had a chance of drawing a pistol without a certain degree of ridicule attached,) not only the whole truth, but all the truth should be told, and I confess that I did drag away my bed from under that window and put it right in the middle of the room, so that no griffin, were his claws ever so long could reach me.

The next day, the steward informed me that our stores had been taken possession of by the Federal authorities and we could not draw the necessary rations. The surgeons had all gone, the steward, a very good, honest, quiet man, was not calculated to give any help in such an emergency, so, though very averse to any intercourse with the intruders, I walked up to headquarters, formerly Dr. M.'s office and making my way through a crowd of strange blue coats, accosted the principal figure seated there, with a demand for food, and rather a curt enquiry whether it was their policy to starve the captured sick. He was very polite, but said that their transports had not been able to get through the obstructions in the river, and until they did so the army would be straitened for food. Fortunately, having been fearful of this need, I had kept a large quantity of coffee, partly saved from rations drawn, and partly from donations to the hospital, so I requested the loan of my own ambulance, which was under Yankee lock and key, to take this coffee to market and exchange it for necessary food. This was acceded to, and an order given me to that effect, which I passed to an orderly, and having gained one point, proceeded to try the ingratiating style if necessary.

He asked if I "was a Virginian."

"No a South Carolinian."

He had "lost a brother at Fort Sumter."

"Ah! I was very sorry. Why did he go there?"

He regretted that "it was out of his power to assist me in any way, for he saw in the pale faces and pinched features of the Richmond women how much they had suffered?"

I retorted quickly this wound to both patriotism and vanity. He may have meant to be polite, but that he was unlucky was proved by my answer-

"If he saw anything in my features that was pinched, or any paleness of face, it was not what had been suffered under the Confederacy, but the horror and dread of seeing our Capital in such hands."

But my ambulance was once more under my command, and putting a bag of coffee and a two-gallon jug of whiskey in, we drove to the market. The expedition was entirely successful, as I returned with a live calf, bellowing all the way. Striking up an acquaintance with my Vermont driver, he informed me that they had "no such real ladies in their Northern hospitals as we had at the South." The drink of whiskey offered to him was refused, perhaps from a latent fear of danger, some foolish story of poisoned pies having been reported.

My next visit was to the Commissary Department of the hospital in search of sugar; but two Federal guards were seated in the adjacent room, the officer in charge having left for a moment. A fortunate moment for me, as the key was lying on his desk.

In a minute an empty basket was filled, and the door relocked. An expostulation from one of the astonished guards met with an explanation that I was always at my kitchen and

could be arrested there if necessary. After this no one opposed my erratic movements, the new comers giving me a wide berth. No explanation of this line of conduct was made, and all I ever gathered was from a young boy who had fraternized with a Yankee sutler, who did me the honor to ask my name and tell his informant, confidentially, that the Federal Surgeon in charge, thought "that little woman in black had better go home," to which he added on his own responsibility, "He's awful afraid of her!"

Away was I compelled to go at last, but took a room near, and still visited my sick who had now been removed to another division. There daily congregated all the ladies in the neighborhood, bringing what delicacies they could gather, and nursing indiscriminately any patient that needed care. This continued till the sick were either convalescent or dead, and at last my vocation was gone and not one patient left to give me a pretext for daily occupation.

And now, when the absorbing duties of the last years no longer demanded my whole thoughts and attention, the difficulties of my own position forced themselves upon my mind. Whatever food had been provided for the sick since the Federal occupation, it had been sufficient for me to eat and drink; but when that failed I found myself with a pocket full of Confederate money and a silver ten cent piece; some former *gage d'amitié*, which puzzled me much, not knowing how to expend it. It was all I could depend on, so I bought a box of matches and five cocoa-nut cakes. The wisdom of the purchase there is no need of defending. Should any one ever be in a strange country where the currency of which he is possessed is entirely valueless, and ten cents be his only available funds, perhaps he may be able to judge of the difficulty of expending it with judgment.

But of what importance was the fact that I was houseless, homeless and moneyless in Richmond, the heart of Virginia. Who ever wanted for aught that kind hearts, generous hands or noble hospitality could supply, that they did not receive it all without even the shadow of a patronage that could make it distasteful. What women were ever so refined in feeling and so unaffected in manner, so willing to share all that wealth gives, and so little infected with the pride of purse, that bestows that power? It was difficult to hide one's needs from them; they found them out and ministered to them with their quiet simplicity of manner and the innate nobility, which gave to their generosity the coloring of a favor received, not conferred.

I laughed at the careless disregard shown by myself for the future, when every one who remained in Richmond apparently had laid by stores for daily food, but they detected with quick sympathy the hollowness of the mirth, and each day at every hour of breakfast, dinner or supper would come to me a waiter, borne by the neat little Virginia maid in her white apron, with ten times the quantity of food I could consume, packed carefully on. Sometimes boxes would be left at my door, with packages of tea, coffee, sugar and ham or chicken, and no clue to the thoughtful and kind donor. Would that I could do more than thank the dear friends, who made my life for four years so happy and contented; who never made me feel, by word or act, that my self-imposed occupation was otherwise than one which would ennoble every woman. If ever any aid was given through my own exertions, or any labor rendered effective by me for the good of the South – if any sick soldier ever benefitted by my pleasant smiles or happy face at his side, or a death-bed was ever soothed by gentle words and kindly treatment, such results were only owing to the cheering encouragement I received from them. They were gentle women in every sense of the word, and though they may never have remembered that

“*noblesse oblige*,” they felt and acted up to the motto in every event of their lives. Would that I could live and die among them, growing each day better, from contact with their gentle kindly sympathies, and heroic hearts.

It may never be in my power to do more than offer my heartfelt thanks, which may reach their once happy homes; and in closing the plain “reminiscences” of hospital experience, let me beg them to believe that whatever kindness it may have been in my limited power to show the noble soldiers of their State, it has been repaid tenfold, leaving with me an eternal but grateful obligation.

There is one other subject connected with hospitals on which a few words may be said – the common and distasteful idea that a woman must lose a certain amount of reticence and delicacy in filling any office in them. This is an entire mistake. There need be no unpleasant exposure, under proper arrangements, and if even there be, the circumstances which surround a wounded man, far from friends and home, suffering in a holy cause and dependent upon a woman for help, care and sympathy hallow and clear the atmosphere in which she labors. That woman must indeed be hard and gross who lets one material thought lessen her efficiency. In the midst of suffering and death, hoping with those almost beyond hope in this world; praying by the bed-side of the lonely and heart-stricken; closing the eyes of boys hardly old enough to realize man's sorrows, much less suffer by man's fierce hate, a woman must soar beyond the conventional modesty considered correct under different circumstances.

If the ordeal does not chasten and purify her nature; if the suffering and endurance does not make her wiser and better, and the daily fire through which she passes does not draw from her nature the sweet fragrance of benevolence, charity and love, then indeed a hospital has been no fit place for her!

*Transcribed by Michael D. Gorman, August 2000*