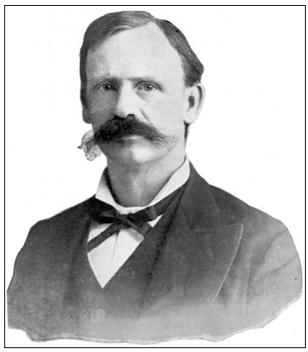
Harry St. John Dixon

Confederate Soldier and First Grand Historian

Introduction by Michael Codina



Harry St. John Dixon, circa 1864

Harry St. John Dixon, the enigmatic founder of the famous Constantine Chapter, was initiated in the Psi Chapter of Sigma Chi on December 4th, 1860. From that time until the beginning of the Civil War, he was an ardent worker for his chapter. His Civil War record in the 28th Mississippi Volunteers is a source of pride for Sigma Chi

After the war he returned to the University of Virginia where he helped to re-establish Psi chapter. At the ninth Grand Chapter at Columbus, Ohio in 1872, Dixon was elected the first Grand Historian and continued in that capacity for the next 12 years. During his tenure he began the accumulation of historical material that was later used in the 1890 *Catalogue and History of Sigma Chi.* A life-long advocate of the Fraternity, he was instrumental in the establishment of the first chapters on the West Coast at the University of California, Berkley and Stanford University.

To honor his memory, the Fresno Alumni Chapter, along with the Order of Constantine, placed monument at his gravesite in Mountain View Cemetery in Fresno, California.

Recollection of a Rebel Private was first published in the *The Sigma Chi* as a series of articles in 1885 and 1886. The material came from his personal diaries that he kept during the Civil War.

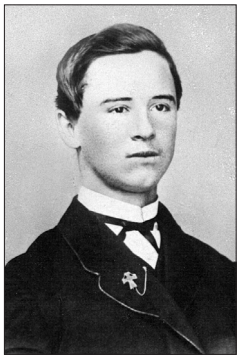
*** Dixon's recollections are illustrated with images of the members of his chapter believe to have fought in the Confederate States of America armed forces. They are not mentioned in the text below.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A REBEL PRIVATE

From Diaries Kept Throughout The War

Harry St. John Dixon

I. "Off to the Wars"



R. L. Bouhaus

No time can efface the memory of my departure from the old plantation. It was one of those matchless days in the fall - the Indian summer of the South, when the sun is so bright and clear. Sycamores, surrounded by its magnificent forest trees, and its spacious "gallery," looked cozy and homelike as the family carriage stood at the front steps awaiting my father and myself, after an early breakfast, on the 24th of November, 1861. Every servant on the plantation was there, led by "nanny," her apron to her eyes; for, having no children of her own, I was "her boy" *par excellence*, being the oldest of a large family. The booming of the guns at Fort Sumter had dissipated all ideas of study at the University of Virginia, and the stern commands of the" governor" had prevented my taking part in the capture of Harper's Ferry and the glories of Manassas, since which ill-health had given, to me, good excuse for my detention in the swamps of Mississippi, absent from my country's defenders. Had I been able to foresee the succeeding four years, I could have borne these humiliations better, and have understood the sage counsel which urged that a lad of seventeen is rarely serviceable as a soldier in actual service. But was I not to emulate my forefathers of the Revolution? Was I not to do something worthy of that old Virginian colonel who fought under Washington, about whom I had heard so many legends? Of what avail to have preserved so carefully in the gun-case (that sat within the sacred precincts of my mother's chamber) the sword of my grandfather, a soldier in the War of 1812, if I was not to be permitted to win my spurs in deadly conflict with the hated Yankee? Not fit for a commission? Of course not, though having been drilled all spring in the Sons of Liberty at the University by graduates of the Virginia Military Institute; (can I ever forget Capt. Tosh in that red shirt and blue kepi!) Could I not drill a battalion better than many colonels then in service! Then let me go in as a private, and fight my way up. The Governor, however, was obdurate. He had a neighbor, a retired "old army officer," and a Northern man, by

the way, who, having been also a "West Pointer," was made a Brigadier General and was in command of our batteries and a brigade of infantry at Evansport, on the Potomac. The quiet old soldier was too shrewd to take to himself a stripling for his aide; but consented to give me service under his Quartermaster as a clerk, with the gracious promise that in battle I should be permitted to leave the wagons and act as his aide. I stomached this dubious position, of being neither soldier nor citizen, with many qualms: hence the mighty preparations for war which went on at *Sycamores* for weeks before, at last, we took up our line of march. I have seen our whole division of cavalry move with less trouble, and my whole squadron with less baggage. Moses, going to the fair, had not more fuss made over him. But now we were off. I had been around to see the neighbors, and tell them good-bye. *Ditchley, Percy Place, Three Oaks, Ararat*, etc., etc., had been visited, and cheery god-speeds had been given me by all of their slavocrat owners, - so hospitable, so kind, so jovial. It was the last time I was ever to know that peculiar state of society, with its great faults and virtues, which slavery created. In four years its shell only was left, and reconstruction crushed that. What Hamlet said to poor Yorick's skull is not more sad. That condition of things, and those joyous neighbors, save one, are all dead: "They are gone; they are entombed in the urns of mortality." ittle, however, thought I then of mortality. Not even the sunken face of my gentle mother, as she for weeks went, silent as death, about her never-ending preparations for my comfort, could wean me from visions of glorious war. And the pain of parting did so but for a time.

Henry cracked his whip, and the lumbering old carriage rolled away amidst farewells: "Good-bye, Mister Harry! Come home safe!"

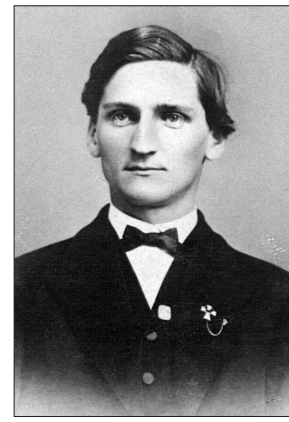
II. At The Front

We took a steamer at the river, thence to Memphis, and by rail to Richmond. At each mile were increased evidences that the country was aroused to the emergency upon it. The capital of the Old Dominion swarmed like a military camp, not only with soldiers of every arm, rank and grade in the service, but as I thought, with Virginia cousins, for my kin seemed without limit in number. The barbarian from the cotton fields of the Southwest was received with open arms (not figuratively, merely), by my fair cousins, and with such dignified courtesy by the President of the Confederacy as would grace a throne; for an uncle had died in his regiment at Buena Vista, and the Governor possessed the entree. Mistakes he certainly made; but his deeds, whether right or wrong, were great, and he impressed not alone the lads who approached him as a great man. Not tall, but erect, slender and pale, his clean-cut face flashed with intellectual fire and a soldier's

decision. “Mr. President, I have brought this boy to see you before I placed him in the army.” Shaking hands with me, he said: “It is a pity to cut our grain before it is ripe;” and, placing his hand on my head, he said with an impressiveness never to be forgotten: “My son, the South expects every man to do his duty; I expect to hear good accounts of you.” My boyish ambition was turned to as sordid ashes as his. He never heard any accounts of me.

Bidding good-bye to my cousins at Richmond, we went by rail to Fredericksburg, afterwards famous, and thence by the muddiest of roads to Gen. S. G. French’s headquarters at Evansport, where I assumed “my position on his staff,” in which place I had to perform hard and thankless duties -- work like a mule, and for pay got $21 per month. “Here father left me on the 10th December, and I can truthfully say that when I saw him ride off, away down the slope leading from brigade headquarters, I felt more friendless than ever before” --(*Diary*). My wretchedness did not last long however, as on the 30th of December, I fell a prey to a violent attack of the measles, and was sent to the hospital at Dumfries, nearby, where I was incarcerated with a mob of genuine Texans, in an ancient brick house, said to have had the honor of having been the schoolhouse of the Father of his country. My experience of soldiering was quite enlarged in this retreat, from which I was discharged and ordered for repairs to my cousins, at Ashland, the scene of Henry Clay’s boyhood. No longer able to stand the mule work of my “staff” position, I had broken with my chief; and although under orders from the Governor to return home and join a cavalry regiment there, could not refrain joining the 11th Mississippi Infantry, as an independent, on its march through the place, for participation in the Peninsular campaign. Great was my woe and small my glory.

My comrades were seasoned soldiers, while I, yet in delicate health, had never walked over five miles at a time. Every recruit remembers his first forced march. Burdened with a blanket, knapsack, canteen, haversack, musket and cartridge-box with forty rounds of ammunition, the first day’s march is well enough; but when the soles of both feet are solid blisters, with heels and toes perfectly raw, and one’s shoes too small to force upon the swollen pedals-ye gods, how the hot sands do give comfort!



H. L.Davis
According to Joseph Nate, Davis was the nephew of Confederate States president, Jefferson Davis

The driver of the company wagon had compassionately taken my blanket. Thus relieved, I yet fell out of my place; then to

the rear of the company, then of the regiment; and at last, desolate and desperate, fell by the wayside, and the wagon train was passing. "I had gotten my blankets out of the wagon and was lying on the roadside, when Major Jones, Brigade Quartermaster, came riding by and asked me, "Have you given out?" "Completely, Sir; I can scarcely put one foot before the other." "Come here, then," he said, "and I'll put you in one of my wagons." From the way I double-quicked to that wagon, you would have thought I could put one foot before another!" (*Diary*.) This bliss soon ended; and I staggered on to Williamsburg, where, despite the ringing address of our Brigadier General Whiting, within hearing of the enemy's guns, I was *hors du combat*. Fortunately I had cousins here who cared for me. It was the home of John Dixon, that old Revolutionary Colonel, whose house I saw with his portrait, and Raleigh Tavern, the Powder House, (about which Patrick Henry made his fiery speech), Bruton Parish Church, where the British held the old colonel prisoner, and other antiquities, so soon as I could creep about. But the way was open to Mississippi, and there being no present prospect for "a fight," I returned to Richmond by steamer, and on the 29th of April enlisted in Company D, 28th Regiment Mississippi Volunteer Cavalry, and bid farewell to the Army of Northern Virginia.

III. My Boy Dick

Upon my return home from Virginia, in 1862, great rivalry existed among the plantation boys of my age, as to who should "go to the war with Mr. Harry." The controversy was cut short, however, by Dick, the foreman of the plow hands, who, learning that I was to have a "body servant," this time, marched to the house, and calling my father out, announced: "Master, I'm going with Mr. Harry, no matter how many of the others go: I nursed him, sir." That settled the question. The incident is mentioned to pay a tribute to as true a heart as ever beat. In the "flush times," father was lodging one night at a country inn in the northern part of the State. His room-mate told him that he had an orphan "boy" lying under the bed, and was without a home for him. Without seeing him, father paid his owner's price, and took Dick, then about ten years of age, to his home at Jackson. There being nothing else for him to do, he took me in charge, and the warmest affection existed between us till his death, while with me in the army, in 1864. In hunting, fishing and swimming, he was a master. Under the medium height, with short "bow" legs and the longest arms I ever saw on man, he had a deep chest, small waist, and was "sway-backed." His mouth was large and prominent, but his nose was not flat, and his forehead high, though retreating, giving his black face a look of brightness and decision. He and his wife agreed badly, for he was a gallant among

the dusky maidens; but he was devoted to his children. These, however, deterred him from the step as little as my father's permission to go to the gunboats if he wished. As brave a man as I ever knew, and filled with jollity, he was as ready for a raid around the enemy's lines, as for a banjo dance in camp. And what a forager! He must have entered into solemn covenants with mother and "nanny" on that score, for the land was indeed bare where Dick could not find something for me to eat. Many a time has he, in hardest pinch, fished up from the greasy depths of our joint "war-bag" some dingy crust of "corn dodger" which tasted of heavenly sweetness. He verily believed in Captain Dalgetty's maxim, that "provant never hindered a march."

When on a march, with the enemy not too close, a comfortable plantation house and a pretty girl's smiles were not avoided by me. Dick was always my shadow on such occasions, and whether the lady of the house thought of that "war-bag" or not, he invariably used such blandishments upon the cook and the kitchen maids, that if it was not well replenished, you might conclude it beyond the possibilities. "His bright smile haunts me still!"--stretching from ear to ear over two rows of ivory, as he would pat his haversack, and chuckling, call, my attention to it, as we rode blithely away from our host's hospitable mansion. He would then take his place three paces in the rear with silent military precision. The most faithful of servants, even to rolling up in his blanket and lying to the windward of me of an extra cold night, he detested to clean my arms. My saber he especially and justly neglected as a useless ornament; never seeing blood on it his gorge rose at polishing it, and especially the scabbard; "What do want with this great long thing, Mr. Harry? You are never going to get close enough to a Yankee to stick him with it"

I never knew his concern for me until the battle of Thompson's Station, 5th March, 1863. I was riding a fiery little pony, acting as courier for General Martin. A missile carried away the end of the scabbard to that same old saber, leaving its point protruding several inches. It cut the arteries in my horse's fore-leg so that the sergeant in command of the couriers ordered me to the rear, to remount myself. The blood had spurted over my boot, so that it looked like I was myself wounded. Galloping around a corner in the little town of Spring Hill, a mile or so in our rear, where our wagons were parked, I halted before Dick, who sat gambling--a favorite pastime of his--with a number of his ebony comrades around a blanket spread on the ground. Reckless of the roar of battle so near, he was so intent on winning our poor promises to pay (three years after the ratification of the treaty of peace between the U. S. and C. S. of America), that he did not see me until I called out, as I dismounted; "Dick, saddle Henry for me-quick!"

Seeing the blood on my leg, as I dismounted, and never comprehending what I said, he threw down his cards, and rushing over blanket, money and companions, without ceremony, caught me in his arms as if I was a child, crying: "My God, Mr. Harry, are you killed? Where are you hit, honey; where are you hit?" When I at last got away from him, and convinced him I was unhurt, he exclaimed, with grotesque satisfaction: "Lord! Won't ole Missus be glad it's the horse, and not you!"

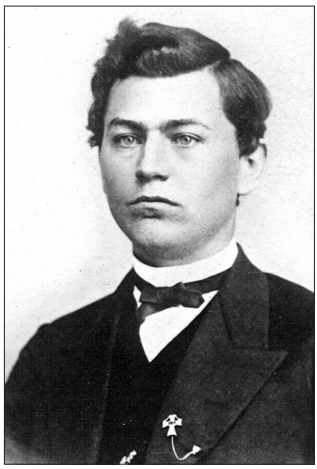
It was my misfortune to see many brave men of both sides die like dogs on the field and in hospitals during the war, but I was never more affected by any death than poor Dick's. My father was a refugee in Alabama in the winter of 1863-64, while I was on detached duty at Columbus, Miss. I gave Dick his furlough first, and took mine afterwards, to enjoy Christmas with the home-folks. He returned unwell, and the day after getting to my family, I received a telegram informing me of his dangerous illness. Returning, I found that the kind lady whose hospitality I was enjoying had given him every attention.

My diary of 29th January contains this entry: "My poor friend is dead. After much suffering from a complication of diseases which would yield to no remedies, he expired at eight minutes to ten o'clock to-day. I saw his last breath. He has been speechless for two days; but on my arrival last evening, being aroused from a torpor which had held him for forty-eight hours, he recognized me, and when I said to him "Dick, don't you know me? - don't you know Mr. Harry?" He tried to speak, and raising his feeble hand to his eyes, tried to wipe away his tears. I have tried to make him understand that I would always see to his children, but don't know that he comprehended. I sat up with him all last night. After a short nap after daylight this morning, I visited him and saw that he must soon die, so I sat by his bedside and saw him go. He asked and called for me during his delirious moments, always expressing a wish that I should come. Death brings with it so many memories of the past. How he has stood by me resolutely when others have fled, in sickness, in rain, cold, heat and hunger, he has been my friend. May God rest his soul!"

My last dollar went to give him a better funeral than was in those days often accorded officers of high rank. A minister, after having prayed at his bedside, performed the funeral ceremonies in a drizzling rain next day, myself alone present. A small marble slab was placed at his head inscribed: "Dick, a faithful servant to a loving master."

IV. Outpost Duty On The Mississippi

Little time was allowed to enjoy the family reunion at *Sycamores*. The enemy had possession of the Mississippi River. Fort Donelson and



W. H. Clapton

Shiloh had been fought; Memphis and New Orleans had fallen. Vicksburg alone stood in the breach, so far as that river was concerned, in 1862. Gunboats and frequent transports traversed it. The richest country in the South was the "Mississippi Bottom," that low, alluvial swamp which extended from Memphis to Vicksburg along its banks. This region teemed with all that war demands except men. They were already in that Moloch's clutches. *Those* of them in the "Bloody Twenty-eighth," as the regiment came to be called, were *fair specimens* of the race they sprung from. Almost universally of pure Anglo-Saxon blood, the rank and file, particularly of Company D (the "Washington Cavalry," as they called themselves, from the county from whence they came), were young men, mostly planters' sons, who had been raised on horseback with arms in their hands. Speaking of the brigade in which the Twenty-eighth was afterward embodied when commanded by Gen. G. B. Cosby (present Adjutant General of California by appointment of Gov. George Stoneman, an ex-Union general). They were physically a fine body of men, 1,200 strong in 1862; but their appearance, as to arms and uniform, was as far from soldierly as possible. Uniform there was none. Dressed in every conceivable color and fashion, they were as oddly armed, using promiscuously every weapon from the shot-gun to the Sharpe's carbine, and sabers which were ultimately discarded, except by the officers, as useless encumbrances. Wonderful also was their camp equipage. Their wagon train was immense. Even privates had their own wagons. My own outfit was a curiosity. Wagon, mattress, mosquito-net, mess-chest and servant were mine, and I a private! In 1865 no regiment had so large a wagon train as our company in 1861. These were happy soldier days. The pets of the entire country, nothing was too good for us, and everything that a soldier's heart could desire was at hand, even to the smiles of fair ladies. Enough sharp skirmishing with gun boats and detachments landed from the transports was given us to make our lives really soldierly.

It was during this service that I received my baptism of fire, and as I have often been asked to relate the experience, I may mention it. On the 26th of July, 1862, while lying near Greenville, Miss., a courier came flying into camp with news that a gunboat and some transports were coming down the river. "Boots and Saddles" was immediately sounded by the bugles, and all was bustle and hurry, quickly ended by "To Horse" and

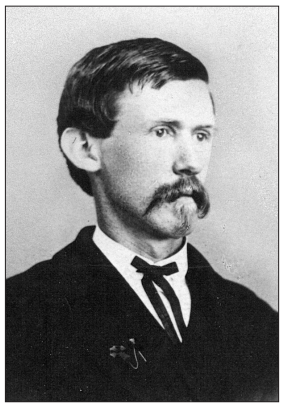
the "Assembly." The stirring bugle calls soon brought us into line, and at a gallop we sped away up the river to a selected point where a sand-bar on the opposite shore of the river thrust the current in to the high bluffs of our side, thus forcing our enemy to come close in to us. But a moment was needed to obey the rapid orders—by fours left wheel: right dress: dismount to fight: number four hold horses! Placed in line immediately on the bank, each man selected his tree, stump or log in the thick forest around us, and awaited our cunning enemy, who had left no device untried to protect himself from our bullets, as well as the shot and shell from the two six-pounders we possessed. As we took position several boats came around the point, gliding along calmly and peacefully in the bright summer's sun, as if by *magic,* for not a man was visible. The Stars and Stripes floated bravely at their prows. The sensations which the scene aroused are indescribable. I had never before seen "the old flag," associated with so many memories of romantic boyhood, except on state occasions, when it was to all the emblem of patriotism. Why was it now carried by the invaders of my country, of my very fireside? My forefathers had aided to make it: why was I now its enemy? Why should those under it seek our lives? And why we theirs? It seemed so unnatural. Such reflections, however, were soon cut short by the angry growl of the six-pounders on our right, which was the signal to commence firing. Instantly we were answered by a vigorous fire of shell and shot and bullets, which riddled the bushes about us. This was kept up until the boats were out· of range. If we had done any damage we did not know it, and had 'suffered but few casualties ourselves. And how did I act and feel under fire? Like a raw recruit, of course. As soon as I had discharged my rifle, I leaped from behind my good cover, and, shouting the "rebel yell" amid the din, continued firing. Our orderly, a grizzled old veteran of the Mexican War, blurted out at me: "Get down there, you d-d little fool, -- you'll get your head blown off!" The wisdom of this command was learned before the surrender, and my horse and I learned to hug a tree on the skirmish line, and I could flatten myself out behind an inconsiderable obstacle to bullets in the most approved manner. Old soldiers converse frankly about cowardice and bravery, and I have never known a brave one who denied that in battle, however high the excitement, he recognized that he constantly stared death in the face. But his faculties are sharpened to the utmost. All in view is exceedingly vivid, and, with a sort of stolid determination to fight on and crush his enemy, he presses through what is not a pleasant ordeal. His nerves are tried most by "getting into the fight." The moving up by slow degrees, with the sounds of battle in his ears, and leisure to reflect, by some strange contrariety, on so many peaceful subjects, while standing passive, frequently under fire, is the strongest test of courage, unless it is the fight in retreat, when he knows he does not and

cannot contend for victory. But once in hot conflict, though he knows death surrounds him, there is a sort of savage antagonism aroused which impels him to desperate effort.

V. In North Mississippi And Tennessee

Our duties in "the bottom" ended in October, 1862, when the incursions from Memphis required us in the vicinity of Panola and Grenada, Miss., to scout rather than to fight. A diary entry, 16th of December, at Grenada, states: "We have gotten the best of repeated skirmishes, especially at Coffeeville, 13th inst. Killing and wounding about one hundred and twenty-five and taking thirty to forty prisoners; loss, five killed and wounded." That ridiculous baggage was lost here: "Our army has fallen back thus far on account of a flank movement from Helena, Ark. Receiving news that the enemy was in hot pursuit of our army across Water Valley, the only place we could pass through going in the same direction, our regiment put out in double quick, the wagons to keep up, so that nearly every tent and the greater part of our baggage has been lost (! !)" A detachment of sixty men was, through the neglect of its commander in not posting pickets, surprised in its camp at night on Cold Water, and a messmate and boyhood friend was killed.

General Grant's operations in North Mississippi necessitated the concentration of all the cavalry. A corps was organized at Okolona in February, 1863, and placed under the command of Maj. Gen. Earl Van Dorn, who, by his movements about Holly Springs, had wiped out the stigma of his failure at Pea Ridge. The pressure of Gen. Bragg required cavalry on his left wing. The Twenty-eighth being incorporated in the First Brigade (Gen. Cosby), Martin's Division, we made forced marches to Columbia, Tenn., arriving on the 19th of February, to act with the army of Tennessee, which had lately won laurels at Murfreesboro. We were now in the hands of an expert soldier, who soon brought us down to actual marching order and strict discipline. A word as to the discipline of the Confederate army in the West. Looking back over twenty years, one wonders that it ever was able to give an enemy a respectable battle,--if from no other cause than that the officers of the line were elected. A body of men collected for an army is purely a mob. Nothing but absolute despotism can make them soldiers; and to allow them to elect their despots seems farcical. Yet this was done, and, but for the magnificent *morale* of the



Payton F. Edwards

individual soldiers, there could have been no sort of an army. As a private I may be permitted to say this. When we add to this the fact that there was no system of reward by promotion or otherwise for gallantry or efficiency of any kind, and that "kissing went by favor" alone, placing in command of regiments and brigades puffy old broken-down politicians who could not drill a squad,--we marvel at the work done by those veteran ragamuffins. Only their individual pluck and devotion to their cause made them the soldiers they were. I have been often guilty of sauntering to my colonel's quarters and inviting myself to dine with him,--an impertinence I have jauntily indulged in even toward my Brigadier, -- when rations were short in camp. And, strange to say, the invitation would be accepted! Down I'd get, and be *bon garçon* as well as another. A little incident which occurred on this campaign illustrates this state of affairs. My company was detailed as Maj. Gen. Martin's body-guard at Florence, Ala. His headquarters were at Gov. Patton's,--one of those substantial old brick mansions so common in the South,--and I was detailed as his orderly for the day. I well knew my duties, and they were very distasteful to me; but I determined "to go the whole hog." So, drawing my saber, I marched back and forth before the door on a frightfully cold morning, until he mounted to go to corps headquarters in town. I held his bit and stirrup with military precision for him to mount, and, mounting myself, rode three paces in his rear. A volunteer aide, one of those military pets who, not even an enlisted man, sported a plume in his hat and some gold lace on his coat, somewhat in the fashion of Jos Sedley, accompanied us. Arrived at our destination, after I had, *a la militaire*, dismounted the General, the "aide" curtly said to me: "Orderly, hold my horse!" A private should have been respectful to any aide his general recognized; but, assuming all the hauteur I could command, I hissed at him: "I believe, sir, I was detailed as an orderly to Gen. Martin, and I do not recognize you as that officer."He was a gentleman, and "begged pardon," as the General ascended the stairs with a smile on his face. On our return the General called me to his side, and we had quite a social chat, he having known my father in "the flush times." Having declined an invitation from Gov. Patton, sent by a servant, to dine with him, his charming daughter repeated it in person. The odor of good things and her gentlewoman's manner was more than I could resist, so, leaving my condition of private at the door, I did my part toward demolishing a regular Southern dinner, with my major general and staff (including my friend of the morning) as fellow guests, despite my rather unpresentable appearance. The good Governor and his fair daughter gave no second thought, doubtless, to the ragged, mud stained boy who was their guest; but the sharp appetite born of parched corn for rations for many days, and the dearth of all refinement in camp, cause him yet to remember that dinner

and their gentle courtesy. What Southern soldier's memory is not filled with recollections of innumerable acts of kindness to him and devotion to his cause by the women of his country? Who has not seen the most delicate of them enduring the stifling stench of hospitals, ministering like angels to the raving wretches prostrated there, and been cheered on by them in disaster and defeat, even when they were to be left helpless to the tender mercies of a conquering army!

We came as deliverers to the people of Middle Tennessee. The victorious battle of Thompson's Station fought on the 5th of March by Armstrong's and a part of Cosby's brigades against Col. Coburn with about equal numbers (who advanced to the attack from Franklin), cemented the mutual trust between Van Dorn and his troops, and assured the citizens, as they vainly hoped, of safety from invasion. It was the prettiest contest I witnessed during the war. The field was all open plain between two ranges of hills, the Federals attacking from the north. The Confederates fought dismounted. Being a courier to Gen. Martin, I was able to see it all. The lines met about midway between the hills, and from early in the forenoon until about 4 o'clock P. M. they struggled with each other, back and forth, one side and then the other gaining the advantage, which was heralded with cheers. It reminded one of two snakes writhing and twisting about each other in deadly conflict. It was a gallant sight, worthy of the heroic people that could produce such soldiers. You could see the flags of the opposing lines as they advanced and receded alternately. For the first time I noticed the great advantage of our uniform. Though more distant, the Federals in their blue coats looked black. They stood out prominently as a mark for the artillery especially, while one had to look closely to find the Confederate line, if at any distance, so indistinct was it. The struggle got closer as evening advanced. We pressed them back toward their hills, every inch disputed stubbornly. Brave fellows (they were Western men), at every vantage in the ground they would hold on like bull-dogs, and refuse to give way. But they were unfortunate. When hardest pressed Gen. Forrest, who, with his usual dexterity of movement, had executed orders to turn their right flank, not only did so, but attacked them in the rear, and their cavalry deserted them; but they would not yield. Falling back higher up the hill, they rallied around a ledge of rocks, and repulsed repeated charges made with that reckless *elan* on which the Southern troops prided themselves. At this moment I saw one of those sights in battle which soldiers remember. My general was sitting quietly on horseback in the turnpike, surrounded by his staff and couriers. Hearing the rattling of sabers to the left, as a battery of artillery unlimbered to the right and poured a deadly fire upon the hill, Van Dorn and his staff approached. Mounted on a favorite blooded mare, flushed with victory in his grasp, he was the picture of the cavalier, in his

full general's uniform, buff sash, gauntlets and chevrons; the slouched hat, from which flowed a long black plume and golden tassels, set jauntily over his long brown hair. Regardless of the fence, he cleared it at a bound, and alighted among us as if a part of his horse. In that storm of shot, saluting his subordinates as if on review, he asked if the reserves were ready. "Order them up at a gallop, and charge," said he to a staff officer; and sent off another to press forward the whole dismounted line. Just then the Federals were driven from their last stronghold, as Forrest's guns were heard in their rear, and we rode forward in a slackening fire to receive the surrender. My diary says: "Upward of 2,000 infantry surrendered with their colors and all officers, one brigadier general [error: Coburn was colonel commanding], three colonels, etc.; having saved their artillery and cavalry. "What is more sad than a defeat, except a victory!" Our men were allowed to strip the dead enemy upon the field --a burning disgrace to our honor. Our loss is heavy, but the enemy lost many more. "The sight of the field after the battle is impressed on my mind. Where the last stand was made the ground was covered with dead, blue and gray jackets commingled. One poor fellow was so magnificent a specimen of physical manhood that I stopped my horse and looked down on his body, through which a fatal bullet had passed, just cutting the brass breast-plate stamped "U. S." on his bosom. He lay with his head up hill, still grasping his rifle, his blue eyes open, and the expression of grim determination yet on his face. Was he, too, robbed of the uniform he had honored? I lived, however, to look with less disgust upon the practice, and to understand the philosophy which teaches a half-clothed victim, bitten by cold, that a warm coat is more serviceable to him than to a dead enemy.

Our adversaries did not let us rest, however, in the beautiful land we possessed. I find these diary entries: "9th March. The enemy made an advance in strong force on Spring Hill this morning, and our brigade, with one other, was ordered out to the pike leading to the place."— "10th March, night. Four miles from Columbia, beyond the [Duck] river, the whole corps is drawn up in line of battle, awaiting the enemy, who are in sight this side of Rutherford's Creek, expecting a fight tomorrow. Our position is a strong one, but the enemy is reported to have 20,000, fully two to our one. "These movements resulted in no conflict, however, until the 10th of April, when Van Dorn moved upon Franklin, a fortified point on Harpeth River where it is crossed by the turnpike road, a short distance south of Nashville. It is the same place made famous by the attack of Hood in

John Dillard, Jr.

December, 1864. The Twenty-eighth had received its cognomen of "the bloody" in derision, and unjustly, for some blunder of its commanding officer at Vicksburg in the spring of 1862, and by its efficient services on the Mississippi had been unable to wipe out the undeserved stigma, until now. Van Dorn determined to make one of his sudden attacks on this post, and on this occasion, a rare thing during the war, used cavalry as such, and not as mounted infantry. A force of about 700 infantry was deployed in the plain south of the town, covered by batteries on the north bank of the river. There was offered an open field and a fair fight. The Twenty-eighth was selected to charge, and did so with such gallantry and loss, overcoming their adversaries, that a complimentary field order was issued. The batteries made it impossible to hold the town, however, after taking it; but, though driven back, the "Bloody Twenty-eighth" ever after rejoiced in its name.

VI. Hospital Experiences

The soldier dreads the prison of his enemy only more than the hospital of his friends; yet, in looking back, I find many rays of light brightening the gloom of the latter. I was fortunate enough to escape the former. At the time of the advance upon Spring Hill, on the 9th of March, 1863, I was taken violently but not dangerously ill, and was sent to the hospital at Columbia. Extracts from my diary probably tell my experiences better than any attempt at a connected narrative:

"Columbia (Tenn.), March 9, 1863.- * * I got permission to come to the hospital here, but wisely came to the kind old Unionist (Mr. Park), who gave the guard quarters when last here; and he has furnished me a neat, comfortable room, etc. (vacated by his son for my benefit)."

"Sunday, 15. -- My abode here has been little varied with adventures worthy of mention. Three nights in succession I have lazily fallen asleep upon the floor before the fire. Have read Rienzi, and Read's Good Fight. I am now reading that quaint production of Sterne's -- Tristram Shandy."

"Monday, 16, night. -- I have laid Tristram Shandy aside for the night, and wish pleasant dreams to 'my uncle Toby,' who has just gotten through with his poor brother officer, Le Fevre."

"Thursday, 19. -- The old gentleman (Mr. Park) told me yesterday that he could not keep my two remaining horses. He told me also, very good-naturedly, that he wished also to get rid of my boy,--he had too many mouths to feed already,--so Dick is off now trying to get a place to work for his food. I'm in a bad fix; these dilemmas, and only $25 in my pocket. If the old gentleman is tired of me, he must say so, or I'll never let him know

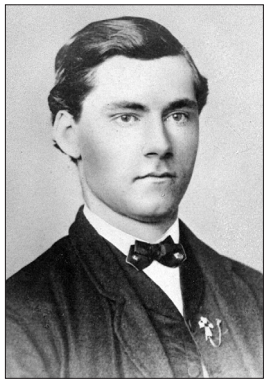
I think it. His son Jim is a generous, rollicking fellow; would not hear of my leaving this (his) room to go into the office, and, when I mentioned as a reason that I could scarcely afford this room, hooted at the idea of pay. Ben (my blanket-chum) told me bad news today. A few men under our Lieut.-Col. S. W. Ferguson were attacked by six regiments of Federals, first at Smith's and then at Hood's Lane, where he lost his artillery. It is said no damage is done *Sycamores,* but I don't expect to see a shingle on end if I ever live to get back."

"Friday, 20-- Left Mr. Park's this morning, after the old lady had well filled my haversack with cakes and biscuit, and my canteen with milk. I reported at the hospital, where I learned that all the sick will be removed to Pulaski. Gen. Bragg has issued an order that no soldier, officer or private, shall be allowed to stay in a private house. It is gratifying to see how the ladies attend to the poor devils here, sick and wounded, both friend and foe. Crowds are here all the time, attending them in woman's peculiar sympathizing way--bringing them bouquets, and. what is better, kind looks and words. About 4 P. M., upon inquiring about forage for my horses, I was directed to come out and stay in the country tonight. I did so, and after being turned off at two places, I appeared at an old widow lady's (Mrs. Young's), and was admitted by the intercession of three pretty girls (as they told me), with whom I have joyously spent the evening. Between laughter and music, bedtime soon came. I have bid them good night, and truly wish it them."

The next morning I should have taken my way to the hospital at Pulaski; but the diary says: "Choosing rather to take advantage of Miss Alice's (the widow's pretty daughter's) kind invitation to remain, I did so, and hated to part with her," and her companions the morning after. The episode will never fade from memory. The widow's old-fashioned brick house sat on a beautiful eminence, reached from the pike by an avenue of locusts. She was a Unionist, too, and was loath to receive a rebel and a stranger within her gates; but her heart gave way probably to my youthfulness and weak condition. Miss Alice's politics were not very decided, I fear, and a visit from a gentleman, though a stranger, was not unwelcome in the dull and hazardous times which war had brought to all country homes. Dick and I reveled in the genial hospitality at our disposal; but never met them afterward.

Arrived at Pulaski, a pretty little town south of Columbia, in one of the loveliest portions of the State, I found the deserted college buildings turned into a hospital, with few of the necessary appointments of such an institution. It was crowded with sick and wounded, both blue and gray. The ladies here, as at Columbia, and indeed all over the South, devoted themselves to the service of the soldiers. The town and surrounding country

was intensely Southern in sentiment; but they showed no distinction between "Yanks" and "Rebs." The rations for those convalescent as I was, were wretched, as both armies had foraged on the country; and I find this entry the 26th of March: "I have been moping about the hospital, playing wounded soldier upon the ladies, but with little effect, as they feed only those who lie in bed, groan and make show of great misery. Crutches have no effect upon the charitable fairs!" My impudence looks huge at the distance of over twenty years; but soldiers understood the maxim that "all is fair in war." Pulaski was the home of a most elegant circle of society, among which were a bevy of the handsomest young ladies it has ever been my fortune to meet, the memory of whom has not yet faded away. Nor can the memory of their sisters, whom I knew in the midst of war, from the Potomac to the Mississippi, from 1861 to 1865, ever become dim. If the Confederate soldier had nothing else to be proud of, the record of the women of the South is sufficient. Their devotion and heroism has never been surpassed. They literally buckled the sword upon their lovers, husbands and fathers, and had them go forth to battle for their country; and in the final crash, when strong men cowered, they remained dauntless and defiant. They deserved the homage they received from their men, not merely for their courage, but for a delicacy and purity unsurpassed, if equaled, by their sisters of any age or country. The "chivalry" of Southern men, so much misunderstood in general, and scarcely less burlesqued by pompous fools who aped what they could not attain, was a virtue which our women inspired, and had its beneficial uses in elevating them into inviolable divinities. Woman, high or low, was sacred to the Southerner, and doubly so to the Southern soldier, who remembers those who wreathed his banners, and blessed them for the battle--smiled at his victories, and wept for his defeats--with a sincerity and fervor which a quarter of a century does not lessen. They were more than worthy of all which man could render!



John Towler

When I became convalescent enough to visit, I reveled in the society of the Pulaski ladies. The $25 (in Confederate scrip) in my pocket went for such things as I could procure to make myself presentable.

Borrowing clothing among comrades was customary for this purpose. *Ecce!*

"May 4 -- It was useless to offer $10 to boot between my old pants and anyone else's today --Yankees or any. I had to accompany Dr. Hogg to Dr. Battes' with a patch on my unmentionables -- covered for this time by Dr. Gooch's cloth coat." It

seems that I succeeded in making a trade with one of the prisoners."

"Tuesday, May 21-- Walked up town today to have a pair of regulation pants fixed, for which I paid five of my remaining $15, to 'splurge,' during my convalescence, among the fair ones of this section. I witnessed a sad scene this evening. A fine young fellow was wounded on the 10th at the attack on Franklin. Day before yesterday I saw his leg taken off above the knee. This evening I saw him die without a friend near him."

"Wednesday, 22-- Spent the day in convalescent laziness around the hospital, most of the time in conversation with an Indiana captain who thinks me (justly) an incorrigible 'sesesh,' and hopes for the restoration of the Union. Pish!" It was one of my chief amusements to visit "the Yankee Ward," filled with the wounded from Thompson's Station. They were curiosities to me, having met but few Northern men, and those only prisoners for a short while. With these I could converse, and could study their differences from "our people," which I found were marked. They were treated precisely as we were, by the ladies as well as the officers, and exchanged poor courtesies with their equally disabled captors.

While always strongly maintaining their side of our family quarrel, they did so with the best humor, and scouted the idea that they were fighting to free the black man but only to make us remain Americans. I remember their cheerfulness -- that sort of hard tenacity under misfortunes characteristic of the Northerner -- which they displayed. They had a queer air in their hospitality, which they always exhibited on a visit from me. I was always greeted with some such expression as: "Helloa, Reb; how many Yanks do you want to eat this morning? Come in; we've got 'oodles' (plenty) of tobacco." An appropriate answer to this greeting -- most probably a regret that I could not eat the whole Yankee nation -- being returned, our pipes would be filled and a circle of Blue and Gray would discuss the Revolution, the Articles of Confederation, Constitution, Missouri Compromise and State's Rights by the hour, rarely losing temper. If any did, some cooler head would turn aside anger with a camp joke, or one of his own side would quiet the belligerent by reminding him that any quantity of fighting awaited him at the front. I then and since the war have remarked how few Northern soldiers (I do not mean politicians, even if they served in the army) failed to credit their Southern countrymen with the sturdiest honesty. If they did not return the deserved compliment quite so generally, the fact that their Anglo-Saxon hearts were fired by the humiliation of invasion and finally a defeat the most complete which ever fell upon any people, should entitle them to some forgiveness. But let us return to my convalescent frolics."

"Monday, April 2-- I am recovering but slowly. Miss Amanda K. sent me milk and butter today. I called on her with Dr. Hogg Saturday

night, and Mrs. Batte having invited the' chibang' (the name given the officers' quarters where I was housed with the surgeons) to tea, sent for us, and we had a merry little dance."

"Thursday, 30-- Nailing and I got our craniums done up by the town barber, Nathan, and called on *la belle* Kennedy. Coming back we heard all sorts of stories about the approach of the Yanks. Sent for my horses, and had things ready for a 'skedaddle,' but was pleasantly disgusted by the fact at 12 o'clock at night that an old citizen had seen a cavalry regiment on a hill, and jumping on his horse, and running him nearly to death, reported to the commandant of the post that the enemy was at hand, rapidly advancing, who at once threw out pickets and gave the alarm."

I had been favored by being allowed to occupy a room over headquarters near the main building, but I found this entry: "6th May. Orders this morning to remove by night and take up lodgings in the hospital, where lice are as thick as hops, and Drs. McMillan and Talbut with Apothecary Spottswood, take possession." This was followed by bad news from *Sycamores*: *"Saturday, May 9*. -- My country is laid waste. Six thousand Federals at Greenville, and every house west of Deer Creek from Courtenay's to Dr. Thomas'--25 miles--in ashes, and the people flying in dismay!" But a soldier's life is a reckless one. At the time I believed this, though greatly exaggerated, to be true, yet when able kept up my gaieties."

"Thursday, 14--At a picnic near here in a beautiful grove; music and dancing. Save uniforms, there was little that was martial there; it was a civic scene."

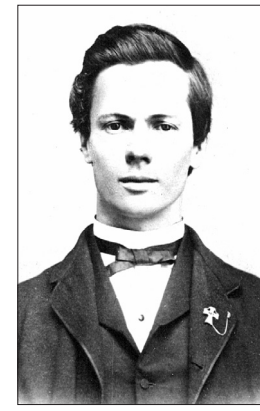
"Sunday, 17-- 'make hay' unto the ladies who attend the hospital here. The other convalescents have to grab corn bread and bacon. I fly around and do any little thing for them a gentleman would do through politeness, and have got their good-will, so that I am given strawberries and cream, pie, and all sorts of nice things!" It seems that this favoritism was interfered with the next day. "Rogers, the old steward, is sent off, and a new fellow, appointed by the War Department, issues orders that No.3 must not receive favors at the ladies' hands, but must play dog in grabbing with the other convalescents. I don't expect to stay many days longer; but I will spend every cent in my pocket (say $5) rather than be subjected to any such thing. I do not, although a private, choose to be made a hog of. It is galling to a gentleman to be absolutely subject to the orders of men, who in private life were so far his inferiors. How much a man undergoes for a country." It seems that the terms on which I stood with the ladies, and the privileges allowed me by the surgeons, subjected me to further contumely, which I remember was keenly felt, because powerless to resent it.

"*Wednesday, 20* -- More about being a private. Talbutt [one of the surgeons,

from my county] told me that Major F--, post commandant, three times suggested the propriety of having me arrested for going up town. Dr. Cowan, a gentleman, and an officer of equal rank, introduced me to this *gentleman,* and I have more than once met him on equal footing as a guest at the houses of the *elite* of this place. He showed that he did not wish to know a private, and I therefore took the weapon from his hands on that score by first 'cutting' him. To submit to this from a low puppy of a foreigner is truly exasperating, when one knows his hands are tied." I do not give his name, because my boyish temper may have caused me to do him injustice; but he was an appointee, per policy, by the government, over the head of natives,--a class of officer which little understood the volunteer soldier, and was as little liked by him. I remember that he was soon brought to his senses by the ladies, who boasted that they made no distinction for rank, and all of whom probably had near relatives serving as privates. Those ladies who showed any preference for officers were mercilessly ridiculed by the privates as victims of the disease of *button on the brain*, of which I find a rude drawing on the fly-leaf, exhibiting a staff button embedded in the brain of a female dressed in a colonel's uniform.

VII. March To Mississippi, Post Service

The sunshine and shadows of Pulaski now vanished however, and though not fit for field duty, I was discharged on the 21st of May, as my division was ordered to Mississippi, to participate in the Vicksburg campaign, which it did with distinction; and with sad regrets I bade farewell to the fair ones of old Giles County. My comrades were glad to see me and Dick on the street ready to join them: "Saw the regiment, pass at 1 o'clock whooping and yelling-calling out from head of column to rear—"How're Harry!" Brave boys -- the surrender found many of them in nameless graves from Vicksburg to Dalton, Atlanta and Nashville. We made the march in great glee, cheered by the ladies of every house and hamlet; but it was a forced march.



Robert D. Farish

"*Tuesday, 26* -- Rode 'till after 1 this a.m. without anything to eat, and only nine ears of corn for our horses; are to travel 27 miles today over a barren, without anything for breakfast. We lay by in the day, and march late at night. Only soldiers can conceive the inconvenience of camping after dark when everything is in a hubbub."

"*Friday, 29*.—We are ready to march into Columbus, Miss. Gen. Jackson says we must do

so with music and flying colors. Glorious news from Vicksburg: Grant surrendered -- six unsuccessful attacks; Gen. Johnston in his rear, and a flag of truce requesting to bury the dead and carry off the wounded. Mr. Grant has a hard man to deal with. Tar had to be burned to counteract the stench of the putrefied dead. Gen. Price has Helena, Ark., secured."

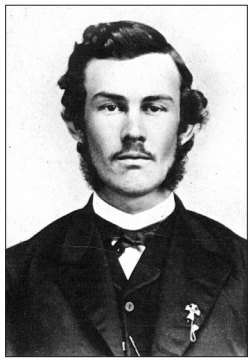
By order of Gen. Jackson we passed through Columbus with solemn silence: "The women looked really disappointed that we did not holler and yell a little. Famished, we went into pleasant camps on the Tombigbee River, where the whole division, almost, went in swimming -- a real luxury. The ladies furnished the whole division with dinner, but indiscreetly sent it to headquarters for distribution, where the staff and officers' hived' the delicacies. No cakes and roasted turkey reached the privates." This shows that the officers were soldiers as well as the privates, and knew how to forage even on comrades. None of them but our favorites would have gotten a morsel had we been given the power of distribution! But this did not chagrin us like our enforced silence. The streets and balconies were crowded with the beauty of a territory never harassed by war, and to be forced to pass through the throng, allowed only an occasional bow or raising of the hat, was an outrage to any occasion, -- and this one where these lovely ladies were dining a whole division! The boys never obeyed the order afterward, and never fully forgave Jackson for it, though he was a fine officer, a "West Pointer," and too often treated the volunteer as a regular just on the wrong occasion.

My command left me, hapless boy, a delirious inmate of the hospital, on the 31st. I was, against my will, no participant in those arduous scenes in the Vicksburg campaign, and after partial recovery, complicated by poisonous vaccine which nearly cost me my life, I was placed on detached duty at Columbus, being unfit for the field, until February, 1884. Hard as it was, I preferred service as a private in the field to that as a quartermaster's clerk on post duty; but I had to submit. It is doubtful whether I should have recovered but for the kindness of the good matron who called the attention of a lady, Mrs. Gray A. Chandler, who had asked to take some patient to her house for care. Through the influence of her family with Dr. Lipscomb, the post surgeon, I was allowed this privilege. What relief was the cool, shaded room in that old brick house, with all the neatness of an "old-fashioned Southern home," after the heat and smell of the hospital! I was installed at my "army home" as one of the family on the 13th of June, until I returned to my regiment. The gentle kindness I there received can never be forgotten; and that good lady and I yet correspond affectionately after twenty-three years have passed. God bless her, and all like her, North and South, who took compassion on the sick and wounded soldier during our dreadful civil war! At that time my father and his family

and servants were refugees at Jackson, Miss., and on its capture, from there to Demopolis, Ala., well nigh in destitution, our home being in the hands of the enemy.

"Monday, June 22 -- Jimmy (my brother) arrived Saturday with money. I was glad to see him really, but he brings unpleasant news. Father and Jule (a brother) are just recovering from severe fever. My command has been in two fights since it left. Another slaughter-pen at Vicksburg; 10,000 Yankees killed. Oh, how I wish to be doing my duty once more! May God soon heal my sufferings! I am so thankful that they (the family) are all safe, at least for the time. My enemies have done a thing which God help me to forgive them. They have dug into--desecrated the graves of my little brother and sister--to find gold. How hard it is to pray for such enemies!" My father would never allow the graves to be filled, and they were in that condition when we turned our backs on old *Sycamores* for the frontiers of California after the surrender. We then mistook this brutality as the general sentiment of the Northern soldiery. At this day there are members of the Blue and Gray camp to which I belong who would seize from me the privilege yet to chastise those brutes who disgraced their uniform by such barbarity. In the meantime, I watched from my sick bed the momentous events of the day.

"Thursday, 25 -- News good from all quarters. Lee sending Stuart into Pennsylvania, and all cheerfully at Vicksburg. God be praised! But it will take many victories to compensate for the loss of that Napoleon of America--Stonewall Jackson." But defeat, not victory, came.



George Perkins

"Saturday, July 4 --I have nothing unusual to mention." The heavy tidings were suppressed.

"*Tuesday, 7*—It was rumored last night that Vicksburg had fallen, but it was contradicted this morning. This evening it is indubitable. My State is in the utmost jeopardy. Father telegraphs for Jimmy--says he is going East at once. Sick, no transportation, no means, and every obstacle in his way, I pity and pray God to help him. I am not yet cast down. I trust in the justice of God, and believe that He will not let us be crushed. *Vanitas vanitatum!* Napoleon was correct when he said that God was always on the side of the most cannon."

"Wednesday, 8 -- Saw Jimmy off this morning. Poor Dick shed tears at finding that he could not go and see his children. I pitied him. Saw little of Miss Helen (Mrs. Chandler's niece), she being engaged in the trying and friendly task of consoling a Rachel of this cruel war. God, let me take my stand once more among my country's defenders." On the

10th of August I was sufficiently recovered for light office work, and was detailed as clerk to Capt. Henry Quitman, assistant quartermaster, son of the celebrated general of the Mexican war, and served in that capacity until my return to my regiment. Now began what was in reality a happy oasis in my army life. Columbus was one of those old time Southern towns to which wealthy planters from a rich country around had flocked, composing one of the most delightful circles of society it has ever been my fortune to mingle in. There was a dearth of *beaux*, it is true, supplied only by the officers of the post and hospital, and the soldiers on sick und wounded furlough, but gaieties went on despite the misfortunes of the country, as if all was glorious conquest. No man fit for service not a soldier was recognized by the ladies, whose custom it was to send by a servant to any laggard some such token of his cowardice as a miniature petticoat, and they disdained to be seen with an escort not in uniform. Despite the universal custom of the ladies to make no distinction against privates, I felt the desire natural to young soldiers to be an officer, and, by advice of Capt. Quitman, applied to be appointed a cadet in the army--the Military School of the Confederacy, but never heard from it. I could not then understand how the government had no time to make an embryo lieutenant of cavalry out of a reasonably good private.

I find on a fly-leaf of the dingy book containing the above notes the following:

SIGMA CHIS IN CONFEDERATE STATES ARMY

1 J. L. Taylor, Brevet Second Lieutenant
Company A, 11th Mississippi Volunteer Infantry.
2 W. C. Barnes, Sergeant, Company A
11th Mississippi Volunteer Infantry.
3 ---Franklin, Sergeant, Company A
11th Mississippi Volunteer Infantry.
4 Baxter McFarland, First Lieutenant
Company H, Mississippi Volunteer Infantry.
5 Henry Ewing, Captain
Aid to Brigadier General Marmaduke.
6 ----Driver, First Lieutenant and Adjutant
1st Tennessee Infantry.
7 Evan J. Shelby, Second Lieutenant
Company E, 28th Mississippi Volunteer Cavalry.
8 T. N. Fowler, Second Lieutenant
Company D, 28th Mississippi Volunteer Cavalry.
9 Harry Yerger, Sergeant, Company D

28th Mississippi Volunteer Cavalry.
10 H. S. Dixon, Private, Company D
28th Mississippi Volunteer Cavalry.

On March 23 this memo is made: "Today I saw a young Kentucky surgeon who told me of Wheeler, of my chapter, now in Bragg's Signal Corps." I never met this Sig. however. In the same book appears an account *current*, some items in which may be curiosities: "2 plugs tobacco, $4; halter, $5; 2 undershirts, $25; bridle, $15; calf-skin (for boots), $45; dying moustache, $2 (on July 24, Aug. 31, Sept. 14, Oct. 2 !); 10 lbs. smoking tobacco, $30; 1 silk handkerchief, $10; 1 pr. shoes (Dick), $15; 1 gold pen, $20; 1 set C. S. buttons, $60; 1 bottle whisky (half water), $8." That moustache--what concern it was to the boy of twenty, and he in the cavalry. Without a moustache how could I sing that jolly camp song Jeb Stuart sent through the army?

"If you want to have a jolly time
Gine the cavalry—"

Of course I went to the barber to help me make it visible, and on one occasion at Columbus, when Gen. Ruggles gave a grand military ball, to which I was invited, and was to escort a lovely damsel, the rascal just before night ruined my pet with nitrate of silver improvised for dye, which took it out by the roots, and made me a sight to behold for many a day! Divers applications of cream and (ladies,' not gun) powder, administered by my kind hostess, enabled me to make my appearance late in the evening, where the weak brilliance of tallow candles aided the obscurity I sought in my wounded condition. I never could catch that man afterward. He could out-dodge a rabbit in a briar patch. I was, unfortunately, not so adroit in evading my lady friends, who were excessive in their mischievous attentions, their merry eyes twinkling while pretending to sympathize with my misfortunes. Alacka-day, many of them are doubtless grandmothers now, and I am not far from the time when I may be! I make a less youthful, but not less hearty, obeisance to them from across the continent, and say, God bless them all. They had made true for my enthusiastic boyish nature Bulwer's lines in the Lady of Lyons:

"The man who sets his heart upon a woman,
Is a chameleon, and doth feed on air;

* * * * * * * * *

Rosy with hope or green with jealousy,

Or pallid with despair-just as the gale
Varies from north to south--from heat to cold."

VIII. Sherman's Raid

On the 6th of February, 1864, my detail and my joyous stay at Columbus ended, and I began a lonely and melancholy march to my command, which was near the western side of the State. Heavy tidings reached me on the way of the rapid advance of the enemy in overwhelming force from Vicksburg upon Jackson, the capitol, and my birthplace.

On the 8th I "met a lieutenant colonel from Canton who told me Jackson, after a disastrous fight for us, especially in the cavalry, was occupied by the enemy."

"Tuesday, 9, Carthage.--More disastrous reports from stragglers. I am told that my command is beyond Jackson in the enemy's rear; that our forces had fallen back from Morton, and that the enemy would probably occupy Hillsboro (thirty-five miles from here) tonight. I am told that my best friends are no doubt dead, and that one of my few earthly possessions, my mule, was in all probability in the enemy's hands." My solicitude for that mule can be understood by an ex-confederate!"

"Friday, 12, Meridian -- Reached here today. Found that the enemy were in hot pursuit and everything in confusion. Met my old neighbor and former chief, Maj. Gen. French, who stopped and greeted me cordially--for a general to a private. Brig. Gen. Watts, of the State troops, with whom I conversed, was the sourest looking man I ever saw. Separated from his command, which is not armed, and complaining of the Governor and telling me of inefficiency!"

"Saturday, 13—I have fallen in with three messmates who bring to memory much that is pleasant of past camp scenes when poor Nat was with us." Let me say a word of him. He was my bosom friend from early boyhood. Our fathers had "settled" plantations only a mile or so apart when we were but a few years old, and we had grown up the closest chums. Descended from the Lees of Virginia, he had those sentiments and habits by birth, as by education, which endeared him to all who knew him. So handsome, so joyous, so brave was Nat, that he was a general favorite in the company. The stupidity of an officer who commanded a detachment on the Coldwater in Mississippi during the fall of 1862, who neglected to post pickets, resulted in a night surprise of his camp, in which Nat lost his life. That is nearly a quarter of a century ago; yet his image has not faded from my mind.

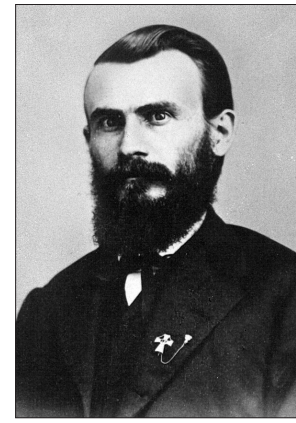
"Sunday, 14 --Left wagon bivouac at sunrise with Lieut. Hill and squad for the Brigade, and have come about forty-five miles--to Enter-

prise. Skirmish at Marion today. It is uncertain yet where the command is. Saw Loring's Division pass through Old Marion this morning in old soldier fashion, band playing and colors flying." This was one of the finest military scenes I ever witnessed. Loring was an "old army" officer and a Mexican war veteran. He had lost an arm in Mexico, and was certainly a fine commander for his Division of Veterans. It seemed more like a holiday than a retreat, save their uniform and equipments. Tattered and torn, mud-stained and greasy were these grim old "infants," as we troopers called them. They marched along with as regular a tramp as if on review, cheering like demons going to victory, while they knew they were too weak to do more than engage the attention of the overwhelming force pressing on them.

"Monday, 15, Old Marion-- I met Ben Offutt and Grayson Carter this morning. I was gladdened at meeting my old friends, but I am sorely grieved for my country." It seems that a foreboding of the end was upon me as I add: "How desponding is the position of that man who stands in the gloom of twilight, knowing that the blackness of night must come." On the 16th we reached the regiment, and on the 17th --"about sunrise we left camp near Lauderdale, and have traversed, at a walk, trot and gallop, alternately, some twenty miles, chasing some Yankees reported, and this evening drove in their pickets near Marion. After standing in line-of-battle a short while we returned to camp in a hubbub, for want of wood and forage. Coming I took six bundles of fodder, knowing that if I did not the enemy would, and that my good mare, Rosa, needed them." It may be remarked that I was not in the enemy's country!

"Friday, 19 -- Made a long march today. Not so cold as yesterday, yet very biting. I lent my blanket to one of the men who has no overcoat, and one of my gloves to Ambrose Hunter, who has none, and put my hands alternately in my bosom for warmth." This was a young gentleman--a mere lad--but a brave soldier, who was captured the next August and died the following winter at Camp Chase.

Sherman pressed hard on the heels of Loring and French, who retarded his progress, wherever possible, with their small divisions. To aid him, Gen.Grierson made a raid as far south from near Memphis as Aberdeen, requiring the cavalry to be sent to the assistance of Gen. Forrest, who was opposing him. We made forced marches, but could not traverse the distance in time.



George M. Peek

"Sunday, 21, Artesia-- We left Macon

early, and passed gaily through Crawfordsville--ladies handing flowers and we cheering. Enemy reported ten miles north of here. It is said they were reinforced last night, and now number 20,000. I trust in God that we may drive them back. The *morale* of the cavalry here is not good; desertions are frequent."

"Monday 22, Starkville -- 'Boots-and-saddles' at twelve last night, and we galloped to this place to find that Forrest had whipped back the terrible column spoken of in my last." I have never been able to surmise why Sherman did not march on to Meridian or Mobile, both of which were defenseless, except so far as these two divisions of infantry, with little aid from Forrest and Jackson, with their depleted cavalry divisions, which could not be spared from the northern portion of the State. The poor people took a long breath of satisfaction, however, when Grierson went back to the Tennessee and Sherman back over his desolated line of March to Vicksburg. A little breathing spell was now allowed, which was enjoyed in soldierly fashion. The command was ordered to the vicinity of Canton, Miss., the 24th of February. Now came a famous "straggle" with a brother Sigma Chi, Harry Yerger of Eta. He, Nat Lee and I had been "boys together" in all the jolly meaning of that term, for boys raised on plantations in *antebellum* times, and our memories teemed with pranks we had played on "Nanny," in fact on everybody save our fathers, whose high-mightinesses were beyond our daring. We were both desperately in love (in fact I can scarcely remember the time when we had not been with one or more), and were, of course, mutual confidants and sympathizers. My enchantment was at Columbus. His was at Jackson. Now was our chance. *We* understood, of course, that Grierson and Sherman were disposed of; that our services would not be needed for a few days longer than we would otherwise be absent, and, being absent on duty, that we would not be reported absent without leave. And was I not an officer--mark you, an acting lieutenant--vested by another officer of the same lofty rank with the most tyrannical of military powers! This blurred old diary gives some glimpses of the adventure.

"Sunday, 28 -- Reveille was sounded at 3 a.m. on the 25th, and after the column was in motion toward Kosciusko Lieut. Fowler (one of the Sigma Chis we made in Constantine Chapter) sent Hal and me back to the vicinity of Starkville to "press" a horse (Fowler wanted a horse), I playing lieutenant and impressing officer. Having gotten some clothes washed we "pressed" the horse that evening, and determined to pay Columbus a visit. We did so, marching all Thursday night, traversing about seventy-five miles and reaching Columbus about daybreak on the 26th. We crossed the pontoon bridge over the Tombigbee, and arrived at my 'army home' in time for Hal to follow my example in doing some cleansing.

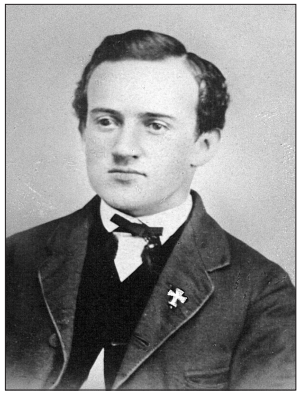
Our reception was all that could be asked. Things were sadly changed though. The approach of the enemy created a panic which sent away many familiar faces. I might have expected it. The enchantress was gone! A little note, however, was left, which fell far short of compensation. Yesterday we left for Nashville Ferry, about 2 p.m., and stayed with Mr. C. at his plantation last night, from whence we have come today, not having been able to get any more horses (because we could not find them!) Knowing that my money was out, Mrs. C.--God bless her--just before we started came to me, and, opening her purse, told me to supply myself. I objected; she insisted. I urged that father might not be able to get any to her in payment. She wanted to make me promise to let him know nothing about it, and would not let me take $20, but forced $60 upon me. How can I ever repay that? "Money is inadequate." Many an old soldier of the South can recall kindnesses like this from the peerless women of his country! We proceeded to the regiment.

"Tuesday, March 1 -- Traveled twenty-five miles today in a cold pelting rain."

"Wednesday, 2 -- A good march today in pleasant weather. My old friend Hal is excellent company. We talk about old times and laugh heartily." What a pleasure it would be to chat over the reminiscences of those boyish days. But more than half a continent divides us. The next night we were entertained at Canton by Gen. Tupper and his lady the parents of Mr. Tullius F. Tupper, a Sigma Chi of Hal's chapter, then a Confederate and now an Episcopal clergyman of Little Rock, Arkansas. My diary mentions that Mrs. Tupper was "full of what the Yankees did while passing through," and adds that "the enemy is reported beyond Livingston and Vernon in retreat on Vicksburg. Hal may be prevented from accomplishing his 'run off' to Jackson to see his ladylove. Better luck attend his exploit than did mine!"

"Friday, 4, near Livingston -- Left Canton this morning, and am now in one of Cousin John Robinson's elegantly furnished rooms. Hal has gone to Jackson. I met him in Livingston in the morning. Our whole route today--seventeen miles--was one scene of havoc and devastation. Cousin John has lost heavily. His elegant mansion may fall a sacrifice next." It did not, however. But his wealth, which was all in plantations and negroes, melted away, and years before his death, after the war, he had become more than bankrupt, and left his children, young and helpless, utterly penniless. I find no mention of an incident related to me by his father-in-law, Dr. Jiggits, of Livingston, of his experience with the enemy while in his once beautiful village. The old gentleman was one of those men of peculiarly marked southern characteristics. I think he was a Kentuckian. Eccentric, excitable, but well educated especially in all those fundamental

principles of the constitution and laws guarding the rights of the citizen; hot tempered and positive, --ready at all times fearlessly to resent any sign of trespass upon personal even more than upon property rights,--he was as poorly qualified to bear tamely the rude intrusions of an invading army on his ease and dignity as any man I ever saw. If I remember alright he was also a Union man--dissenting from secession with irate positiveness, and felt himself entitled to peculiar protection from the Union forces. He was also an eminent and very enthusiastic Mason. We rode up to his respectable old brick dwelling to pay our respects. He had known our fathers in "the flush times," and, as was the custom of the day, he met us at the threshold, with every welcome to hospitality. The poorness of what he had to offer he begun at once to blame the enemy for. "The vandals, sir!" said he; "will you believe me when I tell you that although I told them I was a non-combatant; that I was an old man, and had helpless women and children on my hands to feed, they instantly flooded my premises, and even my dwelling, and took just what they wanted. They ransacked every drawer; they took everything to eat on the place--not even an egg or chicken was left; drove off my, horses and cows, and, when I remonstrated, threatened to burn down my house. I proclaimed that I was a Mason. I asked if there were no Masons among them, and at last found their officer--a major--who was a Mason, but he turned a deaf ear to me, sir, and I told him if that was Masonry and these were Union soldiers I was a secessionist. I was helpless, sir; utterly helpless, else I would not have submitted to their outrages. Come in, gentlemen, but you will find nothing but devastation." We accepted the doctor's hospitality, however, such as he was able to give, and damned the Yankees no little as our only means of consolation. That night we reached the camp of the regiment, eight miles distant, where the doleful record is made: "Hal went to Jackson. My good wishes did him no good. Misfortune attended him; he is disconsolate."



William Smith

Shortly after, another messmate, Ben, is an unfortunate as to more substantial matters. He is dismounted. Our government furnished us no horses. We had to do that ourselves as best we could. It is recorded on

"Thursday, l0-- Ben, in a case of necessity, 'procured' (that is what we called it) a horse some miles back on our line of march here. The owner, coming into camp day before yesterday, Fowler sent a courier to Ben, who sent the sought property to the rear. Night coming, the plan was that I should take the horse to Cousin John's. I did so, arriving at his house

at 11 p.m. Thus I escaped the tremendous rain yesterday. After dinner I returned to camp. (There are regrets, of course.) This is a thing I regret. I felt that I only served my friend, not defrauded the citizen. No one, until it is tried, knows how hard it is to keep up with a cavalry regiment on foot. "I forget now whether" the cit.," poor fellow, got his horse or not. I expect not, for officers and men thought that whatever the country afforded was theirs. The enemy thought so too, and between us the poor people had a hard time of it.

Unless it was intended for a mere marauding expedition, I could never understand Sherman's raid to Meridian. He could have forced a battle, and had enough men to have won it, but did not. He only marched from Vicksburg two-thirds across the State, laying it waste, and returned, with his enemy at his heels, and suffered greatly from a running fight going and coming. From exaggerated reports which reached us as we lay in camp, his troops seem to have been dissatisfied.

"Wednesday, l6 -- Fowler is just from Jackson. He saw a gentleman recently from Vicksburg, who says great dissatisfaction rages in the Yankee army there about the failure of their inland expedition. Sherman and Lincoln in a great contention about it. The enemy there confess that it is no use longer to contend against the rebellion; France, they say, has recognized us, being prompted by interest in the Mexican question; and that an order to the Governor of Kentucky from the President to emancipate the black man has caused a great ebullition, the Governor refusing to obey. Indiana and Illinois have sided with Kentucky, and the Yanks say it will take the whole of the Army of the Mississippi to quell it. If this be true, prospects are brightening. McPher son told this gentleman that if he had men who, under similar circumstances, would fight as our cavalry corps did, 'that he could take hell.'"

We did our duty well enough; but this was exaggeration. And the rest of it? France recognizes us? Napoleon saw farther than any of his crowned-headed brethren; but their small jealousies lost them the only opportunity to break down republicanism on this continent which they are likely ever to have. Why they had not the wisdom to use it is marvelous. I have always believed that any time after the fall of Atlanta, if not after the fall of Vicksburg, the South would have accepted any terms for active armed intervention. Even after the fall of Atlanta, an army of 500,000 regulars and a navy, both at hand for use, and our ports opened, would have insured our success, and the destruction of the republic. To us, then, failure was worse than death; and success, bought at the price of altering our *form* of government to a limited monarchy, would have been thrice welcome. Von Holst, in his history of our contest--surprisingly accurate for a foreigner to write, but from that fact often wide of the true mark of political action under

our peculiar institutions--recognizes the material furnished for a monarchy in this "Slavocracy" of the South. The material consisted more in the landed aristocracy, which slavery created, out of which grew traditions, personal sentiments, and social customs, which would have allowed little friction in accepting a prince of the blood—"a gentleman"--as permanent President, with Lee, Johnston, Beauregard, Jackson, Longstreet, *et id omne genus*, as his Peers. While the South was so purely republican in theory, it was in fact a pure aristocracy, as firmly anchored in the institutions of that section as in any country of Europe, and more so than in many of them. It is forgotten that the law of primogeniture lasted longer in Virginia than in England, and that one of the things .Jefferson directed inscribed upon his tomb was, that he was the author of the Act of Assembly which repealed primogeniture in his State in 1776. With combined Europe upon our side, half a million of trained soldiers upon our rolls would have restored prestige to our colors in 1864; our vast stores of cotton would have bought all needed munitions of war; our people would have risen *en masse* to the final struggle, while dissatisfaction would have been encouraged to action at the North. The result would have been prolonged, but I have always thought it would have been the death-knell of the Republic. We would then have seen Maximilian firmly seated on the throne of Mexico, Dom Pedro aroused from his lethargy in Brazil, and for many decades, if not permanently, the crown would have been victorious over the cap in America. Happily for Liberty the petty quarrels of monarchy lost the great opportunity. Who doubts that the remnants of the rugged veterans of the South would today "fall into line" with their old enemies at the tap of the drum to fight all Europe or Asia? It is probably a pity that they have not had such an opportunity, to prove that they never ceased to be Americans.

Some extracts from my diary show our "gyrations" at this time:

"March 17 --A good march. In camp at a reasonable hour. We thought the prospects for supper bad, when Ambrose Hunter and Old Hal (Yerger) rode up with all sorts of' goodies,' sent to the whole of the mess by the' gals of Jackson.' Lieutenants Johnson and Hunt were invited, and we had a merry-making."

"Sunday, 21 (near Lexington, Holmes County --On the 18th we marched all day, camping at Pickens Station, on the Central Railroad. On the 19th we went to Ebenezer. Last night I was drenched, --no shelter. I drew my old overcoat cape over my head, and 'let her slide.' I feel sorry for the boys tonight. I have 'straggled,' and am in a good warm room, under a hearty old South Carolina 'Secesh's' hospitable roof. A driving sleet, with rain, has kept up since we started from camp,--very foolishly, for there was no necessity. It is bitter cold, with deep mud, crusted with sleet."

"Monday, 22 --A man can be hospitable with a crust and a meat

skin. We see this sometimes in camp. I have partaken of it. Eggs, ham and bread have been enlivened on the part of 'Uncle Johnny's' mess by a jovial hospitality. All my mess were invited. We took over an old gander I bought yesterday, which I, being left to tend, let burn to a cinder. Thus much for my cooking!"

"Tuesday, 23--A hard snow was falling when I went to sleep last night, and this morning the ground was covered four inches deep. 'Boots and saddles' was ordered early (no bugle being at headquarters), and with much grumbling we mounted our dripping horses and commenced a raid which we kept up for about three miles, when our orders were countermanded, and we splashed back to our soaking camps, cheered, however, by the opening sun, whose rays caused many clots of snow to fall from the trees on our shivering bodies. Sergeant 'Saxe' (nickname for Hal Yerger) took me and some others to Mr. Eggleston's to have our horses shod. Let us see if he (Mr. E.) will have the patriotism (! !) to invite one or two of us to dinner."

"Wednesday, 24 (Benton, Yazoo County) --He did invite the whole squad. By a stratagem of Hal's in getting the others oft-abusing me and putting my horse last in the list for shoeing,--we two had the field to ourselves. They are old Virginians, and gave us good savory hospitality. We told the girls,--two of the old Colonel's daughters,--cock-and-bull stories of our soldiering, and left in high spirits. Early yesterday morning we struck camp, and, making a long march, camped some fifteen miles back last night. John McCutcheon and I 'straggled' and filled ourselves to satisfaction, for nothing, as we presented a ten-dollar bill at each place; no change. Bad luck took Hal and I away yesterday morning. Miss Fannie Starke (our Colonel's daughter) invited us to a 'bully' dinner to be given today, and we were to have escorted the Misses Eggleston to the place--Mr. Meade's. We thought to run off, but, on deploying skirmishers, we found the enemy in force too strong either to attack or to bluff, so concluded to give up."

On the 5th of April we were back in Holmes, where Brig.-Gen. Frank O. Armstrong was assigned to the command of our Brigade. "We thought that Brig.-Gen. Wirt Adams was to have command us. I would have preferred him, as I know him personally; but we poor devils of the ranks have no say as to who shall be our masters--and rightly so, too." My hope that Gen. Armstrong "would prove to be of some account," was not disappointed. He showed himself to be second to no cavalry officer in the West, and won the blind devotion of his men. One of the finest specimens of the physical man, he had a sort of brusque, half-savage air which, coupled with his dash and daring and undoubted capacity, endeared him to his men. They soon dubbed him "Old Strong Arm," and used to say

that they could tell when a fight was on hand by his exultant air as he sat by the roadside scrutinizing the passing column in the beginning of each day's march, as was his custom. He was an "old army officer," and had all their peculiar ways, including their entire lack of filthy lucre. I remember an anecdote of his marriage, which took place at Columbia, Tenn., in the spring of 1863. Van Dorn was present. When that part of the ceremony was reached where the groom says "with all my worldly goods I thee endow," Van Dorn said in a stage whisper, "There goes a saber and a pair of spurs." His old soldiers, wherever they are, have rejoiced to know that President Cleveland has made him Indian Commissioner, a post which he is well qualified to fill properly. Prosperity go with him.

Our new Brigadier bestrode his charger with the peculiar swing of the regular cavalry officer at the head of our column on its marchings to Grenada and back easterly to my "army home" at Columbus, where, on the 13th of April, the Division was reviewed by the Bishop-General, Lieut.-Gen. Polk, who commanded the Army of the West, to which we belonged. "We were formed in two ranks on Main Street, while the band discoursed the discords of attempted harmony. After sitting on our horses three hours, Gens. Polk (Stephen D.), Lee and Jackson with their staffs dashed by in a confused mass from left to right, and quietly walked their horses back, colors being lowered. We then marched "by fours from the right-head of column left, to camp,--which I have not yet reached," --for I was writing at Mr. Chandler's, my good friend's home, where I was not only enjoying generous hospitality, but scheming with his niece, Miss Helen, to obtain leave of absence for forty-eight hours, that I might enjoy it the longer. Her kindly intercessions with Gen. Lee at the grand military ball at Maj. Blewitt's, which followed the review, were fruitless, however, and I had to trudge out of that happy little city with my less fortunate comrades. What with doubtless many other such applications and the cares of command upon him, that gallant officer, forgot his promise. When I afterward knew that he was also at the time enthralled by the charms of the Major's lovely daughter, to whom he was married shortly, I forgave him more readily. It was a bitter disappointment to me then. Yet, with the levity of a soldier, I galloped away, singing a favorite camp song:

'Tis little for ghlory I care,
Sure ambition is only a fable;
I'd as soon be meself as Lord Mayor,
Wid lashings of dhrink on the table.

I haven't a ganius for work,
Sure 'twas niver a gift of the Bradies ;

I'd make a most illegant Turk,
For I'm fond of tobaccy and ladies.

I love to lie down in the sun,
And dhrame while me faytures are scorchin',
That when I'm too ould for more fun,
I'll marry a wife wid a forchin.

But my Lieutenant, Fowler, the first initiate in the future Constantine Chapter, did not fail me I find. He commanded my company, and gave me a "pass" for one day, which, of course, I stretched, as he knew I would, to two. "Jimmy, my kind brother, was unwell, which added to the solicitations of the family, induced me to remain until to-morrow" (the 17th), when I took up my solitary line of march--riding 36 miles, and "sleep in a room 10 X 10 with two wild 'Texicans,'" whose way I paid, with that of a member of my regiment, which I joined the next day, 30 miles further, at Tuscaloosa, Ala. This was then the most lovely little town I ever saw. I was entirely unacquainted, but my soldierly "brass" stood me in good stead in enabling me to *corral* many of the good things with which that beautiful country, then blooming in the spring time, so abundantly teemed.

As an example of the Confederate commissariat, on the 22d it is recorded: "A chew of tobacco sufficed for my dinner today. This is scandalous. With the country overflowing with provisions, we are .entitled to our scanty rations. I'll bet that every commissary has as much as he wants--not only of coarse meal, half bran, but of flour, ham, etc." This recalls an incident related of Col. David S. Terry, who commanded a Brigade in the Trans-Mississippi Department, in a similarly plentiful country. Finding his men unprovided for, he sent for his commissary, and berating him soundly, ordered rations issued. Informed that they were not on hand, he told the commissary that if rations were not issued within a certain number of hours he would turn him over to the men to do what they pleased with. It is needless to say that the rations were forthcoming.

I desired to go to church. How a soldier was able to do so is shown by a dingy scrap of flimsy Confederate paper, found with my diary, which is inscribed in pencil, as follows:

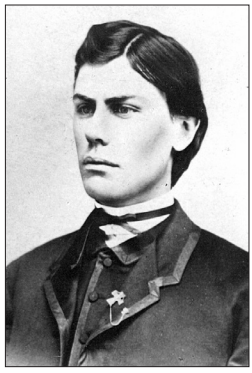
CAMP ARMSTRONG'S BRIGADE, J. C. D.,
NEAR TUSCALOOSA, ALA., April 24, '64.

Guards and pickets pass private Dixon, Co. D, to church in town, to return this evening.

The next entry shows what use I made of my liberty:

"I stopped at an elegant residence, just this side of town--Mrs. Cochran's--and sent in this card: 'Will the lady of the house be so kind as to permit me the use of a room for half an hour, and allow one of her servants to wash some clothes for me? I wish to pay.--Harry Dixon, Co. D, 28th Miss.' Servant said yes; showed me to room, where I performed ablutions, and received invitation from the lady to lie down and sleep and wait for dinner, that she would soon be back from church. Many thanks, but was going to church myself. Went; saw Mrs. Gen'l Ferguson (sister of my messmate, Nat Lee, killed at Coldwater), and escorted her home. Galloped back to Mrs. C's--called for clothes--accepted invitation to supper, which, being a fine one, I enjoyed; and wish much I could have accepted the invitation of herself and daughter to stay the night." There is not a word about the service!

The pleasant days about Tuscaloosa soon ended however. On the 5th of May we took up our line of March to join Johnston in North Georgia, and arrived at Montevallo on the 9th--where I was dismounted by the sudden lameness of my horse. This was a serious misfortune. I had another horse at Demopolis, many miles distant, at which place my father and family were refugees; but how was I to get it? As he had previously, and has since on many an occasion, my good old father, arriving opportunely in camp, stepped in the breach. His kindness to soldiers had made him a general favorite with officers and men in the West, to whom he was known far and near. "He mentioned it (my dilemma) to Capt. Brothers, A. I. G. of our Brigade, who advised that I should go for another horse. I would not ask it. I had intended to ride her [Rosa] until she dropped on her tracks. Father got it through easily." This "it" is what we knew as a "horse detail," a duty which had been so much abused by the troopers, by unlawful prolongation of the period granted, that it was permitted now only on the best recommendation from division headquarters. The document lies beside the Sunday pass, and I copy it as a sort of curiosity:



William Ward

CAMP ARMSTRONG'S BRIGADE,
JACKSON'S CAVALRY DIVISION,
NEAR MONTEVALLO, ALA., May 10, 1864.

Private Harry Dixon, Co. D., 28th Miss. Reg't Cav., is hereby detailed to go to Demopelis, Ala., to get a horse. He will return to his command at the expiration of four days.

> I hereby certify that Private Harry Dixon, Co. D., 28th Miss. Reg't Cav., is dismounted through no fault of his own; that he is a good and faithful soldier, not addicted to straggling (Lieut. Fowler knew that was not entirely so!) and does not shun the battlefield; that he has a horse at Demopolis, Ala., .and will return promptly at the expiration of his detail.

Armed with this means of liberty, the governor and I took the cars that day, he leaving me at Selma, a charming little city, where the enchantress of my boyish imagination held her court, --to which it is needless to say that I hastened. But I may be permitted to say that, knowing that my command was on the march to the front, I met my brother promptly at Montevallo on the 14th, and hurried on toward Rome, Ga., to overtake it. On the 19th I overtook a detachment of my company in command of Lieut. William O. Hunt, of my company, (a ΔKE), twenty-two miles west of Rome. As I was pressing my way through an infantry column in a long lane on the 16th, I encountered the only Sigma Chi whom I met accidentally during the war. While on outpost duty on the Mississippi, in 1862, I had lost my badge. It could not be replaced in the South; so I devoted a half-dollar piece to the manufacture of a rough substitute, which I fashioned into a rude Roman cross with my knife and a file, inserting a gutta percha center, and, if I remember aright, with great labor in some manner inserted therein the mystic letters ΣX in brass or gold. This I wore on my hat. It caught the eye of a young Lieutenant of infantry (whose name strangely has escaped me), who hailed me. I gladly halted my jaded horse, and, as best we could in so public a place, the proper tests (in which I was then more expert than now) were exchanged between us, ending with a hearty grasp of the hands. He was a handsome fellow, very inch a veteran, as he stood there begrimed with dust and smoke in his dingy gray, which vied with his tarnished accoutrements in want of all that makes the holiday soldier. We had but a few moments together. His command (about a division) was moving to the rear, though then at a halt, and I was endeavoring to reach the front where firing was going on, my command, as I understood, being there. With hearty good wishes we parted, never to meet again. I have often wondered whether he passed alive through the storms of death from Rome to Atlanta and to Nashville, or whether he died, sword in hand, leading his grizzly veterans at Dallas, New Hope or Franklin. Probably I shall never know, unless this page reaches his eye in some shadowed home in the Southland, and he lets me know. If it does, let it carry to him the most fraternal congratulations.

H. S. DIXON.