

# Washington in War Time

## THE HUMANITIES OF THE WAR.

Noble Work of the Christian and Philanthropic People of the Country.

BY WILLIAM JONES RHEES, Archivist of the Smithsonian Institution.

Battles, battlefields, captains, commanders, devils of daring, endurance are the topics mainly treated in this memorial of the war, but consideration is also required of another and equally important side of the conflict.

Many volumes and thousands of pages of official reports, biographies, newspaper and magazine articles have recounted the work of those who aided the army by ministrations of love and charity and the self-sacrificing devotion of noble men and women whose services are equally entitled to honor and recognition as those who gave themselves in battle to preserve the Union and maintain our free Republic.

- THE "HUMANITIES" may be considered as:
- Improvement of the sanitary condition of camps;
- Provision for medical and surgical treatment;
- Aid to the wounded and dying;
- Supplies of necessities and luxuries to camps and hospitals;
- Reading matter furnished;
- Material for correspondence and facilities for forwarding mails;
- Preaching and religious and other services and personal conversation;
- Publication of matter to arouse the

sympathies and secure contributions from the public.

Formation and preservation of sentiments of loyalty to the Flag and Union; Aid to soldiers in securing their claims for compensation and pensions from the Government.

Necessarily many of these functions were performed by a number of different agencies and some of them by all, so that the recital of the work of the Young Men's Christian Association, the Christian Commission, the Sanitary Commission, etc., will be in some sense a repetition.

The leading features and events of the prominent organizations will be given, and they will serve to illustrate the whole subject.

On April 12, 1861, a telegram was sent to the Governors of the Northern States that "The war is commenced. The batteries (at Charleston) began firing at 4 o'clock this morning."

This startling intelligence was soon heard through the country and the appeal to arms was at once accepted, however much it had been deprecated.

Among the first to respond were the Ringgold Light Artillery of Reading, the Logan Guards of Lewistown, the Washington Artillery and National Guard of Alexandria, and the Allen Rifles of Allentown.

the Evangelical Alliance (Rev. Mr. Goss) to the city and to offer them hearty cooperation and assistance in their plans and labors for promoting the spiritual and temporal comfort of the soldiers of our army.

The Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, besides other matter, published six books in small flexible covers, called "Pocket Companion for Soldiers," also a "Soldier's Pocket Companion," in six volumes, which its agents and the Young Men's Christian Association distributed by the thousands free to camps and hospitals.

The Boston Tract Society published "The Knapsack Book" and a periodical called "The Banner." These were handsomely printed with patriotic covers in colors, and made very attractive, in strong contrast to the old style of religious tracts.

When shown to Gen. Scott he examined them carefully and said: "Why, these are soldiers' books, and these are the times when God bless you in your work, and if you want any help come to me."

The New York Young Men's Christian Association issued a Soldier's Hymn Book in June, 1861, which had an immense circulation.

THE GOVERNMENT GAVE EVERY FACILITY in the use of the mails for the distribution of this army literature. All that the military mailings would hold over in one week, they were filled with it, and they were sent to every part of the army for a single cent.

LABORS OF ONE MAN. The American Tract Society reported that it distributed in Washington alone: Bibles, 87,292; Hymn books, 1,000; Library books, 1,650; Magazines, 300; Tracts—pages, 10,000.

Rev. O. P. Pitcher's work included the distribution of: Scriptures in English, German, French, Italian and Spanish, 27,177; Religious papers, 155,898; Books and pamphlets, 11,855; Pages of tracts, 1,774,231; Religious services held, 1,181; Miles traveled, 5,240.

These were the labors of one man, and in the District of Columbia and neighborhood.

Rev. C. P. Lyford, Missions, of the Washington Young Men's Christian Association, distributed in the District of Columbia 10,000 books and 1,450,520 pages of tracts, and that he had held 265 services and traveled 800 miles in six months.

THE COMMISSION ENCOUNTERED PECULIAR DIFFICULTIES. A large portion of the population, especially in the earlier stages of the war, was in sympathy with the Southern cause and a practical indifference characterized many others.

worthy to admit any difference of opinion. I sincerely hope your plan may be as successful in execution as it is just and generous in conception.

The Secretary of War, Mr. Stanton, ordered "that every facility consistent with the exigencies of the service will be afforded to the Christian Commission."

LITERARY STATISTICS. The Commission sent nearly 5,000 delegates into the field, each one giving at least six weeks' time to the army work without compensation, and its total receipts and disbursements during the war reached nearly \$6,000,000.

IN THIS EMERGENCY the public heaven-prompted associations of the Christian and Sanitary Commissions offered the channels through which the oil and wine of soothing kindness and strengthening cheer flowed from the plenty of homes to the need of the field.

THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMISSION was held in the hall of the House of Representatives, Hon. William H. Seward, Secretary of State, presided, and President Lincoln, Vice-President Hamlin, and members of the Cabinet, Chief Justice Chase, Admiral Farragut, and many members of Congress attended.

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law, and Bishop Simpson. The great feature of the meeting was the singing by Phillips, Phillips of Boston, and a new hymn, "Home of the Soul," by the Hutchinson Family, the most famous singers of war times.

THE IDEA OF A SANITARY COMMISSION first came to the official notice of the Secretary of War, Mr. Stanton, in June, 1861, by Dr. J. C. Wood, then Acting Surgeon-General, to the Hon. Simon Cameron, Secretary of War.

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EDITOR NATIONAL TRIBUNE: Just before Gen. Polk was killed Knap's Battery was in position on Little Mountain, near the summit of the mountain.

THE CHAPLAIN'S ASSOCIATION. There were in the army which assembled in Washington many able, intelligent Chaplains, and these formed a Chaplains' Association which met weekly and cooperated with the Young Men's Christian Association workers in Washington.

TEXAS A WHOPPER. A Native of the State Grossly Entertained in His Description of the Republic.

MISS DOROTHEA LYNDE DIX. "Who stands in history as the most eminent philanthropist of modern times."

Following His Advice. "I want your advice, Mr. Prosie," said the churchwarden to the vicar.

Russian Sects and Religions. "According to the latest available statistics, there are in Russia, 1,500,000 Orthodox, 1,250,000 Roman Catholics, 12,500,000 Mahomedans, 6,750,000 Protestants, 4,000,000 Jews, 1,500,000 United Church and 2,700,000 followers of other faiths."

Where It Failed. (Detroit News.) "What we fail to comprehend is how the Strike Commission could know so much without having discovered the coal trust."

Work It. (New York Tribune.) It is told of Bishop Williams, of Connecticut, for many years Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church in America, who lived all his life a bachelor, that he was talking one day with a young man from the West about an individual who was trying to impose on bachelors, the tax to be increased a certain per cent. for every 10 years of bachelorhood.

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