THROUGH MANY DANGERS AND HARDSHIPS.

A Thrilling Story of a Successful Escape From Prison.

EDITOR NATIONAL TRIBUNE: The inclosed is mailed to you to make such use as you may have for it either in whole or in part. It was written for another purpose than publication in your paper, but I informed Comrade Simmons that it might reach many of his comrades and those of his associates who escaped with him; that I, with his consent, would mail it to you to make such disposition of as you thought best.—V. M. HODGSON.

FROM A SURVIVOR OF TRAGEDIES.

I was born in New York City, July, 1844, and at the outbreak of the rebellion, like many of my age, became possessed with the wish to go to the front. I went to Rochester, N. Y., several miles away, and on Sept. 20, 1861, joined a company forming there, giving my age as 19 years to Capt. Charles M. Palmer, and under the assumed name of John Hall I was made a member of his company, which soon became Co. C, 49th N. Y., Col. D. D. Bidwell. Our first camp after muster-in was at Washington, D. C., a mile or more northeast of the Capitol, where we remained for several weeks. We spent the Winter in the vicinity of Washington. Our first battle was at Yorktown, Va., in May, 1862. Afterward I participated in the engagements at Williamsburg, May 6; Chickahominy Swamp, June 27; White Oak Swamp, June 29, 1862; Malvern Hill, July 1, 1862; Antietam, Sept. 17, 1862, where I received a gunshot wound of the left shoulder, and was sent to the field hospital. The next day, after my wound was dressed, I was to be sent away to some general hospital. I refused to go, and being able to walk I made myself scarce, and sought out my company, remaining with it, but doing no duty for a long time, being under the care of the Regimental Surgeon. The wound and subsequent exposure in service caused me to become deaf. At the battle of Fredericksburg, in December, 1862, I joined the ranks again, doing the best I could. I was in the engagement at the same place in May, 1863; also at Rappahannock Station, Compton Pass, Mine Run, and Gettysburg. At Brandy Station, in the Fall of 1863, I reenlisted for three years, and afterward was in the Wilderness fight, and was on the skirmish line and joined with my regiment in all the skirmishes and engagements they had up to this time. At Spotsylvania Court House, May 12, we were in advance, and being close up to the works of the rebels, in line of battle, they made a charge upon us, and the line in our rear having given away, we were left almost to ourselves, and were soon overpowered, and the rebels were among us almost before we knew it. A tall, savage-looking rebel grabbed his musket by the muzzle and made a strike with the butt of it at my head, calling out: "You Yankee ——, surrender right smart quick!" I dodged his blow; but there was no use trying to get away from him and his comrades, and myself and others were soon marched to their rear, with many curses from them. George Hoyt and myself were the only members of Co. C captured. A number of the other companies of the regiment, with a lot of other prisoners, were taken to Lee's headquarters and kept there until next day, when we were marched to a small town some distance in the rear. Here we remained one day, and were then put on freight cars and taken, after several delays and slow traveling, to Andersonville Prison, Ga., where we arrived two days later. There were about 1,200 of us from different regiments. Before we entered the stockade we were searched, and anything that could be found upon us of value was taken from us—money, clothes, shoes, knives, and the like. If a prisoner had a new pair of shoes they were taken from him; sometimes they were even yanked off his feet; and if the rebel robber had an old pair they were given in exchange—many of which lasted but a few days or a week at most; coats were confiscated, and the owner entered the pen in his shirt sleeves. In some instances, if one happened to be possessed of a pretty good shirt, that was exchanged for one tattered and torn! In many instances money, watches, etc., were passed slyly down the line, to another prisoner, and perhaps recovered by the owner after he had been put through the searching ordeal and had gotten inside of the stockade. Once inside, we were told off in detachments of 90 under the charge of a Sergeant, who was held responsible for our presence. Roll-call was had every morning, and each must be present or accounted for. We were without shelter, save as a prisoner, now and then, might bring in a piece of shelter tent or old blanket, which they would stretch up as a cover from the burning sun—generally over a hole in the ground, sticks of all kinds having generally been used to cook with. Here were thousands, exposed to the burning rays of the sun and the pelting rain, lying upon the ground, or in holes, like so many woodchucks. The little stream that ran through the stockade was used for washing of all kinds—and for drinking water as well. The borders of the stream were alive with vermin, and a mass of filth. Prisoners could be seen digging for roots, which they ate raw or cooked in water, without salt. For a few days we received a chunk of coarse corn bread, weighing about one pound, for a day's rations; but this did not last long. We were then given a pint of raw corn meal, and we had to cook that the best way we could. My Sergeant was John Freelove, of the 2d Vt., and it was his duty to draw rations, for which he received two rations for himself. About every two weeks, or longer, we might get a piece of bacon or beef, about half the length of two fingers and about as wide and thick. If we got a small bone in our meat, soup was made with it, keeping it until next day, then crack it and cook it again with our corn meal, making a mighty weak kind of soup, without salt. Once in two weeks a half pint of small white beans was given us. The filthiness and repulsiveness of what I saw men eat is not to be uttered or written for civilized ears or eyes. Men, because of cravings of hunger, ate anything they could get. They would beg and cry, night and day, for more to eat, and many a poor fellow became crazy from hunger and exposure. One day, when the gate was open, as the wagon passed out with dead bodies, a black dog ran in, and in a moment a hundred men were after him, and those who could not rise from the ground struck at him as he passed. He lived only a few moments. He was literally torn in shreds, and some did not wait to cook his flesh, but ate it raw. Every bone was eagerly sought by starving men. My own hunger at this time I can not describe. The sights I beheld no one would believe, unless they had seen them for themselves.

SCENES IN THE STOCKADE.

There was among the 30,000 prisoners hundreds without a shirt, a coat, shoes or socks, hatless, without pants or drawers. They were clad in remnants that hardly held together enough to cover their nakedness, made of anything that could be found. Men would tear the hair from their heads and howl like madmen, as many of them were, and fall to the ground, never to rise again. Many there were whom it was dangerous to be near, for fear of being injured or bitten by them.

In July I became very sick, and feared I might die. A fellow-prisoner, from a New York regiment, nursed me the best he could, and having smuggled in a little money, he obtained through a rebel guard, unknown to his commanding officer, some little medicine and food, which relieved me, and I began to mend, and keeping the medicine to myself, used it occasionally, though very sparingly, doing the best I could, hoping and hoping for release by exchange.

The first sight to a new prisoner as he came into the pen caused him at once to be thoroughly disheartened, and I saw many soon after they came in, sit down, and it seemed to me they never rose up again, but sat there moaning and crying until they died; and then they were carried out and thrown in the trench, never to be heard of again by us or by their friends at home. These seemed to give up completely, coming to the conclusion that there was no hope for them. If your hand or foot went over or under the dead line, which was a certain distance from the inside of the wall or stockade, you were shot by the sentry, who was posted in a box on the top of the stockade. I saw men killed who merely approached to what the cowardly sentries said was too near the line. One poor fellow who was sleeping near the line rolled over in his sleep, and his foot passing near the line, in a moment, without warning, a sentry fired and killed him, causing a cry of "Shame! Shame!" by a thousand voices of his fellow-prisoners, and curses without number greeted the miserable rebel wretch's ears; but we had all to recede some distance ere we called to him, or he would have given us the new charge which he placed in his gun.

A day or two after this, Wirz came into the camp, as he had often done before, cursing and swearing. A poor fellow, hardly able to crawl, who had been near me, got up near Wirz, on his knees, and began to speak to or plead with him, when, with an oath, he told his guard to: "Shoot the Yankee —— ——," and he, Wirz, pulling out his pistol, fired pointblank at the poor fellow, and shot him dead at his feet. He performed deeds of this kind many times, and none of us dared make complaint or ask him questions. Men were dying every day by scores from want of food and the awful exposure. I stood near the gate with a comrade one morning, and counted 122 carried out, who had died during the night, and then we were told to get away, and I learned that several more were taken out. I had been there a little over a month when one day a fellow-prisoner from an Illinois regiment began work on an old stump of a tree, trying to get the roots to make a fire. We got into a quarrel, nearly into a fight, as to whom belonged the larger piece, and I finally obtained the greater share. The next morning, in passing his detachment, as his Sergeant was calling the roll, I heard him answer to his name, and it being the same as my own, I soon sought him out and made inquiries of him, and learned that it was my own brother, from whom I had been separated since I was a little child, from whom I had not heard since he went to the West, many years before. Had I not used up my piece of that old stump he then and there could have become the owner of it. It is useless to say that we never had another quarrel, and that there were at least two friends and partners in that starvation pen thereafter. Rations becoming so small and poor, and so many having been there for so long, a certain class of new-comers, most of whom enlisted in the Union army as substitutes, began stealing anything they could lay their hands upon, particularly the rations of the weaker prisoners, which they would bury in the ground and sleep upon, in order to hide them and prevent others from stealing them again. Occasionally in the morning we would wake to find some poor fellow dead who the night before had in his possession a part of his rations—evidently murdered by some miserable fellow-prisoner! A sort of vigilance committee was formed, and shortly six fellows were caught in the act, and they were taken out of the stockade and put into the stocks by Wirz. A court-martial was formed and they were convicted and sentenced to death by hanging. This, it was said, was approved by Gen. Sherman. A scaffold was rigged up by Wirz, inside the stockade, and they were marched in by him and a rebel guard, and he, with many oaths, turned them over to us, saying: "Here, you —— Yankee devils, do as you please with them!" They were marched up the steps of the scaffold, a rope was attached to the neck of each, the trap was sprung, and their bodies dangled in the air—save one, whose weight broke the rope, and he fell to the ground. He was soon picked up, and while begging and crying to be spared was again placed in position and shared the fate of his fellows.

A WATER FAMINE.

Water becoming very scarce, wells or holes were dug, the men using anything they could find that would throw up dirt. A little water was now and then obtained in this way, its quality but little better than that which came from the stream. Some holes that were dug served another purpose, especially those as near the dead line as we dared dig. At night from the holes a trench was dug toward the stockade for the purpose of tunneling out. I assisted in one of these, and we had gotten beyond the stockade, when one of our fellow-prisoners informed the rebel Quartermaster. His compensation for the treachery was a plug of tobacco. The informer lost his tobacco and was made to run the gantlet, while each fellow-prisoner gave him a kick. He received such rough usage that he nearly died. He was removed from the pen by the rebel Quartermaster, and we never saw him again. The rebel cavalry and bloodhounds would every morning make a circuit around the stockade, outside, in order to detect the escape of any prisoner. A prisoner was in the hospital outside, and upon getting better made his escape therefrom during the night. He was soon traced by the bloodhounds, and overtaken. Wirz brought him inside and had him thrown upon the ground. One ear was gone; his face, arms, legs, and body were fearfully lacerated by the hounds. This was done, Wirz said, to teach us "Yankee devils" a lesson. Very few were taken out for treatment by a rebel Surgeon when sick. Most were left to die where they lay. Time went on, and scenes similar to and often worse than the above continued. Rumors of rebel victories became numerous; then rumors of an exchange would reach us. The latter increased as we heard of Gen. Sherman's advance and saw the activity of the rebel troops, serving as guards over the prison, and our rations getting smaller, until one day there was a great commotion among the rebels and we watched them with the greatest anxiety. Soon, in detachments, we were marched outside and put on freight cars, 60 to a car, and learned we were to be taken to a prison at Columbia, S. C., as Gen. Sherman was at Savannah, Ga. Guards were placed on top of each car, one door of which was open. When the train ran slow they sat over the door with feet hanging over the side.

A LEAP FOR LIBERTY.

When within 50 miles of our destination, as we were informed, Serg't John Freelove and Miles Whitlock, of the 2d Vt., and myself, decided that we would attempt to make our escape that night by jumping from the car. About 9 p. m., Sept. 14, while the train was going fast, passing a low bit of bushy ground, we sprang from the train, after I bade my brother good-by (I have never seen or heard of him since). We landed safely and made tracks for the interior as fast as we could. We traveled all that night, and at daylight found ourselves nearly at the spot at which we had left the train. We concealed ourselves in the bushes and weeds, nearly starved, until nightfall. Then we thought we would make our way to the seacoast; but while in prison we learned of so many who had attempted escape in that direction and had been recaptured that we determined to try a northwesterly direction, hoping to reach the Union lines near Knoxville. Serg't Freelove was a well-educated man, and had a memorandum book with him, in which he had made notes from a map he had seen in the prison, and of what Western prisoners had told him about the country. We found it no easy matter at first to fix the points of the compass. Hunger next morning made us more venturesome than judgment approved, and we made some little advance, cautiously, through the woods. Soon we heard the chopping of wood. Carefully creeping along, in sight of each other, we spied the first human being we had seen since leaving the train—an old negro cutting down trees. Looking about, to be sure that he was alone, we approached him and asked where we could find something to eat. He was nearly scared to death, at first, but after informing him who we were, and enjoining upon him entire ignorance of us, he freely gave us what he had with him—a loaf of corn bread and a bottle of clabbered milk—which the three of us devoured like wolves, and with a relish. The negro was plied with questions as to our locality and the route we had best pursue. He directed us how to find other negroes who would help us on our way, and where we might be able to find shelter from rebel scouting parties, who were hunting deserters from the rebel army in that section. We went on for a short distance, and lay in concealment until night, when we ventured upon the highway and traveled as silently as we could, stopping upon hearing the least noise, many times lying beside the road in the bushes or weeds until all was quiet. The next morning brought us near Columbia, S. C., in a northwesterly direction, as we learned. As we approached a grist mill we saw an old man near by, into whose sight we suddenly came, and putting on a bold front we demanded something to eat, pretending to be rebel soldiers going to our regiment, a short distance beyond. He gave us such as he had and plenty of it, and when his eyes were turned we put some of it away in our clothes for future use. Our conversation with him about the Yankee army put him in a pleasant frame of mind. He gave us some rebel advice, and we started on, changing our course again, deeming it best to leave all towns of any size as far away from us as possible.

SKIRMISHING FOR SOMETHING TO EAT.

FINDING A HIDING PLACE.

When at a safe distance from the highway we selected a hiding place, and after planning for the future, lay down to sleep until sundown. The nights had been favorable for us, being moonlight, and we made the best of them as far as our weakened condition would allow. Our clothing was scanty and torn and threadbare. Our trousers were made of coffeesacks and gunnybags, and thorns were used for holding our garments together. Only an apology for a blouse, and almost shoeless, we felt most miserable. Early the next day we came upon a railroad. As we approached it from the woods we heard voices, and saw, some distance from us men at work repairing the track. While watching them we discovered, hanging on a branch of a tree by the side of the tracks, a dinner pail. The men being some distance away, we crawled opposite to, and as near it as we dared. As the men worked away from us, around a little curve, that pail and contents soon were ours, and the pork and corn bread was speedily placed where it would relieve three starving men. Crossing the track some distance below this spot, we made for the mountain side, not waiting, nor caring to hear, the owner of that dinner pail inquire "Who's been about chere?" and then perhaps swear a little. We found the traveling very rough and trying, in keeping away from any highway as far as possible. Whatever we could find that was available we picked up and carried along for the purpose of mending our wearing apparel. The next day we ran across another negro who supplied us with a small quantity of corn bread and a small piece of bacon, pointing out the way to go. He informed us that there had been rebel scouts in that neighborhood the day before. The next day we stopped at an old 'Squire's house, and he gave us as good a supper as we could wish or expect under the circumstances. We passed as rebel soldiers. He appeared anxious, very anxious, for us to remain all night; but, not liking his manners, and seeming anxiety for us to remain over night, we declined his invitation and started, in a heavy rain, on our way. As soon as we were out of his sight we made rapid strides in an opposite direction from that in which he saw us go. It became so dark that we could not tell which way we were going, and fearing we might retrace our steps, we stopped and lay down in the corner of a fence, soaking wet through and through. We slept but little, each taking his turn to keep awake. As soon as it was light enough we started on the tramp, and had gone some distance when, ahead, we saw a large farmhouse, but none other in the vicinity. We went boldly up, made inquiries, and asked for something to eat, which was given. The owner was told that we were going home from our regiment on a short furlough. He quickly asked us to show our furloughs. I informed him that we had only what the Captain had given us—verbal leave, as it was only for a few days. He informed us that scouts were looking for such as we, and said that surely we would not be able to see our friends unless we went to a small town adjacent and obtained passes from the Provost-Marshal there. We left him, going according to his instructions, toward the town—until out of sight of him, around the hill, when we made rapid tracks for the woods in another direction, where hiding in the bushes we lay down and slept—what we could; one of us being always awake. After starting again, toward night, another negro became our friend; and by him we were given directions toward the North Carolina line and to a negro cabin, where food was given us, and we remained near by for the night.

AMONG THE "LAYERS-OUT."

Serg't Freelove put down everything in his book, as to route, negro cabins, etc. Next morning we proceeded on our way as the negro directed, to find another negro habitation. We were some days finding this cabin, or seeing any one, and we lived on berries found in the woods, with occasionally an ear of corn that might be gotten at night, or a small piece of corn bread obtained from a passing negro, whom we made go and bring it to us at a certain place, but we were always certain no one returned with him before he saw us. We were now shoeless and clothes only rags. Freelove had no rim to his hat, and mine had no crown; Whitlock's passed for a head covering but it was never meant for a hat. A few days' travel found us well into North Carolina, and for a long time we had to abandon the highways, as there were so many rebel deserters, who were being vigorously hunted up by the provost-guards. Yet, we had learned that there were some Union men in the locality, and we were trying to reach them, if possible. At one time we ran across a white man near a farm house, and asked him how far the Springs were. We had learned that a rebel company was stationed there. He cheerfully informed us, and showed us the nearest route thereto. Believing that we were rebels he gave us the further information that we were the most fortunate men he had seen in a long time; for, had we gone a little further either way, we would have been gobbled up by the Yankees. We informed him that we did not want to see any of those gentlemen under any circumstances, and we left him immediately, in the direction he pointed out, to escape the Yankees; but when out of his sight we changed our course. During that night we traveled as far as we thought safe, fearing we might get out of our intended way, not wishing to double upon our route, as we were footsore and weary, and one of us quite ill and worn out. The next morning we slowly continued our way for quite a distance; then lay in concealment, but without anything to eat. Provisions were everywhere very scanty among those negroes or whites who shared with us. From our position we could overlook a considerable distance, being well up on the mountain side. A number of rebel scouting parties passed in sight, looking for deserters, and, as many times before, we came near being discovered. We did not venture from our position beyond a short distance. Now and then a cotton-tail would cross our track, or a pheasant fly past us, making us wish for our guns that we might make a meal from them. The next day, while hiding some miles further on, we looked a distance ahead, to the east, and saw a large body of troops, and at first thought we were near our own lines; but there soon appeared in full view a whole regiment, or more, of rebels, and we increased the distance between us and the roadway upon which they were approaching, not discovering another route by which they might pass our new position. We quickly retraced our steps as we saw them make a detour to the right, and directly toward us. Finding a good place, we crouched close to the ground, covering ourselves with leaves and branches of trees and bushes. They finally passed us at a safe distance, but in full view. We then hid until nightfall, when we made our way the best we could for a few miles and awaited sunrise. Near sundown next day we reached a long distance from our starting place, and coming in view of a poor-looking log cabin, we cautiously approached, supposing it to be the habitation of a friendly negro; but we found in it a white woman with a lot of small children, all of whom were greatly scared as we came into view. After a short conversation with her we told her we were nearly starved, and wanted something to eat, if she had it. She went out of the cabin and pulled a few ears of corn. While she was gone one of us took a full survey of her dwelling, the others watching her movements. There was but little furniture and only a ground floor, and the children were in rags. Returning with some corn, she grated it and made bread for us, saying this was all she and her children had. While busy baking the bread she informed us that she thought we did not want any one to see us. We made some reply to change the subject and after making several inquiries we concluded we were safe here, and asked is we might remain all night. She consented, and we found her dry ground floor much more desirable than the damp, swampy ground we had been in nearly all day, or than the mountain side, among the wet leaves. During the early evening she repeated her question as to us not wanting to be seen; and as we became more friendly, we found that her husband was a conscript, and was hiding somewhere thereabouts; and that he had a brother-in-law with him. We then informed her we were not rebel soldiers, but were trying to make our way to the Union lines. At this she seemed delighted, and said she would go with us to her sister-in-law in the morning, whose cabin was but a short distance away, and then find their husbands, who knew the country for miles around. As we approached the other cabin, after we had our breakfast of corn bread, the sister-in-law was greatly scared and refused to see us, and was about to run away, but on the appeal of our protector she returned, and we all engaged in conversation. Finally the first woman left us and was gone some time; returning in sight of us, with one man, she came to us, saying her husband must see but one of our party at a time. The other woman's husband fled when he caught sight of us. Soon we all left the women and went back to the mountain and hid. We remained with them for three days. We had no arms in the party, nor did we dare make a fire. Neither had we dared at any time to have a fire on our tramp, save in a few instances while in the dense forest. Our limbs were in a fearful condition—swollen and sore and bleeding, from tramping through brush and briars and wading streams, in our nearly-starved condition when leaving Andersonville. We were glad to rest and remain with these men, although with nothing for a covering and but branches of trees and leaves for shelter. The women in some way got a little food for us. From these conscripts we got the lay of the country, and found we were many miles from the Union army. They pointed out on a sketch made by Serg't Freelove how to reach one house and another, and where to find a trusty negro, or some Union sympathizer. We learned there were quite a number of the latter in that section, and that as soon as we crossed into Tennessee would find many by cautious inquiry. Freelove made a note of everything.

A BRIEF MUCH-NEEDED REST.

Having given our bleeding feet and limbs a rest, we, on the evening of the third day, left them, finding we would have to reach a certain point by daylight. We tramped all night, and made a crooked way of it, but after a rest of a few hours continued our tramp and came to a small river, a little town being to our left, across the river! Following the stream away from the town, we saw a man on the other side, with a boat, and called to him to bring it over and take us across. He refused, and told us to go to a place nearly as bad as that from which we had come, but whence there is no escape. Keeping along the river bank, out of sight, we ran across an old skiff, broke it loose, borrowed it and crossed over. We had landed below the town, and we made it our business to keep clear of it. We came across a negro and begged him for something to eat. He became much interested in us, and informed us there were a number of white gentlemen who were Union men in that section. He went some distance with us in a northwesterly direction, and showed us a house the owner of which we were told by him had been within the Union lines. We approached the house cautiously and knocked, but found the man abed, it being somewhere near 9 o'clock, and very dark. We aroused him and made known our wants. He came down and let us in and gave us food. We found him of strong Union sentiment. He informed us that we would have to go in a straight line 45 miles before we would reach any Union troops. There had been a skirmish between forces of the two armies some distance from this place a day or two before, and there were then numbers of searching parties in the locality. We remained until nearly daylight, lying on the floor, and then made for shelter. No highway could be taken in that section, and we knew what 45 southern miles were and meant, and we judged that 60 to 75 miles would be nearer the distance. We made all possible haste, through bush and bramble, occasionally halting and resting, and approaching the roadway in order to get the lay of the land. We felt that this man could be trusted, for the information given us by him we felt assured could come from none save one in sympathy with us and our cause. For some distance we found it more thickly settled, and ere we rested appropriated anything we found lying around loose—and some things that were not—that we thought would protect us from the storm or cover our bleeding feet or limbs, which were in horrid condition. The next morning, after a long night's tramp, we learned from a negro we came suddenly upon in the edge of a wood, who, by our sudden appearance, we scared nearly to death, that we were in Tennessee. Not knowing when or where we crossed the line, we determined, if possible, to ascertain just about where we were, feeling now we were comparatively safe. Yet we were cautious in our movements, and kept pretty well up on the mountain side, to get, if possible, a good view ahead. Now and then we saw a rebel scouting party. Where we were we left to surmise. Yet we pushed on our way for a part of that night, keeping to the roadway all we dared. As daylight appeared we took to the mountain side, continuing our journey, resting every few miles, as that is a very rough section of the country, as our route had been for two or three days past. Night found us in view of a house on a good-looking piece of farm land, and being almost used up, and nearly starved, we determined to try to get something to eat. One cautiously approached, and we were invited in and given supper; and, although the man, by actions and expressions, seemed to be a strong Union man, and gave us some information, yet we were fearful of betrayal, as we had informed him who we were.

WITH FRIENDS AT LAST.

Whitlock and Freelove remained at the front of the house, while I stepped over the fence, into an orchard, to see if I could find an apple to eat. Looking around I discovered a horse, with an army blanket on and saddle, tied at a shed. My heart was in my throat. Surely the game was up with us! All the horror of recapture and the return to a rebel prison—its sufferings and hellish cruelties—passed through my mind, and the thought of what we had gone through for the past 23 days—the narrow escapes we had made—caused me to stand like a statue and gaze at that animal. I could not move, could scarcely breathe. Then I heard a loud laugh at the front of the house—a familiar voice—the voice of Freelove! Immediately joy took the place of fear and despair. I knew that such a hearty laugh from him meant release, safety for us. I ran to where he was, and found a third man talking to him, and saw at once that he was not a rebel. He was a Union scout, and at last a friend was found whom we knew would share with us the fate of a Union soldier. Our condition, ragged, hatless, barefooted, with hardly anything to cover our nakedness, we were a horrid sight to him. All entered the house and sat down to a meal such as we had not enjoyed since leaving our regiments, one never to be forgotten, though it was scant in quality and quantity. All talked at once. Our host found no fault with our condition, appearance, or rags, or blackness of face and hands. We did not recognize ourselves on looking into a glass for the first time.

We were not yet entirely safe. We had yet to run the gantlet between the two armies. The scout posted us as to the route, and where we might hide, and promised if possible, to aid us. We remained, after he left, that night, and slept in a barn. After an early breakfast we started on our way as directed. All day we shambled along as fast as we could, straining our eyes for the sight of our army lines and Old Glory. We saw a few scattering rebels straggling along during the day, but kept from their view, hiding in the brush or covering ourselves with leaves and branches, or lying in a ditch, or pulling the tall dead grass over us. Toward evening we saw a few men in Union blue and drew near them; but knowing the rebels often were clad in stolen Union soldiers' clothes, we were careful, then boldly approached, and were halted at the point of the bayonet, and called upon to "Surrender, you Johnny Rebs!" "That's all right," we cheerfully replied, and became their happy prisoners. We were taken within the picket line at once. Our story was told, but not believed, and we were taken to headquarters at Bull's Gap, where, our delighted eyes beheld Old Glory floating above us and the sight made us weep like children—and those around us, letting drop their sympathizing tear, joined in our joy. Col. Kirk looked upon and questioned three of the sorriest-looking men he ever saw—barefooted, sockless, hatless, shirtless and trouserless—save a few strips of rags from coffee sacks, our hair long and matted, feet and hands torn, sore and bleeding, and faces like negroes. We related our story, and he was convinced of its truth. We were given shelter, food and some raiment, the food the best the headquarters had. We were then turned over to the care of the Commissary, and, on the 24th night after we bade adieu to that rebel train from Andersonville, we slept among the boys who wore the blue, and felt at home again. Col. Kirk offered each of us the position of scout, if we would remain with him; but this was refused, each being anxious to join his own regiment and company in the Army of the Potomac. Transportation was given us, and we were sent to Knoxville, to report to the Adjutant-General. We remained there two days, were given clothing and rations, and furnished transportation to our regiments. Serg't Freelove and Whitlock left me and joined their commands in the Shenandoah Valley, while I proceeded to Washington, D. C. My comrades' time of service had expired while they were in prison, and they sought their regimental headquarters in order to get their discharges and then get to their homes in Vermont. This regiment, we learned, had mostly reenlisted. We parted like brothers and met no more. I remained in Washington at the Quartermaster-General's for pay and transportation, three days, then proceeded to my command, which was in the Valley. A furlough was given me soon after, and upon its expiration I joined my company in the Petersburg campaign and at Appomattox, and was permitted the great privilege of entering Richmond at Lee's surrender, and thus have a hand in the downfall of secession.

While my regiment lay near Alexandria, in May, waiting for the Grand Review in Washington, a soldier from another regiment near by, sought me out, and I knew him at once, remembering him in Andersonville. He informed me that 18 prisoners jumped from the train the same night I did, and 15 were returned, being recaptured near the seacoast, and that my party were the only ones never heard from, and were supposed to have been overtaken by bloodhounds and killed, or to have died in our efforts to reach the Union lines.

Several years ago I made efforts to find Freelove and Whitlock, and learned that both had died, only a few years intervening between their deaths. My wound and subsequent exposure caused me to become extremely deaf in my left ear, and gradually affected the right, so that to ordinary conversation I have been a stranger since my return to my regiment after escape.

I have given only a part of what I saw and passed through from September, 1861, to the date of my discharge, June 6, 1865. I am not one who believes the rebels' treatment of Union prisoners was just or their cause right; but I am glad that the rope put around the neck of that old brute, Wirz, was made deadly tight.—JOHN SIMMONS, alias JOHN HALL, Co. C, 49th N. Y.

Gen. Osterhaus Was Cool.

EDITOR NATIONAL TRIBUNE: I notice many incidents are being related in connection with the service of Gen. Osterhaus during our civil war. One comes to my mind, witnessed while driving in the rebel pickets around Fort Blakely near Mobile, in April, 1865.

The rebels had planted lines of torpedoes around Forts Spanish and Blakely, as well as in the bay. As we were closing in on Fort Blakely Gen. Osterhaus and staff rode past us at a gallop. Just as they swerved to the left of our line the horse ridden by a Captain on the staff of Gen. Osterhaus stepped upon a torpedo buried in the sand, near a pine stump. Of course, the shell exploded. It threw a shower of sand over the General and those near him. The horses ridden by the Captain and the officer by his side were literally turned inside out. The Captain was left standing upon the ground, covered with sand. A piece of the shell had passed between his arm and body, tearing his coat, but leaving him without a scratch. He was, however, stunned and bewildered to the extent that he talked incoherently for a while. The General galloped on as though nothing had happened. After the rebel pickets were driven in we rode to a small stream to water our horses. Our company had reached the creek and Co. D, I think, rode in on our left. As the Orderly-Sergeant reached the edge of the water his horse stepped upon mines of hidden death. Fortunately, again no one was hurt. But many elsewhere there were not so lucky. It was a new way of fighting and caused more trepidation than a line of rebels in our front, because it was a hidden danger, and no one knew at what moment he would be blown to atoms without the possibility of even the fragments being gathered up.—GEORGE W. READ, Co. O, 10th Ind. Cav.

It Certainly was Notable.

EDITOR NATIONAL TRIBUNE: Where does the 76th N. Y. come in as a notable regiment? I thought surely it ought to be around some where when the notables assembled. I fail to find it among those you have published; but I know the list is a long one, and I suppose that all can not be printed first, and the 76th may yet be heard of. It does seem to me that a regiment that carried nearly 2,500 names on its rolls, participated in 26 battles, led the van at Gettysburg, could muster but 64 men (I think) at roll call after South Mountain, could contribute but 165 men to the new organization when it was consolidated with the 147th N. Y.—well, it seems to me that such a regiment ought not to fall too far toward the foot of the list when a list of notable regiments is composed or compiled. I am not finding fault; but I read so much about other regiments and see never a word about my own, that my heart gets hungry for it. You see, I have lived down here in the South so long—I live in Florida, have been here 24 years—and we do not have so many G. A. R. men or so many Reunions of the boys in blue as to get salted or surfeited. I belonged to Co. I, 76th N. Y. We were always proud of those figures, 76 on our caps. It was one of the most glorious regiments in the most glorious Grand Army of the world that most gloriously did its grand work. My own part was small. South Mountain was my last battle; I was discharged in March, 1863; but in 1864 I enlisted in the Navy and served till the war ended. I hope Congress will enact a straightout $12 service pension law this Winter.—W. H. BROWN.

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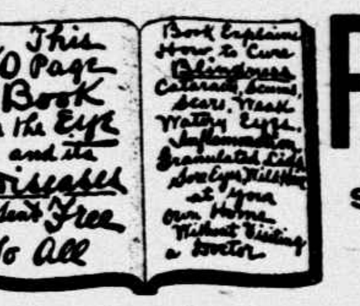

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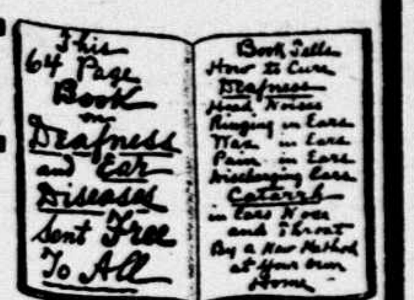

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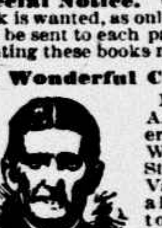
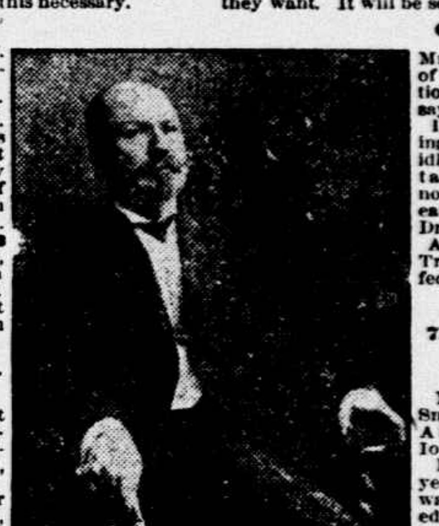


Mrs. W. A. Roberts, Windsor Sta., W. Va., was almost totally blind of both eyes. Doctors pronounced case cataracts, claimed no cure without an operation. Heard of Dr. Coffee's treatment, used it one month as directed—can see as well as ever.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Mrs. Mat Henderson, of Rolla, N. Dak., writes: Your medicine, which I used in in my baby's eyes, is simply wonderful. Doctors told me that my baby would probably be blind for life. I used your medicine in his eyes just eleven days, and his sight is perfect. Words cannot praise your treatment enough or express my gratitude.

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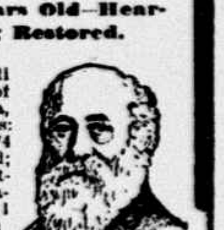

Mr. Eli Snyder, of Altoona, Iowa, says: I am 74 years old; was afflicted with catarrhal deafness for a number of years; was gradually growing deaf. I took a severe cold recently which settled in my head, making me almost totally deaf. Used Dr. Coffee's Absorption Treatment for two months and obtained perfect hearing.

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To the Readers: The proprietors of this paper have investigated Dr. Coffee, of Des Moines, Iowa, and know that he is a physician of highest standing and perfectly responsible for what he agrees to do. Those of our readers desiring one of these books should write to the doctor at once and kindly mention this paper.

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Uncertainties of Life.

Comrade J. M. Griffith, 87th Pa., writes from the State of Washington: "I have suggested in a meeting of the Post that the comrades all make out their preliminary reports and bring them in and send in a bunch to The National Tribune. The frequency of accidents admonishes us to take all available precaution. Two comrades in the same neighborhood lost their houses with valuable contents by fire; one had taken the precaution to have his discharge recorded; the other has died, leaving a widow that does not even know what regiment he served in! A few weeks ago a comrade from a suburb fell dead in this city while his wife was waiting for him to join her to go home."