

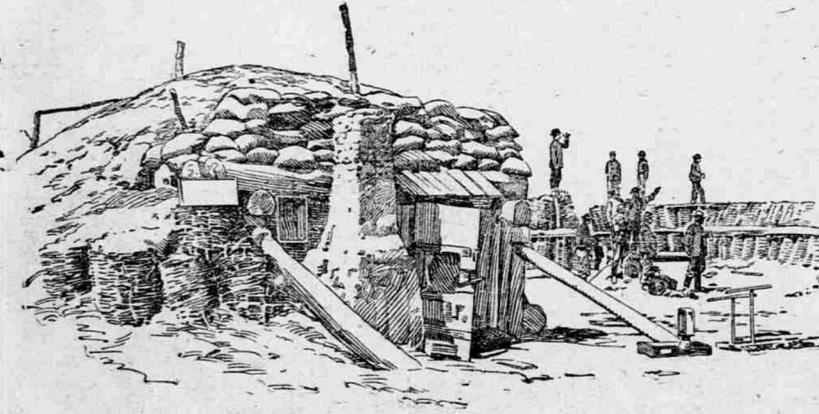
The Wilderness Campaign

By JOHN McELROY.

CHAPTER LII.

The Close of Active Operations.

With October, 1864, virtually ended the field operations for that year. The troops were directed to make themselves comfortable winter quarters in which to pass the inclement season. These on duty in the forts sheltered themselves in bomb-proofs with tents on the terre-plain. The bomb-proofs consisted of long trenches, roofed over, with the face toward the enemy, strengthened by logs, sandbags and old pork barrels filled with earth. Other



INSIDE THE UNION FORTIFICATIONS AT PETERSBURG.

ever a cannon ball was likely to strike a sufficient deposit of earth to stop it was accumulated. Fireplaces were built in the bomb-proofs with the chimneys made of pork barrels. Sleeping bunks contributed to the comfort of the inmates.

The regiments in reserve built even more elaborately, at times giving themselves all the comforts that ingenuity and labor could procure. The huts they built were generally six feet by 10 on the ground and not less than five and a half feet high. If boards or pieces of sheet-iron could be procured, which was not often the case, the huts



A UNION HOSPITAL AT CITY POINT.

were roofed with these. Most always shelter tents and ponchos were made to do duty for roofs. These huts were intended for four men, but as one of them was usually absent on duty three was the number of inmates. The huts also had fireplaces, either cut in the end in the usual Southern style or made by running a trench thru the center of the tent, covering it with flat stones or pieces of tin. This style was very economical of fuel and kept the tent warm, but was not so cheerful as the open fireplace. Many of the huts displayed a great deal of architectural ornamentation, and some of the regiments even went to the luxury of bathhouses. Rations were plentiful, and fresh vegetables and newly baked bread were regularly issued. No army was ever better supplied than that of the Potomac during the Winter of 1865.

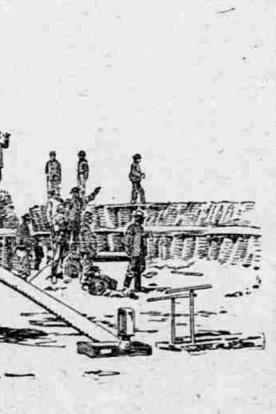
"The Cannoneer's Reminiscence." Comrade Buell, in "The Cannoneer," gives a most entertaining picture of the way the Army of the Potomac was supplied after they had settled down before Petersburg:

"Hard and trying as the work was the army had to do a little resource, and demoralizing as may have been the radical changes in its personnel, it had never in all its history been so well and lavishly fed, clothed and equipped as it was now. The matter of supplying his troops had always been a strong point with Gen. Meade. I have stated in a previous chapter, dealing with the operations immediately after Gettysburg, that Meade's first care after driving Lee back into Virginia was to thoroughly re-equip, reclothe and pay his battered, ragged and poverty-stricken troops. This he did at his leisure, while all the editors in the North were screaming at him and demanding his removal. Now, with his army fairly settled down to the operations of a great siege, with abundant transportation, unlimited supplies and opportunity to establish permanent depots, Meade's genius in the art of supplying an army had full scope. The James River became the route of a veritable procession of steamboats, bringing every imaginable resource, and an army could require. The general depot at City Point resembled a great mart of commerce, with its wharves, stores, tents and sheds, and the art of charging cargoes. The 'Military Railroad,' which had by this time been completed as far as Alton's Crossroads toward the Weldon Railroad, with a branch down the Jerusalem plank nearly to Lee's Mills, teemed with trains carrying every sort of supplies. The whole country south of the James as far as Prince George Court House was turned into a pasture for vast herds of cattle, which were guarded by cavalry and butchered from day to day to afford fresh meat for the hard-worked

usually at the moment old Meade appeared. He had some bales of hay broken and some sacks of oats cut open. "Well," said he, "in a dry time like this there could be no excuse for the delivery of forage in such a condition. It may be well enough, Colonel, for the laws of war to require the President's approval to shoot a deserter from the ranks; but, by—, I think the commanding General ought to have discretionary power to hang Quartermasters without benefit of clergy. Reship that forage to City Point. I will have it thrown into the river there as soon as it is properly receipted for. And, by—, I will throw the distributing Quartermaster in with it if I had the power."

The Rustic Church.

A striking instance of the skill of the men in the various provisions made by them for their comfort during that Winter of 1865 was the church built by the 50th N. Y. Eng. near Meade's headquarters. Capt. M. H. McGrath, of the 50th, a carpenter and joiner by trade, was the architect and bossed the job. The church, or good-sized chapel, was Gothic in architecture, and constructed of poles from which the bark had not been stripped, split in two and placed vertically. The body of the church was 16 feet high, with a good shingled roof, four cables and an arched entrance upon the steeple. There was a big fireplace in each end, and the building was large enough to seat 150 people on



stools. The steeple was quite a work of art. In front and about the center of its second story the badge of the Engineer Brigade, a castle, was ingeniously worked in by using very small pine poles. The 50th were particularly proud of this steeple. The chimneys and windows were also very artistically ornamented, small pine poles being employed for moldings in this work. The rustic church was used several times during the Winter for religious services and for three theatrical performances given by the 40th N. Y. It was taken for hospital purposes, later on. After the war this evidence of the industry and artistic taste of the 50th N. Y. Eng. was appropriated by the colored people of that neighborhood for religious worship.

Grant's Simple Quarters.

Gen. Horace Porter, a member of Gen. Grant's staff, gives an interesting description in his book, "Campaigning With Grant," of the way the commanding General and those with him were housed during this Winter. "The camp at City Point had now given place to winter quarters, for in view of the character of the campaign, the tents were to be conducted by our armies in the West and South it was decided to make no immediate attempt to dislodge Lee's army from Petersburg and Richmond, and preparations were made by the General-in-Chief to pass the winter months at City Point. The tents, which were much worn, had become very uncomfortable as the cold weather set in, and they were removed and log huts were erected in their stead. Each hut contained space enough for bunks for two officers, and had a small door in front, a window on each side and an open fireplace at the rear end. Gen. Grant's hut was as plain as the others, and was constructed with a sitting room in front and a small apartment used as a bedroom in rear, with a communicating door between them. An iron camp bed, an iron washstand, a couple of pine tables and a few common wooden chairs constituted the furniture. The floor



GRANT'S WINTER QUARTERS AT CITY POINT.

was entirely bare. There were many comments in the newspapers about this time upon the preparations for winter quarters. One comic paper had a picture of the General's hut, with smoke curling out of the chimney, and under the words: "Grant fought it all Summer, and now he has his stove." Papers inimical to the cause gave the establishment of winter quarters as a proof that the oldest inhabitants would not be likely to live long enough to see Grant enter Richmond. Some of the jocosely remarks referring to this subject are well known to all, and many of them were a source of considerable amusement.

(Continued on page three.)

THE MONTH GLIDING AWAY,

But Every Wheel Turning in Congress and the Administration—Big Tasks Before Congress—The House Warm Over Apportionment.

The January days are flying at Washington, the while every wheel is in motion. Men who run the Government have to look at the calendar to make sure that the middle of the first month of the new year is almost at hand, and that the sands are flowing with precision and rapidity. There is so much doing in many quarters! The volume of public transactions at the Capital is getting larger every Winter.

There is industry at the White House offices. The multitudes are moving thither there daily on errands of legislation or of self-interest. The doors to the President's big oval office swing in and out, and even thousands of times every official day. He turns from one group to another, and there is little intermission from early morn till late afternoon, thick under the great trees in the White House grounds. He is busy listening, inquiring, deciding and adjusting. Problems galore troop across his threshold, and it is never times seem to him as tho they would never cease. Of course, they will not be as numerous when he has reached his tasks. The speaker of the Administration and the 1st Congress has adjourned since he is talking politics with the politicians, legislation with the lawmakers. The city is full of visitors, and the railroad lawyers are here to argue rate cases before the Interstate Commerce Commission. As many more legal lights are at hand than ever, and the full bench of the Supreme Court. Many of these lawyers are participating in the festivities of the week, and the White House offices for a word with the President, who is always glad to meet lawyers.

Patent Court of Appeals.

These visitors to Washington on legal and other business improve the opportunity to attend to incidental errands. For example, members of the American Bar Association, who have come down to Washington to argue cases, are taking occasion to urge the enactment of a law to create a Patent Court of Appeals. They are asking the President, as well as Senators and Representatives, to push the good cause along. He is interested in most of these activities—even tho the beginning of legislation—often tho the end of the matter is a little harder and makes it a little more difficult for him to keep up with the accumulating papers upon his mahogany table.

But the President's evenings are also crowded. He has set the practice himself that the occupant of the White House should attend many civic gatherings in the country, and he has been more sparing of his time and effort in these particulars. Congress is halting on the threshold of its session, and the President is changing. The prophets of routine procedure, bulking large, have modified their output. Monotonous days in the Capitol are being broken by the supply bills there will be of necessity, but January and February promise to be interesting in legislation and administration at Potomac.

The Lorimer Case.

There will be a plunging forward to the work at hand immediately. The Senate has reluctantly to face a consideration of the Lorimer case. Every inch of ground is being fought for by the firebrands and firebrands in that staid old forum. A National interest has been aroused over the legal and moral questions involved in the charges that the Illinois Senator had used the methods that the lawmaking body should not countenance. Whatever the merits may be, Senators are professedly stirred over the situation. Before the holidays, when the Privileges and Elections Committee, Senator Burrows, Chairman, presented a report on the Lorimer case, the Capitol was that there would be a brief and perfunctory discussion, followed by a nearly unanimous vote of exoneration. The Lorimer case, however, is not in the case that but a few of them were moved to scan the evidence. It is hardly a study of the evidence that the Senate is to take the situation seriously now, and the public agitation outside of Congress has arisen. The newspaper discussion of the conduct of the Illinois Legislature in its election to the Senate has been so generally condemnatory that every wearer of a toga is watching out. Where a month ago it looked as tho the Lorimer case would be a dignified affair against his retention of his seat, there are now probably 30 votes against him, and a possibility that he may encounter a more serious fate.

The status is significant. Only a few years ago corruption in a State Legislature as an incident of a Senatorial election was regarded at the Capitol as something to be deprecated, but not to get fussy about. If the charges could be clearly established, of course, the Senate would eventually put its stamp of disapproval on the proceedings and oust the defendant from his seat. Presumably the Elections Committee has the law and evidence to justify its report, but the general feeling is that the Senate are very much alarmed solely because they see that the American public's patience has been exhausted with a Senatorial election to which the taint of corruption attaches in any degree.

The liveliest kind of maneuvering is now in progress on both sides. Senate leaders do not want the report of a big committee discredited. They would like to defer a final vote for some weeks till the agitation may die down a little. But the opponents of Lorimer are well aware that the case is one of the highest privilege under the rules, and may attempt to hold the Senate to daily consideration and debate.

The Apportionment Bill.

The House of Representatives is considerably "hot up" because of an approaching apportionment bill. A decade ago it overrode its Census Committee, when Albert J. Hopkins, of Illinois, the Chairman, now an ex-Senator, presented an apportionment that did not increase the membership. The old leaders, Democrats and Republicans, are generally against a larger House, but appearances are that they will be disregarded. The House is dividing into two hostile camps over the proposition. The count is probably not yet ready to be established therein, but the legislation and the politicians at Washington are. The measure which the House Census Committee is now framing will be privileged for consideration on any day the fight over its adoption will be precipitated very soon. Struggles such as these, which lift a Congressional session out of the slough

of monotony, promise to recur for several weeks. The President is driving hard for general legislation, much of it of a character that will be resisted. He is summoning numbers of the lawmakers daily to the White House and spurring them to improve the flying moments in the furtherance of his bills. His ocean mail subvention seems to be in a sorry plight, but nonetheless he is urging that Senate and House give it another trial. He is pressing tariff Commission and conservation bills relentlessly, and insisting that there must be enactments about Panama Canal policies.

A very large coterie of Senators and Representatives have been drawn into the controversy between New Orleans and San Francisco for the Panama Canal Exposition. Washington has rarely seen a more spectacular and spirited struggle for votes than these rival cities are now making. The fear of the House decision is near at hand, and the exposition activities are undoubtedly encroaching upon other legislative interests.

January is proving to be a big month for extra Congressional events at Washington, which concern Congressmen especially. The National Tariff Commission is holding a "Congress" here, and on its heels will come the caucus of Democratic members-elect of the next House. The sojourn of the Dominion Cabinet here, at a vicar from Ottawa that has to do with big problems not only commands much Washington attention, but the negotiation of a reciprocity treaty would place before the President and House at this season the troublesome question of its ratification.

NATIONAL FINANCES.

Sale of Irrigation and Panama Canal Bonds—Anti-Panic Legislation.

Bankers in the big cities are taking notice these days of financial doings at Washington. While the Treasury is going along fairly well and the revenues are coming in, there must be more money, and to get it a sale of bonds is necessary. It is now several years since the Treasury has sold any bonds, a procedure which always attracts the attention of the country. The sale of several millions of dollars of Treasury securities on account of irrigation projects to go ahead and in the West is already arranged for. The President has forwarded to Congress the report of the Army Board of Engineers, whose members made up an allotment of money for various projects, and he having approved their report, has passed the word to the Secretary of the Interior to go ahead and award the contracts, meanwhile drawing upon the Secretary of the Treasury for whatever money may be needed. The Treasury is to issue the bonds, and will proceed to sell the Treasury certificates. There will undoubtedly be an opportunity for a popular subscription to the bonds, and it means who prize that kind of securities may have a chance to obtain them.

Panama Canal Bonds.

Right on the heels of that transaction Congress is trying to enact legislation that will make more feasible the issue of more Panama Canal bonds. Some of the plans have been issued years ago, but this is the first effort on a large scale. There are intricate and complicated problems of interest which must be solved in the course of the operation. The Government will be forced to do anything that will depress the value of outstanding bonds or send the so-called two per cents below par. It will be encountered during the hour when the high contracting parties are not engaged in trying to do one another. There will be dinners galore while the plans are being put into effect, and all will be Wednesday evening, when the President gives a dinner in their honor at the White House.

The diplomatic reception at the White House, the first of a series of annual receptions, was also attended by the Canadians. At all these functions the Secretary of State is a prominent figure, because the real business is being done directly under his Department. If the Secretary gets on well with the Canadians and obtains a satisfactory treaty, he will have secured a great deal in his own behalf as the first member of the President's Cabinet.

Secretary MacVeagh, of the Treasury, is having a little more quiet criticism, although wrestling with several problems of finance. The swirl of affairs does not reach so much to the Treasury just at present. The MacVeagh resignation rumors have been stillled, and the Secretary is applying himself to a vast deal of daily business that has to do in the long run with important results.

Trust Prosecutions.

Over at the Department of Justice, however, a full head of steam. This is the very busy season in the courts. The numerous cases that the Government has in the Supreme Court must be looked after first of all. The Department to the new Solicitor-General. But there is a big list of trust prosecutions which the Department of Justice is preparing, and this work is keeping the Attorney-General and a number of his assistants on the jump. The Department also has much to do with the activities of District Attorneys throughout the United States. This is the busy season of the year for those District Attorneys. As the history of this Administration develops it becomes more and more evident that the work of the Department of Justice will stand out very prominently. Probably the President is giving quite a good deal of attention to the work of that Department as to any other, and he is certainly relying upon the Attorney-General to do much that will constitute a big feature of the Presidential term.

Secretary Meyer of the Navy is busy again wrestling with the committees of Senate and House to get enacted into law the bill to give a number of administrative reforms, and is still traveling upon a rocky road. It looks, however, as if he would obtain a measure of success. He will have to fight for what he wants right up to the hour when the Navy bill is put to its final passage, and but Congressional leaders in naval matters are hardly willing to go on record against the Secretary.

Quiet Year for the Army.

Secretary of War Dickinson wants less from Congress, and therefore has fewer troubles. This is a quiet time for the Army. Except in tropical and semi-tropical climates the soldiers



Flirting.

Spring and Summer. They propose to travel up and down the country, give hearings to all who want to be heard in the larger cities and also to make speeches explaining the situation and setting forth possible remedies. Popular opposition to advanced banking and currency laws is very great, because of the ever-present suspicion in the public mind that the bankers get the best end of all such arrangements. If the members of the Finance Commission can present a plan and demonstrate that it is free from such objections, they will have gone far toward removing the obstacles to expeditious legislation by Congress on that subject.

A BUSY CABINET.

All the Secretaries Full of Work. Every Department Has Some Engrossing Problem.

Nearly every man of the President's Cabinet is up to his ears in business these January days. The flood of public affairs descends upon nearly all alike. New policies are being formulated; old plans are being put into execution. This is alike the formative period and the period when results are expected.

Over in the State Department Secretary Knox is wrestling with the Canadian Envoys, and trying to work out an acceptable program of reciprocity. Along with the negotiations go a lot of wining and dining. Such activities are innumerable in these modern days from efforts at diplomatic negotiations. The utmost social affability and amiability is being shown by the big dinner when the high contracting parties are not engaged in trying to do one another. There will be dinners galore while the plans are being put into effect, and all will be Wednesday evening, when the President gives a dinner in their honor at the White House.

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Passing of the Old Leaders.

The passing of a lot of the old leaders in the Senate and of a number of influential members of the House impress upon Republicans at Washington the necessity of trying to dwell together in a little more unity. And heaven seems to be working. In the next Congress the House Democrats will be responsible for legislation, and Republican members of all shades of opinion will be free to criticize. The regulars will normally and properly assume the role in that regard which the insurgents have been playing during the last year or two. While there has been no formal truce, a seeming recognition of the proprieties for less fighting inside the party is very encouraging to the leaders. Some think the line between insurgents and regulars will be partially blurred in the Senate after March 4, when the Republicans will have just a bare majority over the Democrats. A

(Continued on page two.)