

# THE DELTA RIFLES

### From Social Entertainment to Carrying Sand Bags in Ship Island—Promoted I Sever My Connection With the Company.

While at Mississippi City the Deltas were recipients of several social entertainments, one of which yet dwells in my memory notwithstanding all the intervening years. It was at the lovely summer home of the Magness family, the ladies of which invited the entire company. Owing to the fact that up to that time our fatigue suits had been generally worn the dress uniforms were bright and clean so we presented an exceedingly fine military appearance when attired therein.

On the occasion referred to company was formed and with rifles and full accoutrements, the captain at the head and lieutenants at their respective stations, was marched to the hospitable home where arms were stacked on the lawn and we were received as honored guests by the ladies of the household. After an hour of social intercourse delicious refreshments were served and to say they were greatly relished and greedily devoured is quite unnecessary as my readers can well imagine what a company of healthy young soldiers would do to delicious refreshments after a few months of living on army rations.

It was at this time and in this home that John T. Nolan first met the lady who subsequently became his wife. Private Nolan of that time, afterwards Captain Nolan of Miles Legion, was a son of Dr. Nolan, a prominent planter of West Baton Rouge and the same John Nolan who owned an extensive sugar estate near Donaldsonville and lived thereon many years after the Civil War.

About this time boats were frequently sent by the warship Massachusetts to make reconnaissance, with a view of watching the movement of our troops scattered along the Coast. So to better guard certain points companies were sent to different localities and to one point the Deltas were assigned, every one regretting removal from where they were being so generously and handsomely entertained.

To supplement our rations we purchased a long seine with which to capture species of the finny tribe and also to give what pleasure might be derived from wading and swimming as we drew the long net. It was not only fun for the boys engaged in the task but for spectators whose duties kept them from indulging in the sport. Just after reveille the net, which was fully 150 feet long, was pulled ashore, generally with enough fish and crabs to feed the entire company. The fish were mostly turned loose as the boys claimed it was too much trouble to clean and cook them but with crabs

all that was necessary was to throw them into a camp kettle of water with a handful of salt and they were ready. More provident and less lazy soldiers feasted on both fish and crabs.

By this time a number of our comrades had received commissions in other regiments, so great a number that it became necessary to recruit to fill vacancies and while the ranks were kept filled the personnel was greatly changed from the original membership and military life, without accompanying excitement, became wearisome. The only hope for a break in a monotonous daily routine was from time to time when the enemy's boats appeared in our front as if about to raid the main land. Then all was excitement as we fell into line and double quicked to the threatened point only to find the sailors resting on their oars just out of reach of our rifles which we discharged in their direction although to no purpose.

On one such occasion we were run out upon a wharf which extended a long way into the bay, summoned there by the appearance of cutters and other small craft as we supposed intent upon making a landing, but upon our appearance one of the number run closer in than formerly and discharged a bow gun loaded with grape or cannister which falling short was lucky for us who were grouped up on the further end of the wharf, a position that would certainly not have been taken by officers and soldiers of greater experience.

An end was put to the practice of running out on the wharf and exposing ourselves to the danger likely to result sooner or later by the coming of an armed confederate schooner which patrolled the bay between the islands and the main land thus causing the Federals to keep outside in the open Gulf and at a safe distance.

The coming of the Confederate vessel boded ill luck for the Deltas for no sooner had she cleared the bay of the enemy's boats than orders were received to go to Ship Island accompanied by the National Guards where we would be marooned and all chance of receiving leave of absence to visit New Orleans, to say nothing of our pleasant surroundings on the main land lost, for aside from orders forbidding the granting of passes, a packet boat only visited the Island twice weekly, leaving again the same day. The boys could not see the sense of sending troops to that "pile of sand" as they termed the Island. "What can we do there? We cannot fight a ship with heavy guns beyond reach of our rifles while she will have no trouble in shelling us. This is

sure a fool movement." No sooner had we reached the Island than Colonel Allen, commanding our battalion, was ordered to report to General Twiggs for instruction. Reaching the old warrior's office in New Orleans, he was asked if the troops on the Island were ready for duty.

"Certainly," replied the Colonel. "Well then," said Twiggs, "the boat upon which you return will carry a cargo of gunny bags and entrenching tools and you will proceed at once under the direction of the engineer to construct fortifications to protect heavy guns to be sent to the Island."

"Will the negro laborers go over on the boat with the supplies, general?" said the Colonel.

"Laborers, have you not two companies of soldiers? What other laborers do you need?" said bluff old Twiggs.

"Why General, my soldiers are gentlemen; you don't mean to say they must do the work of negroes." "Gentlemen, you take your damn gentlemen and put bags of sand on their shoulders; gentlemen, indeed."

So the boys who had never performed an hour's work in their lives were soon filling sacks of sand and piling them up to form parapets.

Having received a commission as First Lieutenant in another regiment I was kept in camp preparing papers and instructing my successor as sergeant as to the duties of the position and did not go out where my comrades were working, and a few days after, I reluctantly severed my connection with the Delta Rifles and saw nothing more of the company until we met at Corinth just previous to the battle of Shiloh when I found it so changed in personnel that I scarcely recognized it as the famous kid-gloved company I once knew. Thirty-five of the original members had been commissioned as officers, while others had been transferred to artillery or cavalry. Nevertheless, the company fought gallantly and suffered severe losses at Shiloh and elsewhere.

JOHN McGRATH.

## APPRAISING THE HOME

To make the best success of any enterprise one must know exactly why it exists, what is to be expected of it, what are its ideals, what is its for?

This is as true of the home as of any other institution and she will make the best house-keeper who has all the specifications of her job clearly in mind. To arrive at a very definite understanding of these why not sit down, pencil in hand, and ask yourself the following questions:

Why is this home? Is it a place to rear children in? Is it a retreat of order and quiet for repose? Is it a base of supplies for outside activities? Is it the most important thing in life and all outside business merely a means to supply its needs? Is it a show? Is it a place to entertain society? Is it a place to relax and seek comfort? Is it a workshop? Is it a place for play and recreation?

Has it a social significance? Does it add to the dignity and beauty of the neighborhood?

Is this home, for each member of the family, a place of joy; of development; of love and confidence and sympathy; a place where one may bring his friends; where inspiration soars; where rest brings new strength; where big ideas are discussed and thought out; where real life may be lived to the fullest?

If your answers to these questions are not satisfactory, there is a chance to remodel the home. If they are, whether the house is a palace or a cot, whether or not it suits Madame Grundy, it is Home Sweet Home and the dearest place on earth for each member of the family.

If

If flies are flies because they fly, And fleas are fleas because they flee, Then bees are bees because they be. —Yale Record.

# THE AMERICAN ALIEN

By Thelma Johnson Lacour. Patterson, Louisiana

The whole of Garyville was gossiping—men were in little groups, at the postoffice and drug store, talking in low tones and women were whispering over their tea cups. What was it all about? No—a mysterious vampire had not come to town, neither had the town bank failed, but something worse than that had happened—Mildred Randolph had broken her engagement with James Callaghan. Mildred Randolph, whom the whole of Garyville had picked to marry James Callaghan, long before she was out of her teens, had turned down this promising young man.

"What more could she want," whispered the women, "than a successful young lawyer and a member of the state legislature? Why he may be governor some day and now she had given up the opportunity of becoming mistress of the state mansion."

Cy Hicks entered the postoffice and snickering and giggling, said to the men there, "Do ye know what the lovers' quarrel's about? That gal done went up and got mad because Jimmie is 'gainst that bill which will come up in the legislature for women votin'."

There was a roar of laughter from the group—thoughtless men that they were—they did not even know what the ballot would mean to women. They did not know the great responsibilities that women could bear and would be called upon to bear so soon—for this was in 1913, just a little over a year before the call to the colors sounded.

Jimmie called on Mildred after their quarrel thinking she would reconsider him.

"I will be proud to be your wife, Jimmie, if you will promise to support the bill giving the women the ballot when it comes up in the legislature. Not only that bill, but you must promise to support any measure which will remove civil or legal disabilities or inequalities on account of sexes. If you will do this I will be proud of you."

"But Mildred, that is absurd, I cannot support measures of which I do not approve. The woman's place is in the home—it is her duty to have children and to rear them properly. They have as many rights as they need. A woman is represented by her husband so why does she want to vote?"

"That old worn-out argument about the home," said Mildred scornfully, "is the only one the men seem able to fall back upon. The woman who wants to make a home is going to make one whether she votes or not. She will make a home no matter what her legal privileges are—more legal privileges will only add to the home. It will bring family life closer together, for the mother will discuss the civil status of the state with her husband and sons. She whose love for her children is the greatest in the world, will vote for clean laws to protect them. For the mother will think of her children when the father forgets how a law may affect his home. Yes, motherhood is woman's crowning glory and when a woman drinks in the horrors of hell to bring a child into the world why should she not make the laws under which this child should live?"

"It is no use, Mildred, I cannot see your point and I cannot promise to support your measures."

"You cannot see my point because you do not want to see it. Does not my mother make a home? There is not a better mother in the world than she, yet she has time to study the political and social situation of her country. Mrs. Layton, who does not approve of the women's rights, spends hours and hours at bridge—bridge is no sin if not overdone, but she does overdo it; she neglects her home for it. There is a woman who does not want any civil or legal rights and she fails to make a home. Cannot you

see how weak your argument is?" Jimmie had to admit that there was no better mother than Mildred's and that Mrs. Layton did not make a home, although she had no interest in the laws of her state, yet he would not promise to support the measures to which Mildred looked up. So the lovers parted again with bitter words and harsh looks.

So James Callaghan, to support his political faction, fought the bill in the legislature and it was not passed.

As time rolled on, Mildred's two brothers urged her and Jimmie to become reconciled. They liked Callaghan so much and thought that their sister could find no better husband. Man-like, they had not stopped to think that under the laws of their state and country, as they were at that time, their own mother was an alien.

It was true, their mother could trace her ancestry back to pioneer Americans—no, not to the good ship Mayflower, but to a baby boy, who was found in a New England town after an Indian massacre and adopted by a Farrington family. Their mother remarried a number of years after their father's death, to a German, named Von Hess; thus, under the law Mrs. Van Hess, although a descendent of those who went through fire and brimstone to make our country one of glory, became a German.

Mr. Van Hess had been a good father to his step-children. He was not a naturalized citizen, because he wished to study political and social situations of the country before filing his naturalization papers. He was not the kind of man who wanted a political ward boss to get out his papers for him if he promised to give him his vote the next election. He wished to study things carefully and get out his own papers intelligently.

Mildred would not consent to a reconciliation with Jimmie. She believed that if their ideals and standards were so different before marriage, these things would certainly cause friction afterwards.

During the months that passed there was talk of our country entering the war with Germany—but Garyville peacefully and happily living under the droziness of southern sunshine, did not take this seriously. Thus, when the word came that America had declared war against Germany the whole town was in a flurry of excitement and panic.

The two Randolph boys, Jack and Dave, were the first to enlist—this was soon followed by a mad rush to the recruiting office, James Callaghan being among the boys enlisting. On the day that the boys left, Mildred forgot all the harsh things she had said to Jimmie, she forgot that he had ever fought the women's bill in the legislature. She only remember-

ed that she loved him. She had loved him more than ever now that he was about to leave—now that she was putting an ocean between them. After kissing her brother good-bye, she put her arms around Jimmie and kissed him—and two tears rolled down her pretty face. "Little girl," said Jimmie, "do really love me this much—have you loved me all these months that have been so cold? Be cheerful, so that I can carry your smile with me, to light my way in the deep dug-out."

Through her tears, Mildred saw and she waved good-bye to her loved ones as the train pulled out.

We in America did not hear whistling of the bullets in the nor did we hear the roaring of cannons, but we heard their echoes—thundering, peeling, sinister, which did as much harm as the shot and shell. For the boys hardly overseas when Mr. and Mrs. Van Hess were interned as alien. Think of this, gentle reader, woman whose own sons were in mire and slush of the trenches, interned as an alien. Their property was taken over by the alien property custodian and Mildred was left protected and penniless. Her friends in Garyville opened the doors of homes to her, but she, possessing pride that was handed down to her through her pioneer ancestors, refused their generous offers. She as though she could be reduced to poverty but never to charity, packed a few of her belongings, what money she could gather together and left for a neighboring city to work.

There was plenty of work, for war had taken so many men there were many vacancies to be filled.

Mildred had stopped at one of the hotels until she could find a boarding house, for she could not think of staying at the hotel at the sky-high prices. In a few days Mildred secured a position doing filling and general office work, but she had found a place at which to live—the girls' clubs were packed and class boarding houses had all been taken. Her small savings began to dwindle under the big bills and finally in desperation took lodging in a cheap, poorly commodating place. Her room small and poorly ventilated, she no means whatever of heating it one can plainly see that this girl was brought up in a home of refinement and comfort, actually made want because of unjust laws.

Mildred wrote of these conditions to Jack (he dared not tell her brothers what she and her mother were suffering, for fear that they would be disgraced). (Continued on page three)

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