

MY PLAYMATES.

The wind comes whispering to me of the country green and cool—
Of redwing blackbirds chattering beside a reedy pool;
It brings me soothing fancies of the home-stand on the hill,
And I hear the thrush's evening song and the robin's morning trill;
So I fall to thinking tenderly of those I used to know
Where the sassafras and snakeroot and checkerberries grow.

What has become of Ezra Marsh who lived on Baker's hill?
And what's become of Noble Pratt whose father kept the mill?
And what's become of Lizzie Crum and Anastasia Snell,
And of Roxie Root, who tended school in Boston for a spell?
They were the boys and they the girls who shared my youthful play—
They do not answer to my call! My playmates—where are they?

What has become of Levi and his little brother Joe
Who lived next door to where we lived some forty years ago?
I'd like to see the Newton boys and Quincy Adams Brown,
And Hepsy Hall and Ella Cowles who spelled the whole school down!
And Gracie Smith, the Cutler boys, Leander Snow and all
Who, I am sure, would answer could they only hear my call!

I'd like to see Bill Warner and the Conkey boys again,
And talk about the times we used to wish that we were men!
And one—I shall not name her—could I see her gentle face
And hear her girlish treble in this distant, lonely place?
The flowers and hopes of springtime—they perished long ago,
And the garden where they blossomed is white with winter snow.

O cottage 'neath the maples, have you seen those girls and boys
That but a little while ago made, oh! such pleasant noise?
O trees, and hills, and brooks, and lanes, and meadows, do you know
Where I shall find my little friends of forty years ago?
You see I'm old and weary, and I've traveled long and far;
I am looking for my playmates—I wonder where they are!

—Eugene Field, in Chicago Record.

THEY SAVED THE GUN

It is not yet quite fifty years since the close of our war with Mexico, yet the swift movement of modern life has nearly overlaid recollection of it among our people, the colossal tragedy of the civil war intervening between now and then, serving still further to dwarf the older and smaller event. In its day it was one of the most remarkable military events in history.

The battle of Buena Vista, on the 22d and 23d of February, 1847, was, after the opening fights of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, the only considerable conflict of the war in which our forces stood on the defensive, if they may be said to have so stood in those opening battles. After the capitulation of Mantanzas, General Taylor had moved forward with a strong column, attacked and taken the fortified city of Monterey, had advanced to Saltillo, where he had been joined by the column commanded by General Wool, which had marched from Lavaca, Texas, by way of San Antonio, and was preparing to push forward toward the Mexican capital, and a meeting with the strong force which Santa Anna, the Mexican president, was collecting to "destroy the invaders," when he was overtaken by the order from General Scott, detaching the larger part of his force, including nearly all his "regulars" and the larger part of his seasoned volunteers. This was done to strengthen the column destined to invade Mexico from the southeast, landing at Vera Cruz.

The effect of this order was to reduce General Taylor's force to less than 5,000 men, made up of volunteers, much the larger number of whom had been soldiers little more than six months, and had hardly been "under fire" at all. Most of them not at all. There were left to him two or three batteries of "flying artillery," commanded by regular army officers, but in large degree manned by men detailed from volunteer infantry regiments. There were one or two squadrons of regular cavalry, but other than this insignificant squad of trained soldiers his force was made up of green volunteers, mainly from Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Mississippi and Arkansas.

Before General Scott's orders had been carried into effect General Taylor had advanced to Agua Nueva, about twenty miles beyond Saltillo, but the exasperating depletion of his forces made further advance impossible; and here, too, he was met with intelligence that General Santa Anna had organized an army of more than 20,000 men, and was pushing northward with the purpose to destroy him, and then turn his victorious forces to meet Scott, whosoever he might land. There was no ground at or near Agua Nueva where an inferior force could hope to stand, and General Wool was sent back to select a place where defense might be made.

Near Buena Vista, a dozen miles in the rear of Agua Nueva, the mountains on the left of the road along which Taylor had advanced approached more closely than elsewhere to a deep and impassable valley on the right of the road, the sharp foothills running toward the ragged ravine like the outspread fingers of a man's hand, until, at the Pass of Augustura, there were but a few yards between the point of the rocky spur and the brow of the deep valley.

This was the ground selected for defense, and the whole of the small army fell back to this point. Captain Washington's battery, in which the afterward famous General George H. Thom-

as was a lieutenant, was posted immediately commanding the pass, supported by six companies of the First Illinois Infantry, commanded by Colonel John J. Hardin, who was killed near the close of the battle, and whose oldest son, General Martin D. Hardin, subsequently graduated from West Point, was desperately wounded at the second battle of Bull Run, where he lost an arm.

Two incidents of this extraordinary battle illustrate in a forceful way some of the peculiar qualities of the American soldier, and as general history makes no mention of them, being merely details, hidden in the general event, it may prove of some interest to recall them for the readers of this generation.

The first attack of the second day, by a Mexican column of some four thousand men, was delivered directly at the Pass of Augustura, and was beaten off almost, perhaps quite, altogether by the terribly destructive fire of Washington's guns. It was barely over, when a second column of five thousand or more, headed by a brilliant body of lancers, moved out to attack the American line nearer its center. Almost at the same moment a body of American troops, only a few hundred in number, moved out toward the front and advanced beyond supporting distance, as if challenging the whole Mexican army. It was composed of Colonel Bowles' Second Indiana Infantry, or a large part of it, with a section—two guns—of a light battery, under the command of Lieutenant O'Brien—regarded as one of the most brilliant and promising of the younger officers then in the army—and manned mainly by men selected from volunteer regiments of infantry.

Orders had been sent to Colonel Bowles to take up a designated position and aid in repelling what seemed the grand attack of the day. But the position to be taken was not clearly specified, or for some other reason he misunderstood it, and advanced his men



LIEUTENANT O'BRIEN ORDERS FLYNN TO HELP HIM.

entirely beyond support. The first shock of the attack by more than ten times their number fell on this little force, and they stood in peril of being literally trampled under foot. They were as good fighting material as there was in the army, and they fought desperately, until their officers, seeing, too late, the error that had been made, without deliberation, gave a vague order to retire, and they did retire. There was no limit to the order and it might have meant "clear home to Indiana," as one of them subsequently said. Not to put too fine a point on it, they literally ran off the field, and though all, or nearly all, of them fell in with other troops or fought bravely through the day, they did not regain their own organization.

Before this disaster many had been killed and wounded, and the men of O'Brien's guns had more than shared their losses. The trained soldier knew into what a shamble he had been led, but he never wavered or grumbled, and he worked his guns with desperate energy, every discharge opening long lines in the advancing column and shaking it to the remotest ranks. At last all the men and horses of one gun were disabled, and all but the commander at the other gun were stricken down, even part of the horses. And even as the supporting infantry were melting from the field, and O'Brien stood alone, within less than a hundred yards of the head of the advancing column, with his own hands, unaided, he charged his own active gun, double-shotted with grape and canister, and hurled its tempest of shot full in the faces of the foe with terrible effect.

Then, as the column reeled under the blow of his single gun, he glanced swiftly about him. Not a man of the little force was left on his feet, but he saw one man—a member of an Illinois regiment, Flynn by name—who was one of his command, half lying, half sitting against a small boulder. To him he spoke fiercely:

"Get up here, damn you! and help me fire up this gun!"

"I can't, Lieutenant," replied Flynn. "I'm shot through both legs."

"Well," replied O'Brien, "you can lift a little," and so saying he seized the man, sat him down on the ground under the limber—prolong, perhaps they call it—of the old-fashioned gun, cut loose the harness from the dead horse, and with superhuman strength rolled the body out of the way, and while Flynn lifted, despite the torture of his wounds, the gun was limbered. Then he dragged the man from the ground, threw him like a saddle, astride the

still hot and smoking gun, and shouted: "Hold tight, now, for I'm going off from here like hell!"

And leaping, like a fiend incarnate, on the back of one of the horses, with a defiant shout to the foe, in a hurrying rain of bullets, he did "go off like"—he said he would. Twenty minutes later, from a new position with the nearest friends, his gun was again hurling grape into the still advancing column. And Flynn lived to tell the story long afterward at his home in Illinois.

The other gun, which O'Brien was forced to abandon, was one which had been captured from Santa Anna eleven years before by General "Sam" Houston on the bloody field of San Jacinto, where Texas independence was won. Had Santa Anna won at Buena Vista, how he would have vaunted the recapture! But he did not win, and after the battle was over the gun was found by some of our soldiers, spiked and thrown into a ravine. A few years later O'Brien died in Tampa, Fla., sincerely mourned by the whole army. Of such material have our American armies, North and South, been made up.

The other incident referred to, affecting more men, but illustrating similar soldierly qualities, followed on the heels of this.

The misfortune that overtook the Indiana men was full of the presage of defeat. Another such disaster, and the destruction of the little army, outnumbered more than five to one from the first, could hardly be averted. The next force to feel the attack was the Second Illinois Infantry, commanded by Colonel William H. Bissell, subsequently Governor of Illinois, and also a member of Congress from that State, who, while holding this latter position, "gave pause" to a fiery Southerner who sought a duel. However, "that's another story." The fight of the Indiana men had left this full Illinois regiment almost as far beyond effective support as the routed men had been, yet they calmly stood in line and await-

ed the onset, their Colonel sitting his horse, silently watching the advancing foe.

The Mexican column, recovered from the shock of O'Brien's guns, moved steadily forward in perfect order, their lances glittering in the sun, and the heavy column of infantry swinging sturdily up a gentle rise. The jingling of spurs and the firm voices of officers preserving perfect alignment, with the dull, muffled sound of many feet, could be distinctly heard. Soon there came a dropping fire, and when the column came within range the guns of Bissell's men were heard, not in a volley followed by silence while reloading the old-fashioned muskets, but at first "firing by file," which began on the right and rolled steadily down the line, and then every man loaded and fired as fast as he could. The oncoming column was shaken for a moment, but still moved sternerly forward. The Illinois men stood "in the open," unprotected. Men dropped in the ranks, but the cool command to "close to the right" was as coolly obeyed, and not a man left his place except to lie down and die. Far down the slope, nearly a mile away, could be seen Hardin's First Illinois and McKee's Kentuckians running at top speed to join the fray, and a little to their left the guns of Bragg's battery leaped and bounded savagely forward, as officers and men plied voice and lash and put their shoulders to the wheels and raced onward with the hurrying guns. Desperate and mad hurry it was, indeed, and yet it seemed that, do their utmost, they must be too late, and Bissell's devoted men, alone under the tempest, must be swept from the field.

Yet, still they fought on, their Colonel calmly watching the foe, and the line officers firmly closing up the ranks as, file after file, the undaunted men went down. Suddenly a mounted staff officer—Major Bliss, a son-in-law of General Taylor—with spurring, fiery red with haste, dashed through the storm of bullets, and addressed Colonel Bissell:

"Colonel, can you take ground to the rear without danger of another panic?"

Bissell looked calmly into his blazing eyes and answered:

"As surely, sir, as your regimental drill."

"Then do so. But do it at your peril." Bissell rode closer to the right of his regiment and commanded: "Cease firing!" The command passed swiftly down the line, and the firing ceased. Then, followed by his aid, who carried his plumed hat in his hand, his fingers clutching it rigidly, the impassive Col-

onel galloped to the center and rear of his line, and his familiar voice rang in his men's ears: "bout face!" and the line turned in its track. "Forward! Quick time! Steady—men—steady—march!" and the line swung steadily toward what had been the rear, following the Colonel's uplifted sword and the aid with his crushed hat and his heart in his mouth, while men dropped in the ranks as they moved away, and some were caught and helped on by their unwounded comrades.

The aid measured with excited eyes the distance from the foe and that to where Hardin's and McKee's panting men and Bragg's mad gunners pressed forward, and presently said, half under his breath:

"That will do!"

Instantly Bissell wheeled his horse, waved his sword, and swiftly rang out the commands: "Halt! Right dress! About face! On the right, commence firing!" and once more Bissell's guns poured in a storm that checked the cheer of the enemy even as it began.

"The battle's won, by God!" shouted the excited Bliss, as he clapped his battered hat on his head, and, dashing his spurs into his horse, rode swiftly away to report.

And, even as he spoke, Hardin's and McKee's men opened fire, and Bragg's maddened gunners poured in, with incredible swiftness, a tempest of grape that broke up the enemy's column and shattered the grand charge of the day.

These are some of the "little things"—the details—which general history cannot pause to record, but which vividly illustrate qualities of the American soldier, and, taken together, make up and are indispensable to the great things—the results—which history does record.

RATTLE SNAKE WINE.

It is a Favorite Medicine in the West Indies.

Benjamin Gooch, in his "Medical and Surgical Observations," published in 1771, gives a summary of different ancient therapeutic methods, based on the use of animal poisons. One of his observations relates to a case of severe pains, spasms, etc., of long duration. Gooch says, after speaking of the patient's sufferings: "Not to appear inhuman to so wretched a being, after telling him I could do nothing, I sent him a bottle of rattlesnake wine, to take a glass of frequently. This was in the West Indies drunk as the highest cordial. Three nights after the patient walked in. 'Sir,' said he, 'you cannot be so much amazed as I am, nor half so much pleased; I am come to thank you, and, if not criminal, to worship you.'" Gooch's account of how he learned the virtues of rattlesnake wine is as follows: "A very wealthy old gentleman in the West Indies had long been afflicted with leprosy to a high degree, which was deemed incurable by his physicians. Apparently in a dying state, he made his will, leaving a large legacy to a female servant, who had lived with him many years. This circumstance being known to the servant, she and her paramour studied and contrived how to make away with him in such a manner as to raise the least suspicion. They put the heads of rattlesnakes into the wine he drank, thinking it would prove an infallible poison; on the contrary, he grew better, and the criminals, imagining the poison was not strong enough, added more snake venom, whereby the gentleman was restored to perfect health. Conscience finally put this servant upon her knees before her master, confessing her crime. Forgiveness was granted, and the old gentleman gave her a sum of money, ordering her to depart and never see him more."

An Oregon Freak.

A curious physical freak has been discovered on the tongue of the infant child of Mrs. Carl F. Wagner, the wife of a railroad man of Albina, Ore. About a week ago, when the child was but a week old, the mother called the attention of the family physician to the fact that she experienced a peculiar feeling when the child was nursing.

She had not investigated for herself, but thought the babe's tongue was exceedingly rough for one so young. The doctor opened the child's mouth and was astonished to find its tongue covered with silken hair of short growth. This was somewhat extraordinary, and he could hardly believe that what he saw was a fact. The attention of some of the most prominent physicians there has been invited to this freak of nature. They say it is an unparalleled case. It is so extraordinary that a report of it will be furnished all the leading medical journals in the country and Europe. A local museum man has already made Wagner, who is a poor man, an offer for the use of the child as soon as it can be safely taken from its mother.

Aluminum.

The production of aluminum in this country has increased from eighty-three pounds in 1883 to 850,000 pounds in 1895, and the estimate for 1896 is 3,600,000 pounds, the process for making it having been greatly improved. The price at the reduction works ranges from 50 cents to 55 cents a pound. Applied electricity explains the ease with which the light metal is now turned out.

Will Last a Lifetime.

Prof. A. C. Totten, of New Haven, has issued a calendar good for 67,713,250 years. It is said to have a very simple key, and is evolved on a cycle of 1,600,000 years.

A New York electrician has succeeded in sending messages over a telegraph wire at the rate of 1,714 words a minute.

Mamma—Willie, where are those apples gone that were in the store-room? Willie—They are with the gingerbread that was in the cupboard.—Exchange.

FIELD OF VICKSBURG

A MOVEMENT TO MAKE A NATIONAL PARK.

A Brief Review of the Military Operations Which Took Place in and Around the Confederate Stronghold in 1862 and 1863.

Consecrated Ground.
A bill is now pending in Congress to make the battlefield of Vicksburg a national park similar to that of Chickamauga, thereby preserving to future generations the scene of a great and bloody struggle. In view of the proposed change it is timely to recur to the military operations carried on around Vicksburg in 1862 and 1863.

Vicksburg was one of the Confederate strongholds on the Mississippi and with Port Hudson, 120 miles further south, also held by the Confederates, prevented the free use of that water-



GEN. J. C. PEMBERTON.

way by the Government, while by it the Confederates were enabled to receive military support from Arkansas and Texas. In May, 1862, an attempt was made to capture it by changing the channel of the Mississippi, thus



CAVES NEAR VICKSBURG USED AS HOMES.

leaving Vicksburg several miles inland, but it failed. In June Admiral Farragut bombarded the place, with no beneficial result, and thereafter for several months no effort was made to possess the city. In December Gen. Grant at the head of 40,000 troops moved against the city, which was defended by Gen. John C. Pemberton with 34,000 men. Gen. W. T. Sherman was selected to attack the place, but, after difficult and costly operations in the swampy region of the Yazoo river, to the north of the city, he was forced to abandon his efforts.

In January, 1863, Grant took command of all the forces operating against Vicksburg and marching the bulk of his army down the western bank of the Mississippi crossed to the Vicksburg side several miles below the city. In this movement he was aided by Admiral William D. Porter. Grant's object was to reach and capture the State capital, Jackson, and then fall upon Vicksburg in the rear. The first engagement fought after the crossing of the Mississippi was near Port Gibson, where the Confederate force was routed by the Federals under Gen. McClelland. At Richmond, still further on the road to Jackson, the Federals gained another victory over a small force sent out from the capital by Gen. J. E. Johnston, who was in command of all the Confederate forces in Tennessee and Mississippi. On May

Admiral Porter kept up a steady bombardment of the place. At 10 o'clock on the 22d an assault by Grant's whole line was begun and was joined in by Admiral Porter, and until night the battle waged with virtually no advantage to the Union troops, but with a heavy loss in killed and wounded. The failure of this assault determined

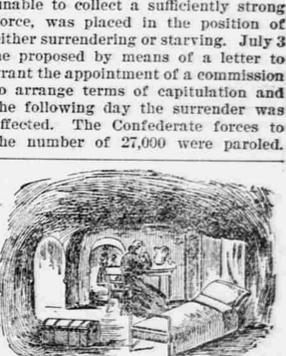


GRANT'S HEADQUARTERS.

Grant upon a regular siege and the arrival of reinforcements, under Maj. Gen. Herron and Gen. Lauman, which swelled his forces to 70,000 men, enabled him to closely invest the place. For a month the investment of the city grew closer and closer, while day and night, with little intermission, the guns of Admiral Porter and of the land forces hurled shot and shell into the city and its suburbs. Many of the inhabitants left their homes and took up their abodes in caves dug in the steep bank where streets passed through the hills. Here they lived practically secure from the iron hail that plowed up streets and demolished houses. Many of these caves were neatly furnished and had carpeted floors. Meantime mining was actively carried on by Grant and June 25 a mine under Fort Hill bastion was fired. Part of the fort was thrown down and through this breach the Federals sought to enter, while the Confederates sought to keep them out. Hand grenades were used and the conflict waged was desperate, with the advantage on the side of the Confederates. Another mine was exploded July 1.

Meantime Gen. Pemberton, shut up in Vicksburg and with no hope of being relieved by Gen. Johnson, who was

unable to collect a sufficiently strong force, was placed in the position of either surrendering or starving. July 3 he proposed by means of a letter to grant the appointment of a commission to arrange terms of capitulation and the following day the surrender was effected. The Confederate forces to the number of 27,000 were paroled.



CAVE HOUSE INTERIOR.

During the entire operations from the crossing of the Mississippi by Grant to the surrender of Vicksburg the Union loss in killed, wounded and missing is placed at 8,575, and the Confederate loss at 10,000.

"Father Is Coming."

The Nineteenth Indiana had for its first commander Colonel Solomon Meredith, famous as a stock raiser at Richmond, Ind., before the war. He was tall, awkward, unmilitary, but brave. His son Samuel was a lieutenant in the Nineteenth. He was as tall, a little more awkward and a little less military than his father, but, like his father, brave. Lieutenant Sam Meredith was officer of the division guard one day early in the history of the regiment. The custom was then, as it is now, to have the guard fall in and salute when a field or general officer approached. Colonel Meredith suddenly came upon the guard without being noticed. As soon as Lieutenant Sam saw him he called out in a loud voice: "Turn out the guard, father's coming!" Poor Sam never heard the last of "Turn out the guard, father's coming." The balance of the brigade would call out, all along the line, whenever Sam put in an appearance, and occasionally when Meredith, Sr., was seen, and after he became a general and had command of the brigade, he would hear: "Turn out the guard, father's coming!" and indulge in one of those Sol Meredith grins the boys used to enjoy. Both father and son died long ago. For years one of General Meredith's daughters-in-law was an extensive raiser of and dealer in blooded stock on the Meredith farm, near Richmond, and it took a sharp Yankee to get the best of the bargain when dealing with her.

Longstreet's Book.

Gen. Longstreet's book has provoked a storm of Southern criticism, but the fact remains that his statements are backed by personal knowledge of the events that he describes, and by a record of military service that is not surpassed by that of any other Confederate commander.

The greatest forces upon which our wills can act are those within.



CHAMPION HILLS BATTLE GROUND.

14 Jackson fell into the hands of the Union forces and after destroying whatever might be of aid to the Confederates Grant began his backward march upon Vicksburg. At Champion Hills Gen. Pemberton, who had marched out of Vicksburg, had taken a position with a force of 18,000 or 20,000 and attempted to check the progress of the Union forces. He was hurled back to the Big Black river, where the battle was renewed the following day. Again the Confederates were routed with a loss of 242 killed and wounded and 1,500 prisoners, and the Union troops passed on to the attack on Vicksburg.

On the extreme right was the army corps of Maj. Gen. Sherman, next to it that of Maj. Gen. J. B. McPherson and on the left the corps of Maj. Gen. McClelland, who was subsequently succeeded by Maj. Gen. Ord. On May 19 Gen. Sherman began an attack on the city, but was forced to abandon it. Another and general assault was planned for the 22d and the preceding night