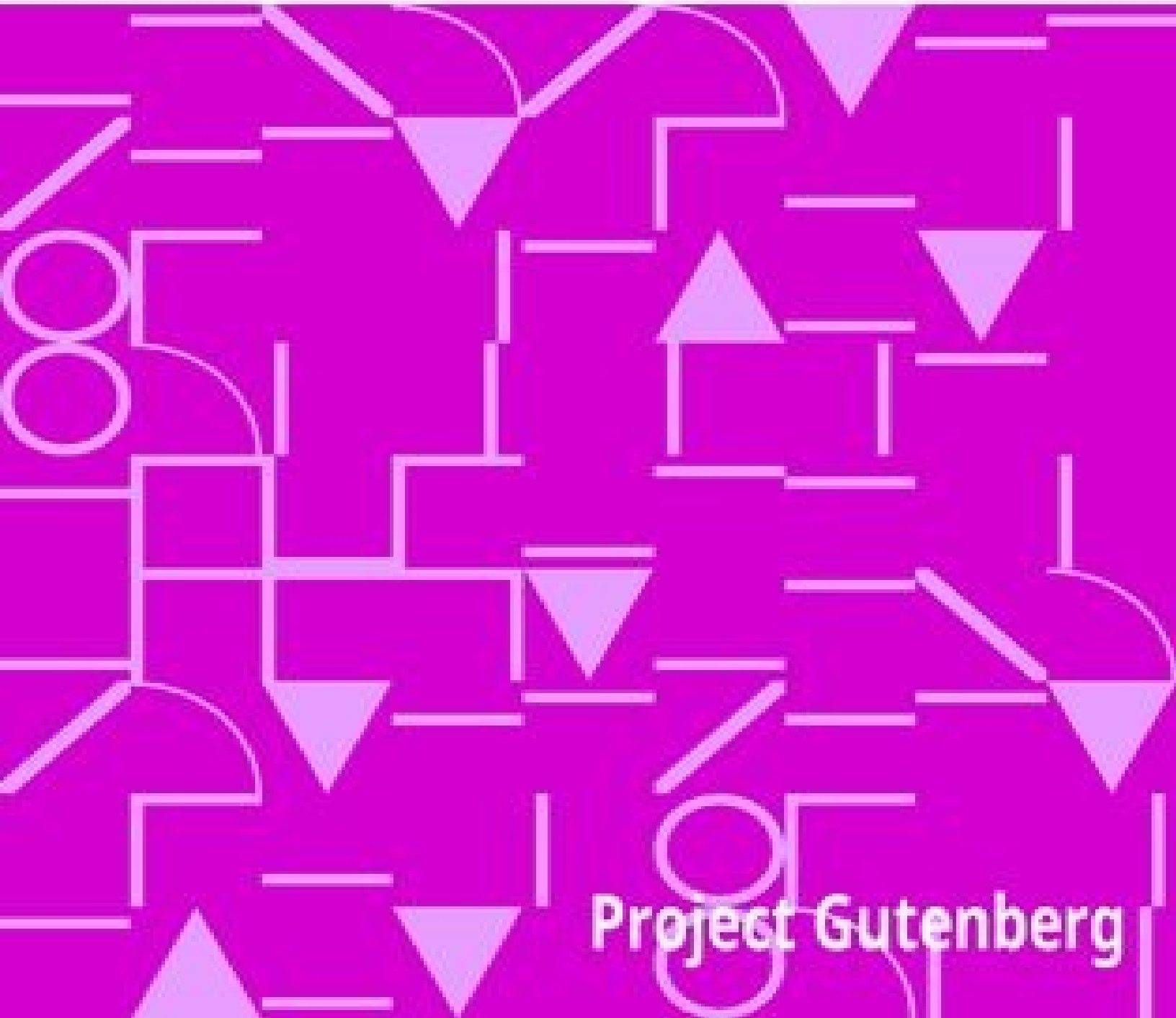
Reminiscences of two years with the colored troops

Personal Narratives of events in the War of the Rebellion, being papers read before the Rhode Island Soldiers and Sailors Historical Society. No. 7,

Joshua M. Addeman



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PERSONAL NARRATIVES

OF EVENTS IN THE

WAR OF THE REBELLION,

BEING PAPERS READ BEFORE THE

RHODE ISLAND SOLDIERS AND SAILORS HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

NO. 7.... SECOND SERIES.

American Flag

PROVIDENCE:"
N. BANGS WILLIAMS & CO.
1880.

REMINISCENCES

OF

TWO YEARS WITH THE COLORED TROOPS.

BY

J.M. ADDEMAN,

[LATE CAPTAIN FOURTEENTH R.I. HEAVY ARTILLERY, COLORED.]

PROVIDENCE:
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REMINISCENCES OF TWO YEARS

WITH THE

COLORED TROOPS.

The circumstances attending the organizing of a colored regiment in this State are well remembered. In the summer of 1863, white men were no longer eager to enlist for a war the end of which none could foresee; but nevertheless the war must be prosecuted with vigor; another draft was impending and the State's quota must be filled. With difficulty Governor Smith obtained permission to organize a company, and, as this rapidly filled, then a battalion, and finally a full regiment of twelve companies of colored men for heavy artillery duty. In common with many others I did not at the outset look with particular favor upon the scheme. But with some hesitation I accepted an appointment from the State as a second lieutenant and reported for duty at Camp Smith, on the Dexter Training Ground, in this city. After serving here for some weeks in the fall of 1863, in the organizing of companies and forwarding them to Dutch Island, where the regiment was in camp, I successfully passed an examination before what was known as "Casey's Board," and after some preliminary service with a company of the third battalion, was assigned to the command of Company H of the second battalion, with whose fortunes my lot was cast till the close of our term of service. On the turtle-backed crown of Dutch Island we remained amid fierce storms and the howling winds that swept with keen edge over the waters of the Narragansett, until the 20th of January, 1864, when, as I was about to make a visit home, the transport, Daniel Webster, appeared in the harbor and orders were issued to prepare for embarking on the following day. At the time appointed, we were on board, but the sutler's arrangements were not completed until early the next morning, when we got up steam and were soon out of sight of our familiar camp.

The incidents of the voyage it is not necessary to recite to any comrade whose chance it was to make a trip in an army transport, which had long since seen its better days, and which had been practically condemned before Uncle Sam found for it such profitable use. The men packed like sheep in the hold, the officers,

though far better off as to quarters, yet crowded too much for convenience and comfort, the inevitable sea-sickness, the scanty rations, and what was worse, the extreme scarcity of water, were annoyances but the counterpart of those endured by many brave men who preceded and followed us to the scene of duty. But in the main the weather favored us, and on the hurricane deck we spent the hours off duty, gazing far across the illimitable waste of waters, as day after day we approached a warmer clime with its glowing sunshine and glittering waves and the deep blue sky bending down in unbroken circle around us. The rebel cruisers were then in the midst of their destructive work and it was natural, as we caught sight of a distant vessel, to speculate whether it was a friendly or a hostile craft. When we were in the latitude of Charleston, a steamer appeared in the far distance, then a flash, a puff of smoke and a loud report notified us that it was sending us its compliments. It approached nearer, a boat put out and officers from the gunboat Connecticut came on board, examined our papers and soon allowed us to proceed. The weather rapidly grew warmer and our winter clothing proved very uncomfortable. The steamer's supply of water was exhausted and we had to depend on sea-water, distilled by the vessel's boilers, for all uses. The allowance of an officer was, I think, a pint a day. Warm and insipid, its only use, as I remember, was for our morning ablutions, which were more a matter of form than of substance. In rounding the coast of Florida we bumped one evening on a sand bar or coral reef. I was very unceremoniously tumbled over, and the game of back-gammon, in which I was engaged with a brother officer, was of course, ended at once. Rushing on deck we found ourselves clear of the obstruction and again on our way. But the breakers, in plain sight, gave us assurance of the peril we had so narrowly escaped.

In the early morning of February second we crossed the bar and noted well that line stretching far to the right and left of us, drawn with almost mathematical exactness, which marked the demarcation between the clear waters of the Gulf and the turbid waters of the Mississippi. In going up the river the buckets were constantly dropped into the muddy stream, and their contents, when allowed to stand for a few minutes, would soon furnish an abundance of that luxury we all craved so much,—clear water, cooled by the ice and snows of the far north. Reaching the inhabited portions of the river, we saw the planters busy with their spring work, and though the air was chilled with the icy breath of northern climes, the orange trees in blossom and the green shrubbery on the shores, gave indication of the semi-tropical climate we had reached. Arriving at New Orleans in due season, our senior captain reported for orders. I must not pause to speak of the strange scenes which greeted our eyes in this, the most

cosmopolitan city of our land. A delay here of two or three days proved almost as demoralizing as a campaign, and I, for one, was glad when the orders came to move. For reasons that afterwards transpired, we dropped down the stream some fifteen miles to a point called English Turn. It derived its name, as I remember the tradition, from the fact that as the commander of some English vessel was slowly making his way up what was then an unknown and perhaps unexplored body of water, he was met by some French explorer, coming from the opposite direction, who gave him to understand that all the country he had seen in coming up the river, was, by prior discovery, the rightful possession of the French monarch. Though no Frenchman had perhaps seen it, yet with his facile tongue he worked persuasion in the mind of the bluff Englishman, who at this point, turned about and put out to sea—hence its name, English Turn. We found here relics of very early times in the form of an old earthwork, and an angle of a brick wall, built, when, and whether by French or Spaniard, none could tell. Here we soon selected a site and laid out our camp. The time rapidly passed in the busy occupations which each day brought, in little excursions into the surrounding country, in conversations with the colored people whose sad memories of the old slavery days recalled so vividly the experiences of Uncle Tom and his associates in Mrs. Stowe's famous tale. Nor were the days unvaried by plenty of fun. Music, vocal and instrumental, we had in abundance. The mimic talents of our men, led to the performance of a variety of entertainments, and in their happy-go-easy dispositions, their troubles set very lightly on them. Their extravagancies of expression were by no means an unremarkable feature. When I at first heard their threats to each other, couched sometimes in the most diabolical language, I had deemed it my duty at once to rush into the company street and prevent what, among white men, I would suppose to be the prelude to a bloody fight. "Oh, Captain," would be the explanation, "we'se only a foolin'."

While here, we had a little flurry of snow, which reminded us of what we had left in abundance behind, but which was a startling novelty to the natives, few, if any, of whom, had ever seen anything like it before. Their explanation was that the Yankees had brought it with them. In the course of a week or two, an assistant Inspector-General put in an appearance and gave us a pretty thorough over-hauling; but what astonished him the most, was to find us in so healthy a condition; for it appeared that because of a few cases of measles on board ship, we had been represented as being in very bad shape, and it was for sanitary reasons that we were sent to English Turn.

We now began to hope for some change. The place was decidedly unhealthy. Our men were dropping off rapidly from a species of putrid sore throat which

was very prevalent. The soil was so full of moisture that we had to use the levee for a burial ground. Elsewhere a grave dug two feet deep would rapidly fill with water, and to cover a coffin decently, it was necessary that two men should stand on it, while the extemporized sextons completed their task.

Washington's birthday was duly celebrated, and foot-ball, wheel-barrow and sack races, among other sports, furnished fun for the whole camp. Even the inevitable greased pig was provided, but he was so greasy that he got over the lines into the swamps and—freedom.

Our battalion commander, Major Shaw, arrived on the third of March, and on the following day, it was my good fortune to witness, in New Orleans, the inauguration of Gov. Hahn, who, by some form of election, had been chosen the chief executive. The unclouded sky, the rich foliage and the beautiful atmosphere, combined to make a glorious day, and the spectacular arrangements were in keeping. The place was Lafayette Square. Flags of all nations waved in the breeze. In seats, arranged tier above tier, were five thousand school children of the city, dressed in white with ribbons and sashes of the national colors, while many thousands of the citizens were gathered as spectators. Patriotic songs were sung by the little folks; five hundred musicians filled the air with sweet sounds, and in the anvil chorus which was sung, fifty sons of Vulcan kept time on as many veritable anvils; while some half dozen batteries of artillery came in heavy on the choruses. These were fired simultaneously by an electrical arrangement; and the whole was under charge of P.S. Gilmore, a name not now unknown to fame in grand musical combinations. An elaborate address by General Banks, then commanding the department, was an interesting feature of the occasion.

Our life at English Turn, was varied by little of special interest. Of course there was no enemy at hand except those foes which a hot climate breeds so rapidly. A mysterious order came one day, to detail one hundred men "to join the expedition," and we were notified that a steamer would call for them on the morrow. Details of picked men were selected from each company. Five days' rations and forty rounds of ammunition, were dealt out to each, and in light marching order they waited several days for the steamer to appear. It was in vain, however, and we reluctantly gave up the prospect of some little excitement. We came to the conclusion that somebody at headquarters had forgotten to countermand the order, or, like Mr. Toots, had deemed it of no consequence.

We discussed the varying prospects of change, sometimes coming as a rumor that we should be ordered to Texas, where was the first battalion of our regiment; sometimes that we should join the Red River expedition, which was then

forming, or the expedition against Mobile which was in contemplation. But after six weeks delay at English Turn, we received orders to move up the river to Plaquemine, a point some one hundred and twenty miles above New Orleans, a few miles below and on the opposite bank from Baton Rouge. This town was at the entrance of the Bayou Plaquemine, of which Longfellow makes mention in the story of Evangeline's search for her lover; a description which gives so good an idea of the bayous by which Louisiana is intersected, that I quote it in this connection.

> "They * * * entering the Bayou of Plaquemine,
> Soon were lost in a maze of sluggish and devious waters,
> Which, like a network of steel, extended in every direction.
> Over their heads the towering and tenebrous boughs of the cypress
> Waved like banners that hang on the walls of ancient cathedrals.
> Deathlike the silence seemed, and unbroken save by the herons
> Home to their roosts in the cedar trees returning at sunset,
> Or by the owl, as he greeted the moon with demoniac laughter."

Here we relieved the Forty-Second Ohio, and went into camp. As we marched through the streets of the village to the site of our camp, the scowling looks of the white spectators, sufficiently indicated their sentiments and especially their wrath at being guarded by "niggers."

We found the state of affairs very different from the tranquil neighborhood we had just left. The surrounding country was infested with guerilla bands, and in the jail were a number of rebel prisoners who had been captured in recent raids. The latter received from the town's people very gratifying evidences of sympathy, and in their comparatively comfortable quarters and abundant supplies, afforded a vivid contrast to the treatment received by our boys at Libby and Andersonville. Intimations were quite freely expressed by the prisoners, that it would soon be their turn to guard us, and we were cautioned by friends and from headquarters, to be on the alert against a sudden attack.

In the evening of the day after our arrival, we were startled by a steamer approaching the landing, all ablaze from stem to stern. The entire heavens seemed illuminated, and it was light enough to read with perfect distinctness. The vessel was loaded with some three thousand bales of cotton, and in landing at a point above us, the sparks from the torch—a wire basket filled with pine knots, and used after dark to light the loading and unloading of the steamer,—had set the cotton afire. The motion of the boat and the perfect draft from her construction, peculiar to nearly all the river craft, of course spread the fire with great rapidity, and only time sufficient to rescue the passengers was permitted. The vessel had a large freight of live stock, some of which escaped to the shore, but most of them perished in the flames, filling the air with their piteous cries. Our particular attention was devoted to our magazine, which was an ordinary store-house and exposed to some danger. Its contents we could ill afford to lose, and their explosion would have made a sensation much more lively than even the destruction of the steamer.

At Plaquemine an earth work had been begun by our predecessors. It had four bastions, one of which was assigned to each of our companies. The work was in a very incomplete condition, and except for the protection its parapets afforded, would have been of little service. In the threatening aspect of affairs, it became necessary at once to strengthen our defences, and under the direction of an engineer, details of men were set to work, and rapid progress was made.

In April parties of guerillas and rebel cavalry began to operate actively in our neighborhood. At Indian village, a few miles distant, they burned a large quantity of cotton which had been sent in by planters or collected by speculators and was awaiting transportation. About the same time mysterious signals attracted our attention, and soon afterwards, we learned that a body of two hundred cavalry had crossed the Grand River for the purpose of attacking us. The men slept on their arms, but no attack was made. A week or two afterwards, I had occasion to visit New Orleans on business, and while there, heard a report that Plaquemine was "gobbled up" by the rebs. I was very much relieved on my return to find everything in *statu quo*. A raid shortly afterwards on Bayou Goula, a trading station a few miles below us, resulted in the destruction of considerable property, but no captures of prisoners.

On the twenty-fifth of May the gunboat 54 was sent to cruise on the river in our neighborhood, and it was a welcome reinforcement to our meagre numbers. On the twenty-eighth of May the cavalry of General Banks' army, on their retreat from the Red River campaign, passed through our post, remaining a short time in

our vicinity. Among them was a portion of our Third Rhode Island cavalry, and no hospitality ever gave greater mutual pleasure than that which it happened to be in our power then to grant. The record of that expedition has been made up, but there was a refreshing vigor of opinion expressed by our comrades on the conduct of the campaign. It seemed very lonesome when they left us with their commander,—a true Rhode Island son, General Richard Arnold.

Orders came within a day or two from Baton Rouge, announcing a change of commanders of the district, and exhorting us to get everything into fighting trim. It will be remembered that flushed with victory the rebels followed close on the heels of our retreating army, and were only stopped by the lack of transportation to cross the swift and deep Atchafalaya. Of course we presumed that they would make one of their raids down the coast and attack our post, and that of Donaldsonville, some twenty-five miles below us, which constituted the principal defences on the river above New Orleans. With the exception, however, of capturing some of our cavalry pickets, we had no trouble, though frequent alarms kept us on the qui vive. The beating of the long roll was almost a nightly occurrence; but this I should not mention to soldiers, except to refer to an instance that now occurs to me in illustration of the rapidity of the mind's movements, at times. About the time of the raids on our northern frontier, I was dreaming one night, that we were ordered home to proceed at once to some point on the border. All the movements incident to our departure and to our arrival at Providence, were before me. As we were halting in Exchange Place, with arms stacked and men at ease, I obtained permission to go home for a few minutes to see my family, to whom our arrival was unknown, when the roll sounded and we were ordered to fall in at once to take the train. Of course my momentary disappointment was great, but awaking at once, I heard the drums beating in reality, and jumping into my outer clothing and equipments in a hurry, was shortly at the head of my company. The first beat of the drum had probably started the long train of the incidents of my dream.

In the midst of these rumors of attack, in the early morning of August sixth we were visited by a body of mounted men. They dashed upon our pickets who made a bold stand for a short time, and then scattered for shelter. The rebels had caught sight of the officer, Lieutenant Aldrich, who was in command, and while a part of them made diligent search for him, the remainder dashed into the town, and breaking up into parties raided through the various streets, firing somewhat indiscriminately, but more particularly at what contrabands they saw. The companies gathered in their respective bastions in the fort and we expected a lively brush. As I stood on the parapet and got a glimpse of a portion of the

enemy, I ached to let fly a shell, but the danger to innocent parties was too great to warrant it just then. I remember how amused I was at the appearance of the gallant commander of our post, as with his coat and equipments in one hand, and holding up his nether garments in the other, he was "double-quicking" from his quarters in the town, to a place of security in the fort. After that he selected quarters nearer us. The prospect of being "gobbled up" was not particularly gratifying, especially to a "nigger" officer, who had Fort Pillow memories in mind. As the rebels did not appear to be coming to us, a strong detachment under command of Adjutant Barney, was sent out to exchange compliments with them. They gave us no opportunity for this but soon retired, taking with them three of our pickets and one cavalry vidette, whom they had captured. We understood, the next day, that our men were shot in cold blood. Lieutenant Aldrich and the men with him, escaped through the friendly protection of an osage orange grove. Others swam the bayou and thus escaped certain death if captured. I think our casualties were, besides those taken prisoners, one man killed and a few wounded. Several of the rebels were said to be killed or wounded. One of the latter, as I remember, fell into our hands and was taken into our hospital where he received the same treatment as our own men. Subsequently we learned that the raiders were Texans who boastfully declared that they asked no quarter and gave none. In consequence of the barbarous treatment of our men who were captured, some correspondence passed between General Banks and the rebel commander, but I am not aware that it amounted to anything.

On the eighteenth a scouting party of our cavalry was captured at Grand River and others in our nearer vicinity. We had two companies of the Thirty-first Massachusetts mounted infantry, who were used for for vidette duty. Being more exposed than our own pickets they suffered occasionally from guerilla raids. One party of them, were surprised, probably in consequence of a little carelessness, and were taken prisoners with the exception of one man who was killed. He had been a prisoner once before and fought to the last, rather than again be captured. On some of these occasions the attacking parties were dressed in our own uniform.

All through the country back of us, a constant and merciless conscription was going on, sweeping in all able-bodied men between fifteen and sixty years of age. Of course many refugees and occasional deserters came within our lines.

During the fall of 1864 we received from time to time re-inforcements of several companies of colored engineer troops, who continued the work on the fort which we had begun. Though not comparing with the arduousness of field

service, our duties were by no means slight. It must be remembered that we were in a semi-tropical country, where to an unacclimated person the climate was itself almost a deadly foe. The extreme heat produced a lethargy that was depressing in the extreme. In a few days of dry weather, the surface of the ground would be baked like a brick. Then would come most violent storms, converting the soil into a quagmire and covering it with water like a lake. At this time, there was no small danger of falling into the deep ditches with which the fields were intersected, for drainage. In this way I lost one man of my company. Of course it will be understood how productive of disease would be the malaria from the soil and the adjacent swamps. Our men with all their buoyancy of disposition, had not the resolute will of white men, when attacked by sickness, and would succumb with fatal rapidity. As captain of a company, my most arduous duty, when not on special duty or detached service, was as field officer of the day. This necessitated the visiting occasionally during the day and night, our videttes and picket posts which were stationed on the roads into the country, and at intersecting points in the fields; and also crossing in a skiff the Mississippi river, to visit the troops stationed to guard a telegraph station on the other side. This station was in the vicinity of a famous duelling ground,—a path not far from the river bank,—to which in former days the young bloods of the town and vicinity would resort to repair their wounded honor, according to the rules of the code. As we were too short of horses always to furnish a mounted orderly, the officer of the day would at night, have to make his rounds alone. There was a picturesqueness in those rides in the solemn hours of the night, a portion of the way over deserted plantations where the weeds would be as high as one's head on horseback, the path at times fringing the borders of swamps where the moss hung in festoons from the stately cypress trees, past lonely negro cabins, where sometimes I heard the inmates in the midnight hours, singing some plaintive melody in tones the most subdued.

In addition to our routine work, our officers were largely detailed for staff, court-martial and other duties. The frequent attempts at smuggling contraband goods through our lines, also necessitated military commissions for the trial of these as well as various other civil offences,—on which duty some of us were always engaged. As a consequence, we were always short-handed, and tours of duty came as often as was agreeable. The fall months of 1864 were marked by occasional raids in our vicinity, with orders, at times, to sleep on our arms. The capture of a large supply of revolvers, which were surreptitiously landed near us, indicated the necessity of strictly guarding the lines, and at the same time, furnish those of us who needed them, an ample supply of that weapon.

During this period, we organized schools for the instruction of our men. While some of them were comparatively well educated and were very serviceable in various kinds of clerical work, a large proportion of them were destitute of the most rudimentary knowledge. Through the Christian Commission, of which Ex-Mayor J.V.C. Smith, of Boston, was in our department the efficient agent, we were amply supplied with various kinds of books and utensils, embracing primers, arithmetics, slates and pencils, besides a liberal allowance of reading matter. Our men were eager recipients of these and made good use of them. We tried to stimulate their pride in every way possible, and the great majority of them learned to sign their names to our rolls instead of making their mark. I had some pride in having my rolls signed by the men themselves, but I remember one of my men, however, whom I ineffectually ordered to do this. He admitted to me that he could write, but in consequence of some trouble he had in former years, got into by the use of the pen, he had made a vow never to write again, or something to that effect. My impression is that it was some kind of forgery he was engaged in. It is possible he may have been an unfortunate indorser; if so, his determination would not seem so strange.

At the same time, we were trying to make a permanent improvement in the way above indicated, we were troubled by difficulties, which were incident to army life at all times. Liquor, of course, would make trouble for us, and I think I never knew of any stimulant more demoralizing, in its way, than Louisiana rum. This fiery fluid would arouse all the furies in a man when it had him under its control. Gambling was another vice against which we labored with more or less success. Sometimes, after taps, I would make a raid on some of the men who were having a quiet little game. When winter came, we had replaced our worn out tents with shanties built from the materials of confiscated houses. These would be darkened, and in voices hushed to the lowest whisper, the men would indulge in their favorite pastime. On one occasion, I remember that suddenly forcing the door open, I dropped, most unexpectedly to them, on a small party of gamblers. As I scooped in the cards and the stakes, one of them remarked that it was no use to play against the Captain, for he got high, low, jack and the game.

In the preparations that were making against Mobile in the winter of 1864-5, we anticipated an opportunity to change our comparatively inactive life. But General Sherman (T.W.) said he could not spare us from the important post where we were stationed, and it was with regret that we were deprived of a share in that brilliant affair which has been so well described in a former paper. During this winter, the rebel forces in Western Louisiana, under command of General Kirby Smith, were comparatively inactive, though raiding parties gave us

occasional trouble. Towards spring they began to move, and attacks on parties of Union cavalry were not infrequent. Unpleasant rumors of the capture of the Third Rhode Island Cavalry reached us, but proved to be unfounded, except that several couriers were taken. Some rebel prisoners were captured by the scouts, who were encamped near us, but our freedom from attack, was probably largely due to the inundated condition of the country. Owing to the neglect of the levees, the river at its high stage in the spring following broke through the embankment above and overflowed a large tract of country west of us. A raid contemplated by the rebels, which would have given us sharp work, and a force which would have been large enough to annihilate us, unless in the meanwhile reinforced, were prevented by the condition of the intervening country, from giving us trouble.

As an illustration of the disastrous effect of this overflow, I am tempted to give a brief description of a trip I made through a portion of the country that suffered in this way. Before the waters had subsided, I was ordered by Brigadier-General R.A. Cameron, commanding the district of La Fourche, in which we were located, to report at his headquarters in Brashear City, for duty on his staff. Taking a steamer to New Orleans and then the train at Algiers, which is opposite New Orleans, I proceeded very comfortably to a place called Terrebonne, where steam travel came to a sudden stop. A hand-car for a mile or two furnished transportation and then we found the railroad completely washed away by the flood above named. The General's quartermaster and myself secured a boat and with a crew of colored soldiers, we rowed some twelve miles to a place called Tigerville, on the Alligator bayou. Our route lay over the bed of the railroad, the track washed to one side of the cut, and a stream of water several feet deep on top of the bed. The road had been built through what seemed, most of the way, a primeval wilderness. The rank growth which skirted both sides of the stream, with no sound to break the silence, save the measured stroke of the oars, for even the birds which occasionally flitted across our path, were songless, though of brilliant plumage; the sight of an occasional moccasin or copperhead snake coiled on the stump of a tree, and not infrequently of an alligator sunning himself on a log, were features of a situation that must be seen to be fully realized. The few small settlements through which we passed, were drowned out. Some of the houses were nearly under water and large quantities of debris were afloat on the slowly moving current. Through the long weary hours of our boat ride, the sun poured its rays upon us with unmitigated fervor. Reaching Tigerville, we found an ugly little stern-wheeled boat tied up in what had been one of the thoroughfares of the village, and which the quartermaster at once

ordered to take us to Brashear City. The captain of the craft, incidentally remarked that his boiler was in bad shape and might blow up at any time. The quartermaster was willing, however, to take the risk, and getting up steam, we were soon on our way. But with the remark of the captain in my mind, as I looked at the stagnant bayou with its waters black as ink, and gazed off upon the interminable swamps on either side, and thought of the monsters from which it took its name, I concluded that the extreme bow would be a little the safest place, and taking passage on an empty water cask I found there, I lighted my pipe and tried to feel as tranquil as the circumstances above suggested would permit. Through the winding bayous, we pursued our way and sometime after dark, we safely reached Brashear City, or that portion of it which was visible above the waste of waters. Speaking of the bayous, it would be difficult to give a clear conception of their peculiarities. Equally strange are the people who inhabit those solitudes. Time would not permit me to describe the "Cajans"—corruption of "Acadians,"—descendants of the exiles who early settled the territory of Louisiana, but who have been driven from their first places of settlement by those more ambitious and unscrupulous. Living in isolated communities, with their artless and unambitious characteristics, their simplicity and exclusiveness, they would furnish material enough for an elaborate paper.

Many reminiscences occur to me in connection with my service on General Cameron's staff, but any attempt to detail them would transgress the proper limits of a paper. In spite of the surrender of Lee and Johnston, a show of hostilities was kept up in the trans-Mississippi department, it being supposed that Jeff Davis was making his way in that direction to still retain a semblance of power in a country which had not felt the severest ravages of the war. Upon his capture, however, the rebel army in western Louisiana, rapidly crumbled to pieces, and while the rank and file were seeking their homes, the officers were continually coming in to our headquarters, to make their peace formally with Uncle Sam. Having occasion to remove our headquarters from Brashear City, to a place called Thibodaux, probably not more than fifty miles distant by rail, we were obliged, by reason of the overflow, to take a steamer and make a circuit of some four hundred and fifty miles, going up the swift flowing and extremely crooked, Atchafalaya, much of the way through a very desolate country, then down the Red River and the Mississippi to Algiers, and thence, by rail, to our place of destination. On our journey we had the company of several rebel officers, some of high rank, who availed themselves of the General's courtesy to reach the Cresent City. In a few weeks the General was mustered out, and soon afterwards, I returned to my company, which, with the battalion, had in the

meanwhile, been ordered to Donaldsonville. Among the duties here assigned to me, was service as Provost Marshal of the Parish, an office which combined as varied a responsibility as can well be imagined. In certain civil cases I had, as judge, jury and executioner of my own decisions, plenty of employment. With an occasional call to join in matrimonial bonds sundry pairs of hearts that beat as one, I had much more frequent cause to settle disputes between planters and employees, where neither party was disposed to meet the other halfway. Vexatious and varied as my employments were, and anxious as I might be to do justice, I was liable to be overhauled by headquarters from misrepresentations made by angry and disappointed suitors. One event in my administration of the office, caused quite a sensation for the day. In the presence of a crowd of whites and blacks, I heard a case in which a colored woman, who had till recently been a slave, was plaintiff and principal witness, and a white man who was defendant, and gave judgment in favor of the former. This may seem to you a very simple matter, but it was evidently no ordinary occurrence in that place, and I presume this was the first occasion in the experience of many of the spectators, in which the sworn testimony of a negro was received as against that of a white person. I seem now to see the glaring eyes of one indignant southron as he scowled upon the proceedings with the intensest malignity. It was not difficult to guess at his opinion of the changed order of things, while to the colored people, it was evident that the year of jubilee had come at last. Thus with comparatively tranquil incidents, the summer of 1865 passed away. Peace with all its attendant blessings, had come. But disease laid its hands heavily on some of us, and death was not an infrequent visitor to officers as well as men. From one scourge of that climate, we were fortunately exempted. Thanks to the thorough policing, on which our commanding officers insisted, "Yellow Jack," who in former seasons had been master of the situation, gave us no trouble. But many of our number, particularly those of us who, during the summer, were on court-martial or other duty in New Orleans or its vicinity, had some uncomfortable experiences with the "Break-bone fever," a species of malarial disease, whose name is sufficiently indicative. The services of our regiment were sufficiently appreciated to delay our muster-out till the second of the following October. The three battalions were consolidated at Carrollton, and a few days after we embarked for home on the good steamer North Star. Some of our officers who took passage in the ill-fated Atlanta, lost their lives by the foundering of that vessel. In the fearful storm, the beginning of which we felt as we passed the Jersey shore, more than a hundred vessels were wrecked on the coast, and among the number was the 'Daniel Webster,' which took us from Dutch Island to New Orleans: In New York we made a parade which was witnessed by crowds of people with apparently hearty

demonstrations of favor. On our return home, we received a cordial greeting from the authorities, and in a few days our regiment was disbanded at Portsmouth Grove and ceased to exist except in history.

It had endeavored to do its duty, and by those who knew it, I believe it had been fully appreciated. General Banks complimented it in orders, and so strict a disciplinarian as General T.W. Sherman, pronounced it a noble regiment, which, from that source, is no small praise. But though most of its officers had served in former organizations during the war, and our lieutenant-colonel was also a veteran of the Mexican war, and with many of his associates brought to the discharge of their duties, the advantage of enlarged experience, a reputation for courage and a high degree of skill, it was not given to the regiment or its several battalions, to participate in any of those engagements or campaigns, some of which it has been the pride and pleasure of comrades here to describe. It was, however, from no hesitation or unwillingness of theirs. The call was hopefully expected but disappointedly unheard. Yet, may they not fairly claim to share in the glory of the result, and to them may not the words of the poet justly apply,—

"They also serve who only stand and wait."

Archaic spelling not corrected in text:

statu quo
guerilla
Atchafalaya

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