



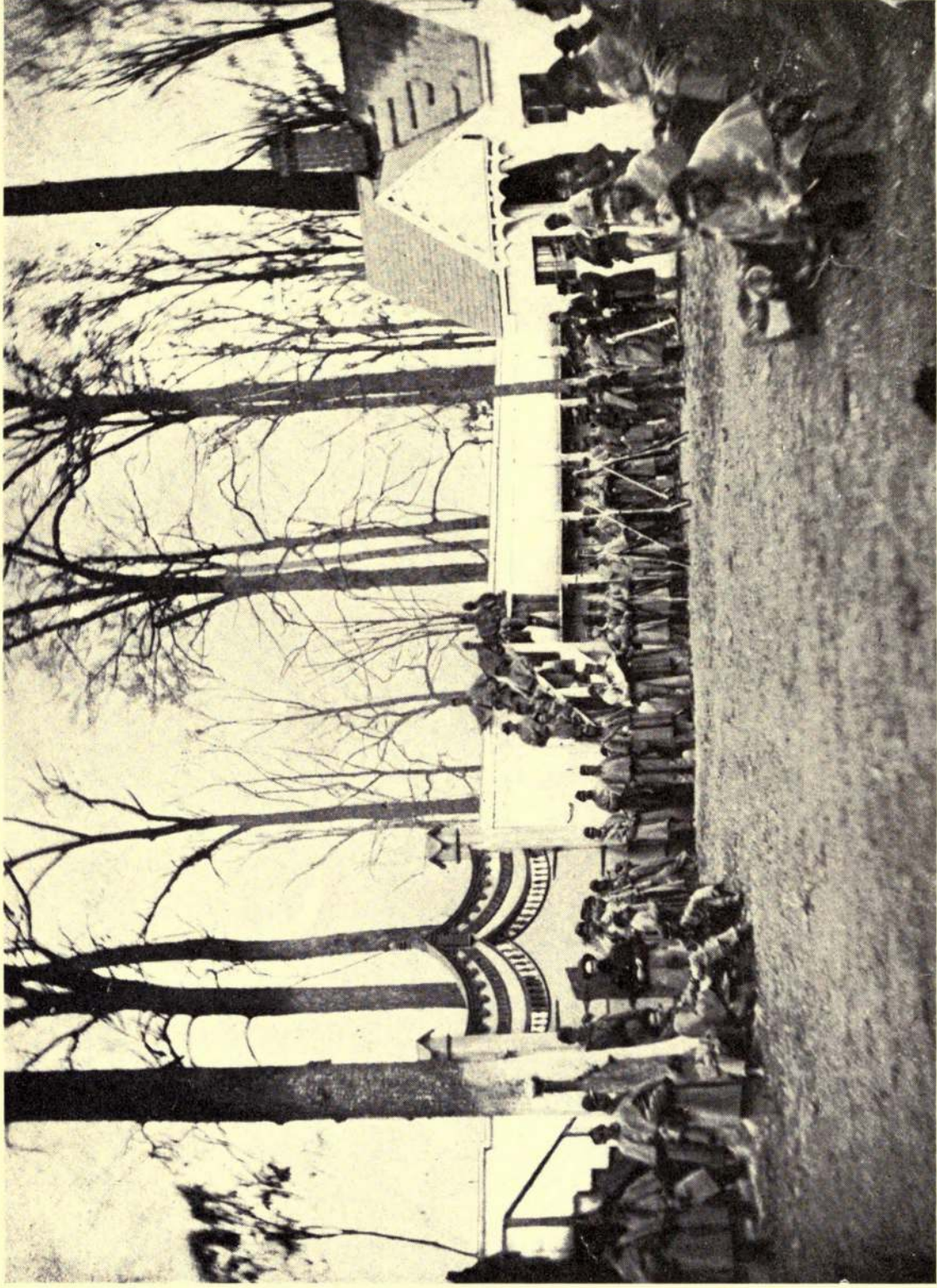
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Capt. Roswell H. Mason
with warmest regards of

J. Langdon Reid



From original photograph in possession of the Author.

Guard and Guard-house at Camp Morton near Indianapolis, Indiana.

The 60th Regiment, Massachusetts. Veteran Volunteers on guard.

August to November, 1864

Prisoners of War

1861-65

A Record of Personal Experiences, and a Study of the
Condition and Treatment of Prisoners on Both
Sides During the War of the Rebellion

By

Thomas Sturgis

Late 1st Lieut. 57th Regt., Mass, Vet. Vols., and Aide-de-Camp 3rd Brig., 1st Div. 9th A. C.

Reprinted from the Report of an Address Delivered Before the
N. Y. Commandery of the Military Order of the
Loyal Legion, Feb. 1, 1911

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| GUARD AND GUARD-HOUSE AT CAMP MORTON <i>Frontispiece</i> From the original photograph in possession of the Author | |
| VIEW INSIDE THE PRISON AT CAMP MORTON SHOWING THE AMPLE SPACE FOR AIR AND EXERCISE . . . | 268 |
| From the original photograph in possession of the Author | |
| VIEW INSIDE THE PRISON AT CAMP MORTON SHOWING THE SUBSTANTIAL AND COMFORTABLE BARRACKS . . . | 272 |
| From the original photograph in possession of the Author | |
| VIEW INSIDE THE PRISON AT CAMP MORTON SHOWING THE PRISONERS SUPPLIED WITH BLANKETS . . . | 276 |
| From the original photograph in possession of the Author | |
| LIBBY PRISON, RICHMOND, VA. | 280 |
| From a photograph taken April 6, 1865 | |
| GARRISON FLAG OF THE LIBBY PRISON | 286 |
| Photographed from the flag now in possession of Gen. Edw. H. Ripley | |
| FACSIMILE OF THE COVER OF THE LIBBY PRISON ORDER BOOK | 290 |
| Photographed from the original | |
| FACSIMILE OF THE LETTER OF COL. ROBERT OULD, C. S. A., AND THE KEY OF LIBBY PRISON | 292 |
| From original photographs. The Key is in the possession of Gen. Edw. H. Ripley | |

| | |
|--|-----|
| SAMPLE OF COAL LOADED WITH DYNAMITE | 296 |
| From the original photograph in possession of the Author | |
| THE INTERIOR OF DANVILLE PRISON | 304 |
| From a drawing by Henry Vander Weyde | |

PRISONERS OF WAR.

**READ BEFORE THE NEW YORK COMMANDERY
BY COMPANION LIEUT. THOMAS STURGIS, FEBRUARY 1, 1911.**

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BY COMPANION LIEUT. THOMAS STURGIS, FEBRUARY 1, 1911.

*Commander and Companions of the New York Commandery
Loyal Legion:*

OUR Commander has asked me to address you on the subject of "Prisoners of War." Remembering my youth at the time of the War of the Rebellion, and the modest rank I attained as a soldier, I should hesitate to obtrude my experiences in the presence of the many older officers of high rank and distinguished service who sit around us, were it not for the fact that my army life included a duality of events connected with the topic of the evening, which taken together form, if not a unique, at least an unusual combination.

In 1864, the regiment of which I was adjutant was placed on guard over Camp Morton near Indianapolis, Indiana, then one of the largest prisons for rebels in the North, and in the winter of 1865 I was made a prisoner at the battle of Fort Stedman in front of Petersburg, Virginia, and was confined in the well-known Libby Prison at Richmond. I thus had the opportunity of seeing at first hand both sides of this much mooted question, the treatment of prisoners. The facts as I saw and experienced them, and the conclusions I reached, I shall try to give you.

I listened with great interest to the addresses on this subject delivered to us last December, to Companion Read's eloquent tribute to our martyred comrades, and to Compan-

ion Putnam's humorous and pathetic story. But I confess to a depression of spirit as I listened. When Read selected Camp Morton as his illustration of Northern prisons, and quoted its statistics from the records (though not as a personal experience), and when Putnam landed at Libby Prison, I felt that what I had to offer had been in some degree anticipated. You will understand why when you recall that my only apology for accepting our Commander's suggestion that I should prepare a paper on "Prisoners of War" was the fact, previously stated, that I had seen and known both sides of prison life, coupled with which was the further fact that my recollections centred around the two prisons already described. Yet as there is always some interest in a personal experience, I trust you will bear with fortitude any repetition that may appear in my accounts of Camp Morton and the Libby and follow me into the wider field which I have tried to analyze and illustrate.

Both the earlier speakers disavowed the intention of going deeper into the question than a recital of the suffering of themselves and comrades, but I think the occasion is fitting for an unimpassioned and judicial review of the facts as they tend to show the attitude of the Southern people upon this question, and the intent, purpose, and policy of their leaders as shown by the Confederate records now in our possession. I speak in no spirit of present animosity. I do not seek to place upon present generations responsibility for the acts of their fathers. Edmund Burke said: "I should not know how to draw an indictment against an entire people," and I do not intend to do so, nor is it needed here. But we helped to make history. We are the living witnesses. We are rapidly passing away from this scene, and it is fitting, in the interest of history, in justice to the way our people conducted the war, and to the contrast presented by the actions of our antagonists, that we should leave our testimony before we go.

At that time Indianapolis was a crude Western town, giving little promise of its present importance, except to the far-seeing ones who appreciated its value as a railroad junc-

tion. The country was as level as a table, the streams flowed sluggishly with hardly fall enough to move their waters; the streets were wide, unpaved, and dusty, and the buildings of wood, low and insignificant. The soil was rich with Nature's centuries of fertilization, and the timber of white oak, walnut, and beech was magnificent. Even then, before conservation had become a "progressive" gospel, it seemed shocking to my Yankee sense of thrift to see our men felling and splitting this grand timber for firewood.

In 1864, Indianapolis was a live wire. Vallandigham was openly making vehement treasonable speeches in the adjoining State of Ohio. He had organized two secret orders of very militant Southern sympathizers, with a large membership in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri. Kentucky was debatable ground overrun alternately by both armies. The plan of making a military movement northward in force through Ohio and Indiana to free the rebel prisoners at Camp Johnson, Ohio, and Camp Morton, Indiana, was long cherished by the Confederacy. These secret orders were called the "Knights of the Golden Circle" and the "American Knights," and the former had their headquarters and were in great force in Indianapolis. Oliver P. Morton, the famous war governor, was in office, and General Alvin P. Hovey was in command of our troops. Under him Brigadier General Henry B. Carrington commanded the recruiting and draft (or conscript) camp, named for him, and General A. A. Stevens commanded Camp Morton, the rebel prison adjoining. Carrington became well-known subsequently when, as Colonel of the 18th Regular Infantry, he commanded at the time of the "Fetterman Massacre" by the Sioux Indians in Wyoming in 1866. Stevens was an invalid though still doing duty.

We had relieved an active regiment upon our arrival and found that the only troops remaining were part of a regiment of men who had been incapacitated for active service by wounds or disease and were organized for guard and garrison duty. The Government had designated the troops of this character as the "Invalid Corps," and they wore the insignia



From original photograph in possession of the Author.

View inside the prison at Camp Morton, the summer and autumn of 1864.
Note that during this period of largest number confined there was no crowding, but on the contrary ample space for air and exercise

"I. C." on the light blue uniforms that distinguished them from active service regiments. These letters are those placed by our government quartermasters upon useless animals and property and mean simply "inspected and condemned." The rebels soon got hold of the identity of lettering and promptly christened our Invalid Corps "Condemned Yanks." The epithet was used so publicly and offensively that these gallant veterans resented the stigma, and the Government changed the title to "Veteran Reserves," by which they were afterward known. Upon the departure of our predecessors my regiment was placed on guard over the prison, and I was detailed as post-adjutant.

Camp Morton was originally established for the custody of wounded prisoners, but was later used for all classes of enlisted men. Its site had a slightly rolling surface, as well selected as the topography of the country permitted. Colonel Hoffman, Commissary-General of Prisoners at Washington, reported of it on April, 23, 1863: "It is a very favorable place for a prison, but occupies a large area. It has a stream of water running through it, and many shade trees standing." It was enclosed by a wooden stockade. Surrounding this on the outside, and at a suitable level to enable them to watch the interior, was the platform upon which the guards were stationed. Inside the stockade, and about twenty feet from it, was a low fence which the prisoners were forbidden to cross, as doing so would have brought them to the foot of the wall. This was not difficult to scale by active men using either a rude ladder or a long plank torn from their barracks. Such attempts were made several times during our stay. They were made at night and by a small number of men, probably not over a dozen at a time. In at least one case the outbreak was successful. The wall was scaled, the guard overpowered, and several men escaped. The surrounding country was well timbered, and the occupants of the small farms were, without exception, sympathizers with the rebel cause. Concealment and subsequent escape across the Ohio River were therefore easy. We never used bloodhounds to track fugitives as was done

in the South, and in the midst of a population friendly to them the fugitives could not have been identified. *Our* men escaping from Southern prisons picked their way at night for weeks together through a hostile country where every man and woman was an enemy, except possibly some timid negro. Swamps were their beds and raw corn and berries their food. The prisoners escaping from Camp Morton found food, clothing, shelter, and sympathy at every farm they approached. I have spoken of the inner fence which the prisoners could not cross. There was no need of their crossing it, as will appear later, for their necessities were otherwise cared for, but it was not a "dead line" in the sense commonly used. In these instances where determined attempts to break out were made, the guards of course used their guns, but I do not recall an instance at Camp Morton where a prisoner was shot, in cold blood, for a real or fancied infringement of this rule. The records of the adjutant-general's office show several such cases as having occurred at other prison camps in the North, perhaps a half dozen in all. Each was made a matter of close inquiry by a duly appointed Board, and in each instance the act of the soldier was found justified by the orders he had received. It is clearly established that there was no desire on the part of our men anywhere or at any time wantonly to take a prisoner's life. That the reverse was often the case in the Southern prisons is unfortunately well attested, but these facts and the feeling that led to them will be given and analyzed farther on.

Within the enclosure wooden barracks had been erected for the prisoners. They were substantial buildings from 100 to 120 feet long by 20 wide, fully enclosed on the sides, and well roofed. There were two places devoted to sinks. Both were wooden buildings, one of them a large structure in the centre of the camp, and both had seats for the use of the men. By filling in with earth, and at intervals changing the location, a good degree of decency and an approach to hygienic conditions were preserved, but the large number of men confined, in my time about 7000, and the constant

use of various parts of the enclosure for this purpose for a year, undoubtedly infiltrated the ground with an amount of poisonous matter dangerous to health. These conditions, which prevailed to a greater or less degree in the other Northern prison camps, were fully recognized by the authorities. The records show that these prisons were frequently and minutely inspected by officers under orders of the Commissary General of Prisons at Washington, and that everything was done to minimize any unsanitary conditions. The only radical cure, removal of the entire prison to a new location, was impossible, but the enclosure was much enlarged in 1864. What could be done to mitigate trouble was done. The hospital accommodations, which from the outset had been fair, were extended, ample medical supplies were kept on hand, the barracks were kept as cleanly as possible, sufficient clothing was supplied, and the food, which was regularly and frequently inspected, was of good quality and ample in amount. Under standing orders from Washington the daily ration was as follows:

| | | |
|----------------|-------------|-----------|
| Hard bread | per man | 14 ounces |
| or | | |
| Soft bread | " " | 16 " |
| or | | |
| Corn meal | " " | 16 ounces |
| Fresh beef | " " | 14 " |
| or | | |
| Pork or bacon | " " | 10 " |
| Beans | per 100 men | 6 quarts |
| or | | |
| Rice | " " " | 8 pounds |
| Sugar | " " " | 12 " |
| Coffee, ground | " " " | 5 " |
| or raw | " " " | 7 " |
| or | | |
| Tea | " " " | 1 pound |
| Soap | " " " | 4 pounds |
| Salt | " " " | 2 quarts |
| Vinegar | " " " | 3 " |

| | | |
|----------|-------------|-----------|
| Molasses | per 100 men | 1 quart |
| Potatoes | “ “ “ | 15 pounds |

During the summer of 1864, it was ordered that sugar, coffee, and tea should be issued only to the sick and wounded, the amounts remaining the same. The unused part of all rations was sold and from it was formed a “prison fund.” This was applied to the purchase of green vegetables and other articles conducive to the health of the prisoners, and was administered with scrupulous fidelity.

On August 6, 1864, C. T. Alexander, Surgeon, U. S. A., reported to the Commissary-General of Prisons that the “prison fund” at Camp Morton was \$36,215.52; that it was well managed; that the individual accounts of prisoners were satisfactory to them; that the prisoners fully understood their privileges and traded with the sutler by cheques.

The ration above described is identical with that then prescribed by law for the United States soldier. It was ample in amount and sufficiently varied in character to keep men in sound physical condition, but also, on account of the unusually large saving, due to the fact that these men consumed much less than men in active service, it permitted the purchase through the “prison fund” of many varieties of food and delicacies particularly useful and welcome to the sick and wounded.

At the time of which I write the cooking at Camp Morton was done by my details. We baked daily from 5000 to 7000 loaves, about six inches cube, of good white bread, which gave to each prisoner a loaf, appetizing and healthful. Our own men were then drawing only hard tack as an equivalent. On their arrival the prisoners were given necessary clothing and blankets. Each man received one of the latter, and as two usually bunked together, they joined forces. As the cold weather of the autumn approached we made a further issue of a blanket apiece, and some of the men fashioned the old ones into capes or cloaks, and the sight of a sturdy Confederate strolling about with Uncle Sam’s U. S. branded between his shoulders was not uncommon.

As before stated, the distressing but unavoidable feature of all such prisons, idleness, with its accompanying nostalgia and depression, was present of course. To relieve this in some degree the prisoners practised many small trades, of which I recall especially jewelry making and carving. Bone and rubber or gutta-percha coat buttons and small silver coins, dimes, and quarters, were supplied by our men, and from these were made rings, shirt studs, collar buttons, sleeve links, and Masonic and Odd Fellows insignia, very neatly finished, with the designs set in silver. These trinkets found a ready market among our men, or were sold by them in town and the proceeds faithfully turned over to the manufacturer.

One distressing feature of all the Southern prisons was happily lacking here. The area enclosed afforded room for the inhabitants. This is shown by the fact that at night when the men were in barracks the grounds were empty, and in the day time the men could stroll about with ample room for air, exercise, and health. The terrible contrast to this afforded by Southern prison conditions will appear when we reach the reverse of the picture.

As official corroboration of the foregoing account given from memory of the conditions at Camp Morton, I quote briefly from the following documents.

On March 23, 1863, Capt. H. W. Freedley, 3d Regt., U. S. Infantry, reported to Colonel Wm. Hoffman, Commissary-General of Prisons, Washington, as follows:

“Camp Morton contains accommodations for a large number of prisoners. They are well provided with quarters and fuel and have ample space for exercise. All are well provided for; every care has been taken of the wounded and all appear as cheerful and happy as could be expected of men in their circumstances. The policing of the camp is good and space allotted to prisoners for exercise kept neat and clean. The barracks are in good order, floors cleanly scoured and swept, bedding well aired and clean. They indulge in games of amusement and exhibit life and activity. The ration was found to be good and wholesome in all its parts.”

On August 28, 1864, Lieutenant J. W. Davidson, Veteran Reserve Corps, Inspector of Camps, reported through Colonel Stevens to Captain Harz, Asst. Adjutant-General, Washington:

“The kitchens are in good condition and kept clean. The grounds undergo a thorough policing each day. Drainage as perfect as locality will permit. The prisoners will require the following to make them comfortable for winter, viz.: 530 woollen blankets, 835 pair trousers, 1250 pair shoes, 850 shirts, 350 coats. Rations furnished daily in compliance with circular order, (already quoted). Rations of soap large, but not more than required.”

The records show that these supplies were furnished within two months.

On September 4, 1864, the same officer reports:

“Sanitary condition good. Rations issued as per circular, and antiscorbutics, potatoes, and onions three times a week.”

Further reporting, October 16th, he says:

“General health of prisoners greatly benefited by thorough policing and exercising. Clothing and bedding have been issued to all destitute men. Potatoes issued every day at rate of eight ounces per man.”

I close with his report of November 6th, when my regiment was ordered away:

“Conduct: prisoners quiet; no attempts to escape. Cleanliness, clothing, bedding all good. Quarters good, thoroughly policed daily. Kitchen good. Food first-class. Quantity sufficient. Water sufficient and good. Sinks sufficient and kept thoroughly clean. Drainage complete. Police of hospital thorough. Attendance of sick good. Hospital diet first-class. General health of prisoners good.”

Let us glance briefly at other Northern prisons. The

report of Surgeon A. M. Clark, Medical Inspector of Prisoners of War, dated April 8, 1864, and applying to the prison at Rock Island, Ill., gives a fair idea of conditions existing at all the Northern prisons named below. From this I abstract as follows:

“Barracks well warmed by stoves. Cooking done by detail. Kitchens and utensils generally clean and in good order. Rations sufficient in quantity and of good quality. All prisoners (6950) well supplied with blankets, and in general well clothed. Policing of barracks and grounds not satisfactory, must be improved. Drainage ordered but not completed. Sinks well arranged. Laundry. Caldrons provided but not enough used by prisoners. Hospital—560 beds—17 surgeons.”

Lieutenant-Colonel S. Eastman, U. S. A., commanding depot, reports as follows regarding the Elmira (N. Y.) prison May 23, 1864:

“The barracks will comfortably accommodate 4000 prisoners without crowding; buildings in excellent condition, well ventilated; Mess room will seat 1200 to 1500. Kitchen can cook daily for 5000; excellent bakery; daily capacity 6000 rations.”

Colonel B. J. Sweet, 8th Reg. Veteran Reserve Corps, commanding post, reports as follows regarding Camp Douglas, rebel prison near Chicago, on June 1, 1864:

“The grounds of Camp Douglas are thoroughly policed and drained. Barracks arranged on streets fifty feet wide, twenty-five feet between ends; whitewashed inside and out and raised four feet above ground. The present, thirty-two barracks, each ninety feet long, will hold comfortably 165 men each. Recommends thirty-nine more barracks giving capacity for 12,000 prisoners at a cost of \$19,000.”

Certainly our Government dealt with its prisoners with conscientious regard for life, and in no niggardly spirit.

In lighter vein let these extracts made by D. B. Tiffany, U. S. Prison Provost Marshall, from the letters of rebel

prisoners at Camp Chase, Ohio, to their friends in the South speak for themselves:

"I want nothing; I have everything that heart could wish except my freedom. I am doing well and living fine and fat."—Jonathan Musgrave (Virginia).

"We get plenty to eat and are treated very well by the officers."—W. A. Womack (Kentucky).

"Bill of fare at the Virginia House, Christmas day: Bean soup, hog and corn, pork and hominy, roast beef, turkey, duck, chicken, oysters, apple dumplings, cakes, peach pie,"—M. E. Russell and Ed. (Virginia).

"We have nothing to do but eat and sleep. We have plenty to eat and to drink, and a very good bed. We have no reason to complain."—John A. Carson (Virginia).

"We are doing very well. The officers are very pleasant, and agreeable men about the prison."—F. P. M. Estis (Missouri).

"I received a letter from you dated the 18th of this month. You express a great deal of uneasiness about my sufferings here. I have a good husk mattress, a parcel of cotton comforts, and two pillows, so I can sleep quite comfortably. The good Being has blest me in my afflictions."—D. D. Davidson (Virginia).

From Post Hospital, Cape Girardeau (Missouri) comes this: "Col. J. O. Shelby, C. S. A., Commanding Mo. Cavalry Division. Colonel, We, the wounded officers of your brigade, take pleasure in testifying that our treatment by the Federal authorities here has been kind, gentlemanly, generous, and disinterested. All our wants have been supplied, and our wishes gratified, and General McNeil and officers have shown by constant and repeated kindnesses that they have no enmity beyond the hot blood and the excitement of the battlefield, and that Confederate prisoners deserve and do receive every attention which courtesy requires. Three of us at present are unable to be moved."—Y. H. Blackwell (Major), H. M. Woodsmall (Capt.), W. H. Ferrill (Lieut.), J. N. Edwards (Adjt.)

In this connection I wish to call attention to the fact that

the above official reports, with one exception, which is necessary to complete the sequence, relate to and treat of the conditions existing during the spring, summer, and autumn of 1864. This period is selected for several reasons. It was the year during which the greatest accumulation of prisoners occurred on both sides, and it was the year when the greatest mortality occurred in the Southern prisons, and when the inhumanity and barbarity of the treatment of our men by the rebel authorities reached its maximum. The comparison therefore, which is made between conditions in the two sections, evidenced by the above reports and by those from Confederate sources given later on, must be recognized by every one as eminently fair. No attempt has been made to select a period of the best Northern conditions and contrast it with the worst Southern period. In 1864 the war had been in progress for three years. Sectional animosity was at its height. No truce or settlement was contemplated by any one other than might come from the exhaustion of one belligerent or the other, and the consequent abandonment of the conflict. All the embittering elements that entered into and exasperated the feelings upon either side to the highest pitch had done their work. The forts and arsenals of the Government had been seized by the rebels, and hundreds of army officers had foresworn their allegiance to the United States and had joined the Rebellion. The slaves had been freed and armed as soldiers. Their death, and that of their officers in case of capture, had been proclaimed, and was being generally practised. Exchanges upon equal terms had been refused and had ceased. The sufferings of Union soldiers in Southern prisons and the frightful mortality there were known at the North and testified to abundantly by the appearance and the words of those who returned alive. The time selected is, therefore, in all respects the fittest for comparison. The people of either side felt the wrongs they believed inflicted upon them with an intensity far greater than existed earlier in the war, before the loss of kindred, friends, and property had been felt at every fireside, North and South, and had converted the impulses

of loyalty to country, state, or party into that concentrated, deadly purpose which accompanies a struggle for the "survival of the fittest." If, under these circumstances, we find one combatant increasing and elaborating its care for the prisoners' wants, and its tenderness for the sick and wounded, and find the other, confessedly and "with malice aforethought," maintaining and intensifying conditions of suffering, exposure and starvation, which it was in its power to remedy, or at least to alleviate; intensifying them until brutality merged into inhumanity and neglect became crime; if, I say, we find this to have been the case, we have a fair measure of the spirit that actuated each of the contending parties. To draw that comparison without extenuation and also without malice, to present the true picture without deepening the shadows or heightening the sunlight, is the object sought by me in quoting the official reports just given and those from Confederate sources which will follow.¹

In concluding these sketches of prison camps in the Union States I wish to make clear one salient point. From it arose the chief, though not the only, cause of the appalling difference between the treatment of prisoners in the North and of those in the South. *Our men did not regard their prisoners as enemies.* No inherited or imbibed enmity, no deep-seated grudge, no hatred because of the locality from which they came, nor any trace of it, existed in their minds or hearts toward their rebel prisoners. The ideas and conceptions of our army deliberately and persistently taught to the Southern soldiers by the rebel leaders and press, which found expression in the thousands of printed records of the war, the scornful contempt as toward an inferior race, the imputation of innate inhumanity and love of cruelty, joined with cowardice, formed no part of the creed of our men. The latter felt that their antagonists were brave men who had fought fairly and gallantly and were prisoners by the fortune of war. Abusive language or abusive treatment of them did not enter into the code of the Union soldier. In their rough way they were sorry for the prisoner and wanted his

¹ On this important subject, see note, page 326.

needs supplied, from clothing to tobacco, and were ready to contribute from their own stores. How this compares with the feeling that met them when the situation was reversed, our story will tell. It is worth noting here that our Government did not swerve from its humane policy for purposes of general retaliation. Special instances there were when the acts of the rebel authorities, such as the killing of the white officers of colored regiments in cold blood after surrender, the confining of them in dark and wet dungeons below ground, heavily manacled, and on a scanty diet of raw meal and water, and the placing of them in shackles under the fire of guns, necessitated similar action by us to compel redress and save the lives of our men, but these were exceptional. When the statements of our released soldiers, corroborated by their emaciated and pitiful condition, convinced our officers charged with the exchanges, that great cruelty was being practised by the Confederate authorities, Mr. Lincoln was repeatedly urged by officials and officers of high rank to treat all rebel prisoners as our men were being treated. But this he steadily declined to do, saying that he would observe the usages of civilized warfare whatever our antagonists might do.

And this was also the attitude of Congress. Those prisoners who, after exchange, appeared before the United States Senate Committee on Prisoners of War, were asked what was best to be done to secure good treatment for our captive soldiers in the South. The ready answer was, "Retaliation in kind." But the chairman, bluff Senator Ben Wade, truly said that no government could stand the odium of such an act; that it would become accursed of God and man and would perish from the earth.

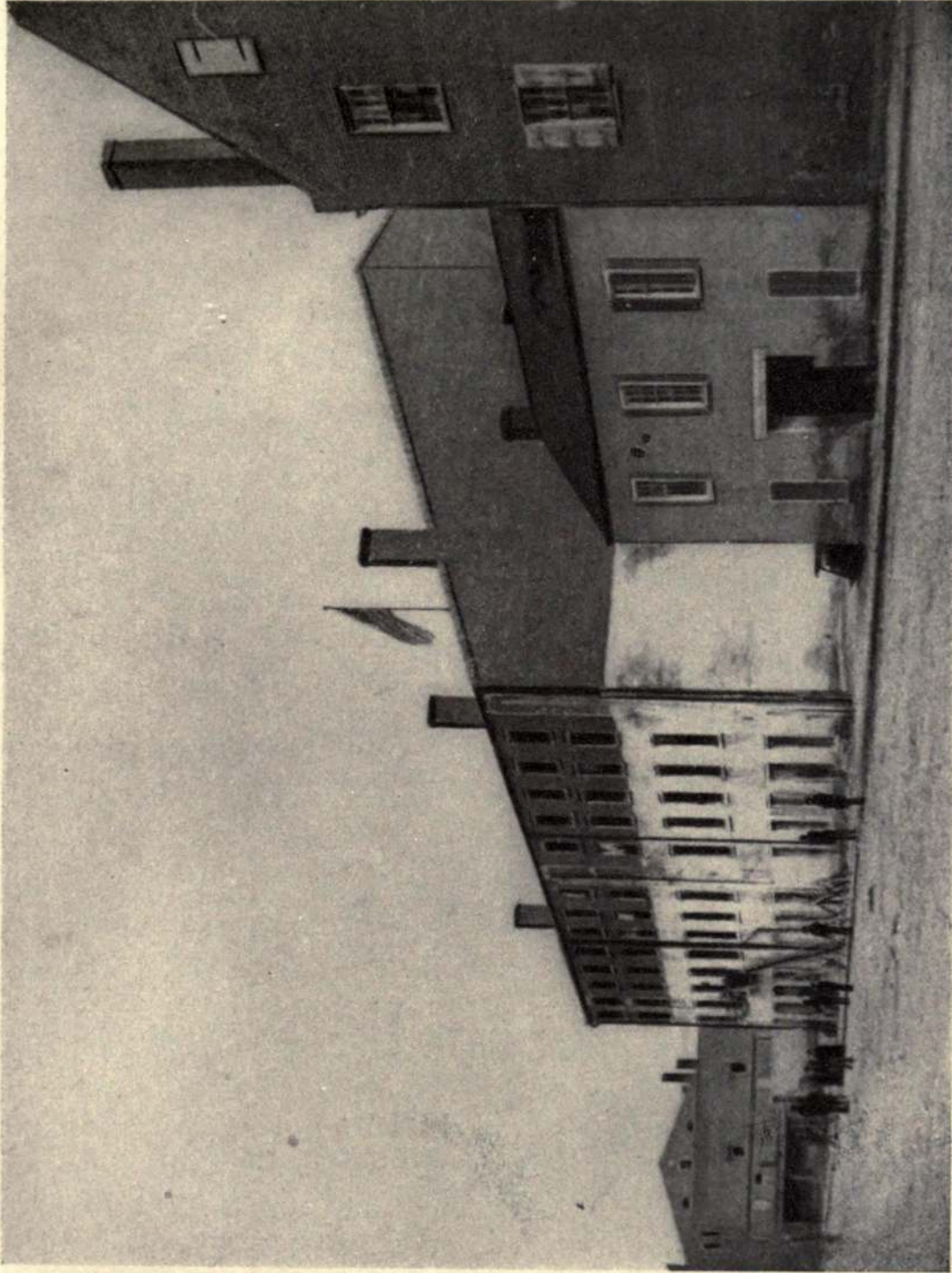
The facts I have given are intended to establish the humane purpose and acts of our Government toward its prisoners, but I do not wish to convey the idea that the utmost effort can do more than minimize the sad condition of all prisoners of war. The hardships that have preceded, and the wounds and sickness often existing at the time of capture, form predisposing causes to which must be added

nostalgia, or homesickness, constantly mentioned in our surgeons' reports as an active evil. When you add to this the lack of regularly enforced exercise, and the ignorance or recklessness as to personal cleanliness and hygiene of the average rebel prisoners, you have bad conditions to face.

In confirmation of my analysis of the attitude of the Union soldier toward his antagonists, I give one illustration (space will not permit more) taken, like most of my quotations, from Confederate records. Writing from Lee Hospital, Columbus, Ga., May 10, 1864, Surgeon-in-Charge Wm. A. Robertson, C. S. A., addresses Hon. J. P. Benjamin, Secretary of State, C. S. A.:

"I notice among the captives General T. Seymour, U. S. A., and think it my duty to inform the Government of his conduct toward the wounded, taken prisoners at the battle of Sharpsburg (Antietam), September, 1862. I was brigade surgeon and was left in charge of 117 wounded. We were very destitute, but were visited on the next day by General Seymour. He immediately ordered the chief surgeon of his division to turn over to me any and all articles in his possession that I might need for our wounded. During our stay he visited the hospital daily, and whenever any men were pointed out by me as needing a change, he visited General McClellan in person and procured paroles for them to visit Baltimore until exchanged. He supplied those dangerously wounded with delicacies from his own table and a sufficiency of tobacco for all, thereby mitigating the sufferings of our wounded and exhibiting a most commendable spirit. I refer for further evidence to Captain Harper, Lieutenant Knox, and Surgeon Davis, 7th Louisiana, to Surgeon Aiken, 15th Alabama, and Brigade Surgeon Howard."

It is a sad commentary on this that on June 1, 1864, less than one month later we find an official recommendation made by Ribly, Assistant Adjutant-General, C. S. A., to the Secretary of War, "that General Seymour (on account of his rank) and fifty others be confined under the enemy's fire in the city of Charleston." Of his own prison experience General Seymour writes, August 10, 1864, to Colonel Hoffman, U. S. A., Commissary of Prisoners:



From a photograph taken April 6, 1865

Libby Prison, Richmond, Va. Looking west on Water Street

“To us who have personally experienced the attentions of Southern jailers, the subject is one of bitter remembrance. For our rebel prisoners we construct elegant accommodations and admit luxuries, while our people rot with dirt and scurvy. At Andersonville, the scene would disgrace a race of cannibal barbarians. Scores die daily from sheer neglect and with less care than a rotten sheep would receive from a brutal owner. . . . I have written fully for the benefit of the thousands who will starve and die in Southern bondage. Had you, like us, been locked in felon cells, and been treated, like us, as outlaws and felons, or worse, there would be no need to pray you to show them (rebel prisoners) [the same treatment, and this in pure mercy toward those (our men) still in their hands.”

As it has been often and falsely stated that the deaths in our prisons closely approximated those of Belle Isle, Andersonville, and Salisbury, I give here an extract from the report of Charles J. Kipp, Surgeon-in-Charge, dated Camp Morton, July 30, 1864. He reports that in the preceding twelve months 558 deaths had occurred from all causes and adds:

“Most of the diseases show malarial poisoning, and are complicated with nostalgia, scurvy, bronchitis, pneumonia, and dysentery. The malarial character of Central Indiana then and now is well known, our regimental sick list was large, and for the reason above given the prisoners undoubtedly felt its effects in a greater degree.”

Similarly on June 12, 1864, Major E. A. Scoville 128th Ohio, Superintendent of the Prisons, Johnson's Island, Ohio:

“The sanitary condition of prisoners is good. Whole number of prisoners 2145; number in hospital 34; deaths last week *none*.”

When, however, we compare these records, covering an average prison population of 6000 to 7000 men in a prison,—perhaps the most sickly one in the North by reason of its location in a miasmatic region with rich alluvial soil,—regrettable as they are, with the wagon loads of dead approximating one hundred corpses a day (by Confederate official reports) hauled out of the Andersonville stockade *at this*

same period (15,000 during 1864 alone), words are not needed to emphasize the mendacity and the absurdity of any attempt by Southern or sympathetic Northern writers to claim or establish a similarity of treatment or any approximation of numerical equality in the death record.

Nor were these striking contrasts and wide dissimilarity in death-rates confined to the stockade or open air-camps. One citation is sufficient, and it is taken from the Richmond prisons, a locality where, it being the seat of the Confederate Government, the best medical ability and the largest amount and variety of medical supplies were concentrated. [On April 1, 1864, Surgeon G. Wm. Semple, C. S. A., rendered to the Surgeon-General, C. S. A., his "quarterly report of General Hospital No. 21—for Federal prisoners at Richmond Va." He states:

"Total cases for three months, 2779; total deaths same period, 1396, fifty per cent." It follows that the death-rate was two hundred per cent. per annum of the number of men that the hospital could contain at any one time.] Further comment is unnecessary.

In his *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, Gen. John B. Gordon, of the Confederate service, describes his plan for an attack on Grant's lines in front of Petersburg during March, 1865. This plan, which was approved by Lee, contemplated the capture of Fort Stedman in our main line, the turning of our flank, a rush to City Point, only ten miles distant, and the capture of the vast quantity of supplies there, on land and on the transports, and as a sequence, the creation of such confusion among our troops as would enable Lee safely to evacuate Petersburg. While this plan was being matured by our antagonists, an incident occurred on our side to which was due in large measure the temporary success of their attack when it was made later on. Desertions from the rebel army were very numerous at this time, and at least fifty men came in to our lines nightly, along the front of our division. This steady depletion of their fighting strength was valuable to us, and General Grant conceived the idea of increasing it and at the same time diminish-

ing their supply of guns by offering additional inducements. He, therefore, had printed a large number of leaflets in which the rebel soldiers were told that if when deserting to our lines, they brought in their guns, they would be paid a fair value for them and upon reaching City Point would be transported without charge to New York, or any seaboard city in the North. Accompanying these leaflets were orders to distribute them among our pickets with instructions to get the papers into the hands of the rebel pickets by any convenient means. These orders came to us under the written authority of Colonel T. S. Bowers, Assistant Adjutant-General on General Grant's staff at City Point. I well remember the substance of the comment made by General McLaughlen, upon whose staff I was serving as aide-de-camp, when he received these unusual orders. He was an officer of the old school and a thorough soldier. He had been with Kearny and the Second Dragoons in Mexico, in 1848, and his language was not always tempered for a drawing-room. Turning to me he said: "Lieutenant, by God, sir, that is the first time in my life, from sergeant-major to brigadier, that I was ever ordered to let an enemy approach my post with a gun in his hand!" Those leaflets, no doubt, suggested to Gordon a justifiable ruse, and when, later on, he made his attack, his men approached our pickets calling out, "Don't shoot, we're coming in!" It was the dark hour before dawn, and they took our picket line practically without firing a shot. The distance between the lines was very short, not over a hundred yards, and in the daytime not a head could be shown on either side without bringing a shot.

This is well illustrated by another extract from Gordon's *Memoirs*, which richly deserves quotation also as showing the truth of what I have asserted regarding our men. Gordon says that he had standing by him on top of their works a single soldier with his musket, who was to fire the attacking signal.

"My men in cutting away our own *cheveaux de frise* to allow the column passage were heard by a Union picket, who was on

guard *a few rods from me.* 'What are you doing, Johnny? Answer quick or I'll shoot,' came the challenge. 'Never mind, Yank,' was the answer, 'lie down and go to sleep; we are just gathering a little corn'—[there were some stalks between the lines]; 'you know rations are mighty short here.' To which the Union picket promptly replied: 'All right, Johnny, go ahead and get your corn, I'll not shoot at you while you're drawing your rations.'"

Let me give the end of the little story; again I quote the rebel general:

"I ordered the private to fire the signal. He hesitated. His conscience seemed to get hold of him. He was going into a fearful charge with the lie on his lips which had thrown the Union picket off his guard. He felt it was not fair to take advantage of the soldierly sympathy of his foe, and when I again ordered: 'Fire your gun, sir,' he shouted, 'Hello, Yank! Wake up, we are going to shell! Look out, we are coming!' and with that fired the shot that launched the attack."

Here, Companions, is that "touch of Nature which makes the whole world kin." We ought not to miss such incidents, for they stand out against the dark background of war's brutality as stars peep through the breaks in the black clouds of a stormy night.

In an article entitled *Glimpses of the Confederate Army*, by Randolph H. McKim, published in the April number of *Review of Reviews*, the writer narrates the following incident referring to General Gordon's attack above described:

"When the order to advance was given, a big Texan stepped out and said: 'General Gordon, this column can't move before 1 A.M. The men have a truce with the Yanks, and it ain't up till one o'clock.' The column did not move till that hour. The private in the ranks had taken command."

This is in keeping with the somewhat sentimental character of the article and its idealized Southern soldier, but it is not history, though much history is made in this way. It is apochryphal. On page 401, of Gordon's *Memoirs*, he quotes

his statement to Lee three days before the attack, naming, 4 A.M. as the hour. On page 407, he quotes Lee's letter of the 24th, which said, "The cavalry is ordered to report to you at 3 A.M. to-morrow" (the 25th), and on the same page he says, "All things ready at 4 A.M. I stood on the top of the breastworks." The attack from its inception was intended for the "hour before dawn," the well-known favorite time with officers of both sides for attempting a surprise, and it was made as intended.

To return to the attack. It failed, but the rebels occupied temporarily a mile of our line extending northward from Fort Haskell, and retreating, swept away with them about 1500 prisoners, of whom I was one. Having carried some orders for the general, I was returning to report, and had reached the entrenchments, when I met one of our officers running and stumbling to the rear, with a white face and fear written all over him. Without stopping he shouted, "All's lost!" and plunged on. (It is interesting to note that I met him two months later in Washington in the glory of a new double-breasted uniform, having been promoted two grades to the rank of major for "gallant services at the battle of Fort Stedman!") I went on, and quickly found myself with a group which, in the darkness, I took for my own men, and for a few moments I gave them orders about repelling the next attack from without. They moved about rather sullenly, and as the light brightened I saw a man climbing through a gun embrasure, who wore a soft felt hat. The conviction that they were rebels flashed through me, and telling them I would return, I turned away, and got out of their sight among the bomb-proof huts. Still trying to reach my general, however, of whose earlier capture I was ignorant, I walked into another body of the rebel gentry, was recognized and, with a musket at my breast to ensure promptness, and the assurance from the holder thereof that he would rather kill me than not, was stripped of sabre and overcoat. I was then sent under guard the short distance to Petersburg, where, in a warehouse, I found my companions in misfortune. Just within the rebel lines I passed close to

General Lee, who was awaiting the result of Gordon's attack. He wore on his head a broad-brimmed gray sombrero, and over his shoulders an army cape. The white horse he rode was, I presume, the well-known "Traveller." In Petersburg we were stripped of our small personal belongings, such as pocket-knives, pocket combs, etc., and were then marched several miles toward Richmond under guard. At a point beyond the reach of Union shells we found box-cars, and by 5 P.M., we were unloaded in Richmond.

Our route to our hotel, the famous, or infamous Libby Prison, lay down Main Street, and I was impressed by the fact that every man we saw of fighting age was in uniform. The "crowd" consisted of old men, boys, and women, and it was evident that the saying that the Confederacy had "robbed the cradle and the grave" for soldiers, lacked little of reality. The boys welcomed us with shouts of "Here come the Yanks!" and "Here are the blue bellies!" but no violence was offered. At the Libby, a brick and stone prison, we were received by Dick Turner, who, with his brother Major Thomas P. Turner, and Gen. John H. Winder, gained a reputation for causeless brutality to prisoners during the war that was second only to that of Wirz of Andersonville, and the keepers of the other open-air, or "stockade" prisons, as they were called, at Salisbury and elsewhere.

[At this point in the address was exhibited on the wall the original garrison flag, the "Stars and Bars" which floated over Libby Prison when we entered it, and which was captured by Gen. Edward H. Ripley when he entered at the head of the first Union troops after the evacuation of Richmond by the rebels.]

At our entrance our money was taken away, the officers were separated from the enlisted men, and we were installed for permanent detention in a room on the second floor of the old tobacco warehouse, our men being placed in other parts of the building. No blankets or food were given us, and each, picking out the softest board he could find, lay down for the night.]

— The room we occupied was a rectangle 100 feet by 45. — One end looked upon the street, and one upon the James River. — There were three windows openings at each end, grated with iron bars, but having no sashes or shutters, and entirely open to the wind and cold. At one end was a rough toilet sink and a water faucet with an iron basin. The furniture consisted of a medium-sized iron stove and a table of rough boards,—no chairs, stools, or benches. —

— Life here quickly assumed a monotonous routine in which, of course, the first thought in my mind was the preservation of health, physical and mental. I realized that it was going to be a question of endurance, and planned accordingly. I was young and unusually strong and vigorous, and the idea that death was imminent did not impress me. I was the first up every morning, and going to the water faucet I would strip to the buff and wash all over with the cold yellow water, using my single handkerchief very cautiously to dry my face. I would then hang the handkerchief up to dry, and dressing, would walk the floor for exercise. Under such circumstances men seek a chum, and I found one in a young Swiss officer who had obtained a long furlough from home and enlisted with us for practical experience. This I am sure he got. He had been well educated at a military school in Europe, and I determined at once to go to school to him and pump as much information out of him as possible. His readiest asset was his knowledge of French, and hour after hour, in the days that followed, we paced the room, he talking fluently and I patching sentences together in response. Another of his possessions was a knowledge of fencing. Borrowing a knife that had escaped confiscation, we split some long strips off the table with infinite labor, and equipped with these rapiers passed many an hour in tierce and carte.

The overpowering anxiety, however, was the question of food, of which it was immediately apparent that we should not get enough to maintain strength or possibly life. —It was sent to us twice a day, viz., at 10 and 4, and consisted of corn bread, baked in the prison ovens. In substance it

was a composite of the inner leaf or shuck of the plant, together with the cob and the grain coarsely ground together. The exterior was generally burned black through carelessness or indifference. This came to us in round cakes twelve or fourteen inches across, and about three inches thick in the centre. These cakes were measured with mathematical accuracy, and divided by our house committee into as many pieces as there were mouths to feed. The proportion to each, however, was painfully small. I brought away with me the last half-day ration. It was between three and four inches long, two inches high, and one inch thick. Rare variations occurred by way of substitution. On one occasion several pails of so-called bean soup were sent up. These were the usual horse buckets used in stables and contained a black water, bitter, without nutrition and undrinkable, and at the bottom about a half pint of beans. Hungry as we were, we threw away the water and carefully collected the beans, dried them in the sun, and although they were half raw, gladly chewed up our teaspoonful apiece. Confirmation of my recollection of this appetizing (?) dish is found in the writings of Lieut. Asa B. Isham, 7th Michigan Cavalry, who was also in the Libby and says of the soup: "It was made up of brown beans, black bugs, and long brown worms in about equal proportions, suspended in a liquor having the color and flavor of tan-vat water." Another day a smoked shoulder of ham was supplied, but on trying to lift it by the knuckle the whole bone pulled out revealing the interior a mass of wriggling maggots. So we turned down the poisonous mess preferring to go decently hungry to bed. I do not recall any material deviation or addition furnished us by our rebel hosts from their supplies. We did not see either fresh or smoked meat, or any vegetable, during our imprisonment. The diet was cob-meal solely, ground with the shuck and in the amounts described. In many official communications sent to our exchange officers, in many official reports (now accessible) which passed between Confederate authorities, and in many histories and memoirs written from a Southern standpoint since the war,

it is asserted that Union prisoners were given the same rations as the Confederate troops. No troops could have lived and fought on what we received. Nor was the statement true of any Southern prison. An exhaustive examination of the records shows conclusively that our food and treatment were as good as, if not better than, any other, and that in many prisons the conditions were infinitely worse. That this was a regular condition is shown by the letter of General Neal Dow to Secretary Stanton, dated Richmond, November 13, 1863, when the rebellion was yet prosperous.

One or two rays of sunlight reached us from our own people later on; we did not know whether they came from our own Government or the Sanitary Commission. We each received a half blanket, and a small amount of white flour and molasses, about one meal apiece, was given to us in bulk. The flour was uncooked, and we had no cooking utensils, nor, during all this time, any fire. But on this festive occasion we begged some fuel, lighted the stove, mixed the flour with James River water from the pipe, moulded it into dough with our hands, and spread it as thinly as possible on the lid of the stove. When it had gained all that heat would accomplish it was cut into strips, and each man got one. They were not unlike bits of whitish gutta-percha. We dipped these sticks into the molasses and then laboriously chewed off a chunk devoting such a time to its mastication as would have made the most ardent disciple of Fletcherism green with envy. Of course during all this time belts were being drawn tighter daily, and the fearful possibilities of the future, the "coming events that cast their shadows before," were having their effect on the minds of the men.

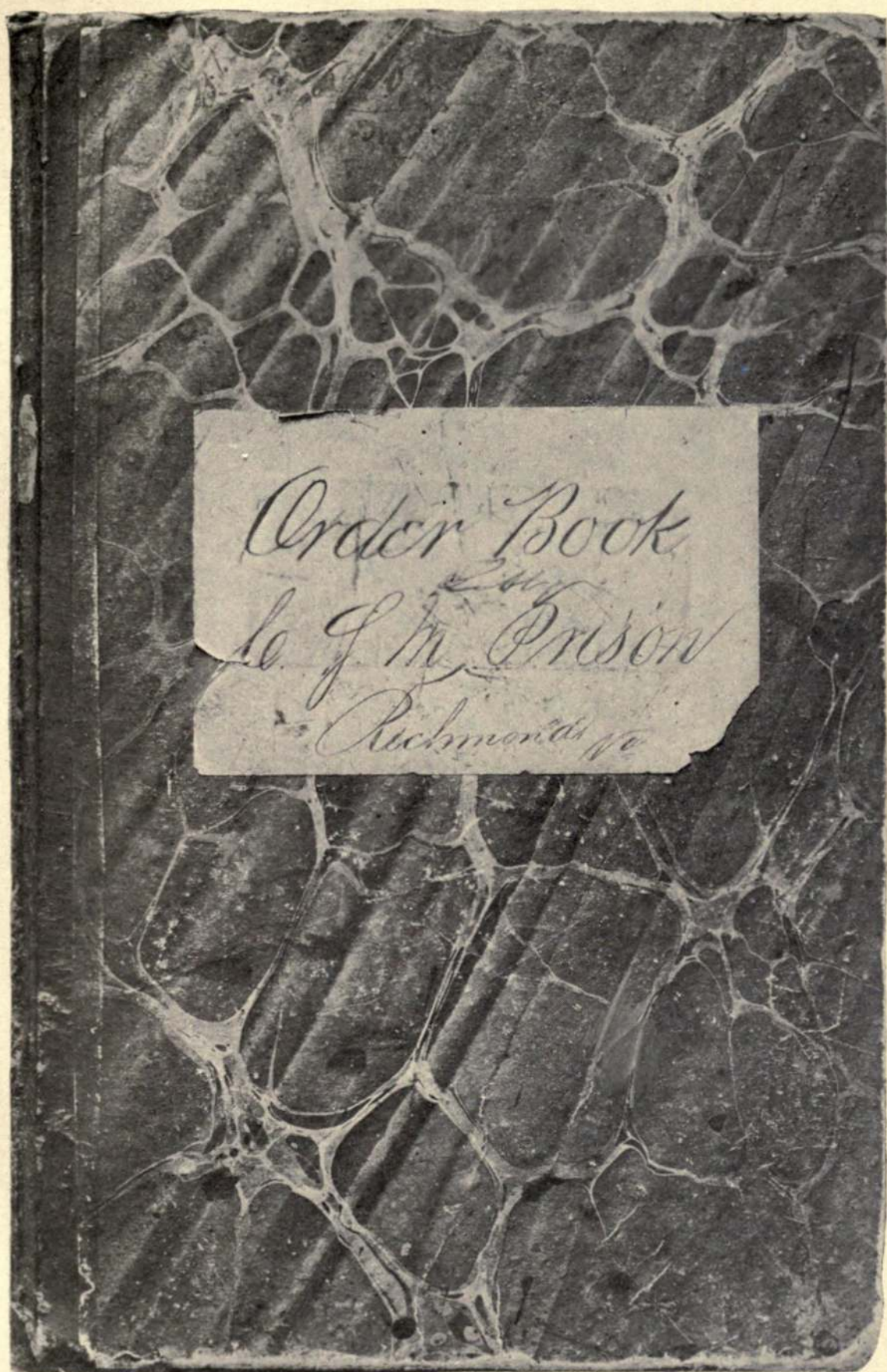
We had been there but a short time when other prisoners were brought in. They usually arrived in the evening and were always greeted with the cry, "Fresh fish! Fresh fish!" which was a prison slogan that I then heard for the first time. These additions brought the number in this room to ninety-three, and we were pretty closely packed on the floor at night. The new men were indeed objects for the deepest sympathy. They came from other Southern prisons and had been in

confinement for one or two years. Clothing they had none; what hung about their persons was a mass of rags. A gunny-sack, a piece of blanket or carpet, or a fragment of a woollen shirt or shelter tent, was variously worn about the body or tied around the feet if the latter were not entirely bare. They were emaciated, and tottered as they walked. Most of them had chronic dysentery, scurvy, or malarial fever. Their hair and beards had not been combed for months, and all were infested with vermin to a degree that was strange and horrible to us. Their eyes seemed vacant, their faces hopeless. They talked little and sat against the wall or lay on the floor, hardly able to comprehend or to respond to a friendly greeting or a word of cheer. And these men, then at the lowest ebb of physical and mental power, had been vigorous, athletic, intelligent officers when the fortune of war made them prisoners of the South.

Above and beyond these definable ills was that intense mental depression, born of present suffering and apprehension for the future, which the strongest minded does not escape, and which only one who has been a prisoner can understand. To know that you are absolutely at the mercy of an enemy embittered by personal resentment (hatred would not be too strong a word) and made desperate by the knowledge of the approaching failure of the cause he had fought for; to know that iron bars guard all windows and doors, and to see comrades weakening and dying day by day in increasing ratio, forms a combination which, by paralyzing the mind, destroys the body. The words of the dear old hackneyed song, *Tramp, tramp, tramp, the boys are marching*, have a very vital meaning to us. We have known what is meant by

“In the prison cell I sit, thinking, mother dear, of you,
And the dear and happy home so far away,
And the tears they fill my eyes, spite of all that I can do,
As I try to cheer my comrades and be gay.

“In the dreary prison cell, we are waiting for the day
Which shall come to open wide the prison door,



Photographed from the original.

Facsimile of the cover of the Libby Prison Order Book

And the careworn eye grows bright and the poor heart almost
gay,
As we think of seeing home and friends once more!"

That the mind may realize what the eye hath not seen, I quote again from Lieutenant Isham, who was exchanged at Charleston, S. C., in December, 1864.

"Six hundred men who had been at Andersonville were exchanged with us. Many were entirely destitute of clothing and shivering in the piercing wind from the sea, and such rags as were possessed by others were covered with masses of lice. A large number were mere skeletons. In many instances the bones of hips, spine, and shoulders projected bare through the skin. Not less than a dozen gaping and grinning idiots were among them with vacant eyes, sunk deep in their bony sockets. The skin was like black parchment from the ravages of scurvy, and bleeding, spongy bones, from which the flesh had rotted away appeared at the feet. Over one-half of these men died on the way, and probably less than one hundred ever regained health. Of these men a Confederate officer, who had been a prisoner, said to Major George B. Cox of the 75th Ohio, 'If I had been the Confederate Exchange Commissioner my regard for the reputation of the people of the South would never have permitted me to turn over such physical wrecks as your men are to proclaim to the world the infamous barbarity of the Confederate Government.'"

Of Belle Island, Colonel W. Hoffman 3d U. S. Infantry, and Commissary-General of Prisoners, reports to Secretary Stanton, May 3, 1864:

"The enlisted men who had endured so many privations at Belle Isle were, with few exceptions, in very sad plight mentally and physically, having for months been exposed to all the changes of the weather, with an allowance of food scarcely sufficient to prevent starvation, even if of wholesome quality, but as it was . . . if it did not kill by starvation it was sure to do it by the disease it created. Some of these poor fellows were wasted to mere skeletons and had scarcely life enough remaining to appreciate that they were now in the hands of their friends. Many faces showed that there was scarcely a ray of intelligence left.

That our soldiers, when in the hands of the rebels, are starved to death, cannot be denied. Every returning flag-of-truce boat brings too many living and dying witnesses to admit of a doubt of this terrible fact. . . . While a practice so shocking to humanity is persisted in by the rebel authorities, I would respectfully urge that retaliatory measures be at once instituted."

Let us turn to a brighter scene. The day did come when the door opened to some of us. It was a Sunday morning when we saw the rebel troops with the star and bar battle flags marching through the city toward the southwest, and we knew that they were withdrawing from the front of our troops advancing up the James. Then we heard cannon to the southward all day, and finally came word that we were to go down by flag-of-truce boat to be exchanged. We left Richmond at 5 P.M. Going down the river I stood with General McLaughlen and Colonel Robert Ould, the rebel Commissioner of Exchange, near the pilot house. This Colonel Ould deserves notice in this connection. Throughout the war he filled this position and was the chief medium on their side, as Colonel Mulford was on ours, through whom the two governments communicated regarding prisoners. His letters to Mulford are often long and argumentative. They are filled with the high flown expressions common to many Southerners, and with repeated denunciation of our (asserted) brutal treatment of their men. Of their sincerity, and of the spirit that actuated him let his own letters speak.

On March 17, 1863, he writes from City Point, Va., to General Winder at Richmond:

"I wish you to send me Wednesday morning all the military prisoners you have. . . . The arrangement I have made works largely in our favor. We get rid of a set of miserable wretches and receive some of the best material I ever saw."

On March 21, 1863, he writes from Richmond to their Commissary-General, Colonel A. C. Myers, as follows:

"If the exigencies of our army require the use of trains for

City Point
March 17. 1863

12
Brig Gen Winder
Sir

A flag of truce has arrived with 300 political prisoners, Gen. Barren and several other prominent men are amongst them, I wish you to send me at 4 o'clock Wednesday morning all the military prisoners (except officers) and all the political prisoners you have. If any of the political prisoners have evidence enough to convict them of being spies, or of having committed other offences which should subject them to punishment, so state opposite their names. Also state whether you think under all the circumstances they should be released. The arrangements I have made work largely in our favor.

* We get rid of a set of miserable scoundrels and receive some of the best material I ever saw. Tell Capt Turner to put down on the list of political prisoners, the name of Edward G. Ogling and Cynthia Hammermaster, the President is anxious they should get off. They are here now. This of course is between ourselves. If you have any female political prisoners whom you can send off safely to keep her company, I would like you to send her.

Two hundred and odd more political prisoners are on their way. *Copy*

I should be more full in my communication if I had time

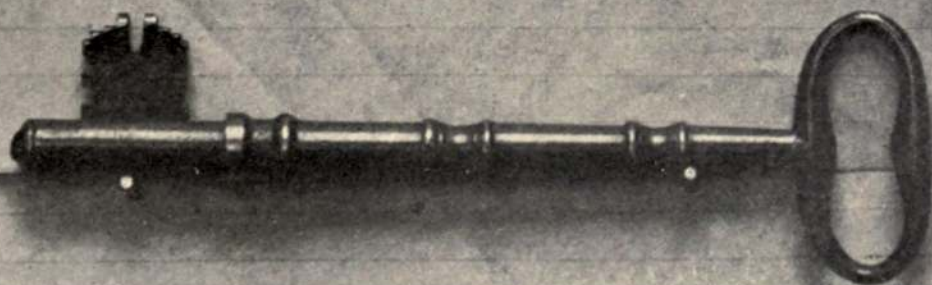
Yours truly
Robt Ould

Agent of Exchange

Copy
Send all called for in this letter unless they are charged with some criminal offence

Gen H Winder

Brig Gen



From original photographs. The Key is in the possession of Gen. Edw. H. Ripley.

1. Facsimile of letter of Col. Robert Ould, C. S. A., Commissioner of Exchange of Prisoners, containing notorious sentence regarding condition of Union prisoners. 2. Key of the Libby Prison

the transportation of corn, pay no regard to the Yankee prisoners. I would rather they should starve than our own people suffer. I suppose I can safely put it in writing 'Let them suffer.' The words are memorable, and it is fortunate in this case they can be applied properly. Your friend, Robt. Ould."

And on May 2, 1864, he writes to James A. Sedden, Secretary of War, C. S. A.:

"The chief difficulty (in exchanges) is the inadmissible claim of the enemy that recaptured slaves shall be treated as prisoners of war. As yet the Federals do not appear to have found any well-authenticated case of the retention of a negro prisoner. They have made several specific inquiries, but in each case *there was no record of such a party*, and I so responded. *Having no especial desire to find any such case it is more than probable the same answer will be returned to every such inquiry.* Respectfully, Robt. Ould, Agent of Exchange."

Finding the river dangerous from torpedoes, which the pilot said had been shifted by spring floods, we did not attempt to reach Varina Landing but were put ashore at a bend two miles above. Our general gave his parole for all, and we started to march overland to the point where lay the U. S. vessel. The ground was rolling and our progress slow, as some of the long-time prisoners could hardly walk, even with our assistance. At last, however, we mounted a low eminence and saw before us a sight, the meaning of which to us no words of mine can convey to you. On the summit of the next hill, with the setting sun shining fair upon it, floated the Stars and Stripes, and around it were clustered the blue uniforms and the gleaming gun-barrels of the black troops of the Army of the James! The flag was there to protect us. The sturdy arms of the men were there to fight for us. Behind them lay God's country, and for a moment the sufferings of the past were forgotten. What it meant to those enfeebled men, who had lost nearly all that manhood values in their two years of prison life, I will not attempt to express, but the words of thankfulness that came from their

trembling lips and the tears that rolled down from eyes unused to weep, told the story. Companions, we have heard and sometimes still hear of "drawing the color line," but I say to you that we saw the "color line" drawn that day, and for those who can conceive the picture of those colored soldiers interposing their sturdy frames as a bulwark between that body of enfeebled white men and the brutal enemies whom they had left, the "color line" can never again be drawn in any other way.

We went down the river that night on Mulford's boat, and an hour after sunset passed three small rebel gunboats. On the after-deck of one sat the rebel Admiral Semmes, formerly the commander of the well-known piratical cruiser the *Alabama*, which had been earlier sunk by the *Kearsarge*. He probably realized at this moment that his career was ended. About midnight the sound of a heavy explosion reached us, and we learned at Fort Monroe next day that he had blown up his three vessels, and so disappeared from history and from our story.

In the morning we touched at Fort Monroe where we were told that Richmond was captured, and another day found us at Parole Camp, Annapolis, Maryland. Our experiences there need no comment, but they afforded an opportunity to confirm our impressions of Southern prisons. Many hundreds of exchanged men were being received by steamer from Wilmington, North Carolina, and from Savannah and Charleston. These men had been brought from the Andersonville, Salisbury, and Columbia stockades, and words fail to express the sad condition of many of them. In these cases all flesh had disappeared, and the parchment-like skin was tightly drawn over the bony frame. The legs were not larger than a man's forearm, and the arms were the size of a child's. These men weighed only about fifty to sixty pounds, and the hospital stewards brought them from the boat two at a time, easily carrying one on each arm. Our hospitals gave them every care, but few survived to reach their homes and families, and of those who did, helpless invalidism was, in many cases, their lot.

In taking a broad survey of the question of "Prisoners of War," one is at once impressed with the complications introduced by the unique conditions existing in our War of the Rebellion which would not have applied in a war with a foreign nation. For instance, both sides claimed the border State of Kentucky, and parts of it were alternately within our lines and within theirs. Southern officers would return to their former homes there and in civilian dress visit friends, obtain military information, and recruit for the rebel army. Captured by us and treated as spies, they appealed to President Davis at Richmond, who invariably sustained their claims for immunity and placed an equal number of our officers in dark cells upon bread and water and under sentence of death. Again, a favorable form of warfare with them was guerilla or bushwhacking. These parties directed their raids into the sections where they had formerly lived. As a rule, they knew no mercy, but killed the non-combatant, the old and young indiscriminately, venting, under the guise of war, the private grudges and personal quarrels that had previously existed. They were without uniform, and when pursued were difficult to identify from the rest of the population. Mosby's guerillas in Virginia and a large part of General Sterling Price's army in Missouri were of this class, and our uniformed officers and men were on repeated occasions shot by them in cold blood after surrender. When we captured these guerilla murderers and condemned them by court-martial, Mr. Davis again came to their rescue, declaring them to be of his regular forces and threatening retaliation. These bodies of men owed their existence to the regular action of the Confederate Congress. April 21, 1862, that body duly authorized President Davis "to commission such officers as he may deem proper with authority to form bands of partizan rangers, in companies, battalions, or regiments, either as infantry or cavalry"; and on May 17, 1862, the Virginia Legislature further enacted:

"Whereas, this Assembly places a high estimate upon the value

of ranger or partizan service, and regards it as perfectly legitimate; and it being understood that a Federal Commander has intimated his purpose, if such service is not discontinued, to lay waste by fire a portion of our territory, be it resolved, that the policy of employing such rangers or partizans ought to be carried out energetically without the slightest regard to such threats."

A conspicuous instance occurred in October, 1864, in Missouri. General Price turned over to Tim Reeves, a well-known guerilla, Major James Wilson and six enlisted men of the 3d Missouri Cavalry who had been captured by his command. Reeves caused the seven men to be shot. In retaliation an equal number of rebel prisoners were executed in St. Louis as soon as the facts had been fully verified.

But the greatest difficulty arose from the different status of the negro soldier in the two sections; viz., in the South, assumed to be a slave, and in the North, a uniformed soldier of the U. S. Army and entitled to be treated as a prisoner of war.

Early in the conflict, Francis Lieber, LL.D., a high authority in international law and usage, compiled for our Government in great detail a war code covering all military and naval subjects. This was issued as general instructions to our troops everywhere, and formed the basis upon which we fought the war. This Code deserves more than a passing notice. It was so broad, just, humane, and altogether admirable that it has elicited most favorable comments from European jurists on international law. One of the most distinguished of these, Ernest Nys, Professor of the University, Counsellor of the Court of Appeals of Brussels, and Member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague, has recently paid it a high tribute. In a pamphlet on the subject of a "Permanent International Tribunal," he says, "Another service rendered by the United States is not sufficiently appreciated, namely the promulgation by President Lincoln of 'The Instructions for the Government of Armies of the United States in the Field,' drawn up by Francis



From original photograph in possession of the Author.

Sample of coal loaded with dynamite to be smuggled on board Union merchant vessels by order of the Confederate authorities

Lieber. They have exercised a powerful influence upon the entire world, for they were the basis of the work of the Conference of Brussels in 1874, and through this conference became the fundamental text of the conventions concerning the laws of war adopted by The Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907." But the Confederate Government claimed the right to construe international usage in its application to their affairs, and to make such departures from it as seemed best to them, and as their situation became more desperate we find, by their official records, that they sanctioned many acts which at other times they would probably not have attempted to justify. For instance, we find Mr. Davis telling John Surratt in Richmond that to kill President Lincoln did not differ from killing any Union soldier in arms; that the seizing of steamers on Lake Erie and killing the crew, and the attempted burning of New York were justifiable acts of war.

But to return to the colored troops. In 1862, the United States began the enlistment of colored troops, and in December, President Davis addressed the Confederate Congress on the subject. That Congress at once enacted a law. Upon this Davis, on December 23, 1862, issued a proclamation, from which I abstract the following:

"Finally the African slaves have not only been incited to insurrection by every license and encouragement, but numbers of them have actually been armed for a servile war—a war in its nature far exceeding in horrors the most merciless atrocities of the savages. . . . Now, therefore, I issue this proclamation and do order . . . That all negro slaves captured in arms be at once delivered over to the executive authorities of the respective States to which they belong, to be dealt with according to the laws of those States, and, that the like orders, be executed in all cases with respect to all commissioned officers of the United States when found serving in company with armed slaves in insurrection against the authorities of the different States of this Confederacy."

On January 12, 1863, he addressed the following to the Confederate Congress:

“. . . So far as regards the action of this Government on such criminals as may attempt its execution (leading colored troops) I confine myself to saying . . . that I shall deliver to the several State authorities all commissioned officers of the United States that may hereafter be captured by our forces in any of the States embraced in my proclamation, that they may be dealt with in accordance with the laws of those States providing for the punishment of criminals engaged in inciting servile insurrection.’

May 1, 1863, the Confederate Congress adopted resolutions from which I quote:

“That every white person being a commissioned officer . . . who shall command negroes or mulattoes in arms against the Confederate States . . . shall be deemed as inciting servile insurrection, and if captured, shall be put to death . . . at the discretion of the Court.”

The United States stood loyally by its colored troops. It first demonstrated by the laws and practice of all nations, and from the Roman code to those of modern times, that slaves once freed in war received the status of freemen, and could not again be relegated to their former condition. It then notified the Confederate Government that we should retaliate strictly and in kind if Davis’s threat was executed. As a consequence of this, and as the rebels refused thereafter to exchange colored soldiers or their officers, exchanges ceased and were not generally resumed until the spring of 1864. The first exchange of officers of colored troops occurred October 9th of that year.

To avoid the complications and publicity which must have resulted from court trials and the condemnation of our men as criminals, our antagonists resorted to a shorter, but not less effective, method. The charge of killing prisoners after capture is a very serious one to bring against the men of any civilized nation, and the writer fully realizes the gravity of it. But it is impossible to read the correspondence between the Confederate officials and consider simul-

taneously the evidence of the acts committed, without reaching the conclusion that the rebel troops, officers and men, understood that such acts would not be investigated, criticised or condemned by their authorities, but, on the contrary, would afford the easiest solution of a vexing problem. The record also shows that the enlisted men (colored) when not killed were, in many instances, sold as slaves.

The inconsistency and insincerity, to use no stronger words, of the attitude of the rebel government, are shown by the letter of Colonel Ludlow, U. S. A., exchange agent to Colonel Ould, the rebel commissioner, June 14, 1863. Ludlow says:

“ . . . Before a single negro was mustered into the U. S. service you had Indians and negroes organized in arms under Albert Pike, in Arkansas, and . . . subsequently negroes were captured (by us) at Antietam and delivered as prisoners of war to you at Aiken's Landing and receipted for and counted in the exchange. More recently the Tennessee Legislature passed an act forcing into military service all free male persons of color between the ages of fifteen and fifty.”

In support of what I have said as to killing prisoners, the slaughter of a large number by the command under the rebel General Forrest, at Fort Pillow, calls for especial comment, as the facts are well established and to my knowledge have never been successfully denied. I quote from the Congressional report “On the Conduct of the War,” which adds that all the statements are supported by abundant and unimpeachable evidence:

“ General Forrest appeared before Fort Pillow sixty-five miles above Memphis, on April 12, 1864. The garrison consisted of nineteen officers and 538 men, of whom 262 were negroes. Major L. F. Booth was in command and after his death Major W. F. Bradford succeeded him. After an engagement of some hours, a flag of truce was sent in by Forrest, demanding unconditional surrender. The rebel troops, in violation of the flag and while

protected by it, followed it closely and obtained positions within one hundred yards of the fort. The demand for surrender upon these terms was declined by Major Bradford, whereupon the rebels stormed the fortifications shouting, 'No quarter!' There followed a scene of cruelty and murder without a parallel in civilized warfare, which needed but the tomahawk and scalping knife to exceed the worst atrocities ever committed by savages. The rebels began an indiscriminate slaughter, sparing neither age nor sex, white nor black, soldier nor civilian. The officers and men seemed to vie with each other in the work; men, women, and even children were deliberately shot down, beaten and hacked with sabres. Some of the children, not more than ten years old, were forced to stand and face their murderers while being shot; the sick and wounded were butchered without mercy, the rebels entering the hospital and dragging them out to be shot, or killing them as they lay unable to offer resistance. Numbers of our men were collected in lines or groups and deliberately shot; some were shot in the river; some on the bank, and the bodies of the latter, many yet living, were kicked into the river. The huts and tents where the wounded had sought shelter were set on fire, both that night and the next morning, while the wounded were still in them, and those who tried to get out were shot. One man was fastened to the floor of a tent by nails through his clothing and then burned, and one was similarly nailed to the side of a building and then burned. These deeds were renewed the next morning when any wounded who still lived were sought out and shot. Of the 400 known to have been killed, at least 300 were murdered in cold blood after the post was in possession of the rebels and our men had surrendered. Major Bradford was held until the following day, and then on the march to Jackson was taken from the ranks by a rebel officer and five soldiers, and shot in the presence of the command."

Forrest states that he "buried 228 Federals the evening of the assault." Colonel Chalmere, his second in command, was conspicuous for urging on his men and personally participating in the murder of the prisoners.

The following are also typical. I shall give but few instances in the West and in the East to show that the enforcement of this policy was not limited to one locality,

but was of general application; they could be multiplied indefinitely.

On June 13, 1863, at Shreveport, Louisiana, Lieutenant-General E. Kirby Smith, C. S. A., wrote to Major-General Tayler, C. S. A., as follows:

"I have been informed that some of your troops have captured negroes in arms. I hope this may not be so, and that your subordinates in command of capturing parties may have recognized the propriety of giving no quarter to armed negroes and their officers; in this way we may be relieved from a disagreeable dilemma."

On the same day his Adjutant-General writes:

"Referring to what disposition should be made of negro slaves taken in arms, I am directed by Lieutenant-General Smith to say no quarter should be shown to them."

On the 16th, General Smith clinches the matter and leaves no doubt in the minds of the rebel leaders by sending copies of his letter (as above) to S. Cooper, Adjutant and Inspector-General at Richmond.

July 11, 1864, Samuel Johnson, Orderly Sergeant, Co. D, 2d U. S. Colored Cavalry, testified before John Cassels, Captain U. S. A., and Provost Marshal:

"I was captured at Plymouth, N. C. I pulled off my uniform and got a citizen's suit. Upon the capture of the town all negroes found in blue uniform were killed. I saw some taken to the woods and hung; others stood on the banks of the river and were shot and others had their brains beat out with the butts of muskets."

On February 16, 1864 at Port Hudson, La., General George L. Andrews, U. S. A., writes to General Wirt Adams, C. S. A.:

"It is reported to me that several of the U. S. colored troops have been shot by the Confederate soldiers after capture, and a

citizen of Jackson has made oath that he saw Lieutenant Shattuck of Scott's Cavalry dismount and deliberately shoot dead a wounded U. S. colored soldier lying on the ground; also that he heard Shattuck say he had shot thirteen negro prisoners that day. There was no fighting on the day referred to. Also that he saw Confederate soldiers take negro soldiers out of town to shoot them, as they said, and he afterward saw the bodies a mile and a half distant from any battlefield. I can no longer doubt that U. S. colored soldiers have been deliberately murdered by your men after capture."

On December 20, 1864, Lieutenant Geo. W. Fitch, 12th U. S. Colored Infantry, with Lieutenant Cooke, same regiment, and Captain Penfield, 44th U. S. Colored Infantry, were captured near Murfreesboro by a detachment of General Forrest's command (C. S. A.). They were robbed of everything of value, including much of their clothing. Two days after, while riding under guard along the pike road from Lewisburg to Mooresville, all three were shot through the head by their guards and left for dead. Fitch alone survived, being concealed and saved by compassionate people of the neighborhood. The facts, which are well established, were made the subject of correspondence between the commanding generals, and were not denied by Forrest. General George H. Thomas, addressing General Hood, C. S. A., closes his letter thus:

"Should my troops, exasperated by such acts, take no prisoners of war in future, I shall in no manner interfere. Your army and not mine is responsible for the inauguration of this dreadful policy of extermination."

On March 14, 1865, General Grant wrote General Lee calling his attention to the murder of these officers and adds:

"Of the skirmish at Milliken's Bend, La., reliable information has been received which convinces me that all the white officers (U. S.) captured were put to death."

Further confirmation of a high character is found as early as May 23, 1863, in a letter from Major-General D. Hunter, U. S. A., at Hilton Head to President Lincoln,

asking that certain rebel prisoners be delivered to him as hostages for the lives of his men. He says:

“The retaliation resolutions, announced by the *Charleston Mercury* as having been passed by the rebel Congress, condemn to death, if captured, all white officers acting with colored troops, thus condemning to death every officer of my command. This declaration would seem to be only a formal announcement of what has for some time been the practice in the Western departments.”

In November of the same year General Halleck then General-in-Chief, U. S. A., writes to Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War, as follows:

“On the 22d of July, 1862, General Dix and General Hill (C. S. A.), entered into a cartel for the exchange of prisoners during the existing war, defining the meaning of a parole, the rights and obligations of prisoners, and how they should be released from these obligations. Special agreements of this kind (duly authorized as in this case), explaining the general laws of war, furnish the rules of conduct for the contracting parties. . . . Finding that the rebel authorities were . . . extorting by threats and ill-treatment unauthorized paroles from our men, and they refusing to exchange colored prisoners or their officers, and it being stated that the former were being sold into slavery and the latter sentenced to imprisonment and death, the rebel authorities were notified (of these violations) and all exchanges ceased. In further violation of good faith and engagements solemnly entered into, the rebel commissioner then declared *as exchanged all his own paroled men and ordered them to their regiments then in the field.*

“Rebel prisoners held by the United States have been uniformly treated with kindness. They have been furnished with clothing and the same quality and amount of food as our own soldiers, while our men, when captured, have been stripped of blankets, clothes, and shoes even in the winter season. They have been confined in loathsome prisons, half fed on damaged provisions, or actually starved to death, hundreds ending their existence loaded with irons. In fine, the treatment of our prisoners by the rebel authorities has been more barbarous than that

which Christian captives suffered from the pirates of Algiers; and the horrors of 'Belle Isle' and 'Libby Prison' exceed even those of the 'British Hulks' or the 'Black Hole of Calcutta.' This atrocious conduct is applauded by the people and commended by the *Richmond Press* 'as a means of reducing the Yankee ranks.'"

In this connection the following is illuminating. Governor Bonham, of South Carolina, writes on August 23, 1864, to Sedden, Secretary of War, C. S. A.:

"I have your reply recommending that captured free negroes be not brought to trial, and have suspended *further* action. I may add that in the cases of slaves of this State so offending, which have occurred before similar courts, *the offending have been executed.*"

It should also be noted that the rebels did not hesitate to force captured negro soldiers to work on their entrenchments, under fire, an act forbidden by the rules of civilized warfare. Finding this to be the case, in some hundred instances, General Butler advised General Grant who replied October 12, 1864, approving of the employment of rebel prisoners in the same way, and sent to Butler a number for that purpose. This had the effect expected. October 19th, General Lee withdrew the colored soldiers from labor in the trenches.

I do not wish to-night to lead you through a "chamber of horrors," but this brief résumé would be incomplete without some notice of the notorious "stockade" prisons of the South; but I shall be brief, and my authorities will be chiefly from rebel sources. "Out of their own mouths shall ye condemn them."

The best known of these prisons were Andersonville and Millen, Georgia; Columbia (Camp Sorghum) and Florence, South Carolina; Salisbury, North Carolina; Tuscaloosa, Alabama; Belle Island in the James River, Virginia; and Camp Ford, Texas. The conditions were much the same in all. There were no barracks in most

cases, even for the sick and wounded. Often the prisoners were not allowed to build cabins, even where, as at Andersonville, timber was plentiful. They erected small huts of boughs, put a piece of a shelter tent on sticks, or dug holes in the ground. They were densely crowded. In 1864, Andersonville contained in its sixteen acres 35,000 men, by their official report, which allowed a space of three feet by two to each man. Very few cooking utensils were provided, and the food was furnished usually in a raw condition. Fuel was so scarce that the prisoners dug up the earth for roots, and what cooking they did was to warm the coarse meal on a stone or a piece of a tin can. The amount given was very small and inadequate, as the result showed, to maintain life. No blankets or clothing were supplied. Often no sinks were provided. The water was often impure. The sickness and mortality were appalling. Prisoners were frequently shot without cause by the rebel officers and guard, in a spirit of malice or as a vindictive display of power, and often the act was accompanied by the language of hatred and sometimes, strange as it may seem, of levity.

Let us call the witnesses. H. C. Trumbull, Chaplain, 10th Conn. Vols., writes November 17, 1863, to Colonel Hoffman, Commissary of Prisoners, Washington:

“At Belle Isle a large proportion of our privates are without tents, barracks, or any shelter, herded like cattle on the cold, wet sand, lacking blankets, clothing, and sufficient food. Men are dying at the rate of ten a day. Of 14 brought in one evening 9 died before morning. The day's ration was a piece of coarse bread 5 by 2½ by 3 inches. A Confederate official said to me: ‘It is a hard thing to say to you, but your men on Belle Isle are dying of starvation.’ Another Confederate officer said to me, ‘The Island is a perfect slaughter pen for your men.’”

G. Wm. Semple, Surgeon, C. S. A., previously quoted in another connection, reports about Belle Isle, March 6, 1864:

“An area sufficient for 3000 has now from 6000 to 10,000 men in it. The whole surface of the camp is saturated with

putrid animal matter. The bread is corn-meal, unsifted or bolted, and greatly increases disease."

On May 5, 1864, Gen. Howell Cobb, C. S. A., writes of Andersonville, to Adjutant-General Cooper, Richmond:

"The prison is already too much crowded; the effect of increasing the number within the present area must be a terrible increase of sickness and death during the summer." There were then 12,000 imprisoned. During the summer it was increased to 35,000!

On June 6, 1864, the same officer reports on the subject of prisoners to James A. Sedden, Secretary of War, Richmond, asking orders. The communication was endorsed by Sedden, June 13th, and a part of the endorsement reads:

"As to the white officers serving with negro troops, we ought never to be inconvenienced with such prisoners."

May 6, 1864, E. J. Eldridge, Chief Surgeon, C. S. A., writes of Andersonville: "Their shelters consist of such as they can make of boughs of trees, poles, etc., covered with dirt. . . . Few would attempt to escape . . . and would be readily caught by the dogs, always at hand for that purpose."

In May, 1864, Isaiah H. White, Chief Surgeon, C. S. A., whose name appears frequently in the records of Andersonville, writes:

"The total number of cases treated here to date is 4588, of which 1026 (about 25%) have died. The month of April exhibits a ratio of 316 cases and 57 deaths to each 1000."

In August, he adds:

"The prisoners are without barracks or tents, 30,000 men being densely crowded together. They are exposed to the sun by day and the dew at night, and entirely unprotected during rains. The hospital (small tents) is utterly inadequate (in number and size) to accommodate the large number of sick."

This being a monthly estimate means that 68% of the entire population would die in twelve months.

That conditions became not better, but worse, as time went by, is shown by the report of Walter Bowie, Captain

and Inspector, C. S. A., to Brigadier-General Chilton, Richmond, May 10, 1864. Confirming the above he writes:

"The number of deaths during the week ending May 8th was 131, or 18 per day . . . a considerable increase . . . which will continue unless a decided improvement is made."

May 25, 1864, Major Turner writes from Andersonville to General Winder:

"Buildings . . . or tents should be furnished. Without this they will die by hundreds *and be a dead loss to us in the way of exchange.*"

The expression, "We now have them where, with the severity of the climate and harsh treatment, nature will do its work faster than the bullet," is found more than once, in varying phrase, in the mouths of Confederate officials, and Winder's (the son of the General) remark to Ambrose Spencer, a Confederate gentleman from Americus, Ga., "that he would make of Andersonville a pen that would kill more d—d Yankees than could be killed at the front," is typical of a large class.

In refreshing contrast to the spirit of callous calculating cruelty, that forms the staple of these records, are the occasional gleams of pity and humanity that appear among them. Of such is the following. On June 23, 1864, a rebel private, James E. Anderson, on guard at Andersonville wrote to Jefferson Davis:

"I am a private in the ranks at this place. . . . I would inform you of things I know you are ignorant of. . . . I have no cause to love the Yankees. . . . Twelve feet inside the walls is a dead line. . . . We have many thoughtless boys who think the killing of a Yankee will make them great men. . . . Every day or two there are prisoners shot. When the officer of the guard comes there is a dead or badly wounded man invariably with their own lines. The sentry is told he did exactly right and is a good sentry. Last Sabbath two were shot in their tents at one shot. Let a good man come and mix with the prisoners, and he will find things revolting to humanity." [Endorsed] "Referred by the President to the Secretary of War. Referred by him to General Winder."

Meantime the increased number of prisoners more than kept pace with the inroads of disease, and conditions grew steadily worse. June 26, 1864, Surgeon White reports 25,000 prisoners, 3,000 sick, only five surgeons, and begs for ten additional doctors. In August, 1864, Captain H. Wirz, commanding prison, reports deaths during July, 1742; prisoners on hand, 31,678. In September, he reports deaths in August, 2993.

But most conclusive, because of the high rank of the writers, are the following. August 5, 1864, Colonel D. T. Chandler, Inspector-General, C. S. A., reports to Colonel R. H. Chilton, Inspector-General, C. S. A., Richmond, from Andersonville:

“The acreage gives somewhat less than six square feet to each prisoner (that is, 2 feet by 3). Many (bodies) are carted out daily. . . whom the medical officers have never seen. . . . The dead are hauled out daily by wagon loads and buried without coffins, their hands in many instances being first mutilated with an axe in the removal of any finger rings they may have. It is impossible to state the number of sick, many dying whom the medical officers neither see nor hear of until the remains are brought out for burial. . . . Raw rations have been issued to a large proportion, who are entirely unprovided with proper utensils and have so limited a supply of fuel that they dig with their hands in the filthy marsh for roots. No soap or clothing has ever been issued. I am confident that by slight exertions green corn and other antiscorbutics could readily be obtained. My duty requires me respectfully to recommend a change in the officer in command (over Captain Wirz), Brigadier-General J. H. Winder, and the substitution of some one who unites energy and good judgment with some feelings of humanity and consideration for the welfare and comfort (so far as consistent with safe-keeping) of the vast number of unfortunates placed under his control. Some one who at least will not advocate deliberately and in cold blood the propriety of leaving them in their present condition until their number has been sufficiently reduced by death to make the present arrangements suffice for their accommodation, and who will not consider it a matter of self-laudation and boasting, that he has never been inside the stockade, the

horrors of which it is difficult to describe, which is a disgrace to civilization, and the condition of which, by a little energy, and even with the limited means at his command, he might have considerably improved."

This report is approved in all particulars under date of November 22, 1864, by W. Carvel Hall, Major, C. S. A., who accompanied Chandler. It is endorsed: "The condition of this prison is a reproach to us as a nation.—R. H. Chilton, Inspector-General." And: "The sufferings of the prisoners seem almost incredible. The frightful percentage of mortality appears a consequence of the criminal indifference of the authorities. . . . These reports show a condition which calls loudly for the interposition of the Department.—J. A. Campbell, Assistant Secretary of War, C. S. A."

During the trial of Wirz in Washington at the close of the war, Colonel Chandler appeared before the Board of Officers constituting the court and corroborated the above with many additional details. He was an officer who had been educated at West Point and his testimony, given in a frank, straightforward way, made a deep impression on the Court. He swore that he wrote the report quoted above, and that the statements embodied in it were true of his own knowledge.

The other witnesses of equal importance, and the last I shall summon are Drs. Joseph Jones and J. C. Bates, of the Medical Department, C. S. A. Of Dr. Jones, Jefferson Davis writing to *Bedford's Magazine* in January, 1870, says he was "eminent in his profession and of great learning and probity." In August, 1864, Dr. Jones was sent to Andersonville to investigate and report to Surgeon-General Moore. He did so. At the Wirz trial he was a witness, and under oath corroborated his report, which was in evidence. From this report I quote briefly:

"I visited two thousand sick within the stockade lying under some long sheds. . . . At this time only one medical officer was in attendance, whereas at least twenty should have been employed.

. . . The sick lay upon bare boards or upon such ragged blankets as they possessed without . . . any bedding or even straw. The haggard distressed countenances of those miserable, complaining, dejected, living skeletons, crying for medical aid and food . . . and the ghastly corpses, with their glazed eyeballs staring up into vacant space, with the flies swarming down their open and grinning mouths and all over their ragged clothes, infested with numerous lice, as they lay amongst the sick and dying, formed a picture of helpless, hopeless, misery which it would be impossible to portray by words or by the brush. Millions of flies swarmed over everything and covered the faces of the sleeping patients and crawled down their open mouths and deposited their maggots in the gangrenous wounds of the living. . . . Where hospital gangrene was prevailing it was impossible for any wound to escape contagion under these circumstances."

Surgeon Bates, C. S. A., who was on duty for a number of months at Andersonville, gave the Court his professional opinion as follows:

"I feel myself safe in saying that seventy-five per cent. of those who died might have been saved, had those unfortunate men been properly cared for as to food, clothing, bedding, etc."

General Winder, whose removal as Superintendent of Military Prisons was thus recommended by Colonel Chandler, was an especial friend and protégé of Jefferson Davis. He was never given command of troops in the field, but in the above capacity made himself notorious by his brutal treatment of prisoners. No words of mine can more fittingly describe his character than his own language employed in his celebrated Order No. 13, issued when General Kilpatrick's (U. S. A.) command moved in the direction of Andersonville. I give it without further comment:

"ORDER NO. 13

"Headquarters, Confederate States Military Prison,
"Andersonville, July 27, 1864.

"The officer on duty and in charge of the battery of Florida

artillery at the time will, upon receiving notice that the enemy has approached within seven miles of this Post, open fire upon the stockade, *i. e.*, the prison containing 25,000 to 35,000 defenceless men, with grape-shot, without reference to the situation beyond these lines of defence. It is better that the last Federal be exterminated than be permitted to burn and pillage the property of loyal citizens, as they will do if allowed to make their escape from the prison.

“By order of,

“JOHN H. WINDER,
“*Brigadier-General.*”

“W. S. Winder,
“Asst. Adj.-Gen.”

Before leaving Andersonville, it may be well to allude to the fate of its jailer, Captain Wirz, who was perhaps the most notorious for personal brutality among the many of his class who commanded Southern prisons. I am led to speak of it because many of our younger generation are ignorant of the facts, and because the women of Georgia recently erected a statue to him as a martyr. Confirming my belief above expressed, so well informed a man as President Roosevelt said to me at the White House in the winter of 1908: “Did the United States execute any of the rebels after the war?” My reply was that we hung one, but not for treason. Wirz was tried upon the charge of murder, and was convicted of having killed with his own hand, at various times in the Andersonville prison, and in cold blood, twelve unarmed and inoffensive Union soldiers, and for these crimes was sentenced and hung. Every opportunity for defence was given him, his lawyer and witnesses being paid by the United States.

In treating of these matters a conscientious writer must often hesitate between the inadequacy of a general phrase to convey the real facts and the apprehension that the full and perhaps loathsome detail will expose him to the charge of bias, exaggeration, or denunciation. To illustrate I give one instance. It has been previously said that in these

prisons "the water was often impure." What may this mean? Let Dr. R. H. Whitfield, surgeon, C. S. A., in charge of the prison at Cahaba, Ala., tell us. On March 31, 1864, he reports to his superior, Surgeon P. B. Scott, C. S. A., Medical Director:

"When you know the sanitary conditions you cannot be surprised at the large number of cases reported. The prisoners sleep on the earth or on boards, without straw or bedding of any kind. The wood (less than half the regulations allow) is green pine or decayed oak. The water for drinking, cooking, and bathing comes along an open street gutter for 200 yards. In its course, it has been subjected to the washing of the persons of soldiers, citizens, and negroes, and has received the contents of buckets, tubs, and spittoons from offices and hospital; the refuse of hogs, dogs, cows, and horses, and filth of all kinds from the streets and other sources."

Of the prison at Florence, S. C., Colonel W. D. Pickett, Inspector-General, C. S. A., reports to General Hardee, October 12, 1864:

"The condition of these prisoners has not been misrepresented. They are emaciated and sickly and filthy in the extreme. Three-fourths are without blankets, and almost without clothing. They have only the temporary shelters they have erected."

Of Columbia, Lieutenant-Colonel Iverson, C. S. A., reports, January 26, 1865, to Colonel H. Forno, Inspector Military Prisons, C. S. A.: "The rations are, in my judgment, totally insufficient for the sustenance of the prisoners."

And Colonel Forno reporting to General Winder, C. S. A., says: "The subsistence department is entirely deficient, and the ration issued daily amounts almost to starvation."

Of Salisbury, Governor Vance of North Carolina, writes to the Secretary of War, C. S. A., February 1, 1865: "Accounts reach me of the most distressing character in regard to the suffering and destitution of Federal prisoners

at Salisbury;" and to General Bradley T. Johnson, C. S. A., he writes: "If the half be true, it is disgraceful to our humanity."

General Johnson replies, February 12, 1865: "It is disgraceful to our country. A large per cent. live in holes in the ground. I have pressed upon our authorities (at Richmond) the terrible suffering and mortality among them."

Of all the prisons of this type we get the same sad pictures, all drawn from Confederate sources and presenting a thousand gruesome details of privation, suffering, and death, which I shall not distress you by repeating.

Such a discussion cannot be left, however, without an attempt to answer two questions: First, was the action of the South deliberate, intentional, preconceived? And if so, who was responsible? After all these years we can surely weigh the question judicially and with fairness. Second, were there mitigating circumstances to be urged on behalf of the South which would render less vivid this panoramic picture of cruelty? In answer to this it should be freely admitted that something can be urged for the defence; that few professional surgeons could be spared from the rebel armies; that surgical implements and medical supplies were very scarce; that blankets and clothing were scarce; that all supplies of manufactured articles, tools, cooking utensils, etc., were drained for their armies; that fewer crops were planted and railroad communications between the interior and the battle lines were cut off; that many of their army officers protested indignantly, but uselessly, against the cruelty they saw practised, and that many Southern citizens joined in those protests.

But on the other hand, what of the pine forests surrounding these prisons which our men were not allowed to cut for fuel or for shelter? What of the abundant corn fields of Georgia, untouched by war, through which Sherman marched while our men at Andersonville, a few miles away, were starving? Is nothing to be said of those vast supplies from which at Salisbury alone, April 12, 1865, Sherman's commissary took 100,000

bushels of corn, 50,000 bushels of wheat, 27,000 pounds of rice, 20,000 pounds of sugar, and 60,000 pounds of bacon, and of those in the neighborhood of Andersonville, about which General J. H. Wilson states, "My command found supplies in great abundance." What of the sutlers who kept for sale near these prisons, corn-meal, bacon, beef, sweet potatoes, beans, onions, pumpkins, salt and soda, for which, at enormous cost, the prisoner's remaining clothing or other things of value, was exchanged until he was naked, destitute, and helpless? What of the Confederate Inspector-General's report that "necessary food could be obtained with slight effort"? What of the using for their own troops of the food, the blankets and the clothing sent by our Government, under solemn stipulation to be used for its captured soldiers, and so accepted by the Confederate Government? What of the report of Surgeon Wm. A. Carrington, C. S. A., March 23, 1864, to the Surgeon-General, C. S. A., regarding hospitals in Richmond? It ends with these words:

"Large, well-ventilated, and completely organized hospitals near the city have been empty during the whole of this time. They were offered (for the use of prisoners) and refused by the (rebel) authorities. They contained 750 beds."

On this point General John H. Stibbs, one of the two surviving members of the Court which tried Wirz, says, May 30, 1910:

"Could these horrors have been averted? I reply yes—scarcely having patience to answer the question. This prison was located in one of the richest sections of Georgia. Supplies were abundant, the prison was surrounded with a forest, and yet some of our men froze to death for lack of fuel which they would gladly have gathered had they been permitted to do so. Among those confined in that stockade were men possessed of all the training and ability necessary to construct anything, from a log cabin to a war ship; and they would have considered it a privilege to have done all the work necessary to enlarge the stockade, build barracks, and provide a supply of pure water,

had they been provided with tools and materials and given the opportunity."

In such a situation the opinion of an eminent and impartial spectator is of peculiar value. Such we find in Goldwin Smith's *Reminiscences of the American Civil War*, written at the time. He was an Englishman of the highest standing, public and private, literary and social. He was known and respected in two continents. He approached the subject, like most Englishmen of his day, prepossessed in favor of the South. Upon the point I have raised he says:

"It seemed to me at the North, generally, there was a remarkable absence of truculence. Prisoners of war were well-treated. I visited the prison camp at Chicago and saw that the inmates were well-fed and suffering no hardship beyond that of confinement. I visited the prisoners' hospital, Baltimore, and satisfied myself that the treatment was good. My visit was unannounced. I record this as an answer to the charges of cruelty rife at the time in England. It was the more notable as the treatment of Federal prisoners in some of the Confederate prisons was known to be most inhuman. In the Andersonville prison camp it was devilish and such as no want of resources on the part of the captor could excuse. No laws of war can warrant the retention of prisoners whom a captor cannot feed. I saw at Annapolis, the first batch of prisoners exchanged from Andersonville; they were living skeletons."

The question is often asked, What was General Lee's attitude toward prisoners of war? The answer is simple. The prisoners, taken by the troops under his immediate command, were treated with consideration and humanity while in his charge. But when they passed into the hands of the Richmond authorities he ceased to concern himself about them. There is no evidence discoverable that he ever interested himself in the general question of the treatment of prisoners in the South, and at a time when his influence with the Confederate authorities was paramount, and when his views would have compelled appropriate action, and when the sufferings of the Federal prisoners were at their maximum,

we fail to find any protest from his pen, or the record of any effort on his part to ameliorate their condition. That he was aware of it appears from his correspondence, but he seems to have regarded it as outside his province. In his correspondence with General Grant he stands for negro slavery and distinctly approves the Confederate policy of refusing to exchange our negro soldiers, saying in substance that in agreeing to an exchange cartel he *had omitted to say* that it could not include former slaves, who would not be regarded by him as soldiers; and he approved the suspension of exchanges, with all its horrible consequences to both sides, rather than to yield on this issue. How far he felt himself bound in this regard by the action of the Confederate Congress and Davis's proclamation, and whether these were in accord or conflict with his own convictions, we can only surmise. So far as we can learn from his official record, he acquiesced and approved. The fact that he was the one conspicuous military figure in the capture of John Brown at Harper's Ferry, and in his subsequent execution, throws a side light upon his view of slavery, and in a measure is corroborative of the opinion above expressed.

To the much-mooted question, What were the total losses by death among prisoners North and South? it must be answered that no even approximate estimate has been or ever can be truthfully made. The necessary data is lacking. The records of the Northern prisons were regularly kept, have been preserved, and are accessible. But in the South no regular systematic records were kept in most instances, and such reports as were made covered irregular and widely separated periods. Even of these, few have been preserved. Andersonville, Ga., forms, apparently, the one exception to this. The records of this, the most notorious of the stockade or open-air prisons, were kept during 1864 (the year of greatest congestion of numbers and maximum deaths), by a Federal prisoner detailed for that purpose, and were recovered from the rebel archives at Richmond. Yet while they present continuity and system, they fall far short of accuracy. Surgeon White, C. S. A., in charge, and the

inspector-generals who, from time to time, visited and reported upon the condition of the prisoners, all repeat the statement that of the hundred and odd bodies, amounting in August, 1864, to an average of 130 a day, which were carried out each morning for burial in a common trench, "hundreds had never been seen by any surgeon or recorded in any way." An attempt has been made by counting graves, and again by deducting the number released from the number supposed to have been received, to establish a balance representing the dead; but in the absence of any approximately reliable record of those received, and in view of the method employed, viz., the hasty interment of hundreds of bodies, piled one upon another in a common trench, it is clearly apparent that such efforts and calculations, made after a long lapse of time, are utterly futile for the purpose of affording any reliable basis of calculation. When we join to this the fact that, after eliminating the smaller places, there were thirty-four principal prisons in the South, located all the way from Richmond, Va., to the southern confines of Texas, that these were abandoned and broken up and their inhabitants sent elsewhere as our troops swept over one part of the South after another during the last months of the war, that the rebel authorities were seeking their own safety and had no interest in the preservation of records which would be self-condemnatory, it needs no argument to establish the fact that the number of deaths of Union soldiers in Southern prisons can never be known, and that any estimate based upon the fragmentary data accessible must be many thousands below the reality.

The careful historian, analyzing the records of those times, is forced to the conclusion that a wide difference existed between the feeling of the South toward the Northern soldier, and that of the North toward the Southern one. To this difference was due in large measure the marked contrast in the treatment of prisoners by the two contending parties, the facts of which are now established beyond controversy.

As no reasonable man would claim that the Southern portion of our people were inherently vindictive and cruel,

it follows that some especial and powerful influences had been and were, at the beginning of the war, at work, to engender among them the characteristics alluded to, which were so constantly and generally displayed toward those of our men who were placed helpless in their hands, during the four years that followed. To ascertain what these influences were, to lay bare the cause behind the fact, is manifestly germane to this whole subject, and necessary to a complete understanding of it. In what follows, therefore, I have tried to outline briefly the source and character of these influences which poisoned the otherwise generous natures of a whole people; the methods adopted by the Southern leaders to carry out their purposes; and something of the effect produced by these efforts.

It is difficult at all times to analyze thought in others and to define motive, and it is unsafe to generalize decidedly or dogmatically as to the impulse that has moved great masses of men toward a common object, but referring to the Northern soldier, it is entirely safe to say that in a vast majority of cases he enlisted to help "save the Union" or "to put down the rebellion," as he phrased it, *i. e.*, to re-establish the national supremacy, to recover its forts and dockyards, and to make its flag once more respected. His impulse was impersonal, a sentiment, if you please, and even during the period before described in this paper, when the events of three years of bloody and indecisive war had excited antagonisms to the highest possible pitch, his feeling never degenerated into a personal animosity toward his Southern foe. His enemy, the "Johnny Reb," continued to be the brave soldier, the gallant antagonist, to the end of the chapter. While he attacked the defenders of Secession with a crusader's zeal, it was the Cause they advocated which he sought to destroy, and no racial hatred, no personal antipathy, added its bitterness to the blows he dealt.

On the other hand, the Union soldier was regarded by the South as an invader, as one come to free the slaves, as a destroyer of homes and property, and as a ravisher of women. The leaders and makers of public opinion in the South, the

Confederate Congress, President Davis, and the public press, used every influence of spoken and printed argument to force and impress this conviction indelibly upon the minds of their people, and so, in their own apt phrase, to "fire the Southern heart."

To escape the responsibility of their own initiative in beginning hostilities, and seizing the properties of the United States, the Confederate leaders planted and sedulously cultivated in the minds of the Southern people the belief, growing to a conviction, that the North meant conquest and subjugation. This accounts in a great degree for the brutality of expression toward our officers and men so constantly found in these records and for the approval with which the South as a whole acquiesced in the treatment of prisoners that I have described.

My personal experience leads me to say gladly that this perverted view of the Union soldier was held in far less degree by the Confederate soldier at the front than by the politician, the editor, and the civilian, male and female, in the rear.

To show that this picture is not overdrawn, a few illustrations, selected at random from a mass of material, will suffice.

Typical of this purpose is the speech of Roger A. Pryor in Richmond, April 10, 1861. He said:

"Gentlemen, I thank you especially that you have at last annihilated this accursed Union, reeking with corruption and insolent with excess of tyranny. Not only is it gone, but gone forever. For my part if Abraham Lincoln and Hannibal Hamlin to-morrow were to abdicate their offices and were to give me a sheet of blank paper to write the conditions of re-annexation to the defunct Union, I would scornfully spurn the overture. Do not distrust Virginia. As sure as to-morrow's sun will rise, just so sure will Virginia be a member of this Southern Confederation. And I will tell you, gentlemen, what will put her there in less than an hour by Shrewsbury clock, *strike a blow*. The very moment that blood is shed Old Virginia will make common cause with her sisters of the South."

And this,—Hon. Jeremiah Clemens, U. S. Senator from

Alabama, when the State seceded, said to the convention at Huntsville, Ala., March 13, 1864:

“I will tell you how your State was got out of the Union. In 1861, when the seat of the Confederate Government was in Montgomery, I met in the office of General Walker, then Confederate Secretary of War, Jefferson Davis with Memminger and Benjamin, of his cabinet, Gilchrist, a member of our State Legislature, and a number of other prominent gentlemen. They were discussing the propriety of immediately opening fire on Fort Sumter, to which General Walker was opposed. Mr. Gilchrist said to him: ‘Sir, unless you sprinkle blood in the face of the people of Alabama, they will be back in the old Union in less than ten days.’ The next day, the 12th of April (though Major Anderson had agreed to surrender on the 15th) Beauregard was ordered to open his batteries on Sumter, and Alabama was saved to the Confederacy.”

Lying before me as I write is a copy of the *Richmond Dispatch* of Friday, March 31, 1865. I obtained it in Richmond while a prisoner and brought it away with me, its only interest to me at that time being the account of a recent battle near Petersburg. The *Dispatch* and the *Examiner* were the two leading dailies of that city. Coming from the seat of government, they were widely circulated and read throughout the South, and their editorials carried all the weight of official inspiration. From the editorial columns on the front page of the *Dispatch* I quote:

“The object of the Yankees in waging the kind of war they are now engaged in carrying on against us, could not be mistaken. It is no longer a restoration of the Union that they seek. That was from the first a mere pretense, used to cover designs which, at one time, it might not have been quite so prudent to expose as they believe it to be now. The universal belief among them is, that they are on the point of completing our subjugation, and that it is, therefore, no longer required by prudence to make a mystery of the fate they design for us. That fate is simply the utmost degree of degradation which their ingenuity, prompted by their malice, can devise. They will not be content with merely beating us into surrender. We must suffer all the horrors of

conquest ever heretofore put in practice against a defeated foe, with the addition of new ones, devised for the especial gratification of their hatred. That hatred is a passion universal among the whole Yankee nation. There are so few bosoms not agitated by it that they scarcely serve for an exception to the general rule. It began long before this war, and any one who attributes the unheard-of enormities which have marked its progress to the disposition on the part of all armies to commit excesses will be very much mistaken. It arises from the long, deep-rooted hatred, to which we have alluded, and which is now presented with an opportunity of gratifying itself. Our cities are wantonly burnt, and our population insulted and murdered, upon *principle*. It is the result of cold-blooded calculation, not of military passions, stimulated by resistance. These soldiers are turned loose upon a population which they hate, and they are told to do their worst, for they will rather be applauded than punished for any crime they may perpetrate.

“Such being the treatment our people receive while we have large armies still in the field, what are we to expect when resistance shall have ceased altogether? The Yankees themselves tell us a part of what we are to look for, but they do not tell us all. We must look for it in their acts. In Charleston, they have not only set the negroes free, but, as far as they have been able, have compelled the whites to associate with them. They do this because they know that the whites consider such association as degrading to them; and they are determined to make them drink the cup to the dregs. There are probably among us Southern people who are tired of the war, and who hope that, by submission, they may obtain a little mercy at the hands of their masters. Never were people more woefully deceived. The Yankee will have no mercy upon them. He is only forbearing when he finds his proposed victim in a condition and disposition to resist. Let him but once be at his mercy—completely in his power—incapable of further resistance—and he might as well hope for mercy from a tiger, or compassion from a wolf, or forbearance from any other cruel and cowardly wild beast of the forest. The Yankee will not only strip his victim of everything he has in the world, down to the very clothes upon his back, but he will take every other means to make him feel his situation. Is it not better to continue to resist even unto death than to accept such a peace as this?

“Our ‘Northern brethren’ of the Puritan persuasion are happily endowed with the felicitous quality of always looking at the bright side of their own character and actions. For example, we suppose that between them and the rest of the Christian world there would not be one moment’s dispute about the practical duties of Christianity. They would not deny that forgiveness of enemies is the peculiar and cardinal virtue of the Christian religion; that the man who does not show mercy to others can expect no mercy from God. They will argue that the rules of civilization, let alone Christianity, do not permit any barbarities in warfare not essential to the end for which war is waged. And yet, the community which holds these excellent principles is not aware of any inconsistency between their faith and practice when they exult in the deadly hate that they bear the South as if it were a first-class virtue; when they pant for our extermination; when they rejoice to read accounts in their daily papers of the Southern farmhouses and towns that have been burned to the ground; of the defenceless women and children that have been turned out-of-doors, and exposed to destruction, and sometimes worse; of the prospect of starving to death whole communities of innocent people; of prisoners dying miserably of cruel treatment, or cold, or famine. Nay, their very preachers get up in the pulpit, and, Sunday after Sunday, invoke their hearers to rain fire and brimstone upon the accursed rebels, and to spare none of the infernal crew.”

Within two weeks after this publication, Grant had received Lee’s surrender, had simultaneously issued 20,000 rations to the nearly starving soldiers of the Confederate army, and had announced the order which has become historic for its magnanimity, granting them their horses and guaranteeing them peace and protection in their homes. Shortly before this our troops had entered Richmond, extinguished the fires lighted by the evacuating rebels among the hospitals holding their wounded, and the houses of the inhabitants, had issued rations to women and children, and had assured protection from want and from insult to all the defenceless people of the city.

On the 18th of July, 1863, Colonel Robert G. Shaw was killed while leading his men of the 54th Massachusetts in an

attack on Fort Wagner, near Charleston, South Carolina. The 54th was the first "colored" regiment that entered the United States service and was recruited from among the citizens of negro lineage residing in the Bay State. Colonel Shaw's parents, advanced in years, and whom I knew well, lived on Staten Island, N. Y. Hearing of their son's death and wishing to recover his body, they communicated with the authorities at Washington to learn what disposition had been made of it after the battle. Our Government forwarded the inquiry through the official Confederate channels, and in due time came a refusal from the authorities at Charleston to attempt to identify or return the body, and this explanatory message: "We buried him in the ditch with his niggers." The reply of Colonel Shaw's parents, as published in the press of that day, was simply that their son's body could not have a nobler burial than among those of his devoted men, and an eminent writer has said: "What was intended as a disgrace will, in the light of history, be regarded as a monumental honor."

Contrast this attitude of the Southern civil authorities with that of the Southern soldier. On the evening of September 1, 1862, General Philip Kearny, U. S. A., was killed in the battle of Chantilly, Virginia. On the following morning General Lee sent the body under an escort and flag of truce into the Union lines. It was fully accoutred with uniform and sabre, as at the time of Kearny's death, and was accompanied by the horse he had been riding, also fully accoutred. In his letter to the Union general, General Lee said in substance, that it gave him pleasure to send at once and with great respect the body and the horse of General Kearny, a very gallant soldier, feeling that the possession of them might be some consolation to General Kearny's widow with whom he sympathized in her great loss.

I have more than once before this audience opposed the erection of a statue to General Lee in the Statuary Hall of the House of Representatives at Washington, on the broad grounds that he was not a patriot, was not true to his oath and his country at the crucial moment, and that no other

than loyal men should receive national commemoration. I still hold this view and holding it feel an especial pleasure in recording this tribute to General Lee's gallantry and courtesy as a soldier, and his humanity and sympathy as a man. Probably no man among the millions, North and South, was more torn by conflicting emotions, or more undecided as to his course up to the last moment, than Robert E. Lee. He wrote his son that he did not believe in a constitutional right of secession, and saw nothing on the part of the North that justified it; and, on the other hand, he told General Scott, that his lands and his slaves were all he had to leave his children, and if his State seceded and he did not join it, he would lose all. The latter influence unhappily prevailed.

These leaders studiously concealed from the Southern people the conciliatory attitude of President Lincoln, as shown by his first inaugural and by his speeches, and the real intent, the preservation of the "Union as it was," with which the North took up arms. Lest this be questioned let Lincoln speak for himself,—and in speaking for himself he speaks for the North as a whole.

In his first inaugural he says to the South:

"In *your* hands, my dissatisfied fellow countrymen, and not in *mine* is the momentous issue of civil war. The Government will not assail *you*. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors."

Such were his sentiments in 1861. What were they in 1865? In February of that year three Confederate commissioners, Alexander H. Stephens of Georgia, Vice-President of the Confederacy, and R. M. T. Hunter and Campbell of Virginia, members of the Confederate Congress, entered the lines of the 1st Division of the 9th Army Corps (upon whose headquarters staff I was serving) in front of Petersburg under flag of truce. They were escorted to City Point, where Mr. Lincoln received them at General Grant's headquarters. The conference was long and, as it proved, fruitless, but as it was about to close, Lincoln, unwilling to believe

that peace was impossible, drew toward him a sheet of paper and said, "Stephens, let me write the word 'Union' at the top of that paper and you may fill in as you please the terms of peace that are to follow."

The foregoing quotations and incidents are not recited for the purpose of again arousing, at this late day, indignant comment or denunciation of the acts and thoughts they reveal. They are introduced here simply for their historical value and are submitted as incontrovertible evidence of what has been asserted above in regard to the view of the Union soldier propagated by the Southern leaders and press, and the feeling that existed toward him on the part of the great mass of the Southern people fifty years ago. I hazard little in asserting that no parallel can be found for them upon the Union side of the controversy. The simple facts are that the Confederate leaders brought on the secession movement to perpetuate human slavery, which they believed to be threatened by the increasing voting power in national affairs of the Northern States. The difference of constitutional interpretation was in no sense a cause, but was appealed to by them as a partial justification of what, for the above reason, they had determined to do, as shown by scores of their letters prior to the war and now public property. They did not intend war, but prepared for it, and finding they could not carry their States with them otherwise, they declared and began it, persuading their people that in so doing, they only anticipated what the North intended. It is true, as often asserted by Southern writers, that the bulk of the Southern army did not knowingly fight to perpetuate slavery, and supposed they were defending their threatened liberties, but it is equally certain that they were deceived by their trusted leaders at the outset and throughout the war. The sowing and cultivating of that feeling by deliberate misrepresentation of the attitude of the North, of President Lincoln and of the Union soldier, with the great war it engendered, constitute a crime against humanity, unequalled for its magnitude and the suffering involved, and for this the Southern leaders must answer at the bar of history.

Equally certain is it that the chief responsibility for their prison policy must finally rest with the political leaders of the Rebellion, Jefferson Davis, and his associates, and upon the Confederate Congress, a Congress which approved the placing of a mine charged with gunpowder under Libby Prison, as stated in the report of their joint select committee of the two Houses, March 3, 1865. These political authorities unquestionably favored a policy which depleted the Union forces by the death of their men and the return of helpless invalids in the exchanges. I say 'unquestionably' because the Confederate State papers avow it. They found isolated instances of army officers and civilians willing to be their tools in carrying out this policy, and the general feeling of the South, already described, sustained them in the results attained, while, perhaps, not chargeable with knowledge of the full measure of the crimes they perpetrated. The contrasts that have been thus presented have been offered, not to arouse sectional feeling and not in a vindictive spirit, but in the belief that the truth should be made a matter of record; that justice should be done to the North for the way she played her part and, that those to whom these great wrongs were due should, with equal justice, be placed face to face with the record they created.

NOTE

Since this address was made, the subject has been somewhat elaborately treated in the publication entitled *The Photographic History of the Civil War*. The seventh volume of this work is devoted to "Prisoners and Hospitals." It has been edited by Professor Holland Thompson of the College of the City of New York, and much of the material was collected and many of the chapters written by him.

I have carefully examined his work and gladly testify that it bears evidence throughout of an earnest effort, quoting his own words, "to be absolutely just and impartial." That it fails in my judgment, in some essential points to be so, is due chiefly to inherent conditions, which I pointed out to him, but of the force of which he was, and probably still is, unaware. This Note

is not the place to refute with detailed evidence the conclusions and generalizations which I believe to be erroneous, but their general line may be indicated.

Professor Thompson undertook, with high motives, what was for him an impossible task. He labored, at the outset, under two practically insurmountable difficulties. He is less than forty years of age, and he is a native of North Carolina. His knowledge of the war is therefore derived entirely at second-hand, and his viewpoint, both from inheritance and environment is the Southern one, the only one in fact which he could hold or make public without being ostracized by relations and friends and by the community to which he belonged.

He started, perhaps unconsciously to himself, with certain pre-conceived theories, and his labors have been in great measure directed toward finding evidence to sustain them. These theories were, briefly, that there was no striking dissimilarity between the treatment of prisoners in the North and in the South; that such favorable difference as existed in the North was due to its greater resources; and that nothing which could be characterized, truly, as inhumanity or barbarity was shown by the South.

He further tries by the misleading method of percentages to prove that the ratio of deaths in certain northern prisons exceeded the ratio in *any* Southern prison. The fallacy of this argument is twofold. Percentages to be valuable require equal numbers of men and equal continuity of death rate, two conditions not met by his illustration. For example, the fact that of two men, in any prison, one died the first week, thereby producing a death rate of fifty per cent. per week, is worthless statistically, if contrasted with the fact that in another prison out of a total of 30,000 prisoners, 15,000 died during a period of from six months to a year. Again, no records worth naming exist of the great majority of Southern prisons, even the Andersonville 1864 record of deaths being admittedly far short of the real mortality, hence his conclusion is unwarranted for lack of data to substantiate it.

In laboring thus to sustain a theory, apparent in his writing to any thoughtful reader, he is led into the further error, unwillingly no doubt, of omitting or minimizing the incriminating evidence and enlarging on that which favors his conception. For instance, on page 80, he mentions the report of Lieutenant-Colonel Chandler, C. S. A., upon conditions at Andersonville as clear and dispassionate, but he fails to quote any part of it.

Extracts from this famous report of the Confederate Inspector-General are to be found in my address. It is moderate in tone and merits the characterization of trustworthiness which Professor Thompson has given to it. But its substance is a description of the horrible conditions which this officer saw, and it closes with a very severe criticism, almost denunciation, of the executive officers in charge, and of the Confederate officials of high rank who permitted such conditions to exist. It would seem, in the interest of fairness and partiality, that Professor Thompson should have quoted the salient features of this report, as it has a marked bearing upon the mooted question of whether inhumanity and barbarism were exhibited toward Union prisoners in the South.

Again, the killing of Union prisoners after surrender he dismisses in six lines on page 174, with slight comment, indicating incredulity, in the face of much confirmatory evidence and official Confederate documents authorizing and approving the practice under specified conditions.

The official correspondence of those in charge of Northern prisons is complete and accessible and their criticisms of defects and earnest efforts at improvement are made the basis for a somewhat general condemnation by him of conditions in Northern prisons; but such records are generally lacking with regard to Southern prisons, and therefore, with a few notable exceptions, these are spared criticism.

Many more instances could be adduced, indicating the unconscious bias I have alluded to above, which pervades the work of Professor Thompson, but enough has been said to register a protest against the acceptance, as history, of many of his conclusions, while every effort has been made to express this honest difference of opinion in language which would in no way reflect upon his entire sincerity of purpose.



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