Facts And Reminiscences.

Of The War Of The Rebellion Of 1861-65.

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Every true American will admit, as do all European powers today, that our Civil War was in every respect unlike any European war of recent date. Take for instance, the English Boar War, the Franco-Prussian, the Russian-Japan; and even the Spanish-American War. These wars were fought for the purpose of gaining additional territory and power. Nation fought Nation; and whichever Nation gained the victory over its foe, was proclaimed to the world, and generally admitted to be, the stronger and more able of the two.

This however, was neither the case nor the cause of this war. The thirteen southern States, which were in fact, all slave States, fearing that the northern free States would become too strong, realized that they would not only lose their power and strength in the Senate and House, but would eventually be compelled to give up slavery; and without their slaves, they thought that they could not exist at all. Hence, they decided to secede from the North, and form an independent Confederacy. Quite a few of the cooler and more far-seeing men were bitterly opposed to secession; not at all because they loved the Yankees, and hated to part with them, but because they were alarmed and feared the strength, power and resources of the North. However, they were overpowered by the majority of the Southerners, and not only had they to submit, but had to keep their own views concealed in their hearts. The South determined to gain their independency. The North equally determined to keep the Union together, and undivided. The North knew that united, we could not only exist, but eventually become one of the greatest and most powerful Nations of the World.

It was a War in which Father fought against Son; Son against Father; and Brother against Brother; it was what you may call a family affair.
Not for territory or power; but with determination to preserve the Union. Our never-to-be-forgotten President, the lamented Abraham Lincoln, only a few months previous to the close of the War, told the south that he had never considered them out of the Union; urged them to lay down their arms and cease fighting; and to come back and enjoy the blessings of the United Country. It was only when compelled to in the interest of the Country - North and South - that he issued the Emancipation Proclamation.

Here I wish to state that perhaps never in the history of wars, met two armies upon the field of battle, more brave and fearless; each determined to conquer, than these two armies. And is it to be wondered at when both armies were composed of men of the same great and glorious nation? Although the south was in the wrong and fought against their own interest, yet the northern soldier will ever acknowledge the courage and bravery of this opposing foe.

Fearful and cruel in the extreme as was this war, yet it has proven to be a great blessing in disguise to both the North and the South. I dislike very much to speak of the good service of my battery during this war; but as it was not I who sighted the guns - which did such excellent and effective execution - I will mention a few engagements and give the credit to the gunners, who, by their cool and deliberate aim, gave the battery which I had the honor to command, the reputation of being one of the best batteries on the field.

At the Battle of Resaca on the 14th of May, the General called my attention to a body of troops in our front, which were moving towards the left, to our left flank or rear. The road over which they moved at a very rapid speed, was, I thought, at least one mile from us. An opening of about ten rods revealed a cloud of dust, which convinced us that the moving column was either cavalry or artillery, as a body of infantry could not have raised such a dense cloud of dust. The General asked me if I could prevent those moving troops from coming in our rear, or
on our left flank. I replied that I thought I could; and at once ordered my battery to open fire, percussion shell, aiming at the opening and the moving troops. We continued firing for some time and then the cloud of dust disappeared, so our southern 'friends' I suppose, considered their undertaking too risky, for they did not bother our flank or rear.

At Lay Ferry, the enemy was quite strong, and prevented our troops from crossing. General Sweeney then requested me to take my battery about one mile ahead and 'engage' their artillery, so that he and his troops could cross the bridge. I ordered one of my sections which stood near the bridge, with instructions to wait there until I had been able to get the rest of the battery in position upon an elevated hill about one mile in advance, and as soon as I would open fire upon the enemy's battery, to commence also, firing at the rebel battery to give them a cross-fire, and whenever they should direct their fire at his section, to cease firing and let his men lie down, but that I would keep on firing until they would concentrate their firing on my guns, when I would cease firing, and he would then open fire again. The Lieutenant opened fire before I was in position, or ready to commence firing. The consequence was that they opened fire with their entire battery, on his section, and in place of letting the men lie down and cease firing, he ordered "Limber to the rear"; and left with his section, his post. When I opened with my guns, they directed and opened fire with all of their guns on my battery, the consequence was that my entire battery was compelled to withdraw. Had the Lieutenant obeyed my order, and remained at his post, between his section and my battery, we would have been able to silence their battery, and Gen. Sweeney could have crossed with his troops. This proves the importance of an officer obeying orders.

At Tarkingtown, Tenn., our Cavalry scouts reported that the enemy were ready to receive us. Gen. Hood, had earth-works (a rifle pit,) and this being at the time when we were getting ready for our Sherman's march to the sea, Sherman was neither anxious nor prepared for a fight.
But it was important that we should make them believe that we were prepared and ready to fight them. A brigade of infantry and my battery were at once ordered to move on their works, with a command of cavalry on their left flank. Gen. Osterhaus, in charge accompanied the troops to the front.

The infantry moved across the fields, the cavalry quite a distance from them on their right flank, and my battery on a narrow road towards the enemy. The road was so narrow that I was obliged to move my battery in columns of pieces; on each side of the road was a deep ditch. I moved my battery at an ordinary trot, the road became quite elevated, and as we reached about the top of the hill, I could plainly see to our right in front of the advancing infantry, their rifle pit; and to the right of their earthwork, their battery; ready and anxious to repulse our advancing infantry. Their battery was an extraordinarily good one, which I very soon found out, and why they did not disable my battery before I was able to get it into position, has been a perfect mystery to me ever since. To the right of their battery was a group of officers General and his staff, as I learned afterwards. Gen. Osterhaus requested me to send a shot in their midst, which I at once did, and we saw them scattering in every direction. He then requested me to engage their batteries, to have an artillery duel with them and thus prevent their artillery opening on our advancing infantry, which I promptly obeyed. Their battery as I remarked before, was a very good one; their fighting was fierce, hot and to the point; in fact one of their guns sent a solid shot which struck the face of one of my guns and recoiled it about ten feet. However, that shot did not disable my gun, in less than three minutes we endeavored to return the compliment, and thus prevent their battery from opening on our advancing line of infantry. I saw to our right a panorama which I shall never forget. As soon as I felt that I could be spared from my battery, I went to my right near a rail-fence, where I was joined by an infantry officer.
From our position we could review the entire field; first came a line of skirmishers, then came two lines of advancing infantry, with Right Shoulder Shift Arms, marching, regardless of the danger which lay in their front, as if they were on dress parade. It was a beautiful afternoon, the sun shone extraordinarily bright; and the reflection of the sun on their bright bayonets and guns, made it a wonderfully impressive sight.

The enemy, from behind their rifle-pit fired volley after volley on the advancing infantry, and it seemed as though their fire would mow down if not the first, surely the second or third line of our infantry, but not one was hurt, in fact it proved quite harmless, which I found to be the case in almost every instance. While we stood leaning against the fence intently watching this remarkable panorama, we remarked to each other—"What would a mother, a wife, sister or sweetheart say, if they could stand by our side, watching this most wonderful panorama?"