PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS
OF THE
AMERICAN WAR.

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EVAN R. JONES,
UNITED STATES CONSUL, NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.
(LATE CAPTAIN 5TH REGIMENT WISCONSIN V.I., AND BREVET MAJOR.)

WISCONSIN AUTHOR.

[Re-printed from the “Newcastle Chronicle” of Saturday,
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On Thursday, February 8, 1872, Major Jones, American Consul, delivered a highly interesting lecture on the above subject, to an exceedingly large and appreciative audience, in the Lecture Hall, Nelson Street, Newcastle, it being the second of a series of popular lectures now being given in that place. James Morrison, Esq., J.P., occupied the chair upon the occasion, and was surrounded by several consuls and other gentlemen upon the platform.

After a brief introduction by the chairman, Major Jones proceeded as follows:—

Mr. Chairman, Ladies, and Gentlemen,—I believe all thinking men have by this time concluded: First, that slavery was the cause of the American war; second, that possibly by a compromise, yielding more territory to slavery, we might have postponed the hour. Thanks to the increase of intelligence and morality in our country, the crisis had to come. Indeed, we might almost say that the political history of the American Republic, from its conception to the firing on Sumpter, is but a series of struggles and compromises between slavery and freedom, with slavery generally victorious.

The Convention for framing the Constitution met in 1787, with a decided majority averse to both slave trade and slavery, but appeals and arguments were met by the cry from South Carolina, "No Slave Trade no Union," and the representatives of that State and of Georgia assured the Convention that if the slave trade was prohibited by the Constitution, they must be considered out of the Union. Thus do we find, at the birth of the nation, a compromise made between liberty—the order of God and the birthright of every man—and slavery, the result of power and despotism, which in less than a century was to bring the country into an internal war, bloody and relentless, "war to the knife, and war to the end, till the land was dotted over with fresh-made graves upon every high hill and beneath every green tree." The pro-slavery party obtained another victory in 1821, when Missouri was admitted into the Union as a Slave State.

Eleven years afterwards, South Carolina again unfurled the flag of disunion. Feeling aggrieved at some of the revenue laws of the general Government, she passed an ordinance nullifying them, proclaiming at the same time that any effort on the part of the Federal authorities to enforce the nullified Acts would be followed by the organisation of a separate Government. The firm and uncompromising course of General Jackson—then President of the United States—not only asserted the supremacy of the Union, but brought dreams of treason and the scaffold to the pillows of the leaders of the movement.
In 1850, California was admitted into the Union under what is known as the Compromise of that year; slavery being neither provided for nor prohibited. The Fugitive Slave Law was strengthened, and the era of slave-hunting on free soil commenced. The officers of the general Government were chief hunters, and all good people were commanded to assist them in the capture of fugitives from bondage. The alleged slave was denied a trial by jury, contrary to the express provisions of the Constitution, and his evidence was refused. During the career of this unholy law, free blacks were sold into slavery; captured slaves were often brutally treated; while some committed suicide rather than return to servitude and the lash.

Kansas was now about to become a State, and Buchanan’s Administration and the South were straining every nerve to secure her to slavery, while a devoted band of freedom-loving people were equally earnest and active in a cause to which many of them had dedicated their lives. Territorial elections were for a long time carried by the pro-slavery party by the help of reinforcements sent across the Missouri border for these occasions. The efforts of the Free State men were directed more towards securing actual settlers for the territory, thus laying the foundation of permanent success in the end. The intrepid old John Brown and his sons fought gallantly through this struggle. Frederick, the eldest son, was killed near the little town of Ossawatomie, which his father, at the head of a small party, defended against superior force. Old Brown often went by the name of “Ossawatomie Brown” after this event. After a protracted struggle and considerable loss of life, the Free Soilers finally triumphed, and on the very day that Jefferson Davis and others left their seats in Congress to take an active part in the rebellion, Kansas—bleeding Kansas—with a free constitution in her hand, knocked at the door, and was admitted into the Union.

There exists in the minds of many in this country a vague idea that the South had to pay special tribute to the North on her imports or her exports. I have never had the position very clearly defined. ‘Tis true that some of the Southern States complained against high import duties, inasmuch as they were producing and not manufacturing States. So did many in Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, also producing States; but the revenue laws of the country are uniform everywhere. The Constitution says: “No tax or duty shall be laid on articles exported from any State; no preference shall be given by any regulation of commerce or revenue to the ports of one State over those of another; nor shall vessels bound to or from one State be obliged to enter, clear, or pay duties in another.” The difference is here. The South believed, with John C. Calhoun, that our Government was a confederacy of the States—that our Constitution was the work of the people of the several States; consequently, that the people of any State could by their voice withdraw from the compact: an accommodating theory for ambitious men like John C. Calhoun and Jefferson Davis to resort to, when the glittering star of their hope was snatched away from them for ever by the better judgment of the people. On the other hand, the producing States of the West believed with Story, Webster, and others, that we were a nation and not a weak confederacy, that our Constitution was—as the instrument itself reads—the work of the people of the United States, and that, as Story says,
“a constitution is a permanent form of government, where the powers once given are irrevocable and cannot be resumed or withdrawn at pleasure.” They saw in the principle of Secession a precedent which any State might carry out upon the slightest pretext. They recognised in this germ the dissolution of our country into weak, petty Repúblicas, and they sent their sons in the vanguard to fight for the Union, and for freedom as the inevitable result of the conflict.

The cry of Secession had become so familiar to the Northern ear that we began to look upon it as a matter of course, and to consider it a perpetual false alarm, made use of by the South to gain their point. And notwithstanding the organizing, arming, and drilling of men for the openly avowed object of severing the Union, we did not fully believe they were in earnest. The Secession ordinance was passed by South Carolina, and hailed everywhere throughout the Cotton States with enthusiastic approbation; yet the North, silent and inactive, looked on, still clinging to the hope that all would be settled amicably.

As late as March, 1861, President Lincoln, in his first inaugural address, breathes the spirit of the North, and expresses the sentiments of a great majority of the American people, in these words—“I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery where it exists.” Non-extension of slavery was all we contended for—that was the platform upon which Lincoln was elected—and had the South been satisfied with the slave territory they then possessed, their cherished institution would have lived until the full value of every negro had been paid out of the Government Treasury, the refusal of which, alone, could bring about an appeal to arms. As evidence of the lingering hope, and as an instance of the tender heart of that noble specimen of our nature, I quote from the last passages of President Lincoln’s inaugural address:—“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.” Again he says:—“I am loth to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break the bonds of affection.”

All hope for peace was crushed on the 12th of April, 1861, when Beauregard opened fire upon Fort Sumpter. The North, till then but passive lookers-on, became enraged and enthusiastic; the President’s call for 75,000 men was promptly responded to; men from all grades of society enlisted as privates: processions of teams loaded with farmers, their sons and labourers, came streaming into cities and towns to enlist, many of whom, on finding the quota already filled, turned homeward with faces presenting unmistakable evidence of disappointment. The Government could have raised a million of men at this time without the least difficulty.

For the eight preceding years, our War Office had been controlled—first by Jefferson Davis, by this time President of the Confederacy,—then by John B. Floyd, soon to become a rebel general. During the last years these men were in authority, our navy was sent to the most distant seas, our little army to Texas; our arms were transferred to Southern arsenals, and when required were taken possession of by the South. Nearly two
hundred officers, educated at the expense of the nation, resigned their commissions in our army to serve the Rebellion; traitors still lingered in Congress the better to serve their cause, while luke-warm patriots were in great abundance in every department of the Government. Under these difficulties the War for the Union was commenced.

During the first six months, the Southern arms were generally successful, especially in Virginia, where they won decided victories, which contributed to unite the South, and embolden their sympathisers in the North and in Europe, thus materially strengthening their cause.

General McClellan was now in command, and "all was quiet on the Potomac," with the exception of occasional skirmishing, and the organizing and drilling preparatory to an advance on Richmond in the early spring. Fremont made considerable stir during his short career in Missouri; and the great soldier of the war, then a Brigadier-General, by a dash on Belmont, the capture of Fort Henry, and soon on its heels, after severe fighting and a gallant charge, Fort Donaldson, with forty pieces of artillery and nearly 15,000 prisoners, had given the nation an earnest of greater achievements to follow. During the winter, we had sufficient fighting to convince both North and South that courage and power of endurance were not wanting on either side, and that, with equal force and position, the ablest general would always conquer.

During the first winter of the war, I was taken ill, and sent to an hospital, near Washington, where I first and last spoke to President Lincoln. The President's children were very ill, and he had come with his carriage to convey a lady, acting as nurse at the hospital, to his house, that she might advise and assist in the care of his sick. He was attended by his favourite son, generally known as Tad. His tall, slender and bony form bore the signs of fatigue. His dark sallow face looked grave and careworn: the anxiety for a nation's weal or woe, and the dangerous condition of his dear ones, were plainly visible: but the instant he spoke, his face lighted up, and he seemed happy and serene. "Honest old Abe." I saw him a few times afterwards reviewing the troops. He always brought a smile to our face. He rode awkwardly, the prancing of the horse continually disarranging his hat; he was unmindful of his horse and hat, looking intently at the men; and the wave of his hand seemed to say "God bless you," to us, as he rode by. We were always glad—proud to see him. We felt that traitors and spies held high places in many of our public offices; we believed that the halfway house patriotism of some of our generals had given victory to the enemy when it ought to and could have been ours, thus sacrificing the lives of brave men to no purpose. But we looked upon Abraham Lincoln as upon our common father; we knew that he was true to us, and to the cause for which we were then in arms.

In the spring, I rejoined my regiment on the Peninsulas—the line selected by McClellan for his advance on Richmond. During our march up the Peninsulas, we had several sharp brushes, but no serious engagement till May 5th, when we fought and won the battle of Williamsburg, where Hooker's division of our army was allowed to carry on an unequal contest all day, when thirty thousand troops were held in reserve, to no purpose. At last, Hancock's Brigade was ordered to turn the enemy's
left, which they did by a brilliant charge, and with comparatively slight loss. This compelled the rebels to abandon their position hurriedly, leaving their wounded in our hands. During this rather severe day’s fighting, M’Clellan was absent at Yorktown, superintending the embarkation of troops up the York River. He reached the battlefield when all the fighting was over.

Johnston fell back to his defences in front of Richmond, followed by our army until we reached the Chickahominy—a little stream running through a flat, swampy bottom—one corps only being sent across to take position on the south banks of the creek. Seizing this opportunity to surprise, overpower, and perhaps destroy our left wing, thus unsupported, an attack was made by Johnston on the 31st of May. So confident were the rebels of completely routing the Yankees, that Jefferson Davis, General Lee, and other great guns of the Confederacy, had come to Seven Pines to witness the triumph of their arms. On the night before the engagement it rained heavily, which delayed the opening of the ball until about noon, when unexpectedly and in overwhelming numbers the rebels advanced rapidly upon our lines, and in a few hours managed to push our men back from nearly all their positions. Meanwhile, the river had swollen, and carried away most of our hurriedly built bridges, making it both tedious and difficult for reinforcements to cross; however, Sumner managed to get two divisions over just in time to stem the tide of the enemy’s second advance, drive them back in confusion, and regain part of our lost ground. Early next morning the rebels renewed the attack, but were easily repulsed, and after fighting all day without much advantage on either side, they withdrew from the field.

All our forces were soon ordered across the Chickahominy, excepting the corps of Fitz-John Porter, still on the north side. Our commander at this time wrote to the War Department that, on the arrival of certain troops daily expected, he would move on Richmond. Lee, however—now in command of the enemy—took the initiative, and having called to his support all available forces, including Stonewall Jackson from the Valley, he threw a large force against our right wing, on the north side of the stream, near Mechanicsville—to be repulsed with terrible slaughter; charge after charge was made, but without success; our men in a good position and well entrenched, could not be dislodged from a single point. Early next morning M’Clellan ordered them to fall back to Gaines’s Mill, which was done much against the will of both officers and men; and finally, after a hotly-contested battle at the last position, they withdrew to the south side of the river. This was the commencement of what is known as the “Seven Days’ Fighting before Richmond,” when an army, far superior in numbers, and equal in every respect, save in leaders, to that of the enemy, was made to fight by day, retreat by night, and witness the destruction of food, clothing, arms, and ammunition, which had cost the Government a million of money.

At dusk, on June 28, the enemy attacked the right of our position south of the Chickahominy, but were promptly sent to the right about by Hancock’s Brigade. Next day we fell back to Savage Station, where the rebel advance was again checked. I remember leaving our position on the railroad at Savage Station when it was quite dark, marching all night over narrow, muddy, and many of them corduroy roads, reaching White
Oak Swamp at daylight next morning. After about two hours' sleep, we were moved to our position on the right. The head of the rebel column soon appeared, and saluted us by shelling our supply train, not yet out of park, creating a panic among the mule drivers. I believe that all unarmed men experience a considerable degree of fear when shells are bursting, ploughing, and tearing in their immediate neighbourhood, and so it was with these mule drivers. Some of them mounted their mules and galloped off, leaving the wagons to their fate; and more would have followed their example but for the armed guard, which compelled them to do their duty. The panic was temporary and not serious, and our train moved out in good order. We were quietly, silently lying on our arms, endeavouring to extract the strength from our coffee by the heat of the sun—fires being prohibited—when the enemy opened the most terrific cannonading I had yet heard, soon to be followed by a charge by Longstreet on our left. He found our artillery and infantry prepared to give him a warm reception. The rebels fought desperately, and were met by equal courage by a division of Pennsylvanians. The fighting at this part of the line was continued incessantly during the entire day. Charges and counter-charges were made. Batteries were captured and recaptured, and I believe our men held their original position when night put a stop to the carnage. Soon after Longstreet made his first charge, our brigade was ordered on the double quick to support the left and centre, without having time even to taste our sun-cooked beverage. I took advantage of a temporary halt to throw away my clothing, blanket, part of my rations, letters, and was about to leave for the rebels a beautiful silver-mounted revolver—a present. I was anxious to make my load as light as possible, for I knew that we had still a long and trying march before us, and I was determined not to fall out of the ranks; but my revolver was saved by a warm-hearted Irishman, who exclaimed, "By my soul, I'll not let you trow that away—I'll carry it for you; it's a beauty." Poor Mac, I afterwards saw him mortally wounded at Fredericksburg.

Night again came, and with it the expected order to march, to the rear, always to the rear, and conscious that thousands of our bleeding comrades were left to be cared for by a bitter enemy—many of them to perish at Andersonville prison. Not very cheering, was it? I know that our men would have gloried in a general engagement, while we were ashamed of this acting on the defensive by day, and stealing away by night. I have seen as brave men as ever faced a foe shed tears during this retreat, which they felt ought never to have been ordered.

After another tedious night march we reached our destination, and bivouaced in an open field on the James river. Our short sleep was much interfered with by the scorching rays of a Virginia midsummer sun. As day advanced we again moved to our position in the line. About a third of our army had reached this camp the day previous, and were strongly entrenched before the rebel column appeared; and it is well established by the evidence of contemporary historians that Lee's entire army was engaged in the effort to carry the position at Malvern Hill, held by only a part of our army. The rebels charged our ranks desperately, recklessly, but never made even a temporary lodgment on our position; at last they became demoralized, and fell back in great disorder. Hooker, Kearney, and
others of our generals were eager for an advance, but McClellan refused.

We reached Harrison's Landing, the position selected by McClellan for his army, on the 2nd July. There is at this point a bend in the river, which made it an admirable position for defence, as both flanks could rest on the river, protected by the gunboats.

The fourth of July—anniversary of American Independence—was a cloudy, wet, cheerless day, and in marked contrast with the general aspect of the national day in American cities. But whatever sad reflections we might have been occupied with were scattered by the enemy driving in our pickets sharply. We were in line in a minute, and immediately advanced to an elevation in our front to await their approach. In our rear, a battery was firing the national salute. I shall never forget the feelings which crept over me at that time as I stood with my comrades, musket in hand, defending, as it were, the guns, while proclaiming State after State which belonged to the Union. The booming of each cannon seemed to say to us: "See to it that your fallen comrades have not died in vain! See to it that the hope of millions shall not be thus early crushed! See to it that a Government conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal, shall not perish from the earth!"

Spades now became trumps, and we were sadly overworked building forts and breastworks, and constructing abatis. We had roll call every two or three hours. We were in a filthy state, with a river in our rear, but could not possibly get to it, cleanse ourselves and clothing and return without missing a roll call. However, a few of us decided to run the risk. On our return, we were summoned before the captain, who, after delivering himself of an essay on discipline, ordered us to the guardhouse. "We pitied him and went."

About the middle of August, we evacuated our stronghold and embarked for Northern Virginia to reinforce General Pope, who was now receiving Lee's attention. Pope was defeated, owing to indifference and disobedience of orders on the part of some of our corps commanders, who were jealous of Pope, because placed over their military idol. I remember distinctly our filing into a field about two o'clock in the day, within hearing of the guns at Gainsville, where we remained nearly two hours. This unusually long rest, as well as the slow marching which followed, was generally, freely, and severely criticised by men in the ranks. Many of us had long suspected what now became palpable to all, viz., that defeat was preferable to a victory won by Pope—and he was defeated. The brave men of Porter and Franklin could, and gladly would, have turned this defeat into victory, but were denied the privilege by their jealous, selfish commanders; these two men occupy the position they have justly earned in the estimation of the American people. The enemy got in our rear that night, and General Kearney, one of the bravest soldiers ever seen on a battlefield, was killed while leading a charge which drove them from their position.

Leaving Pope on his right, Lee invaded Maryland by three lines. By this means he was enabled to secure more horses, cattle, and supplies, and destroy a greater number of granaries, mills, and depots. Jackson's command entered Frederick on the 6th of September: in the morning the Stars and Stripes waved from many a spire; but upon the approach of
the rebels they were all hauled down, when Barbara Fritchie gave a name
to the nation and an example to the world. All was fear and confusion
when, as Whittier* sang:—

"Up rose old Barbara Fritchie, then,
Bowed with her fourscore years and ten;

"Bravest of all in Frederick town,
She took up the flag that men hauled down.

"Up the street came the rebel tread,
Stonewall Jackson riding ahead;

"Under his slouched hat, left and right,
He glanced—the old flag met his sight.

"Halt! the dust-brown ranks stood fast.
Fire! out blazed the rifle blast.

"It shivered the window pane and sash,
It rent the banner with seam and gash.

"Quick, as it fell from the broken staff,
Dame Barbara snatched the silken scarf.

"She leaned far out o' er the window sill,
And shook it forth with a royal will.

"'Shoot, if you must, this old grey head;
But spare your country's flag,' she said.

"A shade of sadness, a blush of shame,
Over the face of the leader came;

"The nobler nature within him stirred
To life, at this woman's deed and word.

"'Who touches a hair in yon grey head
Dies like a dog: March on,' he said."

The enemy's advancing columns were met by McClellan (again in com-
mand), and gallantly driven back from their strongholds in the various
passes of South Mountain. Meanwhile, they managed to capture Harper's
Ferry—a rich prize—with most of its garrison, after which the whole
army concentrated on Antietam Creek, where was fought one of the
bloodiest battles of the war. While standing in column, ready to deploy
and advance to the fray, our brave commander, Hancock, rode up to our
brigade and spoke to us nearly as follows:—"Men, this will probably be
the last battle of the war, if we win. Do your duty, as you have done at
Williamsburg and elsewhere, and I ask no more. The enemy has the
river in his rear; you know the rest." We were marched to that memor-
able corn field on our right, the scene of such desperate fighting, the
much-coveted prize of both commanders. We secured the position with
a trifling loss. Upon this field, dead and dying, representing a majority
of the States, North and South, mingled their blood. In a small corner of
the fence in our rear about fifty rebel dead lay in a heap, while others
were dangling on the fence in every conceivable position, shot through

* The particulars of this valorous incident I give on the authority of the poet. The
material facts I know, from personal inquiry, to be correct.
head and heart. You can scarcely imagine an attitude but is to be
witnessed on a battle-field from which a soldier has not been called to his
Maker. I have seen some who had fallen while in the act of tearing
cartridge, others while returning rammer. We had hoped to crush Lee’s
army on this field, and orders for a general charge the next morning were
issued; but we advanced to find the rebels gone. Lee’s invasion into
Maryland was a mistake; it cost him thirty-nine stand of colours, thirteen
pieces of artillery, 15,000 stand of arms, and 6,000 prisoners, while
McClellan lost not a gun nor a flag.

Soon after this battle, satisfied that the time had arrived, and that public
opinion was ripe for it, Lincoln proclaimed that slavery would be abolished
in all the States found in rebellion against the Government on the first day
of January, 1863; and, true to his promise, the immortal document
appeared on that day. It made glad the hearts of millions in the North,
while it further embittered a large section of our people against the
Administration and the war,—a section of Southern sympathisers and
believers in the divine institution of slavery. The great bulk of our
soldiers favoured the measure, yet it was not without its enemies among
them.

This humane and just promise to liberate four million slaves, to wipe
out a nation’s disgrace, was followed by the darkest and most doubtful
days in the history of America. Grant, now in the lowlands of Louisiana,
surrounded by insurmountable obstacles, was endeavouring to open the
Mississippi, labouring incessantly to get at the enemy, trying every
plan which promised the least hope of success, even to the gigantic undertakings of turning the mighty Mississippi from her course; but with all
his energy and perseverance, he accomplished nothing. McClellan’s
habit of growling at the President, and over-estimating his enemy, had
become intolerable. He was removed, and Burnside placed in command
of the Potomac army. Burnside moved against Lee, strongly posted at
Fredericksburg, and was defeated with a loss of 14,000 killed and
wounded. We soon broke camp for another campaign, but were overtaken
by a severe storm of rain, snow, and sleet; the roads became impassable,
and for several days the army was actually stuck in the mud. Burnside
was now relieved, and Hooker took command. The army was disheartened, and thousands were deserting to their homes in the North.
The President’s proclamation freeing the slaves, while he was without
the power to enforce it, was a dead letter, and characterised as a huge
joke.

After reorganization and preparations under Hooker, we again crossed
the Rappahannock. The Battle of Chancellorsville was fought, and,
though at first successful, we lost the day, and 18,000 were killed and
wounded. The enemy, having to charge our position on the right, I believe
suffered greater loss. Under Sedgwick’s independent command at
Fredericksburg, acting in conjunction with Hooker, was made one of the
most brilliant charges of the war. This charge was led by Colonel Allen
and his regiment, supported by the Light Division, against St. Mary’s
Heights, in rear of Fredericksburg. The steep hill was lined with artillery,
supported by infantry posted behind rifle pits and stone walls. They were
carried at a sacrifice of nearly half of the gallant regiment and with heavy
loss to the division. And, alas, to no purpose. When the works were fairly ours, a rebel fired at one of our men, but his cap snapped; whenupon the Badger (considered about half witted), coolly loaded his musket, and deliberately shot his enemy. Those on the spot remonstrated against what they considered murder. His ready reply was, "He would have shot me if his damned old cap had been good for anything." During the fierce fighting on our right, General Thomas Jonathan Jackson—better known as Stonewall Jackson—fell mortally wounded. He was a brave and brilliant leader, loved by his men, and admired by his foe. He was worthy of a better cause.

The correspondent of the Times, writing after the first of these disasters, said it would be "a memorable day to the historian of the decline and fall of the American Republic." Let us be magnanimous towards such a man. Let us hope that he has lived long enough to be ashamed of his prophecy, and to be proud of the achievements of a kindred people.

Taking advantage of the condition of our army and the disaffection in the North, Lee invaded Pennsylvania; and upon the eve of one of the most sanguinary contests of the war, Lincoln practised what he had condemned in one of the pithiest and most cogent of his sayings. He "swapped horses while crossing a stream." Hooker was replaced by Meade while he was crossing the Potomac to head off Lee's army, now in Pennsylvania. I remember our corps starting before daylight for the battle-field of Gettysburg, and after a march of forty miles—a march which almost stands alone—reaching the field about three o'clock, while Longstreet was making his grand effort to pierce our centre, where he was gallantly repulsed, and where the fate of the day was decided. It was here General Reynolds, a noble and brave man, was killed; he had fought with this army upon all its fields, and was in the advance with his corps to repel the enemy, now invading his native State, when the bullet struck him. He fell in the morning of victory, when the star of the North was beginning to show above the gloomy clouds of the past, and almost within sight of his own home. For once, Lee found himself in an enemy's country, and most gladly left it, after a loss of thirty thousand men.

Grant had by this time obtained a foothold on dry land, abandoned his base, cut off all communications with the outer world, had pushed himself between two armies, which together greatly outnumbered him; whipped first the one and then the other, winning five victories, culminating with the capture of Vicksburg and the opening of the Mississippi.* During this brilliant campaign he captured over forty thousand prisoners. The fall of Vicksburg and the victory at Gettysburg happened on the 4th of July, and great were the rejoicings in the North.

Soon after these victories, New York became the scene of the lawless and disgraceful acts of a mob, who, instigated by rebels, were resisting the draft. Officers, and even friends of the Administration, were hunted down like dogs, negroes hung at sight, and an asylum for coloured orphans—a noble work of charity, erected at a cost of $200,000—was

* I have met gentlemen who were disposed to belittle Grant as a military genius. To all such I would say—Get a copy of Badeau's "Military History of Grant," and read the chapters which give an account of the Vicksburg campaign.
first sacked, and then burned to the ground. Our regiment was among those sent to the Empire City to see that law and order prevailed, and fortunately no disturbance occurred after our arrival. During our stay along the Hudson, the troops behaved like gentlemen, and were treated kindly everywhere; the people were for respecting the laws; it was the ignorant rabble that undertook to defy the Administration. Where the masses are ignorant, their passions are appealed to; give them education, and you must reason and convince them. In the education of the people lies the safety of a representative government.

We returned to Virginia in time to take a prominent part in the battle of Rappahannock Station. Here two brigades of rebels were strongly fortified on the north bank of the river. After a personal reconnaissance, General Russel reported that he could carry the position with his brigade. He threw the 6th Maine forward as skirmishers, and ordered the 5th Wisconsin to move against the main work. This front line was supported by three regiments forming a second. Our men rushed forward with a yell, and without firing a gun, and carried everything before them in fine style. Seven guns, eight stands of colours, and sixteen hundred prisoners was the fruit of this dashing little victory.

After an abortive attempt to surprise Lee at Mine Run, we went into winter quarters near Brandy Station. Here we erected huts and cabins of logs and mud, and a large wigwam or hall in rear of the regiment. We made war against the monotony of camp life by organising debating societies, glee clubs, and clubs for athletic sports. The more studious sent home for books, and devoted themselves to the improvement of the mind. I have known privates, as the result of their studies in the army, to pass the necessary examinations, and secure their commissions as lieutenants and captains in coloured regiments. It had become a general practice in the army to advertise for correspondents from among the fair sex. I have known these appeals to be responded to by spicy and able letters. Acquaintance thus formed often ripened into friendship, sometimes to be followed by the tenderer passion, and occasionally matrimony. All was peaceful and humorous on the picket line. The safeguards of the two armies, often within easy speaking distance, would carry on an interesting conversation with the utmost good nature, and when allowed would exchange newspapers. I have seen the Union and Rebel pickets chasing the same flock of sheep at Mine Run, both bent on roast mutton for dinner. After the first year the pickets behaved in the most honourable manner, never firing unless ordered to do so.

Early in the spring of '64, Grant, now a lieutenant-general, took command of the national forces—head-quarters with the Army of the Potomac. He soon made his appearance among us, sent a few officers to Washington, and reorganised a part of the army. His movements and actions soon convinced us that fighting just hard enough to force the enemy into a compromise entered not into his thoughts or plans. Without gloves, henceforth, must the battle be fought in Virginia.

On the 4th of May we again broke camp and crossed the Rapidan, en route for the much-coveted Richmond; the army full of confidence in its leader and itself, hoping, confidently hoping, that we were not again to return till we marched in triumph, to the music of the Union, through
the capital of the Rebellion. An effort to describe the bloodiest of American campaigns, and one of the bloodiest in the world's history, would occupy more than the time allowed me to-night. Commencing early in May and ending with October, the ball opened in the Wilderness, continued at Spottsylvania, North Anna, and Cold Harbour, and ended with our army in front of Petersburg, the key to Richmond. We had suffered a loss of 25 guns and 70,000 men, including the modest and fearless Sedgwick, twice asked to take command on the Potomac, each time to refuse. He fell from the bullet of a concealed rifleman while in the extreme advance of a corps that loved him for his courage and admired him for his genius. The enemy lost about 40,000 men, including many able officers, and 32 guns.

In July, our corps was transported to Washington, then in danger of capture from Early, who, with superior force, had scoured the Shenandoah Valley, crossed the Potomac, and was making forced marches to put our capital in flames, before we could arrive. Marching up Fourteenth Street to meet him, we were greeted as friends in need, and lustily cheered by the crowds of citizens along our march. We had always been in an enemy's country, expecting nothing but sulks from civilians, and this friendly cheer was real music to our ears, and brought firmness and elasticity to the veteran's tread. After a sharp brush, Early fell back, followed by part of our forces, the rest remaining near Washington till his exact line of retreat was ascertained. Our brigade remained one day; and few hours' passes were granted some of the men to visit the city, most of whom tarried with their long-lost scollopod oysters, brandy smash, and Havanas, after their commands had marched. In no way perplexed they stepped into cabs, and directed the cabmen to drive to their respective companies. I have known some of these soldiers to overtake us when twelve miles on the march, their cabs profusely decorated with accoutrements, haversacks, canteens, and tin-pans. This may be lax discipline, and inconsistent with soldier life, yet it gives you an index to the character of the American volunteer.

We drove Early into the valley, where Sheridan joined us and assumed supreme command. Ascending the valley we passed through Charlestown, where, five years before, John Brown had been imprisoned, and was finally hung, for his gallant but ill-judged efforts to liberate the slave. As you enter the town there are some beautiful weeping willows on the right of the road; on the left is the field of his execution. Near these suggestive willows, the old man, weak and wounded, had awaited his certain doom, with not one in all Virginia to offer him the balm of sympathy, not one to read him some cheering passage from the Golden Book, none to soothe his last moments with a kind word. I believe some minister of the gospel did pay him a visit in his cell, not to talk of Christian charity and the forgiveness of sins, but to adduce arguments to prove that slavery was consistent with the teachings of the Bible. The old man's firm reply was, "My dear sir, you have yet to learn the ABC of Christianity; I respect you as a gentleman, but as a heathen gentleman." As the head of our column entered the town, the leading regiment struck the key, and ten thousand men, marching to certain victory, swelled the mighty chorus of—

"John Brown's body lies mouldering in the grave,
But his soul goes marching on."
This campaign of Sheridan's was distinguished for celerity and dash. He defeated Early, first at Opequon, then at Fisher's Hill, the strongest position in the valley, where the enemy was thoroughly routed, with a loss of all his artillery.

Believing Early to be now completely whipped, Sheridan encamped his army near Fisher's Hill and went on a flying visit to Washington. Meanwhile, Early, strongly reinforced, and embittered by his recent disasters, again advanced, determined on revenge. Having taken every precaution that all should be done as noiselessly as possible—even to ordering the men to leave their canteens behind—on the night of the 18th of October, his army, divided into two columns, was moved stealthily, breathlessly over rugged paths along the hill sides, reaching their respective positions on our flanks and rear, without mishap, before daybreak; while our army was peacefully sleeping, not even dreaming that an enemy was within miles of us. Sheridan had returned as far as Winchester, twenty miles away, little suspecting that Early had crept like a panther on both flanks of his army, and was then anxiously awaiting the light by which to destroy it. This was the state of affairs, when, with a thundering volley, the enemy was hurled against us, taking possession of our rifle pits and capturing many prisoners before we were out of our tents. Brigades were hurriedly formed and thrown forward to check the enemy, while the 6th Corps formed; our flanks fell back fighting. It was next determined and ordered that the entire army should fall back to a more favourable position, and considering the completeness of the surprise and the nature of the order, the movement was well executed. By this time we had lost many prisoners and 24 pieces of artillery. The favourable breeze in the early morn had brought to Sheridan's experienced ear the sound of cannon—the evidence of battle. He was immediately on his horse, making in all haste for the front, where he arrived by ten o'clock.

"What was done, what to do, a glance told him both:
Then striking his spurs with a terrible oath,
He dashed down the lines 'mid a storm of huzzas,
And the wave of retreat was checked there, because
The sight of the master compelled it to pause."

We were electrified by his appearance. He gave us a friendly greeting, reproaching no one. "Face the other way, boys, we are going back to our old camps; this would not have happened if I had been with you." And this all firmly, enthusiastically believed. Having completed his arrangements for a general advance,—his cavalry massed on the extreme right and left, ready for the emergency which he expected,—our right made a left half wheel, while the left and centre moved steadily on. We soon drove in the first line, and a temporary halt for reformation was ordered. During this pause, Sheridan rode along the front, using strong terms to assure the men of coming victory. Now came the general charge, and the lines moved on with a loud cheer, in the face of fifty pieces of artillery—including nearly all our own captured in the morning—and a perfect sheet of infantry fire, but without even a temporary repulse. The rebel lines were broken and hurled back in dismay, when our cavalry came down like a torrent upon the retreating foe, and the rout was com-
plete. We captured everything on wheels, and destroyed Early's army. Thus did Sheridan, without any reinforcements, turn a decided defeat into a complete and brilliant victory. The valley being now cleared of any considerable force of rebels, we returned to our winter quarters in front of Petersburg.

During the last winter of this unfortunate war, close vigilance was kept lest Lee should break through our lines, make good his escape, form a junction with Joe Johnston, and probably crush Sherman, then making his great march through Georgia and the Carolinas. Pickets often availed themselves of dark winter nights to desert the rebel cause. If seen, they were, of course, fired upon; but they generally made good their escape, though sometimes wounded. Some claimed to be Union men, recently conscripted, while others objected to fight longer for a cause which they considered hopeless. Much severe fighting was occasioned on our left, by Grant extending that flank, and, consequently, weakening the corresponding line of Lee, and threatening his base of supplies.

Early in the spring, Sheridan, at the head of 10,000 cavalry, made one of his famous raids. By pushing rapidly up the Shenandoah, he overtook poor Early and annihilated his command of 3,000 men; then, striking boldly onward, destroying railroads, bridges, and canals along his line of march, thundering at the gates of Richmond, then striking to the left, he came in on our right on the James.

Lee, seeing the possibility of irreparable consequences, made a bold and well-conceived effort to cut our army in two, but he failed. On the 31st of March he concentrated on our left and endeavoured to turn that flank. Failing in this, he directed his attention to Sheridan and his cavalry still further to the left, and cut them off from the main body. Sheridan, ever happy in a fight, entrenched himself and fought his men as infantry, compelling the enemy to withdraw that night. Phil followed eagerly at daybreak. He sent a brigade of cavalry opposite the enemy's right; ordered his infantry to strike Lee's left before he could join it to the main line, while cavalry pressed the centre. The enemy, conscious of their critical situation, refused both flanks and entrenched; but at dusk, Sheridan charged down upon them with cavalry and infantry, completely routing the right of Lee's army and making 5,000 prisoners.

This was the beginning of the end. That evening our artillery opened along the entire line; the sky was fairly illuminated by shot and shell travelling with lightning speed on their mission of destruction; men stood around in groups discussing the probable nature of the hot work evidently at hand. A few of the officers had learned from our colonel that the corps in front of Petersburg would be massed that night opposite the enemy's weakest points in their respective fronts, and charge at daybreak. We knew exactly what to expect; the frowning forts were quite familiar to us; the courage of their defenders we had tested on many a field.

I remember three of us—messmates—sitting on a log that night, calculating the cost of the work in the morning. Captain Doughty, an Englishman, said, "At least one-third will fall, and of us three I feel a strange presentiment that I shan't come out of it." Orders to "pack up" came, and were executed quietly, fewer jokes and sharp sayings going about than usual. Axes for cutting away abattis (six for each company) were
brought; and I remember asking for volunteers to handle them, but without response. I asked a corporal to take one. "Certainly, sir, but I am too old a soldier to volunteer for that job," was his reply. Not a man grumbled when assigned to this precarious task. At eleven o'clock we cautiously filed outside of our works, and formed in the rear of the pickets, where we lay anxiously awaiting the appointed hour.

The faint light of morning came, when with a loud cheer we swept over the open space. It was still dark, and the blaze from the rebel guns were the deadly beacons which indicated to us our destination. On we rushed, without firing a gun, into the works; a momentry struggle, and they were ours. Some of the charges were less successful, but Lee's position was now untenable, and he telegraphed to Jefferson Davis that his lines were broken in three places, and that Richmond must be evacuated.

Our corps was hurriedly reformed, and moved in line of battle towards Petersburg. I had command of the skirmishers covering our regiment, and was pressing forward rapidly, when suddenly we stirred up a battery of flying artillery, posted in a farm-yard, its only protection being a wide swamp, through which we were then wading. It was admirably handled, but firing percussion shell (scarecrows in battle) it did but little damage. I made sure of its capture, and my men had entered one end of the small orchard, when it limbered and galloped away at the other. I sent to the farm-house to ascertain who the old grey-bearded officer who commanded the battery was. The answer I received was that it was General Lee himself. It is possible that the commander may have been with his rear guard at such a crisis, but I do not vouch that it was Lee.

Night came, and we dropped upon our arms for the rest and sleep we so much needed, but without my friend Doughty. He girded on his armour to the sound of the first gun on Sumpter, and fell pierced through the head, when crowning victory was ours, to the booming of the last hostile cannon in the land. England did much, through many of her statesmen, and a devoted little band of her press, to cheer us on in the path of duty; but she offered no brighter, holier tribute at Liberty's shrine than the life of John B. Doughty.

Next morning, the identical flag that was hauled down at Sumpter was seen floating in the breeze from the building recently occupied by the rebel Congress.

Lee was rapidly retreating on Lynchburg or Danville, where supplies had been gathered for his much-fatigued, hungry army; but he found Sheridan, with a small force entrenched across his line, determined to give battle to his entire command; anything to detain him till Grant could come up. Lee, however, well knowing every road and path, kept far to the right, and escaped under cover of darkness. Sheridan, leaving his infantry behind, made vigorous pursuit with his cavalry. On coming up with the enemy, he immediately charged them with a brigade; any tactics to compel them to make a stand, and afford time for our infantry to come up; and he fulfilled his mission. By forced marches by night and day, part of our infantry were up with the enemy by April 6th. We were at once thrown forward, when a spirited engagement took place, and Ewell's corps were cut off. That general chose a strong position, with a heavy skirmish line in front, posted on a ridge covered with
timber and brush, and skirted by a deep swamp. I remember sinking up to my waist in this swamp, and being hauled out by two men. The skirmishers were driven in, the main line charged, and most of the corps captured, including Ewell and his staff, overhauled by the skirmishers of the 5th Wisconsin, while endeavouring to escape.

Grant, now certain that the fate of the Army of Northern Virginia was sealed, wrote a brief, considerate letter to General Lee, asking for its surrender, as he said, "to shift from myself the responsibility of any further effusion of blood." Lee evaded the question. Grant replied next morning. Our cavalry, for a time deceived as to Lee's objective point, were again in his front on the 8th, when heavy fighting took place, with a loss to the enemy of 25 guns and many prisoners. By nightfall Sheridan, with all his cavalry, were in position across Lee's line of retreat. In the evening, Lee answered Grant's letter of that morning, still denying that the emergency had arisen which called for the surrender of his army. Grant replied early next morning, still pleading earnestly for men's lives.

The enemy was now at Appomattox Court House, confronted by Sheridan's cavalry, fighting dismounted. It was here that Lee made his last charge. He was endeavouring to drive Sheridan from his front; his army advanced gallantly, but were stubbornly held by our cavalry. By a night march, part of our infantry had come to the support of Sheridan, and as soon as they were formed the cavalry fell to the right. Lee, finding that our infantry had arrived, saw that his race was run, and escape impossible. Our cavalry were advancing to charge the dismayed enemy, when the white flag was displayed. Lee now sought an interview, which Grant granted with pleasure and alacrity. The two great captains met, and the business of the surrender was treated in the able, frank, and generous manner which characterised their whole military career.

This was virtually the end of the war, and it was a day of great joy in the army and the North. We soon returned to our homes and friends and loved ones not seen for years; and gave back to the nation the flag of the Union and the banner of real liberty to all. We ceased to be soldiers, and became the guardians of the widows and orphans of our fallen comrades, and the advocates of unbounded charity towards our brave but misguided brethren.

A hearty vote of thanks, on the motion of Mr. A. S. Stevenson, seconded by Mr. Ingledeew (Under-Sheriff), was accorded the talented lecturer for his very able and highly interesting lecture.