

## Incidents of Prison Life in 1862

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of forests, we must conclude that thousands of years have elapsed since these hearths were deserted, and the wells near by have ceased to allay the thirst of the wearied. Although shovels, spades, axes, and other tools made of iron, have not been found near these ancient works, yet it is supposed by some of the searchers into antiquities, that tools made of iron were then used, and that by lying on or under the earth during all this long period, they have become oxydized and wasted away by rusting.

In conclusion I will say that the antiquities of our country deserve and should receive the attention of all historians.

[To be continued.]

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### INCIDENTS OF PRISON LIFE IN 1862.

BY E. M. VAN DUZEE,

LATE MAJOR TWELFTH IOWA INFANTRY.

On the 6th and 7th days of April, 1862, at Pittsburg Landing, Tenn., there was fought one of the bloodiest as well as most decisive battles of the late war of rebellion. Forts Henry and Donelson, the former situated on the Tennessee river and the latter on the Cumberland, just below the little town of Dover, had fallen. These with other important victories won for the Union cause had filled all loyal hearts with joy, and in an equal degree plunged the rebels into gloom. They were saved from despondency by the characteristic self-sufficiency of their leaders, in whom were united the personal courage of the brave, and an intenser fanaticism than that they affected to despise in their northern adversaries. To repair their ill-fortune and recover by a brilliant success the prestige they had lost by defeat, the rebels had concentrated the flower of their army under their most skillful generals at Corinth, Miss., for a movement against our army upon the Tennessee river. Almost the entire force of Union troops that participated in the capture of Donelson, had been transferred to the Tennessee river, and on board steamers transported to Pittsburg Landing, at which point the first troops

disembarked about the middle of March. Transports laden with infantry, artillery and cavalry, continued to arrive daily until on the 6th of April a force numbering about forty thousand men had been assembled. This army was under command in chief of Maj. Gen. U. S. Grant, and was encamped in thick woods on a defensive position, which a few hours labor with the spade and axe would have rendered impregnable.

On Friday evening April 4th, the enemy made a reconnoissance in force, driving in some of the outposts and capturing a few prisoners. The whole force of the enemy was at this time moving towards its position for offensive operations along the main road leading from Corinth to Pittsburg, through a country traversed by deep ravines, along which flowed small water-courses margined by swampy bottom lands, which recent heavy rains had rendered almost impassible for trains or artillery.

At daylight on Sunday morning, April 6th, the enemy moved upon our position, capturing or rapidly driving in the outposts, and completely surprising many of the regiments in their camps. Our line of battle hastily formed, extended in its general contour, with the usual breaks and deflections from regularity necessitated by the topography of the field, in a semicircle from Lick creek on the left to Snake creek just above the town of Pittsburg on the right. The 2d division under Gen. W. H. L. Wallace, on the left of which was the 1st brigade, consisting of the 2d, 7th, 12th and 14th regiments Iowa Infantry Volunteers, commanded by Col. J. M. Tuttle, was posted to the right of the 6th division under Gen. Prentiss. During a part of the day the 8th regiment Iowa Infantry under Col. J. L. Geddes, which belonged to the 4th division, was detached at the request of Gen. Prentiss and posted in the break between the 2d and 6th divisions, thus bringing five Iowa regiments together. These regiments participated in some of the hardest fighting of the day, and in conjunction with several regiments of the 6th division farther to the left which formed part of the number afterwards captured, held

their position during the entire day with such slight changes of direction as were necessitated by the changes in the line of attack. Under the vigorous assaults of the enemy our long and unsupported line wavered and recoiled. The two wings were gradually folded back upon each other, each wing swinging from a point near the center of the general line. Our brigade (the 1st of the 2d division,) and a few regiments upon our immediate left, were thus left on nearly the same ground we first occupied in the morning. About half-past four o'clock P. M., orders were received to "fall back slowly and in good order." The movement was immediately commenced but before we had proceeded a hundred rods we were compelled to engage the enemy, now rushing upon us from front flank and rear. Repulsing those in our front we again hastened on across open ground under a galling fire from infantry and artillery, until our way was completely hedged up by a solid line of battle of the enemy formed between us and the main line of our own army. Many of our bravest men and officers fell in this tardy attempt to withdraw an isolated body of troops from a position which might have been abandoned without loss or detriment at an earlier hour.

It was now about half past five o'clock in the evening, the sun was low in the west; the rattle of musketry and confusion of battle were almost hushed; the running hither and thither of half-distracted men separated from their commands and not knowing what to do or whither to go; excited groups of field and line officers hurriedly, almost frantically discussing the possibilities of cutting their way out, and the stern yielding to fate on the part of men and officers, as the hopelessness of escape forced itself on our minds—the signal of surrender—the clanging of muskets thrown spitefully upon the ground; the exulting commands of rebel officers as they hurry us to the rear. All these scenes transpire in a few brief moments, and we realize that we are "prisoners of war."

To troops that hold a position gallantly and against fearful odds during slow hours freighted with death and carnage—who, in the intervals between repulse of the enemy and the

quickly succeeding attack, with a grim patience that verges as the moments creep on, towards the dull sensation of indifference—almost of despair, mark the lines of fire swinging together in their rear, thrusting them out into the midst of the overwhelming numbers of an enemy flushed with a victory already won—to such troops, who still “wait for orders” that come too late, it seems unkind that they should be reported captured so early in the day as to rob them of the little a beaten soldier has to console himself with—the honor of duty bravely done. But so it was decreed for us, and so it has passed into history, and to many the correction will never come.

I am not able to state with accuracy the number of prisoners captured in the first day's fight. Nearly a score of regiments and batteries from at least six different States were represented among the prisoners. The 3d, 8th, 12th, 14th and 15th Iowa Infantry, were largely represented, the 8th, 12th and 14th having been captured nearly entire, deducting the losses in killed and wounded during the day, which was a large percentage of their effective strength when they took position in line of battle in the morning. Many of the wounded were recaptured by our own army on the second day, among whom was Col. J. J. Woods of the 12th. All who were able to walk were hurried out seven or eight miles on the Corinth road, and corraled in an old corn-field two or three acres in extent, with a double line of guards around the whole field. The ground was soft and damp, and weary and footsore the exhausted prisoners huddled together in groups around rail fires we had been permitted to build, lamenting the disaster that had befallen our gallant army, recounting the incidents that had fallen under the notice of representatives from the different commands, with serio-comic expressions, bewailing personal losses and discomforts, and with a surprising unanimity uttering unsparing criticisms upon the lack of generalship which had characterized all the movements of our army from the disembarkation of the first troops at Pittsburg Landing down to the close of the first

day's battle, in which we had been most terribly defeated. We had made no provision for such a *denouement*, and blankets and baggage were where we had left them in the morning when we had marched forth little suspecting the fate which the evening held in store for us. To add to our discomfort a violent storm of rain—a phenomenon apparently as invariable in its occurrence after a heavy engagement as the burying of the dead—set in about midnight and continued until break of day. Our fires were extinguished; we moved about to shake off the drowsiness that would steal over us, and which could only be gratified by subjecting oneself to the peril of being trampled to death—the soft surface of the field had been churned by the constant moving about of so many hundreds to the consistency of thin mud, and the morning was welcomed as the rain ceased, and the light of day seemed to revive the fatigued body and cheer the depressed spirits. At an early hour a scanty supply of Confederate hard bread was doled out to us, and orders were passed around to form in line preparatory to marching. The officers and men of the different commands got together as well as they were able, and while we were thus forming, a commotion was observed among the regiment that had been assigned to the duty of guarding us on the march to Corinth, and presently a small force of rebel cavalry dashed by on the main road “towards the rear,” and from that time on during the day we observed, and in hushed voices, as we pursued our weary march along the muddy road, commented upon the appearances of haste and excitement that characterized all the movements of our guard, and from these indications we drew the cheering inference that the “boys in blue” were retrieving the disaster of the previous day, and from our hearts silent prayers ascended that victory might perch upon our banner, and the loyal heart of the nation once more be raised in rejoicing.

We arrived in Corinth a little before dark on the 7th April. Rain commenced falling soon after our arrival, and continued all night. We were without shelter except such as could be

obtained by between two and three thousand men, on the platform of the railroad depot. Our physical discomforts, however, were of slight moment. Heavy thoughts occupied our minds. Suspense as to the results of the second day's battle, seemed uppermost—then succeeded thoughts of home and the dear ones to whom our fate must remain unknown for days, perhaps weeks, but we knew our heaviest thoughts were light compared with the dread suspense of the sorrow-stricken ones as they should peruse the unsatisfactory, mocking reports that always declare the fate of the captured—"wounded and a prisoner," or simply "taken prisoner," leaving fancies of rigid features cold in death, and beloved forms buried by hostile hands in unknown and unhonored graves to visit their breaking hearts, or horrible visions of mangled and bloody limbs to disturb their midnight repose.

The night was spent by our captors in getting cars ready to transport us, whither we knew not. At early dawn the embarkation commenced. The men were promiscuously driven into freight cars, which were packed to their utmost capacity, and the doors shut until the trains should get in motion. A scene transpired during the embarkation which seems worth relating. Among the troops at this time in Corinth, was a company of young "bloods" from New Orleans. They were gorgeously attired—plush and velvet had been unsparingly sacrificed in getting them up. It is scarcely necessary to remark that they had not participated in the fighting of the previous two days. As several officers of the 12th Iowa were standing on the platform of the depot, surrounded by these military "Crichtons" our ears were saluted with undertone exclamations in a foreign language, and directing our attention towards the quarter whence they proceeded, we saw suspicious and somewhat timorous glances directed at Capt. Edgington of "A" Company, whose back was turned towards them, and from whose sword belt was suspended a "Colt's" navy revolver. Capt. E. being the senior officer of the 12th after Col. Woods had been wounded, had assumed command of the regiment, and had surrendered

to the rebel Gen. Polk, in person, who had granted him permission to retain his side arms. His sword had been taken from him on the previous evening, upon arriving at Corinth, but he had been permitted still to retain his revolver. Had a whole battery been brought to bear upon them from some covert in the surrounding forest, scarcely greater commotion could have been created than was manifested at the sight of the Captain's "navy." The peril with which Corinth and all rebeldom seemed at the instant to be menaced, was communicated to a Major somebody, who seemed to be the superior officer of these creole "bummers," and he required the Captain to deliver the offending weapon into his hands—to be transferred undoubtedly to his own holster, with which requirement the Captain complied—of course *under duress*.

There not being a sufficient number of freight cars, a few passenger cars were attached, and a large part of the officers were assigned to them. The embarkation completed the trains moved off upon the Memphis and Charleston road towards Memphis. Among the prisoners were officers of every grade from Brig. General to 2d Lieutenant. Gen. Prentiss was the only general officer that had been captured, and he was among the first to lay aside the distinctions of rank, and his example was generally imitated. And such a party of officers! Dilapidated, moist, muddy and "gritty;" in their appearance and bearing they fully realized the description, "ragged, fat and saucy,"—a good deal fatter, though not so ragged as they were destined to be a few months hence, but in the quality and quantity of "grit," the losses in all other directions were fully repaired. During our ride to Memphis we were securely guarded, and treated with sufficient consideration so far as being allowed free locomotion within the crowded cars was concerned. We could stand, sit or lie down as best suited our pleasure, assuming all risks ourselves, however. About the middle of the day a side of bacon and a box of hard tack was brought into each car—the first food we had received since the morning of the previous day.



Upon arriving in Memphis we were received by a large concourse of interested spectators, and not a few glances of sympathy greeted us from the sea of faces that lined the streets along which we passed. We were distributed about the city to the quarters assigned to us. The party in which I had the fortune to be included, were quartered in the third story of a warehouse on Front street. Towards midnight our craving stomachs were treated to a homeopathic allowance of mouldy hard bread, and the treatment here begun continued after the same school, throughout our imprisonment. There was a small room partitioned off in the story of the building occupied by us, in which, among some cast-off furniture that indicated that the building had been used for a Masonic Lodge room, Lieut. L. W. Jackson of "H" Company, 12th Iowa, found a small American flag. After covertly displaying the treasure to all, Lieut. J. divested himself of his clothing and wrapped the flag around his body. The little flag thus concealed from rebel eyes, was worn by the Lieutenant until he died at Macon, Georgia, in June following, when Lieut. N. E. Duncan of the 12th, who was his faithful friend and attendant, took possession of it and retained it until released. This flag is now in the possession of Mrs. Jackson, and seems, from its history to be worthy of a place in the museum of the Historical Society.

On the morning of the 9th, we were placed on board cars on the Mississippi Central Railroad destined for Mobile. Previous to starting we sang our farewell in such songs as "The Star Spangled Banner," "Columbia the Gem of the Ocean," "John Brown," and "Happy Land of Canaan," and the crowd outside seemed to enjoy the singing very much. Their enjoyment was not owing I presume to any want of loyalty to the rebel cause, probably it arose wholly from the peculiar style of the music, which was vigorous if it lacked cultivation. I make no question as to the propriety of indulging in such songs under the circumstances, though they had an excellent effect, at least upon the prisoners. A cordial hearty sympathy and intimacy was inspired which even

a common misfortune might not so soon or so fully have developed. The dear old songs—reminders of home and country, and flag—the hearty, and sometimes hard times of camp, march and bivouac, drew us nearer together and cemented our hearts in a bond of unity, caused them to throb with accelerated pulsations, and the eye to overflow with manly tears, and as eye spoke to eye and heart answered heart while the soul-stirring words made the welkin ring again, then entered deep down in the soul of each, a resolve, which months of suffering and deprivation could not crush out, to bear our future fortune, whatever of ill it might bring to us, with a cheerful courage and fortitude. There was strength for us in those dear old songs—a strength somewhat owing, I dare say, to the fact that we felt a little defiant and desperate, and they seemed to take off the “wire edge” and tone us down into a more stable mood of tranquility. Tranquil it behooved us to be, for we knew that the duration of our imprisonment, owing to the views that prevailed at Washington relative to the recognition of the Confederates as belligerents, was altogether uncertain, and might be commensurate with the duration of the war itself, and so a philosophical determination to accept the situation was the only sensible mood. And so we journeyed on into the heart of “Dixie,” leisurely enough to be sure, for it seemed the purpose of those who had the direction of matters, to make a menagerie of us for the especial benefit of all the sallow-faced women, cadaverous men and tow-headed children along the route—a crowd of whom was congregated as for some grand gala occasion at every station, all engaged in hurrahing, snuff-dipping or swearing, and some seeming to exercise all three of these accomplishments at the same time. At some of these places the natives would insist upon an exchange of views on war matters, and considerable sharp sparring took place, the barbarous dialect of the poor white trash giving a piquancy to such discussions.

At one of the smaller stations near the central part of the State a scene transpired which amused those of the prisoners who witnessed it, and furnished a sobriquet for the hero of

the incident, which he bore during the future months of imprisonment. A crowd had as usual assembled to witness the "Yanks." Prominent upon the platform of the depot, with arms akimbo, and attitude indicative of conscious prowess stood a woman beyond the prime of life, and evidently regarded by those who surrounded her as the prospective heroine of some tragedy about to be enacted. An expectant look sat upon the faces of the crowd as the train rolled up to the depot and came to a full stop, as the forward platform of the officers' car reached a point opposite the waiting Amazon. Major Wm. M. Stone of the 3d Iowa, (late Gov. Stone,) stood upon the platform when the train stopped, and he was immediately accosted by the old lady in the refined dialect of her class, with a challenge to "bring out the best and biggest man yer've got, and I'll whip him in less nor half a minit,—I'm just the woman as can do that there thing." In some surprise, but with an air of amusing sincerity, the Major remarked that there were some pretty heavy men aboard, but that they might object to so ungallant a thing as a contest with a lady. The "lady" protested that all scruples founded on courtesy to the sex might be laid aside, she could "whale the best man in the crowd," if she was a woman. The Major never loth to enjoy a joke, and seeing a good opportunity to promote one, said to the woman: "Did you know, Madam, that Horace Greeley is aboard?" The fire was in the old lady's bones in an instant, she pressed eagerly forward to the very edge of the platform, exclaiming with curses and very vigorous billingsgate, of which she had a remarkable command, "What? that old devil! Bring the wretch out yere, and let me get my claws onter him!" Now, among the officers was a genial Missourian, who could make or take a joke with equal good humor,—Lieut. Col. Quinn Morton of the 23d Missouri Infantry, considerably over six feet in his stockings, and large in proportion. The Major stepped into the car, and quietly up to the Colonel who was seated on the side opposite the depot and near the rear, and said: "Colonel, there is a lady on the platform who wishes to see you." Hast-

ily running over in his mind the list of his lady acquaintances, to see if he could single out one who would be likely to be "in those parts," the Colonel with great alacrity obeyed the summons, and the Major leading the way, passed out upon the platform. The Colonel's height compelled him to stoop as his form emerged through the door, which seemed scarcely to admit of his egress, and as his tall presence loomed up before the astonished gaze of the lady who wished to see him, the Major introduced him to the virago as "Hon. Horace Greeley of the New York Tribune." With mouth wide open, eyes extended, and hands uplifted, the discomfited "heroine" exclaimed: "That Horace! Wal, stranger, I reckon I'll have ter back out of that ere fight," and the old lady subsided into the dense crowd of spectators amid roars of laughter from both sides. The Colonel took the joke with imperturbable good nature, and from that time forth, was familiarly addressed by his prison associates as "Greeley."

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### POWESHEIK, WAPASHASHEIK AND KISKEKOSH.

A CHAT WITH COLONEL TROWBRIDGE.

BY THE EDITOR.

These Indian chiefs belonged to the Musquaka or Fox tribe. Their villages, in 1837, when I first settled in Iowa, were on the banks of the Iowa River, in what is now Pleasant Valley and Iowa City Townships, Johnson County.

POWESHEIK was of large size—his weight could not have been less than 250 pounds—fat, heavy, lazy and a drunkard whenever he could get whisky, and that was frequently; but honest, brave and just. His word was sacred. A gift was also a sacred thing long to be remembered with gratitude. He was slow to arouse to active work, but when fully aroused, was a man of energy and power while the stimulus that awakened him remained. The leading qualities of his mind seemed to be truthfulness and a sense of justice. All in all, he was rather a noble specimen of the American savage. He was the chief of the tribe.

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