RECOLLECTIONS
OF
3 REBEL PRISONS
Libby -- Salisbury -- Danville.

By COL. G. G. PREY,
Late of the 104th N. Y. V.

(WADSWORTH GUARDS.)

PRINTED AT THE
WESTERN NEW-YORKER PRINTING HOUSE,
WARS AW, N. Y.
1896.
The Western New Yorker.
Leading Paper
in Wyoming County.
Warsaw, N.Y.
CHAPTER I.
The Events Which Led Up To Our Capture.

The road known as the Weldon railroad, leaves Petersburg, Va., on the south side of the Appomattox river, running south to Wilmington, the most successful port for blockade running in the so-called Southern Confederacy. This road was one of General Lee’s main communications for supplies for the vast army under him in and around Richmond and Petersburg, pitted against the army of the United States under Lieutenant General U. S. Grant.

It became necessary in order to cripple, to some extent, more or less severe, the rebel army in cutting off a portion of its supplies, that this road should be cut and destroyed so effectively that it could not be easily repaired or occupied by the Confederacy. Consequently on the 18th day of August, 1864, the Fifth Corps, commanded by Major General J. K. Warren, broke camp in the morning from the vicinity of the Jerusalem plank road so-called, two miles south of Petersburg, and making a detour of about six or seven miles, striking and tapping the Weldon railroad at what is called the Yellow Tavern, four miles from Petersburg. It was found guarded at that point by one hundred and fifty or two hundred Confederate cavalry, who, on perceiving our forces approaching, left on suspicion that that they had guarded it long enough for their comfort and welfare, leaving behind them but one or two of their number as prisoners of war on our hands.

The first division had the lead that day, Brigadier General Griffin commanding, who was ordered by General Warren on striking the road to employ his division in tearing up and destroying the track, and they went at it with a will. We noticed upon our arrival at the road, portions of the track from fifty to seventy-five yards in a body, by a sufficient in number to accomplish it, turned over by the men placing themselves so close by together that at the word the whole thing was raised and turned over and down the embankment. After disposing of a few miles of track in this manner, a portion of this division commenced tearing it to
pieces, throwing the ties on the embankment in piles sufficiently large that when fired the superincumbent rails might, by the intense heat of the conflagration, be easily bent and unfitted for further use.

The second division, Brigadier General Ayers commanding, was second in line and arrived at the road soon after the first division and halted for a short rest until our own division, the third, Brigadier General Crawford commanding, should come up, which, upon arriving, also took a short rest, it being a very warm day. Many of the men were sun struck and rendered unfit for service for a number of days.

Presently the second and third divisions moved up the railroad toward Petersburg. Each brigade closed in mass with battalion front, the second on the left of the railroad, one division being on the right of the railroad. Each marched parallel to the railroad. After having advanced about three-fourths of a mile to near the woods in our front, we deployed into line, sent out a strong skirmish line and advanced into the timber land about one-fourth mile, where we found the enemy, when quite a brisk engagement took place, resulting in the repulse of the enemy and our forces holding the position on both sides of the railroad. We lost however, quite a number of prisoners, both officers and men, and many killed and wounded, the enemy leaving as many killed and wounded on the field as the aggregate of our loss. A portion of the troops near the railroad, being hard pressed, became somewhat disorganized. When the firing ceased the line was rectified and that portion of the line on the right of the railroad wheeled to the left until the line became oblique to the railroad at an angle of about forty-five degrees.

Just before night a strong skirmish line was sent forward some two or three hundred yards and sustained a brisk skirmish with the enemy, but held the line, and at dark it was relieved for the night by the regular detail for picket duty, which transformed the skirmish line into a picket line. Being conscious that the enemy would endeavor to drive us from or retake the road, a portion of the night was spent in fortifying our position by throwing up breast works so that if attacked we would be the better prepared to make a good strong fight. The forenoon of the next day was spent in strengthening our works as we were given to understand that that was to be our line and must be held at all hazards. About midday our division was moved to the right for the purpose of making room for two regiments of the second division on the right of the railroad. We had felled the timber in front of our lines to the distance of about fifty yards in our front which served a very good purpose as an abattis.

Feeling anxious during all the preceding night in regard to our lines, I went in the morning to see Colonel Lyle, of the 90th Pennsylvania regiment, then commanding the brigade, to learn in regard to the connection on the right of our division, as I deemed the lines quite insecure in a dense forest of undergrowth without being properly connected. He answered that Brigadier General
Crawford, commanding the division, had just informed him that the Ninth Corps had moved up and joined the fifth on the right, making a continuous line of battle to the works we left the day before at the Jerusalem plank road. I answered if such were the case, we were all right, as we could hold our position against any force that could be brought against us, little thinking that before night we would be in the hands of the enemy as prisoners of war. Yet I believed our right to be unsupported and asked Colonel Lyle if he believed there was a line of battle as he stated and as Brigade Commander, if he knew there was a connection on our right? "Why, I must believe it for General Crawford said so." "Well," said I, "I don't believe it, and before night we shall all be captured or cut to pieces."

About 3 p. m., firing commenced, as near as we could judge, about three-fourths of a mile to our right and rear, which proved a demonstration that the Ninth Corps had not moved up connecting itself with our right. I afterward learned by some officers who were captured at the time that the Ninth Corps was about one mile to the rear of the Fifth Corps, and in echelon with the Fifth, where it took possession the afternoon before and had not moved during the day. The firing moved up toward our line until it reached our front when our skirmishers were driven in and reported that the enemy was advancing in force. We held our fire until the enemy appeared in the opening in front when our line opened fire upon them, soon driving them out of sight again into the standing timber, they keeping up their fire from its edge.

About this time and while we were engaged with the enemy in front, I received an order to move my regiment out of the line of works and move by the right flank and follow a by-path to the right, which was nearly parallel to our line and about one hundred yards in rear of it, until I should meet the Brigade Commander, who would tell me where to take possession, which order I regretted afterward to have obeyed. I moved up the road as ordered until, as near as I could judge, I had unmasked the right of our division where we encountered the enemy, who demanded of us to surrender. I then flanked to the right, receiving their fire, losing a few men, thinking to make my way to the opening in the rear of our line. On marching less than a hundred yards I was confronted by a line of the enemy, who also demanded a surrender, and received their fire, as I gave the command to right about. I then intended to fall back to the path we had followed and make for the works we had left, as I found no Brigade Commander to inform me where my command was needed. On nearing the path I found it occupied by the enemy. Being surrounded by a force largely superior to my small regiment and being completely isolated from the east of the command, I concluded that the better part of valor would be to surrender as we probably would all have been cut to pieces in trying to force our way out through such a force as surrounded us.
During the different movements, we made after first encountering the enemy, our own batteries were throwing shot and shell into our midst, terribly demoralizing my men. One man had his lips both taken off by a shell before it exploded. Pieces of shell were flying thick and fast all around us, so that some of the men were throwing down their arms previous to my surrender, which did not occur until I counseled with my Lieutenant Colonel, who was suffering from a wound received in the melee. Both of us concluded that surrender was the only safe course under the circumstances.

CHAPTER II.
The Trip From Petersburg to Richmond—How We Were Treated En Route.

We were then filed out of the woods toward Petersburg, and on gaining the open field we found the most of our brigade, even nearly all of our division except one brigade, which was on the left and near the line of railroad, and Brigadier General Hayes with nearly his whole brigade, in the ranks when in line ready to march to Petersburg. We were then marched through the fields and across the railroad into another field where there was another body of prisoners massed, making in all about three thousand men, perhaps more. The weather was so very warm the morning of the 18th, when we started on the march that I wore nothing but a pair of unlined regulation pantaloons, a flannel shirt, and a light flannel blouse, taking a rubber blanket to serve in case of rain. During the afternoon of the 18th and the night following, considerable rain fell, and when we captured we were wearing what rubber clothing we had with us. Some had rubber overcoats, some rubber blankets. I notice this to show in connection how we were treated afterward in regard to such articles.

A lieutenant on our brigade staff had his overcoat taken away by the guard. Colonel Hartshorn of the 190th Pennsylvania Volunteers was hailed by a Confederate officer while we were marching on the railroad, and told that General Mahone, on whose staff he was, ordered him to get the rubber overcoat he was wearing. The Colonel refused to give it up. Soon after the same officer came up and said to the Colonel that General Mahone wanted it for his own use and must have it. The Colonel still refused to give it up. The officer again returned, stating that if he did not give up the coat the General would come and take it himself. The Colonel finally gave up the coat. The rain had ceased and I had my rubber blanket rolled up and carried over my shoulder, when a guard came up and took hold of it saying: "I want this blanket." Said I: "You'll not have it." He gave it a jerk and with an oath said he should have it. I looked him sternly in the eye and drew back my hand clenched and told him to let go of that blanket or I would knock him into the ditch, (along the side of the railroad and nearly full of water). He saw that I was deteruined and let go. In less than five minutes another guard
grabbed it with the same demand. I drew back to strike and told him to let go or I would knock him into the ditch. He let go. I was troubled no more in that way by the guards.

We were soon filed off the railroad, where the marching was good and dry, into the wagon road along side where the mud was over shoetops on purpose, I presume, to annoy and misuse us, for the distance was no further on the railroad than along the highway.

When we arrived at Petersburg, we were filed into a field by the road side and massed, the officers ordered to one corner, and surrounded with a line of sentinels about five or six paces apart and so close to us that we had but room sufficient to lie down. The sentinels' beats were close to our head on one side and close to our feet on the other. Notwithstanding my having a rubber blanket my clothes were quite wet, and I was so chilly during the night that I could not sleep. The ground was about half swarded, consequently not very clean.

During the night I held a severe dispute with one of the guards three different times, I telling him he ought to be shot and he threatened to shoot me. He finally called the sergeant of the guard when he found out I would talk and requested the sergeant to take me to the guard house or quarters, and I explained to the sergeant, and he ordered us both to attend to our own business and left us. The reason why the dispute was held was because of the guard allowing Confederate soldiers to pass his line and steal hats from the officers' heads while they were asleep. I finally took a beat along side of the guard and guarded the hats myself. I was very chilly and told the guard I wanted exercise, I was so cold. He gave way a little making room for me between the officers heads and himself, consequently there were no more snatching hats that night, as no snatching was done while there were any officers up.

At eight or nine o'clock in the morning we were moved through Petersburg and onto an island in the Appomatox river, where our names were registered and we were searched by the Provost Marshal, and rubber blankets, haversacks, canteens, belts, pocket knives, etc., were taken from those who had such articles. Here some would destroy their canteens by stamping on them. Some would take their knives and cut their blankets, while those before them were being searched. This was soon found out and created quite a row and more vigilance was exercised on the part of the guards. Occasionally one would slip past the guards unnoticed and thereby save his property for the time being, but only to be taken at some other time in the near future by another set of Confederate sharks.

Having eaten nothing since the morning before, I began to be quite hungry, and enquired when we were to have rations. "In due time," was the answer. We were kept there until about noon, spending the time after the search in washing ourselves and our stockings and drying our clothing, the forenoon being warm and pleasant. Finally we were ordered to fall in.
Several of us held some interesting conversations with the officers of the home guard of Petersburg, as they termed themselves, upon the war question, in which as a matter of course, the cause of the war was fully discussed, we holding that slavery was the cause, and until slavery ceased to exist the war would last. Occasionally they would be wound up so short on their arguments that they would say nothing or if anything it was so ridiculous that silence would have been manly.

For instance, one of them, a young fop, well dressed, about twenty-two years of age, in bringing up a point to show how much better they of the South were than we of the North, said, "The people of the South have a higher state of morals than you of the North, for you have all over the country, especially in your cities and large villages, licensed houses of ill fame, while we have none."

The answer was, "You don't need them here at the South, for every house in the South is just such a house, or why such a variety of color? Why so many blue eyes peeping through black skins? Why don't you marry them at once and live with them?" "Oh, we don't think its right to marry them, but we do think its right to cohabit with them."

"Well, if that is the high state of morals you have arrived at, God knows this ought to last until you are all exterminated."

Upon all subjects pertaining to the war, they were just about as consistent as in this.

About 1 o'clock p.m., we took up the march toward Richmond, through a heavy shower that drenched us to the skin, reaching a station said to be six miles from Petersburg, and took the cars for Richmond. They could run the cars no nearer Petersburg on account of the road being commanded by some of General Grant's siege guns which opened fire on the road when the cars were in sight. We, the officers, were packed on platform cars, not giving sufficient room to sit down except on the outside with our legs hanging over. The enlisted men were packed in box cars, I say packed, because of the immense number in each car, as you will perceive hereafter when I give description of our movements from place to place during our imprisonment. It rained about half the afternoon, and we arrived at Richmond about dark and were soaking.

The route to Richmond appeared to be very desolate, scarcely anything growing on the ground to supply the wants of the coming year. Squads of cavalry appeared at different points along the road guarding it. We passed one depot of supplies and the contrast between that and our places of the same kind led us to exclaim, "The Confederacy is about played out," using an army phrase. At this depot there was one box car, two thirds full of corn meal, but no meat of any kind. At our depots of supplies there would be piles of Army bread as large as a good sized building, with, one might say, acres of ground covered with pork, coffee and sugar barrels, well filled with the needful. There was not sufficient fuel along the route to run one of our northern roads of the same length forty-eight hours. Everything looked as if the Confed-
eracy would surely winter kill, and it came very near it as there was not sufficient warmth in the following spring to revive it.

We noticed while passing through Petersburg that everything appeared desolate and dreary. Nearly all the business establishments were closed. We were marched through the principal streets for the purpose, I presume, of showing the inhabitants thereof what a large haul of Yanks they had caught and to give them an opportunity to taunt us. Even little children were allowed, perhaps I would be excused if I should say taught, to throw out their southern slang at us as we marched through the different streets. "See the railroad tearers," "I guess you-uns won't tear up any more track;" "Got right smart lot of you-uns this time;" "Where's the horns," and such like expressions were continually rung in our ears by boys five or six years of age hanging on to the hands of older people, mostly women.

In most of the dwelling houses even in that part of the city through which we marched which were occupied, cannon balls had served as ventilators. That portion of the city near the depot was the filthiest place I ever saw, and we were marched in the midst of the street over shoetops in what I would call clearings from hog styes, judging from the scent. We were not allowed to march on the sidewalks while passing through the city.

CHAPTER III.

Libby Prison and How We Were Treated There.

On arriving at Richmond we were marched to Libby Prison, a place never to be forgotten by those whom the casualties of war compelled to become temporary residents and live on the vaunted hospitalities of the Southern chivalry. Libby Prison was a structure built of brick, three stories in height and, and as near as I could judge, without measuring, one hundred and fifty feet long by one hundred feet wide.

It was not necessary to inquire what place it was, for on nearing it we could distinguish on a large sign board extending out from the corner of the building "Libby & Sons, Groceries and Commission Merchants." Each story was divided into three apartments, making each room one hundred by fifty feet. The first story in the west end was sub-divided into smaller rooms for occupation by the officers in charge for office work. From the door of this story, which opened on Cary St., was a hall leading to the rear. On the right was a suite of rooms occupied by the commissioned officers with eight clerks. On the left were rooms occupied by non-commissioned officers belonging to the prison guard. About midway in the hall was a partition and large doors as entrance to the rooms on the left side of the hall. The east room of this story was used as a hospital. I know not to what use the middle room was put while I was there. The rooms of the second and third stories were used as prisons. The west one of each
story was occupied by officers, the other two for enlisted men.

The officers, on arriving, were marched into the hall above mentioned in two ranks and faced to the front. We stood there what appeared to us a very long time. Hunger began to manifest itself and, joined with fatigue, was pulling at our very heart strings. My whole system had become chilled by dampness and my feet were so sore by marching in mud and water that I could hardly endure it longer. I broke from the ranks, sat down on the floor on one side of the hall, and pulled off my boots, wrung the water out of my stockings, and set there determined that nothing short of the revolver or bayonet would raise me until we were to move to some other place.

Presently word came to us from the back end of the hall, to the effect that if any of us had greenbacks they were expected to deposit them in the office and their names would be registered with the amount, and when we were released the money would be refunded. Some deposited. Others did not. General Hayes had about one hundred and fifty dollars with him which he deposited and, although he was paroled to oversee the issuing of clothing to our men the following February to prepare them for exchange, he never received back the money he deposited.

The excitement on that occasion brought me to my feet and I took my place in the ranks. As I stood in the ranks a lieutenant on my immediate left said to me: "Colonel, what shall I do? I have two fifty dollar bills. I don't want to lose them." I said: "Don’t deposit. You never will receive them back," and reaching over his shoulder, I asked him how his shoulder straps were fastened. At the same time I felt of his left shoulder strap and found it only tacked on at the corners, as was the practice of some. I asked him to give me one of the bills, which he did and I folded it so that I succeeded in getting it out of sight under the strap, and, keeping my eye on the guard had him change places with me. I, then, while apparently leaning on him, as if resting, succeeded in getting the other bill out of sight under the strap of his right shoulder, and he went through the subsequent search safe and marched up stairs with two fifty dollar greenbacks under his shoulder straps. After the deposits were all in and names registered, a sergeant came out from the office and said: "Now you uns are all going to be searched and if any greenbacks are found about you they will be confiscated, so you better deposit your money and save it. So the search commenced, beginning with the highest rank. This was the last search. Everything saved there was saved for good.

We were crowded into the hall and the door closed. A large table was brought into the room in rear of the hall and two companies commenced searching, taking two officers at a time, and I was called about the third or fourth call. I had fallen back out of the ranks and was setting on the floor again, and upon hearing my name called I passed into the room leaving my boots and stockings in the hall, and advanced to the the table, stating that I had but
fifty cents in postal currency and thought they ought to take my officer's word in regard to such matters. "We take no man's word here," was the reply. I felt rather indignant at such a reply, and concluded to have something of a time with them during the search, not a little to their disgust, as the event proved, for they ordered me then several times to pass up stairs. Finally they told me if I did not move up stairs they would put me in a cell. I told them I was not ready to go up yet and started for the door that opened into the hall. I was ordered to halt and informed that I could not be permitted to go out there. I said that I had a good pair of boots out there that I did not intend to leave behind me, and passed on and opened the door, when one of them sprang and caught it as I opened it. I then asked Captain Wiley of my regiment if he would please hand me my boots which he was permitted to do, and I then started to go up stairs, at the same time asking them if they would like to examine my boots for there might be a lot of greenbacks in them! "No, d— you, we have had enough of you. Pass up stairs or you will be helped up."

Among the things that annoyed them were the following: During the search of an officer, and while I was being searched, he with his pocket book and other things laid on the table a lemon, when one of them who was sitting by and taking no part in the search sprang up with the expression: "God! What is that, a lemon? I haven't seen one in two years." I took the opportunity on such occasions to say something appropriate, and said, "Is that so? Why we have had them issued to our men this summer," which was a fact, but they came through the sanitary commission. A person could see that such things always told by the way they would slink away as this one did to his seat without another word.

Our resting place the first and second night in Libby was the soft side of a Virginia pine floor, without a blanket or the sign of one for a covering. The first night was very unpleasant. Extended thus wet and chilly on a hard floor having obtained no sleep the previous night, almost worn out, we were effectually debarred from the blessing of sleep. Finally the long wished for day broke up on us revealing to us the place of our abode by the blessed light of heaven, for no light was furnished us during the night, even to enable us to see where to lie down.

Time passed slowly with us, and all wondering when we were to have our first introduction to Confederate prison rations. Eight, nine and ten o'clock passed and no sign of anything to eat. Eleven o'clock brought with it our breakfast, and it breaking quite a fast, a fast of over fifty hours for me. Our rations at this time consisted of corn bread, very course, and a small piece of bacon. According to a memorandum of some items I kept at the time the ration of bread was the size of a cube of about two and a half inches on a side, the bacon about two ounces. The latter was so strong I could not eat it, notwithstanding I was very hungry. I could not even eat all the ration of corn bread, it was so course
and tasteless. It was repugnant, however, but a very few days. Only a short time elapsed before I could eat anything, and everything I could get.

About 4 o'clock p.m., we received our dinner ration which consisted of corn bread of the same size and quantity as the morning ration, and a half pint of pea soup, so called. The peas were in shape like beans, each containing at least three small black bugs. The beans were boiled in the water in which the meat issued to us in the morning was boiled, and apparently shoveled in uncleansed, as they came from the fanning mill, if indeed they were ever fanned at all.

Pods of all sizes from half a pod down to very small pieces, together with the bugs before mentioned, maggots from an inch in length down, and rat manure and many other filthy substances were all served up in our soup.

Captain H. A. Wiley of my regiment and myself messed together, and when we drew our afternoon ration of soup we would sit down and deliberately pick out the bugs, but soon found out that in picking them out we would also pick and throw away the grease both of which floated on the top, and upon examining the beans, found more or less bugs still in their hiding place inside the bean, consequently not driven out during the process of boiling. One day, I said: Captain "I'll tell you what I am going to do—you see in throwing away the bugs, we throw away all the nutriment there is in the soup by disposing of the grease, and if we keep this up we will starve. Now I am going to shut my eyes hereafter and swallow everything that comes along in the shape of a ration." "We might as well," says he, "for if we throw away all the filth there will be nothing left, sure." We did so and our food relished just as well as before, and with more satisfaction.

We remained in Libby prison six weeks, and the ration each day, with the exception that once a week we had wheaten bread and fresh meat, (beef), for breakfast. As a general thing when the soup was brought in, and it was always brought in by the darkie prisoners in half barrels with handles nailed on each side so that two persons, the one in front with his back to the tub, the other following with the soup dish between the two. In looking into the tub a person would think the contents were tar, if he did not know what it was, so thick were the bugs on the surface of the soup. The color of the soup underneath the crust of black bugs, was about the color of roily river water. A description of the rations for one day, describes the ration for each and every day. The bacon was carried past the prison in coal wagons to the cook house, and from the third story of the building maggots could be seen crawling all over the surface of the sides of bacon. When brought in in the soup they resembled rice and were quite thick at that. Occasionally, however, we would have a ration good sweet bacon, which was an admirable change. Nothing under Heaven kept the most of us alive except a determination not to give the rebs the satisfaction of carting our dead bodies to some obscure
place for burial, or perhaps throwing our dead bodies into some filthy place unburied.

CHAPTER IV.
The Commissary Department—A Money Exchange Conducted Under Difficulties.

On arriving at Libby on the 20th of August, 1864, we found some thirty officers incarcerated within its walls, with Lieutenant Colonel Hooper, of a Massachusetts regiment, acting as Chief Commissary. To him as such commissary, the officers held as prisoners of war in Virginia and North Carolina during the fall and winter of '64 and '65, up to the time of the general parole in February, 1865, owed their sincere thanks and heartfelt gratitude for the fair and impartial manner he issued the Confederate rations to them, and for his gentle manly behaviour toward all concerned, while acting in the capacity of commissary.

Perhaps a word of explanation is required in regard to speaking of Colonel Hooper, as Chief Commissary. The officers were confined by themselves and divided into messes of from fourteen to twenty. Each mess choosing a quartermaster from among their number, Lieutenant Colonel Hooper, the Commissary over all. The Confederate authorities furnished our rations in bulk and delivered them to the Chief Commissary, Colonel Hooker. He divided the rations according to the number of messes, which were kept equal in number, as near as could be by adding to as prisoners were brought in and subtracting when prisoners were taken away, and issued to his subordinates. They in turn divided into rations and delivered to the men of their respective mess. Lieutenant Colonel Hooper was also overseer of all the purchases made by the officers, they giving him a memorandum of the articles they wished to purchase through the Commissary of their mess. He then would make consolidated memorandum and purchase through the Confederate Sergeant, allowed by the Confederate authorities to purchase for us certain articles, such as wheaten bread, onions, potatoes, tomatoes, apples, (dried), soap, tobacco, pipes and some few articles of clothing.

I may be asked here how could we purchase such things, having been searched, and our money taken away? It is to be taken for granted that the Yanks were not all dead heads. Do you remember of my mentioning how I saved two fifty dollar bills for one lieutenant? Probably not a fourth part of the money the prisoners had fell into the hands of the Confederates during that search. I know of quite a number of officers that submitted to the scrutiny of that search and entered the rooms above with hundreds of dollars in greenbacks in their possession. Don't you remember how easily I could have taken any quantity of money up those stairs in my boots? Besides, we had a whole day to figure out how to beat them in the search that all knew was coming, and many prepared for it. I borrowed, myself, from two officers, fifty dollars each and converted it into Confederate script for the benefit of
the officers of my own regiment, getting in exchange five Confederate for one greenback, which exchange of course we had to accomplish covertly, as a law existed at that time in the Confederacy, under penalty of death, prohibiting the dealing in greenbacks. Notwithstanding such a law with such a penalty, there were always those outside of the prison who would exchange on the sly, and I am inclined to believe that the officials would exchange more openly.

A good share of this exchange was transacted by Colonel Hooper through some of our enlisted men on parole, whose duties brought them within the prison walls occasionally. I apprehend the most of that business was done through the hospital steward, who was a Union prisoner on parole. I recollect a time came when a Confederate sergeant accompanied the doctor and steward, keeping close watch of the latter. This same sergeant, who was reported as having been in the Union army, but was said to have deserted to the Rebel lines. At this time there was no exchange of money for a few days. At such times a five or a ten dollar greenback would be slipped into one of the darkie’s hands when they came up to sweep without saying a word, for they also were closely watched. But a few understanding the game, some two or three would commence conversation with the sergeant and when his back was turned the money would exchange hands. The next time the darkie came the money would be exchanged, sometimes seven for one, and transferred in a similar manner as before. In almost every way the Yanks would head them off, or as the term used in prison among ourselves. “out-flanked them.”

We generally purchased a loaf of wheaten bread about the size of a bun for one dollar, very light and delicious, but it could be squeezed into the size of a hen’s egg, by the hands,—which came in with the other purchases in the morning at an early hour. Saturday we purchased two, as there was nothing allowed to be brought in on Sunday. We would eat the loaf immediately upon receiving it, and very seldom kept the loaf intended for Sunday through Saturday, our hunger was so intense. After eating the loaf and our ration we would lie down at night so hungry that we could not sleep for hours. No candle was issued to us, consequently we had to lie down at dark or sit, as I would often and look out of windows between the bars and think of home and loved one far away, and meditate upon the surroundings, listening to the sentinel as he paced along his beat on the sidewalk outside.

We could not avoid a smile often at the call of every half hour by them. It was quite amusing to mark the diversity of voice and intonation. Some would exclaim with all the energy of youth and a good strong pair of lungs, when some of us inside would call out “Louder.” Others would make the call in all the faintness of old age, when some of us would respond to the comparative feebleness of utterance, “He’s almost gone,” “Try it again old fellow.” Occasionally they would cry the hour in rhyme, in their pro-
fane southern style. For instance, at the cry "nine o'clock and all's well," the next would break forth in answer or continuation, "nine o'clock and dark as h—-" or cold as h——, just as he happened to feel at the time. Some would in place of crying "all's well" would cry "all's right" when the answer would be "d—-cold night," or "d——rainy night." All of this I have heard during the sleepless hours of the night.

Among all the places I have ever seen, a southern prison furnishes the place and the occasion pre-eminently for a man to act out himself. A man may live to a good old age without ever having an opportunity to develop the mean points in his character. But place a man in a southern prison, on short rations, scanty clothing, etc., and if there is a mean and odious trait of character, it will show itself. I am sorry to say that among us were officers who were supposed to be officers and gentlemen, who would do some of the meanest acts and indulge in some of the lowest and meanest expressions that could be imagined, to their associates, all because they were so outrageously abused by the Confederate authorities.

When we had been in Libby two days, there were issued a plate of tin and a blanket to each prisoner with neither spoon, knife or fork. Those who succeeded in smuggling their knives through the rebel's inquest, went to work, on being informed that these needed utensils would not be issued to them and made wooden spoons taking a piece of joist from overhead for the purpose. I succeeded in getting a spoon and fork through the instrumentality of the darkies. Some few others obtained these articles in the same way also. The blankets were brought up by the darkies and thrown upon the floor and the officers rushed for them, some taking three or four while others received none. That not being the way in which I had been accustomed to business, I got none. So when they were all gone I concluded to make a special request for a blanket. At this juncture one of my officers said to me, "If that's the game I'll look out for you, Colonel." The next day more were brought in and he was so fortunate in the rush as to procure three which we used together.

Soon it was ascertained that more blankets had been issued than there were prisoners, and the darkies told that when they came up to sweep that all the blankets were to be taken away except one for each man. This was soon made known through the room, and upon learning the fact I went to Captain Wiley of my regiment, and told him that I wanted one of his needles and his help for a few minutes. We spread the largest blanket of our three on the floor, placed the smallest one on top of that and sewed them together along the edge of the smallest one and tied them at intervals in the center and rolled them up as usual, the smallest one inside, stowing them away in the accustomed locality. Soon orders came from all in the upper room, to go below, and the counting commenced. Some that were hidden overhead on the joist, (no floor in the attic), were found and seized,
but the searching was managed in a way that proves another flank. Nearly all the blankets were still in our possession, some having as many as before.

I noticed in one of their papers, (several were taken by the prisoners at $3 per week), an editorial stating that U. S. Government wanted the officers that were prisoners, exchanged, but cared but little about the men for the reason that the privates in the Union army were so illiterate that there were nothing in the ranks to make officers of. That all the intelligence in the Union army was embodied in the officers which the Confederate army was composed of material so much more intelligent that they suffered no such embarrassment as they had an abundance of good material in their ranks for officers. On this same day or the next, the following order was posted up in our prison which I copied verbatim et literatim:

CONFEDERATE STATE MILITARY PRISON, August 30, 1864.

Special Order.

No Federal Officer shall be allowed after this date to put their blankets on the floor during the day. Each officer failing to comply with these orders will have his blankets taken from them and be otherwise punished.

By order of Major Turner Comdg Prison. Signed,

RICHARD TURNER,
Prison Inspector.

I concluded, judging from the order, they had surely an abundant of material in these ranks from which to make officers. But I question if there were any in our ranks that would be guilty of chewing the grammatical construction and the orthography of language so fine as in this instance.

CHAPTER V.

Life At Libby—How We Passed the Time—Ready For Departure.

Perhaps it would be well to remark here in regard to the occupation of time during our incarceration. The question is often asked: How did you spend the time? Answer. Almost every person had a way of his own. Nearly one-half would be occupied in playing cards, chess, checkers, etc., and nearly all occasionally. Some would play for money with the usual result of gambling, and would be well supplied, while others became destitute.

I have heard it often said, "That there is honor among thieves." Some things I noticed in prison led me to believe that the assertion does not always prove true. On one occasion, a company was playing poker. I had noticed them several times during the morning playing very steadily near the stairway, and toward noon quite a crowd had gathered about them. I concluded the game had become quite interesting, but it not being interesting to me in the least, I continued about my own business, which I will mention presently. Shortly there was a row in that corner which very nearly resulted in blows. One of the parties had stolen from the other a twenty dollar greenback. Stolen was the term used. Cheat probably would have been the true term. However,
the party appropriating did not give it up, although he knew the other had lost all and was "dead broke." The winner, having hundreds as was understood, gave ground for the inference that there was but very little honor in the transaction and that in a place where if there was a spark of honor in a man's breast, surrounding circumstances would call it into action.

A portion would occupy a great share of the time making trinkets out of the bones that were brought into prison in our rations, many intending to bring them home as trinkets made from the bones of the rebs, and reader, if any ever assert in showing you his handiwork in bone that it was fabricated from a rebel's bone, nail him on the spot, and make him acknowledge it a beef bone. Several sets of chess men were manufactured with wood for material. The trinkets mentioned were finger rings, napkin rings, crochet hooks, tooth picks to represent the arm from the elbow down, and in the palm of the hand the representation of a cannon ball filling the hand, with the arm slit to the wrist, and tooth picks inserted to the number of three to five, with a pin at the elbow end to hold the pick, similar to holding the blades of a pocket knife, the picks closing into the handles as in pocket knives. The only work the writer attempted in this line, was the making of one finger ring and the engraving upon the handle of a white-handle pocket knife, that General Hayes, presented to him when he found out he had none, (the general having two), "Desperandum" on one side and the date of capture and place on the other.

Reading matter was very scarce. A few books were sent in, but avaricious men monopolized them all. Some who claimed two or three steadily refused to be argued out of the idea that others had no right to them. Rather than have a strife or words over the matter, I concluded to let them alone and trust to borrowing from those who had not as yet developed the mean traits in their character, concluding time spent as we were spending it would be a melancholy and improfitable blank in a person's life. I tried hard, both through the hospital steward and the doctor, to procure a French grammar which they promised to do, but they failed. I then asked that dignified strutter, with a revolver on each side, (Dick Turner), if he would procure one for me. He very politely said he would if one could be got, but he thought there was none on the premises or in the city that he could procure. In a day or two the hospital steward informed me that there was a German grammar at the hospital, left by an officer that had been exchanged, and if I would procure the consent of the surgeon, to allow him to bring it up, he would do so. The surgeon gave his consent and the next morning it was brought up to me, and what time, hunger and cold allowed me for application, I improved in the study of German, which was not only a good past-time but time more profitably spent than in useless plays or working on bones. Before we were released I could readily read the German language.
One thing I must not forget to mention, in regard to Libby, for it was our first introduction to the business as a daily duty, and that was prison skirmishing. We knew a little something about it before our capture, but nothing to be compared with that in prison. This skirmishing is nothing more or less than a daily hunting for body lice. This created more sport than any one thing that transpired during our stay in Rebeldom. Occasionally an officer was found so lazy and negligent of his personal cleanliness, that he would seldom skirmish which brought down the indignation of the cleanest upon his head so emphatically that he would be obliged to start out upon the skirmish line. One officer belonging to a heavy artillery regiment was brought in soon after our capture, who quite neglected this important operation, and even slept in his boots for over a week, and was ever afterward known as "Boots." About three weeks after he entered he was told that if he did not hunt for lice and wash himself, they would put him into the bath tub and hold him there until the lice would all drown and he would be fortunate if he himself would come out breathing. It would have been, too, had he not attended to the suggestion.

There was nothing furnished us to sit upon, not even a bench. We were obliged to eat, sit and sleep on the floor. Privilege was granted us however, to purchase chairs and some two or three at ten dollars per chair, were purchased by some few of the officers, (common splint bottomed chairs). I finally instituted a new order of things in the upper room. Captain Wiley aided me in taking down from above me one of the joists. It was pine, three inches thick, about eight or ten inches in width, and some twenty feet in length. Placing one end on a large stone that was in the room, after emptying the sawdust out of two of the spit boxes, with these in the center and end, so that we were able to enjoy the comfort of a seat that would accommodate quite a number of men. Soon the room was surrounded with seats, with one running through the center. We were ordered to replace them overhead, but no attention was paid to the order, so we had seats during the remainder of our stay at Libby.

Most of our stay at Libby we were fortunate in having one of those unfortunate chaplains of the army with us. Unfortunate for having been captured, but brave, sufficiently courageous to be at the front and therefore gobbled up with others, often taken by remaining to care for the wounded, after our troops had moved. Consequently while they were with us we had Divine service once each Sabbath. Chaplains, however remained with us but a short time, as they were, as a general thing, exchanged in a short time after capture from the fact that they were considered as non-combatant.

The last days of September, 1864, were spent by the citizens of Richmond watching with unenviable emotions from their house tops, the bursting of shells from the Union artillery as the Union army was slowly working its way towards Richmond, feeling almost sure that
our army was pressing so hard that it would enter the city. We also were enjoying the same sights, but feeling far different probably from them, and yet there was as much commotion within our walls as outside. We, expecting every minute for three days to see our cavalry pouring into the city and rushing for the prisons to relieve us from captivity, had our plans all matured, companies formed and officered, ready to take advantage of anything that might transpire. In short, we were all ready to make a break en masse, should our forces succeed in entering the city. They, Dick Turner especially, told us if our cavalry did come in he would blow us all to hell.

It was understood by most of the prisoners that Libby was mined and ready to be blown up at any moment. The darkies told us it was a fact. I did not believe it at first but subsequently learned sufficient in regard to it that my belief was strong, almost to the knowledge of the fact, yet I was far from believing that they would carry out so inhuman a transaction.

General Grant pressed so hard on the 29th and 30th of September and 1st day of October that on the morning of the 2nd about three o’clock we were ordered to fall in—that we were to go south. We were also told to leave our blankets and plates. I had purchased two white flannel blankets such as were used in the hospital from a surgeon who was exchanged when he left us, paying five dollars a piece in greenbacks, so that Captain Willey and myself between us had four, one of which was double. I told Captain Wiley to take the two blankets we had previously sewed together and wrap them around him under his clothing. He did so, I took the other and concealed it under my clothing. Rolled up the blankets I had purchased from the surgeon tied them up tight to make them appear as small as possible and took the roll under my arm with the determination to take it with me if possible. On arriving at the foot of the stairs on the lower floor we encountered a sergeant who took all in sight. He took hold of mine saying he had orders to take all blankets. I told him that I could not help what orders he had, that, that blanket was my private property and I had not drawn from the Confederacy and he had nothing to do with it. But he persevered and I resisted, I finally told him that I would only leave it at the command of a commissioned officer. He called one and I explained to him why I was so tenacious in regard to it. He asked me who I was and what my rank was and when I told him he passed by me toward the foot of the stairs and I passed on toward the door where I encountered the sergeant heretofore mentioned as having deserted our army, examining under the clothing and taking what blankets were concealed thereunder.

A number had passed out with blankets concealed under their clothing without being noticed until some over avaricious one who had concealed so many that he attracted attention. Nearly all after that were examined. He grabbed my blanket and I told him that I had just been allowed to pass it by such an officer, mentioning his name, which
I have forgotten now. I was allowed to pass. In hurrying out to avoid Dick Turner I received no rations, ignorant however of their being issued. In filing into the ranks on the street I was asked by my adjutant if I had received my rations. "No," said I, "are they issuing rations?" "Yes, you better go and get them. We have two days rations." I asked him to keep my blanket and I would go and get them. I went back and learned that the rations had never issued, that some of the officers had been the second time and drew, consequently the meat was all gone for they cooked just sufficient for a ration for each officer, but there was plenty of corn bread. As there were a number yet to be supplied among them General Hayes, more bread was sent for. There was issued to us one half loaf more in lieu of beef. While waiting for the bread I saw Dick Turner give to General Hayes and Colonel Hooper each a canteen of water. I politely asked him if he would furnish one for me also, which he did without any hesitancy. We finally got under way and marched to Manchester across the river about a mile and stood there in the rain. It rained all night, until daylight when we took the cars for Salisbury, N. C.

CHAPTER VI.

Into the Heart of the Confederacy—From Libby to Salisbury.

Previous to leaving Libby I intimated to General Hayes that my opinion was that we would be sent away from Richmond if there was a prospect of our forces entering the city and in case we should, we should be prepared to capture the train and make our escape. He consented to the idea and when we embarked I entered the cars with him for the purpose of maturing the plan. We were packed in common small box cars and from fifty to sixty in each car, without seats and very filthy. The door on one side of the car was fastened. The door on the other side open with four guards on the inside of the car and as many on the top of the car. General Hayes talked very strong at first for capturing and the plan was formed for the capture. I took my station in one of the rear cars to await a signal from the General to strike. At every stop, which were frequent, we were allowed to leave the cars to wander about for a certain distance under the watchful eye of the guard. At these stops I urged the General for action and finally told him if there was no move made before we arrived at Burkhville I should abandon the idea.

The last stop before Burkhville the General concluded there were too many guards to make the attempt. The guards in the cars could be easily overpowered but those on the top were the question and final snubbing post to the carrying out of the proposition.

The first day we arrived at Glover Station on the Staunton river, and bivouacked for the night on the side of the road. One or two fires were allowed, small at that, until about ten o'clock. We passed through a region of country very sterile, not sufficient amount of crops raised to feed the few inhabitants residing along
the road through the winter. We were ordered in early next morning and arrived at Danville, Virginia, about midday, one hundred and thirty miles from Richmond, when it began to rain and we were ordered out and stood in the rain about two hours, not allowed to get under the cars to avoid the rain. The excuse for keeping standing in the rain, was that we were waiting for transportation.

We were finally marched to the depot and loaded into cars, the roofs of which were very poor, allowing nearly all the rain to leak through into the cars. The floor of the cars was covered with mud an inch deep. This was our dwelling place during the night for we were given to understand we would not leave until morning. We asked to be permitted to occupy a large empty warehouse that stood near by but we were not allowed that boon. So with a piece of board we scraped the filth from the floor and made the best of our situation. A sorry night it was I assure you. The section of county from Glover to Danville was about the same as that passed through the day before.

The long looked for day finally broke upon us making our hearts glad and very thankful and With it came the Great Ruler of the day.

With his bright beams to chase the cloudy night away,
To bless us all with heat and light,
And cheer us in our woeful plight.

Time dragged slowly. The two days rations were all gone the night before, and none were to be had at Danville except what we, those who had money, could purchase from the darkies which would swarm the car at every station with their hoe cakes, Virginia pies, which upon eating the prisoner would conclude that there was very little sugar in Virginia and that if people had any shortening they put it in the crust "lengthways." The greatest variety of pies so-called was offered along the road. Apple, sweet potato, pumpkin, squash, meat, turnip and various other articles that no other than darkies would think of using. It was somewhat amusing yet disgusting to see how some officers would act. One would say: "Hello dar, old fellow, how much you want for dat cake," pie or whatever the darkie had. With a very polite bow and a salute, "One dolla, Massa." Some other would offer two dollars and in that manner such articles would sell for three or four times the amount asked at the commencement just because officers who are supposed to be gentlemen would take that course, knowing at the same time that others were almost, if not entirely, destitute of money. The officers soon caught the fever of selling, and disposed of nearly all the trinkets in their possession. Rings, pens, pencils, watches, watch chains, etc. The guards finally caught the fever and went in for an exchange of hats with our officers. They had a peculiar fancy for black hats and traded their Confederate grays for those which had been worn from four to six months and paid as high as forty dollars boot money. There was quite an amount of money collected in that way. Gold pens with one point broken off, and some brass ones, sold for fifteen to twenty dol-
lars, (Confederate money of course). Even blankets were sold with the expectation of having the promise fulfilled of an issue of blankets when we arrived at our destination.

Night brought us to Greensborough, N.C., where we were unloaded like a consignment of hogs or cattle and turned out upon a green near the railroad with the usual guard line surrounding us. Here we had the expectation and gratification of seeing more or less Union men, who brought plates full of biscuit and distributed among us, but they would go but a short distance among so many. No ration yet. On speaking to the lieutenant in command of the guard in regard to rations, we received the reply that he would do what he could to furnish them. The guards were out of rations also and were murmuring, which we concluded would shortly bring about a supply, but none came until morning.

The guards procured from some where what they called "Apple Brandy," and some of them became intoxicated in a short time. When one was thus found, a sober one would take his place and send him off to sober up. I worked hard the whole night in trying to penetrate the guard line and make my escape, but was always halted before I crossed the line, the night being quite light. Had it been a dark night I apprehend I would have succeeded perhaps to have been hounded down and recaptured in a day or two.

There were issued to us in the morning five Confederate crackers to each man, and they were what might be called, with a high degree of propriety "Hard tack." They were made, I should judge, of corn and pea or bean meal and so hard, that I who had always been in the habit of cracking hickory nuts with my teeth could make no impression on them whatever. Some refused to take them. I took what was issued to me, "asking no questions for conscience sake," and during two or three days by breaking them with a stick made out to devour four of them. The other I laid away in my haversack with the intention of always having a Confederate hard tack by me, for it never could spoil unless a stone could, but during the winter some generous Union officer took upon himself the privilege of borrowing it, without my consent one night, and either was ashamed or forgot to return it.

In due time, at ten or eleven o'clock we were packed away again like so many hogs in the cars and resumed our march still farther south, passing through a section of country but little better supplied with the needful, although looking more fertile and homelike. In the afternoon we passed a farm house known as "Lynnwood," which reminded me of farming and a farm home in Western New York. Broad acres of wheat looking as beautiful as any I ever beheld—well fenced, good buildings, dwelling house, surrounded by a beautiful grove. Everything showing thrift and comfort. On inquiry I learned the owner was a Northerner and had been there quite a number of years. "Oh! he's rich as an old tar barrel," was the expression.
CHAPTER VII.


Just before dark we arrived at Salisbury, North Carolina, 230 miles from Richmond, having been on the road four days and three nights. What a contrast with our railroads at the North. The authorities of the prison at Salisbury undoubtedly did not expect us. At all events they were not prepared to receive us and separated us into different squads putting some of us on the upper floor or third story of an old cotton factory; others of us in out buildings belonging thereto. I found myself among those who were placed in the factory building. Filing up the stairs in the dark with 'look out for muggers' sounding in our ears at almost every step was not calculated to make us feel any the more cheerful.

The first story of this factory was occupied by citizen prisoners such as reporters for New York newspapers and men captured in the south for their Union sentiments. The second story was occupied by deserters from both armies and termed "muggers" because they would rob all "fresh fish," fresh or newly captured lot of prisoners, of everything they could lay their hands on. On entering the third story which was the attic we were told, by way of warning, by the authorities that a few days previous to our arrival they had received sixty prisoner and they were told that if they did not keep a close watch the deserters in the room below would rob them of everything they had, and notwithstanding the muggers entered and stripped them of everything even to the clothing on their backs. Two or three would hold a prisoner while others would strip him of his clothing.

We accepted the information as being given for our benefit, and told the informers we would take care of that. Lieutenant Colonel Hopper had with him a piece of candle which he lighted to prepare a place for the night and to take a look at our surroundings and by the light the rest of us laid ourselves away, not however before we made arrangements for the reception of the muggers.

Volunteers were called for to stand sentinel at the door which was answered by a number sufficient to relieve each other every hour during the night, each one standing but an hour. A captain belonging to the Second Maryland regiment took the position the first hour. He was afterward killed while attempting to escape, on our return to Danville two weeks afterward. He posted himself at the door which was closed, he being on the inside with a handle of an old splint broom which was hard wood, in his hand for a weapon. We finally became quiet, and shortly the door opened quietly and a man's head was seen, and part of his body came inside of the door. He was asked by the captain, what he wanted? He said he wanted to see if there were any officers there that he knew. With an oath the captain said "I'm the man you want, I'll show him to you," and brought the broom handle down upon the mugger's head with the force that would have knocked him down had the hall not been full of them. It was thronged with them so he could not retreat,
but fell among them, the captain dealing a half dozen blows among them. They got out of reach, amidst the most horrid yells that ever struck the ears of any human being. One of our party near the door became so scared that he ran through the whole length of the room over the men all crying "here he is! here he is."

Shortly the officer of the day came up to see what the row was, accompanied by a squad of guards. The room was searched through but, no mugger found. The person who ran through the room kept mighty quiet about it for it was not found out who it was. Finally the officer of the day left a guard at the top of the stairs with instructions to allow no man up and retired saying that we served them right. The night became quiet and remained so throughout, yet we could hear them through a crack in the floor, making plans to attack us in force, but I apprehend that they had had enough of the officer they wanted to see, and that discretion and stillness was the better part of valor, and did not care to renew their acquaintance with an officer.

Many of the officers had their hats snatched from their heads while passing up stairs by these muggers.

The hall or anti room at the head of the stairs was furnished with two half barrels to be used as sinks, and in the morning they were both over-flowing and the floor to the depth of two inches, was covered with human excrements, five or six all night waiting their turn at the sinks. After what we had been through and in view of the condition of the building in the morning, a consultation was held, the result of which was that General Hays was asked to petition the commander of the prison, (Major Lee), in behalf of the officers confined there to be removed into the yard.

The Major consented to let the officers have that part of the yard containing four log houses, 24 x 24 feet each and two stories high, or rather two floors, provided the officers would give their parole not to try to escape from the enclosure which he submitted to us for our decision. We would consent to the parole with a proviso which was that we would have the liberty of the town. That they would not consent to or allow. We found afterward that the guards had been removed from the inside to the outside of the yard and that there was still a cordon of sentinels on the outside and elevated so that they could see over the fence which was twelve feet in height. We then refused to take a parole stating that if we were to be guarded a parole was unnecessary. They finally saw it so themselves and allowed us to take up our quarters in the aforementioned log houses, placing a guard line between the officers and enlisted men who were arriving from Belle Island at Richmond with orders not to approach that line or beat within ten feet or to talk across that line with the enlisted men, vice versa.

The beat of the sentinel inside of the yard, previous to being stationed on the outside, was about ten feet from the fence. This beat had become a visible line by having been tread upon so much by the march of the sentinel previously. The guards
upon the outside were instructed that this beaten path was the "dead line." But we were not notified of the fact until one of our number was shot through the heart and instantly killed upon stepping on this line, without even being hailed or knowing there was such a thing as a dead line. This was done by a Southern blood, apparently about 14 years of age, one of the "new issue" as they term those collected under the last conscript act or order. There was but little danger comparatively with guards that were old soldiers and had been at the front. They know a soldier's duty, and as a general thing, do not abuse a prisoner. At least I found it so. A raw conscript, especially if young, beware!

The first rations at Salisbury were issued about noon the day after our arrival. It consisted of one-half loaf of wheaten bread, which was all we received that day. After that we received the same amount twice a day with a fair ration of beef in the morning, and a pint of rice soup in the afternoon during our stay there. A sutler, who was allowed to furnish some vegetables and some articles of clothing, sold cotton drawers for fifteen to twenty dollars, and very coarse cotton shirts for twenty to twenty-five dollars. I purchased a pair of cotton stockings at the low price of eight dollars; envelopes at twenty-five cents each, and letter paper at sixty cent a sheet, and other things in proportion.

While at Salisbury we had the best opportunity for exercise of any place in which we were confined. The yard consisted of nearly four acres of ground, enclosed with a board fence twelve feet high as before mentioned. In the enclosure were the factory building, hospital, four small brick out buildings for factory purposes, a portion of the latter used when we were there as work houses for criminals, and the four log houses that we occupied. About one-fourth of the enclosure was allotted to the officers as a promenade. The remainder was occupied by about nine thousand enlisted men when we left.

The weather was very fine during the two weeks we remained there. Evenings, up to nine o'clock, were spent by nearly all promenading; some singly, some in squads of two's three's and four's. We could not endure to shut ourselves in door without any light, and permit warm beautiful moonlight evenings to pass unimproved.

A break, en mass, was continually talked of after our arrival, and plans laid, but never carried out. During the first week I was in favor of a break and anxious to carry it into effect, but most of the ranking officers, General Hayes among them, advocated delay, until more enlisted men arrived, so that a large number could have the benefit of escape. They were arriving every day, but I argued that the more prisoners the stronger the guard would be. I took every opportunity to keep myself posted in regard to the accumulation of the guards which I found to be increasing every day. I often spent fifteen or twenty minutes nearly every evening as near the guard line as I was allowed to go conversing with Union men on guard, who I am confident told me the truth in regard to the guards, all
wishing and hoping that a cavalry raid would be sent out sufficiently strong to relieve us.

When we had been there about a week the guard line was doubled on the inside between the officers and the enlisted men and in each corner of the enclosure was planted a piece of artillery. The yard or enclosure was triangular in form. By this time the guards had increased from three hundred, when we arrived, to two thousand three hundred, having a camp on each side of the enclosure, and another still farther off and out of sight under the hill.

About this time ColonelRalston of the Twenty-Second New York Cavalry was captured and sent to Salisbury. He went in strongly for a break. It had been delayed so long that I concluded that, taking everything into consideration, the thing would prove a failure. It did not then appear to me as possible. A break afterward proved a failure and with the loss of many lives and limbs. However all that talked against a break at this time were stamped as cowards and were to be attended to after we were released. The break was agitated strongly for a week. Plans were laid and the night designated for the strike and all the posts and positions allotted. Those who did not favor the enterprise agreed to take hold and do the best in the affair if it was to be carried through.

The practice of throwing billets across the line from one side to the other was carried on successfully, by keeping close watch of the guards, until the day preceding the night in which the strike was to take place. Never an instance of detection occurred until this time and it was carried on every day. A regular communication between the officers and enlisted men, although twenty feet apart, had been carried on these days, whereby the enlisted men were kept posted in regard to the deliberations and plans laid for the break, and the enlisted men understood just what was required of them through this channel of communication.

Shortly afternoon of this day Lieutenant Gardner of the Thirteenth Connecticut Volunteers wrote on a slip of paper, "The break comes off to-night," signed "Gardner," and as usual threw it across the line to one of his men just as the guard turned on his beat, thereby facing the performance, and saw the billet fall. The billet fell upon the ground between the guard line and where the men were not allowed to come. The guard noticed it and picked it up sent it to headquarters. Two hours thereafter was spent by the authorities trying to find Lieutenant Gardner, who was not to be found.

Five o'clock that afternoon, just two weeks from the time we entered the enclosure, found the officers all on board of the cars for Dansville, Virginia.

CHAPTER VIII.

Off to Dansville—More About Southern Hospitality.

At Salisbury there was only sufficient room in the buildings to accommodate eight hundred prisoners,
leaving eight thousand men to live
or die in the open yard without suf-
cient clothing or covering. Before
we, the officers, were sent away a
great many had built little kennels
of clay. They would dig a hole in
the ground and what came out
they would form it into bricks
with their hands and lay them
up arching the structure at the top
and plastering the outside with the
same material to make the kennel air
and water tight to protect themselves
from the inclemency of the weather.
The only wonder is that a single man
came from that place in February
alive. I heard during the winter
that all the building in the enclosure
were used as hospitals.

While at at Salisbury, I often held
converse with a lieutenant belonging
to the prison headquarters who
would seemingly come in for the ex-
press purpose of talking with me in
particular, in regard to my opinion
of some things that were transpiring
and my opinion of the the outcome
of the war. Just previous to my
being captured the Confederates is-
sued an order and took pains to dis-
tribute it among the enlisted men of
the Union army to the effect that if
they would desert our lines and come
into theirs they would set them
across the line the nearest point to
their homes, thinking by the order
that many would be enticed to de-
sert. In conversation with him one
day he asked me what our men
thought of the order. Said I, “Had
you any idea that order would
entice our men to desert.” “Well,
yes, we had an idea quite a number
would avail themselves of such an
opportunity to get to their homes.”

“Has the order brought many over?”
“Well, no not yet.” “Do you know
what the penalty is for desertion?”
“Yes.” “Do you imagine that our
men knowing the penalty as they all
do would venture the risk?” “We
didn’t know but they might.” “Your
receiving so few ought to convince
you that they will not venture it. I
would not be afraid to warrant that
the whole number you will receive
through that source could be repre-
ented by the fingers on one hand.
As far as my opinion of the outcome
is concerned we’re going to beat you
in the end, and within a year Lee
will be obliged to surrender, if the
South is as destitute throughout as
what I have seen on our route here.
Why business of all kinds is being
carried on at the North just as if
nothing extraordinary was going on.
Why this man that you sent North
for the purpose of ascertaining how
the war affected business, came back
and reported that the North could
fight eternally and grow fat at that.”
Not a time did he leave me, after
such conversations but what he ap-
peared to feel that I had told him
the truth and would apparently feel
down-hearted.

At daylight, the next morning
after embarking at Danville, we
arrived at Greensboro minus sixteen
of our number, who had escaped dur-
ing the night from two of the cars,
one of whom, the captain who stood
as the first sentinel at the prison
door the first night at Salisbury, was
shot and killed as he left the cars to
escape.

One of the cars had a hole cut in
the side through which a number
escaped. The cars ran very slow,
sometimes almost stopping, thereby giving a fine opportunity to jump off. On the other car the back door, as we termed it, was unfastened by some means, probably by negligence, and a good chance was given there for escaping, and both were made use of for that purpose. In the latter car the guard all the time knew that prisoners were escaping, but he said he hadn’t one door to watch, he couldn’t attend to two, one side of the car was enough for him. Finally the office of the guard came in saying “What in h— are you about here? Men are escaping from this car.” The guard who was a six footer in his stockings, straightened up and looked over the car and scrutinized its capacity, replied I guess not, Lieutenant, I guess they are all here. The car seems pretty well crowded.” The Lieutenant found the back door closed and left. After he left the guard said “I wonder if he thinks I’m going to stop men from getting away. I like to see them go.”

This is the style of the Union men conscripted into the army and used as guards for prisoners. We always found them, when not watched by Confederate officers, willing to allow a prisoner to escape. This is not the only instance I know of one allowing prisoners to escape. One other instance in which a guard contracted afterward to allow four to escape from Danville, but was prohibited by the meanness of a Union cavalry officer. We arrived at Danville in the afternoon and were confined in one of the tobacco warehouses termed “prison number three,” one, four and six being occupied by en-
listed men, numbers two and five unoccupied.

Danville, Virginia, was a village containing, before the war, probably three thousand inhabitants. It was situated on the riven Dan, a few miles above the junction with the Staunton river, (the two forming the Roanoke), and about three miles north of the North Carolina line.

The village is pleasantly situated upon an eminence on the south bank of the river, having in full view the north side for some distance, taking in the fortifications built upon the hills on that side for the protection of the place and bridges. The river Dan affords one of the best water privileges of the State. Northern enterprise would make it a flourishing industrial center. The river is very rapid for some distance above the place. Nearly the whole distance might be lined on either side with manufacturing establishments.

On the south side of the stream is a factory, for the manufacture of cloth, carrying on quite an extensive business. On the north side and just opposite to the warehouse in which we were confined, were two small flowering mills not equaling our small country mills, known as grist mills. The dam for these mills extended obliquely up stream and about one-half way across the river, similar to the fish dams or runs anywhere to be found along the Susquehanna river in Pennsylvania, but upon a larger scale. On the same side below the bridges was a machine shop of some kind. The village contained some other manufactories, but of little note. As this was the heart of the tobacco growing station.
and the cultivation of that product being the main business carried on by the inhabitants of this section of country, machinery had been looked upon as secondary, which may apologize for the small amount of manufacturing carried on here.

When we arrived at Danville the prison was in command of Captain Braxton, one of those army men that a man can read at first sight. He remained in command two or three weeks, sporting the while a Union Brigadier’s hat and cord with the additional appendage of a long ostrich feather, caring about as much apparently for the prisoners as he did for the dust he tread upon, promising all the conveniences desired, but never fulfilling a promise. He conducted us into the prison giving us the second and third stories, reserving the first or lower floor as a passage way to the yard in the rear, and to be used as a promenade for the prisoners for exercise, allowing thirty prisoners down at a time during the day and six during the night.

Each room was 78x38 feet in the clear with a row of posts through the center lengthwise of the building as supports, also a stove in each room. A description of the stove may as well be given here. The lower half was a cast iron cylinder about eighteen or twenty inches in diameter and of about the same in height. The upper half was the same size, but funnel shape at the top to receive the pipe on the center. A grate was at the bottom of the hole with no means of shaking it.

Four hundred and forty officers were confined in these two rooms from the middle of October until the middle of February, with the exception of those taken to the hospital, giving about fourteen square feet to each man for eating, sleeping and to exercise upon. When we laid ourselves down at night there was a row of men on each side of the room with their heads against the wall; two rows in the centre of the room head to head in the centre. All lying spoon fashion as we termed it and so close were we packed together that when one turned over, the movement necessitated the turning of the whole row for there was not sufficient room for one to turn over without the rest conforming to his movement.

A great many became so habituated to the movement that they would turn as if moved by machinery without awakening from sleep. Captain Rogers who slept next to me turned over with the crowd very often during the night without knowing anything about it. I often felt deeply sorry that I was obliged to disturb the whole row in which I was a link, so often for I never could endure lying upon the hard floor for more than an hour at one time on account of my bones aching so extremely that I was obliged to turn.

CHAPTER IX.
The Return of Prison Life—A Price List of Luxuries.

Here we were divided into messes of twenty each as at Libby and under the same regulations. There being nothing furnished by the prison authorities for cooking, except in the back yard between two bricks or stones, four messes clubbed
together and sent out and purchased an old cook stove, no better than our northern peddlers often take for old iron, and paid fifty dollars each for it, making in all two hundred dollars for an old stove and that without a particle of stove furniture accompanying it. Wood was a great item with those who had or could get anything to cook, and men who could afford to pay that price for a stove could generally afford to have something to cook besides what was issued to them as rations. There was a certain amount of wood issued to us each day with the intention of having it equally distributed among us all, but the cooking stove monopolized the great share of it. Those who did their cooking in the yard had to procure their wood the best way they could.

About these days wood did not trouble me in the least, for I had nothing to cook. Those who wished to cook and could get none of the wood issued, began to look about them for a supply. The first way of getting wood by this class was to use the joists overhead. A number were sawed out entirely with an old case knife filed into a saw. The joist was cut and split up fine like kindlings and used in the back yard for cooking purposes. Soon this was noticed by the prison authorities and ordered to be stopped or they would not issue another stick of wood to us. It ceased for a few days, but they would have wood and commenced again on the joist, but in a manner not to be so easily detected, working on the sly. Some, when out for water, would pick up pieces of boards and sticks, that they would come in contact with along the route to the spring on the bank of the river.

I said to Captain Wiley, my messmate, one day as he was starting with the water squad, that if he would bring in a piece of board sufficiently large for a seat, if he could find one, I would try and fix up something to sit on. He returned with a piece of slab about six feet long and that army expression instinctly came out, "Bully for you, Captain, we'll have a seat now, sure." I went down to the lower floor and told the guard stationed on that floor that I wanted a few bricks out of the wall to fix a seat. The wall was somewhat damaged at one place and the bricks were lose. Said he, "Don't let the officer catch you at it or they will punish me for allowing you to tear out the bricks." I took the bricks and fixed the seat. It accommodated eight or ten of us very nicely. Another squad took one-half of a joist for the same purpose. These seats were all the seats there were in the building, with the exception of three chairs, heretofore spoken of, as having been purchased by some of the officers.

I was living on my rations nearly, and was almost starving and I concluded to make a venture for something more to eat. So one morning I went below when the Commissary Sergeant came to issue rations and told him plainly that I was suffering from having so little to eat, and if he could spare me an extra loaf occasionally he would do me a great service, and that I would be ever so much obliged to him and if I ever had an opportunity I would
repay him. He asked me if I had no money, and I answered him that I had not a cent. After that I generally received two loaves a week extra which helped my mess-mate and myself very much, but this did not satisfy us. We wanted something besides coarse corn bread. We received but two small rations of meat after Christmas. Nothing but that everlasting corn dodger.

So I concluded to try a haul on another string. I went to the surgeon of the post or hospital one day when he came in. (He was in five or six times during the winter,) and asked him if I could negotiate with him for some money, offering him my note payable sometime in the future, or would give him an order on some responsible man North for the amount. He asked me how much I wanted and said he would try and get me some on the last proposition, for he had a blockade runner that could get the money. I told him that I would take five hundred dollars, and if he remained a sufficient length of time as prisoners to require more, I would want more. Upon settling upon whom the order was to be drawn for one hundred dollars in greenbacks, that he would have the money in the afternoon in the lower story. This I received and distributed it equally between the officers of my regiment, which kept us comfortably during our stay, at least until we were sure of being speedily released.

Now as I intimated heretofore, I will give the price we had to pay for our purchases: Flour three dollars per pound; bacon fifteen dollars per pound; fresh pork twelve; potatoes at the rate of fifty dollars per bushel; onions ten dollars per dozen; black pepper unground twenty-five dollars per pound; dried apples two dollars and sixty cents per pound; an apology for green apples eight to ten dollars per dozen; sorghum molasses fifteen dollars per quart; soap (an apology) five dollars per pound, and about as good as so much tallow for cleansing purposes.

Previous to making this strike for luxuries we became so tired of corn ‘dodgers’ that we would often grate it up fine and mix it over, putting in a little soda which cost sixteen dollars per pound and make griddle cakes occasionally, cooking them on an old stove hearth over a fire in the yard, and often we would make hasty pudding so having mush and milk, without the milk. Either of these changes from the plain corn dodger was quite a relish, and yet we were so hungry that a piece of that corn bread in the morning, warm, just from the oven, relished better than any thing I ever ate before in my life. We needed but little wood for a handful of kindlings would cook a meal of viands, but it was scarce, very scarce. So I began to figure for wood.

I approached the commissary sergeant. He could do nothing in that line. I then ventured upon the commander in charge of the prison, then Lieutenant Colonel Smith, asking him, after explaining, if he would allow me to have a stick from the guard house pile near by. His answer was “I have no control over that wood. You must ask the officer of the guard. I have no objection.” The officer of the day and
the officer of the guard visited the prison every morning, and the next morning I made it my business to be at the foot of the stairs on the lower floor just after guard mounting, the time of day that these officers generally made their appearance. As they came in I bid them good morning and broached the subject of wood. They were a little too crabbed, it was no go. I persevered. I tried again the next morning speaking only to the officer of the day. No go! I began to study the men. The next morning upon looking at the officer of the day I concluded I had my man and I approach him with confidence that my wishes would be gratified. "Yes, Colonel, I'll do anything in God's world for you but let you out of here. My life depends on that, but anything I can do to alleviate your sufferings I'll do. I wish you were all exchanged," and he went to the door and told the guard what I wanted and to bring in a stick of wood from the pile at the guard house. He brought in a quarter of an oak tree which was a foot in diameter and ten feet long. I thanked him kindly and lugged it up stairs. My messmates cut it up and split it up fine and piled it overhead upon the joist to dry and in a day or two it would burn like tinder. This lasted after lending about half of it, a week. After that, another stick of wood the captain would supply us if there was any at the guard house.

Besides this daily visit of the officer of the day and sergeant of the guard there was another daily visitor styling himself the prison surgeon, but appeared more like a walking automaton than anything that had life. He would have a change of pipe each day for a number of days, sometimes a nice fancy one with the stem about three feet long all varnished up nicely. Most of the time his attention was taken up in the care of his pipe. He would stalk up to a person who was lying down and without bending a joint say, "Well, what is the matter with you." He was told; then turning to his hospital steward, who always accompanied him, he would prescribe, and then on to the next and so on throughout the prison, and leave, not to be seen until the next morning, let what would happen. No call would bring him out of his daily routine. In the afternoon the hospital steward would bring in the prescription and leave it with some Union office to deal out and then spend an hour or so selling things to the officers and take bills for more. The sick would be left in the prison two or three days after they should have been taken to the hospital. He was a mere farce and nothing else.

CHAPTER X.

Scenes and Incidents of our Daily Life.

The policing was managed after the same style. We were obliged to do our own cleaning of floors and then not allowed to wash them. The excuse was that water would leak through and inconvenience those in the rooms below. We were furnished six splint brooms once in five or six weeks. They would last pretty well for a week or ten days, consequently the rooms were very filthy most of the time. The regulations in regard to cleaning were systema-
tie but the performance of the work was badly executed as a general thing. The sweeping and emptying the spit boxes were done by each mess alternately; one mess policing one day and another the next and so on until all had taken their turn. Some of the messes would perform the work very satisfactorily while others would do it in a very slovenly manner, there appeared to be so many who did not care how filthy their surroundings were.

They would sit and squirt tobacco juice on the floor all day long when the spit boxes were nearer them than where they spat, apparently doing so to annoy some of us who wished to be more cleanly and occasionally spoke to them about it. The dirt upon the floor was fully one half inch continually. At the same time an allowance must be made for them, for the confinement on such fare had a tendency to make people irritable, and distil into them that "don't-carativeness" that prevailed among the most of them. There were some, however, that proved themselves gentlemen throughout the whole.

Every few days I would dry scrub that portion of the floor occupied by our mess-mate and myself and some of them would take particular pains, apparently when walking for exercise, to step aside with their dirty feet, out of the filth upon the floor just cleaned and you would be obliged to sit and look on and endure it or have a lot of profanity and slang dealt out to you if ought was said about it. After cleaning our part of the floor, it would look so much better that others would follow the example, even if they had to scrape the floor with a piece of glass.

One Lieutenant Colonel spent most of two days scraping his portion of the floor with a piece of glass before he was satisfied with its appearance.

The time was occupied as at Libby by the prisoners working in bone, etc. A great deal of interest was taken on General Sherman's movements south of us on his march to the sea, some believing that he would surely send a raiding force to release us. The majority had no such idea, but were highly interested in what he was doing, believing he and his troops were dealing the death blow to the Confederacy.

The subject of exchange was agitated considerably with us. All reports started among us from whatever source originated would be grasped with much credulity and held with strong tenacity. Some of the officers passing through the lower rooms and conversing with the guards on the subject of exchange would come above and report that the guard just told him so and so and would report a fabrication which appeared feasible on the face of it, and would be taken up and rung from room to room and from corner to corner. It was pleasing to see how many would spend half a day going around and informing all in regard to "one week's time and we would all be in Annapolis," and even on the strength of such rumors wagers of twenty dollars were staked often.

Taking everything into consideration that we had to endure with scarcely any religious influence to
soften the feelings or check our word behavior, it is not so strange that prison life as we found it was terribly demoralizing. Most of the time the four months we remained prisoners at Danville we were without Divine services. There was an army Chaplain with us for a few days at first and over one Sunday and on that Sunday he gave us a good discourse from the following text: "Say ye not a Confederacy to all them to whom this shall say a Confederacy, neither fear ye their fear nor be afraid." Isaiah 8, 12.

The last three weeks, however, the Rev. Mr. Hall, pastor of the M. E. church preached each Sunday and Tuesday, a splendid speaker with none of the Southern twang to his words. I can express his ability to speak in no better term than to say he was an orator. The first time he came in he said: "I want to talk a while with you if you have no objection." We of course had none, and quiet soon reigned and he commenced by saying: "For two or three weeks this passage of scripture has been running in my mind and ringing in my ears with such force I could not withhold longer in trying to make an effort to visit you and see if I could do you any good: 'Sick and in prison and ye visited me not.' I have come in here to offer you my services as a preacher of the Gospel of Christ. I don't come here to talk politics or to say anything upon the issues of the day. We may talk this matter over until doomsday and we probably should not agree. Consequently what I do will be for your spiritual welfare, and perhaps do a trifle for your physical comfort, but I'm not able to do much.”

He furnished some soap for some of us. He presented to me a pair of pretty good cotton shirts for which I shall ever be very grateful, and furnished us considerable good reading matter, and we had, (myself in particular), many good social talks with him which was a balm to the general wound.

We were obliged to keep up a stringent search here as in Libby for body lice. To give some idea of the necessity of daily skirmishing, I will state an incident that occurred one pleasant afternoon. The weather was cold and unpleasant during the forepart of the day, and the skirmishing put off until afternoon when the sun shone in the windows directly and warmly on the south side of the building, when the skirmish line deployed for action. After having finished my search and spent some little time reading, I glanced across the room and noticed that one captain who commenced the same time I did was still earnestly at work and I said, ‘Captain, I'm inclined to think you are having good success, and finding them plenty to-day.” Without saying a word he deliberately arose, came over to where I was, and stopping, and in a very confidential manner almost in a whisper, said, “Colonel, I examined my clothes thoroughly yesterday, not leaving a knot that I could find destroyed, and by hoky, to-day I have found two hundred and fifty by count, and am finding them yet. Actual count, mind,” and as deliberately went back to his place and continued the search. I remarked, “you must be a busy set over there where you stop.” “I reckon,” he concluded,
“it must be so.” No person can have the least idea of the amount of annoyance occasioned us by these little graybacks.

I have mentioned nothing in regard to the warming of our rooms which perhaps may as well be touched at here. I previously mentioned that each room was provided with a coal stove and gave a description of it. There was furnished us for each stove two or three bushels of miserable coal each day, giving out but very little heat. During cold days a person could stand within three feet of the stove all day long without being too warm and the stove at the same time being red hot. A certain crowd would monopolize the stove by standing around it to the exclusion of all others and but very little heat extended outside of the ring. Once every twenty-four hours the stoves had to be cleaned out. To do this the pipe had to be taken off, then the upper half of the stove and the lower portion turned over and about as many bushels of stone and slate taken from it as there were of coal when brought in. We concluded that we would not miss the mark widely if we should call this kind of coal “stone coal.” While cleaning the stoves the rooms would be filled with dense smoke and gas that was almost suffocating. This lasted about an hour. We were allowed here to look out the windows. The windows were glazed. There were no iron bars, but wooden ones on the outside, across the windows. We were not allowed to sit on the window sill or put our heads or hands out of the window under a penalty of being shot at. An officer was pouring water into a cup which sat on the window sill and some of it ran over and out the window. It so happened that the guard outside was directly under the window at the time and some fell upon him and the guard fired through the window, the bullet missing the man and passing up through the floor of the third story and through a sack of potatoes into the hand of another man who was paring potatoes.

CHAPTER XI.

A Union Sympathizer on Guard—An Escape Frustrated—Fresh Fish.

About the first of December the battalion of guards that was doing duty at Danville was sent to the front and a battalion of the “new issue” took their place. Among the latter was one who was a merchant from Raleigh, N. C., a Union man who had voted for Holden, the Union candidate for governor a short time previous. This man had been under conscription ever since the first conscription act of Confederacy called out men. He remained at home upon agreeing to take in and store commissary supplies in his buildings, subject to the call of the Commissary General of the Confederacy or some of his subordinates on duty in the department of which Raleigh was a part. These supplies consisted of what was raised by a tax in kind according to an act passed by the Confederate congress which took one tenth of all the crops raised for the support of the armies of the Confederacy. He remained unmolested.
under this contract until after he voted for Holden for governor and publicly proclaimed one day in the streets that he would rather see Holden in the Presidential Chair than Jefferson Davis. The same day he was ordered into the rank. Having a younger brother in the battalion, influence was brought to bear through him to furnish a position in the same regiment or battalion in which he succeeded; hence his presence at Danville as one of the guard.

He would converse freely with some of us on the subject of war and in the conversation would state to us his belief in the final results and that was the final downfall of the Confederacy, and that on the first opportunity if sent to the front, that presented itself he would cross over to the Union lines. He was shortly sent to the front and we saw him no more.

In conversation with him one day he asked many questions in regard to deserters from their line to ours, anxious to know everything that would aid him in any way, and especially what was done with men who did so desert as they were told that they were put into our army. The answers to these questions seemed to be quite satisfactory.

There was one, Lieutenant Titus, who was captured near Fort Hudson in June, 1863. He was Quartermaster of a regiment composed of negro troops, and was foraging one day by order of General Banks with two cavalry men as guards and was waylaid and pitched in for a fight, seeing but three or four of the enemy, and the result was that three of the enemy were killed, he himself receiving a severe wound, a ball having passed through his abdomen. He then told the two cavalry men to make their escape, the teamsters having already done so. They did so, leaving the enemy in possession of the Lieutenant and the wagons. He was carried in one of his own wagons ninety miles, then sent to Richmond and afterward removed to Salisbury, N. C., where he was when we arrived there. He was confined in a cell at Richmond four months on quarter rations some of the time and never had his wound dressed by a Confederate surgeon. While he was incarcerated in the cell with others, they would trap rats and get the darkies to cook the rats for them, and often pay a dollar per head for rats to add to their rations, in order to keep soul and body together. Lieutenant Titus was the subject of the highest sympathy of anyone in prison. He was a gentleman and a person of good cheerful disposition. He had been a prisoner so long that he had accumulated an extensive stock of furniture in the cooking line, and they were in use constantly from morning until night. Any person was welcome to their use at any time that he was not using them himself. Many a good dish I received from him while I was confined to my regular rations, for which I shall never cease to be thankful.

He made a contract one night with this guard from Raleigh, in which he with three others, were to be allowed to escape. This guard had control of the keys to the doors that night and on his second tour of duty which
was twelve, midnight, he was going to let him out. The Lieutenant came to me and told me all about the arrangement and said he could not get the guard to agree to let out but four at this time, or he would have made arrangements for me to accompany them. I told him I was too conspicuous a person to go out with a number. All those who knew me that visited the prison would miss me at roll call the next morning, and at the visits of the authorities for every time they came in they took special pains to see and have a conversation with me. Many a half hour have I enjoyed a chat with them, especially the Officer of the Day. I told him it would be better for those to go who would not be missed for a few days, and thanked him kindly for the interest he took in my welfare and I offered him my boots, saying to him "that he could not travel to our lines with nothing on his feet and endure it at this season of the year." With considerable urging, he accepted the offer. At the hour agreed upon he with the others prepared for their departure.

A Mr. Hubbard, one of the navy officers, who had been notified of his release which was to occur in a day or two, with all other officers belonging to the navy, got an idea somehow that something of the kind was going on, and with two or three others followed after to the lower flower, and asked to be let out with the four. They were told that four was all that he could let out at that time, but if they would wait awhile and these four succeeded in getting away without a row outside, he would let out as many more in two hours. They were not satisfied with that and Howard said, "We must go with the first gang or we will blow on you in the morning." As a matter of course, this ended the matter and Howard thereafter was looked upon with indignation, even by his own comrades in the navy for acting in so low and despicable a manner. These navy officers were those who we recaptured when the Confederate ironclad Albamarle was blown up at or near the mouth of the Roanoke river in November, 1864.

A portion of the battalion on duty at the time as guards was composed of citizens of the place, some of them dealers in groceries who would try at all times to get positions inside, of which there were two, one at the foot of the stairs at the door leading into the anteroom and one at the rear door leading into the yard. They were anxious to obtain those positions from the fact that they would have a better opportunity to sell their goods to the officers, especially such articles as the officers needed and they could smuggle in. This trade was carried on quite extensively as articles could be purchased cheaper and of a greater variety in this way than in the way prescribed by the the authorities. The legitimate way here was through the commissary sergeant.

In conversing with the guard we came to the conclusion that the guards themselves believed that the Confederacy was about played out. One incident will suffice to show how they felt in regard to it. Many might be given. One night about ten o'clock I went down stairs and into yard and was accosted by
the guard on the back steps with, "Don't you want to buy a loaf of bread?" I said I had no money, but I presume I could find a purchaser for him. "What do you ask for it?" "Twenty dollars," "Let me see it." He took it from under his left arm and from underneath his blanket. It was of the size of a loaf baked up on an ordinary sized baking tin, a loaf similar in size to one usually found in any farmer's kitchen at the North. "It is all of flour made from wheat! Nearly all. It may be a quarter corn meal, not more." "What do you suppose a loaf of that size would cost up where I live?" "O, I suppose about two shillin." "Why is it that you ask so much in your money?" "I think our money ain't worth much. I guess the Confederacy is about played out." "I think so, too," said I, and left him. I reported the fact when I got up stairs that there was a loaf of bread below on the back steps for sale at twenty dollars, and he soon disposed of it to his satisfaction and the relief of some hungry one.

CHAPTER XIII.

A Neat Scheme For An Escape Frustrated.

We would hear the cry "fresh fish" quite often and repeated like some fresh fish vender—"fresh fish," "fresh fish;" whereby we would know that another batch of prisoners had arrived. Twenty-three arrived at one time that had been recaptured, they having escaped from Columbia, where they were sent from Charleston on the approach of General Sherman to the coast, on his march from Atlanta. Some were recaptured and brought in to Danville who escaped from us on the night after leaving Salisbury. Brigadier General Duffia, a cavalry general, was captured in the Shenandoah valley, and in November, with others, were sent to Danville. Some of them had been confined at Lynchburg and some at Libby. General Duffia was determined to escape in some way, consequently he was always agitating a break en mass.

About the last of November and first part of December General Lee sent troops through Danville south to aid in stopping General Sherman's march. For lack of transportation, whole brigades would be obliged to tarry at Danville a day or two. The weather being cold and snow on the ground, many were reported by the guards to have died on the ground while in camp. The afternoon of the eighth of December, troops to the amount of two hundred stacked their arms in the street, running from the south side of the building in which we were confined to Main street. The end of the line of stacks nearest the prison was not one hundred yards from the door of our prison building. The stacks remained there all night and the next day. In the afternoon General Duffia conceived the idea that there were no troops behind those guns, and of breaking out and capturing them, and liberating all the prisoners in the place, take the arsenal, and arming all our men, destroy all the government property, bridges, and clothing factory, getting what supplies were in the place, and then march to our
lines—mighty big undertaking to carry out under the circumstances! He called a meeting of all the field officers to consult on the feasibility of making the attempt and the success of the scheme. While we were thus convened deliberating upon the subject, about dark the arms so stacked were taken by troops stationed or quartered in the building in front of which the arms had been stacked, demonstrating the fact that I mentioned in our deliberation, that the troops to which those arms belonged were quartered in that building. I argued that upon the attempt being made, the guards would fire their pieces and that would be the signal for all the guards to turn out, and before we could break through two doors, both locked and barred, and a line of sentinels outside, we would be surrounded by a number sufficient to shoot down every one of us. Very few could see it in that light. I questioned General Duffia: "Providing we get out and release all the men, and arm them without loss, taking into consideration the coldness of the weather, scantiness of clothing of the men and the distance to our lines; how many men would die from exposure, when we have the fact that many of the men can hardly stand alone, and nearly all shoeless?" "Oh! not many, but we must expect to lose men." "Well," said I, "Can you expect to march the men to our lines with less than the loss of a thousand." (Six thousand were reported at Danville in all). "Well, suppose we lose a thousand, what of that, if the rest can get away?" I replied "I'm not going to take any share in the responsibility of the lives of a thousand men on my hands with no clearer a prospect of success than is shown here, for my opinion is that it will prove a failure, and only result in the loss of a few lives and none get outside of these walls." Said he: "I only want a column of one hundred men here in this building to open the way for the rest, and I think I can get that number of cavalry men to follow me." I being the Senior Colonel, the general and myself did most of the talking. After the talking was closed, the General asked the opinion of each one, commencing the reverse of the usual way at such meetings, by asking the senior officer first and ending with junior. The result was eleven against and eight in favor of the move, and the meeting adjourned, concluding that nothing could be done that night, as the arms had been taken in. I will here remark that Brigadier General Hays was at this time in the hospital some little distance from the prison, and we had not the privilege of his opinion, yet judging from what was said at our meeting at Salisbury, he would have been on the side of the break.

However, General Duffia was headstrong and determined to carry the scheme through. He was a good cavalry officer to carry out plans and obey orders, but he evinced no tact at planning on this occasion. The sequel will show who was right in our deliberations.

The next morning, after breakfast, and after the officers had been through the building on their usual inspection and had left, General Duffia again commenced the agita-
tion, but in a different manner than that which was taken the day before. His line this time was to see if he could get, by private canvass, a hundred men to stand by him in such a break and upon succeeding, which he did, made them take an oath to obey his orders and stand firm until the whole scheme was accomplished. Over one hundred men took the oath and awaited orders. Then the plan was revealed to them as follows: They were to go to work and make as many clubs as the necessary timber could be found in the room, to be used as weapons. When they were ready a squad was to be sent after water, two other squads of four each to go below, when the water carriers returned to the door, and as the door was opened the attack on the guards was to commence. At the same time the rest were to be in column ready to break when all would be right and the thing accomplished. General Duffia was to lead one squad of four, and Colonel Ralston the other. Colonel Ralston was to attack the guard at the bottom of the stairs as the door opened. He was to be assisted by a sergeant from his own regiment, who wore a very heavy black beard. The column was to rush through the door and attack the sentinels outside, secure their arms, and rush for the other prisons, and release the entire men.

About the middle of the afternoon, all was in readiness. The column was formed and a squad of eight or ten men went after water, the other two squads passing below. The stairs from the lower floor to the second floor passed by a window, obscuring about one-half of it. That portion of the window not obscured was the lower part and behind the stairs. In this portion of the window three or four lights of glass were broken out. A guard was stationed outside at this window whose beat took him past this window every few seconds, making any attempt to overpower a guard inside rather hazardous, to say the least. But nothing would do but to make the attempt.

The attempt was made. When the water carriers arrived at the door, the signal was given and the guards were attacked. The guard outside, hearing the scuffle inside, looked through the window, and, seeing what was going on, put his gun through a broken pane of glass and fired, lodging a ball and a buck shot in the abdomen of Colonel Ralston. A retreat was ordered even without any attempt to move by the column of one hundred which was formed at the head of the stairs. Up they rushed taking their respective places, hiding clubs, and arranging things to appear as usual, hiding one of the men who who made the attack under a blanket, and cutting off the beard of Colonel Ralston’s sergeant, a mustache from another, putting all the clubs in the stove that it would hold and the rest under blankets, and some one sitting on them.

Before Colonel Smith had time to arrive at the prison from his office, everything was as quiet as if nothing had happened or no unusual occurrence had taken place. Colonel Ralston in the meantime had been brought up to his place. Colonel
Smith came in very angry and assaulted Colonel Hooper for allowing such a thing to occur, and said in his rage, using very profane language that if the thing happened again he would blow the "d—d thing to h—, and I have good mind to do it now."

He left and the Officers of the Guard came with a file of men to seek out those who attacked them with clubs and to find the clubs. One of the men was found, the one who was hid under the blankets, but not a club did they find on the whole premises. The man who was found was put in a cell until next day and then released. Colonel Ralston was taken to the hospital late at night and died the fifth day. In the evening Colonel Henry, commanding the battalion of guards and very sociably talking the matter over, concluded that it was our duty to escape if we could, but we must run the risk of doing so.

Afterward all remained quiet until we were released. Two officers escaped toward the last and they were not missed for a week, though at the same time we were all counted twice each day. A few conjured up a way to escape which would have been carried out quite extensively if we had remained long. Usually the last turn of water was brought just before dark. The spring from which our water supply came was on the bank of the river, and in going, the route led past a foundry in front of which stood an oven for baking or tempering iron, the dimensions of which was about six feet wide and about eight feet long, and sufficient in height to allow a man to stand upright. Generally but two guards acco-

unpanied the water party. The route was past this foundry to the bank of the river, a flight of steps leading down the bank and near the oven above mentioned, then up the river quite a little distance after having crossed the tailrace of a woolen factory. The spring was considerably below the embankment of the race, so that if the water carriers should string along from the spring to the top of the bank near the oven those near the oven could not be seen by the guard in front or by the one in the rear. The plan was to extend the line of the water party so that when the center of the line was at the oven neither guard was in sight of that point, and the one designated to escape must be at the center of the line and conceal himself in the oven until after dark, and then for escape.

One man did so and was seen by one of our enlisted men, on parole as a baker, whose quarters were across the street and directly opposite of the oven. At dark this man brought to the oven a haversack well filled with corn bread and gave it to the officer in the oven, stating to him: "I saw you dodge in here and concluded what was up and this would help you on your journey." During the forepart of the night, the officer went to the depot and lounged about until the twelve o'clock train came in, and he got aboard for Richmond, calculating that if he was noticed he would tell them that he belonged to Lee's army and had been home on furlough and got drunk and lost his furlough and was making his way to join his regiment. He was again recaptured and lodged in Libby,
where we found him when we arrived there for exchange.

Four others escaped in the same way, taking different routes to our lines, one of whom was recaptured near the south line of North Carolina, making his way to Sherman’s army at Savannah and was returned to us the night before we started for Richmond.

Now to fill up the count that none should be missed. The manner of counting was, to order us to form in four ranks, each man covering his file. The files were counted and multiplied by four, if the counter knew enough to do it, which was doubtful, judging from his manner and hesitancy. The lower floor would be taken first and a guard stationed on the stairs to allow no one to pass up or down during the count in the upper room. When we were all in form on the upper floor there were four ranks down one side of the room and across the lower end, thereby concealing the lower end of the room from any person in front of the first lines as he passed down the room counting. A hole was cut through the floor in the lower corner of the room obliquely across from the stairs and as the counting sergeant was coming up stairs some one would cry out, “Fall in, here he is,” which was the signal for all to fall in and the trap door to be opened, and five from the story below would come up through the hole and be counted on the upper floor. During the day between counts this trap was covered with blankets, pots, pails, etc.

CHAPTER XIV.

Our Bill of Fare—Culinary Arrangements—Great Deficiency in Clothing.

Our rations at Danville were quite irregular, except the bread. Bread was issued but once a day, and that in the morning, fresh from the oven. Beef was issued at any hour the most convenient for the prison authorities, sometimes as late as sundown. Fresh beef was furnished to us as a general thing once a day until the first of October when the issue began to slacken. During the month of November it was furnished from once to three times a week, the forepart of the month three times, about the middle of the month twice and the latter part of the month and into December, once a week.

When beef became scarce they would furnish pea soup, and what they termed cabbage soup, which was made by throwing cabbage stumps, after the heads had been cut off, for the use of the Confederates, into some river water and boiling them without any salt. By the way, salt was so scarce that to get any we had to pay three dollars per pound for it. When this soup was dealt out to us, there would be one square inch to each man of cabbage leaf and about one-half pint of water. A person could hardly tell by the taste whether there ever had been a cabbage leaf near it or not. Often the vessel in which the soup was brought in would contain about an inch of mud and sand which had settled to the bottom from using roily river water. Never while we were at Danville did they make our soup from the water our meat was boiled in. A sergeant who
brought in the soup once said to Captain Daley of my regiment pointing to an officer, "What do you suppose that fellow said to me just now?" "He wanted to know how long this stuff was going to last?"

"I'm glad," said the captain, "You have found some one to name it for I'll be hanged if I could" The sergeant had no more to say and left us.

I will here give an arrangement we had for cooking on the coal stove, proving that necessity is the mother of invention, and pass on to make remarks upon the treatment of enlisted men at Danville, or that portion that came under my own obligation and close this narrative:

In the lower story of the building were some portions of old broken stoves, and among them were two ornamental rings just large enough to fit on the top of our stoves without sliding down the outside. Some prisoner of taste, thinking it might be ornamental and improve the appearance of our dead looking stoves brought one up and put it on. The improvement was so conspicuous that the other stove in the lower or second story was soon ornamented with a similar cornice. All gave in that it was a decided improvement in appearance. In making as many changes as possible with our "corn dodger," we conceived the idea of making crust coffee by taking the crust from the bread, scouring it and boiling it, which proved to be rather a pleasant drink, even without cream and sugar. Shortly after the ornamentation of the stoves, some ingenious person had his cup of coffee hanging by a stick with notches on each end, on the cornice one supporting the cup and the other on the cornice with the stick so notched that he could raise or lower his cup at pleasure so as to have the cup where the stove had become red hot, which, when the fire was first made, would be near the bottom, but as the stove was filled with coal, higher until it reached the top nearly. When this cup was discovered against the side of the stove, pocket knives were soon in requisition to make more hooks, and soon the stove was completely surrounded by quart cups cooking coffee, and although very little heat penetrated the room, beans, rice, dried apples, potatoes, turnips, etc., were successfully cooked in this way, thereby saving wood, and often cold feet while those in the yard below were doing the same that the stove was now doing to the great delight of not a few. Thus you see we were always conjuring up something beneficial.

On the eleventh of February, 1865, I was paroled to issue clothing to the prisoners at Danville sent on by our Government for that purpose, with Colonel Carl of the 191st Penn., and Lieutenant Colonel Sprague of the 13th Conn., to assist me. On entering the office of the prison commander to take the parole and commence work, there was quite a commotion. Prisoners had escaped. Colonel Smith was then in Richmond leaving a lieutenant in charge of the prison. Colonel Smith telegraphed that a prisoner from Danville was recaptured. So the count was ordered the second time which was done and the report was all right. At this a lieutenant came in and the lieutenant in charge requested him
to go and count them. He did so, and reported the count all right. "It beats h—," the lieutenant exclaimed, "go and call the roll." During all this time I sat there listening with a great deal of pleasure to what was going on, but when the roll call was ordered I knew then they had us for there had been no provision for a roll call. The roll was called. The lieutenant and clerk came in and the first word said was "By g— lieutenant, there are five missing." Five failed to answer to their names. But how they escaped or how they missed the count was a mystery.

On examining the packages of clothing sent and comparing them with the invoice, I found them to be correct, but not sufficient in quantity to clothe one-fourth of the men with shoes nor stockings, drawers or caps. I was directed by letter from Brigadier General Hays, then on parole at Richmond, having the charge of the issue to the prisoners at Danville and Salisbury, or rather in Virginia and North Carolina, to inform him of any deficiency and he would forward to me immediately, I receipted for the clothing and proposed to my associates that we visit the different prisons to approximate the deficiency and report to General Hayes, so that by the time we were through issuing what was on hand, the rest might arrive. The idea was consented to by both of them and we started on a mission the like of which I never wish to experience again. I only wish I had the command of words to describe what we saw.

CHAPTER XV.


In issuing clothing we were allowed all the facilities within the power of the Confederacy to dispatch the business. The weather was extremely cold for that section of country. Snow and ice on the ground during the whole time we were issuing. We were obliged to issue in the lower rooms of each prison building and with all the exercise we could get up in handling clothing, we shivered from morning until night. The men were so cold and numb nearly one-third of them could not write their names upon the receipt roll which was furnished us for that purpose. We did not find a Southern soldier that could write his name. All said they didn't know how to write. I mean Union soldiers from Southern states. There were some from Tennessee.

On commencing, the clothing and blankets were put into the quartermaster's room and the key delivered to me, yet while we were issuing or in the night there were some two hundred shirts stolen and a number of pairs of pantaloons. But the most damnable thing that occurred, was, that the officers of the guard in the evening after the issuing had closed, went into the prison among the men and traded with the men for blankets, giving in return bread and a little money, notwithstanding the fact that we charged the men firmly to hang on to their blankets and not to dispose of them for any consideration whatever, for in a few days they would need them when on the cars on the way home. So many
of them were so hungry that they could not bear the sight of something to eat.

On the 17th day of the month we were started for Richmond for exchange. No more clothing had arrived, and the men were still shoeless. Some of them took pieces of old blankets and wrapped around their feet, but the prospect of soon seeing home was both food and clothing for a time.

The men were marched out into the mud and snow and halted, and after standing there nearly an hour were ordered back into the building again on account of failure to obtain transportation. After dark we were again ordered out and marched through the mud and slush which was over shodetops, to the depot and stood about there until midnight before transportation was ready.

One other item of this meanness which occurred, I must on no account leave unmentioned. During the time of dealing out clothing, I received a few packages composed of edibles and some things in shape of underwear for the comfort of those to whom the articles were directed. The packages were both for officers and men, boxes to the amount of five or six and eighteen inches wide and about the same in height. One, some three feet long contained quite an amount. With these packages I received instructions to sell all belongings to those who did or could not be found, to the highest bidder and to forward the proceeds, whether money or note North to those from whom it was sent. No owner could be found for three, and one was reported dead. I wrote to Salisbury asking the person in charge of the issue there, if the persons, naming them, were there, and the answer was no such men there. I then was about to dispose of the articles by sale as directed, but was notified by Lieutenant Allison, then in command of the prison, in the absence of Colonel Smith, who was at Richmond, that I could not sell the packages until he had received an answer from Colonel Smith, to whom he had written in regard to the matter. The lieutenant and myself had some sharp words. I was allowed, however to put the packages in a room over the office which was done, the door locked and the key delivered to me. The next day, upon unlocking the door, and entering the room, I found that during the night the boxes had been broken open and the contents taken out. On reporting to Colonel Allison, I received the following reply, which astonished me: "I can't help it." Well, now, if there was not a row of words in that office for awhile, there never was, that's all!

We finally got away from the most occurred place of all places ever I was in. Talk about Libby! Libby is a palace compared with Danville.

In due time we arrived at Richmond and Libby again and found it much different in regard to discipline than when we left. We were allowed to do pretty much as we pleased. We stopped at Libby a day or two and were paroled and on the ever-to-be-remembered, twenty-first day of February, 1865, departed from Libby down the River James. We sailed or steamed past Fort Darling with its parapets and siege guns frowning down upon us through the em-
brasures and past the obstructions of their James River fleet which was composed of three iron clad rams and three gun boats, to Atkins Landing, where we found two or three thousand Confederate soldiers awaiting transportation up the river on the boats that brought us down, which were two small steamers and one old canal boat, with the sick towed by one of the steamers.

A more hale, hearty, and robust lot of soldiers I never saw than these Confederates, who were just brought up the river on the Union steamer, City of New York. But what a contrast between them and ourselves, scarcely any of us able to walk the plank from the steamer to the shore without tottering. Some of you rebel sympathizers here at the North will say that this is an exaggeration. Well! You will come about as near the truth as you did all along during the two last years of the contest, when was ringing from day to day the cry that the war was a failure, and the rebellion could not be put down, and thanking God that greenbacks were worth but forty cents on a dollar,—as if God would take notice of such thanks. When God holding that institution that the Southern people held with such sacred reverence, slavery, within the grasp of His Almighty power, and could say thus far and no farther, and "here shall thy proud ways be stayed," and when the war closed could say through the instrumentality of my people, Slavery was, Slavery is no more!

And now after being fairly beaten, stealing into the republican ranks, picking up some of the smallest men among them to hold up for the free suffrage of an enlightened people, made doubly so by the conflict just closed. The God of the democratic party that has reigned so long, is no more, and may peace and prosperity take the throne.

We were marched on foot from this landing about four miles, to a point where our steamer, the City of New York, awaited us with the stars and stripes floating out triumph in the breeze.

What joy prevailed the soul on sight of the dear old flag that so long had hung hidden from our view! Cheering! Not a sound was heard! But the tears tickling down the cheek of those emaciated ones told that that old flag was being cheered with cheering that could not be uttered! THE END.
Col. Prey shares his observations as a Union officer captured with his regiment near Petersburg, VA, in August 1864 in this richly detailed account of the conditions and daily life in three Confederate prisons near the end of the Civil War. From the fateful battle where Prey was forced to surrender, through his several prison-bound journeys through the countryside where he witnessed for himself that the South is “about played out,” to the factories and warehouses that served as the prisons, readers will invariably share the misery of the soldiers’ cold and damp clothing, meager rations, frustrated escape plots, menacing “muggers,” and the overall filth and suffering that constituted their lives for six months, until their release in a prisoner exchange in February 1865.