

The Last 90 Days of The War in North Carolina.

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CHAPTER 11.

Johnston's Retreat—Governors Graham and Swain Misunderstand Wheeler's Cavalry—Confederate Occupation of Chapel Hill—The Last Blood—"Stars and Stripes"—One in Death—General Atkins' Scene Around Raleigh—Military Lawlessness.

When the retrograde movement of General Johnston's army was at last fully understood—the supply trains moving slowly along the roads of Orange, and General Wheeler's cavalry acting upon the maxim that all that they left behind them was as much aid and comfort to the enemy, taking care to leave at least a few mules and horses as possible—then deluded people, who had all along hugged themselves in the belief that their remoteness was their security, began to shake the dust from their eyes, and when they admitted the possibility of Sherman's army reaching even their secluded homes.

The mission of Governor Graham and Swain was not generally understood, even by their near neighbors. That any available attempt to check the rule and administration of the military government, very few believed. A distinguished Confederate general, standing on our sidewalk, as his division of infantry marched through on Friday, fourteen, said in reference to the commissioners, that they were a couple of traitors, and ought to be hung. General Wheeler's cavalry held the village of Chapel Hill until midday of April sixteenth, East or Sunday. Not a house in the place but was thrown open, showing their kindness and hospitality. There were rough riders among these troopers—men who, if plunder was the object, would care little whether it was got from friend or foe. How much of this disposition to submit by plunder was due to the West Point training of their general, it would perhaps be inquiring too curiously to consider. A few such reckless men in the regiment would have been enough to entail an evil name upon the whole; and at the time of which I speak there were more than a few in General Wheeler's command who were utterly demoralized lawless, and defiant. Having said this much, because the truth must be told, I will add that that famous band by far the greater part were true and gallant men. We mingled freely with them, from General Wheeler himself, who slept in the drenching rain among his men, and was idolized by them, to his poorest private, and the impression made by them was altogether in their favor. There were men from every Southern State and from every walk in life. There were mechanics from Georgia

and planters from Alabama; one of the latter I especially remember, who had been a country physician in the northeast corner of the State; a frank and steady, gray-haired man, whose very address inspired confidence, and whose eldest boy rode by his side, there were gay Frenchmen from Louisiana, and "knappers" from Tennessee, some of whom had graduated in this University in the happy days gone by, who revisited these empty corridors with undisguised sadness, foreboding that not one stone would be left upon another of these venerable buildings, perhaps not an oak left standing in the noble groves, after Sherman's army had passed. Many of these men had not been paid one cent even of Confederate currency in more than a year. Few of them had more than the well-worn suit of clothes he had on, and some of them were as poor as the poor and poorly equipped horse he rode. A lieutenant, not four years before a graduate of this University, who had not seen his home within a year, and who had not long before received intelligence that his house in Tennessee had been burned to the ground by the enemy, and that his wife and child were homeless, when the certain news was brought by Governor Swain of General Lee's surrender, covered his face with his hands to hide a brave man's tears. He told us that a twenty-five cent Confederate note was all that he possessed in the world beside his horse. The privates generally discussed the situation of affairs calmly and frankly, and with an amount of intelligence that the Southern and Southwestern yeomanry have not generally had credit for possessing. They one and all agreed that if the end was near, they would not surrender. "No, no," said a red-cheeked Georgian boy of nineteen, "they won't get me;" and one six-foot six saturnine Kentuckian assured me that he would join the army of France and take his allegiance and his revolver over the water. I trust he is on his little farm by the Licking river as I write and has found him a wife and has settled down to do his whole duty to the country once more.

These men rode up frankly to our gates. "May I have dinner here?" "Can you give me a biscuit?" Well, it was not much we had, but we gave it joyfully—dried fruit, sorghum, dried peas and early vegetables. Poor as it was we seasoned it with the heartiest good will and a thousand wishes that it were better. The divisions of infantry passed through with a rapid step without halting, so that we could give them no more than a hearty welcome and a farewell, and a hearty God bless them as they passed. Their faces were weather-beaten but cheery; their uniforms were faded, stained and worn; but they stepped lightly and had a passing joke for the town gazers, and a kindly glance for

the pretty girls who lined the sidewalks, standing in the checkered shade of the young elms. On Friday afternoon General Wheeler rode in from Raleigh with his staff and alighted at the first corner. One of his aids came up with a map of North Carolina which he unrolled and laid on the ground. General Wheeler knelt down to consult it and the group gathered round him. Several of our citizens drew near, and a circle of as bright eyes and fair faces as the Confederacy could show anywhere, eager to look upon men whose names have been familiar for four years and whose fame will be part of our national history.

The Federal cavalry were in close pursuit and several skirmishes had taken place on the road from Raleigh. A brigade under General Atkins followed General Wheeler, while Kilpatrick, with the rest of his division, followed Hampton toward Hillsboro, along the Central Railroad line. The last skirmish occurred, and perhaps the last blood of the war was shed on Friday evening, fourteenth, at the Atkins plantation, eight miles from Chapel Hill, near the New Hope river, which was much swollen by heavy rains, and the bridge over which, as well as all others on the road, was destroyed by General Wheeler's men. They attacked the enemy endeavoring to cross on fallen trees and driftwood, and several were killed on both sides. Some of our men were killed in a skirmish at Morrisville, and some of the wounded came on with the trains. One poor fellow from Selma, Alabama, mortally wounded, was carried to the house of one of our principal physicians, and tenderly cared for, for two or three days while he talked of his distant home and his mother, and sent messages to those who would see him no more. After his comrades had passed on and the place was in the hands of the Federals, he resigned himself to die with childish patience, asking for a favorite hymn, and begging the lovely girl who had watched him with a sister's fidelity to kiss him, as he was dying. "For his sister," he was laid to rest in the garden and de- parted as bitter tears of regret and despair fell on that lonely grave as on any during the war; for the war was over, and he and the rest had died in vain.

On Sunday, at 2 p. m. General Wheeler called in his pickets; and once more, and for the last time, we saw the gallant sight of our gray-clad Confederate soldiers, and waved our last farewell to our army. A few hours of absolute and Sabbath stillness and silence ensued. The groves stood thick and solemn, the bright sun shining through the great boughs and down the grassy slopes, while a pleasant fragrance was wafted from the purple panicles of the Paulownia. All that nature can do was still done with order and beauty, while men's hearts were falling them for fear, and for looking after those things which were coming on the earth.

We sat in our pleasant piazzas and awaited events with quiet resignation. The silver had all been buried—some of it in springs, some of it under rocks in the streams, some of it in fence corners, which, after the fences had

been burned down, was pretty hard to find again; some of it in the woods, some of it in the cellars. There was not much provision to be carried off—that was one comfort. The sight of our empty store-rooms and smoke-houses would be likely to move our invaders to laughter. Our wardrobes were hardly worth hiding—homespun and jeans hung placidly in their accustomed places. But the libraries, public and private, the building of the University—all minor selfish considerations were merged in a generous anxiety for the future. So we talked and speculated, while the very peace and profound quiet of the place sustained and soothed our minds. Just at sunset a sedate and soldierly-looking man, at the head of a dozen dressed in blue, rode quietly in by the Raleigh road. Governor Swain, accompanied by a few of the principal citizens, met them at the entrance, and stated that he had General Sherman's promise that the town and University should be saved from pillage. The soldier replied that such were his orders, and they should be observed. They then rode in, galloped up and down the streets inquiring for rebels; and being informed that there were none in town, they withdrew for the night to their camp; and the next morning, being Easter Monday, April 17th, General Atkins, at the head of a detachment of four thousand cavalry, entered about 8 a. m. and we were captured.

That was surely a day to be remembered by us all. For the first time in four years we saw the old flag—the "Stars and Stripes"—in whose defense we would once have been willing to die, but which certainly excited very little enthusiasm now. Never before had we realized how entirely our hearts had been turned away from what was once our country, till we felt the bitterness aroused by the sight of that flag shaking out its red and white folds in advance of the guard, and in less than ten minutes the lower rooms, store-rooms, and bed rooms overhauled and plundered with a swift and business-like thoroughness only attainable by long and extensive practice. A guard arriving, the left, but their plunder was not restored. The village guards, belonging to the Ninth Michigan Cavalry, deserve especial mention as being a descent set of men, who, while they were here, behaved with civility and propriety.

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than conquerors' were of the flowers of their own dear native State. It was all that North Carolina could do for her sons who had died in obedience to her laws. Come, Southern flowers, and twine above their grave; Let all our rash spring blossoms bear a part; Let lilies of the vale and snowdrops wave, And come thou, too, fit emblem, bleeding heart! Bring all our evergreens—the laurel and the bay. From the deep forests which around us stand; They know them well, for in a happier day They roamed these hills and valleys hand in hand.

Ye winds of heaven, o'er them gently sigh. And April showers fall in kindliest rain. And let the golden sunbeams softly lie Upon the sod for which they died in vain.

It was something—it was much, that we could lay them among their own familiar hills, pleasant in their lives and undivided in their deaths. And North Carolina dust will lie lightly on their gentle and noble breasts.

While the command of General Atkins remained in Chapel Hill—a peril of nearly three weeks—the same work, with perhaps some mitigation, was going on in the country around the city of Raleigh, which had marked the progress of the Federal armies all through the South. Planters having large families of white and black were left without food, forage, cattle, or change of clothing. Being in camp so long, bedding became an object with the marauders; and many wealthy families were stripped of what the industry of years had accumulated in that line. Much of what was so wantonly taken was as wantonly destroyed and squandered among the prostitutes and negroes who haunted the camps. As to Raleigh, though within the corporate limits, no plundering of the houses was allowed; yet in the suburbs and the country the insatiable policy of permitting unrestrained license to the troops prevailed to its widest extent. From the statements of several of the prominent citizens of Raleigh I make the following extracts, the first giving a general view and the other simply one man's personal experience.

thirteenth day of April, General Sherman took military possession of Raleigh. A portion of his body-guard pitched their tents (eight in number) in my front yard, which, with a room in my office, were occupied by officers. Their servants—cooks, waiters, and hostlers—took possession of my kitchen, outhouses, and stables, appropriating them in a most riotous and insolent manner. The soldiers tore down my yard and garden fences for fuel and tents, and turned their horses and mules upon my vegetables and fruit trees, destroying a large lot of corn, potatoes, peas, etc., took off my horses and mules, tore off the doors, flooring, and weather-boarding of my outhouses and barns for tents; killed all my poultry, upwards of thirty young hogs, cooking them in my kitchen for the officer's tables.

After the removal of this squad, another instant possession and pitched 24 tents in my front yard and a large number in the lower part of my grounds, still using my kitchen, besides building fires all over the yard. At my plantation three miles from town, the devastation was thorough and unsparring. I had no overseer there. The negroes, some 70 in number, were plundered of their clothing and provisions, consisting of bacon, pickled beef, corn meal and flour. My dwelling house was broken open, weather boarding, flooring and ceiling carried off, every window sash and glass broken, and every article of furniture for house and kitchen destroyed. Barns, cotton house and sheds were all torn down; blacksmith's, carpenter's and farming implements carried off or broken up; three carts and two large wagons, with their gear destroyed; the fences burned and a large number of mules and horses pastured on the wheat fields; all my mules and horses (17 in number) were carried off; 50 head of cattle, 40 sheep, 50 hogs, and a large flock of geese and poultry either taken off or wantonly shot down; a quantity of medicine, some excellent wines, brandy, whiskey and 200 gallons of vinegar were taken. Wagon trains went down day after day, till 150 barrels of corn, 15,000 pounds of fodder, 12,000 pounds of hay and all my wheat, peas, cotton, etc., were carried off, leaving the whole place entirely bare so that my negroes had to come in town for rations.

By the above account it will be seen that having a guard did not avail to protect the premises even within the city, though, as a general rule, their presence did avail to protect the grounds around the house. A lady residing beyond the city limits, the wife of a general officer in our army, had her house repeatedly pillaged, and all the provisions belonging to her negroes, as well as her own, carried off. The tent of a general of the Federal army was pitched just in front of the house, and every marauder going in and coming out laden with spoils was immediately in his view, yet not a word was said to check the men nor any steps allowed for her protection. A guard was refused her on the ground of the action of Wheeler's men at their entrance; and when, after repeated so-

licitation, a guard reluctantly came he allowed all who were on the premises to march off with what they had in hand, saying he had no authority to take anything away from them. The unfortunate negroes were the severest sufferers, they being literally stripped of their all, and beginning a new life of freedom, began it without even the little savings and personal property accumulated in slavery.

That General Sherman was well aware of all this, and not only tacitly permitted it, but considered it a necessary part of war that non-combatants lying at the mercy of his army should receive no mercy at all, is one of the extraordinary developments of the war. There would rather seem to be a deficiency of judgment on his part than a real want of humanity for which he may have been indebted to the astute military training received at West Point.

To this institution alone must be conceded the unenviable distinction of sending out soldiers instructed to carry fire, sentimentally declaring that "Such is war."

"To her alone the praise is due. She let them loose and cried Halloo!"

Even while the peace negotiations were in progress, as have been, and in many cases after peace was declared, the grand army hastened to improve the shining hours in Wake, Orange and Alamance. Wholesale robbery, abuse and insult were practiced in so many instances under the eyes of the commanding officers that those who would have said that the officers did not know or permit such things, and that they were the work of only the lawless stragglers and camp followers, such as are found in all armies, were forced to the unavoidable conclusion that this species of warfare was encouraged and approved by the commanders as an important branch of the service, and an invaluable aid to the work of subjugation and reconstruction.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

(For The Observer.)

IF I WERE YOU.

If I were you, I know, dear loyal one, What I would do; I'd love the girl upon Whose cheeks the dimples play And dance enchantingly. I'd love those eyes of blue, If I were you. If I were you, This wondrous world's delight I'd seek and woo; A fountain flashing bright All lips her praises sing While I'm a sheltered spring, I'd yield her homage, too, If I were you. If I were you, The choice of plaid fount Might I not true? You say you chafe at count That in my face you see Love mirrored perfectly. In this, dear heart, 'tis true, I think as you! —FRANCIS J. SAWYER. Wilmington.

Guilty! Convicted at Last

REMARKABLE VERDICT!

The SENSATIONAL TRIAL is over. The verdict of GUILTY was rendered without a dissenting voice. The jury was composed of thousands of the best merchants in this country. They found us---

¶GUILTY of being THE LARGEST SHOE HOUSE OF ITS AGE IN THE WORLD.

¶GUILTY of carrying the ONLY GENERAL LINE OF SOLID LEATHER SHOES in this country.

¶GUILTY of MANUFACTURING MORE SHOES than all other Richmond houses combined.

¶GUILTY of producing the BEST SELLING LINES of shoes in this country.

¶GUILTY of showing a LARGER PERCENTAGE OF INCREASE in business for 1906 over 1905 than any other shoe house in this country.

¶GUILTY of advertising facts and "DELIVERING the GOODS."

Salesmen started for fall. We ask every merchant to look at this line. We claim it to be the best ever shown in our territory. We don't expect business from those who will deny it. Just BE SURE to LOOK.

The W. H. Miles Shoe Company, Inc.

MANUFACTURERS, RICHMOND, VA.