

A WOMAN'S DIARY OF THE SIEGE OF VICKSBURG.

JUST a quarter of a century ago a young lady of New Orleans found herself an alien and an enemy to the sentiments of the community about her. Surrounded by friends and social companions, she was nevertheless painfully alone. In her enforced silence she began a diary intended solely for her own eye. A betrothed lover came suddenly from a neighboring State, claimed her hand in haste, and bore her away, a happy bride. Happy, yet anxious. The war was now fairly upon the land, and her husband, like herself, cherished sympathies whose discovery would have brought jeopardy of life, ruin, and exile. In the South, those days, all life was romantic. Theirs was full of adventure. At length they were shut up in Vicksburg. I hope some day to publish the whole diary; but the following portion is specially appropriate to the great panorama of battle in which a nation of readers is just now so interested. I shall not delay the reader to tell how I came by the manuscript, but only to say that I have not molested its original text. The name of the writer is withheld at her own request.

Geo. W. Cable.

UNDER FIRE FROM THE GUNBOATS.

We reached Vicksburg that night and went to H——'s room. Next morning the cook he had engaged arrived, and we moved into this house. Martha's ignorance keeps me busy, and H—— is kept close at his office.

January 7th, 1863.—I have had little to record here recently, for we have lived to ourselves, not visiting or visited. Every one H—— knows is absent, and I know no one but the family we staid with at first, and they are now absent. H—— tells me of the added triumph since the repulse of Sherman in December, and the one paper published here, shouts victory as much as its gradually diminishing size will allow. Paper is a serious want. There is a great demand for envelopes in the office where H—— is. He found and bought a lot of *thick and smooth colored paper*, cut a tin pattern, and we have whiled away some long evenings cutting envelopes and making them up. I have put away a package of the best to look at when we are old. The books I brought from Arkansas have proved a treasure, but we can get no more. I went to the only book-store open; there were none but Mrs. Stowe's "Sunny Memories of Foreign Lands." The clerk said I could have that cheap, because he couldn't sell her books, so

I got it and am reading it now. The monotony has only been broken by letters from friends here and there in the Confederacy. One of these letters tells of a Federal raid to their place, and says, "But the worst thing was, they would take every tooth-brush in the house, because we can't buy any more; and one cavalryman put my sister's new bonnet on his horse, and said 'Get up, Jack,' and her bonnet was gone."

February 25th.—A long gap in my journal, because H—— has been ill unto death with typhoid fever, and I nearly broke down from loss of sleep, there being no one to relieve me. I never understood before how terrible it was to be alone at night with a patient in delirium, and no one within call. To wake Martha was simply impossible. I got the best doctor here, but when convalescence began the question of food was a trial. I got with great difficulty two chickens. The doctor made the drug-store sell two of their six bottles of port; he said his patient's life depended on it. An egg is a rare and precious thing. Meanwhile the Federal fleet has been gathering, has anchored at the bend, and shells are thrown in at intervals.

March 20th.—The slow shelling of Vicksburg goes on all the time, and we have grown indifferent. It does not at present interrupt or interfere with daily avocations, but I suspect they are only getting the range of different points; and when they have them all complete, showers of shot will rain on us all at once. Non-combatants have been ordered to leave or prepare accordingly. Those who are to stay are having caves built. Cave-digging has become a regular business; prices range from twenty to fifty dollars, according to size of cave. Two diggers worked at ours a week and charged thirty dollars. It is well made in the hill that slopes just in the rear of the house, and well propped with thick posts, as they all are. It has a shelf, also, for holding a light or water. When we went in this evening and sat down, the earthy, suffocating feeling, as of a living tomb, was dreadful to me. I fear I shall risk death outside rather than melt in that dark furnace. The hills are so honeycombed with caves that the streets look like avenues in a cemetery. The hill called the Sky-parlor has become quite a fashionable resort for the few upper-circle families left here. Some officers are quartered there, and there is a band and a field-glass. Last evening we also climbed the hill to watch the shelling, but found the view

not so good as on a quiet hill nearer home. Soon a lady began to talk to one of the officers: "It is such folly for them to waste their ammunition like that. How can they ever take a town that has such advantages for defense and protection as this? We'll just burrow into these hills and let them batter away as hard as they please."

"You are right, madam; and besides, when our women are so willing to brave death and endure discomfort, how can we ever be conquered?"

Soon she looked over with significant glances to where we stood, and began to talk to H——.

"The only drawback," she said, "are the contemptible men who are staying at home in comfort, when they ought to be in the army if they had a spark of honor."

I cannot repeat all, but it was the usual tirade. It is strange I have met no one yet who seems to comprehend an honest difference of opinion, and stranger yet that the ordinary rules of good breeding are now so entirely ignored. As the spring comes one has the craving for fresh, green food that a monotonous diet produces. There was a bed of radishes and onions in the garden, that were a real blessing. An onion salad, dressed only with salt, vinegar, and pepper, seemed a dish fit for a king, but last night the soldiers quartered near made a raid on the garden and took them all.

April 2d.—We have had to move, and thus lost our cave. The owner of the house suddenly returned and notified us that he intended to bring his family back; didn't think there'd be any siege. The cost of the cave could go for the rent. That means he has got tired of the Confederacy and means to stay here and thus get out of it. This house was the only one to be had. It was built by ex-Senator G——, and is so large our tiny household is lost in it. We only use the lower floor. The bell is often rung by persons who take it for a hotel and come beseeching food at any price. To-day one came who would not be denied. "We do not keep a hotel, but would willingly feed hungry soldiers if we had the food." "I have been traveling all night and am starving; will pay any price for just bread." I went to the dining-room and found some biscuits, and set out two, with a large piece of corn-bread, a small piece of bacon, some nice sirup, and a pitcher of water. I locked the door of the safe and left him to enjoy his lunch. After he left I found he had broken open the safe and taken the remaining biscuits.

April 28th.—I never understood before the full force of those questions—What shall we eat? what shall we drink? and wherewithal shall we be clothed? We have no prophet of the Lord at whose prayer the meal and oil

will not waste. Such minute attention must be given the wardrobe to preserve it that I have learned to darn like an artist. Making shoes is now another accomplishment. Mine were in tatters. H—— came across a moth-eaten pair that he bought me, giving ten dollars, I think, and they fell into rags when I tried to wear them; but the soles were good, and that has helped me to shoes. A pair of old coat-sleeves saved—nothing is thrown away now—was in my trunk. I cut an exact pattern from my old shoes, laid it on the sleeves, and cut out thus good uppers and sewed them carefully; then soaked the soles and sewed the cloth to them. I am so proud of these home-made shoes, think I'll put them in a glass case when the war is over, as an heirloom. H—— says he has come to have an abiding faith that everything he needs to wear will come out of that trunk while the war lasts. It is like a fairy-casket. I have but a dozen pins remaining, so many I gave away. Every time these are used they are straightened and kept from rust. All these curious labors are performed while the shells are leisurely screaming through the air; but as long as we are out of range we don't worry. For many nights we have had but little sleep, because the Federal gun-boats have been running past the batteries. The uproar when this is happening is phenomenal. The first night the thundering artillery burst the bars of sleep, we thought it an attack by the river. To get into garments and rush upstairs was the work of a moment. From the upper gallery we have a fine view of the river, and soon a red glare lit up the scene and showed a small boat towing two large barges, gliding by. The Confederates had set fire to a house near the bank. Another night, eight boats ran by, throwing a shower of shot, and two burning houses made the river clear as day. One of the batteries has a remarkable gun they call "Whistling Dick," because of the screeching, whistling sound it gives, and certainly it does sound like a tortured thing. Added to all this is the indescribable Confederate yell, which is a soul-harrowing sound to hear. I have gained respect for the mechanism of the human ear, which stands it all without injury. The streets are seldom quiet at night; even the dragging about of cannon makes a din in these echoing gullies. The other night we were on the gallery till the last of the eight boats got by. Next day a friend said to H——, "It was a wonder you didn't have your heads taken off last night. I passed and saw them stretched over the gallery, and grape-shot were whizzing up the street just on a level with you." The double roar of batteries and boats was so great, we never noticed the whizzing. Yesterday the *Cincinnati* attempted to go by in daylight,

but was disabled and sunk. It was a pitiful sight; we could not see the finale, though we saw her rendered helpless.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE SIEGE.

Vicksburg, May 1st, 1863.—It is settled at last that we shall spend the time of siege in Vicksburg. Ever since we were deprived of our cave, I had been dreading that H—— would suggest sending me to the country, where his relatives lived. As he could not leave his position and go also without being conscripted, and as I felt certain an army would get between us, it was no part of my plan to be obedient. A shell from one of the practicing mortars brought the point to an issue yesterday and settled it. Sitting at work as usual, listening to the distant sound of bursting shells, apparently aimed at the court-house, there suddenly came a nearer explosion; the house shook, and a tearing sound was followed by terrified screams from the kitchen. I rushed thither, but met in the hall the cook's little girl America, bleeding from a wound in the forehead, and fairly dancing with fright and pain, while she uttered fearful yells. I stopped to examine the wound, and her mother bounded in, her black face ashy from terror. "Oh! Miss V——, my child is killed and the kitchen tore up." Seeing America was too lively to be a killed subject, I consoled Martha and hastened to the kitchen. Evidently a shell had exploded just outside, sending three or four pieces through. When order was restored I endeavored to impress on Martha's mind the necessity for calmness and the uselessness of such excitement. Looking round at the close of the lecture, there stood a group of Confederate soldiers laughing heartily at my sermon and the promising audience I had. They chimed in with a parting chorus:

"Yes, it's no use hollerin, old lady."

"Oh! H——," I exclaimed, as he entered soon after, "America is wounded."

"That is no news; she has been wounded by traitors long ago."

"Oh, this is real, living, little, black America; I am not talking in symbols. Here are the pieces of shell, the first bolt of the coming siege."

"Now you see," he replied, "that this house will be but paper to mortar-shells. You must go in the country."

The argument was long, but when a woman is obstinate and eloquent, she generally conquers. I came off victorious, and we finished preparations for the siege to-day. Hiring a man to assist, we descended to the wine-cellar, where the accumulated bottles told of the "banquet-hall deserted," the spirit and glow of the festive hours whose lights and garlands were dead, and the last guest long since de-

parted. To empty this cellar was the work of many hours. Then in the safest corner a platform was laid for our bed, and in another portion one arranged for Martha. The dungeon, as I call it, is lighted only by a trap-door, and is so damp it will be necessary to remove the bedding and mosquito-bars every day. The next question was of supplies. I had nothing left but a sack of rice-flour, and no manner of cooking I had heard of or invented contrived to make it eatable. A column of recipes for making delicious preparations of it had been going the rounds of Confederate papers. I tried them all; they resulted only in brick-bats, or sticky paste. H—— sallied out on a hunt for provisions, and when he returned the disproportionate quantity of the different articles obtained provoked a smile. There was a *hogshead* of sugar, a barrel of sirup, ten pounds of bacon and peas, four pounds of wheat-flour, and a small sack of corn-meal, a little vinegar, and actually some spice! The wheat-flour he purchased for ten dollars as a special favor from the sole remaining barrel for sale. We decided that must be kept for sickness. The sack of meal, he said, was a case of corruption, through a special providence to us. There is no more for sale at any price, but, said he, "a soldier who was hauling some of the Government sacks to the hospital offered me this for five dollars, if I could keep a secret. When the meal is exhausted perhaps we can keep alive on sugar. Here are some wax candles; hoard them like gold." He handed me a parcel containing about two pounds of candles, and left me to arrange my treasures. It would be hard for me to picture the memories those candles called up. The long years melted away, and I

"Trod again my childhood's track
And felt its very gladness."

In those childish days, whenever came dreams of household splendor or festal rooms or gay illuminations, the lights in my vision were always wax candles burning with a soft radiance that enchanted every scene. * * * And, lo! here on this spring day of '63, with war raging through the land, I was in a fine house, and had my wax candles sure enough, but, alas! they were neither cerulean blue nor rose-tinted, but dirty brown; and when I lighted one, it spluttered and wasted like any vulgar tallow thing, and lighted only a desolate scene in the vast handsome room. They were not so good as the waxen rope we had made in Arkansas. So, with a long sigh for the dreams of youth, I return to the stern present in this besieged town, my only consolation to remember the old axiom, "A city besieged is a city taken,"—so if we live through it we shall be out of the Confederacy. H—— is

very tired of having to carry a pass around in his pocket and go every now and then to have it renewed. We have been so very free in America, these restrictions are irksome.

May 9th.—This morning the door-bell rang a startling peal. Martha being busy, I answered it. An orderly in gray stood with an official envelope in his hand.

"Who lives here?"

"Mr. L——."

Very imperiously — "Which Mr. L——?"

"Mr. H—— L——."

"Is he here?"

"No."

"Where can he be found?"

"At the office of Deputy ——."

"I'm not going there. This is an order from General Pemberton for you to move out of this house in two hours. He has selected it for headquarters. He will furnish you with wagons."

"Will he furnish another house also?"

"Of course not."

"Has the owner been consulted?"

"He has not; that is of no consequence; it has been taken. Take this order."

"I shall not take it, and I shall not move, as there is no place to move to but the street."

"Then I'll take it to Mr. L——."

"Very well, do so."

As soon as Mr. Impertine walked off I locked, bolted, and barred every door and window. In ten minutes H—— came home.

"Hold the fort till I've seen the owner and the general," he said, as I locked him out.

Then Dr. B——'s remark in New Orleans about the effect of Dr. C——'s fine presence on the Confederate officials there came to mind. They are just the people to be influenced in that way, I thought. I look rather shabby now; I will dress. I made an elaborate toilet, put on the best and most becoming dress I had, the richest lace, the handsomest ornaments, taking care that all should be appropriate to a morning visit; dressed my hair in the stateliest braids, and took a seat in the parlor ready for the fray. H—— came to the window and said:

"Landlord says, 'Keep them out. Wouldn't let them have his house at any price.' He is just riding off to the country and can't help us now. Now I'm going to see Major C——, who sent the order."

Next came an officer, banged at the door till tired, and walked away. Then the orderly came again and beat the door — same result. Next, four officers with bundles and lunch-baskets, followed by a wagon-load of furniture. They went round the house, tried every door, peeped in the windows, pounded and rapped, while I watched them through the blind-slats. Presently the fattest one, a real Falstaffian man,

came back to the front door and rung a thundering peal. I saw the chance for fun and for putting on their own grandiloquent style. Stealing on tiptoe to the door, I turned the key and bolt noiselessly, and suddenly threw wide back the door and appeared behind it. He had been leaning on it, and nearly pitched forward with an "Oh! what's this!" Then seeing me as he straightened up, "Ah, madam!" almost stuttering from surprise and anger, "are you aware I had the right to break down this door if you hadn't opened it?"

"That would make no difference to me. I'm not the owner. You or the landlord would pay the bill for the repairs."

"Why didn't you open the door?"

"Have I not done so as soon as you rung? A lady does not open the door to men who beat on it. Gentlemen usually ring; I thought it might be stragglers pounding."

"Well," growing much blander, "we are going to send you some wagons to move; you must get ready."

"With pleasure, if you have selected a house for me. This is too large; it does not suit me."

"No, I didn't find a house for you."

"You surely don't expect *me* to run about in the dust and shelling to look for it, and Mr. L—— is too busy."

"Well, madam, then we must share the house. We will take the lower floor."

"I prefer to keep the lower floor myself; you surely don't expect *me* to go up and down stairs when you are so light and more able to do it."

He walked through the hall, trying the doors. "What room is that?" — "The parlor." "And this?" — "My bedroom." "And this?" — "The dining-room."

"Well, madam, we'll find you a house and then come and take this."

"Thank you, colonel; I shall be ready when you find the house. Good-morning, sir."

I heard him say as he ran down the steps, "We must go back, captain; you see I didn't know they were this kind of people."

Of course the orderly had lied in the beginning to scare me, for General P—— is too far away from Vicksburg to send an order. He is looking about for General Grant. We are told he has gone out to meet Johnston; and together they expect to annihilate Grant's army and free Vicksburg forever. There is now a general hospital opposite this house and a small-pox hospital next door. War, famine, pestilence, and fire surround us. Every day the band plays in front of the small-pox hospital. I wonder if it is to keep up their spirits? One would suppose quiet would be more cheering.

May 17th.—Hardly was our scanty breakfast over this morning when a hurried ring drew

us both to the door. Mr. J——, one of H——'s assistants, stood there in high excitement.

"Well, Mr. L——, they are upon us; the Yankees will be here by this evening."

"What do you mean?"

"That Pemberton has been whipped at Baker's Creek and Big Black, and his army are running back here as fast as they can come and the Yanks after them, in such numbers nothing can stop them. Hasn't Pemberton acted like a fool?"

"He may not be the only one to blame," replied H——.

"They're coming along the Big B. road, and my folks went down there to be safe, you know; now they're right in it. I hear you can't see the armies for the dust; never was anything else known like it. But I must go and try to bring my folks back here."

What struck us both was the absence of that concern to be expected, and a sort of relief or suppressed pleasure. After twelve some worn-out-looking men sat down under the window.

"What is the news?" I inquired.

"Ritreat, ritreat!" they said, in broken English — they were Louisiana Acadians.

About three o'clock the rush began. I shall never forget that woful sight of a beaten, demoralized army that came rushing back,—humanity in the last throes of endurance. Wan, hollow-eyed, ragged, footsore, bloody, the men limped along unarmed, but followed by siege-guns, ambulances, gun-carriages, and wagons in aimless confusion. At twilight two or three bands on the court-house hill and other points began playing Dixie, Bonnie Blue Flag, and so on, and drums began to beat all about; I suppose they were rallying the scattered army.

May 28th.—Since that day the regular siege has continued. We are utterly cut off from the world, surrounded by a circle of fire. Would it be wise like the scorpion to sting ourselves to death? The fiery shower of shells goes on day and night. H——'s occupation, of course, is gone, his office closed. Every man has to carry a pass in his pocket. People do nothing but eat what they can get, sleep when they can, and dodge the shells. There are three intervals when the shelling stops, either for the guns to cool or for the gunners' meals, I suppose,—about eight in the morning, the same in the evening, and at noon. In that time we have both to prepare and eat ours. Clothing cannot be washed or anything else done. On the 19th and 22d, when the assaults were made on the lines, I watched the soldiers cooking on the green opposite. The half-spent balls coming all the way from those lines were flying so thick that they were obliged to dodge at every turn. At all the caves I

could see from my high perch, people were sitting, eating their poor suppers at the cave doors, ready to plunge in again. As the first shell again flew they dived, and not a human being was visible. The sharp crackle of the musketry-firing was a strong contrast to the scream of the bombs. I think all the dogs and cats must be killed or starved, we don't see any more pitiful animals prowling around. * * * The cellar is so damp and musty the bedding has to be carried out and laid in the sun every day, with the forecast that it may be demolished at any moment. The confinement is dreadful. To sit and listen as if waiting for death in a horrible manner would drive me insane. I don't know what others do, but we read when I am not scribbling in this. H—— borrowed somewhere a lot of Dickens's novels, and we reread them by the dim light in the cellar. When the shelling abates H—— goes to walk about a little or get the "Daily Citizen," which is still issuing a tiny sheet at twenty-five and fifty cents a copy. It is, of course, but a rehash of speculations which amuses a half hour. To-day he heard while out that expert swimmers are crossing the Mississippi on logs at night to bring and carry news to Johnston. I am so tired of corn-bread, which I never liked, that I eat it with tears in my eyes. We are lucky to get a quart of milk daily from a family near who have a cow they hourly expect to be killed. I send five dollars to market each morning, and it buys a small piece of mule-meat. Rice and milk is my main food; I can't eat the mule-meat. We boil the rice and eat it cold with milk for supper. Martha runs the gauntlet to buy the meat and milk once a day in a perfect terror. The shells seem to have many different names; I hear the soldiers say, "That's a mortar-shell. There goes a Parrott. That's a rifle-shell." They are all equally terrible. A pair of chimney-swallows have built in the parlor chimney. The concussion of the house often sends down parts of their nest, which they patiently pick up and reascend with.

Friday, June 5th. In the cellar.—Wednesday evening H—— said he must take a little walk, and went while the shelling had stopped. He never leaves me alone for long, and when an hour had passed without his return I grew anxious; and when two hours, and the shelling had grown terrific, I momentarily expected to see his mangled body. All sorts of horrors fill the mind now, and I am so desolate here; not a friend. When he came he said that passing a cave where there were no others near, he heard groans, and found a shell had struck above and caused the cave to fall in on the man within. He could not extricate him alone, and had to get help and dig him

out. He was badly hurt, but not mortally, and I felt fairly sick from the suspense.

Yesterday morning a note was brought H—— from a bachelor uncle out in the trenches, saying he had been taken ill with fever, and could we receive him if he came? H—— sent to tell him to come, and I arranged one of the parlors as a dressing-room for him, and laid a pallet that he could move back and forth to the cellar. He did not arrive, however. It is our custom in the evening to sit in the front room a little while in the dark, with matches and candle held ready in hand, and watch the shells, whose course at night is shown by the fuse. H—— was at the window and suddenly sprang up, crying, "Run!"—"Where?"—"Back!"

I started through the back room, H—— after me. I was just within the door when the crash came that threw me to the floor. It was the most appalling sensation I'd ever known. Worse than an earthquake, which I've also experienced. Shaken and deafened I picked myself up; H—— had struck a light to find me. I lighted mine, and the smoke guided us to the parlor I had fixed for Uncle J——. The candles were useless in the dense smoke, and it was many minutes before we could see. Then we found the entire side of the room torn out. The soldiers who had rushed in said, "This is an eighty-pound Parrott." It had entered through the front, burst on the pallet-bed, which was in tatters; the toilet service and everything else in the room smashed. The soldiers assisted H—— to board up the break with planks to keep out prowlers, and we went to bed in the cellar as usual. This morning the yard is partially plowed by a couple that fell there in the night. I think this house, so large and prominent from the river, is perhaps taken for headquarters and specially shelled. As we descend at night to the lower regions, I think of the evening hymn that grandmother taught me when a child:

"Lord, keep us safe this night,
Secure from all our fears;
May angels guard us while we sleep,
Till morning light appears."

Surely, if there are heavenly guardians we need them now.

June 7th. In the cellar.—There is one thing I feel especially grateful for, that amid these horrors we have been spared that of suffering for water. The weather has been dry a long time, and we hear of others dipping up the water from ditches and mud-holes. This place has two large underground cisterns of good cool water, and every night in my subterranean dressing-room a tub of cold water is the nerve-calmer that sends me to sleep in spite of the roar. One cistern I had to give

up to the soldiers, who swarm about like hungry animals seeking something to devour. Poor fellows! my heart bleeds for them. They have nothing but spoiled, greasy bacon, and bread made of musty pea-flour, and but little of that. The sick ones can't bolt it. They come into the kitchen when Martha puts the pan of corn-bread in the stove, and beg for the bowl she mixed it in. They shake up the scrapings with water, put in their bacon, and boil the mixture into a kind of soup, which is easier to swallow than pea-bread. When I happen in, they look so ashamed of their poor clothes. I know we saved the lives of two by giving a few meals. To-day one crawled on the gallery to lie in the breeze. He looked as if shells had lost their terrors for his dumb and famished misery. I've taught Martha to make first-rate corn-meal gruel, because I can eat meal easier that way than in hoe-cake, and I fixed him a saucerful, put milk and sugar and nutmeg—I've actually got a nutmeg. When he ate it the tears ran from his eyes. "Oh, madam, there was never anything so good! I shall get better."

June 9th.—The churches are a great resort for those who have no caves. People fancy they are not shelled so much, and they are substantial and the pews good to sleep in. We had to leave this house last night, they were shelling our quarter so heavily. The night before, Martha forsook the cellar for a church. We went to H——'s office, which was comparatively quiet last night. H—— carried the bank box; I the case of matches; Martha the blankets and pillows, keeping an eye on the shells. We slept on piles of old newspapers. In the streets the roar seems so much more confusing, I feel sure I shall run right in the way of a shell. They seem to have five different sounds from the second of throwing them to the hollow echo wandering among the hills, and that sounds the most blood-curdling of all.

June 13th.—Shell burst just over the roof this morning. Pieces tore through both floors down into the dining-room. The entire ceiling of that room fell in a mass. We had just left it. Every piece of crockery on the table was smashed up. The "Daily Citizen" to-day is a foot and a half long and six inches wide. It has a long letter from a Federal officer, P. P. Hill, who was on the gun-boat *Cincinnati*, that was sunk May 27th. Says it was found in his floating trunk. The editorial says, "The utmost confidence is felt that we can maintain our position until succor comes from outside. The undaunted Johnston is at hand."

June 18th.—To-day the "Citizen" is printed on wall paper; therefore has grown a little in size. It says, "But a few days more and Johnston will be here"; also that "Kirby Smith has

driven Banks from Port Hudson," and that "the enemy are throwing incendiary shells in."

June 20th.—The gentleman who took our cave came yesterday to invite us to come to it, because, he said, "it's going to be very bad to-day." I don't know why he thought so. We went, and found his own and another family in it; sat outside and watched the shells till we concluded the cellar was as good a place as that hill-side. I fear the want of good food is breaking down H——. I know from my own feelings of weakness, but mine is not an American constitution and has a recuperative power that his has not.

June 21st.—I had gone upstairs to-day during the interregnum to enjoy a rest on my bed and read the reliable items in the "Citizen," when a shell burst right outside the window in front of me. Pieces flew in, striking all round me, tearing down masses of plaster that came tumbling over me. When H—— rushed in I was crawling out of the plaster, digging it out of my eyes and hair. When he picked up a piece large as a saucer beside my pillow, I realized my narrow escape. The window-frame began to smoke, and we saw the house was on fire. H—— ran for a hatchet and I for water, and we put it out. Another [shell] came crashing near, and I snatched up my comb and brush and ran down here. It has taken all the afternoon to get the plaster out of my hair, for my hands were rather shaky.

June 25th.—A horrible day. The most horrible yet to me, because I've lost my nerve. We were all in the cellar, when a shell came tearing through the roof, burst upstairs, tore up that room, and the pieces coming through both floors down into the cellar. One of them tore open the leg of H——'s pantaloons. This was tangible proof the cellar was no place of protection from them. On the heels of this came Mr. J——, to tell us that young Mrs. P—— had had her thigh-bone crushed. When Martha went for the milk she came back horror-stricken to tell us the black girl there had her arm taken off by a shell. For the first time I quailed. I do not think people who are physically brave deserve much credit for it; it is a matter of nerves. In this way I am constitutionally brave, and seldom think of danger till it is over; and death has not the terrors for me it has for some others. Every night I had lain down expecting death, and every morning rose to the same prospect, without being unnerved. It was for H—— I trembled. But now I first seemed to realize that something worse than death might come; I might be crippled, and not killed. Life, without all one's powers and limbs, was a thought that broke down my courage. I said to H——, "You must get me out of this horrible place; I

cannot stay; I know I shall be crippled." Now the regret comes that I lost control, because H—— is worried, and has lost his composure, because my coolness has broken down.

July 1st.—Some months ago, thinking it might be useful, I obtained from the consul of my birthplace, by sending to another town, a passport for foreign parts. H—— said if we went out to the lines we might be permitted to get through on that. So we packed the trunks, got a carriage, and on the 30th drove out there. General V—— offered us seats in his tent. The rifle-bullets were whizzing so *zip, zip* from the sharpshooters on the Federal lines that involuntarily I moved on my chair. He said, "Don't be alarmed; you are out of range. They are firing at our mules yonder." His horse, tied by the tent door, was quivering all over, the most intense exhibition of fear I'd ever seen in an animal. General V—— sent out a flag of truce to the Federal headquarters, and while we waited wrote on a piece of silk paper a few words. Then he said, "My wife is in Tennessee. If you get through the lines, send her this. They will search you, so I will put it in this toothpick." He crammed the silk paper into a quill toothpick, and handed it to H——. It was completely concealed. The flag-of-truce officer came back flushed and angry. "General Grant says no human being shall pass out of Vicksburg; but the lady may feel sure danger will soon be over. Vicksburg will surrender on the 4th."

"Is that so, general?" inquired H——. "Are arrangements for surrender made?"

"We know nothing of the kind. Vicksburg will not surrender."

"Those were General Grant's exact words, sir," said the flag-officer. "Of course it is nothing but their brag."

We went back sadly enough, but to-day H—— says he will cross the river to General Porter's lines and try there; I shall not be disappointed.

July 3d.—H—— was going to headquarters for the requisite pass, and he saw General Pemberton crawling out of a cave, for the shelling has been as hot as ever. He got the pass, but did not act with his usual caution, for the boat he secured was a miserable, leaky one—a mere trough. Leaving Martha in charge, we went to the river, had our trunks put in the boat, and embarked; but the boat became utterly unmanageable, and began to fill with water rapidly. H—— saw that we could not cross in it and turned to come back; yet in spite of that the pickets at the battery fired on us. H—— raised the white flag he had, yet they fired again, and I gave a cry of horror that none of these dreadful things had wrung from me. I thought H—— was struck. When we

landed H—— showed the pass, and said that the officer had told him the battery would be notified we were to cross. The officer apologized and said they were not notified. He furnished a cart to get home, and to-day we are down in the cellar again, shells flying as thick as ever. Provisions so nearly gone, except the hogshead of sugar, that a few more days will bring us to starvation indeed. Martha says rats are hanging dressed in the market for sale with mule meat,—there is nothing else. The officer at the battery told me he had eaten one yesterday. We have tried to leave this Tophet and failed, and if the siege continues I must summon that higher kind of courage—moral bravery—to subdue my fears of possible mutilation.

July 4th.—It is evening. All is still. Silence and night are once more united. I can sit at the table in the parlor and write. Two candles are lighted. I would like a dozen. We have had wheat supper and wheat bread once more. H—— is leaning back in the rocking-chair; he says:

"G——, it seems to me I can hear the silence, and feel it, too. It wraps me like a soft garment; how else can I express this peace?"

But I must write the history of the last twenty-four hours. About five yesterday afternoon, Mr. J——, H——'s assistant, who, having no wife to keep him in, dodges about at every change and brings us the news, came to H—— and said:

"Mr. L——, you must both come to our cave to-night. I hear that to-night the shelling is to surpass everything yet. An assault will be made in front and rear. You know we have a double cave; there is room for you in mine, and mother and sister will make a place for Mrs. L——. Come right up; the ball will open about seven."

We got ready, shut up the house, told Martha to go to the church again if she preferred it to the cellar, and walked up to Mr. J——'s. When supper was eaten, all secure, and ladies in their cave night toilet, it was just six, and we crossed the street to the cave opposite. As I crossed a mighty shell flew screaming right over my head. It was the last thrown into Vicksburg. We lay on our pallets waiting for the expected roar, but no sound came except the chatter from neighboring caves, and at last we dropped asleep. I woke at dawn stiff. A draught from the funnel-shaped opening had been blowing on me all night. Every one was expressing surprise at the quiet. We started for home and met the editor of the "Daily Citizen." H—— said:

"This is strangely quiet, Mr. L——."

"Ah, sir," shaking his head gloomily, "I'm

afraid (?) the last shell has been thrown into Vicksburg."

"Why do you fear so?"

"It is surrender. At six last evening a man went down to the river and blew a truce signal; the shelling stopped at once."

When I entered the kitchen a soldier was there waiting for the bowl of scrapings (they took turns for it).

"Good-morning, madam," he said; "we won't bother you much longer. We can't thank you enough for letting us come, for getting this soup boiled has helped some of us to keep alive, but now all this is over."

"Is it true about the surrender?"

"Yes; we have had no official notice, but they are paroling out at the lines now, and the men in Vicksburg will never forgive Pemberton. An old granny! A child would have known better than to shut men up in this cursed trap to starve to death like useless vermin." His eyes flashed with an insane fire as he spoke. "Haven't I seen my friends carted out three or four in a box, that had died of starvation! Nothing else, madam! Starved to death because we had a fool for a general."

"Don't you think you're rather hard on Pemberton? He thought it his duty to wait for Johnston."

"Some people may excuse him, ma'am, but we'll curse him to our dying day. Anyhow, you'll see the blue-coats directly."

Breakfast dispatched, we went on the upper gallery. What I expected to see was files of soldiers marching in, but it was very different. The street was deserted, save by a few people carrying home bedding from their caves. Among these was a group taking home a little creature, born in a cave a few days previous, and its wan-looking mother. About eleven o'clock a man in blue came sauntering along, looking about curiously. Then two followed him, then another.

"H——, do you think these can be the Federal soldiers?"

"Why, yes; here come more up the street."

Soon a group appeared on the court-house hill, and the flag began slowly to rise to the top of the staff. As the breeze caught it, and it sprang out like a live thing exultant, H—— drew a long breath of contentment.

"Now I feel once more at home in mine own country."

In an hour more a grand rush of people setting toward the river began,—foremost among them the gentleman who took our cave; all were flying as if for life.

"What can this mean, H——? Are the populace turning out to greet the despised conquerors?"

"Oh," said H——, springing up, "look! It is the boats coming around the bend."

Truly, it was a fine spectacle to see that fleet of transports sweep around the curve and anchor in the teeth of the batteries so lately vomiting fire. Presently Mr. J—— passed and called :

"Aren't you coming, Mr. L——? There's provisions on those boats: coffee and flour, 'First come, first served,' you know."

"Yes, I'll be there pretty soon," replied H——.

But now the new-comers began to swarm into our yard, asking H—— if he had coin to sell for greenbacks. He had some, and a little bartering went on with the new greenbacks. H—— went out to get provisions. When he returned a Confederate officer came with him. H—— went to the box of Confederate money and took out four hundred dollars, and the officer took off his watch, a plain gold one, and laid it on the table, saying, "We have not been paid, and I must get home to my family." H—— added a five-dollar greenback to the pile, and wished him a happy meeting. The townfolk continued to dash through the streets with their arms full, canned goods predominating. Towards five Mr. J—— passed again. "Keep on the lookout," he said; "the army of occupation is coming along," and in a few minutes the head of the column appeared. What a contrast to the suffering creatures we had seen so long were these stalwart, well-fed men, so splendidly set up and accoutered. Sleek horses, polished arms, bright plumes,—this was the pride and panoply of war. Civilization, discipline, and order seemed to enter with the measured tramp of those marching columns; and the heart turned with throbs of added pity to the worn men in gray, who were being blindly dashed against this embodiment of modern power. And now this "silence that is golden" indeed is over all, and my limbs are unhurt, and I suppose if I were Catholic, in my fervent gratitude, I would hie me with a rich offering to the shrine of "our Lady of Mercy."

July 7th.—I did not enjoy quiet long. First came Martha, who announced her intention of going to search for her sons, as she was free now. I was hardly able to stand since the severe cold taken in the cave that night, but she would not wait a day. A colored woman came in and said she had asked her mistress for wages and she had turned her out (wanting a place). I was in no condition to stand upon ceremony then, and engaged her at once, but hear to-day that I am thoroughly pulled to pieces in Vicksburg circles; there is no more salvation for me. Next came two Federal officers and wanted rooms and board. To have some protection was a necessity; both armies were still in town, and for the past three days

every Confederate soldier I see has a cracker in his hand. There is hardly any water in town, no prospect of rain, and the soldiers have emptied one cistern in the yard already and begun on the other. The colonel put a guard at the gate to limit the water given. Next came the owner of the house and said we must move; he wanted the house, but it was so big he'd just bring his family in; we could stay till we got one. They brought boarders with them too, and children. Men are at work all over the house shoveling up the plaster before repairing. Upstairs they are pouring it by bucketfuls through the windows. Colonel D—— brought work for H—— to help with from headquarters. Making out the paroles and copying them has taken so long they wanted help. I am surprised and mortified to find that two-thirds of all the men who have signed made their mark; they cannot write. I never thought there was so much ignorance in the South. One of the men at headquarters took a fancy to H—— and presented him with a portfolio, that he said he had captured when the Confederates evacuated their headquarters at Jackson. It contained mostly family letters written in French, and a few official papers. Among them was the following note, which I will copy here, and file away the original as a curiosity when the war is over.

HEADQUARTERS DEPT. OF TENN.

TUPELO, Aug. 6, 1862.

CAPT: The Major-General Commanding directs me to say that he submits it altogether to your own discretion whether you make the attempt to capture General Grant or not. While the exploit would be very brilliant if successful, you must remember that failure might be disastrous to you and your men. The General commends your activity and energy and expects you to continue to show these qualities.

I am, very respectfully, yr. obt. svt.

Thomas L. Snead, A. A. G.

CAPT. GEO. L. BAXTER,
Commanding Beauregard Scouts.

I would like to know if he tried it and came to grief or abandoned the project. As letters can now get through to New Orleans I wrote there.

July 14th.—Moved yesterday into a house I call "Fair Rosamond's bower" because it would take a clue of thread to go through it without getting lost. One room has five doors opening into the house, and no windows. The stairs are like ladders, and the colonel's contraband valet won't risk his neck taking down water, but pours it through the windows on people's heads. We sha'n't stay in it. Men are at work closing up the caves; they had become hiding-places for trash. Vicksburg is now like one vast hospital—every one is getting sick or is sick. My cook was taken to-day with bilious fever, and nothing but will keeps me up.

July 23d.—We moved again two days ago.

MEMORANDA ON THE CIVIL WAR.

General Lew Wallace and General McCook at Shiloh.

SINCE the publication in THE CENTURY of my article on "The Battle of Shiloh" I have received from Mrs. W. H. L. Wallace, widow of the gallant general who was killed in the first day's fight at that battle, a letter from General Lew Wallace to him, dated the morning of the 5th. At the date of this letter it was well known that the Confederates had troops out along the Mobile & Ohio railroad west of Crump's landing and Pittsburg landing, and were also collecting near Shiloh. This letter shows that at that time General Lew Wallace was making preparations for the emergency that might happen for the passing of reinforcements between Shiloh and his position, extending from Crump's landing westward; and he sends the letter over the road running from Adamsville to the Pittsburg landing and Purdy road. These two roads intersect nearly a mile west of the crossing of the latter over Owl creek, where our right rested. In this letter General Lew Wallace advises General W. H. L. Wallace that he will send "to-morrow" (and his letter also says "April 5th," which is the same day the letter was dated and which, therefore, must have been written on the 4th) some cavalry to report to him at his headquarters, and suggesting the propriety of General W. H. L. Wallace's sending a company back with them for the purpose of having the cavalry at the two landings familiarize themselves with the road, so that they could "act promptly in case of emergency as guides to and from the different camps."

This modifies very materially what I have said, and what has been said by others, of the conduct of General Lew Wallace at the battle of Shiloh. It shows that he naturally, with no more experience than he had at the time in the profession of arms, would take the particular road that he did start upon in the absence of orders to move by a different road.

The mistake he made, and which probably caused his apparent dilatoriness, was that of having advanced some distance after he had found that the firing, which would be at first directly to his front and then off to the left, had fallen back until it had got very much in rear of the position of his advance. This falling back had taken place before I sent General Wallace orders to move up to Pittsburg landing, and, naturally, my order was to follow the road nearest the river. But my order was verbal, and to a staff-officer who was to deliver it to General Wallace, so that I am not competent to say just what order the general actually received.

General Wallace's division was stationed, the First brigade at Crump's landing, the Second out two miles, and the Third two and a half miles out. Hearing the sounds of battle, General Wallace early ordered his First and Third brigades to concentrate on the Second. If the position of our front had not changed, the road which Wallace took would have been somewhat shorter to our right than the River road.

In this article I state that General McCook, who commanded a division of Buell's army, expressed

some unwillingness to pursue the enemy on Monday, April 7th, because of the condition of his troops. General Badeau, in his history, also makes the same statement, on my authority. Out of justice to General McCook and his command, I must say that they left a point twenty-two miles east of Savannah on the morning of the 6th. From the heavy rains of a few days previous and the passage of trains and artillery, the roads were necessarily deep in mud, which made marching slow. The division had not only marched through this mud the day before, but it had been in the rain all night without rest. It was engaged in the battle of the second day, and did as good service as its position allowed. In fact an opportunity occurred for it to perform a conspicuous act of gallantry which elicited the highest commendation from division commanders in the army of the Tennessee. General Sherman in both his memoirs and reports makes mention of this fact. General McCook himself belongs to a family which furnished many volunteers to the army. I refer to these circumstances with minuteness because I did General McCook injustice in the article, though not to the extent one would suppose from the public press. I am not willing to do any one an injustice, and if convinced that I have done one, I am always willing to make the fullest admission.

U. S. Grant.

MOUNT MCGREGOR, N. Y., June 22, 1885.

Who Projected the Canal at Island Number Ten?

IN THE CENTURY for June, 1885, I have read Colonel J. W. Bissell's article on the "Sawing out a Channel above Island Number Ten." I desire to call attention to what he says:

"Some officer present making some suggestion about a 'canal,' I immediately pulled out my memorandum-book, and showing the sketch, said the whole thing was provided for."

This on the evening of March 19, 1862, which is the date of General Pope's letter to which Colonel Bissell refers in a foot-note, saying he did not receive the letter because he (Colonel Bissell) was on his return from the reconnaissance he had been ordered to make. To the public this reads as though the plan originated with Colonel Bissell, while I am ready to show that while the colonel directed the work, "some officer," as he says,—or, to be exact, I myself,—was the sole inventor of the project. My own official report, dated Headquarters Second Division Army of the Mississippi, Pittsburg Landing, April 22, 1862 (See "Rebellion Records," Vol. VIII., pages 101-105), reads as follows:

"Transports having reached us through a *channel* cut with enormous labor under the direction of Colonel Bissell, on a suggestion advanced by the subscriber, March 17, 1862, the Second Division embarked on them, April 7, to cross the Mississippi, which was accomplished in gallant style, but without opposition, the gun-boats *Carondelet* and *Pittsburgh*, under Captain Walke, having in dashing style silenced the enemy's shore batteries."

In the same volume, pages 78, 79, General Pope wrote to General Halleck, under date New Madrid, Mo., April 9, 1862: