

INCIDENTS OF HOSPITAL LIFE.

BY MRS. ANNE K. KYLE.

WHEN North Carolina seceded from the Union and her Governor (Ellis) called for Volunteers, our two Military Companies, "The Fayetteville Independent Light Infantry," and the "LaFayette Light Infantry," at once offered their services.

On the day the companies marched away our work commenced. We immediately organized our Soldiers' Aid Association, determining, with the help of God, that no soldier's family should suffer. Our first act was to write to Raleigh, N. C., and ask for a contract to make drawers and shirts. The material was furnished us and we cut the garments, giving them to the soldiers' wives to make.

The Independent and LaFayette companies were sent to Virginia and took part in the memorable battle of Bethel, which occurred June 10th, 1861. Of course our town was filled with mourning and lamentations when the news of the battle reached us, for so many from our midst were there that we could not help thinking that a part of them at least had fallen. Our mourning was soon turned into joy, however, as we heard that we had not lost a single man from either of our companies.

In a few days I left with my mother for our summer home in Wytheville. Va., where I found plenty of work to do, as Floyd's Brigade was quartered near the town. The measles, one of the evils of camp life, broke out. Mrs. Alex. Stuart, a sister-in-law of J. E. B. Stuart, and as noble a woman as he was a great man, and myself rented rooms in the old

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Haller House, and sent word to Gen. Floyd that we were ready to take charge of the sick. We had thirty-two cases of measles from the Patrick company at one time. After his command left, the building was turned into a Wayside Hospital and taken charge of by the ladies of the town. As it was right on the railroad, troops were constantly passing, and it was a haven of rest to many a poor, weary soldier. Whenever we received telegrams saying that troops were coming, we were always at the depot with lunch for them.

I returned home with my mother the 1st of October, and then it was that our work for the soldiers commenced in earnest. Every carpet and curtain that was available was turned into blankets, as we felt we must make every effort to have everything in readiness for the winter campaign. We worked then with willing hands and light hearts. With Lee and Jackson as our leaders how could we think of anything but victory? Everything seemed so bright and hopeful. Our six months' troops returned home in November flushed with hope and victory, but they were soon on the field again. My husband was first lieutenant in a Randolph company.

The year of 1862 our hearts were continually cheered with good news from the army, though now and then some brave fellow from our midst would fall in battle. In 1863, however,

THE CLOUDS COMMENCED TO GATHER,

and in that year one of the most painful and harrowing deaths that I ever saw occurred at the Wayside Hospital in Wytheville. A Mr. Gregory, of Georgia, having started home sick became worse and stopped there a few hours. Soon after he reached the hospital he was taken with lockjaw. The Rev. F. A. Goodwin, of St. John's Episcopal Church, my pastor, watched with me that night. The unfortunate soldier

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was perfectly conscious, and that made it so much more painful for us to see his great agony. Every now and then Mr. Goodwin would repeat passages from the Scriptures and pray for him to try to comfort him, and we could see from his countenance that he understood all that was said. Just as the morning dawned his spirit took its flight and he was freed from all pain and suffering. We closed his eyes and folded his hands with an earnest prayer to our Heavenly Father that his sins might be blotted out and that he might be received in the army of the Good Shepherd. We laid him to rest in the cemetery in that place and I wrote to his mother, giving her an account of his last moments. She seemed very grateful that loving hands performed the last offices for him.

On the 17th of July news was received that a raiding party was making its way towards Wytheville by what is called the Big Sandy Road, led by Lieut.-Col. Powell. That same evening my sister's little boy was so ill that she had just had him baptized. Mr. Goodwin had not left the house more than half an hour when one of the servants ran in and said the Yankees were coming down the hill. I had sprained my ankle the day before and was not able to leave my room. My mother was in the room with me, and my sister brought all of her children and mine in the room with us. There was no gentleman in the house, and the children seemed perfectly paralyzed with fear. To calm them my sister said: "Dear children, we have no one to look to but God; we will seek his protection in prayer." Just as we arose a servant came in crying, "They are firing into the other room!"

Just then a ball passed through the room which we were in. Of course we were terror-stricken. I seized a towel, pinned it to my crutch and put it out the window, hoping to attract their attention. In a

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few moments steps were heard on the stairs. My sister opened the door and said she would like to see the commanding officer. He stepped forward and asked what she wanted. She said: "Sir, I ask your protection. You see my helpless condition - my mother old and infirm, my child in a dying condition and my sister not able to walk. If your men are hungry they will find everything they need in the dining room, or you can take all you wish out of the house. All we ask is a shelter." He replied, with an oath, "My orders are to level this house to the ground. It has always been the headquarters of all the Rebels."

By that time the house was filled with his men. My sister turned and said: "Children, follow me," and she went down the stairs, my mother following, and her little ones clinging to her. My nephew handed me my crutches and just as I reached the door a man snatched them from me, cursing all the time. I would have fallen, but was caught by one of the servants and she and my nephew carried me down stairs. As we got to the hat rack my mother reached out her hand to get her bonnet and shawl. They were taken from her.

In that short space of time they had broken to pieces the elegant parlor furniture, had it piled in the passage as high as the wall, and it was burning. As I was carried by they

THREW MY CRUTCHES ON THE FIRE.

I saw them in the parlor breaking the mirrors and glasses. My sister calmly walked out of the house, without once looking back, with her children following. My mother had my little boy by the hand; the others were clinging to the nurse. When I reached the front door they put me down to rest. An Irish soldier picked me up and started to take me to a house across the street; but one of the men said to

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him: "We are going to burn that too," so he carried me back of the Methodist church. One of the servants returned to see if she could save anything, and she said they made a fire on each bed. I suppose they thought this necessary, as the house was perfectly fire-proof. They permitted her to take out one small trunk with some of her own clothes and a few of the children's clothes.

My sister's home was just as lovely a spot as was ever seen. It was elegantly furnished with everything that could add to our comfort and enjoyment. Fortunately they did not find the wine cellar. That was in the basement to the end of the passage, filled with choice liquors and wines.

It was no light matter to be turned out of doors at night with eight little children and not a change of clothing. Everything in the world that we had was destroyed. All of the buildings that my brother-in-law used as quartermaster were destroyed, and a good many more buildings. There is no telling how much damage they might have done, but the whistle of the train was heard and some one told them we were expecting troops. Lieut. Powell was shot at our gate just as he was coming out by a young boy.

My husband was wounded on the 6th of May, 1864, at the battle of the Wilderness, and was captured the 20th. Not hearing from him I wrote to my cousin, who was in the same command. He said he was left with the wounded and he had not heard from him since. After he was captured he wrote me a letter, giving it to a man at Port Royal, Va., to mail, which he did not do until the latter part of July. Just imagine my terrible anxiety, not hearing from him in all that time. But I was compelled to control my feelings as my mother's health was failing rapidly. Indeed she was never well from the time we were turned out of our house in the night. She pined so for her mountain home that with her physician's

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advice I started with her and my four children across the country in a carriage. She died just ten days after we reached my sister's. Death, just at that time, seemed a happy release from all the cares and trouble by which we were surrounded. My grief was so great that I could not shed a tear and it did not give away until the latter part of the month, when I received a letter from my husband. When I saw his hand-writing

TEARS CAME TO MY RELIEF.

In October I started home, leaving my little daughter with my sister, who expected to follow me the next month. I took my little ones and my niece, who was a young lady, with me. My sister was taken ill and I did not see my little girl until the following July. My husband, being still a prisoner, was carried with the officers to Morris Island, and was under the fire there for forty-two days, and from there he was taken to Fort Pulaski. How I lived through that winter I cannot tell. After Christmas I applied to Dr. Essington for a situation as assistant matron to the lower hospital. They were bringing the wounded from Fort Fisher, Wilmington and other points. We already had one hospital and were establishing another. I shall never forget the doctor's look of amazement when I applied for the situation. My reply was: "Doctor I don't want any pay, but I must have constant occupation or I will loose my mind." I went every morning at nine o'clock and staid until one, and I always went late in the afternoon to see that the wants of the patients were attended to during the night. I always dressed all the wounds every morning, and I soon found that my grief and sorrow were forgotten in administering to the wants of the sick.

Such patience and fortitude I have never seen. Not one murmur did I ever hear escape their lips.

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My Prayer Book was my constant companion. I carried it in my pocket, and many a poor soldier have I soothed and comforted with holy prayers. One day as I entered the hospital I noticed a new face. I made my way to him, as I was struck by his gray hair, and said: "You are too old to be here." He smiled and his answer was quite a rebuke: "One never gets too old to fight for one's home and fireside. I had no sons, so I came myself." He proved to be a Mr. Johnson of Georgia. I made him my especial care, but to no avail. He died on the 8th of March.

Now I will speak of another soldier who died the same day. His name was Sanford, and he was just in the prime of life. It was really pathetic the way he spoke of his wife and home. The surgeon promised him a furlough, and when I went and told him we had written for his wife to come and take him home I shall never forget his expression as he exclaimed: "am I to see my wife and home." Alas! the poor fellow did not live to see his wife again.

On the 10th of March Hardee's men commenced to pass through Fayetteville. It was a day of humiliation and prayer. When I left the hospital I told them they would have to do without me next day as I wanted to do what I could towards feeding some of our hungry soldiers, as we had nothing but bread and meat to give them. My uncle, Dr. Kyle, went with me, and we stood in the store door on Hay street. We soon attracted the attention of a soldier and told him what we wished to do. My uncle, myself and two servants were kept busy the whole day. Three of my neighbors and myself prepared the bread and meat. It was enough to make anybody's heart ache to see the ragged men. One came forward. He looked like a boy of eighteen or nineteen. He had a little iron pot and I said: "Child, you look so tared, why do you carry that iron pot?" and he

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answered: "I keep it to cook with." I offered him a twenty-dollar Confederate note for it, with which he bought twenty loaves of bread and divided it among his comrades. When night came on I closed the door with a heavy heart. They were still coming.

About nine o'clock they sent for me to go to the hospital, and the horrible scene I witnessed there I shall never forget. The wounded had been brought in from Longstreet, where a portion of Hardee's men had had an engagement with Sherman's men. I staid with them until just before daylight and did all I could to relieve their wants. Even then I did not hear a single murmur. Such fortitude has

NO PARALLEL IN HISTORY.

Next morning I had breakfast prepared for some of them, but on reaching the hospital I found only two patients there. Those who were not too ill had been carried away in the ambulances, and the worst cases were sent to the upper hospital. Two ladies of the neighborhood were there with the sufferers.

I had been in the hospital only about a half hour when an officer came up the steps and said: "Ladies, if you have a home and children you had better go to them, as Sherman is entering the town." I finished binding up the arm of a soldier, and when I got to the door I found the street crowded with men. I said to the officer: "Sir, mount your horse and fly;" but he replied, "I will see you safely across the street." He was captured by a Yankee just as we got across the street. I made every effort afterwards to find out the brave officer's name, but was unsuccessful.

I had gone only a little distance when I met one of my servants, who begged me to hurry home, saying they were all "frightened to death." Looking up the street towards the court-house, I saw a Yankee

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soldier make a man take off his clothing in the street. When I reached my room at home I sank into a chair and felt that I must give up. My nurse, fortunately, did the best thing for me, placing my little boy in my arms. I then felt I must be brave. I said, "God alone can protect you, my children. He delivered Daniel out of the lion's den, and if we will only look to Him, He will deliver us." In a few moments my cook ran in and said: "O! Miss Annie, they have broken open the smoke-house and are carrying everything off". One of the men came up on the porch and said: Madam; where is your meat? We want meat. I certainly did feel a little triumph when I replied: "I gave the meat to Hardee's men yesterday." He rejoined: "Hardee's men won't want meat or anything else long after we catch up with them." They entered the kitchen and took our dinner that was cooking, with the pans, ovens and all, and they searched my house from top to bottom, taking everything they could carry. My uncle soon got me a guard, and I felt greatly relieved.

OH! THE HORROR OF THOSE DAYS!

It is impossible to write or tell what we endured, and it never will be known until we stand before the judgment seat of God. After the fall of Harper's Ferry the families and workmen were removed to Fayetteville, in consequence of which a number of handsome dwellings were added to the Arsenal grounds. It was a lovely spot, and we justly felt proud of it. But Sherman's torch reduced it to ashes. Fayetteville suffered more than most towns, for we had five cotton factories in the town and one at Rockfish, just a few miles away, and they were all burned to the ground, leaving hundreds of people without work or any means of gaining bread. And as we had been robbed of all we had, we, of course, could not help them. As soon as night came on we

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could see fires in every direction, as all the buildings in the country were burned. I can compare it to nothing but what I imagine Hades would be were its awful doors thrown open. But for the kindness of my servants I don't know what would have become of me. They were very faithful. One walked up and down the passage all night, and the other staid on the back porch. Still I was afraid to close my eyes. But for my nurse we would not have had one mouthful to eat. She hid some things in her own room, and in that way saved them.

One morning I had a message from the upper hospital asking me to come. I went up and found that six men had died and been buried in two holes in the yard just wrapped in their blankets. I got there in time to close the eyes of the seventh. Soon after Mayor McLean went out and met the army and surrendered the town. The Federal officers insisted on putting the soldier that had just died in the grave with one of the three, but I would not allow it. I went to the Mayor and got a permit of a coffin and the hearse. Then Mrs. Guion and myself, with two of the men from the hospital, followed his remains to the place where we had been burying the soldiers.

The next day Sherman's army crossed the Cape Fear River, the bridge having been destroyed by our own forces. Most of the things stolen by the invaders were carried down as far as Wilmington and put on a vessel bound for New York. The vessel was burned just before it reached its harbor, and we had the comfort of knowing that none of our handsome furniture and household treasures reached their destination. Just a few days after Sherman left I went to a few of my gentlemen friends and raised sufficient money to buy twelve coffins and to have thirty graves dug. I had the six bodies in the hospital yard and the others that were buried where they camped disinterred, making twelve in all.

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Mayor McLean went with me to the cemetery to select a spot where we could have them all buried together. We could not get a square large enough to hold them all, so he gave us the back part of the cemetery, overlooking Cross Creek, a very pretty situation, with room for all, and a space large enough left to place the monument. Eighteen were buried in a field across the creek and we had them all taken up, and just at sunset Dr. Huske, Rector of St. John's Church, read again the words: "I am the resurrection and the life," the coffins were lowered to their resting place, and the souls of the dead entered into the rest of Paradise until they should arise to meet their Lord and Saviour.

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