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BY J. A. SELBY.

COLUMBIA, S. C., FRIDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 22, 1865.

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CENTRAL KENTUCKY, Sept. 3, 1865.

To the Editor of the New York News: Several of your late issues contain detailed and horrible accounts of the way Federal prisoners suffered at Andersonville and other places of incarceration down South. I have read these details with much interest, but no pleasure, for that mind must be indeed depraved which delights in the recital of cruel deeds and "man's inhumanity to man."

I was myself a prisoner once for the long period of eighteen months at Camp Douglas, Chicago, Illinois, and my experience there very often made me believe that both of the contending parties, or those, at least, entrusted with the care of the many unfortunate in captivity, had lost all their religion, and the greater part of their humanity. It is useless to indulge in recrimination: The commission of one wrong ought not to justify another; and no circumstances, however anomalous in character, should palliate the actions of cruel, treacherous and cowardly natures.

I propose to give you a few painful reminiscences of "Camp Douglas by the Lake," and the facts are stated just as they are; nothing being extenuated or ought set down in malice. I do not make the narration for the purpose of reviving vindictive feelings. God forbid! Having passed through the perils and hardships of three consecutive campaigns—having spent one long Arctic night of a year and a half in duration, within the narrow limits of a prison wall—and, most of all, having passed "sub jugum," and come home a disfranchised and suspected man, I do not feel bellicose in the least. I only want to show you that a great many people assume a refined humanity entirely foreign to their natures, and that immaculate characters rarely ever stand the test of experience.

Some time during the sultry month of August, 1863, several thousand prisoners were transferred from different localities to Chicago, and among the number your correspondent. Col. Charles V. De Land was then the commandant of the post, his regiment, the 1st Michigan Sharpshooters, and a detachment of the 65th Illinois, composed the garrison. I do solemnly affirm that from the very beginning, the officers and men of the 1st Michigan adopted and practiced measures unwarrantably harsh. This regiment had from time to time been recruited to the number of 2,500, but the material was so bad, and desertion so frequent, it then numbered only 600. It had never been to the front, nor seen the smoke of a single battle; the members of it, consequently, knew nothing of the courtesies of civilized warfare; they were equally ignorant of the amenities of social life.

"Prisoners," says Vattel, "are not to be treated harshly, unless personally guilty of some crime against him who has them in power. In this case, he is at liberty to punish them; otherwise, he should remember that they are men and unfortunate. A man of exalted soul no longer feels any emotions but those of compassion toward a conquered enemy, who has submitted to his arms." Whether Col. De Land had ever read the "Laws of Nations," I have no knowledge; if he had, and all unlettered gentlemen certainly should, his regime ignored the existence of all principles relative to prisoners of war.

This man is justly responsible for all the atrocities committed by his subordinates. Instead of restraining, he kept alive and encouraged the devilish malignity of his men. When I say prisoners were shot down in cold blood without any real provocation—that they were often hung up by the thumbs until fainting relieved their suffering—that blows, kicks and curses were expended on us in lavish profusion, I tell the truth, so help me God! The most exact obedience to orders, the most servile submission in department, did not exempt us from the exercise of a brutal authority. A thousand and one petty regulations were adopted; not for the purpose of insuring a stricter custody, but to annoy and humiliate us; and the least infringement of any order was punished with a severity altogether incompatible with the nature of the offence. For instance, a few members of Cluke's regiment (the Eighth Kentucky) were discovered excavating a tunnel under their barrack. Instead of punishing the guilty ones, the colonel commanding ordered the entire regiment to stand up in line for a whole day, beneath a broiling sun; toward night, the guard fired into them, killing one, mortally wounding another, and crippling a third. On several occasions our barracks were fired into at night, and men killed while sleeping. These outrages were justified by no circumstance of time or place. No conspiracy or disorder was going on. Every man of us was so well acquainted with the proclivities of our keepers, that we actually studied how to demean ourselves with becoming humility; no course of conduct seemed to propitiate. There was a talisman, however, which never failed to win the latent kindness of the guards, and that was the "oil of palms."

Twenty-five dollars worth of this invaluable elixir, gently rubbed on the hand of a "sharp-shooter," always carried a rebel over the wall to the nearest depot. The cabalistic "open sesame" of the Arabian tale was not more potent than this same oil. During the six months of Col. De Land's administration, over two hundred and fifty prisoners made good their escape; and I do verily believe if greenbacks had been plentiful, our entire command would have gradually evacuated their position.

The winter of '63 will never be forgotten by any of us. A locality in the forty-second degree of North latitude, always subject to the fierce breezes of Lake Michigan, was extremely cold to men accustomed to the genial sun, and soft, vernal showers of the South. Our barracks were nothing more than large sheds, open and dilapidated, with scarcely a single window, and no floors. As the cold weather approached, we commenced making preparations, with the consent and approbation of the "Commissary of Prisoners." Sufficient clothing was sent for to make all comfortable; it safely arrived, per express; but conceive our surprise and disappointment, when we were informed that a late order from the War Department limited our costume to a very few articles, and prohibited overcoats entirely. The consequence was, we only got what they chose to give us; and all goods having to pass through two offices—an examining and delivery office—and every fellow connected with each having to steal a certain per cent. of what passed through his hands, we scarcely got anything at all. Had there been another office, we would have got nothing. At one time during the coldest season, there were several hundred overcoats and a large quantity of other clothing at headquarters awaiting distribution. Earnest petitions were made by the destitute for blankets, woolen shirts, etc., but in no one instance were they favorably received. It was at a time, too, that tried our very souls, the month of January, 1864. One-half of the miserable wretches in each barrack were compelled to lie shivering and closely packed in their bunks, while the others crowded around the stoves, two in number, trying to keep from freezing to death. A great many, enfeebled and emaciated by chronic diseases, silently gave up the ghost in

the still hours of the night, their companions knowing nothing of their departure. Hundreds were frost-bitten. Fuel was doled out in chilling quantities; and, although every little piece of coal and wood was hoarded with miserly care, still we suffered intensely. Toward the latter part of February, if I recollect aright, it was bruited about the camp, and generally believed, that Col. De Land's command had marching orders. The report proved to be correct, and we hailed their departure with sincere joy, anticipating a change of condition in a change of rulers. Col. B. J. Sweet assumed command. Everything progressed with admirable order and cleverness until the following day. During this happy interval, we were comparatively well-treated. With the Colonel's approval, and under the supervision of men appointed by him, we improved our barracks, ditched and made clean our grounds, erected new buildings for various purposes, and in short did all that we could to make ourselves comfortable, fully expecting to remain there until the close of the war. Hard times came on again, however, in July. In the first place, came an order from the War Department curtailing our rations so frightfully that we began to feel hungry at the very prospect. Secondly, we were prohibited receiving articles from the outer world. This was another cruel stroke of "outrageous fortune," for many benevolent persons in Kentucky and other States had been daily sending us mighty hampers and boxes of wholesome provisions. The sutlers were also prohibited selling us anything to eat. Our sufferings now commenced in dead earnest.

We drew just enough meat and bread to sustain life and keep us ravenously hungry all the time. On a prolonged torture, I think a gnawing and everlasting hunger the worst. The fabled agony of Tantalus must have been something like it. Like Oliver Twist in the poor house, we went to bed hungry, dreamed of something to eat all night, and got up the next morning hungrier than ever, to breakfast on a cold crust and pass the long, weary day with our "aching voids" unfilled. This was the case day after day, week after week, month after month. The most rigid economy and careful management did no good. Some would eat their rations for a day at one meal; others thought it best to have two, which was something like conjuring a quart out of a pint bottle.

In a camp of ten thousand men, a hound puppy would have starved to death, provided it wasn't killed and eaten. This was the unhappy fate of a corpulent canine that was decoyed into Barrack No. 9 by Green Williams and Milton Walker, of Company C, 2d Kentucky, killed and cooked by these gents, and eaten with infinite gusto.

Capt. Wells Sponable, the commissary of prisoners, hearing of the affair, summoned the wretches before his awful tribunal, and giving them a sound cursing, committed them to the dungeon.

"Both mongrel puppy, whelp and hound, And curs of low degree."

we were carefully kept out of reach from that day. Petition after petition was sent to headquarters, setting forth the insufficiency of our rations, and praying for more, but we invariably got the same reply—"the Government allow you so much, and no more." This state of things continued for eight months, only times grew worse as the winter of '64 approached. We did not get stoves and fuel until December. In that latitude it is rather cold the 1st of October. We were vastly better situated in respect to warm quarters than during the preceding winter. It seemed, however, that fate, as she bestowed one blessing, gave us, at the same time, a still greater curse. We were, therefore, tormented by the "Police Guard," a set of men as brutal, cruel and stony-hearted as were ever the task-masters of the land of Egypt. It was the duty of these fellows to be with us at all times, to see that no regulation was infringed, and if any were, to punish the offenders at pleasure. Being in-

vested with plenary powers by their superior officers, they carried their authority to a barbarous and unreasonable extent. Punishment, or rather cruelties, the most revolting and humiliating were daily inflicted. Blows, kicks and curses, incarceration in the dungeon, the ball and chain, were the order of the day. The police were armed with revolvers and heavy sticks; they used both without remorse. Among them there was one pre-eminent in savageness of heart. His name was Chapman, but his bull-dog qualities had gained him the appropriate soubriquet of "Old Brindle." The physique of this extraordinary personage well indicated his moral turpitude. Of Herculean build and stature, with a huge angular head, set on a short brawny neck, big jaws and big mouth, with protruding fangs, restless grey eyes and a dark, sinister cast of features, this lineal descendant of the Anthropophagi was "the right man in the right place," to exemplify the beauties of the coercive system. One bitter night in last December, this man, with two others, stealthily entered our barracks and caught three men standing by the stove. It was against orders for any prisoner to be out of his bunk after sunset, but the intense cold had driven some to the fire. Chapman, with his pistol cocked and presented, made these men kneel on the floor, while he severely whipped them with the heavy buckle of his pistol belt, saying, at the time, "God d—n you, I'm printing United States on your back." The men thus cruelly outraged were Bane, Pettway and Cox, and the atrocity was committed in the presence of a hundred and eighty men, any or all of whom will corroborate this statement. We transmitted a report of the whole affair to Col. Sweet, but with no good result. Chapman was immediately promoted a grade higher; he became "Sergeant of the Kitchen," and shortly afterward shot down and killed a half-famished Carolinian, for picking bones out of the refuse barrels. This crime added a good deal to his prestige, and he was still flourishing in undiminished brutality when I left there last February. To him, more than to any man I ever saw, are applicable the words of Signor Gratiano:

"O, be thou damn'd, inexorable dog, And for thy life let justice be accused! Thou almost mak'st me waver in my faith, To hold opinion with Pythagoras, That souls of animals infuse themselves Into the trunks of men: thy currish spirit Governed a wolf, who, hanged for human slaughter, Even from the gallows did his fell soul fleet, And whilst thou lay'st in thy unhallow'd dam, Infus'd itself in thee; for thy desires Are wolfish, bloody, starv'd and ravenous."

I could give you many other sickening details similar to those above related, but it is unnecessary, and I will trespass on your patience no longer. I have written these disgraceful facts to show you that cruelty is not confined to any particular locality; that all men are more or less depraved, and that depravity is developed to a frightful degree in times of war.

MIGHTY RIGHT.

DEATH OF CHARLES L. TRENHOLM, Esq.—This useful citizen and well-known gentleman died in this city, of a severe attack of fever, on yesterday. From early boyhood, he has been connected with mercantile pursuits, and for many years previous to the war was interested in and had the management of that valuable property known as Fraser's or Central Wharves. There are few among us who would be considered his equal in untiring application to business, and in an intelligent and sagacious management of the affairs entrusted to his charge. The deceased is a younger brother of our fellow-citizen, Geo. A. Trenholm, Esq., now confined in Fort Pulaski. Mr. Trenholm was still in the prime of life, being only a few years over fifty.—*Charleston News.*

A few cases of yellow fever reported in New Orleans, but they excite no uneasiness, as they are of a mild type, and yield readily to careful treatment. The health of the city generally was never better.

The robberies continue in Charleston. On Monday night, a residence in Bee street was robbed, and several attempts were made in other parts of the city.

There were more marriages in Petersburg, Va., during the last month of August than in any one month for ten years past.

The French Government is about to send out an engineer to Japan, to establish an arsenal at Yokohama, on the ground ceded to France.

The Russian telegraph through Siberia will be economical on account of the number of Poles on the ground.

Attempts at outrages on ladies are frequent now at Portland, Maine.

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Gent's Half Hose, of excellent quality.
Men's fine Felt Hats, black and colored.
Colored Woolen Shirts and Drawers.
Corsets, China Dolls of all sizes.
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