

STRAY LEAVES

A Department of Current Poetry
By WILLIAM D. ROBINSON.

(All contributions to this Department must be typewritten, "real poetry," accompanied by stamped and addressed return envelope, and sent to 1501 1/2 Taylor St., Columbia, S. C., to the Editor of this column. Allworthy manuscripts will be printed under your own name. Amateurs and poet-aspirants, this is your chance to develop the talent, if you have it.)

The Editor of this Department offers his services to anyone desiring poems on any subject for any occasion, such as epitaphs, memoriams, expressions of friendship, or topics for programs of all kinds.

STRUGGLE.

By William D. Robinson.

Struggling, I came from an unknown world
Into this world of strife,
Like a sailor adrift, by the billows hurled,
Upon the sea of life.

With neither a ship nor a guiding star,
All murky gloom o'erhead,
'Til a beacon flashed from a shore afar
Across the stormy dread.

Breaking thru the struggling Deep, it came,
And challenged me to live,
I felt in my soul an answering flame
That urged me on to live.

Thru hot, mingling sweat and tears and blood,
With pulsing life exposed,
I struggled on 'til the wild waves steed
With ev'ry wind opposed.

I built a small raft with a single sail,
Of driftwood strongly bound:
Its name is the Faith and it cannot fail
To breast the heaving mound.

Let the wild winds rage and the billows toss;
My body made a buffer,
Strong Faith shall support me beneath each cross
That my soul must suffer.

And my spirit shall gain the haven sought,
Struggling on to God;
Enduring as the holy visions taught,
The thorny path He trod.

Struggle! the ocean roars it to the stars!
And rushing worlds reply;
And Nature smiles to heal the bleeding scars,
And cover those who die!

present time I was in command of two companies and that it was impossible for me to advance further with my right flank exposed to an attack. He then charged me with being a coward in spite of my previous operations. I said nothing but walked away out of the headquarters."

"This officer who called me a coward had never served with the regular army and was wholly ignorant of army tactics, yet he was placed in command of a battalion when in the regular army he could not have qualified as a first class private. He stated that Captain Peaks was in command of Company "K" which I had been commanding and that Captain Green was with Company "L," which I too was commanding at that very time. It developed later that Captain Peaks had been wounded on the morning of the 26th and I have described the wounding of Captain Green, who died later from the wound he received and yet the Battalion Commander said he was receiving reports from them hourly, which shows just how much he knew of what his own command was doing.

"Upon rejoining the company I found Company "M" moving up on my left. Lieut. Dent, of Washington, D. C., advancing in the middle of the Bernaville Road. Upon his arrival he informed me that he had received orders to move back.

"After a short conference we decided the order at the present time was impracticable and we held what we had gained. I had received no such order.

"I sent Lieut. Cross and Sergeant Collier to the front and right where they encountered the enemy attempting to move around my left flank and a hot fight took place.

"Lieut. Cross sent a runner requesting reinforcements as he was outnumbered. I sent Lieut. Crawford to support him, thereby, weakening my front line.

"I in turn sent runner to Battalion Headquarters asking for a barrage to help check the advance of the enemy. The runner returned at 2:00 p. m. with orders for the battalion to move out of the woods at double-quick time."

"Such an order I should explain would be detrimental to the morale of the men. Here they were fighting like hell and all of its fury and gaining ground at every encounter and an order comes to move out of the woods.

"I counteracted the order with one to hold the line. All shells were falling behind us and we were advancing into the territory of the enemy.

"Sergeant Collier returned with two prisoners and reported that the patrol had killed four Germans.

"Again the enemy put down a barrage which fell in the valley but we had crossed the valley and had taken the opposite position. Here we awaited orders from the Battalion Commander.

"At 3:00 p. m. received orders from Battalion Commander that all officers report to Battalion Headquarters. This command was sent direct to me. I told runner to report that I had no officers and that my First Sergeant had been gassed and sent to the rear. The runner returned shortly and said 'Captain, Major Norris said report to him at once.'"

"I complied with this order and upon my arrival at the headquarters I found Lieuts. Cross, Cheers and Crawford there. The Battalion Commander said in a loud voice: 'You are all a bunch of cowards.'"

"Forgetting that I was a soldier and should respect my superior officer and remembering all of the hardships and difficulties under which we were operating and of our success, I entered upon a vicious tirade against the ignorance and cowardice of this officer who dared call us cowards. What I said was not entered in my diary but you may rest assured it was not my prayers.

"The officer claimed that the men had run away and yet all of them were there on the firing line on the north side of the valley. This was reported to him. He ordered us back to our companies, with instructions that hereafter all of his orders would be in writing."

"At 6:00 received orders to advance at 6:30. I pulled in my outposts and scouts and prepared for the attack.

"Met the enemy about four hundred yards from our previous position and a battle commenced. The right flank was yet exposed, so I sent Sergeant Collier to cover it.

"Again I sent a report to Major Norris telling him of the impossibility and impracticability of advancing with the right flank of the battalion exposed. He ordered a halt which was impracticable at this time as it destroyed the morale of the men.

"The enemy had circled our right flank and was driving Sergeant Collier and his handful of men back. I changed my front and directed my fire to the right flank and the enemy was repulsed. I then placed Lieut. Cross be prepared for an attack of the enemy on the front line with instructions to

At eight o'clock with the darkness came a rain and also an order from the headquarters asking the whereabouts of my headquarters for the night. I should have given a definite location but replied here on the line with these men.

"At eight-thirty I observed all of the companies moving back and upon query Lieut. Dent told me the order had come from Battalion Commander as he had asked for a barrage. Again I ordered the men to hold their position and went to battalion headquarters.

"After a long search I found the headquarters and was informed by the sentinal that the commander was sleeping and had given orders that he was not to be disturbed. Disregarding these orders I walked past and there I found him in his dugout as nervous as he could be."

"I wish that I had the words to describe the miserable plight of this officer into whose care the responsibility of the American cause had been entrusted. Although saying that he was sleeping I found him almost a nervous wreck, not knowing what to do and entirely ignorant of the operation of his men. The only thing he could say was that the men had run away like cowards which was a lie and further showed his ignorance.

"The commander denied that he ordered the men to move back in spite of the fact that such an order had reached the front."

"September 29, the front arriving at 4:00 o'clock. Assembling of command showed that two platoons were missing.

"Scouts arrived at Company headquarters stating that a strong German patrol was moving around our right flank.

"Prepared to stem their progress, I sent Lieut. Cross to the left of Bernaville Road and Sergt. Collier with sixteen men to take up position on the right and sent runners to the rear to find lost platoons."

"Runners returned stating that Lieut. Reed, a new officer, was moving with two platoons. Runners also came from Lieut. Cross stating that Fritz was moving forward and I ordered the men to open fire on them. Fritz was surprised and retreated hastily. We moved forward about 300 yards to the outskirts of the Bernaville village.

"Fritz put down a barrage, cutting off Lieut. Reed and the two platoons. This officer braved the fire and moved forward."

"At 9:00 a. m., Lieut. Reed, Lieut. Cross and I moved into Bernaville village without firing a shot. This was a German supply station. As yet no message had been received from the Battalion Commander in spite of the effort to establish connection.

"At 11:30 a. m., received a message that we could be relieved by French troops."

The next article will deal with the events leading up to the court-martial and probably the court-martial itself.

URGES COLORED PEOPLE TO COME TO CALIFORNIA

(By The Associated Negro Press.)
Los Angeles, Calif., July—Bishop Parks, Senior bishop of the Church, in welcoming the bishops to Los Angeles to their mid-summer council, urged them to consider advising the people to come west. "We are glad that such a representative group of leaders of the American Negro has taken time to go over the Coast. This is God's Country. I want you to encourage our people to come. There are wide expanses of land, the best land in the world, freedom of thought, fair dealing, and great opportunity. A half million Negroes could come here from the South without hurting the South, and with great profit to themselves, and the Pacific Coast. For the Negro is the best worker in the world. He has made good in the South, and the South does not want to let him go. He has recently made good in the East, but he fights shy of the West. "Go back and tell the people about this fine climate, far better suited to the black man than the cold northeast. Tell them that the agricultural possibilities are unlimited, and that even cotton is becoming a staple of this country, and the Negro knows how to raise cotton as no one else. Here he ought to find a cotton bonanza. Here is opportunity, independence, and citizenship.

INFORMATION FOR DELEGATES GOING TO LAURENS JULY 16th

Passenger train leaves Columbia 11:35 a. m. Delegates going to Laurens on the 16th should mobilize at Columbia in time to catch this train. With a sufficient number a special coach will be given which will make this ride more comfortable.

No application is made for reduced railroad rates this year as so many of the delegates travel by automobiles that it has been impossible to secure the necessary number of certificates.

This will be an important session of the Convention; for the first time in its history the Convention will change Presidents. There is keen interest everywhere as to who will succeed Dr. Moore.

The usual interests will confront the Convention, and the local organizations are urged to keep the standard up. No doubt our schools and Unions want to do no less for Education than here-to-fore. The much needed Boys' building at Morris College is to be erected this summer. Let the part played by the Sunday School Convention be up to the standard. Schools and Unions that cannot send delegates are asked to send letters.

Write Mrs. Mary E. Whitener, 227 N. Caroline St., for assignment. Wm. HOWARD, Cor. Sec'y.

SELLS BOOKER T WASHINGTON'S FURNITURE

(By The Associated Negro Press)
Tuskegee, Ala., July—The entire contents of Booker T. Washington's famous home were put on sale here Wednesday, including the antique furniture, im-

ported rugs and bric-a-brac of all kinds. The home and its furnishings were willed to his two sons, David and Booker, Jr., and to his daughter Portia, by the late educator. Criticism of the sale was heard on the ground that the public would have preferred to see the contents of the home preserved with the house.

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BLOODY DAYS

By Captain David Smith.

For The Associated Negro Press.
Editor's Note: This is the third of a series of articles by Captain Smith in the refutation of the charges made by General Robert Lee Bullard, a son of the South, who declared in a recent syndicated article that the Negro was a failure in the Great World War. Captain Smith is one of the men court-martialed for cowardice and was exonerated and is now writing this series of articles for the Associated Negro Press from his war diary. Each article becomes more interesting so do not miss a single installment.

In beginning the weekly installment, let me first pay tribute to Y. M. C. A. Secretary Banks. A native of Ohio, Mr. Banks was of much service to the men on this particular drive, making trip after trip among the wounded, comforting them and issuing cigarettes as well as carrying men back to the first aid station.

September 28—"We arrived at the enemy's barbed wire entanglements and here halted on account of not having wire cutters and the darkness prevented us from entering the enemy's territory. Orders were given to halt until daylight.

"Four-thirty a. m., a verbal order was received from the Battalion Commander stating that the attack would be resumed at 6:30. I assembled the men and the report of the company showed that I had about 150 men and no officers. This report was sent to the Battalion Commander. His former order was reiterated that we should move out at 6:30. At 6:00 o'clock I held conference with Captain Green, Commander of Company "I". I told him of the Battalion Commander's order. We had no objective.

"During conference with Captain Green a shell fell within twenty yards of us, striking Captain Green, wounding him fatally.

"Although yet under arrest, I assumed command of his company too. The company consisted of three platoons, commanded by Lieut. Cheers, Lieut. Cross and Lieut. Crawford.

"Placed Lieut. Cross on my right to cover that flank and ordered Lieut. Cheers and Crawford to connect up my left flank with Company "M".

The Forest in which we were operating was very trick and wired throughout, which made operation very difficult without wire cutters. I personally commanded the first platoon.

"Moved out of position at the time ordered under a machine gun fire and at 10:00 a. m. with the first platoon I had taken a trench leading to the Morrow Valley, a strong position of

the enemy.
"At 11:00 a. m. halted for observation and to allow other platoons to come up, having moved faster than they had as the obstacles were not so great.

Sent out patrols and runners to locate other platoons and those of Company "L". The enemy in the interim treated us with a machine gun attack and I decided to move across the valley. In this attack one man was lost."

"Perhaps the readers do not understand why I ordered my platoon to move out in the face of the deadly machine gun fire of the enemy which was combing the area traversed. This is better than to remain stationary or to move back, as it in a way disconcerts the gunners.

"Took the position on other side of valley and awaited the coming of Company "K" and platoons of Company "L". Company "K" arrived first in this position across the Morrow Valley.

"Sent Sergeant Collier with eight men to my right flank to establish connection with the Second Battalion, under command of Major Elsie. He returned stating that the battalion could not be found, therefore showing that my right flank was uncovered and unprotected.

"At 12:30 a French Officer came up and commended the outfit for their work and stated that he was going to report our attack and the condition under which we were operating to the regional Commander.

"I sent Sergeant Collier, with a squad to locate an enemy machine gun nest that was peppering our position continually. He returned with one machine gun, four pistols and reported that the nest had been wiped out.

"The area in which we were operating turned out to be a gas area and fourteen of my men were suffering from gas including my First Sergeant. This caused us to move back to the crest of the hill.

"Met Lieut. Cross and his platoon. I placed him in command and went to Battalion Headquarters to report. No order had been received since 4:30.

"I reported our operations to the Battalion Commander and told him that I had tried to establish connection with the Third Battalion but to no avail and that the flanks of our battalion were exposed. He replied that I was wrong that the flanks were covered.

"I further reported that Captain Peaks had not yet been located and that Captain Green had been wounded. Again he said I was wrong that both Captains were in the front line with their respective outfits. I told him this was impossible as at the