PATRIOTS LIFE IN CAMP

A VISIT TO THE CUBAN ARMY INTERESTINGLY DESCRIBED.

How They Spend Their Life in Camp—The Clothes They Wear and Their Amusements—Other Interesting Features of the Cuban War Field.

From his retreat in Virginia, where he is engaged in writing war history, Gen. Bradley T. Johnson sends the News the following letter from a gentleman in Cuba:

Having received notice of an encampment of insurgents in the neighbourhood of my estate, I resolved to visit it, not only to pay my respects to the General in command, as an old friend, but also to see for myself and become acquainted with the composition of such an organization. The small bands that frequently visited my place were for the most part independent bodies, acting, to all intent, on their own responsibility, but having, nevertheless, communication with the large bodies of patriots that moved about the country, keeping the troops in constant alarm by their rapid changes of position.

I started early one morning under the guidance of a couple of insurgents who visited me most frequently, taking with us the passports of papers that every one is obliged to carry either at his residence or to go even beyond the boundaries of his estate, as in case of meeting the Spanish soldiers I could remain within the exactions of military law. I also took the precaution of carrying a field glass so as to reconnoitre the roads that lay in our way, from the hills that overlooked the land. As it was, we met only a small detachment of cavalry crossing our route at some distance, and we remained hidden until it had passed. About ten miles from the starting point, on ascending a small eminence, we were suddenly confronted by two insurgents, whose appearance somewhat startled me, as I could see no object or bush of sufficient size to enable any one to hide in. I suppose that they had dug holes for the purpose, as they informed me that the detachment we had seen had passed close to them. They exchanged a few words with my guide and we passed on our way. A few hundred yards further we were stopped by a squad of mounted men, who, on learning the object of my visit, informed me that they were the advance guard of the main body, and directed us to ruins that could be seen through some trees on our right.

The encampment was formed in the batey or cluster of houses that belonged to the sugar estate—the cane has been destroyed long ago by fire—and of the buildings only one remains in fair condition and that was occupied by an aged couple. Of all the others only charred timbers and blackened walls remains to mark the place where they stood. The general had moved away the previous evening with the greater part of the command, leaving 150 men, who were at this time engaged in cutting up three steers and preparing their morning meal. I passed through the throng, exchanging salutations with the men and reached the quarters of the commanding officer, in whom I recognized an old acquaintance, and was invited to partake of the meal to which he was doing justice, and dismounting I occupied the seat offered me by one of the staff, which was formed of several bricks in a pile. On a charred piece of timber that had been a supporting column of the sugar house was the lay-out, consisting of a large piece of meat almost burnt on one side and quite rare on the other and a pile of sweet potatoes. For table cloth there was a large yagua or bark of the palm tree.

Of this meat each one present, with the knife carried at the waist, carved a piece, which was eaten 'en nature' as fingers were made before knives and forks. Water was drank from bottles or leather cases, with which many were provided. The commanding officer, however, had a cup of coffee, which he insisted on dividing with me, regretting that the present the sugar had given out. Jokes were not wanting, and laughter resounded on all sides, proving that if anything else was wanting, good humor certainly was not. The meal being over, a shrill whistle resounded, silence was restored, and at the word of command each man sought his horse and in a few minutes the line was formed ready to take up the march. I asked permission to inspect the arms, which was readily granted. Many were Colt repeating carbines, others were Remington or Peabody, and two or three men had No. 12 breech-loading shotguns which showed hard use and were not kept in as good condition as could be desired. All had revolvers, mostly Smith & Wesson's and the well-known machete. Some of the rifles were new from a recent landing on the coast, and not a few had broken stocks that had been mended with wire or twine.

The men were dressed in clothes of many colors, some merely with knit undershirts and linen pants. Nothing suggested anything of a uniform except the five-pointed star on a blue ground that was conspicuous on the upturned brim of the hat, whether felt or straw. Some of the dusky race had further ornaments of peacock or other gay feathers. All had pieces of oilcloth rolled and carried at the front of the saddle, which were used as a cloak for protection from the rain, or at night from the heavy dews. The men appeared strong and healthy, and if their garments were somewhat worn and ragged, and shoes out at the toes, they were cheerful and contented. There was casual mention of the "presentation," or wilful surrender of two of their number, who a few days before had taken advantage of the amnesty decree. 'Let them go, so much more merit to those who remain true to Cuba!' exclaimed one in a loud voice, amid the cheers and cries of approval of the whole troop. Among this squadron I counted fifteen colored men, who in nowise showed as inferior to the best.

We dwell with pride on the trials, the abnegation, the heroism displayed in our war for independence. Marion receiving the British officer at his meal of a few sweet potatoes and a piece of raccoon, with a pine log for a table: Washington obliged to remain in bed until his only shirt is washed, make our breasts swell with admiration. We feel for the suffering endured by those heroes of the past, in frost and snow; we follow them in sympathy in the dreary march through drenching rain and clinging mud—let us give a thought to those of the present, though not of our race, who, without remuneration of any kind, often without raiment, without other shelter than the trees of the forest against the heavy storms of the tropics, with scant knowledge of the use of fire arms, are struggling for their liberty against a numerous and powerful foe, wielding every implement known to modern warfare, and who shrink from no act however cruel or barbarous, for the accomplishment of a purpose.

Let the world know that in the dungeons of the Spanish fortresses are confined by the hundred, where half the number would be crowded, human beings whose only crime has been the desire of liberty, religious and political. With no covering or bed but the slimy pavement of the chamber, in which their scanty food is thrown to them and in which every loathsome function of the human body has to be performed, these martyrs, like beasts in an ill-kept den, breathe the foul air, many suffering from fever and disease without help of any kind until death, by the platoon fire or the midnight murder by drowning, brings relief to the wretched sufferer.

Armenia's struggle with the Turk for religious liberty has awakened a worldwide sympathy and called forth the armed intervention of all Europe; in what respect is her cause more just or less holy than that of Cuba, in whose defense no one has raised a hand nor a voice protested against a barbarous system of warfare, carried on by the proconsuls of Spain? But the destinies of nations are not all in the hands of man. God, our lord, watches and waits. Let us hope.—Baltimore News.

SURGERY WITHOUT ANÆSTHETICS.

The Horror of the Knife Up to the Discovery of Anæsthesia Fifty Years Ago.

One of the most interesting papers read at the recent celebration in Boston of the fiftieth anniversary of the first administration of ether in a surgical operation was that by Dr. John Ashhurst of that city on 'Surgery Before the Days of Anæsthetics.' It vividly recalls the horrors of those days when the surgeon's knife was an object of far greater terror than now, and inflicted untold tortures upon the conscious patient.

'A study of the condition of surgery before the days of anæsthesia,' said Dr. Ashhurst, 'reveals on the one hand a picture of heroic boldness and masterly self-control on the part of the surgeon, and on the other a ghastly panorama, sometimes of stoic fortitude and endurance, sometimes of abject terror and humiliation—but always of agonizing wretchedness and pain—on the part of the unhappy victim who required the surgeon's aid.

"The 'pitilessness' which Celsus urged as an essential trait in the operative surgeon was, before the days of anæsthesia, a feature in the surgeon's career which impressed very strongly the public generally as well as those immediately connected with the operation. It is interesting to recalls that Sir James Simpson of Edinburgh, shortly after beginning his professional studies, was so affected by 'seeing the terrible agony of a poor Highland woman under amputation of the breast' that he resolved to abandon a medical career and seek other occupation; happily his intention was reconsidered, and he returned to his studies, asking himself 'Can anything be done to make operations less painful?' and, as everyone knows, in less than twenty years became a high priest of anæsthesia, and the introducer into surgical and obstetrical practice of ether's great rival, chloroform.

'No braver or more gallant gentleman ever lived than Admiral Viscount Nelson, and after his right elbow had been shattered by a French bullet in the assault at Teneriffe he manifested the utmost courage refusing to be taken to the nearest ship lest the sight of his injury should alarm the wife of a fellow officer whose own fate was uncertain, and when his own ship was reached he climbed up its side without assistance, saying; 'Tell the surgeon to make haste and get his instruments. I know I must loose my right arm, so the sooner it is off the better.' 'He underwent the amputation,' we learn from a private letter of one of his midshipmen, 'with the same firmness and courage that have always marked his character.' And yet so painfully was he effected by the coldness of the operator's knife that when next going into action at the famous battle of the Nile he gave standing orders to his surgeons that hot water shohld always be kept in readiness during an engagement, so that if another operation should be required he might at least have the poor comfort of being cut with warm with instruments.

On the side of the surgeon we find throughout the ages a constant effort to diminish the terrors of operations and a continuous reprobation of the distressful, not to say cruel, modes of practice adopted by preceeding generations. And yet the time is not very far distant from ours when they lopped of a limb by stricking it violently with a heavy knife; that time when they knew neither how to stop nor how to prevent hemorrhage but by burning the part whence the blood jetted with burning oil or the red-hot iron; that time when surgeons armed themselves at every moment with pincers, with burning cauteries and with instruments, the representations even of which cause terror.

'The belief that operations might be rendered painless appears to have been present in the minds of surgeons from the earliest periods. Witness the accounts of the Memphis stone, described by Dioscorides and Pliny, which by steeping the vinegar was made to give forth the fumes of carbonic acid, and of the mandragor, employed, according to Theodoric, when mixed with other narcotics, by inhalation, and causing a sleep from which the patient could only be aroused by the fumes of vinegar. So profound was the stupor induced by this drug that Bodin assures us that under its influence a man submitted without consciousness to a painful operation and continued to sleep for several days thereafter.

'Vigo speaks of the whole body being 'brought asleep by the smelling of a sponge wherein opium is,' but warns his readers that the practice is dangerous, because the use of opium is sometimes followed by gangrene. In his work on 'Natural Magic' Baptista Porta speaks of a volatile drug kept in leaden vessels, which produced sleep when applied to the nostrils, and Perrin suggests that this may actually have been ether or some other of our modest anæsthetic agents.

'Mental preoccupation was sometimes sought as a means of preventing pain. Richard Wiseman found that soldiers dreaded the loss of a limb much less if it were removed immediately, while they were 'in the heat of the fight,' than if the operation was postponed until next day; 'wherefore,' he says, 'cut it off quickly, while the soldier is heated and in mettle;' and Renauldin recalls the case of the amiable Dolomieu, who, exposed to the pangs of starvation in a Neapolitan dungeon, measurably alleviated his own distress by in the composition of a treatise on mineralogy, while his unfortunate servant, and fellow prisoner, who had not the same intellectual resources, was hungry enough for both.

'But the presence of pain was not the only evil dreaded by our predecessors in attempting important operations; the great risk of fatal accident from some involuntary movement of the patient was constantly present to the mind of the conscientious surgeon. 'How often,' says Dr. Valentine Mott, 'when operating in some deep, dark wound along the course of some great vein, with thin walls alternately distended and flaccid with the vital current—how often have I dreaded that some unfortunate struggle of the patient would deviate the knife a little from its proper course, and that I, who fain would be the deliverer, should involuntarily become the executioner, seeing my patient perish in my hands by the most appalling forms of death! Had he been insensible I should have felt no alarm.'

'Coming down to the days more immediately preceding the date of the great discovery we find that opium and alcohol were the only agents which continued to be regarded as of practical value in diminishing the pain of operations, though the attendant disadvantages of their employment were of course recognized. Meanwhile facts were accumulating, the significance of which we now plainly recognize, and which excited no attention.

'Sir Humphrey Davy, in the early days of the nineteenth century, suggested the use of nitrous oxide gas as an anæsthetic in minor operations, and it was the custom at some of our medical schools—at the University of Pennsylvania, for one—for students to breathe 'laughing gas,' as it was then called, for diversion. But yet—and yet—surgeons went on, in every country, cutting and burning, and patients went on writing and screaming, until on the sixteenth day of October, in the year 1846, in the Massachusetts General Hospital, Dr. John C. Warren painlessly removed a tumor from a man who had previously been etherized by Dr. William T. G. Morton, and surgical anæsthesia became the priceless heritage of the civilized world.'

JENNIE LIND AND THE QUEEN.

Both Ladies Acted Gracefully in an Embarassing Position.

There is a pretty story told of Queen Victoria and Jenny Lind. It belongs to the year 1848, and shows how the modesty of two women the Queen of England and the queen of song, made a momentary awkwardnnss which the gentle tact of the singer overcame.

It was on a night when Jenny Lind was to sing at Her Majesty's Theatre that the queen made her first appearance after the memorable Chartist day. For the great artist, too, this was a first appearance, for it was the beginning of her season at a place where, the year before, she had won unparalleled fame.

It happened that the queen entered the royal box at the same moment that the prima donna stepped upon the stage. Instantly a tumult of acclamation burst from every corner of the theatre. Jenny Lind modestly retired to the back of the stage, waiting till the demonstration of loyalty to the sovereign should subside.

The queen, refusing to appropriate to herself that which she imagined to be intended for the artist, made no acknowledgment, either from the stage or the royal box.

At length, when the situation became embarrassing, Jenny Lind, with ready tact, ran forward to the footlights and sang 'God Save the Queen,' which was caught up at the end of the solo by the orchestra, chorus and audience. The queen then came to the front of her box and bowed, and the opera was resumed.

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