

WHEN BOYS WERE MEN

By JOHN HABBERTON,
Author of "Helen's Babies," "George Washington," Etc.

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(CONTINUED.)

After the works on both sides had been making faces at each other for several weeks, and a great lot of powder had been burned without hurting many people, and thousands of men had been kept awake at night when they wanted to be asleep, the word was passed through our camp one evening that General Longstreet was to be made to feel very sick next morning and that we were to assist at the operation. Between dark and dawn the bridge was secretly repaired, right under the enemy's military nose. The most difficult part of the work, that of repairing the frame, was done silently. Then an army of contrabands went down in couples, each couple carrying a young pine log to be used as planking. When these had been laid, other contrabands packed the cracks with straw, and still



Lying down in shallow rifle pits.

others carried out bags and boxes of dirt and strewed over all, so the bridge should be noiseless under footfall of man and horse. Eight hundred Africans were kept awake all night by that job, and I do not believe the occasion would have been favorable in which to interview them on the blessings of freedom. Just before dawn several companies of our regiment passed over and learned that the enemy had not expected them. Close behind came a large body of infantry, which prolonged the surprise we had caused and prepared to make it permanent. Then some of our light artillery took a hand. We struck the enemy's line near its center and behaved so disagreeably to the Johnnies that General Longstreet took them back to General Lee.

CHAPTER XVII. AFTER THE SIEGE.

As I am told that General Longstreet is a gentleman of fine sensibilities, I am very glad he did not hear the expressions of delight with which the Thirty-eighth received the announcement that he had gone back to his old familiar hunting grounds. Nobody meant to speak unkindly, but all were glad that he was gone, and we said so with as much intensity as was in us. We took the road at once, not to delay his departure, but just to see how he had left things. We did not at all approve of what we saw; neither did the natives. The woods and fields were scarified with miles upon miles of ditches and embankments. Among the natives the

conclusion seemed to be that if they were to have their forests shorn and their land turned upside down it didn't much matter who might do it—Yank or Johnny.

Free colored people who lived outside the lines had grievances too. They had been able to hide some cows, pigs, chickens and turkeys from occasional Union soldiers who prowled about alone, but against a few thousand hungry men who were fully informed on the secretive ways of the African it was useless to contend. They followed us when we returned to camp and became part of the colony of which Possum Ben was a bright and shining light.

For some weeks after Longstreet's departure we spent most of our time in the field. The general commanding preferred that Longstreet should have as few excuses as possible for coming back again on the plea of looking for forage, so he proceeded to take up 20 miles of railroad track on each of the two roads leading from our post. It was a tedious job, but as we troopers had little to do but look on and occasionally be killed while repelling inquisitive Johnnies we rather enjoyed it. A large force of infantry and light artillery was with us. So were some hundreds of contrabands, and while we kept the enemy on the river too miserable to come across in a body and visit us the contrabands raised the rails, loaded them on platform cars and burned the ties. We worried General Lee's overburdened heart a good deal for two or three weeks, but that was one of the jobs for which we had enlisted. We made so many feints at attempting to cross the stream and advance in force on Richmond from the south that he had to send some of his men down to watch us.

We worried the natives too. Our horses ate all the grass, hay and fodder that Longstreet's men had left, and the assurance that the owners would be paid could they prove that they were good Union men did not seem to comfort the said owners a bit. They did not doubt that our officers told them the truth, but there were some stubborn facts in the way of their getting their pay after peace should be declared. A one legged farmer with a military look and a pair of crutches was a picture of agony while his barns were being emptied and his stacks melted away. His wife went stark crazy over what seemed the impending starvation of her family.

Immediately after beholding such experiences or hearing of them a man who had any heart under his jacket would a little rather be shot than not so after hearing that demented woman's ravings I was delighted to be assigned to very dangerous duty. It was to carry a dispatch to the general commanding a brigade on our extreme left. We felt so secure in our superior strength that the right, left and center were isolated commands rather than parts of a line. I started an hour or two after dark and was told that another man who had been sent on the same errand returned with the report that there was Confederate cavalry in the woods. I had been selected because I

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THROUGH ISSUE.—First Class One-Way Through Fare, good going Dec. 24 and 25, returning until Dec. 26, 1902. First Class One-Way Fare to Montreal added to First Class One-Way Fare and One-third from Montreal, good going Dec. 22, 23, 24, 25, 29, 30, 31 and Jan. 1, returning until Jan. 5, 1903.

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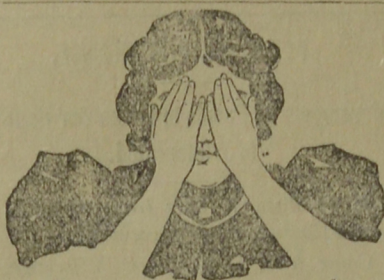
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NOTE.—Local Issue implies that tickets will be issued to all stations on the Intercolonial Railway, and fares quoted to these stations will also apply to all stations on the Prince Edward Island Railway, Dominion Atlantic Railway, Midland Railway and to Stations beyond St. John and east of Montreal.
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Dec. 18—d4w1

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Mr. Wm. O'Malley, Madawaska, Ont., writes:—I used to be terribly bothered with boils and pimples, caused by bad blood and run-down system. I took two bottles of Burdock Blood Bitters, and it made my skin nice and clear, and built up my constitution. Any person using it will never be bothered with skin diseases.



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"For about one year and a half my face was very badly broken out," writes Miss Carrie Adams, of 116 West Main Street, Battle Creek, Mich. "I spent a great deal of money with doctors and for different kinds of medicine, but received no benefit. At last I read one of your advertisements in a paper, and obtained a bottle of Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery. Before I had taken one bottle of this medicine I noticed a change, and after taking three bottles I was entirely cured. I can well recommend Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery to any one similarly afflicted."

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had a fast horse which ought to be able to dash through any ordinary line before an alarm could be given, and the chances of a flaxie rider being nroo

upon and killed in the dark were not very serious. I could not miss the road, for it had no forks or branches. There seemed enough risk in all this to insure my remaining awake. I stuffed the dispatches inside my shirt, put fresh percussion caps on my revolvers and started. Nothing unusual occurred for a quarter of an hour or more, but as I descended a gentle slope I was sure I heard the clank of sabers in front of me. My horse, too, gave the usual equine indications of being suddenly interested in something ahead. I halted an instant, and the noise ceased, but when again I rode forward the clanking was resumed so noisily that I became thoroughly frightened, reined my horse under partial cover at the side of the road, turned pale—or felt that I did—and galloped back to camp.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Be Prepared.

Jack Frost has been in hiding for some time. He will appear some of these days without giving any notice and will meet you more than halfway.

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Have been anticipating a visit from him, and in order that their Customers may be prepared, have provided a large stock of warm serviceable goods in Clothing, Boots, Shoes, Overboots, etc.
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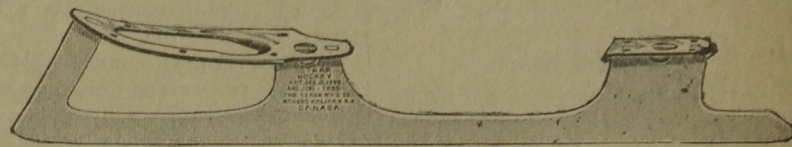
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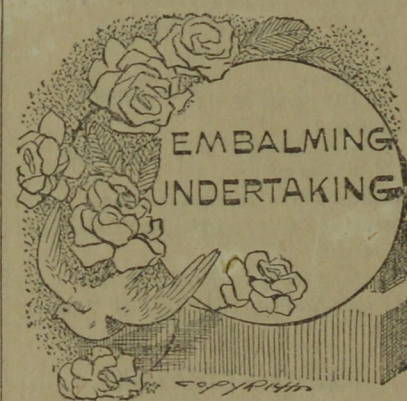
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Oct. 25—d&wt