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HE LED THE TIGERS.

STRANGE CAREER OF BOB WHEAT, LIBERATOR AND CONFEDERATE.

With Taylor and Scott in Mexico, Striking for Cuban Liberty, a Filibuster Under Walker, and Fighting for Italian Union Under Garibaldi.

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All the Louisiana Tigers never been heard of. Bob Wheat would have cut a figure in local southern history and tradition just the same. That not because of the six feet of electric physical manhood with which he was favored, but for the reason that he couldn't keep out of a "row," and lived in an era full of patriotic impulses. He attended every failibuster worthy with humdrum; and then he was a minister's son, born to the vice of credulous, if not to that of genius. Wheat was a Christian, a man of culture and sentiment, with an abundance of pride and jealous self respect thrown in. The Tigers were bought from the twilight of all redeemed souls for bad characters, the New Orleans lawyer. How the Tigers and the lamb came to take the warpath together is a strange story.

Col. Chaloner Robardan Wheat was born a Virginia cavalier, an F. F. V. of Hugenenot blood, and was bred to manhood in that unwary genius of soldiers, the state of Tennessee. His grandfather on his mother's side was that Gen. Robardan, of Philadelphia, who footed Continental bills for the tuge of Washington, raised troops and led them built forts and defended them, opened local mines to manufacture bullets and put in good work generally in aid of revolution.

The streak of the old patriot's blood that fell to Bob took fire when the Mexican war broke out, and he was the first recruit on the roll at Memphis, where he was a law student just out of his teens. Wheat's father was responsible for the milder elements of the young man's nature. He was rector of Christ church at Nashville, and within a few hours after the call to arms reached the Mississippi valley, two war hotters were traveling in opposite directions over the stage route between Memphis and Nashville. One hotter was from the peace loving rector to the young law student, saying in effect: My son, don't be carried off your feet by the war news. Wait awhile, and if more troops are really needed, and I think it your duty to volunteer, you may go. The girl your loins in pathos said that four cents.

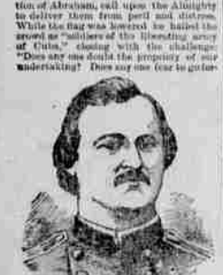
This was the letter that passed the other on its way to the rectory in Nashville: "Dear Pa—A ship of the old block. I knew you would be ashamed of me if I did not volunteer as soon as the call came. My name I am proud to say is the very first on the list. I have been unanimously elected second lieutenant of a company of cavalry. Please send Jim by some careful hand."

The Jim asked for was a highly trained blooded horse, the pride and pet of the family, and he was soon making paces toward Memphis on the way to the Rio Grande. Wheat served in the Tennessee Mounted volunteers in Gen. Taylor's battles and afterward organized and led Gen. Scott's bodyguard. He was now well mounted, elaborately uniformed and equipped and well up in the ornamental work of headquarters romance, and perhaps the young soldier lived too much would war's dazzling splendor and thought that was the whole of it.

The mustering of the volunteers after peace was declared landed hosts of them in New Orleans, where the "Jingo" spirit was always up against our southern neighbors. Wheat settled down and quickly made fame as a criminal lawyer. He was in politics, and was a success as a stump orator, but yet he was not happy. At any rate he couldn't see a war footing on the broad surface of the earth but he must get behind or in front of it.

His first adventure as a foreign combatant was with the Spanish-American patriot, Lopez, in the Cuban invasion of 1850. Lopez was an exiled Spaniard, whom the Cuban revolutionists had won to their cause, and raised two expeditions in the United States to invade the little island and stand by the insurgent natives. Wheat was leader of the New Orleans contingent and sailed from that port with several hundred men. He had secret orders from Lopez, and on opening them at sea found directions to meet Lopez at a certain point and proceed to Cuba.

Wheat summoned his men, and in a stirring speech told them what they must at once throw off all disguise, haul down the stars and stripes, and like Roger in the wilderness, when cast off from the protection of Abraham, call upon the Almighty to deliver them from peril and distress. While the flag was lowered he hailed the crowd as "soldiers of the liberating army of Cuba," closing with the challenge: "Does any one doubt the propriety of our undertaking? Does any one fear to go for



MAJ. C. R. WHEAT, C. S. A.

war? Let him! If so, let him retire!" The Cuban banner having kissed the breeze, he exclaimed, "Liberators, behold your flag!"

The vessel sailed on to the rendezvous and united with a band under Lopez. The party landed at Cardenas and seized the town, but the Cuban population failed to keep their appointment and there was no uprising. After a little fighting the invaders backed off and sailed for New Orleans. Wheat had been wounded in the night attack on Cardenas and came out a hero in the eyes of the sympathetic southerners of the gold cities.

Those were days when the air was laden with the cries of the oppressed and the lamentations. Wheat had no lack of occupation as a professional liberator. He caused one to March to take a hand in the uprising headed by Carvajal against the Clement party. The column failed, and Wheat, back to doff his explanatory cost lots in with the filibuster Walker, who had been his college classmate at Nashville. Heavy reinforcements and arms to Walker at Nicaragua after the defeat of the filibusters at River, and while there was news from the sack of an unpaid steamer, but swam ashore, taking a wounded man with him.

Meanwhile another and a more powerful uprising was afoot among the rugged Swiss in Milan, and Wheat offered his sword to Airaxes, the champion of the Liberals against Santa Anna and the church. He was appointed general of artillery, but Airaxes resigned without a fight and took his well filled gold chests and his favorite officers to a peaceful hacienda up from the muddling turmoils of revolution and proceeded to take a rest. Wheat soon tired of the monotony, and hearing from afar the rifle blasts of Garibaldi's orchestra pouring the gates ajar of sunny Italy, he crossed the ocean for a chance to polish up his liberating sword once more.

Garibaldi gave him all the chance he wanted, and he went through battle and skirmish displaying the magnificent courage, the rare horsemanship and the peculiar chivalry of the cavalier. He was close to Garibaldi and in his confidence, and the enthusiastic Latins called him the "American Monk." He saw the thing through in Italy to the point where Garibaldi crowned Victor Emanuel king, and then set his face homeward to mix in the great fight of the age, the civil war.

Returning through Paris, Wheat was presented at Napoleon's court. Soon afterward he was strolling in the Bois de Boulogne with a friend whispered in the emperor's ear to avoid suspicion, shadow of royalty. The Empress Eugenie happened to be in the park with her retinue, and the regalia, for fear of making a break, proposed that Wheat and himself should back off from the divine circle that hedges in the crowned pates and retire. Wheat had no lack of respect for the situation, but didn't see the need of such subservientism, and went his way with a gallant salute that brought a leaf and smile in return from the proud "sullen wife of the shaved throne of France."

On landing in America Wheat went at once to his old clientele, Gen. Scott, but of no lack of respect for the old man's view of coercion against state rights, and crossed the lines to Richmond. As an appeal to his friends in Mexico, to say nothing of the other claims, he casually conferred something on the hands of Jefferson Davis. He got only a rebuff, and in his chagrin started for Pensacola to enlist as a private in a battery led by his younger brother, John Thomas Wheat. He passed through New Orleans on the way, and the Tigers hailed him to help organize the raw levies flocking to the Confederate camps.

"I WILL PUT MINE ON RECORD."

Suddenly orders reached there from Richmond asking for soldiers to help defeat Manassas against the Grand Army of the Potomac under McDowell. Wheat snatched up five companies of recruits, many of them respited jailbirds, and reached Hall Run just in time to play the hero's role. His men were fresh, were fearfully get up and were from farad Louisiana, that had its eyes "fastened" to look after, and so very generous to bear the Virginians' appeal.

Wheat called his men the Old Dominion Guard, as the situation suggested, but one of his companions gave a tissue having a picture of a bank under the legend, "As gentle as"—. The men styled themselves "Tigers," and in the fight at Hall Run the whole battalion demonstrated the temper of the jungle in fierce and relentless onslaught and resistance. The men went into the fight as Wheat's battalion and came out as the Tigers, never to shake the name.

Wheat was in his element. "Beauregard," the idol of the creole population, gave him a place of honor. Before the battle opened he crossed Hall Run stream alone on a scout and sped out through the bushes the Union columns trying to find a march on Beauregard's camp. His battalion was afterward deployed as skirmishers in the ambush, where the head of the Union columns were treading confidently along the woodlands expecting a surprise and an easy victory.

The Tigers first encountered Burnside's brigade, and made havoc in the ranks of the Second Rhode Island regiment. Their rifles brought down Col. Slocum and Maj. Bullon, and scores and hundreds of their fearless followers. Wheat was shot through the chest from side to side, the bullet covering both lungs. The surgeons told him he must die, because there was no case on record of recovery from such a wound. "I will put mine on record," he declared hopefully, and lived to fight another day.

Desperately placed Wheat for nipping the Union assault in the bud, and the Tigers, with the Black Horse cavalry, carried off the sensational honors of the field. All Dixie rang with their praises for months.

Wheat was on hand to lead his men in Stonewall Jackson's campaign in the Shenandoah valley in the spring of 1862. He went with the valley army to Richmond, when Jackson's forces united with Lee in breaking up McClellan's lines on the Chickahominy. In the first assault on the Union batteries at Gaines' Mill, he was instantly killed at the head of the storming party, where he fell, mowed down as made a "shining mark" for bullets.

Wheat carried in his pocket a book of devotions given him by his mother, and before daylight on the morning of his death he crawled his officers and read them the "Prayer for Joyful Resurrection." After reading the "Psalm of the Day," as he called it, he made a few remarks, punctuated with tears, and then mounted his horse and rode off to battle with the monotonous soldiers and without body of men in the army.

GEORGE L. KNIGHT.

A wire netting fence 300 miles long is one of the late Australian wonders. The fence separates the colonies of New South Wales and Queensland, and its object is to keep the rabbits out of the latter country.

Says of It.

Mrs. Justrich—These diamonds are genuine of course?

Jeweler—Certainly, madam; I know the manufacturer personally.—Exchange.

DEATH WEEK.

A Singular Ceremonial Which Takes Place in Rural Russia.

"Death week," the "Smertna Nedelya" of the Slavonic people, marks the end of winter in rural Russia. It is kept during the last seven days of March, and is a survival pure and simple of early paganism. In the old Slavonic mythology, as in the minds of the mass of untaught Russians nowadays, the idea of death and winter is closely associated, and the ceremonies proper to the "death week," from the sacrifice to the "Volyanes," or water spirit, with which it begins, to the driving out and drowning of death, with which it terminates, are based upon the superstition that was formerly universal in northern Europe. That writers on Russia and the Russians have given no account of the "death week" celebration is due, no doubt, to the fact that it takes place at a time of the year when travelers are rarely tempted to visit Russia, and is confined to rural districts out of the beaten track, which are unlikely to attract foreigners.

When the ice begins to break on the water, winter is considered over in Russia, and the breaking of the ice is the—the Russian peasants hold—to the "Volyanes," or water spirit, who lies in his abode in the rivers and streams. He has slept over the winter, they say, and awakes hungry and angry with the first rays of the returning sun. He bursts the congealed covering of the water, sends the ice floes drifting, drives the fish from their haunts and causes the streams to overflow.

In the last week of March therefore, before the ice begins to break, the peasants in rural Russia start the "death week" celebration by preparing a sacrifice for the "Volyanes," so that he shall not be kept waiting when he awakes from his winter sleep. They meet together in the village where the celebration is to take place and subscribe a sum of money for the purchase of a young horse. The animal must not be a gift, but bought for money; it must not be bargained for, and no one person must contribute more than another to the amount required.

The horse is taken to a stable specially reserved for the gift to the "Volyanes" and fed for three days on bread and oilcake. On the fourth day, at midnight, the horse is taken from the stall and conducted to the nearest river or stream, the villagers following in a body. The mane is decorated with red ribbons, the head covered with honey, the legs are tied together and a couple of milletoes secured to the neck. Then a hole is made in the ice and the horse thrown into the water a living sacrifice to the "Volyanes."

Fisher folk in the Archangel district pour a quantity of fat into the water instead of throwing in a horse, and the millers of the Ukraine cast the horse's head into the river and not the living animal. After appeasing the water spirit, the house spirit, the "Domovoi," calls for a sacrifice. He awakes on the night of March 25, and will wait only three days for his offering. So on returning from the river side the villagers prepare a suitable gift for him. They take a fat black pig, kill it and cut it into as many pieces as there are residents in the place. Each resident receives one piece, which he straightway buries under the doorstep at the entrance to his house.

In some parts, it is said, the country folk bury a few eggs beneath the threshold of the dwelling to propitiate the "Domovoi."

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