

A RIDE ALONG THE PICKET LINE.

IN THE FIELD BEFORE RICHMOND, }
December 4, 1864. }

Picketing here on the north of the James is a different business from picketing before Petersburg or at Bermuda Hundred, where strong lines of works are over against each other, with sentinels merely advanced a little in their front. Here, all the country around is to be watched, and the videttes are at some points quite remote from the intrenchments of either side. Outside of our works is a strong infantry line. Beyond is a line of dismounted cavalry. Still further out are mounted videttes skirting the entire front from Chapin's Bluff to Malvern Hills. The infantry line can only be passed by special permit from corps headquarters. Obtaining that, a few days since, we rode out of the sally-port near the New Market road, opposite the tenth corps front, for a look along the line. Over the ground where was sharpest fighting and bloodiest work on the 7th of October, where brave Gen. Birney spent his last strength in recovering the ground lost by Gen. Kautz, and where the Texas and Alabama troops were hurled back by the New England soldiers of Terry's division, we passed to the old Kell place, which, at the time of that battle, was a dwelling in good repair, but which has since been carried away by piece-meal to eke out our winter-quarters until only one or two rooms of the first floor remain, standing out in the cold, as a scanty lath and plaster cover of the cavalry reserve. Along the ravine beyond we found the infantry pickets. Their reserve has cosy log cabins chinked with mud.

To look upon the picturesque groups of men cooking supper over a gipsy fire, washing in the brook near by, lolling on the hill-side, chatting or playing cards, while their comrades stood at neighboring posts on duty, one could hardly realize that they were part of the outpost guard between the two mightiest armies of earth, ready to fall in at the earliest alarm and meet the first shock of the next battle, which might prove the last fight to them and their comrades. Still further on, we found the dismounted cavalry, pacing a regular beat. Then, at a turn of the path through the dense woods, we came upon a cavalry vidette. Ereet in his saddle, his very horse still as a statue, he sat with carbine ready cocked, its muzzle raised, watching with vigilant eye and ear the thicket before him, whence at any moment an enemy might spring to kill or capture him. Even then a hostile rifle might be leveled against his breast. A second's inattention would probably cost him his life, or his army a battle. Tiresome work, that! The hour on vidette post in such a country is nerve-straining and strength-taxing. No wonder that the lonely sentinel

"longs to hear
A step to the soldier's ear most dear,—
A sound that banishes all of his grief—
The welcome tread of the next relief."

There was an opening in the woods beyond. Opposing videttes were in sight of each other. There we saw a fair illustration of Yankee soldiering. A Union vidette stood by the ruins of an old dwelling. Before him, at perhaps 120 yards, was another ruin, in which was a single window. That was the post of a rebel vidette. By the Union trooper stood a quartermaster-sergeant of a Connecticut regiment evidently in perplexity. He was out for building materials for his colonel's quarters. He wanted that window over the way. It was but a step to it, but the rebel guard was a serious obstacle to its possession. He was calculating the cost. As he told his trouble he remarked: "They say there's only one of 'em there. If I had my rifle here I could fix him and get the window." Then he added, with perhaps a dash of sour grape in the argument, "But two of the lights is broken; I don't know as 'twould pay: there's only four on 'em left." We passed on, leaving the Yankee reckoning up the comparative value of a charge of powder and a broken window—the morality of rebel killing was not an element of the mental arithmetic. "Was it worth while to take so much pains to get so few panes?" that was the "sum."

Over a bog where we mired and well nigh lost our horse, we skirted the vidette line to the open field and high ground beyond the Johnson place, on the Darbytown road—the Darbytown road up which we have advanced so many times with high hopes or anxious hearts, and down which we have so often returned, "the object of our reconnaissance fully accomplished," and some of our bravest and best left weltering on the bloody fields adjacent. There

in full view stretched rebeldom before us. Up the Darbytown road but a few hundred yards was a screen of fallen trees to cover a rebel picket post. About that a group of Johnnies were lounging in the pleasant November sunlight. Still higher up the road was seen the frowning bank of a strong earthwork, over the parapet of which gleamed the white tent tops, and above all the headquarters flag with its starry blue cross on the blood-red field. Away to the right a continuation of the same earthwork was seen stretching out to the Charles City road, where a formidable redoubt pointed its heavy guns on our immediate flank. Tents were visible all the way along, extending far back in successive regular lines. Pickets were posted in the edge of the wood at our front, and again in the fields just beneath us. A group loitered again in the fields just beneath us. A group loitered about the ruins of the Gerhardt House, which was our hospital during the fight of the fatal 13th of October, when gallant Major Camp laid down his life before those bristling works in the woods beyond. Parties for wood and water were moving hither and thither, and all gave evidence of the nearness of the vast army.—[Springfield Republican.]

Miscellaneous.

MODESTY.—Who art thou, O man, that presumest on thine own wisdom? or why dost thou vaunt thyself on thine own acquirements? The first step towards being wise, is to know that thou art ignorant: and if thou knowest not to be esteemed foolish in the judgment of others, cast off the folly of being wise in thine own conceit.

As a plain garment best adorneth a beautiful woman, so a decent behaviour is the greatest ornament of wisdom.

The speech of a modest man giveth lustre to truth, and the difference of words absorbeth his error.

He relieth not on his own wisdom; he weigheth the counsels of a friend, and receiveth the benefit thereof.

He turneth away his ear from his own praise, and believeth it not; he is the last in discovering his own perfections.

Yet, as a veil addeth to beauty, so are his virtues set off by the shade which his modesty casteth upon them.

But behold the vain man, and observe the arrogant; he clotheth himself in rich attire, he walketh in the public street, he casteth round his eyes and courteth observation.

He is puffed up with the vanity of his imagination; his delight is to hear, and to speak of himself all the day long.

He swalloweth with greediness his own praise, and the flatterer in return eateth him up.

He tosseth up his head and overlooketh the poor; he treateth his inferiors with insolence, and his superiors in return look down on his pride and folly with laughter.

He despiseth the judgment of others he relieth on his own opinion, and is confounded.

CONCUSSION OF HEAVY GUNS.—Every country boy who has ever been to a "general training," as the annual muster of village militia is called, has remarked how the grass is blown down by the discharge of the 5-pounder gun usually fired on such occasions. Similar effects take place every time a gun is fired, but they are not always so apparent. The discharge puts a column of air in motion from the muzzle outward, which sweeps forward with terrible force. The original Monitor when she engaged the Merrimac in Hampton Roads, was universally condemned for not following the repulsed vessel to its lair, and the correct reason for her failure has never been given until the publication of this article.

The Monitor did not follow the Merrimac because she was not in a condition to do so, for this reason: The pilot-house, it will be remembered, was immediately forward, and when the guns were fired in line with the keel the shot passed over it. The top of the pilot house was a solid, wrought plate, 3 feet 6 inches wide, by 5 feet long, and 3 inches thick. This top was lifted bodily up and displaced by the discharge of the 11-inch guns fired from the Monitor's turrets, so that in sheering off to repair this damage, the Monitor reluctantly allowed the rebel vessel to escape. The guns could not afterwards be fired except at an angle of 30° with the keel, so great was the effect of the discharge upon the vessel itself and upon the inmates of the pilot-house through the sight-holes. For this reason, and some others, the pilot-house on the new monitors are placed over the turrets, and the hatches which cover the openings in the

deck are all strongly fastened with heavy bolts.—[Scientific American.]

A TOUCHING SCENE.—A ministerial friend, says a late Buffalo paper, related to us yesterday the following painfully touching and yet suggestive incident, which occurred at the City Point Hospital, a few days since:

A chaplain of the Christian Commission, while moving through the long line of sufferers, administering the consolation of the gospel, approached the bedside of a gallant fellow, who was severely wounded.

His earthly march was nearly ended; but when the chaplain asked him if he were prepared to die, he motioned for pencil and paper, and with a trembling hand wrote, "I am prepared to go to heaven; my trust in Jesus Christ is perfect"—and immediately under these words of assured victory over the grave, "Come rally round the flag, boys."

The chaplain took the paper, and standing up, read it with a loud voice. Just as he concluded, a soldier, who had recently lost a hand, sprang from his bed, and waving the mutilated stump in the air, burst forth with the glorious hymn which his dying comrade had suggested.

The effect was electric. A thousand voices took up the chorus, and the place of suffering was made to fairly rock with thunders of melody. As that vast soldier choir ceased singing, the chaplain turned to look upon the dying brave. He was just in time to catch the last faint smile that flickered across the sun-burnt face, as the soul was wafted on the strains of that Union music to the throne of Liberty.

TRANSLATION OF A VALUABLE CHINESE WORK.—M. G. Aubaret, a Captain in the French navy, has translated a Chinese work of great interest and importance, called the *Gia-dinh-Kung-chi*, a description of Cochin-China. It is the production of one of the most eminent mandarins, was written about thirty years ago, and has since been esteemed as the classical hand-book of travelers desiring to be acquainted with Cochin-China. No candidate for public employment could pretend to a post in that part of the empire unless he was perfectly read in all the historical and geographical details supplied by the *Gia-dinh-Kung-chi*. The work carefully translated by Captain Aubaret, enriched with copious notes, beautifully printed at the Imperial Press, and illustrated with an excellent map, is divided into two parts. The first contains the history of the conquest of the six provinces; the second is entirely geographical in its character, and must have offered unusual difficulties to the translator in consequence of the multiplicity of proper names.

PARIS.—WEDDINGS, &c.—A correspondent makes an extraordinary statement to the *A. Z. d. I.* concerning weddings, baths for ladies, and funerals in the Jewish community. The former are divided into six classes, and a couple may be married at so low a figure as fifteen francs, or at so high a one as 750 francs. There is, besides, a seventh, called *hors classe*, whose marriage ceremony costs 15,000 francs. The cost does not depend upon the wealth of the person married or their general contributions towards the support of the synagogue but upon the splendor and pomp displayed upon the occasion. There is one tariff for the ceremony when the gas is lighted, another when the whole or only half the choir performs. A similar classification, according to the pomp displayed, takes place at funerals. A man may be buried for 6 or 400 francs. Ladies who bathe are likewise divided into five classes. A lady may have a bath at 60 centimes or order one as high as 6 francs.

MATCHES.—The enormous tax on friction matches is defeating its object. The *Portland Advertiser* says that matches are now imported into the United States from New Brunswick, and sold in packages suitable for the retail trade, without being stamped, and without paying any tax under the internal revenue law. The duty for importation is very much less than the stamp duty upon friction matches of domestic manufacture. The consequence is that the imported matches are sold so low that manufactures of matches in this country cannot compete in the market. Already, at least three manufacturers of matches have removed from Maine into New Brunswick to carry on the business there.

—A chemist in Liverpool who sold strychnine by mistake, and killed a man, was sued by the widow, and compelled to pay \$7,500 damages.

Agricultural.

WILLOW SPRING FARM, }
Davis County, Jan. 25, 1865. }

TO THE HON. G. A. SMITH:

According to my promise I give you an account in detail of the products of the above farm for the year 1864.

Asparagus, bundles,	2,00
Apples, bushels,	5
Artichokes, "	1
Apricots, dozens,	86
Beets, bushels,	650
Beans, "	7
Corn, "	200
Carrots, "	4,200
Cucumbers, barrels,	20
Currants, Bushels,	3
Cabbage, heads,	8,000
Grapes, no crop through frost.	
Grass, (English Rye)	1 sheaf
Horse-Radish, enough for family use.	
Herbs, bunches,	3
Lettuce, bushel baskets,	12
Molasses, gallons,	169½
Water-Melons,	2,400
Musk-melons,	100
Mustard and Cress, plates,	24
Oats, bushels,	200
Onions, "	200
" (Shallott)	2
Potatoes, bushels,	1,408
Peas, (in pod) "	47
" (dry) "	4
Plums, "	2
Peaches, "	10
Parsley, baskets,	2
Peach Trees (young)	400
Raddishes, bundles,	598
Red peppers, bushel,	1
Rhubarb, lbs.	73
Squashes, loads,	19
Sour Krout, barrels made from cabbage	33
Spinach, bundles,	4
Strawberries, quarts,	9
Turnips, bushels,	9
Turnips, bundles,	200
Tobacco, green, lbs,	6
Tomatoes, bushels,	41
Trees, various kinds,	150
Wheat, bushels,	600
Seeds of all kinds, bushels,	5
Brocoli and pickling cabbage,	100

The above crops were produced from 48 acres of land, and in consequence of drouth the crops of 5 acres were destroyed, causing a loss of 1,500 dollars. The under mentioned persons were engaged in raising the crop.

Richard Jones, Robert Ure, William Mann, William Waddoups, William Irwin, William Howard, John Burtonshaw, John Drakeford, David Wheeler, Thomas Howard, Charles Dean, William Page.

None of the grain raised is included in the sales.

One third of the cabbage was destroyed by lice, the remainder sold in the head and kept for home consumption.

Our fruit crop this year was small, in consequence of blight, being 130 bushels less than the previous one.

As near as I can estimate, the amount of manure applied on the land is 1000 lbs per day.

There remain 2 acres of the farm to be reclaimed.

There has been about 1,000 loads of willows and willow roots, taken off the farm.

Butchered for the year, five beeves, five calves, a number of sheep and about 1,500 pounds of pork.

We are authorized to say, that in addition to what was sold in this market, there was stored away sufficient to supply the wants of forty-seven persons till the next harvest.

Corn grew fourteen feet high the past season, and the highest ear was found to be nine feet from the ground.

It is estimated that one-third of the carrot and cane, and one-fourth of the grain crops were lost by the drouth.

FROZEN POTATOES.—Those who are so unfortunate as to have potatoes frozen, may find comfort in the following from the *Germantown Telegraph*:

If your potatoes freeze in the cellar, don't wait for them to thaw, but throw them into a conical heap, either where they are, or in the open air, and cover with dirt, straw, shaving, old clothes, or chaff, packed tight with them and they are safe. The cover will prevent sudden changes, which causes all the mischief. I have saved frozen potatoes in this way; it may be new to some of your readers, and may be of use to them, as it has been to me.

—On the 4th of November the direct railroad from Turin to Florence, tunneled under the Apennines, was opened to the public.