

lyn, Boston, Pittsburg, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Chicago and elsewhere. To their powerful assistance the Commission is indebted for the greater part of its success; indeed the Commission is but the means by which the Branches which furnish the great bulk of the supplies are enabled to act with economy, system and efficiency. Nor would the Branches in the great cities have been able to furnish supplies in such abundance, but for the hundreds and thousands of "sewing circles," and "Aid Societies" contributing to their stores from all parts of the interior of the country. Hence, in speaking of the success of the Commission, and of the great and valuable work it has done for our soldiers and our country, we desire to be understood as including all the Branches, sewing circles and Aid Societies.

How to condense into brief space any adequate description of the inestimable services rendered by the Army Relief Department of the Commission baffles our ingenuity. A full statement would require the space of an ordinary volume.

Steamboats chartered by the Cincinnati Branch reached Fort Donelson laden with medicines and supplies of every kind in time to supplement the deficient stores of the Medical Staff, and save hundreds of men. At Antietam there were literally no Government medical stores. The surgeons had used up their stock during General Pope's campaign in Virginia. Supplies sent them from Washington had been captured at Manassas. The Quartermaster's Department, taxed to its utmost to forward ordnance and Commissary stores, ammunition and food, had been obliged to leave all medical supplies behind, miles away from the field.

But the officers of the Commission at Washington, advised by authority of this unfortunate deficiency, and of the impending battle, sent off by independent routes, and in good season, wagon trains laden with medical and surgical appliances, which reached the field before the battle was over, and for forty-eight hours after that hardly-won victory, thousands of wounded men got all their opiates, stimulants, chloroform, medicines, appropriate diet, and hospital clothing and bedding, mainly from agents of the Sanitary Commission. So at Gettysburg, the headquarters and supply depots of the Commission were established and at work while the battle was hottest. At Vicksburgh, Murfreesboro, Chancellorsville, Chattanooga, Chickamauga, Fredericksburg, its relief agents dispensed many thousand dollars' worth of life-saving supplies. During the Peninsular campaign it did the army most signal service. Its Relief depots and Hospital transport service did more to relieve misery and save life than any other voluntary organization has ever done within the same period.

After the second battle of Bull Run, the

wagon trains of the Commission, moving from Washington, met our retreating forces at Centreville, exhausted by hard fighting, and wholly without restoratives or medicines. Their medical supplies had fallen into rebel hands. At this point, as at many others, the Commission's proper work of supplementing accidental deficiencies in the Army system, saved hundreds from perishing from prostration, and enabled them to return to their ranks and their duty. We have elsewhere set forth (in our army letters) what was lately done by the Commission at White House. That need not be repeated. At Belle Plain, before Grant changed his base to White House, the agents of the Commission fed and cared for more than 22,000 wounded men. The pangs of consuming thirst and of raging fever there alleviated—the agonizing pains relieved—the tender and home-like nursing extended to that city of suffering soldiers set down in the fields—what pen can do justice to them? Who can estimate the priceless relief that was there administered?

Before the first train of ambulances of wounded from the Wilderness reached Port Royal, two steamers, two barges, a steamer, and a tug-boat had arrived with the stores of the Sanitary Commission, and more than a hundred active and experienced men and women were instantly at work and in readiness for the coming sufferers. What fabulous sum in dollars and cents can express the value, or what words can do justice to the beneficent nature of this *prompt* relief? Who will set a price on the hundreds of lives saved on those blood-stained fields?

But we can follow this branch of the subject no further. It is the *promptness* of the action of the Sanitary Agents at Port Royal, as just mentioned, that is its great characteristic. *It is always on the spot* with its abundance of stores, and its hundreds of willing hands and cheerful hearts, just at the very point of time when their service is most needed. Help and supplies then are worth infinitely more than when they have to be sent for after the battle—and when precious days are consumed in getting them to the field.

Nothing that is here said is intended to express or imply any want of efficiency in the Medical Staff of the army. They do all that it is in the power of medical officers to do; and the Agents of the Commission, who act in entire subordination to them, bear cheerful and cordial testimony to their devotion to the duties of their noble profession. But they are limited in number, and are obliged to act within the means furnished to them, and according to their instructions. They have no power to act according to discretion. The Agents of the Commission have discretionary powers, and also have abundance of supplies of a kind which the Government never undertakes to furnish. Here we perceive another of the

great advantages of the Commission, as an auxiliary to the medical staff of the army. The Commission does what the Government cannot undertake to do, but what the people would not willingly leave undone for their soldiers.

The devotion of the Sanitary Agents to their duties has become a matter of honorable record. Many noble instances of the sublime courage with which they have gone into the fire of the enemy to bring in the wounded are mentioned in letters and reports from the army. There was a conspicuous instance of this at the storming of Fort Wagner. Under the very guns of the fort, the trained Agents of the Commission picked up the wounded men as they fell and bore them to the hospital.

Some of the wounded were struck while climbing the parapet, and then rolled into the deep ditch round the fort, where they would have been drowned had they been left without other help than their own. But the Sanitary agents, acting under the direction of Dr. Marsh, rescued them under the hottest fire. The devotion of these men in other places has resulted not only in ruined health, but loss of life. One of the martyrs to the service of the Commission was the Rev. James Richardson, a gentleman of education and high social influence, who died November 10th, 1863, from disease contracted in the field.

We have now closed our sketches of the Sanitary. They might have been swelled to volumes, but we are compelled to be brief; yet, imperfect as they are, they will serve to illustrate, to some extent, the origin, the nature, the organization and the inestimable benefits extended to our soldiers by the noble organization for which we are now holding our Great Fair.

#### THE TWO BRECKINRIDGES.

BY JOHN W. FORNEY.

The appearance of the Rev. Dr. R. J. Breckinridge, as he advanced to take his post as temporary chairman of the Union National Convention at Baltimore, on the 7th of June, (inst.,) was most impressive. There stood one of the historical characters of the age—a spotless divine, a self-sacrificing idealist, an unselfish patriot—one, across whose eventful path not a single doubt as to his sincerity had ever thrown a shadow, and whose lofty moral integrity had never been questioned either by the enemies of his church or the advocates of slavery. What he said before the Convention has been widely and profitably read. But how he said it could not be painted or printed. First of all, was the evidence, not necessary to be made clear to those who sat in rapt attention under his utterances, of the *perfect unpreparedness* of his speech. The short-hand reporters took it down as it fell from his lips, and then carried it to Washington by the even-