

WHEN BOYS WERE MEN

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

"Perhaps he really did want to see us three on the business, on suggest," said I to Hamilton. "I won't do any harm to ask."

He shook his head doubtfully, but approached the lieutenant, followed by Cloyne and me.

"Lieutenant," said he, "excuse me, but I have reason to expect some official communications from Albany, through the major, for myself and my friends here. Can you tell me whether they have come?"

"Not that I know of," said the officer pleasantly.

"Will the major be in soon?"

"The major is—no. The truth is, I doubt whether we shall ever see him again. He hasn't succeeded in raising a company, much less a battalion, and has dropped out of the business. He never had a commission anyway."

"Then all of us to whom he promised commissions are duped?"

"Not at all—if you've raised the requisite number of men. Have you done it?"

Then Hamilton lost his self-possession for the first time within my knowledge.

"How many men have you raised?" continued the officer.

"Five," said Hamilton feebly.

"And you?" This to Cloyne.

"Four," sighed the handsome Irishman.

Then the lieutenant looked at me inquiringly.

"Three," I whispered, remembering that one was dead and another reclaimed by his parents.

"And you've consumed nearly a month at this," said the officer. "What commissions do you suppose you are entitled to?"

No answer, so the lieutenant resumed his work.

Then three Summerton men stepped aside at Hamilton's suggestion for consultation, but we at once began to moan and grumble instead of consulting. Cloyne said he had no one in particular to suggest, but nevertheless to go off as we were about to, without saying a word to any of the many people he had known pleasantly for years, would make him feel very much as if suddenly arrested and sent to prison.

Hamilton said he heartily wished himself in Cloyne's shoes, but unfortunately there were many people to whom he owed parting calls and some with whom he had made engagements which he wouldn't break for anything. I began to say that I feared that not to see me again would be the death of my father or mother or brother, but he cut me through my speech very well. As for my brother Ned, when I thought of that little fellow and all I might have been to him, but hadn't, and now he wouldn't have a bad brother again for years, I secretly promised heaven to endure patiently any hardship or suffering of war if I might be permitted to make amends to that small boy.

Suddenly Hamilton exclaimed:

"This won't do. We're wasting precious time. If we can't go back home we can at least get a telegram to come down and get goodly to us. Let me labor with the dog maul once more."

"Lieutenant," said Hamilton, whom Cloyne and I followed to the desk, "I beg a thousand pardons, but I know you'll forgive me if you'd put yourself in my place for a moment. I'm an old first lieutenant and I know orders must be obeyed."

"First lieutenant, eh?" said the lieutenant, rising from his desk, while Cloyne and I plucked each other with delight at the impression which Hamilton's announcement had evidently made.

"Yes, and I've enlisted for service, not for money, for I'm quite well off already. My two friends here and I would like to see our families and acquaintances before we start."

"Telegraph them to come at once," said the lieutenant. "Go to the nearest hotel and see them there. You wouldn't like to meet them before this crowd. I'll pass you through the guards."

We must have been a happy trio to look at just as Hamilton took the lieutenant's hand and murmured:

"God bless you."

"I hope he will," said the officer, "for everybody else is cursing me today, though I'm merely doing my duty."

We all moved through the door, the lieutenant leading. Just then I felt a clutch at my shoulder and, turning, saw Brainerd, his face set and staid and most woebegone. Hamilton glanced to see him, too, stopped, stared and exclaimed:

"Eh? What's this?"

"This is a surprise," said I. "He's one of us after all."

"Thank heaven!" exclaimed Hamilton.

I was so pleased at this remark that I was hours in comprehending the entire meaning of it, which was that there was a woman in the case. Meanwhile Hamilton named the hotel to which we would go and where the lieutenant could notify us when it was time to start. We at once telegraphed our families and while awaiting them made some hasty goodby visits to friends in the city. Two hours later we felt as criminals condemned to death must feel during the final visit of their friends. My father—bless his dear, thoughtful heart—brought down the entire family and the dog besides. Had it not been for that dog's efforts to explore the hotel and Ned's efforts to bring him back there would have been little relief from the gloom of which all of us were full. Brainerd's mother seemed to suffer worst of all. She had gone away only to get him back again forever, she supposed. Now he was a soldier once more, and at scarcely an hour's notice she was to lose him. My own misery was doubled by her sorrow, for was not I to blame for his being in uniform?

My cousin Ned tried to put some cheer into the party, and as she always laughed heartily at the slightest provocation it was impossible not to be affected by her spirits. She made cheery though modest replies to some gallant speeches which Hamilton addressed to her, and she told Mrs. Brainerd to speak how much more Charley's quick wits would be to the nation than the guns of a dozen common men. She scarcely spoke a word to Charley himself, however, and he looked at her only slyly, for as he had not yet returned, he had caught a glimpse of himself in a hotel mirror and felt like a scarecrow.

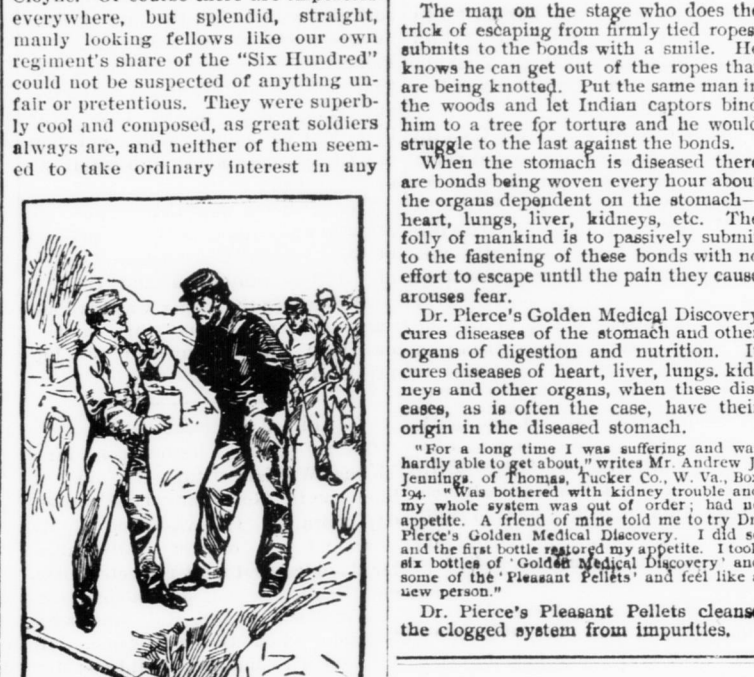
delighted as I, but Cloyne twisted his face, looked out the car window in an absent-minded sort of way and remarked:

"They'll make about 1,200 survivors of that 'Six Hundred' whom I have personally met, yet I haven't been a great traveler."

"Perhaps," said I, "Lord Cardigan didn't carefully count his men before riding at the Russian guns, or perhaps Tennyson took poetic license as to number."

Cloyne laughed as he tried a pun.

"Somebody somewhere has ventured more lie than sense on the subject. I thought this was very cynical of Cloyne. Of course there are impostors everywhere, but splendid, straight, manly looking fellows like our own regiment's share of the 'Six Hundred' could not be suspected of anything unfair or pretentious. They were captured by road and compass, as great soldiers always are, and neither of them seemed to take ordinary interest in any of our proceedings. They were captured by road and compass, as great soldiers always are, and neither of them seemed to take ordinary interest in any of our proceedings."



The man on the stage who does the trick of escaping from firmly tied ropes, admits to the bonds with a smile. He knows he can get out of the ropes that are being knotted. Put the same man in the woods and let Indian captors bind him to a tree for torture and he would struggle to the last against the bonds.

When the stomach is diseased there are bonds being woven every hour about the organs of digestion and nutrition. The heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, etc. The body of mankind is to passively submit to the fastening of these bonds with no effort to escape until the pain they cause arouses fear.

Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery cures diseases of the stomach and other organs of digestion and nutrition. It cures diseases of heart, liver, lungs, kidneys and other organs, when these diseases, as is often the case, have their origin in the diseased stomach.

"For a long time I was suffering and was hardly able to get about," writes Mr. Andrew J. Frazier, of Boston, Mass., W. Va. Box 102. "I was bothered with kidney trouble and a swollen bladder. I did not have any appetite. A friend of mine told me to try Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery, and I bought a bottle of it. I took six bottles of Golden Medical Discovery, and now I feel like a new person."

Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets cleanse the digestive system from impurities.

In the service once before and got out and hadn't sense enough to stay out and deserve all the bad luck they can find."

I was angry and miserable enough to believe for the moment that he was nearly half right.

CHAPTER V.
THINGS SLOW AND LIVELY.

WITHIN A few days our company was organized, and we recruits were gathered into tents of our own. But we continued to be thoroughly miserable. The cavalry camp seemed such a shiftless, do-nothing place for all who were not recruits that I made a serious study of writing a private letter to President Lincoln suggesting that he should have this large and lazy body of men go out and kill some rebels or do something else that would help end the war. It seemed to me that the men I saw lounging about me could not possibly be the same who had been all the talk of the post when the Ninety-ninth was there.

We recruits did very little lounging. We were drilled pretty steadily in the use of a saber, a weapon which did not feed or act anything like we had supposed. For days it seemed too heavy and clumsy for me ever to use to any purpose, and I doubted whether I ever should be able to injure the Confederacy or defend myself by any of the

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thrusts, points or cuts of the manual of arms. I told Cloyne so one day, and he replied:

"That's the reason you're being taught. If you'd already known how."

During this wretched experience of cavalry life my spirits were strengthened frequently by observing the imperturbable manner of Hamilton, listening to Cloyne's sensible comments on whatever occurred and admiring the loyal spirit of little Brainerd, to whom whatever the government did through any of its officials seemed entirely right. Whenever my mind was troubled because I didn't understand the full meaning of everything that was done or left undone Brainerd would remind me that if I knew everything about the war I probably wouldn't be a private soldier, but general of the army or perhaps president of the United States.

"Leave something, a little something, to the colonel or the war department or at least the president," Brainerd would say. "If you could do and manage everything, as you seem to wish, the higher officials wouldn't have anything to do but draw their pay, don't you see?"

There was some truth in this, and such a remark would generally pacify me for a few hours. I think, however, that I got most comfort out of my spurs and the joy I anticipated for the time when I should have a horse and tickle his flanks. My father had never allowed one of his horses to be touched with a spur—my experience with old Rover was unknown to him—so there was a pleasure in store for me. And what spurs they were! I had brought them from New York. They were "Mexicans," the wheels nearly three inches in diameter, with points as long as a single nail, and they gave out bell-like jingle as I walked, which was such sweet music to my ear that I never was without them. I even wore them to bed, for, as no one removed any of his clothing when lying down for the night on the floor of his tent, where was the use in taking off one's

spurs? One night this question was answered to some extent. Our tent was round, and the 15 men who lived in it slept with heads toward the outside and feet to the center. By early November the nights were so cold that a man needed a blanket as well as his uniform to keep him warm. Several recruits who admired my spurs had purchased others as much like his as possible of the regimental sutler or stockpiper, and they wore them continually. One evening after our tent had enjoyed a private supper of fried-egg goose, purchased from a colored woman, we lay down peacefully to sleep. Whether the goose—there were two of them—was underdone or too rich for men whose ordinary supper was dry bread and sauce of dried apples I don't know, but some of us were affected in our dreams very much like small children after Christmas dinner and unlimited candy. How the trouble began I do not know, but I awoke from a dream of being heavily shackled in a rebel dungeon to find a terrible uproar and struggle going on in the tent, which was as black as Egypt during the plague of darkness. To make matters worse, the most serious part of my dream seemed still in operation, for I could not liberate my feet when I tried to crawl away from the center.

"What blanked cuss has been tying our feet together?" roared one man.

"Let go of my blanket," shouted another, "or I'll break your head!"

"You're a nice one to talk!" said a third.

"When it's you that's making all the trouble!"

Meanwhile I, who had just awoke and didn't know anything about the difficulty, was being dragged one way and another by my feet, so I raised my own voice and complained of unfair treatment.

The din awoke the first sergeant, one of the only two noncommissioned officers yet appointed for our company, and he opened the tent flap and roared:

"Keep quiet here or I'll send you all to the guardhouse!"

"I'd be greatly obliged, sergeant," said Brainerd plaintively, "if you'd send me there right away, if only to get out of this frightful snarl!"

"Strike a light," said the sergeant.

Hamilton, who always carried matches, scratched one and lighted the candle, which was in a socket on the tent pole; then, as I struggled to a sitting posture, I beheld an odd spectacle. Nearly all the men in the tent seemed bound together by the feet by blankets or held down by blankets stretched tightly across their legs. After each man had investigated for himself a little while it appeared that the men with Mexican spurs, like all the others, had been tossing uneasily in their sleep, all on account of the goose supper, and had scratched one and lighted the candle, which was in a socket on the tent pole; then, as I struggled to a sitting posture, I beheld an odd spectacle. Nearly all the men in the tent seemed bound together by the feet by blankets or held down by blankets stretched tightly across their legs. 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