

## *Dr. Daniel Garrison Brinton with the Army of the Cumberland*

THE FIRST installment of Dr. Daniel Garrison Brinton's Civil War diary, published in the July, 1965, issue of this *Magazine*,<sup>1</sup> covered the spring and summer of 1863, when Dr. Brinton was a medical officer in the XI Corps of the Army of the Potomac. In early September, 1863, after the exhausting ordeal of the Chancellorsville and Gettysburg campaigns, he came home on leave to West Chester, Pennsylvania, to recover.

A few weeks later, when he sought to rejoin the XI Corps, it was already on its way to the rescue of the Army of the Cumberland, which was virtually besieged in Chattanooga. As a result of the Union defeat at Chickamauga on September 19 and 20, General William S. Rosecrans, the commanding general, had ordered a retreat to Chattanooga, a few miles north on the southeast bank of the Tennessee River. The victorious Confederate forces under General Braxton Bragg, by seizing Lookout Mountain and other heights to the west and Missionary Ridge to the east, controlled the access to the town by all routes except a miserable trail north of the city, which remained the only line of supply for the large Union Army.

The situation in Chattanooga was desperate and, unless the Army of the Cumberland was speedily rescued, a disastrous retreat seemed the only alternative. Fortunately, the seriousness of the situation was grasped in Washington and large scale relief measures adopted. General Grant, in over-all command, ordered the Army of the Tennessee, his old unit, now under General Sherman, to the rescue, and detached Hooker's XI and XII Corps from the Army of the Potomac for the same purpose. General Hooker's command concentrated at Bridgeport, Alabama, on the Tennessee River close to the Tennessee border, some twenty-five miles west of Chattanooga.

<sup>1</sup> D. G. Brinton Thompson, "From Chancellorsville to Gettysburg, A Doctor's Diary," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, LXXXIX (1965), 292-315.

Of immediate importance was the opening of a practical supply route to the beleaguered army. Dr. Brinton was present at this successful operation conducted by the simultaneous action of Hooker's forces and the Army of the Cumberland, commanded by General George H. Thomas, who had succeeded Rosecrans.

With Chattanooga relieved, Grant next attempted to dislodge Bragg's army from its threatening and formidable positions. The plan was for Sherman to march his army through Chattanooga and attack the northern end of Missionary Ridge, along which extended the main Confederate strength. At the same time, Hooker was to attack the forces on Lookout Mountain. Thomas was simply to make a strong demonstration in the valley between the two ridges to distract the enemy.

In the meantime, the XI Corps, of which Dr. Brinton was now Medical Director, was ordered to the left flank of Thomas' army and eventually reinforced Sherman's drive. On the first day of the battle, October 24, Dr. Brinton watched Hooker's successful attack on Lookout Mountain; closer at hand he had little to see since fierce resistance stalled Sherman's drive on Missionary Ridge. The following day, however, Dr. Brinton, after being disappointed again at Sherman's progress, saw Thomas' troops, which were supposed merely to engage in a limited action at the base of Missionary Ridge, charge, without orders from the higher command, up the precipitate ridge and break the center of the enemy line causing a rout of the whole Confederate Army.

Sherman's forces and the XI Corps then marched off to relieve Knoxville, where General Ambrose Burnside was besieged by General James Longstreet, whose detachment from the Army of Virginia had previously reinforced Bragg.

*Trinity College*

D. G. BRINTON THOMPSON

Willard's Hotel<sup>2</sup>

Washington, D. C.

Wednesday, Oct. 7, 1863

Last week, while still at home, I heard a rumor, at first of no apparent credibility, to the effect that my corps (XIth) had gone to

<sup>2</sup> Willard's Hotel on 14th Street was the leading hotel in Washington.

Chattanooga. A visit to Phila. on Friday last, made it sure that with other reinforcements it had gone through Wheeling and Indianapolis. On Monday I telegraphed the Adj. General, but got no reply. The next day therefore, I packed up, bid goodbye to the family, and came on here. We reached here at 6 A. M. and after a short nap & breakfast I proceeded to the Surg. General's of. reported myself, had a short interview with Drs. Dunster<sup>3</sup> & Brinton<sup>4</sup> and with Surg. Crane<sup>5</sup> U.S.A. Thence I proceeded to the Adj. Gen's of. & learned the Corps was at Nashville.

Nashville, Tennessee

St. Cloud Hotel

Sunday, October 11, 1863

Nothing further of interest occurred to me in Washington and, as I had arranged, at 6.30 P.M. I took my seat in the Balt. & O. R.R. cars for the west. At the Junction after much waiting and struggling I managed to get half a berth on the sleeping cars. The road was one of the most irregular tracks I ever had the comfort of riding over, and as we turn around the sharp turns, it recalled vividly certain nights at sea when I have had to grasp frantically the sides of my berth to prevent landing in the middle of the stateroom. When I turned out next morning we were far into the mountains. On each side they rose in long ridges with rounded summits wooded to the top with a dense forest. Below us a precipitous descent led to a brawling brook in a deep glen. A little after midnight I reached Columbus, Ohio; as for two nights consecutively I had been subjected to the delights of a sleeping car, and moreover I was informed that I could not make the connection at Cincinnati, I resolved to pass the rest of the night in this city. Accordingly I sallied out, carpet bag in hand, & espying at no great distance a window stating that oysters and refreshments were there obtainable & also that the modest house attached was known as the Exchange Hotel, I marched across and domesticated myself there for the night. By 8 the next morning I was at breakfast, and having an hour or two to spare after that had been accomplished

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Edward S. Dunster was attached to the surgeon general's office.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. John Hill Brinton (1832-1907), cousin of D. G. Brinton.

<sup>5</sup> Dr. C. H. Crane of the surgeon general's office.

satisfactorily, I went forth to view the town. The Capitol is of a style of architecture that I am unable to appreciate. The effect is of that startling nature which would be produced by seeing a huge barrel on top of an enormous dry goods box. The town itself is like all other thriving towns, the traveller observing the usual amount of plate glass, smirking clerks, quack advertisements, newspaper boys, whisky shops, and hotels. Street cars were also at command. My time, though limited, sufficed for my curiosity, and at 11 A.M. I was very careful not to miss the train, & was soon bowling southward, through fields of corn over which the grim trunks of girdled trees still kept watch, and where the prevailing style of architecture manifested a strong attachment to the log cabin. I was obviously at a distance from the long cleared, & long inhabited fields of the east. It was what I always pictured to myself the West to be. At 4 P.M. we were in Cincinnati. An hour was to spare which I profitably employed by ordering supper in a German beer saloon, and, as I thought, got a clean, abundant, and every way satisfactory meal, accompanied by a glass of beer, for less money than I have paid for any other meal since I left home (35 cts). It was twilight by the time we left, & I only caught a glimpse of the vine yards on the Ohio river. We reached Seymour, Indiana, about 11 P.M. where we had a half hour to wait for the southern train to Jeffersonville. My view of Indiana by oil-light revealed a flat country, abounding in bars and railroads, principally bars. After solacing myself with a reasonable amount of Bourbon, hot, with sugar, I lit a segar and strolled into the waiting room. It was crowded with soldiers, and I was on the point of going out, preferring the chilly night air to the packed room, when I was accosted by an unknown officer in a friendly manner. We soon fell into conversation, and as we were both on our way to Louisville, we remained together. He was Capt. Jones, 6 N. Hampshire, vols. Provost Marshall at Russellville, Kentucky, west of Bowling Green. We reached Louisville at 2½ A.M. and an hour after, were lucky enough to secure very comfortable beds in the National Hotel, a very pleasant house, new and clean. I did not have the time to enjoy its advantages and "inducements to travellers" as much as would have been agreeable, as in two hours and a half the servant woke me up and by a violent effort of self-control, and most honorable victory over my inclination to let the train go to the - - - and sleep it out, I

reached the depot just in time to secure a seat and be comfortable in conscience. The journey to Nashville was agreeably diversified by tales of the barbarity of guerillas, and information that the day before, large bands of them had appeared near the track, and that today, an attack could be reasonably anticipated. In consequence of which, I was advised to have my pistols in readiness, & not to yield. As my most formidable weapon was an uncommonly dull pocket knife with only one whole blade, I preferred to put my trust in Providence and luck. The result proved that I was right, and at 7 P.M. we reached Nashville in safety. I repaired to this hotel, hearing it to be one of the best, and, with much difficulty obtained a room. In the evening I wrote home. I also saw Capt. McMichael,<sup>6</sup> Com. of. Sub. but it was altogether too late an hour in the day to obtain any information from him, as he had quite past that point. This morning, however, I met Capt. Lacy A.Q.M.<sup>7</sup> of our division and his clerk who told me the wagon train, etc, were about a mile from town. I set out in search of them and after walking about six miles, & entirely losing myself, found them quite close to my hotel, on my way back.

Headquarters 2nd Div. 11th Corps.  
Camp near Bridgeport, Alabama  
Tuesday, Oct. 13, 1863

Next day early I paid an exorbitant hotel bill \$5.50 for the worst meals I almost ever had in a civilized country, & a room, half of which was occupied by a total stranger. Indeed, my reminiscences of Nashville are not those of a place pleasant to live in. Many residences are stately and new, many bear evident signs of the princely wealth of the old population, but this population is gone. Houses half finished, neglected gardens, closed stores, and the shifting character that one every where sees marked on men in the street, prove too clearly how great has been the fall here. The hospitals hold 6000 patients, and every other building is employed for some government purpose or other. The military government is ably conducted. One

<sup>6</sup> Capt., later Maj., William McMichael, Assistant Adjutant General to Gen. Thomas, was the son of Morton McMichael, Mayor of Philadelphia after the Civil War.

<sup>7</sup> Capt. Heman Andrew Lacey.

point particularly shows an improvement and a conquest over civil prejudices, viz., that all the prostitutes are obliged to take out licenses, and submit to a medical inspection twice a week.

On Monday morning I walked leisurely to the Chattanooga depot. It was early and I had time to observe the vast business that is here performed. The train on which I was to leave was there. Just behind the engine was attached a guard car. This resembles somewhat an ordinary baggage car, but the sides are of thick oaken plank, pierced on each side with loop-holes for the soldiers within to fire through. At the front end were steps leading to a small platform, level with the roof, on which was a six pound howitzer on a revolving support. This, loaded with grape, would prove a valuable adjunct in a guerilla skirmish. This passenger train was the second that had been over the road since the track had been torn up the last time by the rebels. It was considered no ways unlikely that we should be troubled by some of them. At 8 A.M. we started. The road led us over the battle field of Stone river,<sup>8</sup> where an officer called my attention to the frequent marks of bullets in the trees. Of course a satisfactory view of the battleground was impossible. Like the rest of Tennessee east [*sic*] of the mountains, the vicinity is a series of long rolls generally heavily timbered, in some places approaching a prairie in appearance. The houses are few and wretched, one story frame, and small log cabins often without glass, being the favorite style of architecture. The inhabs. seem largely women and children, both in a state of great squalor & plain destitution. They are fair specimens of the "poor white trash" of the south. The owners of the plantations I judge were non-resident. All the route is a scene of devastation, fences destroyed, houses demolished, fields uncultivated, public roads grown up with weeds, & only distinguishable from the fields by their long depressions and the relics of the worm fences on either side. About 80 miles from Nashville, we came in sight of the Appalachians, rising abruptly from the cleared plain at their base, a woody wall, stretching unbroken on either hand as far as the eye can reach, and rising to a height of 1500 feet or so. At Stevenson we changed cars. It is like the other towns along the route, small and filthy, and crowded with

<sup>8</sup> The Battle of Stone River, Tenn., was fought from Dec. 31 to Jan. 2, 1863. It was a seesaw affair with the Union Army finally driving the Confederate forces out of Murfreesboro, an important road center adjacent to the field of battle.

government employees. It was dark when we reached there, and a full hour elapsed ere the train for Bridgeport was ready. Capt. McMichael was there, who of course had a supply of stimulant, a sup of which and a cigar, made my supper. Gen. Howard<sup>9</sup> was there also. Gen. Hooker's H.Q. are there at present. Gen Howard was coming up to Bridgeport, & I entered the same caboose. One of his aids was with him, who, after our arrival in Bridgeport, informed me where General Steinwehr's<sup>10</sup> Hqrs. were. A third of a mile from the station, he said, & pointed inland. A sort of a road leads there. First over a hill, then through a valley, then into a woods. Not very lucid when the night is pitch dark & I cannot even see whether I put my foot in a hole or up a step. However, I was bound to do my best so off I started.

Presently I became aware of a huge structure looming up against the sky, which, from its dim outline I rightly judged to be a fort. At the further angle a watch fire was burning and around it were two or three soldiers lying in various positions. At one side a few boards leaned against a cross piece offered a rude shelter. Carefully keeping at a distance from where I thought the fosse might be, I approached & inquired my way. The corporal led me to the opposite angle of the fort and pointed to a deep valley beneath us where countless campfires gleamed & sparkled. "On the other side of the valley somewheres" he said "are your headquarters. In the camp below they will tell you exactly" and left me alone. I plunged down the hill through the darkness, rendered more intense by the heavy clouds that were gathering over the sky. First I tumbled into a ditch running out from the fort, some four feet deep. Clambering out of this I found myself on a precipitous declivity covered with weeds and underbrush higher than my head and encumbered with felled trees lying in every direction, across each other, up, and down. Twenty or thirty yards of this work and I felt that further progress was impossible, that I was entangled in a sort of abatis which probably extended to the valley below, where I was likely to come on a marsh or stream. A heavy shower passed rapidly over, making everything wet and slippery. With considerable labor I regained the top of the hill and again repaired to the corporal. "There is another road on the other side of

<sup>9</sup> Gen. O. O. Howard commanded the XI Corps.

<sup>10</sup> Gen. A. von Steinwehr commanded the 2nd Division of the XI Corps.

the fort, rather bushy, I guess, but better perhaps than where you tried" said he, and started to show me it. He had not proceeded a dozen paces when in the midst of a sentence, there was a slide and a scramble and the corporal had disappeared. I instantly stood still, and looking intently discerned directly at my feet a more pitchy darkness than around me. The corporal had walked directly into the fosse, here 8 or 9 feet deep, with vertical banks. Half a step more and I would have shared the same luck. "Are you hurt?" I shouted. He lay still a moment then gathered himself up, shook his large frame, and replied, "Only shaken up." It was a most fortunate escape. With my assistance and by the aid of roots and stubs he regained the surface and we walked on, taking good care to give the ditch as wide a berth as possible this time. When we reached the other side of the fort the rain commenced in heavy drops. Bearing in mind my last attempt, and something daunted by my companion's adventure, I hinted that I had rather stay in some shelter than attempt it alone. With a soldier's readiness he offered me a share of his shelter, which I gladly accepted, putting aside certain doubts that arose as to sleeping with 3 or 4 common soldiers never very scrupulous as to cleanliness, of little godliness and less cleanliness. When we arrived at the fire it occurred to the corporal that I might do better in the tent of the adjutant nearby. I favored the suggestion. The adjutant received me hospitably, struck a light, produced a bottle of whisky, and with a feeling of relief, I pulled off my boots and threw myself on an old tent with three others, where I passed a dry if not a comfortable night. It rained in torrents till day light, when it ceased, and taking advantage of the lull, I crossed the valley to the General's H.Qrs. No one was up. Presently, however, they turned out, and I learned that my valise was safe but every blanket lost. This I half expected & so bore it philosophically.

Same

Monday, Oct. 19, 1863

Tonight our horses came up in good condition, considering the long journey and insufficient food. We hope soon to explore the country thoroughly. Here we can do this better than in Virginia. There are few or no guerillas this side of the river, and the natives, what there

are, do not appear so vindictive as in that state. They have witnessed nothing but defeats on the Confederate side and have lost all confidence in its ultimate success. Many of them are deserters and refugees from the Southern army who have escaped, come home, taken the non-combattant oath, and returned to the pursuit of their ordinary occupations. Some, indeed, profess to be and a few really are devotedly and heartily loyal to the Union cause, giving slaves and property cheerfully in its support. May their shadow (and their number) never grow less.

Concerning the healthiness of the region I have my doubts. Our camps suffer much from intermittent, typho-malaria, etc., besides epidemics of measles and variola, though the latter are not of severe type. In this climate, negro troops would probably have better health than white soldiers. Upon the hill between us and the R. R. is the burial place used by the rebels when here last spring, which clearly shows that our southern brethren suffered sadly also, during their occupation of the point. Speaking of negro troops I noticed the camp of a brigade this side of Murfreesboro; and positively I have never inspected a brigade of our own soldiers which presented a neater, and more comfortable appearance.

Same

Oct. 25, 1863

We have had an uncommonly rainy and cold week for the season—one that would be so esteemed even in Pennsylvania, which is more than five degrees north. We have been put to our wits for means of keeping warm and have been fain to employ the Italian method, extemporizing *Scaldini*<sup>11</sup> from old pots and kettles, and heaping them with coals, hot ashes, and cannon balls at red heat. This made our tents something unhealthy but comfortable enough. The cannon balls require some caution inasmuch as it leads to the use of shells and these are treacherous objects, not unfrequently looking innocent enough, but resenting most strenuously the heating process. One day, before breakfast we heard one explode at the cattle corral in the woods near our headquarters, and directly thereupon rushed a negro boy almost pallid with fright to my tent with the direful news that one man was

<sup>11</sup> Italian earthenware brazier.

mortally injured and another seriously so by the explosion, and my presence was needed, most urgently. It seems they had placed the missile in their camp fire and were sitting around it in great comfort when their pleasure was thus rudely disturbed. I hastened to the spot, and was much relieved to find the victims merely scratched, though prostrated by the shock, and severely scared.

Hdqrs 2nd Div. 11th Corp.  
Lookout Valley, Tennessee<sup>12</sup>  
Oct. 31, 1863

I have the events of four days to describe and they have been fruitful in scenes and objects of interest. On Tuesday morning we awoke at an early hour being ordered to move at six o'clock. Our way lay across the river over two pontoons, one each side of the island, and into a series of woody bottoms & knolls, with here and there a clearing & log house. Our Division had the advance and as we hourly expected a rencontre of some kind, we proceeded with great caution, sending our cavalry ahead and on our flanks. Part of our way lay through the "Narrows."<sup>13</sup> Here the banks crowd the river into a narrow bed and rise frowning above it to a height of some 300 feet, actually over-hanging the narrow road that circles around its base. Thence we left the river to take one of its long turns, & followed the railroad up the valley of the Running Waters.<sup>14</sup> Part way up the R.R. crosses the defile of the creek by a bold bridge. This had been entirely destroyed by fire, and even the piers had partially been demolished. Not far beyond we stopped for the night at a station called Whiteside,<sup>15</sup> in a small house, two rooms occupied by a woman with eleven children.

The condition of the inhabs. that remain is miserable in the extreme. Their diet is reduced absolutely to "hogs meat" and corn-bread with a little salt. Their clothing they manufacture themselves by spinning and weaving cotton. Their dyes are the polk-berry, sumack, and bark of the black walnut. The latter gives that peculiar

<sup>12</sup> Lookout Valley lies west of Lookout Mountain.

<sup>13</sup> A section of the Tennessee River.

<sup>14</sup> A small stream running into the Tennessee River.

<sup>15</sup> Whiteside, Tenn., on the railroad from Bridgeport to Chattanooga.

color known as "butternut," which has given a name to the whole of our rebel enemies. The cotton cloth is very good in quality. Even before the war the status of these people was low, very few among them knowing how to read, and what surprised me more, lacking much of the "push" that I have seen in other frontier settlements. They have less vulgarity of dialect and manners than one would assume from such facts, their voices were softer and their features less coarse than most mountaineers. Some of the girls could even have been called handsome, though accustomed to work in the fields. They are mainly blonds, with light hair, muddy complexions, some even tallow like, and lack lustre eyes. Fever & ague is prevalent, and the gaunt, depressed figures of the men told plainly of its ravages. Otherwise the country is healthy. It chanced that I was speaking German to one of our staff & he answered volubly, & attempted to talk in very bad English to the old lady where we stopped over night. She was much astonished & expressed her opinion that he must be a real Yankee as she could hardly understand a word he said!

*Oct. 28.* We rose early, long before sunup. I walked through the bushes & descended a steep ravine to take my morning wash in Running Waters, which roared near our camp. At this point its course was due E. and W. It was an impressive scene. The mountain torrent hurled itself through rocks at my feet, gaunt limbs & dead trees hung over the steep sides of the ravine and stood out boldly against the sky, the morning breeze swept through the forests and light clouds drifted athwart the sky & over the face of the full moon which was sinking on my right directly down the gully, while in a diametrically opposite direction the red light of the morning rose over the sky in red streams & deepening waves of color.

We marched carefully, especially as we approached Lookout Valley, where we expected the enemy, and I picked out a hospital to be in readiness. My labor was unnecessary, however, as none appeared, & we moved slowly down the valley. As we reached Wauhatchie<sup>16</sup> we could see Lookout Mt. & heard the artillery from that point playing on Chattanooga. Presently desultory shots were heard ahead, and news came our Cavalry was driving the infantry pickets of the enemy. I rode forward to our 1st Brigade which was in

<sup>16</sup> Wauhatchee, Tenn., a railroad junction in Lookout Valley.

front. The cavalry was sent to the rear, a line of skirmishers deployed, & a first line of battle formed, while the rest held themselves ready to report. The enemy made no stand, however, and we pushed through the woods with only a loss of 2 killed & 4 wounded. Meantime the battery on Point Lookout had brought several pieces to bear on the valley & was trying to get the range of the road, but with no success, except to fright us some. Coming into the plain on the river we saw the heights on our right which commanded completely the valley, covered with regiments. For a moment our anxiety was intense, but our joy was equal when we saw them unfurl a broad flag with the stars & stripes & wave it in welcome. We received it with three cheers, & a band striking up a lively air, we marched cheerily into camp about a mile further on. The troops belonged to Grant's command, & had taken the heights the day before. We had a good supper and went to bed, hoping to enjoy a comfortable sleep, I in an ambulance, the rest under a fly.

*Oct. 29.* Both our calculations and slumbers were disturbed about 1 A.M. by firing on our front. It woke me, then as it lulled I turned over to rest again, but suddenly a whole volley brought me to my feet, and at once the whole camp was awake. The general & aids hastened to the front while I & the Ordnance Officer remained near his train listening to the rapid firing, as it would sink away, & then break out anew with violence. At about 2½ it ceased, & I rode to Corps H.Q. Here I found a hospital had been established in a woods near by & busied myself till daybreak in getting it "running" in order. At dawn I went to the scene of action. The rebels had taken possession of a steep hill, from which the 2nd Brig. had driven them by a desperate charge, in which the 33 Mass. & 73 Ohio had particularly distinguished themselves. The Col. of the 33rd was seriously wounded (Col. Underwood),<sup>17</sup> and Capt. Buckwalter<sup>18</sup> of the 73rd fatally, with both of whom I was pretty well acquainted. The battle ground on the hill side was strewn with dead. It was wonderful to think men could charge up such a precipice. And except at night they would hardly have attempted it. The force they drove was two brigades of Longstreet's Corps. The 12th Corps was likewise engaged,

<sup>17</sup> Col. Adin Ballou Underwood.

<sup>18</sup> Capt. Luther M. Buckwalter.

Geary's Division.<sup>19</sup> Our loss was 176 killed & wounded. It is considered a noble action. At noon we received orders to send all wounded to Chattanooga immediately. I distributed this order. The day was clear & very warm. I dined with the Staff. Gens. Howard, Meigs,<sup>20</sup> Butterfield<sup>21</sup> & Hooker were there. After dinner I was suddenly seized with feebleness, twitching of the muscles, vertigo, all from exposure to the sun. By prompt application of whiskey & water, the latter externally, the former internally, I avoided the impending sun stroke, though I still have the characteristic pain on riding. I at once reported my condition to the Med. Dir. and kept quiet the rest of the day.

Same

Nov. 2, 1863 Monday

Yesterday I saw a copy of the Chattanooga Daily Rebel, now published in Marietta, Ga. It is a single sheet on pretty good paper, but old type. Its tone was not more severe than our Northern papers. Among the advertisements were some for runaway slaves, rewards only 50 or 100 dollars. The favorite song "When this cruel War is over" was advertised by two firms. It seems as popular South as north.

Same

Nov. 8, 1863, Sunday

The times have continued without stirring incidents. We have completed fortifications around our position to such an extent as to make it already formidable and large details are at work to render it finally next to impregnable. Meanwhile the command is kept constantly in a mobile condition, the severely sick being constantly sent away and rations on ahead being on hand constantly. The same activity is manifest throughout the whole army, even the 5 or 600 desperately wounded that still remain in Chattanooga, forlorn relics of the Chickamauga fight, are being shipped to the rear, with the

<sup>19</sup> Gen. John W. Geary.

<sup>20</sup> Gen. Montgomery C. Meigs, Quartermaster General of the Army.

<sup>21</sup> Gen. Daniel Butterfield, Hooker's Chief of Staff.

utmost expedition. Very early this morning I arose and looked out at the scene. The whole east glowed with a richer flush than I have seen in northern climes. The sky behind Lookout was all aglow. Over it, suspended like a pearl & silver crescent in the sky, the old moon now in her 4th quarter hung glittering white against the ruby colored back ground. The sentry marched noiselessly on his beat, and the early camp fires were just breaking through the gloom. I returned & lay down again. Presently soft low strains of sacred music, like the notes of a distant organ seemed to reach me through the stillness of the Sabbath dawn. I thought I must be half asleep, or my imagination fired by the scene I had been looking at, but strove to remain in the half slumbering condition I was in. Soon the strain became louder and distinct, and I recognized one of our finest brass bands. They were playing to Gen. Howard, about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile off, celebrating his birthday, & in respect to his views, using sacred music. Such incidents effect me strangely and throw a softening influence over me all the day, an influence that I cannot & never would attempt to describe, nor to analyze, but only to enjoy, careless of the sympathy or participation of others, or indeed shunning it altogether.

Day before yesterday, partly out of curiosity, and partly in furtherance of certain plans of change I entertain, I called with Dr. Hubbard,<sup>22</sup> Actg. Medical Director of our Corps on Dr. Perin,<sup>23</sup> Med. Dir. of this Dept. in Chattanooga. The town has suffered disastrously from military occupation. Many houses are half ruined, nearly all either wholly deserted or occupied for army purposes. It was once a neat and thriving town of some 4,000 inhabs. being "right smart" of business, as its appearance testified. Around it are high hills, every-one of which is crowned with fortifications, entrenchments, bastions, bombproofs, & all the other enginery of war. There is great carelessness in policing manifested in camps and hospitals here. Anywheres around Chattanooga you can count a dozen or two dead horses and mules, their dead carcasses left where they fell, or at most dragged to one side of the road. It gives some color to the assertion that the difficulty of transportation and shortness of rations caused a loss of not less than ten thousand mules and horses to Gen. Thomas' command.

<sup>22</sup> Dr. Robert Hubbard.

<sup>23</sup> Dr. G. Perin.

We have continued to be the targets for the rebels' batteries on Point Lookout, but though they throw daily a number of shells over our way, the casualties are very small in proportion to the noise.

Same

Wednesday, Nov. 11, 1863

A vast step remains to be taken before our army is brought to anything like perfect organization. In the department of engineering and that of medicine this is especially the case. I have planned an article setting forth the lack of all system in the latter dept., but whether it would do to publish it, I do not know.

Deserters come over frequently from the base of Lookout. Longstreet has moved away, & his place been supplied by Pemberton's men<sup>24</sup>—two brigades. They have never been exchanged, though they say it was published in all their papers to the effect that the exchange was made, & those that were loth to go, driven in by cavalry. The pickets converse together amicably and by mutual agreement refrain from shooting each other.

On Monday, with the General, I called on & was introduced to Gen. Hooker & Gen. Butterfield. Their hqrs. are near our own though not so comfortably arranged.

Same

Wednesday, Nov. 18, 1863

Towards the end of last week Capt. F. W. Stowe<sup>25</sup> left our staff, having made application to enter the Invalid Corps. Since the wound he received at the battle of Gettysburg, his head had given him almost continual uneasiness.

Owing to the want of vegetable food of all kinds, unmistakable symptoms of scorbutus are commencing to develope themselves, and though just now sickness is small its type must soon deteriorate. Rebel pickets tell us their rations for three days consist in 3 lbs corn meal, 1 lb flour, & 1 lb bacon. This is still worse than ours.

<sup>24</sup> Gen. John Clifford Pemberton, who had surrendered Vicksburg, Miss., with his army on July 4, 1863, to Gen. Grant.

<sup>25</sup> Capt. Fred William Stowe.

Graysville, Georgia<sup>26</sup>  
Saturday, Nov. 28

During the period that has elapsed since my last entry, events of great apparent weight in future history have transpired in the range of my observance. Bragg's army we believe to be defeated and practically annihilated, Longstreet is supposed to be cut off, Chattanooga to be free, and the road to Atlanta open.

On the night of the Wednesday on which I last wrote, I received my appointment as Medical Director of the XIth Army Corps by Sp. Field Order No. 308 Hqrs Dept. of Cumberland. Next day at noon I reported for duty and investigated the papers and business of the office. On Friday while thus engaged Lt. Col. Asmussen<sup>27</sup> informed me that the corps was to move that night at midnight. There was the organization of the Field hospital, the arrangement of medical supplies all to be looked after at once. With the assistance of Dr. Hubbard, after a day of work this was all done by night. Then came orders that the movement would be temporarily postponed. So we had till Sunday noon (22) to complete our preparations. At one A. M. Gen. Howard & his staff crossed the river on the Ferry boats & reached Chattanooga. The troops bivouacked east of the town and hdqrs were made with Gen. Granger.<sup>28</sup> I called on Dr. G. Perin U.S.A. Med. Dir. of the Dep. who assigned to the XI corps for a hospital all the buildings near the public school (14 wards, to accommodate 60 each) and the latter also. Battle was expected the next morning, but owing to the delay of Sherman it did not occur. On the afternoon of Monday the 23 the hospital was ready for the sick, largely owing to the activity of Dr. Gunkle<sup>29</sup> of Chester Co. 73 P.V. in charge. I went up on Fort Wood<sup>30</sup> to look at the movements of the troops. They commenced to advance in long lines of battle toward missionary ridge. Soon skirmishing commenced on our left though not active & by nightfall we had possession of a number of their rifle pits. It seems that the enemy could not imagine that this deliberate advance in open day into the plain was anything but a parade or

<sup>26</sup> A village just south of the border of Tennessee on the railroad from Chattanooga to Atlanta.

<sup>27</sup> Lt. Col. C. W. Asmussen, Chief of Staff, XI Corps.

<sup>28</sup> Gen. Gordon Granger commanded the IV Corps.

<sup>29</sup> Dr. W. H. Gunkle, surgeon, XI Corps.

<sup>30</sup> A Union redoubt defending Chattanooga to the south.

general inspection, and consequently looked on with no other feeling than one of curiosity till they were taken. Little was done on this day, however. Some 20 (21 precisely) odd were brought in wounded to our hosp.

About 11 A.M. rapid firing, musketry and artillery, was heard over in Lookout Valley. I jumped on my horse and rode up Cameron's Hill which overlooks Lookout Valley to some extent. Here a very unexpected sight awaited me. Instead of seeing the smoke of battle in Lookout Valley, it was far up Lookout Ridge, just below the summit. Clearly the only explanation of this could be that we were attacking them by turning their left flank and driving them along the mountain side. Still it was uncertain what our success in this brilliant movement would be. The side of the mountain is covered too thickly by underbrush to permit one to see bodies of men from Chattanooga. Except at one point directly under the point where a white house stands and a clearing some 20 acres in extent. This point we watched with great anxiety. All at once we saw a dark blue mass emerge from the woods & rush into this open spot led on by the standard bearers, and could distinctly hear the resounding cheers of our men. The shout was caught up & reechoed by the thousands of observers in Chattanooga. Our men, who we afterward learned belonged to the command of Gen. Hooker, partly of the XII, of the IV & of the XV corps, formed in the field & proceeding across it, drove the enemy into the woods beyond. On this three or four of our batteries near the town commenced to shell this grove rapidly, and kept up the cannonading till dark. The view I obtained of this movement was very clear and satisfactory.

On Wednesday (25th) I learned privately that this movement on the enemy's left was a feint, while the real attack was to be made by the XV corps, Sherman crossing the Tennessee at the junction of the Chickamauga creek in conjunction with our forces in the town. Accordingly I went up early on Fort Ward, on the Eastern side of the town. Cannonading was progressing on the northern extremity of Missionary ridge. We had taken the northern most hill of this ridge during the night without material opposition. Between it & the second was a deep ravine and on this second was a rebel battery. On the side fronting the town was an open field reaching nearly the summit. Over this the storming party was to go to take the battery.

It was composed of the 1st Brigade 2nd Div. XI corps; it was not properly supported, however, and having reached the summit, it was not only driven back in confusion, but in great part taken prisoner. Even the wounded mainly fell in the hands of the enemy. Some 80 to a 100 were brought to our hospital, among them Maj. McAloon<sup>31</sup> of the 27 Pa. wounded badly. This movement executed in view of all of us on the ramparts of the fort, it may well be imagined was regarded with most intense anxiety. It had been finished some time & we were about turning back to our headquarters sufficiently despondent, when we observed that our long lines of battle that had been maneuvering on the plain during the day had disappeared in the woods at the base of Missionary ridge. Presently a tremendous firing was heard on the summit of the ridge. Hooker had come round by the Rossville road & was attacking them in the rear. At the same time lines of blue and glittering steel emerged from the woods on our side and rapidly ascended the hills in three long converging lines. They gained the heights, took cannons & rifle pits at the point of the bayonet, and by sunset were masters of their position, with 42 pieces of artillery & 3500 prisoners. On Thursday I was at the hospital all day. Our wounded amounted to something over 150. It was Thanksgiving day, and it seemed a strange coincidence that this public festival like last 4th of July,<sup>32</sup> should be the era of another victory. Our corps had moved on with the other troops in pursuit.

Accordingly on Saturday, I directed 4 surgeons to remain behind with the wounded & the others to rejoin their command, myself setting the example. The day was clear; our road lay up the Tennessee to the junction of the Chickamauga, across that creek on a pontoon bridge, & up the valley on its right bank. We passed through some of the richest bottoms I ever beheld. The corn stalks still standing averaged 15 feet in height and some materially exceeded this. Maiden cane, sweet gum, oak, white & black, beech grew luxuriantly. About noon we passed Chickamauga Station. This had been one of the principal depots for supplies of the enemy. They had set it on fire & left in great hurry. About 3000 bushels of shelled corn lay around covering the ground kneedeep. Barrels of vinegar stove in lay in numbers around, torpedoes—tin cans with rods and springs ready

<sup>31</sup> Maj. Peter A. McAloon. His commission as Lt. Col. arrived on the day after his death.

<sup>32</sup> Battle of Gettysburg.

to be attached, bushels of corn meal, vast heaps of corn in the ear blazing like coal furnaces, smoking ruins of the storehouses and depots, numbers of pontoon boats which they had not had time to fire, & all the varied litter that collects around a Q.M. depot, were thrown & hurled in a confused mass around. Two large siege guns, I observed, only one of which had been spiked, and several wagons not injured. On the road beyond broken wagons, scattered stores, etc. frequently came to view, while now and then a shell, a splintered tree, bloody rags of clothing or a pool of blood attested the skirmishes of the rear and vanguards of the different armies.

Mr. Gray who owns the house we are in is a wealthy planter, has 400 acres of rich land, a hundred & fifty slaves, a large vineyard, and a very extensive flour mill. Rather he had this latter last night for as I came out from breakfast this morning I found it in flames, by order of Gen. Sherman, making a magnificent conflagration. Mr. Gray is absent with most of his servants & the place is in charge of an English agent Mr. Page.

Hdqs XI Corps  
Charleston, Tenn.<sup>33</sup>  
Monday Nov. 30

About three in the afternoon we learned through Gen. Sherman that our corps was 7 miles distant, at Parkers gap, exactly on the Tennessee & Georgia line, & reached it by nightfall.

Headquarters were at the house of an old woman by name Elliot. She was of the real Spartan stamp, Union to the corps [*sic*], and told us how on sundry occasions she had defended her property against the rebels. She gave us a list of prices in Confederate money. A quart tin coffee pot costs \$6.00, a fine tooth comb \$3.50 to 5.00, a bushel of corn \$15.00 etc. I could readily believe this after Mr. Page, at Graysville had shown me a common velveteen overcoat for which he had refused a thousand dollars. She also told us how the people communicated with their friends in the north by means of "pilots" who relieve each other at stations 50 or 60 ms. apart, carrying letters etc in hollow reeds as canes.

<sup>33</sup> Charleston was on the south bank of the Hiwassee River on the railroad from Chattanooga to Knoxville.

Nov. 29 marched to Cleveland<sup>34</sup> 19 ms. through Bradley Co. Tenn. This is a Union county and much have they suffered in consequence of these sentiments. The people are not the poor white trash of the south but a hardy sterling race, and intelligent too as far as their opportunities go. Their land is poor, houses log, soil thin, & there is little appearance of opulence till one reaches Cleveland. Here are some fine buildings, private & public. The copper rolling mills, the only gun cap factory in the Confederacy have been lately burnt. All the stores are deserted, and though the village is naturally very pretty & northern like, it is now forlorn enough. A Dr. Long called on me in the evening, & I went with him to see two wounded Union soldiers. They were doing well under his hands, and as I could not send them to the rear I left them in his hands. Our Hdqrs were in the old seminary, now empty. The R.R. track had been destroyed to prevent Longstreet, whom we are pursuing, from returning. The best way to effect this is to build a fire of the sleepers laid in cobwork on the sills & the rails across the top. This bends the rails irretrievably. We captured some corn here and some prisoners.

Hdqrs. XI Corp.

Wednesday Dec. 2

Near Philadelphia, Tenn.<sup>35</sup>

Dec. 1, 1863. From Charleston to one mile beyond Athens, 17 ms. Crossed the Hiwassee<sup>36</sup> at daybreak on the R.R. bridge part of which had been destroyed by the rebels, but it had been repaired and covered with boards during the night. The morning was intensely cold, a severe frost covering the ground, and the ice being an inch in thickness. One could not but pity the men. Many are without overcoats, many without blankets and not a few with worn out shoes some actually walking barefoot over the icy mud. Insufficient & unwholesome rations add to their sufferings. There is no hard tack nor bacon, and only half or third rations of sugar and coffee. They

<sup>34</sup> Cleveland, Tenn., was an important railroad junction on the Chattanooga-Knoxville railroad.

<sup>35</sup> Philadelphia was on the railroad a little more than halfway from Chattanooga to Knoxville.

<sup>36</sup> The Hiwassee River flows west from North Carolina to join the Tennessee about thirty miles north of Chattanooga.

obtain meal & must cook it which they do carelessly & ignorantly, causing sickness & weakness. It tells visibly on them. The country through which we passed was a valley of fertile land and with buildings that promised comfort, but all devastated by the war. At Calhoun,<sup>37</sup> opposite Charleston, we obtained 30 sacks of salt & a lot of flour, left by the rebels in some baggage cars. Athens is a flourishing little village, with a school & courthouse, several churches and pleasant residences. We have to forage on the land and pigs & geese suffer in consequence.

Dec. 2. From near Athens to near Philadelphia—22 ms. Fine weather warmer than the last few days. I write by the light of a red pine or fat pine fire. We reached Sweetwater<sup>38</sup> by noon. It is a clean modern built village, with those sure signs of a flourishing community, a school house and several churches. Had a good dinner, sausage, milk, and molasses. After we got outside the village we were annoyed by a small body of rebel cavalry. We accordingly to meet them sent ahead a brigade of cavalry and 2 regiments of mounted infantry. They had a skirmish beyond the little village of Philadelphia and as we were in this wretched forlorn little place one of the 3 Ohio cavl. was carried in dead, completing the contrast of the name (Brotherly love) as its appearance does with the city I am so well acquainted with. The houses were old, dirty, and wretched, & the people resembled them. Headquarters in the house of Mr. Cannon, secesh. Our men are foot sore & dirty, but keep up well considering their condition.

Hdqrs XI Corps, A of C.

Loudon, Tenn.<sup>39</sup> Dec. 3, Thursday

Started at 4 A.M. expecting to have a fight here but though our troops were in town by daylight, the rebels had all left, except the sick in the hospital. Of these there were about 70. I called at the hospital, & introduced myself to the Confederate Medical officers in charge Surgeon Field of Georgia & Asst. Surg. Darby of South

<sup>37</sup> Calhoun, Tenn., was on the north bank of the Hiwassee River opposite Charleston.

<sup>38</sup> Sweetwater, Tenn., a few miles south of Philadelphia.

<sup>39</sup> Loudon was on the railroad from Chattanooga to Knoxville where it crosses the Tennessee River some twenty-eight miles southwest of Knoxville.

Carolina. The hospital is an old hotel, dirty and cold, and three of the patients have died within 24 hours. We—Dr. Hubbard & myself—took breakfast with them, & I placed what I could for the benefit of their wounded at their disposal. The rebels destroyed 3 engines here and 70 cars. We captured a quantity of meal, & have rested here all day. Longstreet is still in the advance. Sherman & Granger crossed the river 6 ms. above here today. Bushwacking is carried on here at a fearful rate. It is equally unsafe for negroes or whites of any political complexion to traverse the roads. They are robbed & mercilessly shot down by roving bands of depredators and marauders.

Thirty deserters & refugees have come into our lines here today. Tennesseans desiring to return home. They say 3,000 men from this state left Bragg's army after the late battle.

HdQRS XI Corps, A of C  
Louisville Tennessee<sup>40</sup>  
Sunday Dec. 6, 1863

We stay in the house of Mr. Foster. He is a sound Union man & is at present attached to the Commissary Dept. He returned today. In conversation he told me that Burnside's first intimation of our approach was last Thursday. Col. Burd at Kingston<sup>41</sup> received the news in a dispatch from Grant on Tuesday to the effect that Burnside must hold out at any cost, that he must subsist on the inhabs. and that 8 columns were on the march to relieve him. This dispatch he must send through to Burnside, & sent accordingly three messengers with it on different roads. One of these was shot by bushwackers & his dead body found in the road. A second tried in vain to get through the pickets & finally had to return, the third, who was Mr. Foster himself, succeeded in getting near Knoxville & was almost in despair of reaching it when he met a Union woman whom he knew. She learned the importance of the news, & told Mr. F. that he could never get through with it, that her own life, was less important to the cause than his and moreover that she felt sure she could deliver it safely. He gave it to her & she succeeded in reaching its destination.

<sup>40</sup> Louisville was located twelve miles south of Knoxville.

<sup>41</sup> Kingston, Tenn., was an important road junction situated near a sharp bend in the Tennessee River some thirty-five miles west of Knoxville.

Such incidents are the romance of war. I wish I had learned her name. It deserves a place in history.

Hdqrs XI Corps A of C  
Sweetwater, Tenn.

Tuesday Dec 8 1863

We left Louisville yesterday about 7 A.M. and marched to Davis' ford on the little Tennessee, 14 miles. On reaching here Lt. Col Meysenburg<sup>42</sup> & myself took up quarters in the house belonging to Gen. Vaughn<sup>43</sup> of the rebel army. We came very near capturing this officer when we took Loudon, & his position is still critical. His wife is in the house & her children. She is very much of a lady though, extremely rank secesh. The building is good for this part of the world, and a piano and some books speak well for the general culture of the family. The people here are very glad to have an officer or two lodge in their houses as it protects them from the importunity and depredations of the soldiery. Stragglers have caused much trouble to the people here since we passed through, plundering them mercilessly in many instances. Gen Howard strives to govern his men in this respect with great vigor but Gen. Sherman is by no means so particular, & has left a bad reputation for himself and corps behind him.

Hdqrs XI Corps  
Lookout Valley, Tenn.

Saturday Dec. 19, 1863

The night after leaving Cleveland (Tenn.) we passed at the house of a Mr. Goochy, a clergyman, Baptist I believe, a few miles this side of McDaniel's gap<sup>44</sup> at Steiner's Station on the Chattanooga and Cleveland R.R. He was an old and infirm man, 69 years of age and dropsical, with a wife as tottering and helpless as himself. They had been rich for their section but were now deplorably poor. Every live animal on their farm had been taken, every fence torn down, hardly a bushel of corn left, and to crown all, Sherman's men had entered the house and plundered it of everything valuable, leaving hardly

<sup>42</sup> Lt. Col. Thomas A. Meysenburg, Assistant Adjutant General, XI Corps.

<sup>43</sup> Gen. John C. Vaughn, C.S.A., commanded a brigade of Tennessee Regiments.

<sup>44</sup> McDaniels Gap, Tenn., pierced White Oak Ridge, some twelve miles west of Chattanooga.

bedclothes enough for one bed. Not a slave was left but a child 8 or 10 years of age and the poor old couple with their daughter were actually reduced to live by the charity of their neighbors. In the midst of such extraordinary afflictions, such a combination of misfortunes it was most instructive to see with what resignation, I might almost say, with what cheerfulness, this venerable old man bore his hard fate, not relating his losses with murmuring and grumbling, and indeed not speaking of them till questioned. Gen. Howard on leaving gave him some commissary stores and an old horse. The General & his staff then proceeded to the Chickamauga creek & crossing at the Railroad bridge, which, as it was solidly built of stone had not been destroyed, reached the left bank, with the infantry, while the artillery, ambulances, and wagons, went over the pontoon bridge at the mouth of the creek. The road lay through the Tennessee bottoms through mud of unfathomable depth, & so crowded with vehicles that they could not cross till the following day. With the General, I visited the summits of Missionary ridge, and the ground of the Battle. The relics of the battle, testimonies to the sharp but short conflict here lay around in profusion, torn clothing, broken arms, cartridge boxes, belts, haversacks, etc. In descending the ridge on the side towards Chattanooga, which we did at the General's customary breakneck rate, I came very near adding another to the list of mortality on this famous field. While in full gallop my horse slipped on a stump, threw me over his head, and performing a feat of admirable tumbling, lit directly on top of me. Strange to say I was not injured, though stunned and shocked by the tremendous impetus & covered with mud from head to foot. One of my legs was bruised, but in a day or two it was well. I arrived in Chattanooga in time to get an excellent dinner at the hospital. I found it in good condition, only five deaths having occurred, & one of those by disease. A case of exsection of the humerus in continuity that I had performed was doing very well, as also 4 similar operations. The sick in the ambulances 48 in number, I directed to be taken to the General Field Hospital, and having submitted myself to the mercies of a barber & obtained some instructions from Dr. Bache,<sup>45</sup> Dr. Hubbard & myself followed the troops around the nose of Lookout into our old camp.

<sup>45</sup> Dr. Dallas Bache, Assistant Medical Director at Chattanooga.

Same

Thursday, Dec. 31, 1863

The last day of the year! A pouring day, a floody day, as if the heavens were weeping at the death of the old year, veiling themselves in sombre clouds and pouring plenteous tears, or as if nature was ashamed of the dirty condition of things here and was bound to have a good wash in honor of the newcomer. Vain hope! Like many another good resolution and intended reform, she leaves things worse than she found them.

How many events have crowded themselves within the last year, how strange its scenes and novel its experiences. I look back and see that I have progressed in knowledge, and I think also in thought. It is well, says Goethe, to solemnize ends but not beginnings. It enables us to sum up, to post our mental books, and estimate our mental & our spiritual profits and losses. We can take stock of ourselves at such times, and compare balances, we can, as the Testament beautifully expresses it, set our house in order, and enter upon what is left to us, if not with clear determinations of retrenchment here, and outlay there, of tearing down this and building up that, at least with a knowledge that such amendments should be made and such deficiencies & surpluses exist.