

## OUR ARMY CORRESPONDENCE.

*For the Connecticut War Record.*

## From the Fourteenth Regiment.

CAMP NEAR STEVENSBURGH, VA.

DEAR RECORD:—Did you ever see a big camp unroof itself and get into marching order in about five minutes' time; doff its white canvas in early morning, as 'twere a night cap; take in its sail by magic, like a great ship fearing a gale? Of course you have, times and again, for you are an old veteran; but all your readers perhaps have not. If they had been here on this maddy plain this morning at break of day, they might have seen it done in a pouring rain.

At two this A. M. we were all roused from our comfortable slumbers, with the pleasant order to get our breakfasts, pack up our traps, and be ready to march at break of day. "To hear is to obey," under the sway of military authority, in this republican land, as well as under an Oriental despotism. So, though the rain came down in a steady, persevering, business-like way, as if its day's work were laid out before it, and couldn't be postponed or interrupted for all the armies on the planet, when the time came, and the bugle sounded, down came the houses, and were soon folded up all dripping and heavy on the men's backs. Grumbling, but on the whole good naturedly as all things of late are done in the Army of the Potomac, the boys were getting into line, ready for a hard, slippery, soaking march, no tent in the regiment left standing, save that of your humble servant, as chance was, when an aid came dashing up to the Colonel, and informed him that the order to march was countermanded. With a rousing cheer all along our lines, off come the dripping packs, and on go the roofs to the houses again; our camp like magic spreads her sails again, and we, not move, but stop. The soldier, unlike the sailor, furls his canvas when he moves, and spreads it when he stops. Woe, this morning, to the improvident boys who, in the thought of departure, have piled their cracker-box, chairs and stools, and their sapling bedsteads into the big fire-places, and burned their pork-barrel chimneys, and in many cases the whole walls and frames of their houses, just to laugh at the bonfire. The laugh was on the other side of their mouth when the word was stay, and they had to go to work again in the rain to rebuild their houses out of the ruins. And great was the self-congratulation of your correspondent that he was the only one in the regiment who hadn't even the trouble of putting on his roof again, but could go about among the builders and insinuate that

he had been in the secret all along, and would have been happy to have informed his brother officers and soldiers sooner, only for "reasons of state" and "military necessity." Short work though was it with our veterans to straighten out camp, and make themselves comfortable again.

Last Fall we let ourselves suffer, shivering in comfortless tents, and waiting for permission to go into winter quarters till the winter months had well nigh disappeared. But now learning wisdom from experience, we build winter quarters immediately at every stopping place, whether for three days or for months. It is surprising to see how quickly our boys will make themselves comfortable. In one day, six men with a hatchet or axe, and an hour's loan of the company spade, will build themselves a handsome and comfortable first-class, brown-front, mud, log residence, with all the modern soldier conveniences, turf-chimney included. Log walls three or four feet high, plastered up with mud; four pieces of shelter tent, buttoned together over a sapling ridge-pole seven feet high on two forked stakes, constituting the roof, and two more buttoning in to fill up the gable ends; this is the house nine feet by six, amply large for a half dozen soldiers. The door and chimney are side by side on the same end, the latter built now usually of turf laid up in a square or circular form, with two or three stakes driven in to keep it steady, and a pork barrel set on the top to finish out the flue; the former (the door) not being built at all, but left, and a rubber blanket hung over, perhaps, to keep out the air. Inside, across one end, two and one half feet high, a bunk of cedar poles or pine will be laid across wide enough for three men to occupy for a couch, and below on the ground, but kept from contact with the earth by saplings laid on the ground and covered over with cedar boughs, is room for the other three. Thus, more than half of the front end of the room is left free to serve as a parlor and drawing room; and still the sleeping apartments (in both stories) are ample, rifles, equipments, are slung under the ridge-poles, knapsacks chucked under the bunks. A cracker box holds the crockery and loose provisions of the party. Two of them get the wood and water, one cooks, another washes the dishes, while the other two are most likely on guard or picket duty. I am most happy to announce to you that the eight days' ration nuisance, and sixty or eighty rounds of cartridge nuisance, so much and so justly complained of by the soldiers, have been at last abated. Orders have come down that henceforth a five days' maximum of rations only shall be carried on the backs

of the soldiers, and only forty rounds of cartridges, (just what the cartridge boxes are made to hold.) Whether to give the credit of this eminently sensible proceeding to Gen. Meade or to the War Department, I do not know; but millions of soldiers' blessings will be on his head who ordered the curtailment.

The private soldier is the basis of our army, the pillar of our country's defense. God bless every man that seeks to make his burdens less, every officer, high and low, who gives his first and chiefest attention to make those under his command as comfortable as possible. If there is any man in this world whom I respect, whom I especially honor, for whose patriotism I have a sincere reverence, it is the man who, from a simple sense of duty, without the inducement of the dignity and emoluments of office, has subjected himself to the hardships and dangers of a private soldier's life, and done his duty in the ranks in his country's defense. The people, the sturdy, liberty-loving common people of these Northern States, saw the meaning of the great rebellion against our Democratic government, (the people's government,) and rose in their might to put it down, and defend the institutions that were most emphatically their own. And it is the people rushing to arms and bravely fighting in the ranks who have brought us such a measure of success in the field, bearing all the losses and waste resulting from blunders of incompetent commanders, persevering against every discouragement, never wavering in the great object set before them. And it is the people, bearing every burden of taxation and the loss of productive labor, the common people of our land, undismayed by the cost of the war in treasure and the blood of their sons, (no house from which there is not one dead,) who, in the recent elections and every way in which their will can be made known, are still showing themselves resolute as ever to finish up the work they set before them, and bring our government and free institutions unscathed out of their fiery trial. The nations of the earth laughed us to scorn and said, "America is broken in pieces;" but the sturdy northern people said, "wait and see." England said, "we won't lend these foolish Yankees money, and they can't carry on the war a year." The people said, "we will furnish the two or three millions a day that are needed for this affair, and here is the gold for the five or six hundred millions of Rail-way and U. S. Bonds that John Bull holds of ours, if he is afraid of our credit, and wishes to put our obligations on the market." And the war still continues on as grand a scale as ever, and America has purchased

back those bonds, and owes other countries less at this hour than ever before since our colonial days. Against traitors South and traitors North, disregarding sneers and evil prophecies, and threats of intervention abroad, through severe defeats and disappointments, against all manner of trickery and coalitions, the will of the American people and their good right hands, the valor of the men and the patient self-sacrifice of the women, the steady, persevering, irresistible determination of the people, has carried on this war, and is going to finish it honorably and successfully, and woe to him who this gainsays. He cannot stand before the American people. And proud is the record of any private soldier who has done his humble duty to defend in the field the principles of freedom and good government, instilled into him from his brave and pious ancestors. Noble the death of him that hath died in such a cause and from such motives! Noble your Record of the faithful deeds and service of Connecticut's sons in the cause! Ever may they be in the van of those who from such generous principles act, suffer, and, if need be, die.

Yours truly, S. F.

*For the Connecticut War Record.*

#### Eleventh Connecticut Volunteers.

GLoucester Point, Va., }  
December, 1863. }

November brought us no move of camp, a good deal of quiet, with very little idleness. We were glad not to move, for Fort Keyes, which we found filthy and malarious, by the change of season and an efficient system of policing, has become both healthy and neat. Our quiet has been disturbed by neither fright, nor raid, nor battle. Dress Parade and Guard Mounting are all we have seen of the "Pomp and circumstance of War." Yet Dress Parade, with us, if one so lately from civil life may express an opinion, attracts much interest and commendation too, and requires not a little preparation. Many of our men appear at parade in coats bright in color, neat and tidy, and yet they are the very coats they wore from Connecticut two years ago. Yesterday was pay day, and the settlement of the year's clothing account told of a great saving in clothes and a consequent increase of pay. One officer expressed for thirty men, thirteen hundred and twenty-nine dollars.

We had but little idleness in the month past, for the work of a regiment falls upon one reduced to a third of its number, and besides the usual routine of duty here

and in Yorktown, our old and leaky tents have been patched and fixed into very comfortable winter quarters, and Winter came punctually, with a freeze and snap on the first of December. If we are to be frozen in and hibernate, we are willing it should be here.

The place is not gay, and would be far from attraction or even tolerable, were it not for the noble York River, here narrowed from two miles to one, to ease and accommodate a crazy old Ferry Boat, (the Winnissimmet,) which usually, once in an hour, works and puffs its way across, with hitch and tremor, much as an old man walks. In truth, this is an out of the way, fever smitten spot, once fertile, but now neglected and abandoned, except by a scanty sprinkling of poor whites and the new born national Freemen, huddled in one Slab Richmond—a place all unknown to Fame.

The quiet of the place makes more attractive our Library Box, now filled again, and piles of Magazines, and will send more men to a Reading Room just going up, which is also to be used for evening meetings. For books, magazines and papers, the gifts of friends at home, we feel and express thanks. We are encouraged too, to ask for other things.

Thanksgiving is past. We rejoiced at the victory before Chattanooga, if not at festive boards and family reunions. But the Christmas holidays are close at hand. At that time, turkey and cranberry sauce are relished in Connecticut. Apples are good in long winter evenings. The shucks of nuts burn prettily in the fire; their meat has a good flavor. Connecticut soldiers would enjoy these good things in Virginia or Southward. I suggest to true and liberal men and women and children, that such things be freely sent, and I suggest it more freely, because I know that, while the true soldier finds his whole heart in this service, and is willing to serve either for the war or for death, many in coming from home did vastly more than those at home can do, by any benefactions to us.

DE F.

*For the Connecticut War Record.*

#### The Sixteenth Regiment.

CAMP SIXTEENTH CONNECTICUT VOLUNTEERS, }  
PORTSMOUTH, Va., Dec. 7th, 1863. }

Although one correspondent may be sufficient to keep the readers of the RECORD posted as to the condition of our regiment, an extra letter may not perhaps be unacceptable.

We still remain at Gettysville, (near Portsmouth,) as this vicinity is called, in honor of Brig. Gen. Geo. W. Getty, commanding our division, enjoying ourselves and living as comfortably as we are able. By dint of industry and perseverance we have fitted up our quarters in quite respectable condition, showing conclusively that Yankee soldiers can and will live comfortably, even though necessarily deprived of many advantages. Most of the men have by this time completed their buildings, and are now enjoying the fruits of their labor, though it is uncertain how long we shall be permitted to do so. Rumors have circulated of a move to Texas or Charleston, but they are doubtless like most army rumors, without foundation.

Having finished work on the line of defense, we have resumed the business of perfecting our soldierly qualities. Soldiers cannot be made effective without a certain degree of proficiency in drill, especially the evolutions of the line. Our experience at Antietam, where we were brought in deadly conflict with a subtle foe, without any preparation, demonstrate this fact quite clearly, at least to our own minds. It was a dear lesson to us, and I am glad to say that we have applied ourselves so diligently to perfecting our drill that we compare favorably with other regiments, especially in the manual of arms. For brigade drill we change places with the Tenth New Hampshire, they drilling with our brigade, (Gen. Harland's,) and we in theirs, (Col. Steer's,) as the distance from our own brigade renders it inconvenient to drill with it.

A detachment of the Sixteenth is now at home recruiting, for we greatly need an increase of numbers. Instead of the long line which we used to make, we can bring out for parade hardly enough for two good companies.

Besides drilling and camp guard, we are also engaged in picket duty, remaining out four days at a time, at Deep Creek and Bowers' Hill, alternately. We have also two or three stationary picket posts.

Thanksgiving Day—the old New England day—has come and gone, and so far as we could, we celebrated it in a manner in good keeping with the Yankee custom. Several companies had their turkeys, chickens, geese, and other luxuries, with which they made merry. Our officers kindly allowed us the day to ourselves. Kind Providence has granted us many assurances of his favor, and has kept us from dangers seen and unseen.