

ADVENTURES OF TWO CLERICAL GENTLEMEN

BY CHARLES KASSEL

THE biography of Edwin Miller Wheelock, begun with a sketch in outline, published in the September number, 1920, of the present magazine, and amplified, period by period in subsequent issues, loses for a time its direct connection with the larger phases of the nation's history. For a brief space the narrative enters a realm which, for the student, is of narrower interest. It is a realm, however, with a fascinating appeal of its own and from which the reader emerges with unforgettable pictures of war-time life in the Old South.

Strung through the issues of the *Open Court* for February and July, 1922, March, August and September, 1923, March and July, 1924, April and September, 1925, and March, 1926, will be found the installments of this biography elaborating the brief sketch with which the series commenced and bringing the recital down to the conquest of the Mississippi by the federal forces in 1863. With the close of the last installment we left the subject of our story in the midst of his tasks as one of the Superintendents of Negro Labor at New Orleans under General Banks, co-operating with George H. Hepworth during the latter's short-lived career in the Department of the Gulf. The work with which Hepworth and our minister were jointly connected had to do with the crop-season of 1863 and was designed to solve the problem of the refugee blacks who left the plantations in hordes and quartered themselves upon the federal army posts. That temporary purpose accomplished, Hepworth returned to the North, to realize through press and platform upon his brief war-experiences. The celebrated Labor System of General Banks, with which the name of Hepworth is so often erroneously linked, had its birth in the following year and took its tone and color from the labors of Chaplain

Wheelock, as will later appear, but the passing touch with the work in 1863 sufficed Hepworth, with his journalistic instincts and ready gift of speech, for a round of lectures, and for a book, now long forgotten, under the name of *Whip, Hoe and Sword; or the Gulf Department in '63*. It is from this work, and the life of Hepworth by Susan Hayes Ward, that we obtain the record which serves as the basis for the present chapter, and these remarkable adventures are abundantly worth preserving, not only for their special value as bearing upon the life we are writing, but for their general interest as episodes in the history of a great contest.

It was against a background of colorful historic incident, as we have seen in the March issue, 1926, that the two clergymen prosecuted their work, sharing as participants or spectators in sundry of the military engagements, and in their sojourn up and down the Mississippi obtaining a contact with plantation life in war-time such as came to no other figures, similarly circumstanced, on the Northern side. It is precisely this aspect of their labors that created the vogue enjoyed for a time by the writings and lectures of Hepworth.

A study of the campaigns of General Banks in the Department of the Gulf, and of the opening of the Mississippi, must possess for our purpose more than a merely historic interest, and it is for this reason we have gathered from varying sources, and in the preceding installment have recorded, with an amplitude of detail not found in the published histories, the story of those phases of the great struggle. Of the participation of our minister, during intervals of labor for the negro, in many of the stirring episodes of the time there can be little doubt. Such information as we possess comes, it is true, from the biography of Hepworth, and from *Whip, Hoe and Sword*, but the constant association of the two chaplains in the task set for them by the Commanding General during the first half of 1863 is persuasive of a common share in these experiences, and the fact is confirmed by the express statement of Hepworth to which we have already referred.

In the work by Susan Hayes Ward we read of a visit to Baton Rouge where they found still visible the havoc of war—referring doubtless to the battle of Baton Rouge we have described. So, too, of the march to Port Hudson upon the occasion of Farragut's successful effort to pass the river-batteries, we find mention at length. In the second expedition up the Teche, also, when the Confederates were driven beyond Alexandria and a large portion

of eastern Louisiana was thus won for the Union, both chaplains participated, leaving their column at Opelousas to return to their work for the plantation negroes. In the investiture, finally, of Port Hudson, with the two costly assaults and the wearying siege, Hepworth certainly, and our minister probably, was present. By way of quotation from *Whip, Hoe and Sword* we shall endeavor to fill in the appropriate details of their days in the field and on the march, allowing the reader to make his own deductions for the partiality and prejudice of that work.

For Unitarian preachers, accustomed to the placid course of New England life, these were unwonted experiences. Nor were their ways and works less strange and unusual during intervals between military campaigns. The supervision of the living conditions of some thirty thousand negroes—the number given by Susan Hayes Ward—with visits to “most of the plantations in the Department of the Gulf”—to quote from *Whip, Hoe and Sword* at page 47—was surely a bizarre and quixotic work.

Two years before, sitting quietly in their studies, they might have envisaged a coming time when slavery should be no more. Either or both might have foreseen that a military contest between North and South would find them with the Northern armies contributing their share to the great consummation. But that one or both should be caught up by a furious gust in such a storm and set down in the very midst of slave-life, with arbitrary power to judge between the master and his serf, neither in his wildest moments could have believed. It was one of those romantic interludes in a bitter struggle that serve to redeem somewhat the horrors of war.

The country in which they wrought was as unusual as their work. Southern Louisiana, with its huge swamps and lazy bayous, its dark forests and innumerable lakes, belonged to the past. It was an area not yet ripe for the habitation of man and held kinship geologically with epochs in the planet's history when saurian monsters haunted land and sea and air. Its very alligators were a hint of ages long forgotten. But it was precisely these things that challenged interest. The endless lakes and bayous were poetic, the great, gloomy, cypress-covered marshes quickened into life a thousand memories borrowed from history and fable. The pendants and festoons of Spanish moss, linking the boughs together where the swamps began, seemed like an effort of nature herself to protect her creatures against those dismal and impen-

erable solitudes. Nor did it detract from the weirdness of the region that, in sharp contrast with all this gloom, one might emerge of a sudden into floods of sunlight, with perfumes weighing down the senses from jessamines and magnolias, oleanders and camelias, and roses in bewildering profusion.

It was the charmed country of Evangeline—a region of mystery which the imagination of the New England poet had wrapped in a golden haze. In his student days and early ministry our chaplain had revelled in the tender sentiment and rare imagery of that poem, and now the very scenes were before his eyes and every object recalled some beautiful touch of the poet's fancy or some magical turn of phrase.

Whether either minister was present with the forces of General Banks during the first expedition up the Teche—the expedition in January which was abandoned as untimely—is left uncertain by *Whip, Hoe and Sword*—which work, indeed, is little more than a jumble of impressions and experiences hastily thrown together for publication, without pretense to chronological sequence; but that Hepworth, and inferentially our own minister, participated in the first visit of Bank's army to Port Hudson, when the feint was made of a land attack in order to hold the attention of the Confederates while Farragut passed the works, is plain from that interesting if fragmentary record.

"It was a bright, beautiful morning," remarks the author on page 246, "when the command was given, 'To horse, gentlemen!' and the noble Farragut had passed Baton Rouge in the *Hartford* cheered by the huzzas of ten thousand hearts," and he proceeds:

"He is really a hero; and there is a ring to his tones, which reminds one of a trumpet, when he says, 'Iron gunboats are all well enough; but give me a crew of iron hearts'. We very soon caught up with the advancing column; and I have never witnessed a grander sight than that presented by our forces. First a wagon-train, interminable in length, filling up the road for full two miles,—the white canvas tops contrasting with the rich green of the foliage, for the road was through a dense wood; the drivers hallooing to their mules; the negroes making the woods ring with their songs; all made up a picture at once novel and interesting. Next we came upon a solid column of some twenty-five thousand men. They were in the best of spirits; and as the whole body parted in the middle, and filed to either side of the road, and gave expression to their confidence in their leader by cheers which ran along the entire length of the line, every one was roused to an enthusiasm almost uncontrollable. I felt that he who led such a

body of men was the most enviable being in the world; and, when the scene was rendered wilder by the crashing music from a dozen brass bands, it seemed as if every man was ready to risk his life in the dread encounter.

"That night, our advance encamped within six miles of the enemy's works. I accepted the kind invitation of Col. Bullock, of the Thirtieth, to share his tent; and slept as though I had had a bed of down. A hard ride of six or eight hours naturally inclined me to hunger and sleep. I relished a pile of crackers and cheese more than Vitellius ever did his dainty dish of birds' tongues; and was soon afterwards on my back, giving good evidence of my condition.

"I slept soundly until about half-past ten; when a faint, booming sound awoke me. It occurred at regular intervals of about a minute; and, as soon as I gathered my scattered senses, I knew that the gunboats were hard at work. I lay quietly for some time, awed by the solemnity of the occasion; for it was then pitch-dark, and the dull, heavy sound was freighted with success or defeat; and, on opening my eyes again, I could distinctly trace the course of a shell through the air by the light of the fuses. I watched them until about two o'clock: when I ordered my horse, and set out for headquarters. It was so dark that I could not keep the road, and so trusted to the instincts of my noble beast. It was, withal, a lonely ride,—five miles through dense woods, the silence only broken by the gruff 'who goes there?' of the guard, and the ominous clicking of the hammer as he cocked his gun. All the legends of the Hartz Mountains ran through my mind; for the night seemed just fitted for a carnival of the Genii.

"I had just reached headquarters when the welcome news came, that a part of the fleet had succeeded in getting by the fort. Still there was something ominous in a certain glare of light, which ever and anon burst up from the tree-tops in the distance. One of our vessels must have caught fire. It could not be a common gunboat, for the flames had already lasted several hours. At last a courier came, saying that the *Mississippi* had caught fire. That noble vessel was part of the price we were to pay for the victory hoped for.

"I have never witnessed a scene so magnificent as that which closed the career of this war-ship. One moment, the flames would die away, and then the black darkness of the night seemed heavier than ever; in another minute, the flames would curl up again above the treetops, and tinge the cloud-edges with a lurid light. At length came the catastrophe. I thought the fire had gone out; and was just turning away, when fold after fold of cloudy flame, driven with terrific force, rose higher and higher, until the entire heavens were illuminated, as though the sun itself had burst; and immediately after came a sound that shook the earth,—a crash so awful, that it seemed as though one could feel it; which thundered along the entire horizon, frightening the birds in their coverts and the horses in their stalls; and then all was still and dark. The

Mississippi was no more. That noble vessel, which had made for herself a history, had at last fallen a victim to the chances of war. She was a splendid ship and every American will remember with regret the hour when she was lost."

Between the dramatic episode which this quotation records in the conquest of the Mississippi and the second expedition up the Teche in April there was an interval, bountifully filled as we may believe, with visits of inspection to the plantations, and it was a welcome relief doubtless, from the strain and tedium of constant inquiry and investigation, when the order came to accompany the troops along the Teche. That expedition, it will be recalled, was set a-foot on April 11th, and in the initial skirmish the Confederates were driven from Brashear City. Retreating northward to Opelousas the Confederates were pursued by Banks and on April 20th were driven from that place, retiring thence beyond Alexandria.

From Brashear City to Opelousas the two chaplains accompanied the army, sharing the interest of the marches and the excitement of the battles, but at Opelousas they bade fareweell to the troops and returned to their work upon the plantations. We give the account as we find it in *Whip, Hoe and Sword* at page 271, merely prefacing that often the vanity of the author prompts the use of the pronoun "I" where "we" should be read, and instead of "my work in the labor system" we should read "*our work*", for here, as elsewhere, throughout the book, the official association of our minister with Hepworth in the labors of the latter's office is ignored.

"Some time after this General Banks made his demonstration against the rebels opposite Brashear City. They were too few in number to offer any great opposition; and, being made up largely of unwilling conscripts, did little else than effect a masterly retreat. At one or two places on the road, they made a stand, but only for a short time. I was down the river when the fight began, and without any means of transportation. We—Chaplain Wheelock and I—hurried by rail to Brashear City. That evening, the booming of cannon in the distance made us very uneasy. There were no means of getting over the bay until the next afternoon; and, by that time, the army, which made splendid marches, was about fifty miles away. When once we got on the other side of the bay, however, we succeeded in getting two tenth-rate horses and saddles, and started. It was a long chase. The first afternoon, we rode thirty miles, and through a country swept clean of every thing by two armies; and the second day, after having ridden fifty-five miles,

we came up with the rear division of our forces. The best horses had all been taken by the Texans of the enemy; but, in their haste, they left every thing that was not easily portable. Our boys drove to the rear every pony and mule, every ox and cow and sheep. They did not leave, on an average, two chickens to a plantation. Wherever they encamped, the fences served as beds and firewood. A more forlorn and destitute set of people never were seen. Some cried, some cursed, some whined; and some, overcome with fear, hid themselves in the woods, leaving every thing to the tender mercies of the army. I could not help contrasting these times and our policy with the times and policy of two years ago in Virginia. This was war, with all its penalties and all its horrors; that was a system of fighting by which nobody was hurt, and nothing injured.

"There was very little excitement to be found in the rear of the column; so, the next morning, having changed our jaded horses for two better beasts with a kind-hearted rebel (who, however, did not seem to relish the trade so much as we), we started for the advance. We were most of the time with Capt. Williamson's company of cavalry skirmishers. This, certainly, is the most exciting arm of the service. Fast riding, dashing onsets, scouring the woods, all come in as a part of the skirmisher's duty. From that time till we reached Opelousas, we did not lose sight of the rear-guard of the retreating column. Every hour or two, they would make a stand, deliver a volley or two, and then ride with all their might for another covert.

"These Texans almost always dismount when they fire. Hiding their bodies behind their horses they rest their guns in the saddles, and thus render our return-fire useless until they are mounted. Once we had a fine view of them. Some four or five hundred lingered by the edge of a thick wood, hoping to get a few chance shots at us. One of our Parrott guns was brought to bear on them; and, in a very few minutes, they concluded that in the woods was better than out of them. At another time, we came suddenly upon a broad plain; and on the farther side of it were some two thousand of the foe, all mounted. We sat, and looked at them for a little while; but, as our cannon had been mired about a mile in the rear, we were unable to make an attack. Our cavalry were itching for a charge; but it was concluded best not to risk any thing; so, after the interchange of some hundred or two shots, they moved quietly away. Then the chase began anew. Once only was the advance cavalry taken by surprise. There is, close to the little village of Opelousas, a dense wood. From information which we had gained, we felt sure that there was no force in the thicket; and so rode leisurely on. When within about a hundred yards of a covert, whiz, whiz, came the bullets, singing around our heads. Only two of our boys tumbled from their saddles; and these were killed instantly. Of the two, one was a negro. He was acting as guide; but was well armed, like the rest of the cavalry. He was a

brave fellow; and, when he was struck, was in the van. I remained by his side for some little time, anxious to see the effect produced on the soldiers by the sight of death. I had been talking with Porte Crayon, just before, on this question. He surprised me by telling me of the perfect indifference on such matters that characterizes the soldier. He said, that, after the battle of Antietam, the over-wearied boys lay down on the field, by the side of the killed, to sleep, and sometimes even used their dead comrades for pillows. One man he told me of who brought his fiddle, which he had carried through the campaign, and, sitting down on the nearest dead body, began to play and sing. Indeed, there is no merrier time in a soldier's life than just before and after a battle. When the wounded are brought into the surgeon's room, they are met by the jokes of their comrades, also wounded."

It is also, perhaps, to the days on the Teche that the episode is to be referred which is recorded at page 125 and which affords an enlightening insight into the conditions of life in the invaded sections of the South during the war.

"After a hard day's riding over a road made infinitely dusty by an interminable wagon-train, I came upon a house which seemed to promise a good night's rest for man and beast. I was hungry as well as tired; and though I indulged in the faint hope of fresh meat and flour-bread, and a cup of real Mocha, instead of that wretched counterfeit made out of burnt sugar, in which the members of the Confederacy so largely indulge since the blockade. I nevertheless was morally certain that I should have to make myself contented with a slice of hard ham, and a square of the inevitable corn-cake which has been the staff of life to the rebels ever since the blockade. I (when I say 'I', I mean we; for my friend Wheelock shared these luminous experiences) knocked at the large front-door; and was very soon confronted by the mistress to whom the frequent question was put,—

"Madam, may we trespass on your hospitality for the night?"

"The 'yes, I suppose so', came out very reluctantly, and showed plainly enough the proclivities of the landlady.

"There was, however, no hesitancy on our part to accept such coldly given succor; for we knew that, only the week before, the same house had been the favorite rendezvous for rebel officers; and felt that what had been given to the red, white and red, was due to the red, white and blue. She was alone, of course; and, had I been three months younger, I should have pitied her forlorn and seemingly widowed condition, and checked the exodus of chickens, geese, and turkeys from her barnyard, which threatened soon to leave her destitute of these valuable domestic songsters. But the last three months had added largely to my experience, as well as something to my age; and, knowing well the occasion of her temporary widowhood, I could find in my heart no spark of

pity. Her husband, a Northern recrant, had, a few days before, gathered together his best hands (the young, strong-limbed men), his finest horses, and all his mules, and started for the prairie near Alexandria, whose soil the foot of the Yankee, he thought, would never desecrate.

"We found in the Teche a large number of widows of this description. The husbands, sure that they would find no security in the presence of the Union forces, left their wives and children to the mercy of the invading army, while they themselves sought a safe asylum, with whatever valuable portables they could take with them, within the Confederate lines.

"We promised to keep the house of our unwilling hostess free from stragglers during our stay,—for which favor she seemed very thankful as this gormandizing rear-guard of the army had spread terror in every kitchen of any promise whatever,—and then retired to our rooms for rest and sleep."

Arduous as were the duties of the two chaplains, however, and difficult and dangerous as may have been at times the role they enacted, it was by no means a case of all work and no play. We have distinct record now and then in the book from which we are quoting of periods of rest and diversion, and it may not be amiss to transfer to these pages the story of one such period spent on the Cheniere, where, be it recalled for the interest of the reader, the pirate ships of Lafitte were wont to anchor in the old days and gather store for a voyage of pray. This account we find at page 68:

"Being very much worn with constant travel for weeks, Mr. Lawrence, of the Magnolia Plantation, about forty-five miles below the city, asked Mr. Wheelock and myself to spend a few days with him; and we at once cheerfully accepted his kind invitation. We found him a very genial, hospitable gentleman, and enjoyed our stay exceedingly. We rode over his fine, large plantation, and happening to hit a half-acre of luscious, ripe blackberries (it was in May) found ourselves in the midst of the brambles in a surprisingly short time; leaving the place with great hesitation, and then only on condition that we should make daily visits to the spot, or that the darkies should bring the well-laden baskets to us. Day after day, we sat in the gallery, enjoying the luxury of physical repose, which seemed like a delightful prolonged siesta. A few quaint, old-fashioned books supplied us with reading; and good-tempered but sometimes warm discussions upon the topics of the day came in to fill up the little interstices of time, when we otherwise might have felt the symptoms of ennui.

"One day, our host told us that a few miles away were three of those mysterious mounds which the Indians left as a memento-

and a puzzle to the white man, and that we could go a part of the way through some of the finest scenery in the State. It was at once determined that we ought to make the trip, so the orders were given to have a skiff in the canal early in the morning, with Sam and Jim to handle the white-oak. A bright, beautiful morning it was. Soon after breakfast, the buggy drove to the door; and we rode to the canal, at the wood-end of the plantation, where we found our two sable friends ready. A half-mile through the canal, where we scared up an alligator ten feet long, who made the water foam when he went down, and we struck into the beautiful Cheniere, a bayou about seventy-five feet wide, and one of that tangled web of bayous which drain the lower part of the state. We moved smoothly and quietly along, the silence broken only by the regular dip of the oars; all about us, on either side, an almost boundless prairie, level as a floor, and covered with tall, rank grass five or six feet high. I could not control my destructive tendencies, and landed twice to set it on fire; but succeeded only in making a huge smoke which floated upwards in heavy black clouds, adding to the picturesqueness of the scene.

"We went on in this way for a little while, when the Cheniere flowed through some woods which gave us scenery wholly different. On the banks, and out of the rich marshy land, grew those wonderful live-oaks, uncouth but grand, which one must see to appreciate. So tough is the fibre, that branches sometimes grow horizontally to incredible lengths. I remember seeing one branch thus growing, which I measured, and found, to my surprise, that it was eighty feet long; extending almost at right angles from the trunk. These long branches stretch out over the water, forming the most delightful shade; while from them hangs, in thick, rich folds, six feet long or more, this aerial moss, which makes every forest of the South so picturesque. It gives the trees the air of antiquity; and the knotty, rough, irregular character of the live-oak strengthens the impression. I thought, at the time, that it was the most romantic, unreal, weird, and yet fascinating picture I had ever looked on. But the illusion that it was the home of the fairies was soon dispelled by the numerous alligators, which were lazily lying on logs, or ogre-like floating leisurely along, only their thin, long heads visible. They disappeared only when our boat showed a desire on our part to cultivate too close an intimacy.

"At last, we reached the place where we were to land, and take guides through the woods to the hieroglyphics of ancient history. Two little huts showed themselves just on the edge of the woods; and farther on, in a cleared space, another, in which lived, not the lowest of the 'poor white trash', but people deplorably dirty and incredibly ignorant. The master of the first hut, who was to be our guide, had reclaimed from the swamp and forest a few acres of land, and had, at his leisure and at sundry times, planted a few orange-trees thereon, from which he hoped, in the course of a few years, to enjoy a snug little income. How he managed to support

himself in the interim, I could not discover. There was no evidence of farming utensils having been used; for thick clusters of weeds, of most luxuriant growth, tangled our feet at every step. A little patch of half an acre was planted with sweet potatoes. That was the entire farm. The Creole fished and hunted, and in that way supplied his table. When he was successful, his dinner consisted of sweet potatoes, plus a catfish or a piece of venison; and, when he came home empty-handed, it consisted simply of the aforementioned esculent. His neighbors enjoyed the luxury of a log-hut, the wide cracks in which were not even plastered with mud. Three men and a woman lived it in. I saw one rude mattress, and was convinced that these simple people lived in a perfectly natural way; and were, perhaps, being far from the contaminations of the city, delighting in a little golden age of their own.

"However, be this as it may, we started for the mounds. It was a rude path we traveled, through acres of straight, slender cane-stalks, which would have excited me beyond measure in my Izaak Walton days; over fallen timber, and narrow bridges made of uncertain limbs; spanning black, slimy-looking, stagnant water; through clouds of every kind of pestiferous insect known to the naturalist. Such heat never was felt before. We reached the mounds in a very melting mood; and, clambering forty feet to the top of one, were compelled to build a smudge, and put our heads in the hot, wavy smoke, in order to be comfortable. What expedients will not a man resort to in pursuit of comfort!

"We were, however, well repaid for our journey; for these great heaps of earth, burial-places, landmarks of history, or whatever they may be,—dumb mementos of the past,—were very interesting. They were like those cairns found in the West, in Labrador, and all along the Gulf-coast. Some have been opened; but nothing satisfactory has been discovered. A few huge boxes, some pieces of pottery, and a few rude agricultural or domestic utensils, are all that have ever been dug up. Whether they were made by the Indians, whom we have driven away; or whether they are as old as the Pyramids, relics of a race living here when the earth was young, in some dim, ante-historic period,—has not yet been decided."

One quotation remains to be made from the work of Hepworth, because it deals with an epic hour in the great battle for the control of the Mississippi, in the labors of which our minister must have borne a share. The siege and surrender of Port Hudson the imagination loves to dwell upon for its dramatic interest and it is difficult to pass over any story of its incidents drifting down from contemporary sources. In this instance, however, the recital carries a special appeal. A battle or siege is a kaleidoscopic thing and what a beholder sees depends upon his point of view. It means

much to us, therefore, that the account we have comes from the hand of one with whom our minister must have had many things in common. We may let the one speak for both:

“When our boys invested Port Hudson, they had, most of them, been in the Teche for a month; and, having started in light marching order, were without change of clothing. Yet they were uniformly cheerful, enduring the fatigues and deprivations of the campaign like veterans. They had no tents, and, for a long while, no meat; nothing but coffee and hard-tack.

“Our position was on the further edge of a heavily wooded lot; and our line, shutting the rebel works in, was about seven miles long. On the river-side, the enemy’s position was so fortified by nature, that no number of gunboats could hope to capture it. On the land-side, it was protected by a high parapet, in front of which was a ditch about twenty feet wide and six feet deep. Between our position and theirs was what looked to be a plain, three-quarters of a mile wide; but, when examined by the proper officers, it was found to be full of deep ravines, at the bottom of which was broken timber, and very tall, dense chaparral. Under proper circumstances, (i. e., with a good supply of provisions and ammunition and twenty-five thousand men) it could resist any force we could bring against it.

“We made some assaults; but they were soon found to be of little use. We could not get near enough to the enemy to make a dash over the parapet. We had to grope our way through deep ravines, or slowly find it under and over fallen timber. A regiment could not march in line, on account of the thick chaparral, brier-bushes, and gullies. We then sat down quietly, to starve the rebels out, and to harass them by our artillery practice. We fenced them in with our guns some six weeks before they cried, ‘Enough!’

“It was a long, tedious, and dreary work to capture the place. Disease at length got into the ranks, and made sad havoc with the men. Every day, loads of sick went to the hospital. Thither I followed, in my turn, to study the character and test the skill of the army-surgeon.

“It was a grand day,—the glorious old Fourth of July,—when a strange steamer came bowling down the river, bringing the unexpected but glorious news of the fall of Vicksburg. When it was announced, the whole line sent up its joy in many a ringing hurrah and many a silent prayer. The news reached Gen. Gardner’s ears, and he at once sent to Banks to know if it was true. Our general sent back a copy of the official despatch from Grant, and that day Port Hudson changed hands. Gardner said, ‘If Vicksburg has fallen, it is of no use for me to hold out longer’. I have no doubt that the rebel officers were dismayed; but I have very good authority for believing that the rank and file were glad enough to end their war experiences then and there. They were poorly

clothed, having on no uniform,—nothing but the rude, home-made clothes of the South,—and had been for some time on short rations. They had been deserting in large numbers for many days, and were doubtless glad to be freed from the conscription-act, and from imperilling their lives for the sake of slave-holders.

“On the 5th day of July, the Mississippi was opened from the Passes to Cairo, the Confederacy was cut in two, and the rebel cause received a blow from which it will never recover.

“The dawn has come after patient waiting. When will the ‘perfect day’ come?”