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Buehler, Fannie J.
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(WRITTEN BY REQUEST OF HER CHILDREN.)

1896.

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Thirty-three years have passed since the events, which I shall now relate, took place. Most of the actors in our late Civil War have passed into the "Shadowy Land." A few more years and not one of all the "great hosts" who then went up to battle; not one of "all the many" who participated in the events which I am about to relate, will be living to tell the story.

We all have the experiences of our life time. I had mine before, during and after the great battle which was fought on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd of July, 1863, and of these I am now going to write.

I do not do this for self gratification, but to please my children, my grand-children, possibly my great-grand-children, and many friends whom I dearly love. We all know, as the years go by, the story of this great battle, so often told in our days, will grow in interest, to those who may come after us, and that my experience may not die with me, I will endeavor to tell what I know, what I saw, and of the little help I was enabled to give to the wounded and dying in that momentous struggle.
ONE WOMAN'S EXPERIENCE.

At the time of the Battle of Gettysburg, Mr. Buehler and I were living on Baltimore street almost opposite the Court house, which was then a new building, of which we were all very proud, for we had anxiously awaited its coming. I mention this fact because it figured conspicuously before, during, and after the battle. My husband by profession was a lawyer: he also edited a Republican paper, was a prominent politician, was well known throughout the town, county and state as a staunch Republican, "a Leader among the Leaders." Business was at a stand still; everything was demoralized, times were depressed, and as we had a family of six children to provide for, my husband very gladly accepted the offer of Postmaster of our little town, and filled that office at the time of the memorable battle, although he was not present during the conflict. Postmasters, especially prominent "black Republicans," were marked men by the Confederates, and wherever they could be seized, were hurried to Libby and other prisons where they soon died, or suffered untold miseries worse than death. That my dear husband might not fall into the hands of the Rebels, early in June I persuaded him, much against his will, to prepare for flight should the enemy make an invasion into Pennsylvania, as they so often threatened to do. I promised to do the best I could, and if I could but be assured of his safety, I knew the Lord would take care of us. The Rebels came—Gens. Early and Gordon in command. My husband fled with the mails, so he was not in Gettysburg during the fight in that memorable June and July, 1863. I am not writing a history of War, nor of the Battle; I am only telling what I saw, what I did, what I know about it, for those who in future years may read or listen to the story, sitting around the fireside, as I, when a child, loved to sit and listen to the story of the Revolutionary War, as it fell from my grandfather's lips, who served in that war.
It is a sad story. Had I been asked on that first day of June whether I would be equal to all the experiences of that eventful month I should have answered in the negative. Having been able through Divine help, to pass through all that I shall relate in this simple story, I can now say, I would not part with my experience for anything the world can offer. I am proud that I was able to do and to suffer, even so little, during this fearful struggle, "that this Nation," in the words of our beloved Lincoln, "might have a new birth, that the Government of the people, for the people, by the people, shall not perish from the earth."

It was in the early month of June, 1863. How well do I remember the year and the month. I was then in my thirty-seventh year. I am now in my seventy-first; but in looking back it seems but as yesterday, so well do I recall the coming and the going of "the Rebels" whom we had so long expected. All through May and June, there were daily, almost hourly reports of raids into Penn'a, and once or twice some Cavalry came as far as Cashtown and then retreated. At first we were very much frightened by the thought of Rebel soldiers invading our town, taking possession of our new Court house and other buildings, and doing all kinds of bad things, such as we read of in the papers. As day by day passed, and they did not come, we lost faith in their coming, and it grew to be an old story. We tried to make ourselves believe they would never come, and we made merry over the reports which continued to be circulated until they really came. When we saw them, we believed.

My only sister who lived in Elizabeth, N. J., had two daughters about the same age as my two eldest girls. These children often exchanged visits; my daughters going to the city one summer, and sister's coming to the country the next. This was the summer for sister's children to come to the country, and all arrangement had been made early in the season for their coming, but as the summer drew near so many reports of Rebel invasions into the Northern states were afloat, my sister wrote "she thought the children had better postpone their visit," nevertheless, two of them came early in June.

My dear mother had been with us during the year on a visit. For a woman, she was a great politician, a red-hot Republican, and loyal to "her country and its flag to her heart's core"—in
deed had she been a man, she would have been among the very first in the attempt to put down the Rebellion. But being a woman, she could only make known her sentiments of loyalty to the Stars and Stripes, by words which were not always wisely chosen. In writing thus of my dear mother, I mean no disrespect. She was a good Christian woman, one who represented a large class, both in the North and in the South—women of intense patriotism—in whom love of country "was bred in the bone"—women who fairly boiled over when they saw the flag trampled in the dust or torn in shreds—women who could not help saying bitter things of a father, brother, or a son, if either had fired a shot at the dear old flag wherever it floated. A woman of such intense feeling against those whom she felt were our country's enemies, ought not be brought in contact with them, unless by necessity. So Sister insisted upon our Mother's going to Elizabeth, to remain with her, taking with her three children of mine and her two, who had been with us. For, as the days went by, frightful rumors were afloat, many citizens were leaving the town, taking with them all their treasures. The banks sent away their money, stores were closed, merchandise was shipped away, individuals chartered cars in which were packed household goods and valuables of all kinds, and the cars sent to some distant part of the North for safety.

Mr. Buchler was one among the many who desired to save as much of our household accumulations as possible, so we had a car somewhere, with our possessions, from June until November. One day, to our joyful surprise, the car turned up, with our table linen, our bedding, sheets, blankets pillow cases, towels, and many other articles, with our best clothes, all of which we could not have afforded to replace for a long time afterward. A year after the battle, muslin sold for seventy-five cents a yard, and a friend of mine paid a fabulous price for a flannel skirt. All dry goods were high, and luxuries were not to be thought of at that time, and the people in the South were reduced to narrower straits than were we of the North.

I sometimes meet with friends in the South and compare notes. Some whom I meet have been reconstructed and some have not, and it is amusing (in our day) to compare our different experiences, and to hear our friends' comments on the war. We must admit that while we in the North had hard times
and sad experiences, their lot was infinitely harder. Their's was a hopeless cause, although they had not yet realized it, for the North was in the right and had plenty of men and money to back it up. I have great admiration and sympathy for our Sisters of the South, I mean those who have accepted the inevitable, who have submitted to the general government, who are trying to do the best they can, with the little means left them, and who have little or no bitterness in their hearts. I know there are just such noble women today in the South, for I have met them. It is also true there are still many "unreconstructed" men and women in the Southern States—more women than men—and the women are more bitter than the men. But when we hear of what these people, who were Southern born, really suffered, endured, and were deprived of; when we realize what the giving up of home, possessions, of everything near and dear to them, meant to them, I wonder they can feel and talk as well as they do. But I will resume my story.

It was not easy for my mother to make up her mind to leave Gettysburg and go to Elizabeth with the children, and to leave me behind with the eldest and the youngest, but she finally went.

Late in the evening of June 20th, (I think it was on Saturday night,) the sky in the direction of Emmitsburg, ten miles away, was suddenly illuminated, as by a tremendous conflagration. People rushed out of their houses and the whole town was panic stricken. Very soon the cry was raised "the Rebels," "the Rebels have crossed the line and are burning Emmitsburg and are marching towards Gettysburg." The rumor was false, as we found out afterward. There was a large fire in the direction of Emmitsburg, with which the Rebels had nothing to do, for they had not as yet, in any large body, crossed Mason and Dixon's line. However we all believed the story, we were in a condition to believe anything, either good or bad, and the whole town was in the streets all night long discussing the probabilities and possibilities. Soon after midnight I learned that many of our citizens were preparing to leave their homes on the early morning train, and after some difficulty I persuaded my mother to go and take three of my children and two of sisters' who were with me, to Elizabeth, N. J., and leave me with my eldest and youngest child to take care of our home. Mr. Buehler and his assistant postmaster had already secreted themselves outside of
the town, but returned during the next day. It was further reported, the morning train would be the last one to leave Gettysburg, as all the rolling stock was to be removed to Hanover and York. This made me anxious that my mother should go at once, without further delay, and she went with the children, reached Elizabeth in safety, and remained there with them until the following November, when she brought them back to us, after several hard frosts had made it safe for them to come home.

After this scare, we had rest for a few days, although we had been looking for a Rebel invasion for a long time, and had as we thought, prepared ourselves for it; when the Rebels really came, they took us unawares. We were so used to the cry, "the Rebels are coming," when they did not come, were not even in sight, that we paid little or no attention to the daily, even hourly reports, that came to our ears and we even laughed and joked among ourselves, little dreaming they were really so near.

On the 26th of June they came in considerable force. The morning passed as usual, with some little commotion on the streets, to which I paid no attention. After a very simple lunch, (for we ate very little during this excitement) I went to my sewing machine to finish off a piece of work I had on hand. In a very short time, possibly a half hour, my daughter rushed up stairs and said, "oh! mamma, the Rebels are here sure enough!" I looked up, saw she was very much excited, laughed and replied, I guess not. "Yes indeed they are, hurry down." But I did not hurry. I finished my work, shut up the machine, and went leisurely down stairs to see what was up. Mr. Buehler was in the post office deliberately gathering up the letters from the boxes, and arranging things generally, for he too, was incredulous, and we both took it as another false alarm, and laughed over it. In less time than it takes to write it, our brother put his head in the window and said the Rebels are just marching into town, hurry up, or you will be caught." I then said to Mr. Buehler, "I will remain here, possibly you had better go and see how things look!" So he put on his hat and I followed him to the door. He went as far as the Diamond, or Centre Square, when a friend (Dr. Stoever) called to him, "David, flee for your life." The advance Division of Early Corps (Infantry) was then marching up Chambersburg street. I looked again and saw Mr. Buehler running towards home, and at once realized
the situation—*the Rebels had come*. As I have said, or written, before, we had for weeks been preparing for this raid, and it did not find Mr. Buehler unprepared for it. In the early Spring he procured a satchel in which he could put all his valuables, personal and official papers, with any government property he might have on hand, and a few necessary articles he might need, and it was ready for any emergency—never unpacked—but abundant room for additional stamps or other supplies. When I saw him running, I immediately ran for the satchel and an umbrella, for it began to rain, and met him at the door. The satchel he took but the umbrella he left, for it would be an incumbrance to him. I urged him to hurry up, not for a moment to think of me, as I was not afraid, but would do the best I could, if I knew he was safe, I would be all right, for God would take care of us both, and He did. I last saw him as he turned the corner of Middle street on a dead run. It was raining slightly. The Rebel Cavalry darted across the Square, down York street, the very direction Mr. Buehler had taken; the infantry were rounding the Square and marching on foot up Baltimore street, on the same side our house was on, and would pass the post office, so I hurried in, closed the shutters, took down the sign, locked the door and buried the keys, and then went to the front door with the children just in time to see *the Rebs* file past and pass on up over Baltimore hill. I looked after them and thought, "long looked for, you are certainly here at last," and they surely were. I never saw a more unsightly set of men, and as I looked at them in their dirty, torn garments, hatless, shoeless, and foot-sore, I pitied them from the depth of my heart. They excited my sympathy, and not fear, as one would suppose. I wondered what this coming meant; what they were going to do; and how long they were going to stay, so I sat myself down on the door step with my children and "Bruno," our faithful New Foundland dog—to watch operations. After a while, the men scattered in various directions, and in course of time many came and quartered in front of the Court house, almost opposite to our house. While this was going on near my home, Gen. Gordon and Early were negotiating terms with the Burgess and Town Council. The officers made requisitions upon our town which our City Fathers could not grant, as our stock of provisions was very low, and all our
money had been sent to Philadelphia, so we had nothing to give. These officers (Gordon and Early) took in the situation, they could get nothing here, and as they proposed to advance on York, and from thence march to Washington or Philadelphia, they could afford to promise us protection without our giving them any money, which we did not really have to give. After matters had been satisfactorily arranged between our Burgess and the Rebel officers, the men settled down and the citizens soon learned that no demands were to be made upon them by the Rebel soldiery, and that all property would be protected, and it was. Some horses were stolen, some cellars were broken open and robbed, but so far as could be done, the officers controlled their men, and all those in and around the streets behaved well. The "Louisiana Tigers" were left and kept outside of the town. At this time I was alone with my children and my dog. My two servants had left for parts unknown, and I had no help in the kitchen. The two girls who had been with me (and no one ever had better servants) were colored and came from the South. One of them left early in June, from fear of being captured; the other I thought I had captured, for she promised to stand by me, and I promised to protect her, yet when she saw the Rebels she fled, I know not whither, as I never saw her afterwards. I heard of her from some one who had seen her on the way to Philadelphia. So when I saw "the Rebs" arranging their camp-kettles, preparatory to getting something to eat, I closed the front door and went in the kitchen to prepare something for my little ones. I suppose the meal was a frugal one. I can't recollect, but in those days our meals were irregular, and very little satisfied us. However, when all was finished, I closed up the house in the rear and took my seat again with the children on the front steps. It was a pleasant evening in June; the rain had passed away; the sun set clear, and by and by the moon came out, overshadowed every now and then by clouds, and the temperature was pleasant. The neighbors gathered around, we chatted and watched and wondered what next. We were all very anxious concerning the Court house, of which as I said in the beginning of my story, we were very proud. As we saw the blue flames curling up from under the camp kettles, we wondered if it would blacken the walls; whether the inside of the building would be polluted, and last of all, would the enemy fire our
town and burn the Court house. I think now, after so many years, I must have thought more of the Court house than I did of my own home, but I never once thought of that being destroyed, although the shot and shell hissed and exploded over and around us for two days during the battle.

Well, just before dark, two, or possibly three, of the strangers who had so suddenly come upon us, seeing me setting on the steps of our house, came across the street and asked permission to sit down, which I granted. They were not as ragged and dirty as some of the men I had seen earlier in the afternoon and were very civil and well behaved. We had a long, pleasant talk; no bitterness expressed by them or by me. They spoke of their surprise at the condition of things as they saw them at the North, and thought it was high time they had left their impoverished country to find a land of plenty, a town full of men and full of good things to eat. They could not understand why they saw so many idle men as they called them. "Why," they said, "our men and boys are all in the army, why aren't these?" Oh! I replied, we have all the men in the army who are needed, and thousands stand ready to fill up the ranks as they are thinned out. We have all the men and all the money we need, and while I feel very sorry for you, the sooner the South realizes this fact, the better it will be for you. This I said pleasantly, and the "Rebs" made no reply. After a while one of the men remarked, "Well, we haven't as many men left in the South as you have and not as much money, for look at these ragged clothes, but we will get better ones after we have been North awhile." Oh! I replied, how long are you going to stay? "Why, all summer, of course." This reply startled me. At that time we knew nothing of their plans and purposes, as we learned of them afterward, we only knew they were here, and if they were to remain all summer, what should we do? and my husband away, I knew not where. But I calmly said, "I guess not so long," and then turned the subject. Very soon one of these men said to me, "what time do you close up?" I replied, any time before ten o'clock. So after awhile they bid me "good night" and left. I closed up the house, put my children to bed, took "Bruno" up stairs and bade him lie down underneath my window, threw myself, across the foot of the bed, for I realized I was alone in this great house, without any earthly protector but a Newfound-
land dog, and our town full of Rebel soldiers. But "He who never slumbers or sleeps" watched over us, so I laid me down and slept soundly until the dawn of day. When I opened my eyes it seemed all like a dream and I went to the front window, turned the blinds, looked out and saw the men outside the Court House all astir, preparing for breakfast. The town was not burned down, the Court House remained uninjured so far as I could see, the men were quiet and orderly, and as to their next move I could only watch and await developments. So when the children awoke I prepared some breakfast for them, afterwards I put things in order and returned to the front to investigate so far as I could. I soon saw, or thought I saw, preparations for a move, and the longer I watched operations the more I was convinced that the men were packing up to go somewhere, where, of course I did not know. Soon the march began and by nine o'clock every man of them had left our town and were on their way to York, as we afterwards learned. This was on Saturday morning, June 27th.

Leaving the Rebels on their way to York I will now give my husband's experience after he left me on the 26th of June, as the enemy was entering our town.

After he had turned the corner at Middle street, knowing he must escape with all possible haste, he hailed the driver of an empty wagon, who was also trying to get away in order to save his horse. He jumped in the wagon and the man drove as fast as possible toward York street and reached the corner of York and Stratton streets at St. James church a little in advance of the Rebel cavalry, who were dashing down the street from the Diamond. There were other persons hotly pursued, some of whom were overtaken and marched back to town, but I think they were subsequently released and permitted to return to their homes. My husband, seeing his danger, jumped from the wagon and made for the woods, after a few shots had been fired after him, and in time, reached the farm house of a friend, (Eden Norris) who lived on the Bonaughtown or Hanover road. The horses had all been sent off to York except one old nag, which had been left out to look after itself. My husband being no longer able to walk and realizing the danger of remaining where he was, straddled this raw-boned animal and started for Hanover. On the way he overtook others, who were also flying from "the Rebs,"
by whom he sent word to have some kind of a vehicle sent out for him from Hanover, as he was well nigh exhausted. Just outside of that town he met a man with a buggy who had come for him and who took him to the Central Hotel. On his way to Hanover it rained hard for awhile. He had never ridden on horseback before and having no saddle he was wet, tired and sore when he reached the hotel. He at once sent for the President of the Railroad, (Capt. Eichelberger) whom he well knew, told him the situation in Gettysburg and wished to know what he was going to do about sending all the rolling stock to York that night. If he did, he too would go at once to York, if not, he would remain in Hanover over night and get some dry clothes. The Captain replied, "I think now, I shall wait until morning, but I will inform you in time should I change my mind." The Rebels were engaged in burning all the rolling stock they could find in Gettysburg previous to a raid on Hanover. After leaving my husband at the hotel, the Captain learned of the burning at Gettysburg and concluded to run no risks but send cars, locomotives and all rolling stock to York at once. He sent a messenger to the hotel, as he had promised, and my husband was just in the act of drawing off his boots, which were well soaked with water, he had one off, and not having time to put it on, ran with it in his hand to the last train which left Hanover. Everything and everybody who could go, went to York in advance of the Rebels. Once there, they awaited to see what would come next, but as reports were very gloomy and forbidding, and there was such a determination on the part of many to burn the bridge at Columbia over the Susquehanna, that the Rebels might not pass over into Philadelphia, my husband thought it prudent for him to proceed to Lancaster, from thence to Philadelphia. He passed over to Columbia and there witnessed the burning of the bridge which was one mile in length. "The Rubicon was crossed, the bridge was burned behind him," so he went on towards Philadelphia, stopping at Lancaster, where he found people in the wildest state of excitement and who begged him to give them the latest news, as he just come from the front. This was on Sunday, the 28th of June. The next day, Monday, he went to Philadelphia, deposited his mail matter and valuable papers which he carried with him to a place of safety, and concluded it was best for him to go to Elizabeth, N. J., where my sister lived, who had care of
our mother and children. He reached there on Monday night; found all well, but very anxious concerning those who were left behind in Gettysburg. And it was here my husband heard the first new of the Battle.

Here I will remark, no one at that time thought a battle at all imminent. The Rebels might move on to Washington or Philadelphia; they might invade the whole North and would meet with no resistance. We thought the bulk of Union soldiers was far away and their way was clear, and no one dreamed of a battle being fought in our town, or any place near us. Had Mr. Buehler suspected for a moment, what really came to pass, he would have remained at home and taken his chances with others. But we did not know.

We can scarcely imagine his surprise and anxiety when the New York papers on the 29th of June announced the massing of troops around Gettysburg, and a battle would be fought there. Every one said, "it could not be;" "never at Gettysburg;" "how could it be?" "it cannot possibly be so," were the comments made on all sides. But when the news came "Fighting at Gettysburg; Gen. Reynold's killed; The 11th Corps repulsed on Seminary Ridge; Union troops driven through the town; Have taken possession of Cemetery Hill;" there could no longer be any doubt that a battle was being fought at Gettysburg, and one can imagine the anxiety of those beyond the lines concerning friends within. Those days, in which the battle raged so fiercely were days of suspense and anguish which can never be forgotten while memory lasts, and must be felt; cannot be described.

On the 4th of July my husband announced his determination to return to Gettysburg, even at the risk of his life, and he started for Philadelphia, not knowing how far he could go, or what might befall him by the way, for the result of the great battle was not yet known. It was not until about 9 o'clock on the morning of the 4th that two of our citizens (D. McConaughy and Geo. Arnold) drove to Gen. Meade's headquarters and told him the Rebels were defeated and were then marching to the Potomac, so how could people in Harrisburg, Philadelphia and New York know of the glorious victory. I don't propose to discuss the why or the wherefore of this battle, history has done this. All honor and glory be to these gallant men who fought so nobly on this bloody battle-
field; they did the best they could, and were victorious; "the backbone of the rebellion was broken," and eventually our country was saved.

But to return to my story: My husband had no difficulty in getting to Philadelphia, but which way to turn then was the question. Should he try Baltimore or Harrisburg? It was said the whole road was filled with Rebels, and to try to reach any point would be dangerous and uncertain, and the best thing to do was to remain where he was and await developments.

Reports were very discouraging and as my husband grew hourly more anxious to reach home, he determined to try Baltimore. After much delay and inconvenience he reached that city, and, although only fifty-two miles away, could in no way reach home. So he made up his mind he would try to get to Harrisburg as the Northern Central was running some trains. He knew Gov. Curtin personally and thought possibly he might help him through the line by a pass. When he first saw the Governor he was amazed at Mr. B.'s request. "Why, Mr. Buchler, Sir, "Don't you know the whole country is full of Rebels, from the Susquehannah to the Potomac. I have my scouts out and they bring in terrible reports from all directions." "But, Governor, my wife and children are in Gettysburg, and I must get to them." "Well, my dear sir, I can't give you a pass until I know you can go through the lines safely; better wait a day or so".

Now, the truth of the matter was, there was not on that day, the seventh of July, 1863, a single Rebel soldier, between Harrisburg and Gettysburg in a fighting mood, only the Governor did not know it, neither did my husband. There were many dead men, many wounded, many prisoners, and if there were any deserters they wished to be left alone. With this condition of affairs my husband might have gotten home two days before he did, but he could not.

After several conferences with Gov. Curtin without obtaining a pass, and receiving no encouragement, Mr. B. determined to make his way back to York, as he knew a man there, an old stage driver between York and Gettysburg (Leonard Stough) and he was almost sure he would take him home. It was only 28 miles and he would pay him well. He found his friend after a long search, who consented to drive him home the next morn-
ing, but when he appeared ready for the start the stage driver backed out. During the previous evening such wild reports had been in circulation that no one but the most reckless and daring would risk his life and his horses, so he would not go. While discussing the state of affairs with the driver, two or three other gentlemen who were just as anxious to reach Gettysburg as my husband, joined him, and together they made this offer: they would indemnify the stage and horses and pay the driver any price he asked, if he would only try to get them through. The offer was accepted, they started, found the road clear, did not even see a live rebel, by the way, while evidences of a fierce struggle were everywhere apparent. So far as I can remember it was about ten o'clock in the morning, July 7th, when my husband came back to me, as one from the dead, for so he had been reported.

While there had been skirmishing all around us for several days, the great battle did not open until the morning of the 1st of July, 1863. It would be too long a story to tell you of what occurred in our own home on the morning of that eventful day. My friends urged me to fly with my children to some place of safety in the county, which, by the way, was then nowhere to be found. Officers dashed through the streets ordering everyone to their cellars, as the town would be shelled; people running hither and thither, not knowing what to do or where to go for safety. The battle had commenced. The wounded were being brought in. Here was women's work, and they did it nobly. Public buildings and private houses were quickly turned into hospitals, while the slaughter went on. In less time than I can write it some of the slightly wounded found their way into our house. They had been sent to the Court House, but in some way or other the key had been lost or mislaid and during the delay in opening it the poor men hobbled in wherever they saw an open door or alleyway. We had both, so we soon had a number to be cared for. During the first excitement my three sisters-in-law from Chambersburg street, took refuge in our house and other friends came to us, so we lost sight of our own danger and commenced to make bandages and scrape lint, that we might dress the wounds of these poor men who were so unexpectedly thrown upon us. While in the act of making them more comfortable the citizens were again ordered to their cellars, and I,
then thinking I was or would be responsible for the lives of all within our house, made some hurried preparations and had the wounded men removed to the cellar where the others soon followed. We have three cellars, which were high and dry, and we might all have remained there during the three days' fight and have been comfortable, but I never before lived under ground and did not propose doing so then, so I said, you may all remain here while I go up stairs and see how things look. Some of the excitement had passed away, many people were in their cellars, but there were others on the street and the wounded were still being brought in; some others took refuge through the alley into our yard and had fallen on the pavement and lay there as dead men, still grasping their guns. I did not return to the cellar but immediately gave my attention to these last comers, supposing at least most of them were dead.

We had frequent showers in those days from the much firing of gun powder, and the bricks in our yard were wet and slippy. This dampness soon brought signs of life in some of these men, who, it turned out, fell from shere exhaustion. They belonged to the 11th Corps and had fought in the woods back of the Mamasburg road; had been repulsed and driven into town through Middle street, and they took refuge wherever they could find a place of retreat. After awhile the men who were not wounded revived. others crawled upon the porch, the guns were all stacked and they had found a haven of rest, for how long none of us knew. Up to this time none of our men were dangerously wounded, they having only received flesh wounds, and while painful, "the boys" did not consider them very serious. This was a relief to me, for if their limbs had been mangled and torn, as many were, whom I afterwards saw, I am afraid I should not have been equal to the occasion. But God mercifully veiled the future from my eyes and gave me needed strength from day to day.

To the men in the cellar I now turned my attention, and when I told them of the condition of things above stairs they were carried up and laid on the dining-room floor. This room opened on our back porch and there they remained until after the battle and were taken or ordered away, for only the dead, the dying and those who were dangerously wounded, were left behind, and the number was very great,
These men were not only wounded and exhausted, but were hungry and faint. They asked for something to eat and as soon as I possibly could, I prepared our first meal.

Among the men was a German and an Irishman, both of whom made themselves very useful to me; indeed I could not have done all I did without their help, and I believe it was by God’s appointment they came to my relief, for I had no other help. Mr. Frey, the German, came from Berks county. A man of forty years, of genial disposition, very fatherly in his ways and fond of children.

My youngest child was about two years old, and required more attention than I, under the existing circumstances, could give him. Mr. Frey took in the situation and begged that I would allow him the privilege of looking after my boy, assuring me that nothing evil should happen to him, and he did, even as he promised. This enabled me to give more attention to the wants of “the Boys.”

John, (I forget his last name) as we called him, was an Irishman belonging also to the 11th Corps—and he proved himself to be “the right man in the right place.” He could, and did make the kitchen fire, brought the coal and wood, kept plenty of water boiling on the stove for any emergency, pared the vegetables, washed the dishes, said funny things, and kept us all in good humor. So with the help of these two excellent men, (each in his way,) I was enabled to do more than I otherwise could have done, and with much more comfort and ease. A day or so after the battle they were ordered away and I forever lost sight of both these soldiers who were so helpful to me in a time of need. There was no lack of provisions in our home, thanks to the prudent forethought of my very thoughtful husband. We had stowed away two full barrels of flour, our usual summer supply of hams and lard, we had butter, eggs, coffee, sugar, tea, apple butter, and in our little garden we had onions, some peas, beans, new potatoes, and some old ones; so there was no trouble about having enough to eat, the only thing to do was to prepare what we had on hand. We had no bread, but I substituted biscuit, which was more acceptable to “the boys,” for it was a change from “hard tack,” and as for light bread, they had eaten none for months.
We took our extension table from the dining room, drew it at full length on the porch, and from it, these half famished soldiers enjoyed the first square meal they had eaten for many a long day, and month, and from that hour our table remained standing for several weeks. I think through the whole month of July, on the porch, always ready for any one, citizen or soldier, friend or foe, men of high and men of low estate, Governors, Senators, Congressmen, officers of the Christian and Sanitary Commissions. All were made welcome, and all ate from this table of such as we could give them at any hour of the day and night. The kitchen fire never went out, the tea kettle was never without plenty of boiling water, and a large wash boiler never emptied of oat meal or corn meal gruel, the same of coffee or soup, all subject to the call of those who were attending the very sick and the dangerously wounded men, who were lying in a dying condition in the Court house across the street, as well as for those who had come to look after their dying and their dead. I often look back upon those days and wonder how we all were able to do what we did during those three terrible days of the battle, and the weeks succeeding them. Surely we should have failed utterly, had the Lord not sustained us by His strength, and held us up by His power. To Him be all the praise.

We had just gotten through with our first meal, on the first day's fight, on the 1st of July, when our door bell was rung most violently and our alley gate shaken as if to force it off its hinges. I hesitated a moment, as to whether I should answer the bell or not. One of our wounded men, whose name it is not necessary to mention, said to me, "If I were you I would answer the door bell, if you do not, you may fare worse." Having no fear, I at once crossed the hall and opened the door. There stood three or four men, whom I at once recognized as Confederate soldiers, led by "Harry Gilmore," known in war times as "the Brigand Chief," from his style of dress. I had read of him and of his uniform, his cocked hat and feather, but I never expected to meet him face to face. He hailed from Baltimore, Md.

Before I had time to speak, he accosted me, "Madam, you have Union soldiers concealed in your house, and I have come to search for them."

You will recollect this was on the afternoon of the first days'
fight, when the Union men had been repulsed on Seminary Ridge, had been driven through town by the Rebels, and were now in possession of Cemetery Hill, consequently the Rebels held our town, and we were within the enemies lines, and it was about four o'clock in the afternoon.

I appeared very bold on this occasion, and said, "you are mistaken, Sir; there are Union soldiers in my house, but none of them are concealed. They are all lying around on this first floor of our house, step in and see them." They came in, and strange to relate, some of these men had met before on picket duty, and recognized each other, and there was quite a fraternal greeting between "the Blue and the Gray," which inspired me with confidence for the time being. These men talked and laughed over the situation for half an hour, at least, and altho they were reassured there were no other men in the house, insisted upon searching it. I accordingly led the way to the garret, the Rebels following me, and in turn opened each and every room—they examined the closets, looked under the beds, in every nook and corner where any man could hide, and finally came to the first floor from which we had started, and then went to the cellars. Then my heart sank for the first time. I knew no men were concealed there, but I did know my main stock of provisions was there, and I feared they might take them. My hams were hanging up just above their heads, there were also cans of lard, jars of butter, potatoes, and other things, I knew they would be glad to have. They evidently saw them all, but were more bent on getting prisoners just then than something to eat, for in no way did they allude to what they saw, but seemed quite disappointed not to find what they were after. Those men did not leave the house before going back to the Union men still lying on the floor, and reported the failure of their mission, and as the chief of the squad passed out called back: "we are having our parole papers printed, we will be back and parole you fellows." But they never returned, and we never saw them again. The guns of many of our men were stacked in the yard, and remained there until after the battle, indeed until the well men were ordered away, and our stock of provisions was never disturbed. Many things of interest occurred during the two remaining days of the fight, but it would make this story too long
to tell of them all. The fight went on, with the dreadful slaughter of human life, the roar of the artillery and of musketry, with the groans of the wounded and dying, baffles all description. At one time it was all so near to us that we closed our ears crouched into a corner, not knowing how to endure it. The ground trembled, on which our house stood, and the awful continuous roar of the canon was was far worse than the heaviest thunder from heaven's artillery. That was when the enemy got possession of Culp's hill and fought back of the Reformed church on the night of the second day's fight. To me, that was the most awful time of the awful battle. In the early hours of Friday morning, the third, the Union troops regained this hill and position, and from that time the fighting was further toward Cemetery hill, Little Round Top, and then Pickett's fatal charge across the Emmitsburg road, which was "the beginning of the end of this cruel war." While the fight went on, we fed the soldiers in our house, dressed their wounds, sent broth and gruel to the wounded men at the hospitals, supplied those who wanted it with coffee, did what we could for all within our reach, but I remained indoors, so much depended upon me, and what would happen if a stray shot or shell should strike me. No, no, whatever others did I must run no risks, and so I staid in the house and yard, and on the porch, which was so sheltered no shot or shell could reach me, "the boys" guarded me well.

Our dear little "Allie," our "baby pet," who went to Heaven in September after the battle, was quite amused, as the shells were sent whizzing over our house, and said to me, looking up as if to see something, "listen mamma, do you hear the birdies?" He compared the noise to the flapping of wings of the wild geese which he remembered having heard and seen pass over the town earlier in the season on their homeward flight.

For a week or more, we had baked no bread, nor had we any in the house. We had flour, lard and water, we could buy no milk, and we had no cow, so I baked biscuit as a substitute for bread. But the demand was so great for them that I had blistered my hands in making them, and I really felt, I must manage in some way to get "yeast" and bake some bread. My good friend, the German, offered to go out through the lines, and if possible find me "something to raise bread with," as
he expressed it. He went, but we all felt anxious about him, until he returned with some bakers' yeast. Where he got it we shall never know, but we had it, and at once I made a sponge, set some bread, and continued baking night and day until the following Monday, when some friends came from Lancaster and brought me bread and meat. There, they had baked night and day ever since the news of the battle, and early on Monday morning brought a large wagon load of bread and hams to Gettysburg for the starving thousands, as they supposed. It is astonishing to know how soon provisions of all kinds were poured into our little town. Both the loaded wagons of the Christian and Sanitary Commission waited outside the Rebel lines, ready with their supplies to come in as soon as the Union lines were open, and already on Saturday morning they came in, took possession of the store rooms and unloaded their supplies and distributed according to the necessities of the people. For some days fresh meat was not to be had, but as cattle could be procured and slaughtered, all persons who had wounded men in their homes could procure an order from the Sanitary Commission for as much fresh meat as they required, by paying for it, when the person or persons were able to do so. This was perfectly right, and we had all that we needed.

On Thursday morning, after the 4th of July, several wagon loads of provisions were sent to our door from the country and were unloaded for the use of the poor soldiers. There were dozens of jars or crocks of apple butter, jellies, preserves, pickles, bread, meat; indeed, everything was freely given, sent and distributed among the sick and the wounded men. I shall never forget how some of their eyes sparkled at the very sight of apple butter, and with what a relish they ate it. To some of them it seemed the very "elixir of life."

My friends in New Jersey, Philadelphia, Baltimore and other places, knowing I was on the ground, sent me many boxes and barrels of supplies, to be distributed in person to the wounded men lying in the field hospitals, as well as those in our town buildings. There was wine and pickles, oranges and lemons, sugar by the barrels, tea and coffee, beef tea, indeed everything that sick people crave or that could give them strength. Then there was clothing of all kinds, sent to be distributed where most
needed—to the Union men *first*, afterward to their unfortunate comrades. In making this distribution, it was necessary for me to go in ambulances to the different Corps and Field Hospitals. My husband always accompanied me and we discharged our duty as faithfully and as well as it was in our power to do, and I can never forget how grateful these poor men were for what we were able to give them. We could never repay them, for had they not given their life to save us, and our homes, for our children!

The Rebels commenced their retreat to the Potomac about midnight of the 3rd, or the morning of the 4th of July. "Our Boys" suspected the enemy was beaten from some little things they heard, and believed they were preparing for retreat from what they saw; consequently they kept a close watch upon them, and soon found they were not mistaken. They were really going away.

The enemy retreated cautiously and very quietly, and many of our citizens did not know of their going until seven or eight o'clock in the morning, for they did not withdraw their last pickets until the advance of their now broken army neared the Potomac. At eight o'clock on the morning of the 4th, we could, from our garret window, see the army wagons winding their way among the hills far off in the distance. They carried away with them some of their wounded and their dead, but thousands were left upon the Battlefield.

After breakfast, and the excitement of the hour had passed, some of our men ventured in front, hoisted the Stars and Stripes, and by some means procured a hospital flag, which they floated above the door, and we breathed more freely than we had done for many days. All we knew certainly was, the Rebels were gone, and must have been repulsed by the Union Army and suffered very heavy loss.

All around us were evidences of a great battle. The wounded, the dead and dying, all heaped together; horses that had fallen beneath their riders, with limbs shattered and torn—dead, wounded and bleeding—broken down artillery wagons, guns and knapsacks, cartridge boxes, capes, coats and shoes; indeed all the belongings of a soldier, and the soldier himself, all lying in the streets, so far as we could see, either up or down. Such was
the awful scene spread out before us, as we ventured to the front of our house on the morning of the 4th of July, 1863. No wonder one was appalled when we realized that the War had indeed been brought to our very door. Our Union men had, with God's help, driven the enemy back from our homes in the North. It remained for us to do our part as nobly and as well. *For myself*, it was "do or die."

Our German friend had an idea the Captain of his Company either lay dead or dying very near our house, and he started out to find him. He found him (Capt. Myers) lying next door to us on a wooden counter, where he had been carried on the first day of the fight. He laid in his own blood, and was unable to speak. Mr. Frey asked permission to bring him into our house, which of course was granted. I brought a cot from the garret, found him some clean clothes and opened a bottle of blackberry wine, and directed the men to cut off his soiled garments, bathe his person and find his wound. His tongue seemed stiff and his limbs and body were rigid. His mouth was forced open and a little wine dropped on his tongue, and after frequent repetition, this apparently dead man, revived sufficiently to have his wound dressed. We found he had been shot under the right breast. The shot made a clean cut and came out under his left shoulder blade. We cleansed the wound with cold water, that being the only remedy then used, inserted lint freely and changed it often. In a day or so this wounded Captain improved so much that we removed him to one corner of our dining-room. In less than a month Capt. Myers was well enough to leave us, and he obtained a furlough to visit his old father and mother, who were too feeble to come to him. Later on, in the fall, Capt. Myers paid us a visit, bringing his bride with him.

After we had fixed Capt. Myers comfortably in the dining room we took three more wounded Captains in, so we had four, one in each corner of room, and they were with us until they were well enough to go away. We had a man from an Illinois Regiment who was wounded in the throat. We watched with him all night, moistened his throat with water, but expecting him to die before morning. Strange to say he recovered so far that he was sent home.

While we were doing all we could for the wounded men in
our house, we also did all we could for those lying in the Court house just opposite to us, supplying them with all that was needed so far as we were able. When provisions, clothing and delicacies were sent from friends abroad to the poor wounded soldiers, as I before said, they were carried and distributed where they were most needed.

The sights and the sounds at the Court house for a week after the battle are too horrible to describe. Limbs were amputated amid the cries and groans of suffering humanity (there were no anesthetics used then) and often have I stopped my ears that I might not hear the groans of those poor unfortunate men, whom I could not relieve. Loads of arms and legs of these poor soldiers, that were amputated, and—possibly under other circumstances, might have been saved—were carted outside of the town, and were either burned or buried. The Regimental Bands which are left behind after a battle came every afternoon and played patriotic airs in front of the hospital, and what an inspiration this music was to these boys can only be known by those who suffer only as wounded men suffer after a battle.

"The Star Spangled Banner," "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp, the Boys are Marching," "Rally Round the Flag Boys" brought again hope and courage into their hearts and they longed to be up and "at them again."

About the latter part of July my health broke down and the doctor said I must take a rest. One day during this rest, an Orderly appeared at the door and begged I would take in his Colonel, who was mortally wounded, and could not live many weeks. At first I begged him to find another place for his Colonel, of whom he had the care, for I did not feel quite strong enough for the undertaking. But after consultation with my husband and physician, I consented to give him the third story front room, indeed he had the whole of the third floor for the accommodation of his nurse and wife who came with him, and remained until the 1st of September. Col. John C. Callis had been a merchant in Lancaster, Wisconsin, when the war broke out and troops were called, he closed his store, took his clerk with him and they both joined the army. After he was wounded at Gettysburg his former clerk was detailed his nurse, and he remained with him as long as he was in our house. Col.
Callis was wounded in his left breast, and the bullet lodged in his right lung. He had frequent hemorrhages, and the doctors said he must die. We gave his wife the freedom of the house, and did all we could to make her and her husband comfortable, free of all expense. Indeed we charged no one for anything they ate or drank, or for any service rendered during this fearful summer. About the last week in August, Mrs. Callis received a letter telling her that her children whom she had left at home in Wisconsin, had the measles. She at once determined to go to them as the Col. was comfortably cared for, and if necessary, she would return to him later on. She communicated her plans to her husband, who at once said "he too, would go." The doctors refused to have him moved, indeed, forbid his going. They said the slightest movement of the body would cause the bullet to move and bring on a hemorrhage, from which he would die, and there was no help for him. But the Col. had made up his mind to go, "dead or alive," and he went. We arranged a comfortable bed for him in the cars, prepared a nice lunch for them. We realized the risk he was running by going. We urged his remaining; but he took his life in his own hand, he determined to go home, and all we could do was to give him as comfortable a send off as possible, which we did. Amid tears of gratitude mingled with pain and anxiety the Col. and his family left us.

In those days the railroad to Harrisburg ran by way of Hanover and the Junction, where it met the Northern Central on its way from Baltimore to Williamsport. Late in the evening of the day on which Col. Callis started, we received a telegram from Mrs. Callis, informing us that her husband was dying at the Junction from a hemorrhage. We were not surprised, for that was just what the doctors said would happen. The motion of the car had dislodged the bullet and had brought on the fatal result. We could do nothing but telegraph our sympathy and await further news. Five days after that we buried our youngest boy, our dear little Allie, who clapped his tiny hands when the shells went wizzing past during the battle and thought they were birdies passing over the house. The Death Angel came with noiseless wings and conveyed our darling from our home on earth to our dear Father's home in Heaven. Notwithstanding
our sorrow, we thought often of our friends at the Junction, of the sad death of the Col. and the long, lonely ride of Mrs. Callis, taking with her the dead body of her husband, the father of her children, and of all the sadness of her long journey, and her arrival home. We waited day after day for news, but heard nothing.

A few days before the Christmas after the battle, a gentleman walked into my husband’s office, introduced himself as a gentleman from the West, and handed him a letter from Col. Callis. Imagine our surprise when told, the Col. was not only living but was in tolerably good health, he was now on his way to Washington and would on his return come to see us. He did come then, again he came at the laying of the corner stone of the National Monument. His children have visited Gettysburg, and so far as I know he is living to-day an old man, a physical wreck. The bullet which is still in his lung, became encysted and he has no more hemorrhages. We have pictures of the Col., his wife and children, also of their Western home.

While Mrs. Callis remained with her husband in my house, I was able to go out every day to the hospital tents between Dr. Krauth’s house and the Seminary, on the ground which was, and is now used as a garden. Gen. Trimble and Major Kemper, of the Confederates were among the wounded in the Seminary building, and I saw them every day, with many other Confederate soldiers. The tents were filled with wounded men, who craved good, nourishing food. So a number of ladies had a cooking stove taken to the woods behind the Seminary, and there we spent every day for weeks cooking and making “nice things” for men who were suffering, but who were not sick, and could eat anything that was offered. These men were from both armies, and were very grateful for all we did for them.

In course of time, these wounded men were sent away from Gettysburg and placed in the General Hospital, which was located a mile from town, on the York pike.

This hospital was in charge of Doctors Oakley and Janes, and the badly wounded soldiers were cared for there until the weather became too uncomfortably cold for them, which was sometime in November. I frequently visited the men in this hospital, and afterward saw some of them at York, Pa., where they had been removed, and where some of them died.
Some one may ask why I have written these remembrances of the war from Winchester and not from Gettysburg. I will tell you.

Our youngest daughter is married and lives in this historic town, made memorable in verse by "Sheridan's Ride," and I have come to spend the summer with her.

Winchester was the gateway between the North and South. Both Gens. Sheridan and Milroy had their headquarters here, and it is said the ground around this town was fought over eighty times; being held alternately by Union and Confederate forces.

There are two Cemeteries here. The Union and the Stonewall Jackson. There are more Union soldiers buried at Winchester than lie in the National Cemetery at Gettysburg.

One day while looking at the house from which Sheridan and his Staff started on his memorable ride—the spirit moved me, and now I have written the story I promised my children so long ago.

Winchester, Va.,
August, 1896.