

Recollections of the War
By Mrs. R. E. Ellison.

Being a little girl in 1860, Secession meant very little to me, but I can easily remember the enthusiasm, which the women shares courageously, little imagining what Secession would mean to them in the years to come, because the impression was that if war came, it would be of short duration, believing in our ultimate success. There was no effort made by the wives or sisters to prevent the men of the family from enlisting. At any rate at first it was very certain that they were too enthusiastic and excited to count the cost. . In a great many instances mere boys in their early teens threw down their books and entered the Service. My widowed mother alone furnished six sons, a son in law and an adopted son, from her home, and the day our Fairfield soldiers left for the coast, all were buoyed up to the highest pitch with patriotic fervor, and mothers, wives, sisters and sweethearts bade them God-speed.

The days, months and even years that passed after this were filled with deepest anxiety, together with the necessary Responsibility and burdens thrust on them, but even in those dark days there were some pleasant past times. Bazaars, concerts and all the usual ways of raising funds were resorted to. Concerts, composed of music, both vocal and instrumental, tableaux and charades, all gotten up by our immortal Mrs. Ladd, whose place has never been filled, and by the efficient help of our own girls, and the wives and daughters of certain Charleston families, who refugees here during the war, and who contributed largely to the social and religious life of Winnsboro.

There were always a great many soldier boys at home on furlough or sick leave, and these entertainments were gotten up

to give pleasure. and to raise necessary money for those who were bearing hardships in the field.. Every day would find devoted women at the station for the trains as they passed, with large baskets filled with nourishing food, medicines, bandages and even clothing sometimes, to minister to the sick and wounded, and this they did til the close of the struggle.

Even in these troublesome times, the schools went on uninterruptedly. The last two years of the war, my suster and I had been sent to St. Mary's, and Episcopal school at Raleigh, N. C., where we stayed until there were threats of Sherman's raid, and when we came home for the Christmas holidays in '64, we did not return, for we knew when his ruthless hand had laid waste the country through which he passed, there would scarcely be any thing to subsist on, and really this proved true.

When I hear school girls criticize the conditions of the things in the schools of to-day, I would like to compare them with things as they existed during those years.. Our principal diet was cow peas and light bread for at least two meals a day, with coffee sweetened with black molasses. However there were nice things intersperced at intervals, and numerous boxes from home, received by the girls, served to break the monotony of the diet., but, with it all, we were a healthy, happy set.

My recollections of Sherman's raid can never be effaced from my mind. We knew his preamble in Columbia, where he had begun his work of utter destruction meant that our time was near, we being in the direct line of his march, knew no escape was possible. Two of my brothers who happened to be at home on furlough, spent two days burying silver and valuables, and provisions too, which fortunately were not found by the invaders. They flew for their lives, and barely escaped being taken prisoners, as the Army entered the town from the South.

The Sunday before the arrival of Sherman and his vandals, we were on our way from Church walking, the carriage and horses having already been ridden off by my two brothers at home on furlough, and we passed a number of our soldiers lying on the embankment in front of Mrs. Boyleston's home, worn out from marching. They were trying to escape Sherman, and had probably been marching all night. As we passed, as tired and worn out as the soldiers looked and were, many of them stood up, especially the officers, and took off their hats til we passed.

Having two instruments in our home, we had visions of being made tipsy on the piano, so, on the impulse of the moment, I gathered up an armful of music, and ran upstairs to hide it in the garret, when, on looking out of the Western window, I saw swarms of blue coats coming down the Columbia road. In fact it seemed that they were coming from every direction. I flew down stairs to find them pouring in the house. The clatter of their swords sounded above every thing, as they ran up and down stairs wanting only booty., and having no respect for us --a few helpless women and children.

The bed room floors were strewn with clothing and other

articles which they had pulled out of drawers and wardrobes, hoping find valuables secreted. They did not rob us, however of our entire supply of dresses, for each of us had on at least three dresses which we kept on for days and nights, never thinking of disrobing when night came. The store room was emptied, and what was not wanted was thrown in the yard. °

To make sure that we would have nothing to eat, they mixed rice, flour, meal, corn, coffee and sugar with molasses and soft soap. Jars of pickle and preserves were opened and spit into. Accidentally a small amount of grist was left, which was our only means of sustenance for days. The few spoons and forks that were left out for the use of the family were quickly picked up, and we had not a little fun cutting spoons out of pieces of board to eat hominy with. Our little niece two and a half years old, when crying for her supper one night, was given a dose of paregoric, and put to bed, as there was literally nothing in the house for her to eat.

The first morning that they were there, one of the soldiers, walked up to my sister and asked if we had any brothers or soldiers in the war from the house, and she replied, yes, that eight had been sent, but she wished that there had been 10,000. To this, he answered: "She is s'inku, isn't she?"

This condition of affairs lasted for four days before the last of Sherman's burners left, and we could get communication from town, our house being situated some distance out of the limits. Although they threatened to burn the house several times, our faithful old nauma would intercede with the officers and managed to save it.

The day after we thought the last raider had left, in walked a Yankee soldier, whom we soon discovered was one of Sherman's burners. He came where we were all sitting and took his seat to pay a social call, but not feeling in an amiable mood, we did not make ourselves very agreeable to him. He tried in vain to enter into conversation, but he found us a very immovable and haughty set, answering none of his questions and taking no notice of his remarks. Seeing a piano in the room, he asked if one of the young ladies would not favor him with a tune, which my mother replied. "You cannot expect these young ladies to play, after having passed through what they have in the past few days." He said, "Well, I don't know, music hath charms --" Mother finished the sentence by saying "Yes to soothe the savage breast." After he had been sufficiently snubbed, he took his leave, much to our relief.

Much has been written of the costumes of the women in war times, and has caused much merriment. Considerable ingenuity was exercised in making from old material toilets that resembled fashionable ones, hats of palmetto and hounds, gloves knitted from silk unravelled out and spun anew, mixed with wool when you wanted them for warmth. I have vivid recollections of a hat made for me out of wheat straw, shaped on the neck post of the stairway, and to beautify it further, it was treated to a coat of black carriage paint, which, as you can imagine, did not aid to my comfort. Foreign dyes, of course, were not to be had, and hickory and wal-

nut bark, plumroot and sunack, took the place of imported dyes. I remember my sister and I wearing dresses, that were spun, dyed and woven in our own yard by one of the women who had been trained to weave. By the way, she is still liking on the same plantation where she had bought her little home, although the rest of the land has long since passed out of the hands of her former master. Right here, I may add that the younger generation who did not know the negro of slavery, can form very little idea of the type of that day, by comparison with the so-called educated negro of to-day. With few exceptions they were faithful, and the love and respect they bore to their masters should convince the most skeptical. We all know that the negro is lazy and improvident, so the life they lived suited a race like them, for their needs were all supplied. In sickness, they were provided with a doctor and a nurse and medicines; they were well fed, being always given an allowance. Appropos of the feeling they had about slavery, the following few lines, in the words of an old Charleston negro, will speak for themselves:

"Dey tek we from we shelter,
And dey say, "Go long, you'se free,
I aint call dat no freedom,
Ter take we home from we.

I'me happy in de old time,
Wid Mis and my old Mausa.
Such a chillun as I nus --
Bes you eber saw suh.

Dey's bery good to me now,
Dey aint forgit dere nauma,
But when I gits to Hebben,
I hope de widder's warmer.

I miss dem nice winter clos,
And I mis dem roar'n fire,
Wud oak and pine and light(ood,
To make de plaze rise higher.

I sit sometimes and tink upon
Dem plate piled high wid bittle
I cook all what I got now inxai
In dis ol' iron kittle.

I tink upon dat physix too,
And all dat pill and plaster.
W'en was sickwe jes sen word,
To tell ol' nis and master.

Ef' dis is freedon -- God forbid,
I calls it simply nabery,
And we'n I gits to Hebben, Lord,
I hope I'll find it shabby."

In God's providence, shabby came and went, and while race question to-day is a vixing problem, we can always feel sure that white supremacy is God-given, and will last. Veterans of the war can meet and calmly discuss battles won or lost; they can speak of comrades who fell at their sides, and laugh at some of the re-

collections of camp-life; but the women who were old enough to realize a; that the war meant, cannot speak of it lightly. All the old pain comes back -- it is still the tragedy of fifty one years ago, and time cannot soften its memory.

Winnsboro, S. C.
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