

THE Progress Magazine.

VOL. I.

FEBRUARY, 1867.

NO. II.

Soldiering in North Carolina.

BY AN ISLANDER.

It has been said that man is essentially a "fighting animal,"—that in this "world's broad field of battle," his life, from the cradle to the grave, is one continued struggle against want and its attendant circumstances,—and that he is the greatest who, be his position what it may, acts well his part. If this be true—and I think it is—then the man who goes to war only exchanges one mode of strife for another—"the whips and scorns of time," for interminable drilling, "hard tack and salt horse,"—"the oppressor's wrong," for the hardships of the march and the dangers of the battle,—"the proud man's contumely," for the murmurings at home that he does not "clean out" the rebels in a week or two,—"the law's delay," for the tedium of garrison and camp life,—"the insolence of office," for the rule (not always gentle or humane) of men placed over him,—and the "bare bodkin," for the sword and the bayonet. And yet—and yet—

"Ah me! what perils do environ
The man that meddles with cold iron,
What plague mischiefs and mishaps
Do dog him still with utter claps!"

The severe checks and disasters experienced by the Union arms in the Spring campaign of 1862, culminating in the "seven days' fight" before

Richmond, and the retreat of McClellan's noble but suffering and crippled army to James River, while it spread sorrow and mourning throughout the land, had the effect of awakening those in power to a full sense of the nation's peril. When the President called for more men, thereby giving effect to the wishes of the loyal people of the North, I was one of those who helped to swell the volume of that mighty response which echoed back from the hills and prairies, cities and villages, town and hamlets:

"We are coming, father Abraham, three hundred thousand more."

On the 4th of August, 1861, I started to enlist. A recruiting officer for the 17th, who had an office in Boston, took me willingly, and after being examined and sworn in, I was packed off, with some twenty other recruits, to Camp Cameron in North Cambridge. It was late in the evening when we arrived there, and no preparation being made for us—owing, I suppose, to the constant and rapid influx of recruits, which taxed to their utmost the various departments to fit out and provide for,—we had to turn in, supperless, to a bunk of downy boards, with no covering but our thin citizens' summer clothes. I thought it was a very uncomfortable resting place at the time, but it was nothing to what I have since known in the way of sleeping accommodation. The next morning I had leisure to