

The Comte de Paris' History.

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CONFEDERATE VOLUNTEERS—FEDERAL VOLUNTEERS.

The second book of the first volume deals with the causes of the civil war, the nature and extent of the military resources available for the prosecution on both sides, and the principal features of the political crisis which preceded and introduced it. One chapter is devoted to "the Confederate Volunteers," another to "the Federal Volunteers," and an interesting and acute analysis of the characteristic traits of the soldiers of the two sections is presented with their peculiarities contrasted.

"Those of the South became good soldiers more rapidly than those of the North. They were more accustomed to follow leaders; their life was rougher than that of the Eastern farmers, and more adventurous than that of the Western pioneers. Inured to privations, they were satisfied with rations which the Federal soldier looked upon as insufficient. Hence that rapidity of movement which was one of the principal causes of all their successes. Rarely paid by the Government, which, unable to solve its financial difficulties, fairly ignored their claims, they never asked for the depreciated paper which was due to them, except when they thought their officers better treated than themselves, and then it was sufficient to lead them against the foe to pacify them. Nearly all of them were practiced in the use of firearms, and one might see them enter the recruiting offices with the rifle on their shoulders and the revolver at the belt—weapons which they never laid aside, and without which they would not have considered themselves safe. In fine, they carried into the war more passion than their adversaries.

"The Confederate foot soldier, easier to manage and more excitable than his adversary, would rush to the charge with savage yells, and, in this way, he frequently carried positions which the latter, with equal courage, could not have captured. But on the other hand, possessing neither his patience nor his tenacity under a murderous fire, he was much less able to defend them. So that, in the course of the war, we shall always find the Southern officers trying to surprise some point or another of the Federal lines with heavy masses. This infantry, which would not have cut a very brilliant figure at a review by the percision of its movements, possessed the art of marching through the densest forest in good order, deployed in such a manner as to avoid trees, and yet without becoming separated. This art rendered those surprises easy of achievement, by enabling a body of infantry to hide within the depths of the forest without being preceded by any line of skirmishers, and to approach the enemy with sufficient rapidity to attack them suddenly in the clearing where he was encamped. The history of the war will show how useful this kind of tactics was to the Confederate generals—how they availed themselves of it to compel the enemy to extend his lines so as to cover all his positions at once; in this manner they frequently obtained advantages upon the point of attack with inferior forces; and if their columns were repulsed, they were quickly withdrawn and led elsewhere to attack some other position. We shall also find, however, that they did not apply these tactics to advantage when they found themselves among the unwooded hills of Pennsylvania."

"During the first campaigns, the habits and education of the Confederate soldiers gave to their cavalry a still more marked superiority over that of their adversaries. This superiority was wrongly attributed to the merit of the chiefs who commanded it; for if Ashby, Stuart, and all those brilliant officers who organized the cavalry of the South won at first the respect and admiration of their enemies, they found in front of them generals equally expert in the art of handling that arm of the military service; Sheridan, Stoneman, Kilpatrick, and many others demonstrated this as soon as they had good troops to command."

The European impression that the foreign element predominated in the Federal Army is corrected, and by an elaborate analysis of the statistics of population and emigration, it is shown that of the volunteers who enlisted during the first year of the war, "only one tenth were foreigners; of the remainder, two thirds were born on American soil, and seven thirtieths, or rather less than one-fourth, were naturalized Europeans. By examining separately the contingents of the Eastern States, where but a small number of emigrants settle, we find a still larger proportion of natives—a proportion which in 1864, when conscription was partially resorted to, reached as high as eighty per cent." And these details are summed up in the affirmation that "from the native born American down to the latest landed European, the proportion of volunteers furnished to the Federal Government by the different classes of the community was in a direct ratio to the interest that each took in the affairs of the Republic, and that the longer the emigrant had lived upon its soil, the more largely did he contribute toward its defence. It must not be imagined, therefore, that the increase of emigration, so remarkable during the war, was a means of directly supplying the Federal armies. It was an indirect result due to the sudden advance in the price of labor occasioned by the war. The difference in the rate of wages between the two continents is the sluice which regulates with precision the current of emigration; and the new comers, instead swelling the ranks of the Army, went for the most part to fill, either at the plough or in the factories, the places of the Americans who had put on the uniform."

The average age of the volunteers is stated at between twenty four and twenty five years, and the beneficent influence of the New World upon the European races was shown in the fact that the average stature of each contingent among these young men was in inverse ratio to the number of emigrants who had settled in that State that furnished it, the largest and most robust men being furnished by a population which for the most part had already been American for two or three generations past. "The American foot soldier displayed from the very first a great deal of personal bravery. The conflicts among the woods, where he was to fall unnoticed and to die without help, afforded the strongest evidence of this kind of courage, for they deprived him of that powerful incentive of all human action, the hope that his name would not die with him; it was nevertheless in these encounters, under the green shroud of the forest, that he exhibited all his firmness. He very soon acquired a remarkable skill in firing, and quickly learned to hit his mark as a skirmisher.

"Notwithstanding their bravery, it took them a long time to learn that, upon ground where the fighting had to be done at short distances, it was almost always less dangerous to rush upon the enemy than to be de-

imated by his fire while standing still. For want of that mechanism which, in well regulated armies, communicates the will of the directing power to each man, as rapidly as the nerves in the human body, they were frequently to lose the opportunity of turning a first advantage into a decisive victory. When certain death awaited those occupying the first ranks, when it was so easy to march with less rapidity than the rest, personal courage could not be displayed to the same extent by all; if a single man hesitated or was allowed to hesitate with impunity, it was enough to render that hesitation contagious, causing the bravest soldier to lose his dash, and the most resolute chief all his daring."

"In consequence of the independent character of the Federal volunteers, more than one general saw, in the battles we shall have to describe, a certain victory turned into defeat, while on the other hand, the most disastrous checks could almost always be remedied; a sort of public opinion existing among them even in the midst of conflicts, we shall find them stoically suffering themselves to be killed at their post so long as they are actuated by a spirit of rivalry; then, suddenly persuading themselves that further resistance is useless, at the very moment perhaps when it would have decided the fate of a battle, they fell back to the rear in search of a better position. This retreat, which no effort on the part of the officers can prevent, is however effected without hastening their pace, in spite of a shower of balls, and with a degree of coolness which would be admirable under other circumstances. And, what is still more remarkable, this temporary disorder seldom degenerated into a rout; a few minutes would often suffice to stop the fugitives, restore confidence among them, re-form their ranks, and restore all the authority of their chiefs. A moment after, these soldiers, so suddenly discouraged, would refuse to believe themselves beaten, and this conviction would be almost equivalent to a victory."

"They ate a great deal, did not know how to economize their food, adjusted their knapsacks clumsily, and could only carry two day's rations. The first day's march, which used up a great number, although very short, already filled the road with stragglers, who, while directing their steps towards the place assigned for the halt, did not consider themselves bound to keep up with their comrades, and whom a fresh spring of water or a shady spot would keep back; fortunately for the Federal armies, the Confederate guerrillas, in picking up such stragglers, did more towards putting a stop to this fatal habit than the severest orders of the day."

This description is applied only to the volunteers in the early days of the war, before they had been transformed by discipline and experience into soldiers, who, like those of Sherman, were seen at the end of the war "traversing the half of a continent and conquering success through the vigor of their legs, while those of Grant carried a load of forty five pounds on their shoulders." The author dwells upon the defects of the American volunteers "because they were the cause of their first reverse, and because, in exposing them, we are only exalting the merit of those men who had so much to learn, in order to become capable of accomplishing the great task they had undertaken, and who succeeded by dint of perseverance and devotion. One trait in their character redeemed all these defects, and already displayed, under the grab of those inexperienced men, those valiant champions who, at the end of the war, car-