

ARMY LODGES.

BRO. JAMES S. REEVES, M.D., of Michigan, writes to the *Masonic Jewel* as follows: "It was a member of Washington Military Lodge who furnished medicines and wines for the paralyzed wife of a La Grange Brother (a Confederate), and saved to the Lodge at La Grange its jewel. The Military Lodge repaired the shattered walls of the Masonic Hall at Vicksburg, and one of its members recovered a heavy jewel belonging to a Vicksburg lodge and restored it to the brethren. A member of the Military Lodge saved from destruction the charter of Scott Lodge, No. 80, Hillsboro', Miss., and returned it to the Grand Secretary. At the battle of Thompson's Hill, (near Port Gibson,) a Confederate colonel was wounded and brought to our hospital. He was a Mason, and I had a brother always with him, first one then another of our members, night and day, and he was tenderly nursed and supplied with everything that could possibly be obtained for his comfort or relief, while he lived.

And when our army occupied Vicksburg, we learned that there were suffering families there, the wives and widows, children and orphans, of Confederate soldiers, and we expended every dollar we had in our treasury for their relief, and when that was gone we took our pay, and fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and furnished medicines and sanitary stores to the sick and afflicted. Ah, Bro. Wheeler, those people did not consider our Military Lodge a nuisance.

I must tell you of an incident. There were citizens (rebels) who were not in the army—called guerillas, because they kept up a predatory warfare on their own hook. It was my lot to fall into their hands several times, for being a surgeon, I was often with the wounded remote from the battle-field, and always unarmed, as I was not a belligerent. At the battle of Champion Hills (Baker's Creek), Miss., I was Chairman of the Operating Board of the 3d Div. 17 Army Corps, and had many wounded men to operate upon when the battle ceased. The fight being rapidly transferred to Black River bridge, we were suddenly left about five miles behind the army, and were soon pounced upon by armed men in citizens' clothing, who handled us roughly. I was immediately deprived of my coat, vest, hat, boots, everything (whether metallic or not); and upon discovering that I had a belt around my body, a hand was thrust in and it was dragged from me, and several of the citizens scrambled for it. It was a canvas belt, lined with oiled silk, and in it they found the charter of Washington Military Lodge—nothing else. A consultation was held in a low tone, one of the number seeming to be a leading man. There were eleven of them, and such was the interest manifested in the document they had captured, that we were left to ourselves. I watched the whole proceeding closely, satisfied in my own mind that they knew all about the value of the charter, but fully determined not, by word or sign to interfere. I had not long to wait, for they carefully folded the charter, replaced it in the belt, and respectfully returned it to me, together with all they had taken from me, and one of them expressed his regret that they had interrupted our work. Not one word was spoken by either of them that would indicate that he was a Mason and they quietly disappeared.

On the other hand, the *Masonic Jewel* sets forth the evils generally incident to Army lodges, saying:

We have met with many Masons who have told us that they joined an Army lodge because they were solicited to do so by its members while in the army; that it was a common thing for these army Masons to solicit their comrades in arms to join the order, as it might be the means of saving their lives in battle, and aiding them in case of capture. We know of several lodges, North and South, whose members have told us that soldiers from their town had been made Masons in these Army Lodges that were totally unfit to be received, and who had tried to join before going into the army, and had been blackballed.

We know of, and have also heard of many men who were notoriously profane, addicted to gambling, and drinking to excess when they went into the army, who found no difficulty in joining an army lodge, and came home with the same habits, and guilty of the same excesses.

More trouble in proportion to numbers has been created in subordinate and Grand Lodges in matters of trial and appeal by these "army made Masons," than by all other causes combined; for proof of which see various Grand Lodge proceedings since the war.

Many Masons made while in the army, on account of the surroundings, and their ignorance of Masonry, have never affiliated with any lodge since, and have taken no interest in, and have no knowledge of the art.

Many Masons have dimitted from Masonry, and ceased to care for the institution because they have seen so many unworthy characters that were admitted into the order during the war.