

(Written for the Canadian Illustrated News.)

MY CAMPAIGN IN VIRGINIA.

CHAPTER I.

"Colonel," said I, "let's go down to New Haven and enlist."

"What do you want to do that for?" asked the Colonel.
 "Well, I want to go 'soldiering'—I want to see some real service; for my three months of militia soldiering at Washington was only a farce. They give a good bounty at New Haven; they take men for only nine months, which I think will be long enough. And, lastly, I think the New England men will be better associates than those of New York. What do you say—will you go?"

"Well, I don't know—yes—I'll go."
 "Here comes George; let's ask him: George, will you go down to New Haven and enlist?" Here the same arguments were repeated.

"Is Billy going?"

"Yes."

"Yes, I'll go."

And thus in less than five minutes, the United States obtained three recruits. Let me introduce them to you, gentle reader:

William E. Wilson was a Pennsylvanian by birth; kind and amiable in disposition, he had the art, more than any man I ever saw of winning not only the esteem, but the love of his comrades. He had got the sobriquet of "the Colonel" from having the same name as Colonel Wilson, of the Sixth New York (generally known as Billy Wilson's Zouaves); but we frequently called him by the diminutive of Billy.

George Thompson Swank was also a Pennsylvanian, a young man of singular determination of character—a free-spoken, open-hearted man. Of all his distinguishing characteristics, the one that at this date most forcibly impresses itself upon my memory, is that of fidelity—fidelity to his principles, to his country, and, above all, to his friends.

Your humble servant, Ladies and Gentlemen, was, and is, a subject of her most Gracious Majesty, Victoria—God bless her!—distinguished for nothing in particular; and known to my friends as—well, in the 27th I was called Sergeant.

Swank and myself had but just returned from "defending the capital" in the ranks of the Seventy-first regiment, N. Y. S. M. As we had not even seen a rebel during our three months' stay, our thirst for glory was unassuaged, and we desired to go again, in the hope that this time we might see what we called "real soldiering."

That night at eleven o'clock we took passage by steamer for New Haven, and in the morning we marched up the streets of the Elm City in search of a recruiting office. It was not hard to find; and before noon we were enlisted, sworn into the service of the State of Connecticut by a Justice of the Peace, examined by a United States Surgeon, passed, were paid an installment on the large bounty offered, and had received permission to return to New York.

In a few days we were sent for, as the regiment had gone into barracks. Then for the first time, we learned that we belonged to Co. D, 27th Regiment of Connecticut Volunteers.

We reported to Captain DuBois, and were shown our quarters in the temporary barracks built of boards. The regiment was not quite full; and pending that consummation, we were to acquire what we could of the necessary volunteer drill.

After putting our few personals in the bunks assigned to us, we were told that there would be no drill that day, and we might amuse ourselves as we pleased, but that we could not leave camp.

As I passed out of the barracks my attention was drawn to a man sitting near the door, who appeared to be far beyond the age at which volunteers were taken.

"Is that a recruit?" I asked in some astonishment of our Orderly Sergeant.

"Yes," he replied, "he is one of our best men. That man has crowded more time into fewer years than any man that ever lived. He is a Joshua on a large scale: the sun has been standing still for him all his life. He has been twenty-eight years in the United States army; sixteen years in the British army; fifteen years in a large clothing establishment in New York; ten years an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company. He has travelled in all parts of the world: two years in China; seven years in Europe; four or five in South America; as many in Central America and Mexico; and he has spent at least a decade in wandering through Polynesia, Australasia, Siberia, Central Africa and other charming regions of the earth. Altogether, according to an estimate we have made, putting down the time he has been engaged in these various pursuits, according to his own stories, he has lived one hundred and twenty-two years, without making any allowance for childhood and infancy. And he is adding at least fifty years to his vast experience every day. He must be either the Wandering Jew or the Devil—that is if you believe all he says; and of course you wouldn't like to suspect the veracity of a venerable old ante-diluvian like him.

"But why do they take such an old man?" I asked.

"Why, there's the rub," said the Orderly, with a laugh; "when you bring him right down to it, he says he is only forty-five; and he is certainly in a wonderful state of preservation for a man of his years."

Here we approached the subject of our conversation, and heard him entertain a select but appreciative auditory with an account of a seventeen years captivity among the Indians, and concluded by singing an Indian war song, which elicited the warmest commendations from his auditors, who unanimously voted the old man a "perfect brick." This compliment so pleased him that he straightway invited the party down to the sutler's, and gave each his choice of sweet cider, root beer, and pumpkin pie.

But he was not yet talked out by any means.

"Did I ever tell you," he asked, "how I became a great prophet and medicine man among the Indians?"

No one had heard the story.

"Well, come up here in the shade, and I'll tell you."

When we were all seated on the ground in the shade the old man thus commenced:

*The First Sergeant is generally called the Orderly Sergeant in the United States.

In the year 1832 I graduated at West Point; and upon reporting to the Secretary of War, I was immediately attached to an expedition, then upon the point of starting for the purpose of exploring and surveying the head waters of the Missouri and its tributaries. During the Summer we worked our way slowly up the great stream, and when Winter came upon us we encamped in the wilderness, at least 700 miles from the nearest white settlement. The following year our operations were much the same; and at the close of the Summer of 1833 we concluded that our work was half done. Up to this time the party had kept pretty well together, as our work lay along the banks of the main stream; but in the Spring of 1834 it was thought better to detach small parties to explore the smaller streams. In accordance with this resolution I was put in charge of a party of six men, and despatched up a considerable branch of the Yellowstone River.

Up to this time we had experienced very little trouble from the Indians. They were at peace among themselves, and we were thus drawn into no side quarrels, and by a liberal distribution of presents, we had managed to keep the friendship of all. Some days after my party left the main body, however, I began to notice unusual signs among the red men. Small hunting parties were nowhere to be seen; outlying camps had been removed; and at length we came upon the entire nation of the Shawnee, encamped upon the stream we were surveying, and making every preparation for coming hostilities. I had acquired some knowledge of several Indian tongues, and had no difficulty in discovering the cause of the trouble. A band of Otoes had stolen some beaver-traps and horses belonging to the Shawnee, and the latter were preparing to avenge the indignity. Now a war between these two tribes would have consequences serious enough. It would stop all expeditions into the troubled country, which embraced the whole Yellowstone region. But worse than this might ensue: these Indian wars are frequently contagious, and there was no saying where or how hostilities might end. And as the Indian does not always confine himself to his immediate or legitimate enemies, our sojourn in the neighborhood of the contending parties would be very dangerous. The news of the outbreak therefore caused me a great deal of anxiety; and I returned to our little encampment debating with myself whether it would not be better to return at once to the main party. When I arrived at the camp I found Stephenson, the surveyor, poring over a tattered copy of the United States Almanac for 1834. He had given a five dollar gold piece for it to a messenger who had brought out instructions to us the previous year, and as it was the only book owned by any one in the expedition, it was highly prized and carefully preserved.

"That eclipse takes place to-morrow, Lieutenant," said Stephenson, after I had told him of the troubles ahead.

I knew what eclipse he meant, for we all knew the almanac by heart. I had forgotten about it; but the moment he spoke of it, a thought entered my mind.

"What time does it commence?" I asked.

"Twenty minutes after eleven."

"Joe," said I, "can you travel twenty miles through the woods by daylight?"

"Yes," said Joe, "for he was always ready."

I hurriedly gave Joe the necessary instructions; and, taking a small supply of dried buffalo meat, he at once set off on his journey.

As soon as he was gone I again repaired to the Indian encampment, and found, as I had anticipated, that the principal men of the tribe were holding a council. I at once went to the large wigwam in which the council was assembled, and entered without being announced. One of the medicine men of the tribe was speaking. He set forth in strong terms the indignity which had been offered to the great Shawnee nation, strongly counseled war, and promised in the name of the Great Spirit, that signal success would attend their arms.

When he sat down the Chief looked at me, and for a few moments I felt that my life was hanging in the balance, for my intrusion into the council might not be taken in good part. This was the more to be feared as it was evident that the last speaker was anything but favorably disposed toward me, judging from his looks. At length the chief took his pipe filled with "Killickinick," drew a long inspiration, and then gravely and slowly puffed the smoke, first down to the ground, then upward toward the sky, and lastly, toward myself. This was favorable, so I arose, and in the Shawnee tongue, spoke as follows:

"The Otoes have stolen horses and traps from the Shawnee. It is not well; and the Great Spirit is angry with them. But the Great Spirit of the pale faces has sent his medicine man to say to the Shawnee, ye shall not go to war with the Otoes, for the Great Spirit himself will punish the Otoes, unless they return the horses and beaver-traps they have stolen. And this shall be a sign to you: If to-morrow the sun shall rise and give light as usual, and shall pass through the heavens and set as usual, then the pale face is a liar and no medicine man; but if the sun shall become dark and cease to give light, then shall ye know that the pale-face is a great prophet, and that he has spoken the words of the Great Spirit."

I saw that these words had made an impression; so I turned and left the wigwam.

I had not at that time passed through so many dangerous scenes as I have since, and my nerves were not quite so firm. Can you wonder, then, that I passed an uneasy night? I had no doubt of the correctness of the almanac. But was our calculation of time correct? We had been in the habit of keeping our reckoning by means of notched sticks, such as you read of in Robinson Crusoe. But we might have made a mistake. And if we had, our lives would certainly pay the forfeit, for I had directly opposed the great medicine man of the tribe, and unless I was completely triumphant in my plan he would certainly leave no stone unturned to effect our complete destruction. At length the morning

*This term is now used by tobaccoists to designate a particular kind of smoking tobacco. Among the Indians it means a mixture of tobacco and the inside bark of the sumach tree.

dawned. I felt thankful that it was clear. Bright and beautiful the glorious luminary rose above the horizon, with nothing unusual to indicate the approaching phenomenon. I was glad to learn from one of my men that many of the Indians were eagerly watching it. But I kept close within the tent. The time for action had not yet come.

If any of you were as old soldiers as I am, you would have noticed that among a soldier's scanty baggage is often to be found some article, cumbersome, perhaps, and in the way, as well as quite useless, which he nevertheless always clings to, he hardly knows why. An article of this description was an old, highly-colored dressing gown which I had carried ever since we left St. Louis. Now its day of usefulness had come. About ten o'clock I arrayed myself in this odd-looking garment, and first directing the men to keep in the tent, I proceeded past the Indian camp to the summit of a high bluff on the opposite side of the river. Here I waited till about eleven o'clock, when I began to act. The whole of the Indians—men, women and children—were out looking at me, and I resolved that they should not look for nothing. So I began to jump and rave, and howl. Then I would run wildly along the bank, the old dressing gown streaming in the wind behind me. Anon I would throw myself on the ground; then, rising, I would stretch out my hands to heaven, as if invoking the interposition of the Great Spirit. All this time I anxiously watched the sun. At length I saw the shadow just beginning to impinge upon the bright orb. Suddenly I stopped my theatrical display, and rushing down the bank, fording the stream, I passed through the encampment, crying out in the Shawnee tongue, "Wo to the Shawnee! Woe, woe, to the Shawnee!" Then I entered our own tent and closed it. Slowly the shadow crept over the sun's face, and soon we could plainly see that the Indians were very much agitated. They were running about in great consternation; and appeared to be imploring the medicine man to save them from the impending calamity. But that worthy was evidently as much frightened as any one. His power was unequal to the emergency, and when the sun was about half obscured I saw a deputation of Indians, headed by the Chief, coming down toward our tent. For some time I refused to come out to them; and when I did appear it was only to denounce them in the strongest language I could command. When I had used up the Shawnee and several other Indian languages in terrible threats, I suddenly assumed a tragic attitude and recited "Lochiel's Warning," which evidently produced a great impression. But their terror was not complete till I got down upon my knees, raised my hands to heaven, and sung a love song in 'good' high Dutch. The fearful accents rendered them dumb with terror, and then for the first time they appeared to give themselves over to despair. By this time the eclipse was total, and I thought it was time to begin to relent. So I told them I would consult the Great Spirit. I went into the tent, and soon came out and told them, if they would promise to keep the peace the Great Spirit would pardon them and give them the sun again. They were sufficiently frightened to promise anything; and, the result was soon seen (as they thought) in the reappearance of a little rim of light which gradually widened and brightened till daylight was thoroughly restored.

The following day Joe Stephenson returned, and with him came a deputation of Otoes, bringing not only all the stolen property but a liberal peace offering beside. Acting under my instructions Joe had effectually frightened the Otoes into justice, using the eclipse as the great argument, of course. Thus I was the means of saving many lives and of keeping peace among the Indians long enough to allow of the survey being completed of all the tributaries of the Missouri. I was acknowledged as a great medicine man by all the tribes in that country, and many good results accrued to our party.

Some other time I will tell you how I discovered a silver mine, and about my seven Indian wives.

Here we were ordered to fill in for supper; and after roll-call, we marched up to the cook-house, with our tin plates and cups, where we each got a pint of coffee, a large piece of bread and some boiled rice, which was a sample of the supper we generally got when in camp.

SIR PERCY WYNDHAM, the English baronet, who came to this country about a year and a half ago and has since been serving with distinguished honor as a colonel of cavalry in the Union army, is now stopping for a short time at the Brevoort House in New York. The colonel, although still a young man, has served in no less than six campaigns in as many different countries. He was with Garibaldi in Italy, and shared alike with him the shelter of his tent, and the risks and chances of the battle-field. Colonel Wyndham has proved himself to be one of the many dashing cavalry officers in the service, and his bravery and soldier-like qualities make him most popular with his men. Why he should have been relieved of his command, for even a season, is one of those mysteries which puzzle everybody outside of the war office, for, during the recent battles in Virginia, the brigade led by him did eminent service.—United States Paper.

TOO ANXIOUS BY HALF.—An amusing affair happened lately between a coal dealer and purchaser in Boston. The latter was very anxious to see that the former did not cheat him, so he—the purchaser—inspected the weighing of the coal himself, and felt perfectly satisfied that he got his allowance, without any desire on the coal dealer to shave. However, while the coal was weighing, the driver could not help laughing, aware at the same time that the purchaser was particular about his full weight of coal. The purchaser noticing the laughing of the driver, asked him when he had received his coal, what was it all about? So the driver told him.

"Why," said he, "when your coal was weighed, you were standing on the scales, and were weighed with it."

"Is it possible? Why, I weigh nearly two hundred pounds."

"Well, sir," said the driver, "you are sold."

"Yes," was the reply, "and I have bought myself, too."