GOOLRICK JOHN TACKETT

HISTORIC FREDERICKSBURG: THE STORY OF AN OLD TOWN

John Goolrick

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Goolrick J.

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Содержание

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FREDERICKSBURG
A Preface

Fredericksburg sprawls at the foot of the hills where the scented summer winds sweep over it out of the valley of brawling waters above. The grass grows lush in the meadows and tangles in the hills that almost surround it. In spring the flowers streak the lowlands, climb on the slopes, and along the ridges; and Autumn makes fair colors in the trees, shading them in blood crimson, weathered bronze, and the yellow of sunsets.

Over its shadowed streets hangs the haze of history. It is not rich nor proud, because it has not sought; it is quiet and content, because it has sacrificed. It gave its energy to the Revolution. It gave its heart to the Confederacy; and, once when it was thundered at by guns, and red flames twisted in its crumbling homes, it gave its soul and all it possessed to the South. It never abated its loyalty nor cried out its sorrows.

In Fredericksburg, and on the battlefields near it, almost thirty thousand men lay on the last couch in the shadowy forests and – we think – heard Her voice calling and comforting them. To the wounded, the Old Town gave its best, not visioning the color of their uniforms, nursing them back to life: And, broken and twisted and in poverty, it began to rebuild itself and gather up the shattered ideals of its dead past.

Out of its heart has grown simple kindness; out of its soul simple faith.

As I look out over the streets, (I knew them well when Lee and Jackson and Stuart, Lincoln and Grant and Hancock knew them too), they shimmer in the Autumn sun. Over them, as has ever seemed to me, hangs an old and haunting beauty. There may not be as great men here as long ago, but here are their descendants and the descendants of others like them. And he who comes among them will find loyal hearts and warm hand-clasps.

Ah, I know the old town. My bare feet ran along its unpaved walks and passed the cabins many a time in slavery days. I knew it in the Civil War and reconstruction days, and on and on till now: And it has not failed its duty.

Fredericksburg's history brims with achievement and adventure. It has not been tried in this volume to tell all of these. I have tried to tell a simple story, with the flame of achievement burning on the shrines and the echoes of old days sweeping through it, like low winds in the pine woods; to make men and women more vivid than dates and numbers. I have tried to be accurate and complete and to vision the past, but above all, I have loved the things of which I have written.

There is no possibility of expressing the gratitude the author feels for the aid given him by others, but he must say, briefly, that without the assistance of Miss Dora Jett, Mrs. Franklin Stearns, Mrs. John T. Goolrick, and Dr. J. N. Barney, Mr. Chester B. Goolrick and Mr. John T. Goolrick, Jr., the book could not have been made as readable as we hope the public will find it. We owe just as deep thanks to Miss Sally Gravatt of the Wallace Library.

Jno. T. Goolrick.

Fredericksburg, Va.,
October 25, 1921.

INTRODUCTION

Rev. Robert Campbell Gilmore

As a public speaker of wide reputation, especially on Southern themes, Hon. John T. Goolrick, Judge of the Corporation Court of Fredericksburg, Va., needs no introduction. It is my privilege to introduce him as a writer of history to an ever widening circle of readers. Other men can gather facts and put them in logical order, but few can give the history of the old town of Fredericksburg such filial sympathy and interest, such beauty of local color, as can this loyal son.

The father, Peter Goolrick, a man of fine education, came from Ireland and made his home in Fredericksburg, and was mayor of the town.

The son has always lived here. The war between the States came in his boyhood. His first connection with the Confederacy was as a messenger at the Medical Department headquarters of General Lee. Growing old enough and tiring of protected service he enlisted in Braxton's Battery of Fredericksburg Artillery. He was wounded at Fort Harrison, but recovering, returned to his command and served to the end of the war as "a distinguished private soldier," and surrendered with "The last eight thousand" at Appomattox. Since the war he has been prominently connected with Confederate affairs. At one time he was Commander of the local Camp of Veterans and is now on the staff of the Commander of all the Veterans of the South and Virginia.

After the war young Goolrick studied law, was elected Judge of the Corporation Court of Fredericksburg, and of the County Court of Spotsylvania, served for a time as Commonwealth's Attorney of Fredericksburg, and later was re-elected Judge of the Corporation Court, which position he has held for sixteen years, and which he now holds. He has been the inceptor often, and always a worker, in every public event in the town.

This is not Judge Goolrick's first appearance as a writer. He has contributed many articles to newspapers, and magazines, and has published several books. He is thus particularly fitted to write the history of his own beloved town.

In the Older Days

One by one the little cabins are built along the river bank —

Enveloped in the perfume of old English boxwood and the fragrance of still older poplars, and permeated with the charm of a two hundred and fifty year old atmosphere, the town of Fredericksburg, Virginia, nestles in the soft foliage along the banks of the Rappahannock, at the point where the turbulent waters of the upper river rush abruptly against the back-wash of the sea, an odd but pleasing mixture of the old and the new.

Subtly rich with the elegance of the past, it looks proudly back across its two and a half centuries, but it has not forgotten how to live in the present, and combines delightfully all that it has of the old with much that is new and modern.

Perhaps no other community in the country has had a more intimate and constant association with the political and historic growth of America than Fredericksburg. From the earliest Colonial period, when it was a place of importance, it traces its influence on the nation's development down through the Revolutionary war, the War of 1812, the Mexican and Civil wars and the periods of national progress between those conflicts, and even today, when the old town has lost its touch with affairs as an important community, it still can claim a close connection with events through the influence of its descendants – sons and daughters – who have gone forth in the world and achieved leadership in movements of the day that are aiding in shaping the destiny of mankind; and of these another chapter tells.

But while proud of the accomplishments of these, the old town does not depend upon them for distinction. It bases its claim to this on the events with which it actually has been associated, and the importance of the part it has played in the past is proved by data found in the recorded annals of the country.

The Spanish Missionaries

It might, indeed, if it sought historical recognition on accepted legend rather than known fact, assert an origin that antidates that of the first English permanent colony in America. A historian, writing in the Magazine of American History, says the spot now occupied by Fredericksburg was first discovered in 1571 by Spanish Missionaries, who erected there the first Christian shrine in America. It is almost certain the town was settled in 1621, three hundred years ago, but this cannot be definitely proven, and the town has not claimed it as a date in its established history. It does not claim to have had a beginning with the recorded arrival of Captain John Smith, one year after the settlement of Jamestown, but takes as its birthdate May 2d, 1671, at which time the site was legally recognized by a grant from Sir William Berkley, then Colonial governor, to John Royston and Thomas Buckner, who are looked upon as the real founders of community life at the spot now occupied by Fredericksburg.

Whether or not white men first reached the location as early as the suggested arrival of the Spanish Missionaries probably must always remain a mystery, though there are reasons to believe that this is entirely probable, as it is known that Spaniards made an early effort at colonization in Virginia, and in 1526 came up the James River from Haiti with six hundred people, and, with many negro slaves as workmen, founded the town of Miguel, near where Jamestown afterwards was established by Captain John Smith. It is probable that these pioneers ventured into the surrounding country, and not at all unlikely that some of them strayed as far as the falls of the Rappahannock.

But if the data are not sufficient to actually prove this early visit to the site, it is a fact of record in the diary of "Chirurgeon" Bagnall, a member of the party, that Captain Smith reached the spot in 1608, one year after the establishment of Jamestown, and after successfully disputing possession of the land with a tribe of Indians, disembarked and planted a cross, later prospecting for gold and other precious metals. The diary of Smith's companions, still in existence, tells of the trip in accurate detail and from it is proven that even if the Spanish missionaries did not come as far as claimed for them, at least the Indians had recognized the natural advantages of the place by the establishment there of towns, which might have been in existence for hundreds of years.

Captain Smith's First Visit

Captain Smith made two attempts to explore the Rappahannock. The first, in June, 1608, ended when the hardy adventurer in plunging his sword into "a singular fish, like a thornback with a long tail, and from it a poison sting," ran afoul of the water monster and because of his sufferings was obliged to turn back. The second trip was started on July 24th, 1608, and was continued until the falls were reached.

Dr. Bagnall says in his diary that when near the mouth of the river, the party encountered "our old friend, Mosco, a lusty savage of Wighconscio, upon the Patawomeck," who accompanied them as guide and interpreter, and upon reaching the falls did splendid service against the unfriendly Indians, "making them pause upon the matter, thinking by his bruit and skipping there were many savages." In the fighting Captain Smith's party captured a wounded Indian and much to the disgust of the cheerful Mosco, who wished to dispatch him forthwith, spared his life and bound his wounds. This work of mercy resulted in a truce with the Redmen, which made possible the final undisturbed settlement of the land by the whites, the prisoner interceding for Smith and his party.

Captain Smith's first landing on the upper river probably was directly opposite what now is the heart of Fredericksburg. Dr. Bagnall's diary says:

About The Indian Villages

"Between Secobeck and Massawteck is a small isle or two, which causes the river to be broader than ordinary; there it pleased God to take one of our company, called Master Featherstone, that all the time he had been in this country had behaved himself honestly, valiently and industriously, where in a little bay, called Featherstone's bay, we buried him with a volley of shot * * *

"The next day we sailed so high as our boat would float, there setting up crosses and graving our names on trees."

Captain Quinn, in his excellent History of Fredericksburg, says that Featherstone's bay "is in Stafford, opposite the upper end of Hunter's island," but it is probable he did not closely examine facts before making this statement, as his own location of other places mentioned in Dr. Bagnall's diary serves to disprove his contention as to the whereabouts of the bay.

"Seacobeck," Captain Quinn says, "was just west of the city almshouse." The almshouse was then situated where the residence of the President of the State Normal School now stands. Massawteck, Captain Quinn locates as "just back of Chatham." If his location of these two places is correct, it is clear that the "small isle or two," which the diary says was located between them, must have been at a point where a line drawn from the President's residence, at the Normal School, to "just back of Chatham" would intersect the river, which would be just a little above the present location of Scott's island, and that Featherstone's bay occupied what now are the Stafford flats, extending along the river bank from nearly opposite the silk mill to the high bank just above the railroad bridge and followed the course of Claibourne's Run inland, to where the land again rises. The contours of the

land, if followed, here show a natural depression that might easily have accommodated a body of water, forming a bay.

There are other evidences to bear out this conclusion. Dr. Bagnall's diary says: "The next day we sailed so high as our boat would float." It would have been an impossibility to proceed "high" (meaning up) the river from Hunter's island in boats, even had it been possible to go as high as that point. Notwithstanding contradictory legend, the falls of the Rappahannock have been where they are today for from five to one hundred thousand years, and there is no evidence whatever to indicate that Hunter's Island ever extended into tidewater, the formation of the banks of the river about that point giving almost absolute proof that it did not.

No authentic data can be found to prove the continued use of the site as a settlement from Smith's visit forward, though the gravestone of a Dr. Edmond Hedler, bearing the date 1617, which was found near Potomac run in Stafford county, a few miles from the town, would indicate that there were white settlers in the section early in the 17th century, and if this is true there is every reason to believe the falls of the Rappahannock were not without their share, as the natural advantages of the place for community settlement would have been appealing and attractive to the colonists, who would have been quick to recognize them.

In 1622, according to Howe's history, Captain Smith proposed to the London Company to provide measures "to protect all their planters from the James to the Potowmac rivers," a territory that included the Rappahannock section, which can be taken as another indication of the presence of settlers in the latter.

Establishment of the Town

The first legal record of the place as a community is had in 1671 – strangely enough just one hundred years after the reported coming of the Spaniards – when Thomas Royston and John Buckner were granted, from Sir William Berkley, a certain tract of land at "the falls of the Rappahannock." This was on May 2d, and shortly afterward, together with forty colonists, they were established on what is now the heart of Fredericksburg, but known in those remote times as "Leaseland." This is the date that Fredericksburg officially takes as its birthday, though additional evidence that colonists already were in that vicinity is had in the fact that the boundaries of the land described in the grant from Governor Berkley to the two early settlers, ended where the lands of one Captain Lawrence Smith began.

Major Lawrence Smith's Fort

Three or four years after the grant was made to Buckner and Royston the "Grande Assemblie at James Cittie" took official cognizance of the Colony by ordering Major Lawrence Smith and one hundred and eleven men to the Falls of the Rappahannock for the purpose of protecting the colonists. Records in regard to this say, "At a Grande Assemblie at James Cittie, between the 20th of September, 1674, and the 17th of March, 1675, it was ordered that one hundred and eleven men out of Gloucester be garrisoned at one ffort or place of defense, at or near the falls of the Rappahannock river, of which ffort Major Lawrence Smith is to be captain or chief commander." It was also ordered that "the ffort be furnished with four hundred and eight pounds of powder and fourteen hundred pounds of shott."

A few years later, in 1679, Major Smith was authorized by the Jamestown government to mark out, below the falls of the Rappahannock, a strip of land one mile long and one-fourth of a mile wide, to be used as a colony and, together with eight commissioners, he was empowered to hold court and administer justice. Within this confine he was instructed to build habitations for two hundred and fifty men, fifty of whom were to be kept well armed and ready to respond to the tap of a drum. It would appear that the "ffort" mentioned in the earlier meeting of the "Grande Assemblie" was not

built until this year. The contention that it was erected on the Stafford side of the river seems to be without any foundation of fact.

That the community was now growing seems to be proven by the fact that the same act, defining the limits mentioned above, also mentioned a larger district, defined as extending three miles above the fort and two miles below it for a distance of four miles back, over which Major Smith and his commissioners were to have jurisdiction. Two years later, in 1681, the little town received a great impetus when two hundred families came to join the colony. From this time forward, the community began to take an important part in the life of the Colonies.

In 1710, upon the invitation of Baron de Graffenried, a friend of Governor Spotswood, twelve German families came to America and settled on the Rapidan river, eighteen miles above Fredericksburg, opening the first iron mines and establishing the first iron works in America. They named the place Germanna, and, according to an account left by one of the party, "packed all their provisions from Fredericksburg," then the principal trading point of the section.

In 1715, Governor Spotswood and the now-famed "Knights of the Golden Horseshoe," started from Germanna (some of them came through Fredericksburg en route and stopped with Austin Smith). Assembling at Germanna they left on September 24th and continued across the Blue Ridge mountains to the Valley of Virginia. An interesting account of the trip, which has been made the theme of song and story, and even the basis of a secret society, can be found in the diary of John Fountaine, a member of the party.

For a period nothing seems to have happened to the community of sufficient importance to be recorded, and for the next few years the imagination must supply the story of the settlement. It probably was a village of irregular, straggling streets and indifferent houses, with a population that struggled for a living by trading, trapping and other pursuits of that day. Its stores were likely very good for those times, but across the river it had a rival in its neighbor, Falmouth, which as a place of importance was fast catching up with it, and soon was destined to pass it, for in 1720, seven years earlier than "The Leaseland," it received its charter from the House of Burgesses at Williamsburg, who vested its government in seven trustees.

Falmouth's Fast Growth

If not as a political and social center, at least as a trading point, Falmouth had soon superceded Fredericksburg. It was the market for all the grain of the upper country, which by this time was beginning to be settled, and was in direct commercial communication with England, Europe and the West Indies by ocean-going vessels, which, when under 140 tons burden, could come up to its wharves. It was a great milling center and its merchants began to grow prosperous and wealthy, one of them, Mr. Bazil Gordon, accumulating the first million dollars ever made in America, though he was the product of a little later date than that now under consideration.

Grain brought out of Falmouth in boats larger than 140 tons was first put upon barges or flat boats of large capacity, which were conveyed down the river to waiting vessels and transferred by slave labor. The stories heard of large vessels docking at the Falmouth wharves are apocryphal; no boat of great tonnage ever got as far as Falmouth. This may account for Fredericksburg's final supremacy over Falmouth, which doubtless came about the time the first ferry was started, permitting the planters to cross the river with their grain and load directly to the waiting vessels, thus saving time and work, valuable considerations even in those days of abundant leisure and cheap slave labor.

"Leaseland" Is Chartered

But, while Falmouth was progressing "Leaseland" was also making strides, and in 1727 it became of sufficient importance to receive its charter from the House of Burgesses, and was named

in honor of Frederick, Prince of Wales, son of George II. The Prince died before ascending the throne, but his son became George III., and it was thus from the domination of the son of the Prince for whom their town was named that the patriotic people of the little village later plotted to free themselves. The act giving the town a charter names John Robinson, Henry Willis, Augustine Smith, John Taliaferro, Henry Beverly, John Waller and Jeremiah Crowder as trustees, and the streets were named for members of the Royal family, names which fortunately endure today, despite an attempt made some years ago to modernize the town and discard the beautiful and significant old names in favor of the less distinguished and uglier method of numerical and alphabetical designations.

Settlers now were rapidly coming into the community which was growing in importance. In 1732, Colonel Byrd owner of vast tracts where now stands the magnificent city of Richmond, an important man in the Colonial life of Virginia, came to Fredericksburg, calling on his friend, Colonel Henry Willis, "top man of the town," as Colonel Byrd refers to him in his very interesting account of the visit preserved to posterity. Colonel Byrd was impressed by Fredericksburg, particularly by the stone jail, which, he said, seemed strong enough "to hold Jack Shepherd" and with the versatility of one Sukey Livingstone, or Levinston, doctress and coffee woman. Some believe that the old stone building at the Free Bridge head is the jail referred to.

The seat of justice which had been located at Germanna, was this year moved to Fredericksburg, St. George's parish established and the church erected, with Rev. Patrick Henry, uncle of the famous orator, as its first rector.

"Town Fairs" Are Begun

In 1738 the House of Burgesses authorized the holding twice annually of town fairs for the sale of cattle, provisions, goods, wares and all kinds of merchandise, and it is easy to understand how these affairs became the most important events in the life of the village, attracting plantation owners from miles and taking on a social as well as business aspect. And as the act also provided that all persons attending these fairs should be immune from arrest for two days previous and two days subsequent to the events, except for capital offenses or breaches of the peace, suits, controversies and quarrels that might arise during the events, it can well be imagined that they were lively and exciting gatherings.

One year later the trustees found it necessary to purchase additional land for the accommodation of the growing population but a bargain was struck with Henry Willis, "the top man of the town," and John Lewis only after the House of Burgesses had taken up the matter deciding the ownership of the lands in question and fixing the sum to be paid Willis at fifteen pounds and Lewis at five pounds, not a bad total price, considering the survey shows that only three acres were bought.

Masonry Is Established

The town had now grown to such importance as a trading point that the establishment of direct connections with the Stafford shore was made necessary, and in 1748 the first ferry was authorized by law. Evidently from this time forward the town began to forge ahead of its thriving neighbor, Falmouth, for the lessened expense of transferring grain directly to the waiting ships made it more attractive as a market and many of the up-country people who formerly had sold their gain and traded in Falmouth, now crossed on the ferry and spent their money with the merchants of Fredericksburg. The establishment of Masonry in 1752, at which time the lodge was known as "The Lodge of Fredericksburg," points to the growing importance of the place; and that the Colonial citizens were keenly alive to the benefits to be derived from attracting industry to their towns is attested to by an act of the General Assembly, passed in 1759, to encourage the arts and manufactury in the Colonies, which set up a premium of five hundred pounds to be awarded the citizen making the best ten

hogsheads of wine in any one year, within eight years from the passage of the act. A number of citizens of the town contributed to the fund, among them George Washington, who gave two pounds.

In the Indian wars of 1755-57, Fredericksburg became an important depot and rendezvous for troops. Recruits, provisions, supplies and ordnances were sent to the town in quantities, and on April 15th, 1757, Governor Dinwiddie ordered Colonel George Washington to send two hundred men there to be "Thence sent by vessels to South Carolina, to treat with curtesy the Indians at Fort London, and to send them out in scalping parties with such number of men as you can spare."

But now the peaceable growth and prosperity of the village were to be halted. Dissatisfaction with the government in England began to grow, and there were murmurings of discontent and resentment, not by any means indulged in by all the citizens, for large numbers were still utterly loyal to the Crown, and those who opposed its policies congregated to themselves, meeting in secret or standing in little groups about the streets to give vent to their feelings.

The Revolution Gathers

One well-known place for the meeting of "Revolutionists" was the Rising Sun tavern still standing in good order, at that time kept by "Mine Host," George Weedon. This famed old Tavern is told of in another chapter. It is almost certain that at this tavern the rough draft was made of a resolution to be later passed in a public town meeting, which was tantamount to a declaration of independence, and which was passed twenty-one days before the famous Mecklenburg declaration and more than a year before that of the American congress.

These resolutions were adopted on the 29th day of April, 1775, amidst the greatest public excitement. News of the battle of Lexington, fought on the 20th of April, and of the removal by Lord Dunmore of twenty barrels of powder from the public magazine at Williamsburg to the English frigate "Fowey," then lying near Yorktown, which occurred one day after the battle of Lexington, had just reached Fredericksburg. Immediately the citizens showed their indignation. More than six hundred men from the town and the surrounding country armed themselves and sent a courier to General Washington, then at Williamsburg, offering their services in defense of the Colonies. Delegates were also dispatched to Richmond to ascertain the true state of affairs, and to find out at what point the men should report. The men stayed under arms and in readiness to move at short notice until General Washington transmitted a message, advising that they restrain from any hostilities until a congress could be called to decide upon a general plan of defense. This advice was received by a council of more than a hundred men, representing fourteen companies (the number under arms having by this time grown), which decided by a majority of one to disperse for the present, but to keep themselves in readiness for a call. Many of them afterwards joined the armies of General Washington.

The Gunnery Is Built

Material preparations for the conflict that everyone, even the Tories, now felt was certain, were made by the establishment at the town of the first small arms manufactury in America, which was located on what now is known as Gunnery Green. Colonel Fielding Lewis, brother-in-law of General Washington, was one of the commissioners in charge of the gunnery and active in its management.

With the coming of the Gunnery, and the formation of companies of troops, the peaceful atmosphere of Fredericksburg quickly changed to one of a militaristic aspect. Recruits drilled in the street, the manufacture of arms was rushed, supplies were received and stored, couriers, with news from other parts of the country, dashed in to acquaint the eager townspeople with events, and those loyal to the Colonies went bravely about with every kind of war preparation, while those inclined to Toryism kept quiet and to themselves, or moved away with their families, hoping, and probably succeeding in many cases, in reaching England before the whole country was affected by the war,

in which the part played by Fredericksburg and its citizens was of the utmost importance. The town gave to the Revolution an unusually large proportion of troops and many of the great leaders.

During the Revolution, although Fredericksburg men were the leaders of the Army, no fighting occurred here and the period was not one of danger for the town, but was one of anxiety for the inhabitants. Tarleton passed close to this city on his raid towards Charlottesville, and Lafayette and his men built the road still known as "The Marquis Road," through the Wilderness toward Orange.

Recently three soldiers, whose uniform buttons testify they were Hessians, were dug up near Spotsylvania Court House. A prison camp existed about two miles from here on the Plank Road from which Washington recruited some artisans to do the interior decorating in the home of his beloved sister, Betty, at Kenmore.

Regiments Are Recruited

Several Regiments went from Fredericksburg. General William Woodford (see sketch of life) was elected Commander of the first. Among his descendants are the late Marion Willis, Mayor Willis and Mr. Benj. Willis. General Hugh Mercer was chosen Commander of the third regiment, and James Monroe, of Fredericksburg (afterwards president) was Lieut. – Colonel, while Thomas Marshall, father of Chief Justice Marshall, was Major. The other Virginia Regiment was not recruited here. It was commanded by Patrick Henry.

Although it furnished two of the first three Virginia Regiments, and half of America's Generals, as well as the Commanding General, Fredericksburg was not a war center. Its history during that period will be found in the lives of the men it produced, elsewhere in this book.

It did give most material aid by furnishing arms from the "Gunnery" of Col. Fielding Lewis, and was generous in its financial aid, and always ready for attack.

After the Revolution

In the days of its glory, the Old Town was famed and prosperous

The first mention of Fredericksburg in the annals of the new Republic is an act of the legislature in 1781, incorporating the town and vesting the powers of its government in the hands of a mayor and commonality, consisting of a council and board of aldermen. Courts were established and provision made for future elections of its officials.

The first mayor was Charles Mortimer, and the Board of Aldermen consisted of William Williams, John Sommerville, Charles Dick, Samuel Roddy and John Julien, who, together with the mayor, were also justices of the peace, and required to hold a hustings court monthly. John Legg was appointed sergeant of the court and corporation, and John Richards and James Jarvis constables. The town's initial commonwealth's attorney, John Minor, is said to have been the first man to offer in any legislative body of the country a bill for the emancipation of the slaves.

The first action of the court is interesting, especially in these times. It was giving license to five persons to conduct taverns, immediately followed by an act to regulate them by establishing prices for alcoholic, vinous and fermented beverages. There is no mention of opening or closing hours, Sunday selling, selling to minors or any of the later and stricter regulations, and the prices to be charged are in terms of pounds, or parts, per gallon. The American bar was unknown then and probably even in the taverns and tap rooms, little liquor was sold by the drink. Some of the prices established translated into dollars, were West Indian rum, per gallon, $3.34; brandy, $1.67; good whiskey, $1.00; good beer, $0.67 and so on.

Having taken care that the tavern keepers could not charge too much for drink, the court now provided that they should not over charge for food served, placing the score for a "single diet" at twenty-five cents, a most reasonable sum according to modern standards.

While having the power to regulate, the court was not without regulation from a superior source as the articles of incorporation show that in case of misconduct on the part of the mayor or any member of the board, the others would have power to remove him after the charges had been fully proved, and it further stipulated that should any person elected to office fail or refuse to serve, he should be fined according to the following scale: mayor, fifty pounds; recorder, forty pounds; alderman, thirty pounds; councilman, twenty-five pounds. In 1782 an amendment was passed by the legislature, enlarging the jurisdiction of the court to include all territory within one mile of the town limits.

The Famed "Peace Ball"

Fredericksburg was not long in recovering from the effects of the Revolution. It had suffered no physical damage, though it had lost a great deal of actual and potential value in the deaths of citizens who gave their lives for the cause. A magnificent Peace Ball was held, in 1784, in the assembly room over the old City Hall, at Main Street and "Market Alley," which was attended by General Washington, General Lafayette, Rochambeau, Washington's mother, who came leaning on his arm and all the notables and fashionables of the country. The town was soon again a thriving hustling center of trade and business.

New enterprises came as requirements of the times made themselves felt. In 1786 the Virginia Herald made its appearance, the first newspaper published in the town, and about the same time whipping posts, ducking stools, and pillories were established to keep down the criminal tendencies

of the unlawfully inclined. In 1789 an act was passed, empowering the trustees of the Fredericksburg Academy to raise by lottery $4,000 to defray the expenses of erecting a building on the grounds for the accommodation of professors, a method of raising money that modern morals has outlawed. In 1795 the Episcopal Charity School was established by Archibald McPherson one of the splendid men of the town and in 1799 the town experienced its first serious fire, which was held by some to have been the work of an incendiary and by others as due to a wooden chimney. The council in an effort to assuredly exclude all danger of another such from either source, offered a reward of $500. for conviction of the incendiary, and passed an ordinance abolishing wooden chimneys, and stove pipes sticking through windows or the sides of houses, provided the buildings were not fire proof.

Commercial Development

From 1800 to 1850 Fredericksburg was the principal depot of trade and commerce for all that region between the Rappahannock river and the counties of Orange, Culpeper, Rapidan, Madison and Fauquier in addition to the contiguous territory and the great section lying between the town and the Chesapeake bay. Commerce with the upper country, however, was the most productive, for the lower country people were in close connection with the rivers and, as in those days all shipping was done by water ways, they shipped from wharves along the Rappahannock near their homes. They received much of their goods in this manner and were not so dependent upon the town as the upper country people who were forced to bring their products to Fredericksburg by wagon trains, which lumbered slowly down with their burdens of grain, produce and tobacco, and having unloaded and tarried awhile, lumbered back even more slowly, loaded with groceries, wines, liquors, household stores, plantation supplies, dry goods and merchandise for the country stores.

These wagons were of huge dimensions, “their curving bodies being before and behind at least twelve feet from the ground” according to one writer. They had canvas covers and were drawn by four horses always, sometimes six and eight, carrying jangling bells upon their collars. As many as two hundred of them were often on the streets or in the wagon yards of Fredericksburg at one time, making prosperity for the energetic merchants of that distant day, and bringing business for the many vessels, some of them large three masted schooners, which came from all parts of the globe to anchor at the wharves.

Fires Sweep the Town

At about this time Fredericksburg received two serious blows that greatly retarded its progress and prosperity. The first was in 1808, when nearly half the town was destroyed by a fire which broke out at the corner of Princess Anne and Lewis streets, where the Shepherd residence now stands, and fanned by a high wind quickly roared its way through the inflammable houses, such as most of the residences then were, until the town was half in ashes. At the outbreak of the fire most of the citizens were attending the races at “Willis Field,” just below the town, and before they could get back it had gained such headway that their efforts to check it were ineffectual. It is said the fire was caused by the overturning of a candle in the kitchen of the Stannard home, occupying the present site of the Shepherd residence, where refreshments were being prepared for the funeral of Mr. Stannard, and that the remains were gotten out of the house only with great difficulty on the part of the mourners. In those days funerals were accompanied by feasts, at which cake in sombre wrappings and wine in glasses with long black ribbons tied to the stems, were served.

Much of the brick construction on the upper business section of Main street, and a number of residences known as Colonial, are results of that fire, but deserve to be called Colonial as that period, architectually speaking, extended until about the year 1812. The Shepherd residence, of course, was built following the fire; the old Doswell home, now occupied by Mr. A. W. Rowe, probably was

erected afterwards and the old Marye home, now owned by Mr. A. L. Jenkins, has a corner stone bearing the date 1812, the residence formerly occupying that site having been burned. However, most of the older residences in Fredericksburg antedate the fire, and are of an earlier Colonial period.

During The War of 1812

Another blow was the War of 1812, and though, as in the case of the Revolution, the city did not suffer actual physical damage, its business and trade were interrupted and severely decreased, if not totally stopped, due to the English dominance of the seas and during the course of that conflict, the commercial life must have been slow and stagnant.

Fredericksburg itself was for a time threatened when the English admiral, Cockburn, made a raid up the Rappahannock. Many thought his objective was Fredericksburg and General William Madison, brother of the President, summoned a small force which took up positions of defense, from which to repel the raider, but he never got up the river as far as the city, turning when much lower down and putting back to sea for a cause which history has not assigned. During this war, as had been the case in the Revolution, and was to be in the Civil war to come, the Mercer home, now occupied by Councilman George W. Heflin, which stands on an eminence on lower Main street commanding a splendid view of the river, was used as a post from which to watch for the approach of enemy ships, a use that has given it the name of "The Sentry Box."

Following the War of 1812, Fredericksburg's trade revived and increased, and the city settled down to a full enjoyment of that remarkably cultural era – the only classical civilization America has ever known – which lasted until the Civil war and which has been made famous in song and story and the history of the old South. The families of the early settlers had by now become wealthy; the plantation masters owned hundreds of slaves, farmed thousands of acres and lived in their handsome old Colonial mansions in the most magnificent style the times could afford. Surrounded by many servants and all the comforts known to the day, they entertained lavishly, kept splendidly stocked wine cellars, boasted of private race courses and keen thoroughbred hunters and racers, and, as the business of the plantations was largely in the hands of overseers, they were gentlemen of splendid leisure with an abundance of time opportunity and means to devote to sports, politics and literature. Most of them were educated abroad and were learned in the classics, clever and entertaining conversationalists, beautiful riders, excellent shots, and when not engaged in social or literary pursuits that kept them indoors, enjoyed the sports of the field, hunting to the hounds, gunning for quail, deer, bear, wild turkey or duck, or fishing in the abundantly supplied streams tributary to the Potomac and Rappahannock rivers. Hard drinking was not unusual among them, but they were men of the highest sense of honor and principle, and were always true to an obligation.

While the townspeople did not enjoy life quite so lavishly as their plantation neighbors, they were not far behind; entertaining frequently and hospitably and mingling freely with the people from the country.

Care-Free Era of Gayety

But though it was a gay and carefree day, the times were not without their troubles. In 1822 the town was again visited by fire, this time originating at the site of the present Brent's store, at Main and George streets, destroying the entire business block encompassed between Main and Princess Anne and George and Hanover streets. Recovery from this fire was rapid. The merchants were financially substantial and quickly rebuilt the burned area.

As early as 1822, Fredericksburg was an important postal point, the mail for five states being assorted and distributed in the city and sent thence to its final destination. The conduct of Postmaster General Meigs in regard to increasing the compensation of carriers on the Fredericksburg route

without authorization from Congress, was the subject of an investigation by that body, but he was exonerated when it was explained that the increase was necessary because the mail had become so heavy that carriers were no longer able to handle it on horse back, being compelled to use surries, an added expense to them which justified the additional pay.

James Monroe, a former resident, lawyer and councilman of Fredericksburg, was at that time President of the United States, and though the town doubtless was a naturally important postal distribution, it may have been that the President's influence had some bearing-on the selection of the place which had given him his political start.

The Town Grows Richer

For the next decade, the trade and commercial life of the town increased. The merchants and manufacturers – by this time several large industries of this character being in operation – were busy and prosperous and had begun to grow either wealthy, measured in the standards of the time, or were in very comfortable circumstances, while the citizenry, generally, was prosperous and free from want. The town was compactly built, many of its structures now being of brick, and was regularly laid out. The public buildings consisted of a courthouse, market house, clerks office, the Episcopal Orphan Asylum, the Episcopal, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist and Reform Baptist Church. It had two banks, one female and one male academy of the higher class; a water system supplied through pipes from Poplar Spring. And the upper river canal was being built, a public enterprise from which great results were expected and which was to extend about forty miles up the Rappahannock. Gold was being mined in considerable quantities in upper Spotsylvania and lower Culpeper counties and brought to Fredericksburg in exchange for goods, and a generally thriving trade was being done, chiefly in grain, bacon, tobacco and other farm products for export. One writer has computed the city's annual exports at that time as averaging four million dollars, and Government statistics show that there were in the town in 1840, seventy-three stores, two tanneries, one grist mill, two printing plants, four semi-weekly newspapers, five academies with 256 students, and seven schools with 165 scholars. The population in that year was 3,974. Ten years previous it had been 3,308, divided as follows: whites, 1,797; slaves, 1,124; free blacks, 387.

The City Limits Are Set

From 1840 until the middle fifties, prosperity was continued. The canal was completed and had brought about an increased business at a lower cost. A railroad was in operation from Richmond through Fredericksburg to Aquia Creek, and steamboats had to some extent taken the place of sailing vessels as a means of water transportation, meaning quicker trips with greater burdens. In 1851 the legislature passed an act empowering the town to extend its limits, which was done according to a survey made by William Slaughter, and though that was more than seventy years ago, and though the population has since more than doubled, overflowing the limits and encroaching on the adjoining county, the limits have not again been enlarged.

In 1855 Fredericksburg's trade had ceased to grow at a rate equal to its average yearly increase for the previous twenty years, a condition for which the business men of that day were not altogether responsible, but which rather was brought about by the new commercial era the country and world was just entering – the era of railroad transportation, which quickly and cheaply, in comparison to past charges, carried the staples of the farm to the ports of the sea where waiting vessels stood ready to spread their sable sails on voyages to foreign markets. This era created the importance of the seaport and spelled the doom, as important shipping points, of the tidewater cities – those which had been located at the point where mountain torrent and still water meet in order to get both the advantage of power production and trade routes.

It is true that the business men of the city made the serious mistake about this period of building a plank road into one portion of the upper country from which they derived much trade, instead of building a railroad, for just a little later transportation by wagon train for export purposes had nearly entirely given away to transportation by rail, and Fredericksburg was utterly without such connection with its greatest field of trade, which soon was largely converted into other channels by the railroads now beginning to practically surround the town at a distance of approximately forty miles to the west. The single railroad passing through Fredericksburg had no coast terminal. Throughout its short length it paralleled the coast, offering no means of shipping for export, which comprised most of the business of the day. The plantation owners of the upper country who had dealt nearly entirely in Fredericksburg, now found it cheaper to haul to the railroad passing through their country and soon Fredericksburg was belted by little towns to the west. When later the P. F. & P. R. R. was built to Orange, it did not save the situation and except for lumber and ties, a trade it still largely enjoys, it has never hauled much to Fredericksburg for export, though it did help the city considerably in the matter of retail business.

Trade, however, had not ceased entirely to grow, nor the town to increase. In 1860 its population was nearly 5,000 persons, its business men still were active and prosperous and, but for the Civil war which was to come, they doubtless would have found a way out of the commercial difficulty confronting them and a different history of the town from that time forward might have been written.

The War Ends Prosperity

But over the course of a few years preceding this date, the community was troubled and torn by political strife and moral dissention. Black and ominous on the horizon of men's thoughts loomed the slave question, perplexing the country's leaders and giving threats of the red carnage that was to follow. A carnage that cost millions in men and money, caused unreckoned anguish and suffering, and retarded the growth of the South to such an extent that at the end of the following fifty years it had only just begun to emerge from the black shadow cast over it by the war.

By the end of the fifty's, trade had almost ceased, a spirit of patriotism for the Southland superseded that of commercial enterprise, the quietness of the soft old Colonial town was broken by wild public meetings; soon the call of a bugle floated softly across the still air and the heavy monotonous tread of feet sounded against the ground in unison to the beating of drums, and though the citizens had been loyal to the Union, sending by nearly a two-thirds majority a Union man to the State convention, they made ready for the inevitable conflict, and when the flame of war burst on the country like a flaring torch, they threw in their lots with the land of their nativity and bravely shouldering their arms, marched away from their homes to a fate that would bring them death or sorrow, and reduce their land to a shambles. The story of the Civil war as it effected this town is told in other chapters which follow this.

A Town in "No Man's Land"

For many years after the Civil war, Fredericksburg's connection with the great tragedy was told in the lines of patient suffering that webbed the faces of the older generation. It was a town of sombre, black figures – the widows and daughters of soldiers – gentle creatures who moved about in quiet dignity, bravely concealing the anguish hidden in their hearts, and smilingly making the best of such disordered conditions and distressing circumstances as before they had never known. It was a town filled with broken, crushed men, ill fitted for the harsher demands of their new lives; men once rich but now suddenly tossed from the foundations that always had sustained them, who found themselves aliens in an unknown and unfriendly world.

Blackened, scarred ruins of what once had been magnificent homes remained mute, grim evidences of the ghastly horror and the quaint old town was stunned and still, a tragic wreck of its one time beauty. But as best it could it gathered up the tangled threads of its existence and for the next decade struggled dumbly and blindly against the terrible disadvantages imposed upon it by the ruthlessness of war.

When the war came with Spain, it showed that the hurt of the Civil strife was gone, when its young men marched proudly through the streets to take their parts in the crisis; sent on their missions of patriotism with the feeble but sincere cheers of aged Confederate veterans ringing in their ears.

With the beginnings of the 20th century, Fredericksburg gave visable evidence of its recovery from the wounds of war. Its business men had accumulated sufficient capital to revive trade, at least partially, on its past scale; additional industries were started, new homes and buildings sprang up and there was the beginning of a general and steady improvement.

A Change in Government

In 1909 a group of progressive citizens, among whom one of the most earnest was the late Henry Warden, a man of immense usefulness, realized their ambition and the consummation of an aim for which they had fought for years, when the old form, of councilmanic government was abolished in favor of the City Manager form, Fredericksburg being one of the first small cities in the country to adopt it. Since its inauguration, the city has prospered and improved. Well laid granolithic sidewalks are placed throughout its business and residential sections, splendid hard gravel streets, topped with smooth asphalt binding, have replaced the old mud roadways, the water system has been enlarged and improved, fire protection increased and other municipal improvements made that have taken the town out of the class of sleepy provincial hamlets and made of it a modern little city. New hotels of the finest type, business enterprises and industrial concerns have come to give it new life and color, but with all this it still retains much that is sweet and old and is filled with the charm and elegance of the past.

Though it has just celebrated its two hundred and fiftieth birthday, the anniversary of a time when America was only beginning to give promise of its brilliant future, a time when the country was young and weak, but when manhood was strong and courage held high the torch of hope, Fredericksburg looks forward to the future with eager longing, confident that in the mirror of its past is the story of the time to come.

War's Worst Horrors

Shelled by 181 guns for hours, the town becomes a crumbled ruin

Fredericksburg is the point through which the railway and the roads to Richmond pass, and is half way between Washington and the Southern city. During the Civil war the possession of the town was an advantage not to be despised, and so from the beginning the two great armies of the North and South were contenders for the town.

The first attempt toward Fredericksburg was made June 1, 1861, when Federal gunboats and a small cavalry force were defeated, in an attempt to land troops at Aquia Creek, by General Daniel Ruggles, C. S. A., in command of the Department of Fredericksburg. This was the first skirmish of the war, in Virginia, and occurred nine days before "Big Bethel" and seven weeks after Virginia seceded.

On the nineteenth of April, 1862, the Stafford hills were taken by the Federals, and on April 27th General Marsena R. Patrick marched troops into the town and placed it under military rule. General Patrick treated the citizens with consideration and under his rule there was but little complaint of oppression. He was, in fact, generally admired for his fair treatment of the populace.

But with the coming of the conceited and inhuman General Pope, who followed McClellan in command of the Federal army, all that was changed. From that time forward this quiet old city between the hills, with its splendid homes, its old silver and china and tapistry and paintings, its great trees and broad streets, was to know every cruelty, horror, and depredation of war.

In the Enemy's Hands

General Pope, driven back by the Confederates, moved through Fauquier and Culpeper counties to Fredericksburg, and immediately upon securing the town, his subordinates scoured the city and arrested nineteen of the most prominent men, alleging no crime but stating frankly that it was done in reprisal for the arrest by the Confederates of Major Charles Williams of Fredericksburg, who was held in Richmond to prevent him from aiding the enemy. These men were sent to the old Capital Prison at Washington, where they were held from early in August to late September in 1862, and were then released in exchange for Major Williams and others. There were Rev. W. F. Broaddus, D. D., James McGuire, Charles Welford, Thomas F. Knox, Beverly T. Gill, James H. Bradley, Thomas B. Barton, Benjamin Temple, Lewis Wrenn, Michael Ames, John Coakley, John H. Roberts, John J. Berrey, Dr. James Cooke, John F. Scott, Montgomery Slaughter, (Mayor), George H. C. Rowe, Wm. H. Norton, Abraham Cox.

Fredericksburg was evacuated in August, 1862, when the Northern soldiers were drawn up in line and marched out of town. A great burden was lifted from the community. Heavy explosions marked the blowing up of the two bridges. On September 4th, an advance guard of Confederate cavalry rode into the town amid shouts of welcome.

The relief was but for a short period. On November 10th, Captain Dalgren's (Federal) dragoons crossed the river above Falmouth and clattered down Main street and met a small force of Confederates under Col. Critcher, who drove them back. But General Burnside's whole army was following and in a few days held the Stafford hills.

Fredericksburg and the country immediately about it was fought over, marched over, shelled and ravaged and desolated. The town became a dreary military outpost of battered, falling walls and charred timbers, of soldiers, now in gray, now in blue. Under its streets and in yards hundreds of dead

were buried to be now and again, in after years, unearthed. No other American city ever suffered as did this formerly prosperous town.

The situation, from a military standpoint, was this: Southeastward of the city the Rappahannock broadens, so that it is not easily bridged, and if an army crossed, it still would have to get to Richmond. Northwest (and much nearer west than north) of the city, the Rappahannock is fordable, but its course is *away* from Richmond, and the roads to Richmond *again lead back toward the rear of Fredericksburg*.

There were, therefore, but two feasible plans for the North to accomplish its "on to Richmond" purpose. One was to take Fredericksburg and with it the roads and railway to Richmond; Burnside tried this. The other, to cross the river just above, and get in the rear of Fredericksburg, thus getting the roads and railways to Richmond; Hooker and Grant tried this.

Threats of Bombardment

On November 20th, General Sumner peremptorily demanded the surrender of the town, under threat of immediate bombardment, but on receiving a request from Mayor Slaughter, he consented to extend the time twenty-four hours and sent General Patrick across the river with a message, as follows:

> "Gentlemen: Under cover of the houses of your town, shots have been fired upon the troops of my command. Your mills and factories are furnishing provisions and materials for clothing for armed bodies in rebellion against the authority of the Government of the United States. Your railroads and other means of transportation are removing supplies to the depot of such troops. This condition of things must terminate; and by direction of Major-General Burnside, commanding this army, I accordingly demand the surrender of this city into my hands, as a representative of the Government of the United States, at or before five o'clock this afternoon (five o'clock P. M. to-day). Failing an affirmative reply to this demand by the time indicated, sixteen hours will be permitted to elapse for the removal from the city of women and children, the sick, wounded, and aged; which period having elapsed, I shall proceed to shell the town.
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> "Upon obtaining possession of the town, every necessary means will be taken to preserve order and to secure the protective operation of the laws and policy of the United States Government."

While General Patrick waited from 10:00 A. M. until 7:00 P. M. (November 21) in a log house at French John's Wharf, the note was passed through the hands of a civic committee who had previously met General Lee at "Snowden," (now the beautiful home of Mr. and Mrs. F. C. Baldwin) on which were: Mayor Slaughter, William A. Little and Douglas H. Gordon. A note from General Lee was then transmitted to the town officials by General J. E. B. Stuart. This Mayor Slaughter, Dr. Wm. S. Scott and Samuel Harrison delivered late in the afternoon to General Patrick. General Lee simply said the town was non-combatant; that he would not occupy it, nor would he allow any one else to occupy it.

The Citizens Driven Out

Advised by General Lee, the inhabitants of the town now began to refugee to the rear. They went in the dark, in a snow storm, afoot, in vehicles and some in a railway train, upon which the Northern guns opened heavy fire. They slept in barns, cabins and the homes of country people, and left behind their silverware and fine old china, their paintings and portraits and every kind of property, all of which was doomed to destruction.

But the town was not shelled and a few at a time many of the old men and the women, the boys and girls, crept back from impossible shelters in the country to their homes in the town.

Then, twenty-two days later, at dawn of December 11th, at a signal from the "Long Tom" on Scott's Hill, at Falmouth, Burnside opened on the town, now half full of residents, with one hundred and eighty-one guns. The guns were placed along Stafford Heights from the Washington Farm to Falmouth, and the whole fire was concentrated on the town, where walls toppled, fires sprang up and chaos reigned.

Frequently the Union gunners fired a hundred guns a minute, round shot, case shot and shell. The quick puffs of smoke, touched in the center with flame, ran incessantly along the hills and a vast thunder echoed thirty miles away. Soon the town was under a pall of smoke, through which lifted the white spires of the churches.

"The scenes following the bombardment," says John Esten Cooke, in "Jackson," "were cruel. Men, women and children were driven from town. Hundreds of ladies and children were seen wandering homeless over the frozen highways, with bare feet and thin clothing. Delicately nurtured girls walked hurriedly over the various roads, seeking some friendly roof to cover them."

The following article by one who, as a little girl, was in Fredericksburg on the day of the bombardment, catches a glimpse of it in a personal way that is more convincing than pages of description.

The Shelling of Fredericksburg

Recollections of Mrs. Frances Bernard Goolrick (Mrs. John T. Goolrick) who was a little girl at that time.

During the stormy winter of 1862, my mother, a widow with three little children, was still in her native place, Fredericksburg, Virginia. Many of the inhabitants had long since left for Richmond and other points farther south, for the town lying just between the hostile armies was the constant scene of raids and skirmishes, and no one knew at what instant everything might be swept away from them. My mother, separated from her relatives by the fortunes of war, decided that it would be best for her to remain where she was and thus probably save the household effects she had gathered around her. The strongest arguments had been used by friends in town and relatives at a distance to induce her to leave for a place of more safety, but so far without avail, and though we were often alarmed by raids into town, as yet we had sustained no injuries of any description. In the fall the Federal army, under General Burnside, was on the Stafford hills just across the river, and it was constantly rumored that the town would be bombarded; but lulled to an insecure rest by many false alarms, the people had but little faith in these rumors.

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Guns Open On The Town

On the 11th of December, one of the most cruel and heartless acts of the war was to be perpetrated, the town of Fredericksburg was bombarded, the roar of guns beginning at daybreak, with no one in it but old or invalid men and helpless women and children. As quick as thought, we were up and dressed, and my aunt being very rapid in her movements, was the first to reach the cellar. My mother had long since had some chairs and other pieces of furniture placed there in case of an emergency. I being the first child dressed, ran out into the yard, and as I turned towards the cellar steps I beheld, it seemed to me, the most brilliant light that I had ever seen; as I looked, my aunt

reached out her arms and pulled me, quivering with terror, into the cellar. A shell had exploded at the back of the garden, in reality at some distance, but to me it was as if it had been at my very feet. The family soon assembled, including the servants; we had also additions in the way of two gentlemen from Stafford, Mr. B. and Mr. G., who had been detained in town, and a Lieutenant Eustace, of Braxton's battery, who was returning from a visit to his home. Also a colored family, Uncle Charles and Aunt Judy, with a small boy named Douglas and two or three other children. The couple had been left in charge of their mistress' home (she being out of town), and with no cellar to their house they were fain to come into ours.

Hiding From The Shells

And now the work of destruction began, and for long hours the only sounds that greeted our ears were the whizzing and moaning of the shells and the crash of falling bricks and timber. My mother and we three children were seated on a low bed with Ca'line, a very small darkey, huddled as close to us children as she could get, trying to keep warm. Mr. B. and Mr. G. occupied positions of honor on each side of the large old-fashioned fire-place, while my aunt was cowering inside, and every time a ball would roll through the house or a shell explode, she would draw herself up and moan and shiver. Lieutenant Eustace was a great comfort to my mother, and having some one to rely on enabled her to keep her courage up during the terrible ordeal of the cannonading. Although my brother, sister and myself were all frightened, we could not help laughing at the little darkey children who were positively stricken dumb with terror, old Aunt Judy keeping them close to her side and giving them severe cuffs and bangs if they moved so much as a finger.

My aunt, as well as the rest of us, now began to feel the pangs of hunger, and Aunt B. ordered the cook in the most positive manner to go up to the kitchen and make some coffee, telling her that she knew she was afraid and we would all be satisfied with only a cup of coffee for the present. I believe Aunt Sally would have gone without a word if my mother had told her, but this, from an outsider, she could not bear. (Aunt B. was my uncle's wife and the family servants had seen very little of her.) She, therefore, demurred, and Aunt B. calling her a coward, she arose in a perfect fury, and with insubordination written upon her from her rigid backbone to her flashing eyes, informed Aunt B. "dat she warn no mo' a coward dan de res' of 'em, but she didn't b'lieve Mars Gen'l Lee hisself cud stan' up making coffee under dat tornady." Just about this time Uncle Charles sprawled himself out upon the floor in ungovernable terror, and called upon the Lord to save him and his family. "Pray for us all, Uncle Charles," screamed my aunt, her voice just heard above the roar of artillery. The cannonading was now something fearful. Our house had been struck twice and the shrieking balls and bursting bombs were enough to appall the stoutest heart. My aunt being brave in speech, but in reality very timorous, and Uncle Charles "a bright and shining light" among the colored persuasion, she again requested him to pray. Aunt Judy by this time began to bewail that she had "lef' old Miss cow in the cowshed," and mistaking the moaning of the shells for the dying groans of the cow, she and Douglas lamented it in true darkey fashion. Uncle Charles meanwhile was very willing to pray, but Aunt Judy objected strenuously, saying, "dis ain't no time to be spendin' in pra'ar, Char's Pryor, wid dem bumb shells flying over you and a fizzlin' around you, and ole Miss cow dyin' right dar in your sight." But when the house was struck for the third time, Aunt B., in despairing accents, begged Uncle Charles to pray, so he fell upon his knees by an old barrel, in the middle of the cellar floor, upon which sat a solitary candle, whose flickering light lit up his hushed and solemn countenance, and in tremulous tones with many interjections, offered up a prayer.

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My mother thought of my father's portrait, and afraid of its being injured she determined to get it herself, and bring it into the cellar. Without telling anyone of her intentions, she left the cellar and went up into the parlor; the portrait was hanging just over a sofa, on which she stood to take it down. She had just reached the door opposite the sofa when a shell came crashing through the wall, demolishing the sofa on which she had so recently stood, as well as many other articles of furniture. She reached the cellar, white and trembling, but with the portrait unhurt in her arms.

Cannons Stop For Dinner

At one o'clock the cannonading suddenly ceased and for one hour we were at liberty to go above and see the damage that had been done. My mother's first efforts were directed towards getting a lunch, of which we were all sorely in need. With the aid of one of the frightened servants she succeeded in getting a fire and having some coffee made and with this, together with some cold bread and ham, we had a plentiful repast.

What a scene met our eyes; our pretty garden was strewn with cannon balls and pieces of broken shells, limbs knocked off the trees and the grape arbor a perfect wreck. The house had been damaged considerably, several large holes torn through it, both in front and back. While we were deploring the damage that had been done, Lieutenant Eustace returned in breathless haste to say that he had just heard an order from General Lee read on Commerce Street, saying that the women and children must leave town, as he would destroy it with hot shell that night, sooner than let it fall into the hands of the enemy, who were rapidly crossing the river on pontoon bridges. They urged my mother to take her children and fly at once from the town. After resisting until the gentlemen in despair were almost ready to drag her from her dangerous situation, she finally consented to leave. The wildest confusion now reigned, the servants wringing their hands and declaring they could not go without their "Chists," which they all managed to get somehow, and put upon their heads, but the gentlemen insisted so that we had only time to save our lives. They would not even let my mother go back into the house to get her purse or a single valuable. So we started just as we were; my wrapping, I remember, was an old ironing blanket, with a large hole burnt in the middle. I never did find out whether Aunt B. ever got her clothes on, for she stalked ahead of us, wrapped in a pure white counterpane, a tall, ghostly looking figure, who seemed to glide with incredible rapidity over the frozen ground. * * *

"Refugeeing" in Winter

We plodded along under a heavy cross fire, balls falling right and left of us. We left the town by way of the old "plank road," batteries of Confederates on both sides. The ground was rough and broken up by the tramping of soldiers and the heavy wagons and artillery that had passed over it, so that it was difficult and tiresome to walk, and the sun got warm by this time and the snow was melting rapidly; the mud was indescribable.

We had now reached the "Reservoir," a wooden building over "Poplar Spring," and about a mile from town. I had already lost one of my shoes several times, because of having no string in it, and my little brother insisted on giving me one of his, so we sat down by the "Reservoir" feeling very secure, but were terribly alarmed in a few moments by a ball coming through the building and whizzing very close to our ears. No, this would not do, so on we went, footsore and weary; sometimes we would meet a soldier who would carry one of us a short distance. All of our servants, except Ca'line, who was only seven years old, had taken some other direction. When we got about two miles

from town we overtook many other refugees; some were camping by the way, and others pressing on, some to country houses which were hospitably thrown open to wanderers from home, and others to "Salem Church," about three miles from Fredericksburg, where there was a large encampment. Our destination was a house not far from "Salem Church," which we now call the "Refuge House." Exhausted, we reached the house by twilight, found there some friends who had been there some weeks, and who kindly took us into their room and gave us every attention. And so great was our relief to feel that we had escaped from the horror of that day, that such small matters as having to sleep in the room with a dozen people, having no milk and no coffee, our principal diet consisting of corn bread, bacon and sorghum, seemed only slight troubles.

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Pillage and Plunder

From the end of the bombardment, and at the first invasion of the town by Union forces, until they were driven across the river again, Fredericksburg was mercilessly sacked. All day, from the houses, and particularly from the grand old homes that distinguished the town, came the noise of splintering furniture, the crash of chinaware, and – now and then – a scream. On the walls hung headless portraits, the face gashed by bayonets. Bayonets ripped open mattresses and the feathers heaped in piles or blew about the streets, littered with women's and men's clothing and letters and papers thrown out of desks. Mahogany furniture warmed the despoilers, and ten thousand were drunk on pilfered liquors. Windows and doors were smashed, the streets full of debris, through which drunken men grotesquely garbed in women's shawls and bonnets, staggered; flames rose in smoke pillars here and there, and the provost guard was helpless to control the strange orgy of stragglers and camp followers who were wild with plunder lust, amid the dead and wounded strewn about. A fearful picture of war was Fredericksburg in those December days from the eleventh to the thirteenth.

A Carnival of Horrors

To the citizens of Fredericksburg, those days meant bankruptcy, for their slaves walked away, their stores and churches were battered, their silverware stolen, their homes despoiled and their clothing worn or thrown away. Wealthy men were to walk back a few days later to their home town as paupers; women and children were to come back to hunger and discomfort in bleak winter weather; and all this was the result of what General Lee said was an entirely "unnecessary" bombardment and of days of pillage, which no earnest attempt to stop was made. Fredericksburg was the blackest spot on Burnside's none too effulgent reputation.

From the army, from Southern cities and from individuals money for relief came liberally, and in all nearly $170,000. was contributed to aid in feeding, clothing and making habitable homes for the unfortunate town's people. A good many carloads of food came, too, but the whole barely relieved the worst misery, for the $170,000. was Confederate money, with its purchasing power at low mark.

The First Battle

When, at Mayre's Heights and Hamilton's Crossing, war claimed her sacrifice

Following the shelling of Fredericksburg, on December 11th, the Union army began to cross on pontoons. On the 12th of December, under cover of the guns and of fog, almost the whole Union army crossed on three pontoons, one near the foot of Hawk street, another just above the car bridge, and one at Deep Run. On the morning of December 13th, General Burnside's army was drawn up in a line of battle from opposite Falmouth to Deep Run. It was, say they who saw the vast army with artillery and cavalry advanced, banners flying and the bayonets of their infantry hosts gleaming as the fog lifted, one of the most imposing sights of the war.

General Burnside actually had in line and fought during the day, according to his report, 100,000 effective men.

General Lee had 57,000 effectives, ranged along the hills from Taylor, past Snowden, past Marye's Heights, past Hazel Run and on to Hamilton's Crossing.

There were preliminary skirminishes of cavalry, light artillery and infantry. The enemy tried to "feel" General Lee's lines.

Then, about 10 o'clock, they advanced against the hills near Hamilton's Crossing, where Jackson's Corps was posted, in a terrific charge across a broad plateau between the river and the hills to within a quarter of a mile of the Confederate position, where they broke under terrific artillery and musketry fire. At one o'clock 55,000 men, the whole of Franklin's and Hooker's Grand Divisions advanced again in the mightiest single charge of the Civil War. Stuart and Pelham (he earned that day from Lee the title of "The Gallant Pelham") raked them with light artillery, but nevertheless they forced a wedge through Jackson's lines and had won the day, until Jackson's reserves, thrown into the breach, drove them out and threw back the whole line. As dusk came on, Stuart and Pelham counter charged, advancing their guns almost to the Bowling Green road, and Jackson prepared to charge and "drive them into the river," but was stopped by the heavy Union guns on Stafford hills.

At Hamilton's Crossing

During the fiercest part of the battle, "Stonewall" Jackson was on the hill just on the Fredericksburg side of Hamilton's Crossing where Walker's artillery was posted, but toward evening, fired with his hope of driving the Union forces across the river, he rode rapidly from place to place, sending out frequent orders. One of these he gave to an aide.

"Captain, go through there and if you and your horse come out alive, tell Stuart I am going to advance my whole line at sunset." It was this charge, mentioned above, which failed.

Late that night, rising from the blankets which he shared with a Chaplain, Jackson wrote some orders. While he was doing this, an orderly came and standing at the tent flap, said, "General Gregg is dying, General, and sent me to say to you that he wrote you a letter recently in which he used expressions he is sorry for. He says he meant no disrespect by that letter and was only doing what he thought was his duty. He hopes you will forgive him."

Without hesitation, Jackson, who was deeply stirred, answered, "Tell General Gregg I will be with him directly."

He rode through the woods back to where the brave Georgian was dying, and day was about to break when he came back to his troops.

General Maxey Gregg, of Georgia, was killed in action here, as were a number of other gallant officers.

Jackson held the right of the Confederate lines all day with 26,000 men against 55,000. His losses were about 3,415, while Hooker and Franklin lost 4,447. Meanwhile, against Marye's Heights, the left center of the line, almost two miles away, General Burnside sent again and again terrific infantry charges.

The Charge at Marye's Heights

The hills just back of Fredericksburg are fronted by an upward sloping plane, and at the foot of that part of the hills called Marye's Heights is a stone wall and the "Sunken Road" – as fatal here for Burnside as was the Sunken Road at Waterloo for Napoleon. On Marye's Heights was the Washington Artillery, and a number of guns – a veritable fortress, ready, as General Pegram said, "to sweep the plans in front as close as a fine-tooth comb." At the foot of the heights behind the stone wall were Cobb's Georgians, Kershaw's South Carolinians, and Ransom's and Cobb's North Carolinas – nine thousand riflemen, six deep, firing over the front lines' shoulders, so that, so one officer wrote "they literally sent bullets in sheets."

Against this impregnable place, Burnside launched charge after charge, and never did men go more bravely and certainly to death. This was simultaneous with the fighting at Hamilton's Crossing.

Meagher's Irish Brigade went first across the plain. Detouring from Hanover street and George street, they formed line of battle on the lowest ground, and with cedar branches waving in their hats, bravely green in memory of "the ould sod" they swept forward until the rifles behind the wall and the cannon on the hill decimated their ranks; and yet again they formed and charged, until over the whole plain lay the dead, with green cedar boughs waving idly in their hats. The Irish Brigade was practically exterminated, and three more charges by larger bodies failed, although one Northern officer fell within twenty-five yards of the wall. The day ended in the utter defeat of the Union Army, which withdrew into Fredericksburg at night.

In front of the wall 8,217 Union soldiers were killed or wounded, and in the "Sunken Road" the Confederates lost 1,962.

The total Union loss in the whole battle of Fredericksburg was 12,664 and the Confederates' loss 5,377.

General J. R. Cook, of the Confederate Army, was killed almost at the spot where Cobb fell. General C. F. Jackson and General Bayard, of the Union Army, were killed, the latter dying in the Bernard House, "Mansfield," where Franklin had his headquarters.

The Death of General Cobb

General T. R. R. Cobb, the gallant commander of the Georgians, fell mortally wounded at the stone wall, and tradition has said that he was killed by a shell fired from the lawn of his mother's home, a dramatic story that is refuted by evidence that he was killed by a sharpshooter in a house at the left and in front of the "Sunken Road."

But the brilliant Georgian, who aided in formulating the Confederate Constitution, was killed within sight of the house, where, more than forty years before, the elder Cobb met, and in which he married, she who was to be the General's mother. Journeying late in 1819 North to attend Congress, Senator John Forsythe, who was born in Fredericksburg, and Senator Cobb, Sr., were guests of Thomas R. Rootes, Esq., at Federal Hill, a great house that sits at the edge of the town, overlooking the little valley and Marye's Heights, and there began a romance that led to marriage of Miss Rootes and Senator Cobb, in the mansion, in 1820. From the spot where he stood when he died, had not the

smoke of a terrific battle screened it, their son, the Georgian General, could have clearly seen the windows of the room in which his parents were married.

General Cobb died in the yard of a small house, just at the edge of the "Sunken Road," ministered to in his last moments, as was many another man who drank the last bitter cup that day, by an angel of mercy and a woman of dauntless courage, Mrs. Martha Stevens.

Her house was in the center of the fire, yet she refused to leave it, and there between the lines, with the charges rolling up to her yard fence and tons of lead shrieking about her, Mrs. Stevens stayed all day, giving the wounded drink, and bandaging their wounds until every sheet and piece of clothing in the house had been used to bind a soldier's hurts. At times the fire of Northern troops was concentrated on her house so that General Lee, frowning, turned to those about him and said: "I wish those people would let Mrs. Stevens alone."

Nothing in the war was finer than the spirit of this woman, who stayed between the lines in and about her house, through the planks of which now and then a bullet splintered its way, miraculously living in a hail of missiles where, it seemed, nothing else could live.

Lee Spares Old "Chatham"

During the battle at Fredericksburg, General Lee stood on "Lee's Hill," an eminence near Hazel Run, and between Marye's Heights and Hamilton's crossing. Looking across the Rappahannock he could see "Chatham," the great winged brick house where General Burnside had headquarters, and where, under the wide spreading oaks, General Lee had won his bride, the pretty Mary Custis. The fine old place was now the property of Major Lacy, who rode up to Lee and said: "General there are a group of Yankee officers on my porch. I do not want my house spared. I ask permission to give orders to shell it." General Lee, smiling, said: "Major, I do not want to shell your fine old house. Besides, it has tender memories for me. I courted my bride under its trees."

In all this saturnalia of blood, it is a relief to find something in lighter vein, and in this case it is furnished by two Irishmen, Meagher and Mitchell. This little incident takes us back some years to "Ould Ireland." Here three young Irishmen, Charles Francis Meagher, John Boyle O'Reily and John Mitchell, known respectively, as the Irish Orater, Poet and Patriot, fired by love for Free Ireland and Home Rule, earned exile for themselves and left Ireland hurriedly. O'Reily settled in Boston and became a well-known poet and a champion of the North. Meagher settled in New York, and at the outbreak of the War organized the Irish Brigade, of which he was made Brigadier-General. Mitchell settled in Richmond, where he became the editor of the Richmond Enquirer, and, as a spectator, stood on Marye's Heights during the battle and witnessed the desperate charges and bloody repulses of his old friend, Meagher; and as he watched he unburdened his soul. His refrain varied between exultation at the sight of a fine fight and execration, in picturesque and satisfying language, of the "renegade Irishman," his one-time friend, who would fight against the very principle, the advocacy of which had brought them exile from Ireland.

Mitchell's grandson was John Purroy Mitchell, mayor of New York City, who died in the Aviation service during the late war.

The Good Samaritan

There was another soul at the Battle of Fredericksburg whose spirit of mercy to the suffering was stronger than the dread of death, and in the Chapel of the Prince of Peace at Gettysburg, is a tablet to him, Dick Kirkland – the "Angel of Marye's Heights" – a gracious memorial placed by the Federal survivors of that fight.

Dick Kirkland, a Southern soldier, who all day long had fought behind the Stone Wall, laid aside all animosity when night fell and the bitter cries arose in the chill air from the wounded and dying on

the plain. The pitiful calls for "water, water" so moved the young South Carolinian that he asked his commanding officer to be allowed to relieve the sufferers. His request was at first refused, but when he begged, permission was given, and taking as many full canteens as he could carry, he went out among the pitiful forms dotting the field, while the shells and rifle fire still made it most dangerous, administering to the enemy. He was a good Samaritan and unafraid, who is affectionately remembered by a grateful foe. Kirkland was more merciful to the wounded Federals than was their commander, for it was forty-eight hours before General Burnside could swallow his pride and acknowledge defeat by applying for a truce. In the interval, during forty-eight hours of winter weather while the wounded lay unsheltered, chill winds sweeping over them, the wailing and the agonized crying slowly died out. Every wounded man who could not crawl or walk died, and when the truce came more than four thousand bodies were piled in front of the "Sunken Road."

At night of December 13th, Burnside was utterly defeated and after quietly facing the Southern forces all day on the 14th, he was practically forced to abandon his battle plans by the protests of his Generals, who practically refused to charge again, and moved his army across the river at night.

A Critique of the Armies

In the whole action at Fredericksburg, General Lee used but 57,000 men, while official reports state that the Northern forces "in the fight" numbered 100,000. As bearing on this (and most assuredly with no intention to belittle the gallant men of the Federal Army, who fought so bravely) the condition of Burnside's Army, due to the policy of his government and to Major-General Hooker's insubordination, is to be considered. An estimate of this army by the New York Times shows to what pass vacillation had brought it. The Times said after Fredericksburg:

"Sad, sad it is to look at this superb Army of the Potomac – the match of which no conqueror ever led – this incomparable army, fit to perform the mission the country has imposed upon it – paralyzed, petrified, put under a blight and a spell. You see men who tell you that they have been in a dozen battles and have been licked and chased every time – they would like to chase once to see how it "feels." This begins to tell on them. Their splendid qualities, their patience, faith, hope and courage, are gradually oozing out. Certainly never were a graver, gloomier, more sober, sombre, serious and unmusical body of men than the Army of the Potomac at the present time."

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.