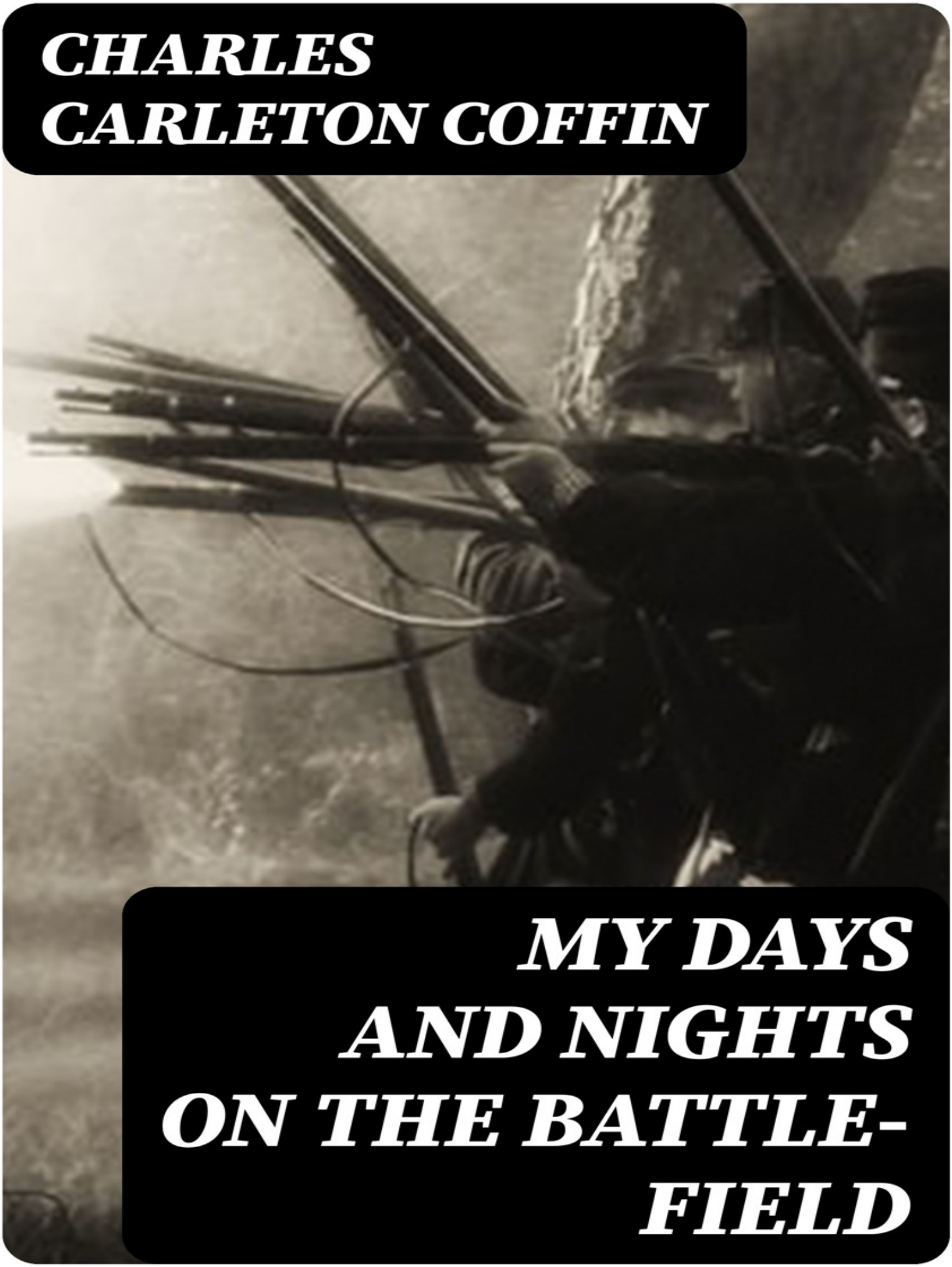
CHARLES CARLETON COFFIN



MY DAYS AND NIGHTS ON THE BATTLE-FIELD

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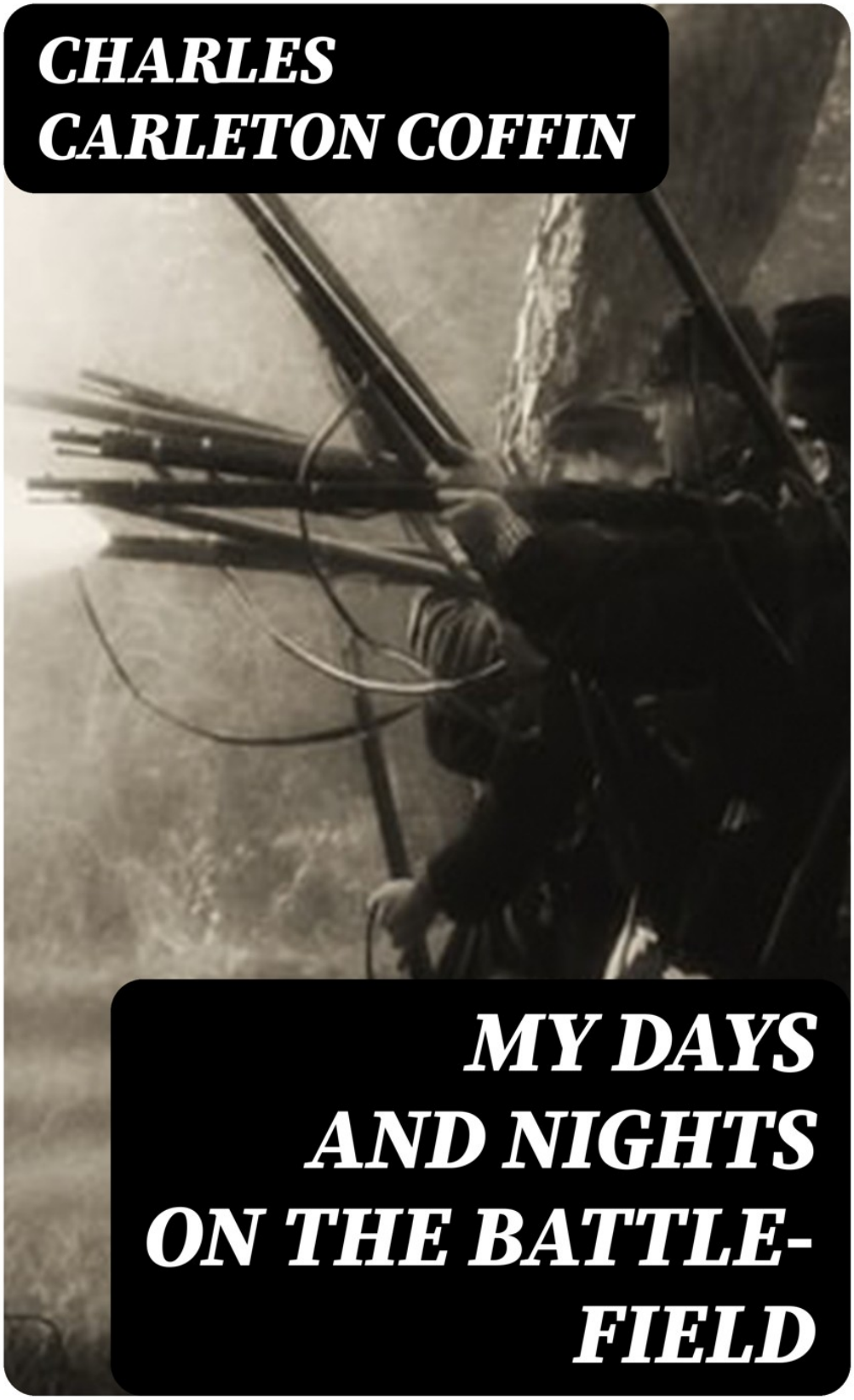

MY DAYS AND NIGHTS ON THE BATTLE-FIELD

Charles Carleton Coffin

My Days and Nights on the Battle-Field

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INTRODUCTORY.

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TO THE YOUTH OF THE UNITED STATES.

In my boyhood, my young friends, I loved to sit beside my grandfather and listen to his stories of Bunker Hill and Saratoga,—how he and his comrades stood upon those fields and fought for their country. I could almost see the fight and hear the cannon’s roar, the rattle of the musketry, and the shouts of victory. They won their independence, and established the best government the world ever saw. But there are men in this country who hate that government, who have plotted against it, and who have brought about the present Great Rebellion to destroy it. I have witnessed some of the battles which have been fought during this war, although I have not been a soldier, as my grandfather was, and I shall try, in this volume, to picture those scenes, and give correct descriptions of the ground, the marching of the troops, the positions they occupied, and other things, that you may understand how your father, or your brothers, or your friends, fought for the dear old flag.

CHAPTER I.

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HOW THE REBELLION CAME ABOUT.

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Many of you, my young readers, have seen the springs which form the trickling rivulets upon the hillsides. How small they are. You can almost drink them dry. But in the valley the silver threads become a brook, which widens to a river rolling to the far-off ocean. So is it with the ever-flowing stream of time. The things which were of small account a hundred years ago are powerful forces to-day. Great events do not usually result from one cause, but from many causes. To ascertain how the rebellion came about, let us read history.

Nearly three hundred years ago, when Elizabeth was Queen of England, Sir Walter Raleigh sailed across the Atlantic Ocean to explore the newly discovered Continent of America. Sir Walter was a sailor, a soldier, and one of the gentleman attendants of the Queen. He was so courteous and gallant that he once threw his gold-laced scarlet cloak upon the ground for a mat, that the Queen might not step her royal foot in the mud. At that time America was an unexplored wilderness. The old navigators had sailed along the coasts, but the smooth waters of the great lakes and rivers had never been ruffled by the oars of European boatmen.

Sir Walter found a beautiful land, shaded by grand old forests; also fertile fields, waving with corn and a broad-

leaved plant with purple flowers, which the Indians smoked in pipes of flint and vermilion stone brought from the cliffs of the great Missouri River.

The sailors learned to smoke, and when Sir Walter returned to England they puffed their pipes in the streets. The people were amazed, and wondered if the sailors were on fire. So tobacco began to be used in England. That was in 1584. We shall see that a little tobacco-smoke whiffed nearly three hundred years ago has had an influence in bringing about the rebellion.

Twenty years rolled by. London merchants dreamed of wealth in store for them in Virginia. A company was formed to colonize the country. Many of the merchants had spendthrift sons, who were also idle and given to bad habits. These young fellows thought it degrading to work. In those Western woods across the ocean, along the great rivers and upon the blue mountains, they saw in imagination a wild, roving, reckless life. They could hunt the wild beasts. They could live without the restraints of society. They had heard wonderful stories of exhaustless mines of gold and silver. There they could get rich, and that was the land for them.

A vessel with five hundred colonists was fitted out. There were only sixteen men of the five hundred accustomed to work; the others called themselves gentlemen and cavaliers. They settled at Jamestown. They found no rich gold-mines, and wealth was not to be had on the fertile plains without labor. Not knowing how to cultivate the soil, and hating work, they had a hard time. They suffered for want of food. Many died from starvation. Yet more of the same indolent class joined the colony,—young men who had

had rows with tutors at school, and who had broken the heads of London watchmen in their midnight revels. A historian of those times says that “they were fitter to breed a riot than found a colony.”

The merchants, finding that a different class of men was needed to save the colony from ruin, sent over poor laboring men, who were apprenticed to their sons. Thus the idle cavaliers were kept from starvation. Instead of working themselves, they directed the poor, hard-working men, and pocketed the profits.

Smoking began to be fashionable in England. Lawyers in big wigs, ministers in black gowns, merchants seated in their counting-houses, ladies in silks and satins, all took to this habit of the North American Indians. Tobacco was in demand. Every ship from America was freighted with it. The purple-flowered plant grew luxuriantly in the fields of Virginia, and so through the labor of the poor men the indolent cavaliers became rich.

As there were no women in the colony, some of the cavaliers sent over to England and bought themselves wives, paying a hundred pounds of tobacco for a wife. Others married Indian wives.

The jails of London were crowded with thieves and vagabonds. They had committed crime and lost their freedom. To get rid of them, the magistrates sent several ship-loads to Virginia, where they were sold to the planters as servants and laborers. Thus it came to pass that there were distinct classes in the colony,—men having rights and men without rights,—men owning labor and men owing

labor,—men with power and men without power,—all of which had something to do in bringing about the rebellion.

In August, 1620, a Dutch captain sailed up James River with twenty negroes on board his ship, which he had stolen from Africa. The planters purchased them, not as apprentices, but as slaves. The captain, having made a profitable voyage, sailed for Africa to steal more. Thus the African slave-trade in America began, which became the main fountain-head and grand cause of the rebellion.

The Virginia planters wanted large plantations. Some of them had influence with King James, and obtained grants of immense estates, containing thousands of acres. All the while the common people of England were learning to smoke, snuff, and chew tobacco, and across the English Channel the Dutch burghers, housewives, and farmers were learning to puff their pipes. A pound of tobacco was worth three shillings. The planters grew richer, purchased more land and more slaves, while the apprenticed men, who had no money and no means of obtaining any, of course could not become land-owners. Thus the three classes of men—planters, poor white men, and slaves—became perpetually distinct.

By the charter which the company of London merchants had received from the King, owners of land only were allowed to have a voice in the management of public affairs. They only could hold office. A poor man could not have anything to do with enacting or administering the laws. In 1705, a historian, then writing, says:—

> “There are men with great estates, who take care to supply the poor with goods, and who are sure to keep

them always in debt, and consequently dependent. Out of this number are chosen the Council, Assembly, Justices of the Peace, and other officers, who conspire together to wield power.“[1]

Thus a few rich men managed all the affairs of the colony. They were able to perpetuate their power, to hand these privileges to their sons, through successive generations.

At the present time there are many men and women in Virginia who consider themselves as belonging to the first families, because they are descendants of those who settled the country. The great estates have passed from the family name,—squandered by the dissolute and indolent sons. They are poor, but very proud, and call themselves noble-born. They look with contempt upon a man who works for a living. I saw a great estate, which was once owned by one of these proud families, near the Antietam battle-field, but spendthrift sons have squandered it, and there is but little left. The land is worn out, but the owner of the remaining acres,—poor, but priding himself upon his high birth, looking with haughty contempt upon men who work,—in the summer of 1860, day after day, was seen sitting upon his horse, with an umbrella over his head to keep off the sun, *overseeing his two negro women, who were hoeing corn*!

All of these springs which started in Virginia tinged, entered into, and gave color to society throughout the South. There were great estates, privileged classes, a few rich and many poor men. There were planters, poor white men, and slaves.

In those old times pirates sailed the seas, plundering and destroying ships. They swarmed around the West India Islands, and sold their spoils to the people of Charleston, South Carolina. There, for several years, the freebooters refitted their ships, and had a hearty welcome. But the King’s ships of war broke up the business, and commerce again had peaceful possession of the ocean.

These things gave direction to the stream, influencing the development and growth of the colonies, which became States in the Union, and which seceded in 1861.

While the Dutch captain was bargaining off his negroes to the planters in 1620 at Jamestown, another vessel was sailing from Plymouth harbor, in England, for a voyage across the Atlantic. Years before, in the little town of Scrooby, a man with a long white beard, by the name of Clifton, had preached what he called a pure religious doctrine. Those who went to hear him, and who believed what he preached, soon came to be called Puritans. Most of them were poor, hard-working English farmers and villagers. There was much discussion, controversy, bigotry, and bitterness in religion at that time, and these poor men were driven from county to county, till finally they were obliged to flee to Holland to escape persecution and save their lives. King James himself was one of their most bitter persecutors. He declared that he would “harry every one of them out of England.” After remaining in Holland several years, they obtained permission of the King to sail for North America.

On a December morning the vessel, after five months’ tossing upon the ocean, lay at anchor in the harbor of Cape

Cod. Those on board had no charter of government. They were not men who had had midnight revels in London, but men who had prayers in their families night and morning, and who met for religious worship on the Sabbath. They respected law, loved order, and knew that it would be necessary to have a form of government in the colony. They assembled in the cabin of the ship, and, after prayer, signed their names to an agreement to obey all the rules, regulations, and laws which might be enacted by the majority. Then they elected a governor, each man having a voice in the election. It was what might be called the first town-meeting in America. Thus democratic liberty and Christian worship, independent of forms established by kings and bishops, had a beginning in this country.

The climate was cold, the seasons short, the soil sterile, and so the settlers of Cape Cod were obliged to work hard to obtain a living. In consequence, they and their descendants became active, industrious, and energetic. Thus they laid the foundations for thrift and enterprise. They did not look upon labor as degrading, but as ennobling. They passed laws, that men able to work should not be idle. They were not rich enough to own great estates, but each man had his own little farm. There was, therefore, no landed aristocracy, such as was growing into power in Virginia. They were not able to own labor to any great extent. There were a few apprenticed men, and some negro slaves, but the social and political influences were all different from those in the Southern colonies. The time came when apprenticed men were released from service, and the slaves set free.

These hard-working men did not wish to have their children grow up in ignorance. In order, therefore, that every child might become an intelligent citizen and member of society, they established common schools and founded colleges. In 1640, just twenty years after the landing at Plymouth, they had a printing-press at Cambridge.

The cavaliers of Virginia, instead of establishing schools, sent their sons to England to be educated, leaving the children of the poor men to grow up in ignorance. They did not want them to obtain an education. In 1670, fifty years after the Dutch captain had bartered off his negroes for tobacco,—fifty years from the election of the first governor by the people in the cabin of the Mayflower,—the King appointed Commissioners of Education, who addressed letters to the governors of the colonies upon the subject. The Governor of Connecticut replied, that one fourth of the entire income of the colony was laid out in maintaining public schools. Governor Berkeley, of Virginia, who owned a great plantation and many slaves, and who wanted to keep the government in the hands of the few privileged families, answered,—

> “I thank God there are no free schools nor printing in this colony, and I hope we shall not have them these hundred years.”

All the Northern colonies established common schools, and liberally supported them, that every child might obtain an education. The Southern colonies, even when they became States, gave but little attention to education, and consequently the children became more ignorant than their

fathers. Thus it has come to pass, that in the Northern States nearly all can read and write, while in the Southern States there are hundreds of thousands who do not know the alphabet.

In 1850 the State of Maine had 518,000 inhabitants; of these 2,134 could not read nor write, while the State of North Carolina, with a white population of 553,000, *had eighty thousand native whites, over twenty years of age, who had never attended school*!

The six New England States, with a population of 2,705,000, had in 1850 but eight thousand unable to read and write, while Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama—five States, with a population of 2,670,000 whites—*had two hundred and sixty-two thousand, over twenty years of age, unable to read a word*! In the Northern States educational facilities are rapidly increasing, while in the South they are fast diminishing. In 1857 there were 96,000 school-children in Vermont, and all but six thousand attended school. South Carolina the same year had 114,000 school-children; of these *ninety-five thousand* had no school privileges. Virginia had 414,000 school-children; *three hundred and seventy-two thousand* of them had no means of learning the alphabet!

In Missouri, in some of the counties, the school lands given by Congress have been sold, and the money distributed among the people, instead of being invested for the benefit of schools. With each generation ignorance has increased in the Southern States. It has been the design of the slaveholders to keep the poor white men in ignorance. There, neighbors are miles apart. There are vast tracts of

land where the solitude is unbroken by the sounds of labor. Schools and newspapers cannot flourish. Information is given by word of mouth. Men are influenced to political action by the arguments and stories of stump-speakers, and not by reading newspapers. They vote as they are told, or as they are influenced by the stories they hear. So, when the leading conspirators were ready to bring about the rebellion, being in possession of the State governments, holding official positions, by misrepresentation, cunning, and wickedness, they were able to delude the ignorant poor men, and induce them to vote to secede from the Union.

Two thousand years ago the natives of India manufactured cloth from the fibres of the cotton-plant, which grew wild in the woods. The old historian, Herodotus, says that the trees bore fleeces as white as snow. A planter of South Carolina obtained some of the seeds, and began to cultivate the plant. In 1748 ten bags of cotton were shipped to Liverpool, but cotton-spinning had not then begun in England. In 1784 the custom-house officers at Liverpool seized eight bags which a planter had sent over, on the ground that it was not possible to raise so much in America. The manufacture of cotton goods was just then commencing in England, and cotton was in demand. The plant grew luxuriantly in the sunny fields of the South, but it was a day’s work for a negro to separate the seed from a pound, and the planters despaired of making it a profitable crop.

A few years before the Liverpool custom-house officers seized the eight bags, a boy named Eli Whitney was attending school in Westboro’, Massachusetts, who was destined to help the planters out of the difficulty. He made

water-wheels, which plashed in the roadside brooks, and windmills, which whirled upon his father’s barn. He made violins, which were the wonder and admiration of all musicians. He set up a shop, and made nails by machinery, and thus earned money through the Revolutionary War. When not more than twelve years old, he stayed at home from meeting one Sunday alone, and took his father’s watch to pieces, and put it together again so nicely that it went as well as ever. It was not the proper business for Sunday, however.

When a young man, he went South to teach school. He happened to hear General Greene, the brave and noble man who had been a match for Lord Cornwallis, wish that there was a machine for cleaning cotton. He thought the matter over, went to work, and in a short time had a machine which, with some improvements, now does the work of a thousand negroes. He built it in secret, but the planters, getting wind of it, broke open his room, stole his invention, built machines of their own, and cheated him out of his property.

About this time there was a poor cotton-spinner in England who thought he could invent a machine for spinning. He sat up late nights, and thought how to have the wheels, cranks, and belts arranged. At times he was almost discouraged, but his patient, cheerful, loving wife encouraged him, and he succeeded at last in making a machine which would do the work of a thousand spinners. He named it Jenny, for his wife, who had been so patient and cheerful, though she and the children, some of the time while he was studying upon the invention, had little to eat.

The gin and the jenny made cotton cloth much cheaper than it had been. Many manufactories were built in England and in the New England States. More acres of cotton were planted in the South, and more negroes stolen from Africa. In the North, along the mill-streams, there was the click and clatter of machinery. A great many ships were needed to transport the cotton from the agricultural South to the manufactories of the commercial, industrious, trading North. The cotton crop of the South in 1784 was worth only a few hundred dollars, but the crop of 1860 was worth hundreds of millions, so great had been the increase.

This great demand for cotton affected trade and commerce the world over. The planters had princely incomes from the labor of their slaves. Some of them received $50,000 to $100,000 a year. They said that cotton was king, and ruled the world. They thought that the whole human race was dependent upon them, and that by withholding their cotton a single year they could compel the whole world to acknowledge their power. They were few in number,—about three hundred thousand in thirty millions of people. They used every means possible to extend and perpetuate their power. They saw that the Northern States were beehives of industry, and that the boys swarming from the Northern school-houses were becoming mechanics, farmers, teachers, engaging in all employments, and that knowledge as a power was getting the better of wealth.

The men of the North were settling the new States of the West, and political power in Congress was slipping from the hands of the South. To retain that power they must bring additional Slave States into the Union. They therefore

demanded the right to take their slaves into new Territories. The Northern school-boys who had grown to be men, who had gone into the far West to build them homes, could not consent to see their children deprived of that which had made them men. They saw that if slavery came in, schools must go out. They saw that where slavery existed there were three distinct classes in society,—the few rich, unscrupulous, hard-hearted slaveholders, the many poor, ignorant, debased white men, and the slaves. They saw that free labor and slave labor could not exist together. They therefore rightfully resisted the extension of slavery into the Territories. But the slaveholders carried the day. The North was outvoted and obliged to yield.

The descendants of the first families of Virginia raised slaves for a living. It was degrading to labor, but a very honorable way of getting a living to raise pigs, mules, and negroes,—to sell them to the more southern States,—to sell their own sons and daughters! Their fathers purchased wives: why should they not sell their own children?

It was very profitable to raise negroes for the market, and the ministers of the South, in their pulpits on the Sabbath, said it was a Christian occupation. They expounded the Bible, and showed the benevolent designs of God in establishing slavery. It was right. It had the sanction of the Almighty. It was a Divine missionary institution.

Their political success, their great power, their wealth,—which they received through the unpaid labor of their slaves, and from selling their own sons and daughters,—developed their bad traits of character. They became proud, insolent, domineering, and ambitious. They demanded the

right not only to extend slavery over all the Territories of the United States, but also the right to take their slaves into the Free States. They demanded that no one should speak or write against slavery. They secured the passage of a law by Congress enabling them to catch their runaway slaves. They demanded that the Constitution should be changed to favor the growth and extension of slavery. For many years they plotted against the government,—threatening to destroy it if they could not have what they demanded. They looked with utter contempt upon the hard-working men of the North. They determined to rule or ruin. Every Northern man living at the South was looked upon with suspicion. Some were tarred and feathered, others hung, and many were killed in cold blood! No Northern man could open his lips on that subject in the South. Men of the North could not travel there. The noble astronomer, Mitchell, the brave general who has laid down his life for his country, was surrounded by an ignorant, excited mob in Alabama, who were ready to hang him because he told them he was in favor of the Union. But Southern orators and political speakers were invited North, and listened to with respect by the thinking, reasoning people,—the pupils of the common schools.

Climate, trade, commerce, common schools, and industry have made the North different from the South; but there was nothing in these to bring on the war.

When the slaveholders saw that they had lost their power in Congress to pass laws for the extension of slavery, they determined to secede from the Union. When the North elected a President who declared himself opposed to the extension of slavery, they began the war. They stole forts,

arsenals, money, steamboats,—everything they could lay their hands on belonging to government and individuals,—seceded from the Union, formed a confederacy, raised an army, and fired the first gun.

They planned a great empire, which should extend south to the Isthmus of Darien and west to the Pacific Ocean, and made slavery its cornerstone. They talked of conquering the North. They declared that the time would come when they would muster their slaves on Bunker Hill, when the laboring men of the North, “with hat in hand, should stand meekly before them, their masters.”[2]

They besieged Fort Sumter, fired upon the ships sent to its relief, bombarded the fort and captured it. To save their country, their government, all that was dear to them, to protect their insulted, time-honored flag, the men of the North took up arms.

CHAPTER II.

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THE GATHERING OF A GREAT ARMY.

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The Rebels began the war by firing upon Fort Sumter. You remember how stupefying the news of its surrender. You could not at first believe that they would fire upon the Stars and Stripes,—the flag respected and honored everywhere on earth. When there was no longer a doubt that they had begun hostilities, you could not have felt worse if you had heard of the death of a very dear friend. But as you thought it over and reflected upon the wickedness of the act, so deliberate and terrible, you felt that you would like to see the traitors hung; not that it would be a pleasure to see men die a felon's death, but because you loved your country and its flag, with its heaven-born hues, its azure field of stars! Not that the flag is anything in itself to be protected, honored, and revered, but because it is the emblem of constitutional liberty and freedom, the ensign of the best, freest, noblest government ever established. It had cost suffering and blood. Kings, aristocrats, despots, and tyrants, in the Old World and in the New hated it, but millions of men in other lands, suffering, abused, robbed of their rights, beheld it as their banner of hope. When you thought how it had been struck down by traitors, when you heard that the President had called for seventy five thousand troops, you hurrahed with all your might, and wished that you were old enough and big enough to go and fight the Rebels.

The drums beat in the street. You saw the soldiers hasten to take their places in the gathering ranks. You marched beside them and kept step with the music. The sunlight gleamed from their bayonets. Their standards waved in the breeze, while the drum, the fife, the bugle, and the trumpet thrilled you as never before. You marched proudly and defiantly. You felt that you could annihilate the stoutest Rebel. You followed the soldiers to the railroad depot and hurrahed till the train which bore them away was out of sight.

Let us follow them to Washington, and see the gathering of a great army. The Rebels have threatened to capture that city and make it their seat of government, and it must be saved.

We have been a quiet, peaceable nation, and have had no great standing armies of a half-million men. We know but little about war. The Northern States are unprepared for war. President Buchanan’s Secretary of War, Floyd, has proved himself a thief. He has stolen several hundred thousands of muskets, thousands of pieces of artillery, sending them from the Northern arsenals to the South. The slaveholders have been for many years plotting the rebellion. They are armed, and we are not. Their arsenals are well filled, while ours are empty, because President Buchanan was a weak old man, and kept thieves and traitors in places of trust and power.

At the call of the President every village sends its soldiers, every town its company. When you listened to the soul-thrilling music of the band, and watched the long, winding train as it vanished with the troops in the distance, you had one little glimpse of the machinery of war, as when

riding past a great manufactory you see a single pulley, or a row of spindles through a window. You do not see the thousands of wheels, belts, shafts,—the hundred thousand spindles, the arms of iron, fingers of brass, and springs of steel, and the mighty wheel which gives motion to all,—and so you have not seen the great, complicated, far-reaching, and powerful machinery of war.

But there is activity everywhere. Drums are beating, men assembling, soldiers marching, and hastening on in regiments. They go into camp and sleep on the ground, wrapped in their blankets. It is a new life. They have no napkins, no table-cloths at breakfast, dinner, or supper, no china plates or silver forks. Each soldier has his tin plate and cup, and makes a hearty meal of beef and bread. It is hard-baked bread. They call it *hard-tack*, because it might be tacked upon the roof of a house instead of shingles. They also have Cincinnati *chicken*. At home they called it pork; fowls are scarce and pork is plenty in camp, so they make believe it is chicken!

There is drilling by squads, companies, battalions, and by regiments. Some stand guard around the camp by day, and others go out on picket at night, to watch for the enemy. It is military life. Everything is done by orders. When you become a soldier, you cannot go and come as you please. Privates, lieutenants, captains, colonels, generals, all are subject to the orders of their superior officers. All must obey the general in command. You march, drill, eat, sleep, go to bed, and get up by order. At sunrise you hear the reveille, and at nine o’clock in the evening the tattoo. Then the candle, which has been burning in your tent with a bayonet

for a candlestick, must be put out. In the dead of night, while sleeping soundly and dreaming of home, you hear the drum-beat. It is the long roll. There is a rattle of musketry. The pickets are at it. Every man springs to his feet.

“Turn out! turn out!” shouts the colonel.

“Fall in! fall in!” cries the captain.

There is confusion throughout the camp,—a trampling of feet and loud, hurried talking. In your haste you get your boots on wrong, and buckle your cartridge-box on bottom up. You rush out in the darkness, not minding your steps, and are caught by the tent-ropes. You tumble headlong, upsetting to-morrow’s breakfast of beans. You take your place in the ranks, nervous, excited, and trembling at you know not what. The regiment rushes toward the firing, which suddenly ceases. An officer rides up in the darkness and says it is a false alarm! You march back to camp, cool and collected now, grumbling at the stupidity of the picket, who saw a bush, thought it was a Rebel, fired his gun, and alarmed the whole camp.

In the autumn of 1861 the army of the Potomac, encamped around Washington, numbered about two hundred thousand men. Before it marches to the battle-field, let us see how it is organized, how it looks, how it is fed; let us get an insight into its machinery.

Go up in the balloon which you see hanging in the air across the Potomac from Georgetown, and look down upon this great army. All the country round is dotted with white tents,—some in the open fields, and some half hid by the forest-trees. Looking away to the northwest you see the right wing. Arlington is the centre, and at Alexandria is the

left wing. You see men in ranks, in files, in long lines, in masses, moving to and fro, marching and countermarching, learning how to fight a battle. There are thousands of wagons and horses; there are from two to three hundred pieces of artillery. How long the line, if all were on the march! Men marching in files are about three feet apart. A wagon with four horses occupies fifty feet. If this army was moving on a narrow country road, four cavalrymen riding abreast, and men in files of four, with all the artillery, ammunition-wagons, supply-trains, ambulances, and equipment, it would reach from Boston to Hartford, or from New York city to Albany, a hundred and fifty miles!

To move such a multitude, to bring order out of confusion, there must be a system, a plan, and an organization. Regiments are therefore formed into brigades, with usually about four regiments to a brigade. Three or four brigades compose a division, and three or four divisions make an army corps. A corps when full numbers from twenty-five to thirty thousand men.

When an army moves, the general commanding it issues his orders to the generals commanding the corps; they issue their orders to the division commanders, the division commanders to the brigadiers, they to the colonels, and the colonels to captains, and the captains to the companies. As the great wheel in the factory turns all the machinery, so one mind moves the whole army. The general-in-chief must designate the road which each corps shall take, the time when they are to march, where they are to march to, and sometimes the hour when they must arrive at an appointed place. The corps commanders must direct which of their