Documents

FOURTEENTH INDIANA REGIMENT

LETTERS TO THE VINCENNES WESTERN SUN

The third series of letters written by Lieutenant William Landon of Vincennes, who used the signature “Prock,” were published in the Indiana Magazine of History for September, 1937. The series reprinted below is the fourth. “Prock” was wounded in the Battle of Chancellorsville and was sent to a hospital in Washington, D.C., where he remained until the middle of October. He was in the hospital during the period of the Gettysburg campaign, and wrote no letters to the Sun from May 6 to October 24, 1863. The earlier letters in the present series do not rank as high as those published in the issue of September, 1867, but the correspondence improves as the weeks pass and it has seemed best not to omit any communication or delete any passages. “Prock” was severely wounded in the ankle on May 10, 1864, and again sent to a hospital in Washington.*

PROCK’S LETTERS FROM CAMP, BATTLEFIELD AND HOSPITAL (OCTOBER 24, 1863, TO JULY 1, 1864)

Camp of Fourteenth Indiana Volunteers,
1st Brigade, 3d Division, 2d Corps,
Near Greenwich, Va., Wednesday, Oct. 24, 1863.

Friend Greene: Five months have filed past since our communications were cut off. It seems about as many weeks, time flies so rapidly.

It seems as but a single moment fled,
But fortune’s dame has mix’d with skill adroit.
The pain and pleasure through which we are led;
How swift an hour glides by, if we enjoy it.
She’ll pour out happiness and then alloy it.
As dairymen do their milk, or hater’s breed,
Thus, when we think we’ve got about the thing.
We “nuss” to find how little joy (twill bring.

“There is no rest for the wicked.”

“Tis ever thus in the dark world of sorrow.”

Which words are echoed, as you might suppose.
In fact, religious cant I like to borrow.
It pains my conscience much, the devil knows.

* Lieutenant William Landon joined the Army again in December, 1864. He wrote no further letter to the Western Sun until July 4, 1865. (See the Sun for July 7, 1865.) In the meantime his friends in Vincennes seem to have lost track of him. Even the editor of the Sun was unable to answer the many anxious inquiries received in regard to “Prock” until the arrival of the letter written in camp on July 1, 1865. (See Sun, Sun, July 7, 1865.) A final series of the letters of Lieutenant Landon will be reprinted in a future issue. After the Civil War, he joined the Regular Army with the rank of Second Lieutenant. While stationed at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, in the summer of 1866, he disappeared from camp and was not seen again. It was not until February, 1867, that news of the disappearance reached Vincennes. Soon after, an official report from Assistant Adjutant General Samuel B. Broom, Washington, D.C., was received by W. E. Niblock, member of the National Board, to the effect that Lieut. Landon was supposed to have drowned while bathing in the Missouri River on July 8, 1866. (Sun, Feb. 22, 1867.)

† Vincennes Western Sun, Oct. 31, 1863. The village of Greenwich was about ten miles northeast of Warrenton, Virginia, and about thirty-five miles southwest of Washington.
Now, how is this, can anybody tell?
One-half the world prefer to worship evil.
No ten of death or searching flames of hell
Prevent their shooting bally halleydoodle to the devil.

I am just down to the "Front" from Washington, D.C., where I have been on "sick leave." I will not attempt in this homely scrawl to give "in full description each adventure"—time enough for that "When this cruel war is over," but nevertheless will jot down a few items of what I saw in the American Sodom.

A looker on one afternoon at a game of "base ball" played on the grounds of the National B. R. Club, directly in the rear of the White House, I heard every few seconds the report of firearms, and soon perceived Father Abraham engaged in target practice. The weapon used was a smooth-bore, load at the breech, with the largest cock I ever saw on any piece, although it kicked unmerrily. The Rail-Splitter done some tall shooting, and "plumbed the center" several times, which seemed to tickle him prodigiously. The target used was one of his proclamations—the center of this "Bull's eye" being a "little joke."

Obtaining a pass from Col. Baker, I visited the old Capitol prison, and a sight the inside of that box was, sure enough; Barnum's Museum is "no wharf." A motley crew of all ages, sizes, and colors, from every State in the Union and (at present) out; also the territories. There were civilians and soldiers of Yankeeland and Dixie, and a "right smart sprinklin" of Sambo. Europe was represented by some hard-looking chaps, among others I particularly noticed a Spaniard, that from his demoniac look, no doubt entered upon his career of crime by cutting the throat of his mother. In the female department were two persimmon-eaters from North Carolina, dressed in the style of '76, waist two inches below the arm pits, no hoops, hair a la Indian squaw, snuff colored teeth, deep set, grey eyes, keen as a falcon's, long finger nails; I thought of tendering the use of my knife to pare the claws but was actually afraid to. What a magnificent pair of hawks were spoiled. The biggest one having eyed me savagely, asked, "Kin you give me a chew baccia, Cap?" "Don't use the weed that way." "Spile his kimbixen to chaw; ain't he a butty, Judy?" Laughing like a hyena, Judy broke out with—"What are ye sassin the d——d conscript for, Malviny? he's pious he is, a regular Yankee sirkit rider, cired by that infernal thief John Brown; yer a full ter waste breath on sich like. Give me yer snuff-box here." I left the lovely Judy preparing for a "dipping" and humming the 'Bonnie Blue Flag.'

The Navy Yard has many objects of interest, amongst others four cannon captured by Capt. Stephen Decatur in 1812; and the guns of the rebel ram Merrimac. Uncle Sam's work shops, foundries, &c., coming in for a large share of the visitor's curiosity.

The Arsenal is a delightful place to pass a summer afternoon. At the farther end of the long shaded walk a bright brass twonound howitzer stares you in the face. It formerly belonged to Bragg's Battery, and was one of the "dogs of war" that sent a "little more grape" into the Mexican ranks at Buena Vista. It was the hour for practice, and Col. Hotchkiss, inventor of the celebrated Hotchkiss shell, what soldiers call "hell screamers," was testing the qualities of his invention (with an improvement) out of a thirty pound Parrott. 'Tis much more interesting, though not as exciting, to hear the shriek of these missiles when you are a spectator and not the target.

From the National Observatory, with the excellent spy-glass for use of visitors, there is a magnificent view of Washington, Georgetown, and their surroundings. Innumerable forts, camps, hospitals, &c., also the winding of the Potomac with Alexandria in the distance. The tower, twenty feet in diameter, revolves—inside this is a huge telescope, and many other astronomical instruments. At ten minutes to twelve o'clock (noon), a black ball three feet in diameter is hoisted to the top of the flag-staff, visible all over both cities, and at twelve o'clock—"correct time"—it is lowered quickly. Towards noon you can hear citizens enquire if the "nigger head" is up yet. The porter at this place is an "intelligent contraband." I mean, really so, and amused me not a little with the account of his flight to Abraham's bosom. "Suffered 'mazingly, Cap'n, winter fore las, cummin fru the wilderness from ole Richmond—hope never to see dat place again; fore God I do!" Very likely his tale was a gotten up thing.

There are eight classes of buildings composing the hole of Washington (for a hole it is, taken all in all, and a dirtier, filthier city there is not on this continent, I hope). Public buildings, hotels, restaurants, boarding-houses (two meals only each day, hash and liver, the hash eaters paying $7 per week) boarding-houses, station-houses, guardhouses, musical and other halls, including one what is known as the "Island" Hall encompassed by a wall that is both strong and tall, and that as well. Most of the private houses in the city were owned by the secession and have been confiscated, the Government using them for offices, &c.

California prices in '49 were cheap compared to the exorbitant demands made here for the necessaries of life—and everything else—in this the year of our Lord 1863. There is a difference of at least fifty per cent, between this city and Baltimore. All the principal hotels purchase their edibles in the latter place.

Although there is a heavy police force, assisted by a mounted and foot patrol of the Provost Guard, and two corps of detectives, still the daily criminal record equals in length that of New York City. Murder is a common thing and of nightly occurrence; indeed this place in many respects would compare favorably with the capitol of Brigham Young's dominions. Would you believe it? There is in this city a Maj. Gen. who is also a Justice of the Peace, and receives his "little old" fifty cent paper rag for administering the "oath of office" to officers with apparently as much nonchalance as he would take the "oath" himself "without any water and with a little sugar."

We left Washington City last Tuesday—we arrived in camp on the east side of Bull Run Creek, Friday night, in the midst of a tremendous rain-storm. Next afternoon we waded the creek, waist deep, and deployed as skirmishers, protected the flanks of a cavalry advance

\*\* Paper money included fractional currency with face values of fifty cents, twenty-five cents, and ten cents, at the time of and for a number of years after the Civil War.


\* Orange and Alexandria R. R.
—coming back at sundown wet as drowned rats. Monday at daybreak we left camp and Bull Run behind, marched through Manassas to Bristow Station, O. & A.R.R.* and next day from there to this place. Our corps having the advance, only waded Broad Run three times in one day (yesterday). The water was comfortably cold, I thank you!

Edward Dehan, private Co. G, was taken prisoner whilst on picket, and has gone to Richmond in advance of Meade’s army.

We shall probably leave here early to-morrow. How far we are at present from Warrington I can’t say—not far, however.

We are using up the last rails on this route, and I pity the army that marches through here in cold weather, if any should. Persimmons and fresh made graves abound—the former in profusion, and ‘tis all there is left in this American desert to eat.

In haste, yours,

PROCK.

Camp of Fourteenth Indiana Volunteers,
1st Brigade, 3d Division, 2d Corps.

Near Warrenton, Va., Wednesday, Nov. 6, 1863.6

Friend Greene: Our encampment is about four miles east of Warrenton, on the W. J. R. R.7 The weather has been delightful, but it can’t last long—even now our artillery is rumbling, and stormy times are near at hand.

Our sutler came up last night with a huge amount of “Old Scotch Ale” and Sherry. There was a lively and happy time in camp for a spell, I assure you.

The woods in our rear took fire this P.M. and burned fiercely until the New York Garabaldi Guards, sent out as skirmishers, put down the destructive element.

Stones abound all over this God forsaken State; at this particular spot not a square foot of the “sacred soil” is visible. They are in great demand just now for building chimney’s to our rag houses. We have a fine supply of rails from the neighboring farms of rebellious Virginians. Company quarters throughout the “Gibraltor Brigade” are heaped with ‘em, piled high. To-day an order came from the Provost Marshal General to return the “splinters” instant. When the regimental wagons drove up to haul ‘em back, ‘twas discovered that not a whole rail was there to be found in the numerous heaps. The old brigade was not to be cheated out of their favorite fuel—won’t freeze, if it does turn cold, not they. There are not five axes in our regiment and those we have are worthless.

How in the devil does the Provost Marshal General A. P.8 suppose we could obtain wood? I am always in favor of burning Old Virginny rails—love to see the greedy flames lick ‘em up—cannot be excelled for fuel, and in fact ‘tis the only “Greek Fire” we of the A.P. can use on the rebels—at present.

The great Cavalry go home this fall to recruit. Grape vine is badly frost bitten, and ’bout dead.

A few good fellows from the 14th were sent home to “winter,” and try their luck at recruiting. Lucky boys! They deserve their good fortune. The “Iron Brigade,” A.P., General “Long Sol” Meredith, was sent home.

We will call to see the good people of the Hoosier State in June next, “no preventing Providence,” or “any other man,” or General Order, 9,999, or ill luck.

Sleep will vanish from the “downy pillows” and eyes of many who sweetly slumber now “as it” January 5th, ’64. They will be keeping constant and unweary vigils (like a picket on a dangerous out-post) on the look out for ye draft!

It tickles us old soldiers all over. Aye, “muchly,” it does! I hope Abe and Congress will “rub out” the $300 clause8 and substitutes go up to a big figure, and “more too.” Say one, two, and five thousand “shads!” Wag! Come out of the “long grass!” Go for ‘em, Father Abraham! The stars and stripes are bound to fly high, must will now. No alternative. The rebellion must be crushed, for the honor of the Nation and the old flag are at stake. Cost what it may, the “Dixie Land” must be reclaimed. Long marches, rain, sleet, snow, starvation for twenty-four and forty-eight hours; heat, thirst, smoke, dust, “hard luck,” camp coffee, “salt junk,” and “salt horse” will soon teach most any man to fight. Come forth, Draft! Say I.

Hoop skirts have been discarded in Dixie. They return to the old North Carolina persimmon-eating, snuff dipping, she-tobacco-chewer’s style—except under the arm pits, and a straight shirt tail from that down. Why don’t they “war ther har short;” a la bulleties of the prise ring? ’Spose the dear, deluded critters will file their teeth next, and leave off paring their nails, including toe nails, as they will wear sandals, of course.

Should relish some of the game you folks at home have furnished you in such profusion at this season of the year—squirreli, quail, and fat duck. The “General” was always h— on ducks. I learn he lost his last mouth’s pay playing “freeze-out” poker in Westport on last Thanksgiving day. The old sinner! may he live till he freezes out.

Good night!

PROCK.

Camp of Fourteenth Indiana Volunteers
1st Brigade, 3d Division, 2d Corps.

Stepsenburg (on Rapidan River), Dec. 7, 63.10

Dear Greene: We broke up camp near Kelly’s Ford, Rappahannock river, early on the morning of the 26th of November, and sunrise found us miles away toward Germania Ford, on the Rapid Ann. We crossed without opposition at 3 o’clock that afternoon and bivouacked in a dense pine and cedar thicket; ’twas a clear, cold night, and the bright, full moon made all things glisten with her pure silver rays. Aroused by the shrill bugle at 4 A.M., we pushed forward briskly and drove in the Rebel pickets at 6 o’clock. A portion of the 14th, under command of First Lieut. Geo. Rotramel, of Co. F., with a detail from the 8th
Ohio and 7th Va., were thrown forward as skirmishers, and a lively fusillade was soon opened. The "Johnny's" held their ground for some time, but reinforcements were thrown forward, a charge made, and the "Rebs" fell back a short distance; 'twas "pop!" "pop!" for about four hours, our artillery pitching over an occasional shell. We lay on a high ridge and looked on. At 3 o'clock, P.M., the 7th Va. and 8th Ohio made a charge and drove the "Johnny's" half a mile, but they still maintained an unbroken line and kept up their fire. "Twas a "panorama" for us fellows, as we could see every man engaged—every gun fired.

After dark extra ammunition was issued, and the 14th moved out to our skirmish line and relieved the 7th Virginia—the night was cloudy and bitter cold; we lay behind an old rail fence all night—no fires, of course. At early dawn our line moved forward and found the "Johnny's" had retired during the night. On we went in line for two miles through thickets, dark pine-woods and fields of stubble; four "Rebs" were captured, and at 7 o'clock we found the "Johnny's" strongly posted, on a steep hill, formidable earth-works and a strong line of skirmishers on a low ridge, some five hundred yards in front, awaiting our approach.

I never saw a more imposing sight—the red battle-flags, with the large white cross in the centre, flying—a long, dark column of men, their bright arms gleaming in the morning sun—the dark and frowning muzzles of eighteen or twenty pieces of artillery, and all as quiet and still as though not a soul but the once peaceful and happy inhabitants of the valley were near.

Our Brigade bugle sounded—"Halt!" And the two armies stood and gazed at each other for several moments. I could hear the artillery rumbling in our rear, and the steady tramp of our gallant boys of the 3rd Division (our support). "Forward! Double quick!" screamed the bugle—and we smashed into the skirmish line and drove it back. Bang! Bang! bang! whiz! whack! a rebel battery laid opened on us. "Lie down!" blew the bugle, and down we went in the tall grass, willows and along the fence rows—some behind a house and out buildings that lay between the opposing forces; there we lay all day long and popped away. The distance to the rebel lines was about seven hundred yards, or perhaps not over four, on an air line.

An attack in force was not contemplated, it seems, but we did not then and there know that. Several men wounded in the sharp shooting that day, and not a man but had scores of narrow escapes; the "Gibraltar" ransacked the house from top to bottom, though bullets were whacking against and through it all day. Your correspondent had a huge piece of bread and butter for his dinner.

At night we were relieved. It had rained hard part of the afternoon and we were glad to fall back and cook supper.

Around at 4 A.M. we marched all day, away down to the rebels' right wing—arrived there just at sun down and found the "Johnny's" coming in, too, on a double quick, in front of us. Their battery gave us and the setting sun a parting salute for the day. We threw up a fence rail breastwork, and without fire lay down to sleep; 'twas a very severe night—a heavy frost, and we exposed on a bare kiln in a large field; but little sleep any of us got, though we were tired enough. In front of us lay a dead soldier of the 1st division, shot through the brain—their skirmishers had preceded us.

Monday, Nov. 30th, aroused at 3 A.M.—formed line of battle—three lines rather; we were in the second line; moved up within about six hundred yards of the rebel works; stacked arms and piled knapsacks. The orders were that there would be a grand charge of 28,000 men at 8 o'clock. A narrow cedar-covered ridge hid us from view of the rebels. In advance of this strong line of our skirmishers were deployed. 8 o'clock came—no bugle sounded the charge. Gen. Warren, our corps commander, rode along the lines; everybody was busily engaged in trying to keep from freezing, pacing quickly up and down. By noon most of us had crept to the top of the ridge and obtained a full view of the work and works before us. The charge would have resulted in another Fredericksburg—all agree on that. Even as savage and reckless as all had become, consequent on hunger, cold and exposure, it would have been impossible to carry and hold those works. At 7 P.M. we fell back half a mile; next day threw up entrenchments and lay behind them till 8 P.M., when the "Gibraltar Brigade" joined the Grand Army of the Potomac in the midnight "skedaddel" for the Rapid Ann [Rapidan]. All night long we marched—along side of us the 3rd Corps—no halt—and at sun rise Wednesday, Dec. 2nd, recrossed that river at Ellis', or Culpeper Gold Mine ford. 'Twas a hard march of about twenty miles.

These land mines were worked up to within about twelve months since. On the river bank there is quite an extensive establishment for washing, &c., with all the washers and other mining implements scattered around. A "Union man" and his family, living here, crossed to the north side with us; 'tis the first opportunity he has had of escaping from the "Johnny" Confederacy.

Breakfast two miles from the river—then pushed on to this, our old camp, reaching it weary and foot-sore at dusk—distance marched since 8 o'clock 25 miles, with knapsacks, and a good part of the time four columns abreast—and it must be remembered over old Virginia roads.

Thursday, Dec. 3d—obtained some boards and put up a shanty—orders to build "winter quarters."

Friday, Dec. 4th—Orderly Gundrum and I worked hard all day and nearly finished a fire-place and chimney to our log hut. Orders to march at daylight.

Saturday, Dec. 5th—Marched as per orders. After traveling about 3 miles, reached the miserable village of Stevensburg, about five miles south-west of Brandy Station, O. and A. and Culpeper R. R., and the same distance south-east of the town of Culpeper. We halted in a dirty, filthy, old cavalry camp—no wood, no water, no nothing; in fact, 'tis a n— of a place, and colder than Greenland. The distance from Morton's ford, Rapid Ann river, is about four miles.

I am writing in the cold, and am not in the best of humor either. I assure you.

We are under orders to be ready to move at short notice. Oh!
for a stint "sniffer" of "Old Bourbon." I never told you that to obtain a canteen full of the U. S. A. miserable, stinking, "commissary" whiskey an officer (even the Col. of a regiment), has to get an order approved at brigade headquarters! That is a fact. Nothing goes according to the Regulations in this Army of the Potomac. "General orders" having superseded the Regulations, rendering even the revised copies entirely useless.

The "Black Swan," it seems, has turned up in the Old Post—fifty dollars a night, only! Does her singing equal that of "Potato Rat," the "Irish Biddy" of Fitf's Theatre?

I had forgotten to mention that the only loss sustained by our regiment in the weeks' campaign south of the Rapid Ann, was, 1st Lieut. Geo. Retramel, C. F., a brave officer, a gentleman in every sense of the word, and a comrade beloved by all. He was mortally wounded near Locust Grove or Robertson's farm, where the first skirmishing commenced. Tros. Piety, of Co. G, was one of the detail under command of Lt. Retramel, and although this two-hundred and five pound six-feet two inches high corporal was closely "nipped" several times by rebel bullets, he escaped unhurt.

All the farms south of the Rapid Ann were laid waste, and the inhabitants made acquainted with the "cruel war" and the "thieving Yankees"—guess there is "weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth" over there now.

I wish I could re-write this letter. I would endeavor to make it more interesting; 'tis a scrawl gotten up under difficulties, and no mistake. So with a hearty wish for the welfare of all at home, and the hope that the "General" will not invest in Swan's down because 'tis fashionable.

I shiveringly subscribe myself yours, coolly, on account of the weather.

PROCK.

Camp of Fourteenth Indiana Volunteers.
1st Brigade, 3d Division, 2d Corps, Stephensburg (on Rapidan River), Dec. 12, '63.13

Dear Greene: After spending a week in hunting a suitable camp, the "Gibraltar Brigade" at last had the good fortune to "settle down" in a huge hollow, with a dense pine and cedar thicket in front to keep the west wind off, and a forest of heavy timber in the rear. Hail Columbia! What a din of axes and cracking of falling timber on all sides! The Western boys are adapt at "blocking up" shanties in a hurry. We all felt at home when the arms were stacked beneath the tall chestnut oaks, the camp staked off, and orders issued to build "winter quarters"—while the axe-men were making the chips fly, others were carrying stone for chimneys and splashing the "sacre-d soil" over the "chinks." Tools were scarce enough; 'would have astonished them at home to see men quarrying rock with bayonets only, and what comfortable quarters a couple of the veterans can put up in two days with a dull hatchet. One and all worked with a will and now we are comfortable housed for the winter, unless Lee concludes to

visit this side of the Rapid Ann in force—hope he won't, for don't want to "git up and git" before warm weather.

Sergeants Gundrum and Wicks, with your correspondent, are sitting to-night in a snug "hotel" with a parlor, bed-room, fire and kitchen all in the same room. We are comfortable, I thank you—and having disposed of supper with a soldier's appetite, indulged in a big smoke out of my Cheat Mountain pipe, and whiled away an hour waiting for the mail and playing dominoes with the boys, I thought 'would interest friends at home to read a few camp items. Seventeen days of absence to officers and furloughs to enlisted men are again granted the Western troops in this army, the "Yankees" only getting ten—they being so much nearer home. Those who failed to obtain leaves and furloughs last winter and spring will be allowed to go first—two commissioned officers and four enlisted men at a time from the 14th. Col. S. S. Carrol has gone to Washington City, and Col. Coons commands the Brigade. Lt. James Caldwell, of Co. "B," (14th), has been appointed recruiting officer for the regiment, to ascertain how many of the "veterans" present will re-enlist for "three years or during the war." Can't say how many will "go in"—probably not many—the boys most all want to have a "4th of July" at home, and that 4th the next 4th too!

Major General William S. French, formerly our Division commander, now in command of the 3d Corps, ordered some time since a new set of arms for this regiment—breech loading rifles—a high compliment to the Hoosiers, who never forget to cheer their brave old commander when by chance he passes along their line. The arms are now in Washington, awaiting shipment. The boys will be proud of their new guns and our recruiting officers at home had better drill their squads of one or more in the breech-loading exercise. Not an unpleasant task for 'em, I fancy.

We are blessed with a most extraordinary "spoil" of fine weather just now, and excellent rations too—vegetables, such as onions and potatoes in abundance. These were much needed by the men after their long diet on "marching rations" of crackers and pork. Verily the commissariat must have fallen into new and honest hands. The "robbers" have had their day—this Brigade has suffered its full share from d—d rascals in the commissary department. Hurrah for the change! Butlers are here by the gross, with heaps of "goodies," &c.—their prices as usual up to the top notch—would frighten any but a soldier or resident of Washington City. Butter 75 cts per lb; eggs 60 cts per dozen; cheese 50 cts per lb; fresh "sawage" (horse meat probably, with a mixture of dog-stew and hair) 40 cts per lb; green apples 25 cts per hand-full.

The—Itinerant—carpet-sack—hook-nosed — covered-with-jewelry— miserable—dirty-lousy-theiving-vagabond looking peddlers, heretofore the greatest nuisance in this army, no longer flock to our camps from Washington and Alexandria, their numbers reduced. The army Provost Marshal system and the absence of the Eleventh corps has rid us entirely of the rogues. I'll wager a month's pay there is not a score of this class in the ranks of the Army of the Potomac. Then why
should they be allowed to fleece the soldiers of their hard-earned dollars? I "can't see it!"

I have learned by your paper of the death of Hon. James Dick, and am grieved to hear of the fact. To me, who served eighteen months as clerk in his office, Mr. Dick was always the same urbane, courteous, kindhearted old gentleman—true as steel to those whom he honored with his friendship.—Requies cat in pace!

Twelve months ago this night we of the Fourteenth Indiana were quartered in the fine brick dwellings on Caroline street in the city of Fredericksburg, Va.—rassacking, pillaging, feasting, fiddling, dancing, and having a gay time generally, as soldiers will have whenever opportunity offers, even though it be on the eve of a great battle and under the very guns of the enemy. Forty-two answered to "roll call" that night in Co. "G." "Tattoo" brought but eighteen together this evening on the same side of the Rappahannock. Two years ago tonight the same drum call summoned ninety men to answer to their names or be placed on "extra guard duty;" then we were stuck down in mud unfathomable near Huttonville, Western Virginia. Your correspondent once had the honor of belonging to a "company meeting called the "Tiger Tails"—we numbered nineteen—seven are still with the regiment, a merry mess we were, and well remembered will be the days and nights passed in our cozy "Sibley."

Mr. John Rotramel, brother of Lt. George Rotramel, of Co. "F," arrived in camp from Carlisle, Ia. [Ind.] yesterday. He is here for the purpose of obtaining the remains of his brother. "Tis extremely doubtful whether Gen. Lee will allow a flag of truce so far within his lines for that purpose. The Lieut. lies buried some twelve or fifteen miles south of the Rapid Ann.

Here are two incidents that occurred during our last "raid" into Dixie that may prove worth publishing:—two soldiers, one of the 7th and the other of the 14th Indiana, were pulling heads of cabbages from a hole in the garden right on our skirmish line at Mine Run. The 7th Hoosier being nearest to the "fruit," had several fine cabbages unearthed when the bullet of a rebel sharpshooter broke his leg. He begged most piteously to be carried out of "range" but hungry-for-greens Hoosier No. 2 couldn't see it, and grabbing the pile of vegetables, made off on double quick for a safer locality.

As we were hurrying along about midnight, Tuesday, Dec. 1st, two corps side by side, on the Chancellorville plank road, making for the Rapid Ann, a soldier belonging to some regiment in the 3d corps stumbled and came down on the rough hard planks with a tremendous thump, his gun clattering after him. The poor devil fairly bounched again, so quick and heavy was the fall. A dozen comrades were compelled to trample over him, going at the rate we all were, before he could regain his feet. I heard a wide-awake and always ready "Knott" in the 14th sing out—"What the devil are you laying down there for?"
The rejoiiner consigned the 14th man to a very warm corner in Lucifer's dominions. Devilish little sympathetic soldiers have for unfortunate—especially when on the go. I hear some speculating soldier crying—"Here's your fresh oysters, only $1.10 cts per half can!"

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Prock's Letters

Camp of Fourteenth Indiana Volunteers.
1st Brigade, 3d Division, 2d Corps, Stephensburg (on Rapidan River), Jan. 6th, '64.

Friend Greene: We are in the midst of mud unfathomable, and Old Winter has fairly settled down upon us. Many changes have taken place in the regiment since last I wrote—the "Veteran Volunteer" excitement has died down, and a "heavy, run, too! Some sixty of as "good and true" men as the 14th can boast of re-enlisted for the war. The inducements held out to old soldiers were indeed great, and such as no government ever offered before. The bounty was liberal in the extreme; in fact, taken altogether, four hundred and two dollars and thirty days at home, with free transportation to and from, was a "big thing," and no mistake. We have some fifty or sixty men whose term of service does not expire for twelve months to come, so the probability is the organization will remain intact, and our decimated regiments filled "chock up" with ye conscripts. Wagh! Bryon wrote—
"Tis sweet to hear the honest watch-dog's bark,
But sweeter still 'twill be to see cons [conscripts] "time mark!
And watch their shivering forms at early dawn,
As weary, hungy, chilled through, and forlorn,
They meekly answer "here!" to the stern summons of one
In answer to his country's call in '61!

A rough night, in sleet and snow, on picket, suggested the above. Duty is rougher, tougher, and more of it this winter than ever before. The Line officers of our regiment are on duty every other day, and the men relieved from guard at 10 A.M. to-day are detailed for fatigue at 6 A.M. to-morrow. The division has a "task" to perform in the line of road making—that thoroughly Western style familiarly known as "Corseroy"—and a task it proves, indeed. You should hear the storm of yells, groans, and curses on all roads in general, and those in Virginia in particular, bestowed by the fatigue detail of the "Granaltar Brigade" every morning. The fact is, whether a regiment numbers one hundred or ten hundred, they have the same amount of guard and fatigue duty to perform, so we all join most heartily in the cry—

"Father Abraham, hurry up the Cons."

Prock indulged in a "few stew"—hot—on Christmas eve, and for dinner Christmas day there were served up a brace of attenuated and most ancient fowls of the Shanghai breed, that cost me two dollars, and my cook all his stock of patience before they were ready for successful mastication. Now, Peter, my colored servant, is a "character," and there is not another like him in Old Virginia, I'll wager a "cock tail!" After boiling and re-boiling the descendent of the cock that crew for his pious namesake the Apostle, disposing of sundry "draws" of "com-
"oaken" door—himself incarcerated for shooting a Johnny’s foals instead of the d—d rebel himself. I repeat, could he, under such circumstances, himself be the victim of foal play, and plaintively scold as did Prock once on a time?

Camp of Fourteenth Indiana Volunteers.
1st Brigade, 3d Division, 2d Corps.
Army of the Potomac, February 9, 1864.

PROCK.

Friend Greene: Saturday morning, 6th inst., cold, raw, and drizzling, found us with blankets slung, three days’ rations, and in rapid motion toward the Rapid Ann, which stream we forded, waist deep, at noon. Wash! Cold is no name for it.

The Third Brigade of our Division had the advance, and a warm time of it they were having with the “Johnny’s” as we crossed. As we advanced to their support, the enemy shelled us briskly. The river was too deep and swift for our artillery to cross, and we had no pontoons. However, the big guns lent us all the aid in their power from the north bank, and Capt. Arnold’s battery of twelve pound howitzers delivered regular (as the boys say) “vollies of six-pounders,” but the “Johnny’s” knowing their advantage, after three brigades were across, opened a tremendous fire on us from their artillery and made a charge—but the Third Brigade stood their ground well, and were not to be driven from their position. We being their support, caught it heavily—the regiment losing fifteen killed and wounded without a chance of returning a shot. Long after dark the opposing lines continued the contest, the bright flashes from their guns presenting in the deepening gloom a splendid sight, though the contents of at least one-half of those iron tubes whistling, humming, and “nipping” around was, to say the least, unpleasant.

At 10 o’clock we withdrew to the north bank, lay down in the mud, wet through, and chilled to the very bone. Spent the day Sunday in watching the “Johnny’s” across the “drink” [river], and the compliments of the season exchanged by the hostile batteries. At night, returned to camp through unfathomable mud, over stumps and stones, stumbling and cursing along in one of the darkest of dark nights.

Corporal Thos. Piety, of Co. G, was wounded in the right foot on the advance skirmish line.

Lieut. Andrews, of Co. B, had his belt clasp perforated by a bullet, which passing through his coat, pants, drawers, and shirt bruised his abdomen severely, but most fortunately lost its penetrating power when it reached the flesh.

It is very unhealthy on the south bank of the Rapid Ann, and one runs great risk of his life in penetrating the country to any extent;

I cannot live always. I wish not to stay—

If he pleads not guilty to any of these “ups and downs” of life—refuses to “shout folly as it flies—commit us to “faux pas” or miss’dmeanors—knows nothing of these things, nor of “them things,” and “can’t see it”—then he is a bogus

PROCK.

“I went to go. I want to go. And I want to go there, too!”

That is, I want to visit home on a fifteen days’ “dark.” To those who know the “ropes,” ’tis, though a devilish short, a merry trip after all.

Capt. Patterson returned to the regiment yesterday.

We have buried two of our comrades in the hostile soil of Old Virginia since we pitched this camp. One, McDonald, of Company K, and the other, Welch, of Company D. The former was stabbed to the heart in a broil with a messmate, and although his heart was almost completely severed in twain, he lived forty-five minutes, and actually walked some thirty yards! The latter died in hospital, and was buried yesterday during a driving snow storm. These are the only burials that have taken place in the 14th (whilst encamped) since we left the dilapidated tents and sod-chimneys of our camp at Huttonville, on the banks of the Tygart, in Western Virginia.

I received one New Year’s gift—a bottle of “Irish whiskey”—from Lieut. A. M. Van Dyke, now on Gen. Webb’s staff. He goes home on the “short fifteen” in a few days. May he enjoy the trip hugely.

I forgot to mention the names of Company G’s “Veterans.” Corporal Wm. Linn and privates James Dolan, Pearson D. Rodgers, and Asher W. Foster. The remainder of the Company present are all “June Bugs.”

I see that Mrs. Mary Ann Onderdonk has her “picture” and somewhat eventful history in the second of January number of the “National Police Gazette,” under the heading—“A Widow in Distress.” If I am not much mistaken, Vincennes was 1st on A tyne hur A Bode,” as “Artemus” would say. The ubiquitous history of the “lady fair” richly repays perusal.

I must return thanks to my comrade, Sergeant Colman, now at home, for many favors through Uncle Sam’s “U. S. Army Mail.” Should he fall in enlisting any recruits for Company “G,” 14th, I do hope and trust he will not only thoroughly recruit his health, but likewise conscript for life some fair damsel of the Old Post.

How about that “railroad” name-sake o’ mine? Does he wear a wig? Is he totally in favor of “punches”—hot and spicy—of Scotch whisky? Can he sing when in the midst of difficulties? For instance—if lodged in a square two-story building, built of ramshackle “gray,” and sitting “fornias” the “Ten of Diamonds,” gazing at the last rays of the setting sun and the solitary horseman—an sentinel guarding the
nevertheless, he becomes accustomed to the climate after a few trips, and reckless of the consequences.

Our reconnaissance proved conclusively that the "Johnny's" are still there, and guess to receive us; and furthermore, that they are in force. Guess when we pass that way in the spring, the blue jackets will make the greyhounds leave their kennels howling.

I will give you items of the trip another time—am weary and not in the very best humor in the world.

I hope to obtain fifteen days soon, and perhaps will "ax" you "how you is?"

In haste,

PROCK.

Camp of the Fourteenth Indiana Regiment,
1st Brigade, 3d Division, 2d Corps,
Army of Potomac, March 21, 1864.

Dear Greene: Your correspondent's short and merry fifteen days' and nights leaving of absence have passed and gone—a croaker might add never to return; not so, though; fond memory will not lose sight of 'em—oft will they be lived over again; yet one of 'em, I would rub off the tablet if I could—the one I spent in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.

I sometimes, in my dreams at least, have thought
That when in Heaven the Devil's flag was raised;
He who shed his blood for his country's cause;
To his own cause in the after world,
That great power with whom he'd fought,
The rebel chief from his high place was hurled;
When we swept the blue sky o'er us as he was dropped,
He fell as far as Pittsburg—and there stopped.

Missing a connection compelled me to go into camp into that miserable coal-hole for twenty-four hours. Other connections were made, and closely, too, all the way through; but the Lord deliver me from even an extra hours' breathing spell in the "Iron City" again.

Well, nearly two thousand miles of railroad travelling is excessively fatiguing, and a "sky-lark" of fifteen days to be well put in and all the tickets "punched" requires considerable backbone, but the heartfelt pleasure of grasping one's friends by the hand and exchanging greetings known to be genuine—the relief from all responsibility and duty for the time repays one richly for the hard travel; at least it did Prock.

The furlough was granted as the following items reveal:

"Prock,—Lieut. London, of the 14th Indiana regiment, is now here on a short leave of absence. His many friends are delighted to find him "gay and happy." My one hope is that he will continue so."—Vincent's Western Sun, Feb. 27, 1864.

"Our friends Lieut. Wm. London and Wm. Holland returned from a short but successful hunting expedition on Saturday morning [Feb. 27]. We were kindly remembered by them in the shape of a large fat ham and a splendid saddle of venison. Thanks, gentlemen!"—Ibid., Mar. 5, 1864.

London, London.—This popular young gentleman and brave accomplished officer left the city for his regiment (14th) on Sunday evening [Feb. 28], after spending a few days with his numerous friends in this locality. Lieut. W. London is a very handsome young man, with a fine figure and good bearing. He has a most agreeable and intellectual manner, thus winning the esteem of all who meet him. London is remarkably kind to his men, and has the reputation of being a "rattler" to his officers. A young man of promise, and a soldier who will make a name for himself, and one to whom I am sure the regiment will do honor. He is a very popular officer, and his name is not unknown to the men of the regiment. He is a man of energy and determination, and is always ready to undertake any task that is assigned to him. A true soldier, and one who will be a credit to the regiment.

"Prock's Letters"

Prock's Letters

who enjoyed his four days in "Old Post" [Vincennes] every minute of 'em hugely. Was glad to find all my friends enjoying life and health. The city looked natural and though there was a "smart sprinklin'" of blue jackets and bayonets, I am accustomed to "sich." In my first glance at the Wabash, really thought some small town above had floated down—so many arks were moored stern on to the warf; but I soon learned that the steamboat mania was raging, and a desire to sing—"I'm afloat! I'm afloat!" had seized the romantic youths of the city. Amongst others, my worthy friend the General had concluded to—

"Sink or swim!"

A rough spell of weather on the voyage around from St. Louis—a thumping trip of one hundred hours to Russellville, for a couple of grindstones, ten corks of tar-bark, and a back-down, including a butt at the draw, thoroughly disgust my chum of the P. O. with "Life on the ocean wave."

and he wisely concluded to cease "crying the lead" and cry "'Nuff!" When I met him, there was a tear in his eye and a five-cent Havana 'twixt his teeth. After the warmest of friendly greetings and two drinks, said he, with a sigh—"Prock, I have parted with her. Was she abandoned?" said I, taking out my handkerchief for my eyes were growing moist. "I am going to leave this part of my adopted country soon," said General, taking hold of his goatee familiarly, as in days gone by. He drew me closer, and hoarsely whispered: "General, was it the small-pox or had she been...

"Never told her love, but let concealment." A...

The General smiled ("tis dangerous to smile too often in "Old Post" I am told). "She is a steamboat!" said he. "Her name?" said I, frantically throwing myself outside (as "Orpheus" would say) of a glass of Toney's best Cogniac. "The Huffschmidt, stern-wheel, flat-bottomed, canal-boat-rigged packet, capable of transporting one thousand pounds weight of bough-orn seed and four deck passengers," said the General, "smiling again, and gently stroking his goatee. The English, or American, can rather, for that "2-tonic" name is "Hug Shoal," I was informed—purchase on account of her sobriquet, no doubt. I congratulate the General publicly on his "sell" and sell out. One of the incentives, I understand, for getting rid of the boat was the extraordinary appetites of the crew. Previous to starting from St. Louis to Vincennes, (after the purchase), several pieces of bacon sides, two or three dozen eggs, and some dried apples were bought for the use of the boat. The crew were liberally supplied with meat, apples, and one egg a piece for dinner, but, strange to say, were not satisfied, and complained to the General, who put the case before Dick, the Captain. The latter was naturally incensed. "—a 'em, give 'em two eggs for supper, and let 'em bust!" cried he. This was done, and, of course, it "busted" the owners.

But 'tis time, friend G., I was giving you some army items.

March weather now, rough, too—duty very heavy. Our picket line is as quiet as the streets of Old Post on a Sunday morning. Blue
Prock’s Letters

weeks, I can only say—my friend, his thee to Baltimore and be “gay
and happy,” for verily and of a truth the Monumental City, in my
humble opinion, is filled to overflowing with strawberries and cream,
with or without sugar, and the words “No Admittance” are not visible.
Open doors is the order of the day and night. Seek and ye shall find;
and there is no lack of “signs”—he that runs may read. Hurrah
for Baltimore! I had two 4th of Julys there, and other things by gross,
dozen, half dozen, raw, stewed, smothered, with sauce and without,
and hugely did the boy enjoy all these blessings, by night and by day—run-
ning, standing, flying, and otherwise.

Who could not enjoy life under such rose-colored circumstances?
Alas! the time for my departure arrived entirely too—d—d soon; and
here I am at the “Mystic Front,” and a custodian of “Commissary” the
only comforter. Tan-bark, juice, tar-water, turpentine, brown sugar,
lump-sal and alcohol are the ingredients. After a hearty swig, a fellow
feels as though some one was inside, striking two flints together—
the fire flying out of his eyes. Price, 50 cents, in rag currency, per
quart.

I know men who have imitated so much that hair has actually
grown on their teeth. I am using it for the express purpose of testing its
qualities as a restorative, but have little confidence in its virtues. At
present there are no signs of “hair” visible, and several quarts have
been disposed of.

Ye Paymaster, with a huge pile of greenbacks, made all of us re-
joice to-day by replenishing our pocket-books.

“Vet. Vol.” private Asher W. Foster, Co. “G,” has returned from
his thirty-five days’ furlough.

I have heard a rumor that your office has been demolished by the
soldiers. Hope ’tis untrue; I am sure none of the 1st Brigade could be
induced by cowardly, street leaders (who blow about their loyalty and
love for this Union and the old flag, yet dare not fight to maintain
either) to commit such an act of ruffianism.

I should like to take another duck hunt; will, too—man never goes
under till his time comes. General says that is “every other time.”
Can’t see it!

Yours truly,

PROCK.

United States Hospital,
Fredericksburg, Va., May 14th, 1864.16

Friend Greene: I will write you a full account of the campaign from
the 3rd to the 10th of May as soon as I am at all comfortably situated.
The 14th was in the fight of May 5th and 6th at Brock’s Cross-
Roads, and in the fight on the north bank of the river Po, on the farm
of Giles C. Graves, on the evening of the 10th inst.

I was wounded severely in the left ankle and sent from the “field
hospital” to the city yesterday. Since then I have not heard any reliable
news from the regiment, though five thousand “Johnnies” captured by
the 2d corps passed by this hospital this forenoon.

16 Ibid. May 21, 1864. “Prock” was severely wounded in the ankle on May 10.
See the list of wounded and dead below, and also the succeeding letter of May 18, 1864.
I enclose a list of the killed and wounded in our regiment that I know of—it is gotten up in a great hurry, but is correct.

I expect to be sent to Washington City in a few days.

In Haste

PROCK.

List of Killed, Wounded and Missing in the 14th Indiana Volunteers, May 5 and 6th, 1864.

Corporal Thomas Pety, Co. G, left knee, severely;
Berry Noland C, back, severely;
Serg't G. Fauset, D, both legs, mortally—dead;
Thos. Clements, C, left knee, mortally;
Judson Stuart, A, hip, slightly;
John White, I, right leg, severely;
John R. McClure, G, right arm, severely;
James Steele, K, right arm, seriously;
James McNellis, G, right leg, seriously;
Corpl. John Geisenhauser, F, left arm, seriously;
Wm. Rice, H, left arm, seriously;
James Townsend, I, left hip, seriously;
Lieut. Mitchell Prater, F, knee, seriously;
J. Sutherland, A, over the eye;
James Armstrong, A, right hip, slightly;
M. Schmidt, A, left hand, seriously;
Ed Slusser, F, left hand, seriously;
Conrad Tayler, J, face, seriously;
Hy Slaughter, A, left hand, seriously;
Hy Shueyman, D, right fore-arm, seriously;
Sam'l F. Timcher, D, back, seriously;
Lieut. H. J. Caldwell, A, thigh, mortally;
P. Hughes, K, mortally;
Henry Slusser, F, right leg;
John Pierce, F, face, seriously;
Hi Ash, F, right hand, slightly;
L. T. Frame, C, right hand, slightly;
Nick Hartline, E, right hand, slightly;
Owl'y Serg't Harrison Baly, right arm, slightly;
O. S. Emery Allen, C, bowels, contusion;
Com'y Sgt. A. J. Edmonson, G, right foot, slightly;
Lieut. A. S. Andrews, B, left arm, slightly;
Fred. Yocum, G, left hand, slightly;
Hutson, D, arm, slight;
Tracey Prior, B, foot, severely;
O. Sgt. James Mullen, E, killed;
Henry Bussing, C, killed;
Wm. Utolphoffin, E, wounded;
Sgt. Mat Kleine, E, wounded;
James M. Hughes, K, mortally—since dead;
Sgt. James Coleman, G, wounded;

May 10th—Lt. Wm. Landon [Prock], G, left ankle, severely;
Sgt. Kile Lertly, F, left leg, slight;

Mount Pleasant Hospital,
Washington, D. C., May 15, 1864.17

Friend Greene: Having reached the “City of Magnificent Distances” and taken up quarters where things are, to say the least, most comfortable, I proceed according to promise to give you a sketch of the campaign in the “Wilderness.”

Our regiment, the 14th Indiana, crossed the Rapidan for the fifth time about 8 o’clock on the morning of the 4th of May, having broken up camp at 11 o’clock the night previous. The sun shone bright and warm, and the veterans of a score of battles soon began to lighten their loads; and from this date till I left the front (11th inst.), the roads were strewn thickly with U. S. blankets, shelter tents, over-coats, and clothing of every description. I never saw anything to equal it—the old soldiers of the army carry nothing now but arms, ammunition, and the grub-bag (haversack).

We bivouacked the night of the 4th on the old battle-field, one mile south of Chancellorsville. The woods were strewn with the skeletons of comrades killed here one year ago.18

The boys of company “F” found the remains of Sergeant Tom Kidd, lying where the brave fellow fell on the 21st of May, ’63; the strips were still visible on the sleeves of his blouse—all that was left was at last decently interred.

At sun-rise on the 5th we pushed farther south. Soon after passing

17 Ibid., May 29, 1864.
18 Battle of Chancellorsville, May 3-7, 1863.
19 May 3 is probably meant, though Sergeant Kidd may have been killed during the night of May 2, 1863. See letter of May 6, 1862, Indiana Magazine of History (Sept., 1907), XXXIII, 537.
Cobb's tavern, the cavalry in our front commenced a brisk skirmish with the enemy, both sides using artillery. This fire opened at precisely 12 o'clock, and the noise of either cannon or musketry had never entirely ceased either day or night when I left the army for Fredericksburg hospital—an interval of seven days!

Countermarching, we again passed the hotel mentioned above, and moved off at double-quick in a due westerly course—heavy cavalry fighting all along our flank; and the scariest riders (all not by any means) having had enough for the day, were constantly seen riding furiously to the rear, and nearly all capless.

At 4 o'clock a tremendous musketry fire opened, with occasional discharges of artillery directly in our front. In a few moments, out of the smoke and heat we reached Brook's Road, pillaging knapsacks, dashed into the fight, the left of our regiment saving two pieces of artillery directly on the plank-road, that were under a terrible fire from the enemy's sharp-shooters, they having killed all the horses and disabled the cannoniers. After blazing away until dark, we were relieved by a strong, double line of skirmishers, and without withdrawing from our positions, slept on our arms.

Ammunition was distributed at 9 A.M., and soon after the musket fight again opened with redoubled fury. This was kept up with varying success till 2 P.M., neither party seeming to gain much advantage. The thick undergrowth of black-jacks was literally moved down with balls, and the ground so often charged over taken and re-taken, covered with dead and dying men and horses. The woods taking fire, compelled both sides to cease firing. Our men fell back to the road running east and west, and threw up a long line of entrenchments. At 4 o'clock our brigade took a position some 400 yards in rear of this stockade, and the men were cooking the first meal for over twenty-four hours, when again the heavy volleys began to roll off in front. Longstreet's whole corps were making a grand charge on our centre—the advance line had driven part of the 1st division out of the hastily constructed breastworks, immediately in our front, when the four old veterans regiments of Carroll's brigade (the 4th and 8th Ohio, 7th Virginia Vet. Vols., and 14th Indiana) sprang to their arms, and with a cheer that made the old woods ring were 400 yards in rear of this stockade. And the structure again and broke their line. Many dead rebels were left lying across the breast-works—amongst them a major, and two captains. Two stands of colors were captured. This, with the exception of the never-ceasing skirmishing, picket-firing, and sharp-shooting, ended the conflict at this point.

On the 7th we lay quiet all day—the skirmishing was so heavy in front that many times during the day the men would, without command, gather around the gun-stacks; but Longstreet had enough for the present, and was off.

The 8th and 9th were spent by us in throwing up intrenchments, &c. Having moved many miles to the left, we came in sight of the Potomac at 5 P.M. Here Lieut. Geo. Grant and Gen. Meade passed through the files of our regiment as it lay in an open field in line of battle. After a sharp skirmish, we crossed the Pot at 6½ o'clock, and bivouacked on the farm of one Giles C. Grave. Chickens, turkeys, pigs, and the contents of a smoke-house, ice-house, and corn-crib soon disappeared, although the rebel sharp-shooters made the vicinity of these constant fighting, care but little for life, and really don't mind the fire of sharp-shooters or skirmishers but little more than people at home do house flies.

On the morning of the 10th our batteries opened all around. We lay for some hours watching the shells burst—no reply from the infantry, no sound from the cavalry. Soon after our brigade was put in motion, re-crossed the plank road. Soon after our brigade was put in motion, re-crossed the plank road, and moved off to the left to support a charge of the 5th corps. We were in the Potomac's creek, and moved off to the left to support a charge of the 5th corps. We were in the Potomac's creek, and moved off to the left to support a charge of the 5th corps. We were in the Potomac's creek, and moved off to the left to support a charge of the 5th corps. We were in the Potomac's creek, and moved off to the left to support a charge of the 5th corps.

The night following was spent amongst the groans and cries of the wounded and dying at the Corps' field-hospital. I had much rather have been kept in a skirmish or picket-line than amongst the army butchers.

At 4 P.M. on the 11th, the ambulance train started for Fredericksburg. The rain poured down in torrents, and we reached our destination after being jolted for sixteen hours in coming fourteen miles, after being jolted for sixteen hours in coming fourteen miles. Several times the train was stopped to bury some poor wretches. That road will be lined with graves. The city itself was simply a dilapidated, dirty hole. I was glad to leave there at 10 o'clock A.M., on the 15 inst.

Once more north of the Rappahannock! 'Tis the tenth time I have crossed the inner stream. The road to Belle Plain Landing on the Potomac was simply horrible. Before reaching the Potomac we passed a large hollow, very horrible. Before reaching the Potomac we passed a large hollow, very horrible. Before reaching the Potomac we passed a large hollow, very horrible. Before reaching the Potomac we passed a large hollow, very horrible. Before reaching the Potomac we passed a large hollow, very horrible. Before reaching the Potomac we passed a large hollow, very horrible.
venient distances—the men lounging around their gun-stacks ready to "fall in" at the first alarm.

Lieut. Col. E. H. C. Cavins, 14th Indiana, has command of about 800 recruits and returning veterans (for different regiments in the Army of the Potomac) at this place. He is retained here with his "mixed" command to assist should there be any trouble with the rebel prisoners.

The Sanitary men and women and those of the U. S. Christian Commission are working night and day to alleviate the sufferings of the wounded soldiers both at Fredericksburg and Belle Plain. There is no estimating how much relief their presence affords our brave blue-jackets. I saw Mr. Kellogg (formerly of the firm of Kellogg & Smith) amongst them. He was very kind to me. But I have made this letter very tedious I fear, and will close.

Sailed up the Potomac, for the fourth time, on the steamer Connecticut—had a huge "chip" of "milker punch," strong, and a most refreshing sleep aboard. Am getting along finely, if I can only keep quiet. 'Tis hard work, too!

PROCK.

P.S.—I have just learned of the death of Sergeant Albert Wicks, of Co. "G." I thought everything of that boy, and am deeply pained to know that I shall meet my gallant comrade, tried and true friend, no more.

The Second Corps has covered itself with glory, but we have to mourn the loss of scores of brave men.

Any thing directed to me here will be promptly forwarded, should I be sent (as I expect I shall) to some other hospital.

Mount Pleasant Hospital,
Washington, D. C., May 21, 1864.

Friend Greene: Nothing to do but to keep quiet, grin, and bear it. I will jot down for you a few more items and incidents of the late battles in the Wilderness.

The late battle-field of Chancellorsville was still strewn thickly with fragments of the strife—portions of cannon, their limbers and caissons broken; muskets, pieces of uniform, haversacks, canteens, knapsacks, and the bleaching skeletons of the brave fellows that fought and fell; rifle-pits, and breast-works, a portion partially demolished, were visible in all directions. Both armies adopted the McClellan plan—"fortify as you go"—a few shovels full of earth and a log or two save many lives.

Strange feelings crept over me as we marched along the same road and over the same ground where one year and a day before I had stood up with my comrades in line of battle. The old white house occupied as headquarters by Gen. Couch during the fight, shattered and torn with hostile shot and shell, is still standing, a refuge for bats and owls (ghosts, too, for aught I know).

I remember the identical tree on which hung our blood-red hospital flag. A group of tall, stately pines, near which a lot of beeches were butchered for us first, and a lot of rebels by us afterward (in the charge made by the 1st brigade, 3d division, 2d corps), are left standing—their trunks splintered, bruised and torn by rifle balls and cannon shot, bear witness to the fierceness of the contest.

Beyond the battle-field some five miles, in a southerly direction, we crossed the N. river, a mere ditch, not over twelve or fifteen feet in width. On the southern bank was a smelting furnace (since burned by our troopers), and beyond an iron-ore mine, worked quite recently, as the heaps of freshly-dug ore indicated.

At Cobb's Tavern, we saw the first seven females—quite a squad of 'em there was, too. Their look was one of bitterness and hatred. Little care the rough soldier for this, however—three years service steel a man's heart to anything.

The ground in front of the position so hotly contested for on the 5th and 6th of May [1864] presented all the horrors of a battlefield, including the charred and blackened remains of those who were burned and smothered in the blazing leaves and underbrush; saplings were split into matches by the storm of bullets. Soldiers of all ranks lay there—a muddy slough filled with spiced bushes was literally corduroyed with the dead bodies of our fellows, whilst on the narrow ridge directly in front the Johnnies lay piled in heaps. Sharp-shooters commanded the plank-road, and if a man wanted to be satisfied for once in his life he went at the identical individual fired at, his career decided at once as he crossed the highway of Death. Towards the close of the fight Col. Coons gave his horse to carry a dispatch to Gen. Webb, and in doing so, I was compelled to gallop some distance down the plank-road. No use dodging—they flew too thick! Why I was not killed, can't tell—time hadn't come I guess. 'Tis astonishing how soon men become accustomed and totally indifferent to danger. During these successive fights in the Wilderness I have frequently seen soldiers sitting by the side of a dead comrade eating, whilst others were loading and firing with all their might in the same line.

An ice-house was captured on the 7th by our skirmishers from the Johnny pickets, and was the "bone of contention" all day, our men holding it as the " patrician" Twas amusing and exciting to see our fellows (those not engaged) crawling down to the skirmish line after their "rations of ice," and coming back on a "double-quick" when the ration had been served. All of these adventurers did not escape unseathed.

A regiment of Chippewa Indians were sent out on the 9th to sharp-shoot. The yell they raised on getting in range of the Johnnies scared nobody, but on the contrary was so original that men on both sides lauded it heartily. These "allies" were, I presume, given the privilege of scalping a fallen foe, as I saw none of those "seeking trophies" in their belts on their return.

I noticed that the Heights of Fredericksburg were not fortified in the rear. The train of ambulances coming in well up the river and winding down in front of all the rifle-pits and earth-works, I had the gratification of thoroughly inspecting this rebel stronghold—this time at "short range," and without being shot at! I always said (and shall
stuck to it), that this position was and is impregnable, when held by veterans, to an attack in front.

The fields in the immediate vicinity of the town were planted with corn principally, which was just sprouting—soon to be trampled into mire by the thousands of horses and mules attached to this army.

Had the Johnny bullet-hole been in my arm instead of my foot, I should have tried to visit some places of interest (to me) in this town—the house Co. “G” was quartered in both before and after the fight in Dec. ’62—the depot where the huge 20-pound shells first burst in our ranks, and the ditch into which our poor fellows, killed in this “Burnside’s slaughter-pond,” were thrown.

The country north of Fredericksburg, all the way to the Potomac, is a barren waste—now and then a house filled with women and children, who wear a care-worn frightened look that arouses one’s sympathies at once. How they have subsisted the past winter, God only knows! I saw perhaps half a dozen little patches (for roasting ears, probably) a few peas, beans, onions, &c.—no fences, though, not a sign of an enclosure was there. A hard, hard lot is theirs! These are probably the families of the devilish guerrillas that scour this desolate waste, as Arabs do the Desert, but nevertheless the helpless women and children are to be pitied.

I never saw our men so determined—so confident as they were and are during this campaign. All seemed to be firmly convinced from the time we crossed the Rapidan that this was to be the final struggle between the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Va.; that Lieut. Gen. U. S. Grant was too much for Lee, and therefore one and all were confident of success; that they will be successful I have not the least doubt. May Heaven grant it!

I will jot down a few items of hospital life in my next.

Tell the General I am in receipt of his last letter—but presume these are some mistake somewhere—was not aware that I was his “Dear Persimmon,” nor could I clearly understand the lock of auburn hair—unless it was a slight insinuation that the article was ‘sacred’ with me. Ye ‘piece of poetry’ it was wrapped up in also mystified ye ‘Eagle,’ viz.:

The locks enclosed are from the brow
Of one steamboating brog’t to grief;
In your enchanting presence now,
The ship-wrecked mariner finds relief.
[signed]

HENRIET

and not “General,” as usual. Guess the produce-shun was not intended for you, truly,

PROCK.

P. S.—Tell the “folks tow hum,” friend G., to be careful when they write to soldiers in U. S. General Hospital, and leave out the company and regiment—unless they do this, the letters will certainly go to the regiment, wherever it is, first. Write name of hospital and ward plainly. As for instance,


He has no late news from the regiment. So far I am improving—

should the inflammation not increase, will be marching around in “four ranks” (two of ‘em wooden files) B 4 long.

A private letter was received by a friend yesterday from Lieut. Landon, from which we are permitted to take the following extracts. “Prock’s” numerous friends will be gratified to learn that his wound is progressing favorably."

"I am out of doors today, on a camp (iron) bed-stead. It is bulky to sleep in the fresh air by the mouthfuls once more, and get away from the—hospital stinks in the close ward, and escape from the cursed flies, fleas and bed-bugs. Ah! I feel 50 per cent better—that I do; and my foot is assuming a somewhat natural shape, though the bullet has not yet been extracted, and the probability is that it may heal up with the rebel lead inside.

I have not heard a word from the Old Post for two weeks—no letters or papers."

"I am frozed to hear from the old regiment. Have any of the boys got home? I can well imagine what a bully, good time they will have in a few days."

"Write! write! and enjoin all my friends to do the same."

"I guess I shall have to put in a tall old visit to Old Kentucky, too? What! Won’t that be a bully go?"


"There are a h—l of a lot of cripples here—men shot in every part of the body, arms—some of the most queer. Makes the Johnny bullets do take at times—one man shot in the right eye, bullet went clean around his head under the left ear, and came out through his left eye!"

"I am still weak. The weather is so cussed hot that I can’t write long at a time, &c."

"Remember me to all enquiring friends."

Your friend,

PROCK.

Mount Pleasant Hospital,
Washington, D. C., July 8, 1864.

Dear Greene: All of the “vets of the war” and “recreants” who have a year or more to serve Uncle Samuel, that formerly belonged to the 14th Indiana, and are now attached to the 20th Indiana, are to be divided into two companies on the reorganization of that regiment, so as to give the non-commissioned officers of the 14th, who reenlisted last winter, a chance. This is a simple act of justice to brave men. Well, the boys know that justice and a fair show for all honors to those deserving them will be meted out by Col. Taylor of the 20th. My informant says “our fellows are highly pleased with their new Colonel, and are quite at home with the men of the gallant double X Indiana regiment.” I am glad of it. There are many clever souls and brave and daring soldiers in that “remnant” of the 14th, and I shall always take an interest in the welfare of my old comrades."

"Ibid., July 2, 1864.

"The Sun states that the paper was regularly mailed to “Prock”.

"Vincennes Western Sun, July 3, 1864."
I failed in my letter, a few days ago, to return thanks through the columns of your most excellent paper to a few warm-hearted, kind, and true friends both of the Old Post and Princeton, Ind., for their sympathy and generous offers of a home to the soldier, with all the comforts and attentions they and theirs could bestow on a wounded friend. These good people know not how deeply their generous offers stirred the soldier's heart. Whilst there is a pulsation there, 'twill be for them. 'Tis cheering to know that one has friends. Nothing lightens the load through life so much as their warm welcomes, their earnest greetings (sympathy, too, when needed), and cheerful countenances. God bless 'em all!

There are three classes of visitors to the hospitals. First, and least important, are the worldy sympathizers—of both sexes—the male portion of these "drones" are generally composed of broken-down, short-winded, long-faced, seedy preachers of all denominations. They walk solemnly up and down the wards, between the couches of patient sufferers; first casting their cadaverous looks and ghastly shadow upon all, and then, after a whispered consultation with the surgeon of the ward, offer to pray; do so, and retire, without having smiled on a single soldier or dropped a word of comfort or cheer. The females belonging to this (the "first class") go gawking through the wards, peeping into every curtained couch, seldom exchanging a word with the occupant, but (as they invariably "hunt in couples") giving vent to their pent up "wheel-inks" in heart-rending (?) outbursts of—"Oh, my Savior!" "Phoebe, do look here!" "Only see what a horrid wound!" "Goodness, gracious, how terrible war is!" "My! my! my!!! Oh, let's go—I can't stand it any longer!" And as they near the door, perhaps these dear creatures will wind up with an audible—"Heavens! what a smell! Worse than fried onions!"

Class No. two is composed chiefly of flash youths, got up in the latest style, and "perfectly regardless of expense," every "har" in its proper place, kids, canes, and patent leathers, seal rings, and an odor of musk. Accompanying these are wasp-waisted, almond-eyed, cherry-lipped, finely-powdered damsels, carrying tiny baskets, containing an exquisitely embroidered handkerchief, highly perfumed, and a vial or two of restoratives (to be used in case of sudden indisposition). This batch of "sight seers," do-nothings, idlers, time-killers, fops, and butterflies skip through the hospital, and like summer shadows, leave no trace behind.

But the members of the third class (and thank fortune, their name is legion) with their cheerful and benevolent countenances, words of sympathy and encouragement; their ever ready smile and helping hand to fan the fevered brow or carry a cup of cooling beverage to parched lips; their quiet step, plain and unassuming manners; their earnest enquiries and endeavors to find out whether the soldier may not need something—anything that money can purchase or kindness bestow; their thousand and one most welcome gifts, from a fresh and fragrant rose to a—well, I hardly know what not; for the catalogue of presents from these good Samaritans is as endless as their generosity is unbounded. Their whole souls are in the good work, and many an eye glistens with a bright tear-bead to hear their kind words, and in returning thanks for these (to the soldier) priceless treasures. These noble souls totally obliterate all signs or thoughts of the two former classes of visitors—the "sight seers" and "ah, me's!"

Now, all soldiers are not alike any more than other people, to-be-sure, and while one will eagerly accept a gift from strange hands, another by his side would quietly but most respectfully refuse, with the remark—"Cer- tainly your gifts, my kind sir, on some one more in need of luxuries or necessities!" but each and every gallant fellow feels his heart beat with joy as these articles are distributed, and the donors do not experience more real pleasure in bestowing than the blue jackets in receiving, and the hearty "God bless you" of many a mangled and suffering volunteer no doubt re-pays them ten thousand times o'er.

The odor from the "dead-house" when it is first opened for ventilation each day, is most offensive. This institution is entirely too near the hospital. The military command, a first Lieutenant of the Second Battalion, Invalid Corps, is a thorough going soldier (minus his right arm), keeps the yard and grounds thoroughly policed and his men as clean and neat as soap, blacking and pipe clay can make a soldier, his clothing, and arms. In fact, the boys spend two-thirds of their time, when off duty, polishing up.

The foot continues to improve. Hail Columbia! I shall travel soon, I 'spec. I am slightly of the opinion that, like Davy Crockett, "I was so tarnation angry when the ball hit me that the hostile lead melted and ran out."

Capt. John S. Poland, of 2d Regular Infantry, U.S.A., and "Commissary of Musters," D.C., an old friend, called on me yesterday. He is looking well, and is formerly from Princeton, Ind.

Hon. John L. M.C., that kind-hearted and most affable old gentleman, calls to see us Hoosier boys frequently. Trock is largely indebted to him for Indiana papers and other most acceptable reading matters, including Major-General George B. McClellan's Report.

I must not forget to mention the names of a number of Indiana ladies who have been very, very kind to us. Indeed, Mrs. Senator Lane, Mrs. John P. Usher, Mrs. Judge Wright24 (of Loganport, I think), and others whose names I have unfortunately forgotten, have contributed a large share to our comfort during the long weary hours of confinement to a couch of painful suffering. The soldiers' blessings go with them and all who go around doing good in this abode of trials and sufferings, of wounds and death.

Numerous are the touching scenes I have witnessed here in the past fifty days. A father, mother, sister, or wife, summoned by the telegraph, arrives just in time to hear the death-rattle in the swaying
throat of those that are dear to them, or find that him they so fondly hoped for, had, perhaps but the hour before, passed swiftly and quietly to the "other shore," there taking his place "in line" with comrades gone before, will "march and counter-march" through Hades until the shrill blast of Gabriel's golden bugle, sounding the "assembly," warns the spirits of departed soldiers to prepare for a last "Grand Review," then "falling in," he takes the "stey" from his "file leader," and pausing only to salute the Great Captain as he files past, enters with brave heart and a firm, confident tread upon the campaign that is to last forever.

I received a letter from Capt. Patterson last evening stating that the old 14th was no more. The war-worn remnant of the gallant old regiment had gone to their homes, never perhaps to again rally under the old blue ribbons that once composed a handsome battle-flag. Joy go with them, and may many long years of unalloyed happiness fall to their lot. None are more deserving, surely.

I heard a rumor that my much esteemed friend, ye General, was in Porkopolis [Cincinnati] lately on a "sparring tour," and had purchased the "Blue Goose." All things must have been lovely.

"Oh, carry me long!"

Prock can't see it—still should it prove a "true bill," I have only to say, "sail in 'Lafayette;' you are a 'team'—especially on the 4th of July!"

Appropos of the National Anniversary, this coming 4th will be the fourth 4th that I have passed as a soldier, and "sich" gay 4ths they have been, too! Ha! ha! Well remembered, I fancy, by many a 14th man who may chance to read this.

I may not "take up my line of march" from here for ten days yet, and then 'twill not be towards Hoosierdom. So all letters and papers addressed to me at this hospital for 35 days to come, will be duly received, read with great pleasure, appreciated as soldiers only know how, and answered promptly, by

Yours, crippled, but "gay and happy still," PROCK.

F.S.—D—n the Quartermaster's Department, say I! My valise (a new leather one), with valuable papers, clothing, &c., left with regimental head-quarters' baggage, has "gone up for 90 days"—so I hear. Wish I had the chap that had that baggage in charge by the ears about a minute, cuss him! P.