

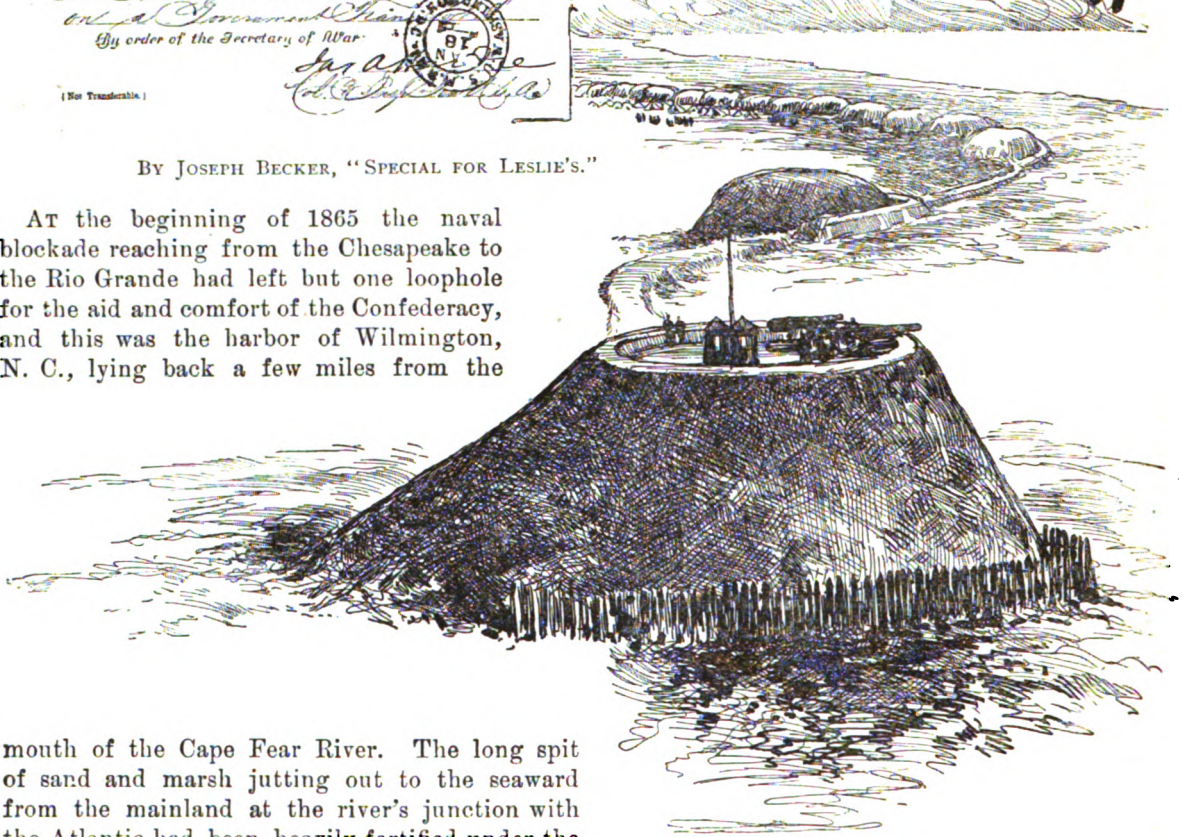
FORT FISHER

AND WILMINGTON

No. — War Department
Washington, D. C. January 11, 1865
Pass
To Joseph Fisher, United States Engineer
For the purpose of visiting the Fort Mound Batteries and Fort Fisher, N. C., and Government Ordnance.
By order of the Secretary of War
J. A. [Signature]
[Circular Seal: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF WAR, JAN 11 1865]

BY JOSEPH BECKER, "SPECIAL FOR LESLIE'S."

AT the beginning of 1865 the naval blockade reaching from the Chesapeake to the Rio Grande had left but one loophole for the aid and comfort of the Confederacy, and this was the harbor of Wilmington, N. C., lying back a few miles from the



MOUND BATTERIES AND FORT FISHER.

mouth of the Cape Fear River. The long spit of sand and marsh jutting out to the seaward from the mainland at the river's junction with the Atlantic had been heavily fortified under the direction of General Braxton Bragg, the "Little more grape, Captain Bragg" of the Mexican War, and was considered the one remaining impregnable rebel fortress. The marshes protected it on the riverside, while heavy cannon guarded the approach by sea. In addition the sloping sand of the beach had been planted thickly with ground torpedoes, connected by wires with batteries within the fort, while a tangled network of wire had been snarled over them with the design of hindering an attacking party until they could be exploded. Where mound batteries and earthworks were lacking palisades of cypress logs, many of them two feet thick, guarded the inclosure. The extent of the work was astonishing, extending nearly a mile in one direction and half a mile in another.

Once under the guns of this barrier, the swift

but frail blockade runners were safe. Guided by a well-understood code of signals, they dropped across from Bermuda and Nassau or down from distant Halifax, and made port with ease. The blockading fleet had to keep to the open sea and frequently to make Port Royal in nasty weather; and, while many of the runners were caught, enough got through to keep the Confederacy in touch with the rest of the world, and to bring in medicines, ammunition, guns and wares.

The fort had been reconnoitred often enough, the importance of taking it was fully understood; but its defensive character was well enough known to prevent any moderate undertaking. When, in December, 1864, General B. F. Butler, in co-operation with Admiral Porter, took a great

military and naval expedition against the fort and failed, with victory seemingly in his grasp, a howl went up from the North that precipitated Butler's removal from command, and incidentally started an unending controversy—with which, however, I have nothing to do. General Grant's determination to send a second expedition under General Alfred H. Terry to take the fort, with the assistance of Porter's fleet, was reached in secret, and was well at sea before its object was known, even to its commander. The fall of the fort on January 15th, two weeks after the Butler fiasco, aroused immediate newspaper interest, and I hurried to join the expedition and illustrate the fort, with the intent of following up the other operations which were a necessary sequence.

My general pass got me a berth on the *Quaker City*, a side-wheel boat that had done duty by turns as gunboat and transport, and a few hours' sailing from Norfolk brought us to the fleet, in the mouth of the Cape Fear River. This was the greatest aggregation of war ships assembled during the Rebellion, and embraced half a dozen monitors, the famous *New Ironsides*, and, together with such ships of the line as the *Minnesota*, now the apprentice training ship in New

York harbor, the *Colorado*, *Ticonderoga*, *Wabash*, *Susquehanna*, *Brooklyn* and *Powhatan*, long since broken up, and a legion of lighter vessels, including some converted blockade runners, made up a fleet that could throw six hundred tons of metal at a broadside. The monitors—or at least some of them—are rusting away in the James River now; but of all the famous fleet, the brave little *Yantic* is the only one to-day in the active service of the navy.

Fort Fisher had been built to resist a prodigious bombardment, but nothing like the one it was subjected to. So long as its guns were serviceable the fort was invincible against an assault; these destroyed, it was only a question of superior force. The fleet smashed the guns and Terry's soldiers did the rest, but not until the Confederate garrison under Colonel William Lamb had made a valiant resistance.

The flag of the whole country was flying over the fort when the *Quaker City* rounded to. I made haste to put off with an accommodating boat's crew. My general pass entitled me to be treated as a person of distinction. It had even curtailed the lofty impertinence of the toy officer who snubbed me when I boarded the *Quaker*

North Atlantic Squadron,

U. S. Flag-Ship "Halbarn,"

Cape Fear River Jan 25 1865

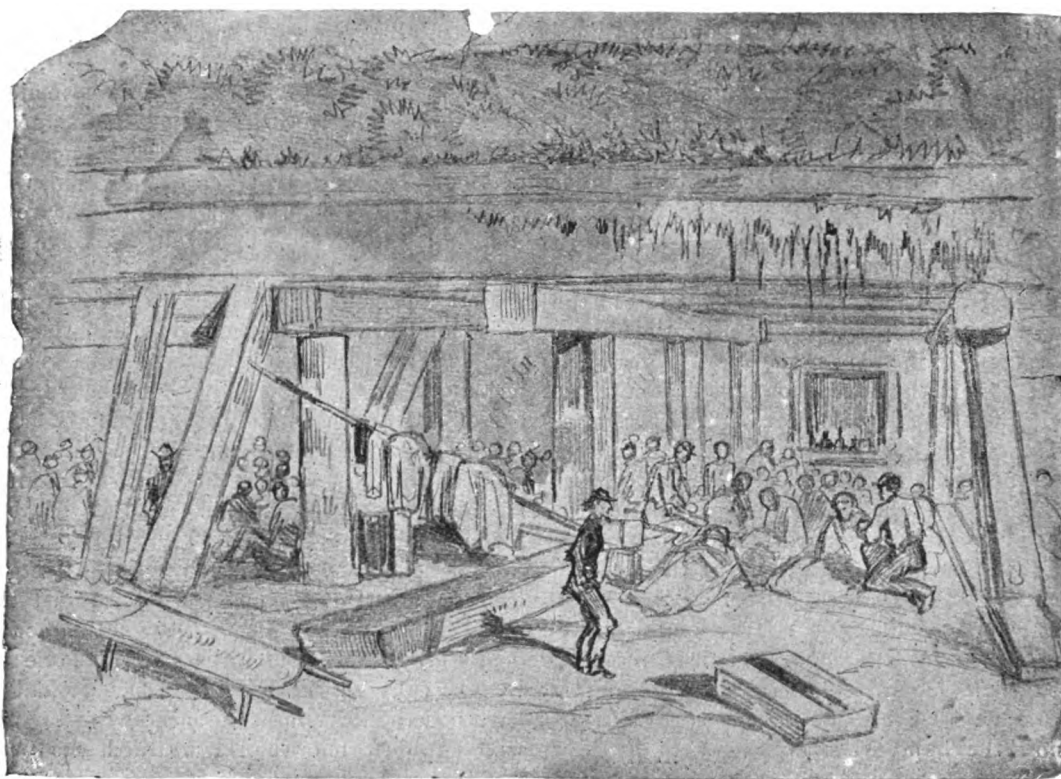
All naval officers will afford Mr
J. O. Becker all facilities in their power
towards accomplishing his purpose
of sketching the defenses of Cape Fear
River &c.

Army officers are requested to recognize
the pass & permit Mr Becker to visit any
place within our lines -

By order of Rear Admiral D.D. Bates

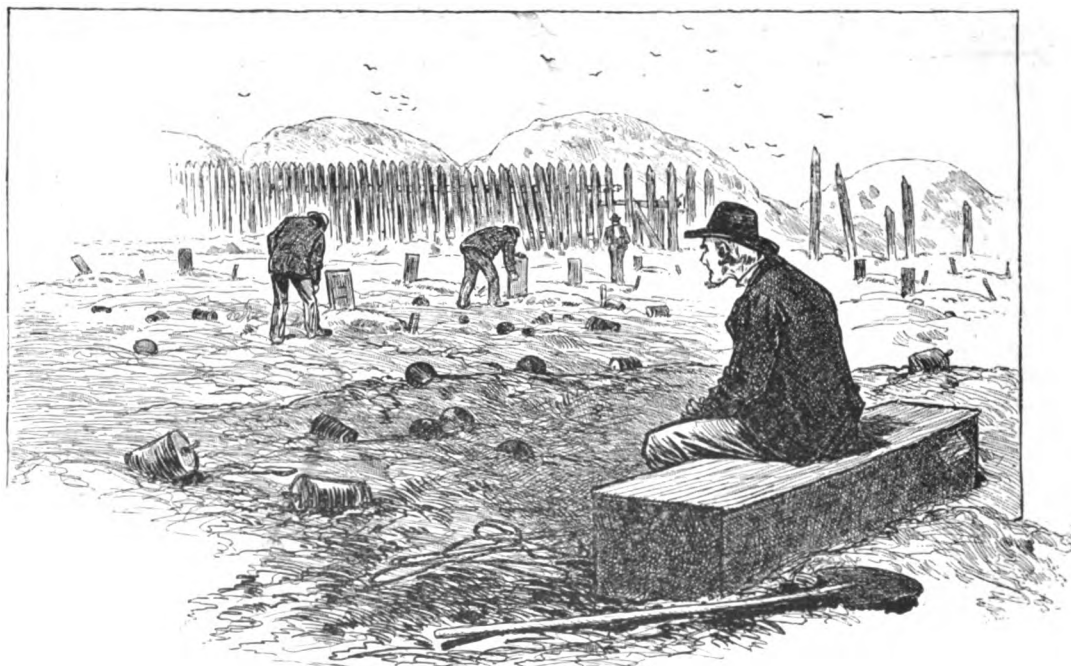
A. M. Wells.

Head Quarters.

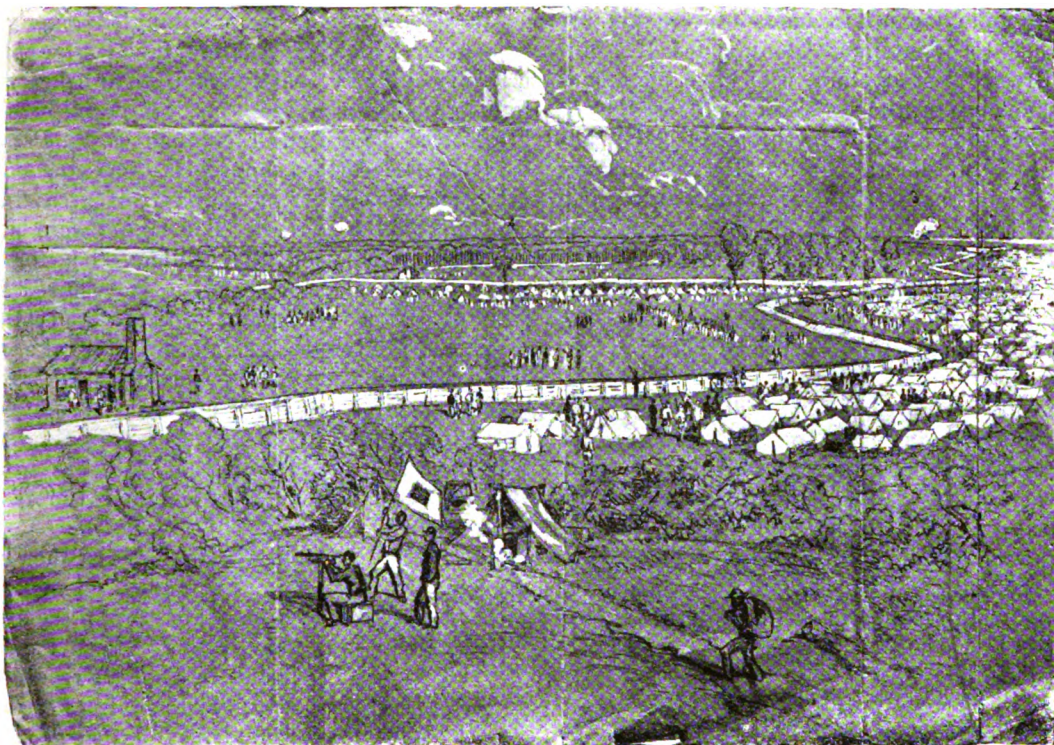


BOMBPROOF OF FORT FISHER USED AS A HOSPITAL.—FAC-SIMILE OF ORIGINAL SKETCH.

City, and it was now potent in getting me off. Tar had to receive the prescribed treatment for resuscitating a drowned person for half an hour before he came to. The flagship *Malvern*, We landed ingloriously, tipping over in the heavy surf, and were in such peril that one Jack



A NEW ENGLAND FATHER "WAITING TO TAKE HIS BOY BACK NORTH."



THE UNION LINES THREE MILES ABOVE FORT FISHER (AFTER THE CAPTURE OF THE FORT).
FAC-SIMILE OF ORIGINAL SKETCH.



EFFECTS OF THE BOMBARDMENT.—FAC-SIMILE OF ORIGINAL SKETCH.

lying in the river, responded to a signal and sent a boat to take me off to her. I presented my credentials to Lieutenant Commander K. Randolph Breese, fleet captain, who gave me a general pass for use on the vessels of the fleet and was exceedingly kind about everything. I had a letter from Mr. Leslie to Admiral Porter, who was one of his intimate friends, and who gave me a seat at his table in the cabin of the *Malvern*. The *Malvern* had been a blockade runner, and like most of her class was a side-wheel boat, very swift and beautifully fitted up.

So secretly and swiftly had the expedition succeeded that the blockade runners were not posted. Two ran in from sea and displayed signals which were properly answered by the fort. The disgust of the English speculators on board when they found they were trapped was something to remember.

There was mourning in the fleet over the loss of the tars in the naval brigade, who, gathered from many ships and without knowledge of land

tactics, attempted to storm the fort from the ocean side, and who were entangled among the torpedoes, which fortunately failed to explode, but who suffered heavily from the musketry and light guns on the redoubts. Especial was the grief over the gallant Lieutenant S. W. Preston, who led the forlorn hope. He was one of the most popular officers in the navy, of great talent and unflinching courage. The sailors were buried where they fell, and the soldiers, too, for that matter. For days afterward gray-haired men from distant New England villages were scattered over the sandy reaches, waiting to take their "boys" home. The ready army undertakers were on the ground, searching among the rude board grave marks for the names of the missing ones. Few men there were from the big cities to seek their slain, but from New England the fathers always came.

Under the bombproofs in Fort Fisher were the Confederate sick and wounded. I never saw more misery than here. The two attacks had told heavily, and men lay about in the grewsome caverns, with gaping, festering wounds. The surgeon had been killed, and they got little or no attention until after the fight—a good while after, in fact. Maggots were devouring the flesh of living men. It was too horrible to describe.

I never saw so much iron in shape of projectiles anywhere as within and about Fort Fisher. The fleet had hurled more than fifty thousand missiles at it from three to eleven inches in diameter, and I know that more than a thousand tons of them were afterward picked up. Yet so strong were the works that, aside from the shattered cannon, they were little harmed. The army, which carried the fort by assault, after much desperate fighting, got in more readily than might have been supposed. I know a breach in the palisades where two huge logs were found loose was pointed out to me as the key to the initial success.

We led an easy life on the

Provision Return for Co. "D," 13th N.C. Battalion Light Artillery for 111 days, commencing December 10th 1864, and ending December 27th 1864.

Post or Station	No. of Men	Inches	No. of Days	No. of Rounds	Of Artillery						Remarks
					24 lb	32 lb	42 lb	6 lb	8 lb	10 lb	
Fort Fisher N.C.	111	2	11								

The A.C.S. Will issue according to the above return of Capt. Mann Co. "D" 13th N.C. Artillery

J. T. Adams, Capt. Commanding Battery

113
114
124



"KINGDOM COME!"

flagship. There was not much ceremony, although the admiral felt all of the honors of his rank.

I did not like Porter. He was very boastful. It was his delight to fill in the dinner hour with his theories on the right way to conquer the Confederacy. It was clear from his conversation that he believed but one person could accomplish it satisfactorily, and that was himself. He was especially severe upon the Army of the Potomac, from the men to the generals, and seemed to enjoy repeating loudly a set phrase that if circumstances had given the navy the work to perform that had fallen to the lot of the army it would be soon ended. These strictures were greeted with reverential assent by the officers around the admiral's table, but they filled me with anger. I had been with the Army of the Potomac in battle and siege, from the Wilderness to Petersburg. I had seen its columns march unflinching

to destruction, and I knew that braver or more devoted soldiers never went to the sacrifice. It was easy for this naval officer, sitting at his luxuriously laden table, to devise schemes of conquest, but the hungry, ragged troops in the trenches before Petersburg were giving up their



SERVING RATIONS TO NEGROES AND POOR WHITES AT WILMINGTON.



THE WAR ARTIST IN LOVE

lives while the Porter part of the navy kept comfortably out of range and had not dared even to venture up the Dutch Gap Canal.

These reflections bred in me a prejudice against the admiral, which he soon reciprocated. I did not show him my sketches, as he broadly hinted I should, and kept my own counsel while on the *Malvern* and with the fleet. Porter wrote to Mr. Leslie expressing the opinion that I was loafing, as he never saw me doing anything. Luckily the same mail carried fourteen sketches of Fort Fisher and the fleet, so I did not re-

quire any special vindicating. Mr. Leslie wrote back to the admiral that he was satisfied with my exertions, and that ended the matter, though it did not please the admiral.

But I am frank to confess that a loafing period followed. Wilmington fell soon after the taking of Fort Fisher. The Confederates realized that, with Sherman marching up the coast and the blockade runners completely cut off, there was no use in bothering about Wilmington. The Federal forces took prompt possession of



PLACES OF REFUGE USED BY THE CITIZENS OF PETERSBURG DURING THE SIEGE.



UNION TROOPS ENTERING PETERSBURG, APRIL 3D, 1865.

the town, and I left the fleet to join them. Wilmington had been the great port of entry for the blockade runners, whose profits were so large that they could afford to lose one ship out of three and then clear a fortune. Great warehouses lined the streets to store the cotton which went out on the return trips, and the stores, munitions and luxuries that made up the incoming cargoes. Here came a swarm of Old World adventurers. It was a modern freebooters' rendezvous, where prosperity and demoralization went hand in hand. The occupation destroyed all this. Prosperity disappeared and poverty came in. Living lavishly, the people had nothing when the blockade running stopped, and to add to the general wretchedness thousands of negroes from the adjacent country came in to enjoy the strange pleasures of freedom and the universal good time and rations that were supposed to keep liberty, fraternity and equality company.

In a little time ten thousand helpless blacks were thronged about the city, a burden upon the commissary, who did his best amid infinite confusion and misery. The poorer whites fell in with the negroes, and the equality of hunger brought them together at the pork barrel and biscuit box.

It was pathetic to see the negroes come wandering in. They traveled in companies, usually with some patriarch at the head, feeling their way timidly until safe within the lines. Wandering

along the river, well inland, one day, I came with a companion upon a band of these black refugees. They were led by a bent old African whose snowy hair and dignified manner bespoke him as a person of importance. When he saw us he was some distance from the head of his band. He turned around and faced them, holding up his long staff warningly. They stopped and huddled together like a flock of frightened sheep until we assured the leader that they had reached "Kingdom



Come" and that this was indeed the Year of Jubilee, and also told them where they could get something to eat. They were so childlike in their innocence and ignorance that it seemed cruel to turn them loose on their own resources and the scant tenderness of the War Department.

There was little to do in Wilmington, so I fell in love. At least I think that was it from the symptoms as I now recall them. I boarded with a shoemaker whose household contained a bevy of girls, of the soft-voiced Southern sort, one of whom, who can be called "Molly" without fear of identification, took much interest in art and the special artist. I suddenly became tired of the war and of making pictures of guns and drums and warriors, and wore out my pencils in picturing the fair face of the lazy-laughing Molly. In this way winter slipped into spring. I was very uncomfortable, and spent much thought in meditat-

ing solemnly upon my future course. Should I abandon my career, let art go to the dogs and settle down as a Carolina cracker? That was the question. Like most such problems, it was decided for me. One day, late in March, I went to the post office and found there a peremptory letter from Mr. Leslie ordering me back to Petersburg and rather intimating that I was wasting my talents. It dazed my youthful head. I went back to the house in a mental maze, with the letter clutched in one hand and the envelope in the other. As I sat by the window in my room on the ground floor, pondering over the first crisis I had ever met, something fell from the window above and struck on the broad sill beside me. It was a small box filled with fine snuff, and with it was a little stick with a tuft of cloth tied over the end. In a minute more the owner came in and claimed it. It was Molly. The maiden "dipped"! I was cured in a flash. In another hour I had started back to join my old love, the Army of the Potomac.

I reached Petersburg none too soon. The activity of the Army of the Potomac had been renewed with immense energy. The signs pointed to the swift crumbling of the Confederacy. On the 1st of April the direct assault began on the defenses of Petersburg. Sheridan's cavalry had well-nigh cut the beleaguered town off from its back door into the lines of Lee's army, while the fierce assaults of Wright's corps and the brigade under General Nelson A. Miles were made in a determined purpose to take the town. But it is no part of my tale to describe military manœuvres. The events followed swiftly upon each other. By the 2d of April, though often repulsed, the outworks of Petersburg were taken, and early on the morning of April 3d the brave soldiers of the South, who had for ten months defied the best fighters and the best generals of the North, wasted and famine-stricken, stole out of their pits and battlements, and made haste to join Lee in a last stand for their lost cause.

The news that they were departing came with the dawn. Every heart in the army leaped for joy. The men felt that the end was now scarcely more than a matter of hours. They had rested on their arms preparatory to a general assault in the morning, but now the attack was nothing but a scamper. With a cheer column after column "legged it" up the hillside and into the empty city.

I skedaddled after them as fast as I could run. Every man vied with his fellow to be the first inside.

JOHN BREWER'S RESTAURANT. No. 10 Bank Street.	
BILL OF FARE.	
Ham and Eggs,	\$1.15
Sausage and Eggs,	15
Beef Steak,	75
Venison,	1.15
Mutton Chops,	15
Pork Steak,	15
Wild Ducks,	50
Partridge, each,	10
Rabbits, do.	20
Squirrels, do.	15
Oysters, per Fry,	15
Do. do. Stew,	45
Do. do. Scollop,	15
Turkey, per Dish,	15
Fish, do. do.	15
Coffee, do. Cup,	5
Tea, do. do.	5
Butter, with each Dish,	2

A PETERSBURG MENU, AFTER THE SIEGE.

Here indeed was every sign of the exhaustion of war. Not a soul was in sight. The houses to the number of fully one-third were in ruins. The spires of the churches had been used as range finders by the Federal gunners, but these had escaped. Not so the houses around them. They were riddled.

Deep down in trenches were the wretched quarters in which the people of Petersburg had passed the siege. Cook stoves stood without the holes in the bank into which the refugees fled at the shriek of a shell. What they cooked is a mystery. There was not a crumb or any live thing to be found in the town. Even the rats and cats were gone.

Straggling down the main street, my eyes were gladdened by the sight of a restaurant sign. The shop was open, and the wide-swung door revealed the proprietor, a beaming black man, who seemed to be awaiting custom. I was the man for him. Long diet on army stores had whetted my appetite for a square meal. With a flourish he produced the bill of fare. I reproduce it here so it can be seen that it was indeed tempting.

"Doan' min' de prices," he said. "Dey's all Confederate money. I'se got a barrel full ob it in de back room, all I'se got to show fur feedin' de swaggerin' orficers dat come here as proud as ef dey owned de place, an' order as ef dey were kings. Take yo' order, sah?" he concluded, with a flourish.

I began at the top. "How about ham and eggs?"

"Ham's all gone, sah, but I'se got some aigs."

"Any sausage left?"

"We'se out ob sassage, sah, but we has de aigs."

"Well, beefsteak will do. How about that?"

"De Confederates done et up all de beef las' year."

"Well, I'd just as soon have some venison."

"Dey ain't no venison, sah. De Con——"

"Mutton chops?"

"De chops is out, sah."

"Then give me some wild duck."

He rolled his eyes despairingly. "Dey ain't no wild duck heah, boss," he said.

"No partridge?"

"No, sah."

"But you can get a rabbit?"

"Rabbit's all cotched long ago, boss. Guess dey ain't no rabbit lef' in Virginny."

"Nor squirrels?"

"No squirrels, sah. De sharpshootahs done got 'em all."

"Well, then, trot out some oysters."

"Fo' de Lord, boss," he groaned, "dey ain't been no oysters fo' a yeah. I'se just got aigs, an' not another livin' thing, an' dat's de troof."

It was. He had three. I ate them. They were not fresh. My host was deeply interested in the Yankees. He was a free negro, but none the less concerned. Did I think we had come to stay? I did indeed. He grinned widely at this, and invited me to take all the Confederate money I wanted out of the barrel in the back room. I stuffed my pockets with it, and gave him fifty cents, which was worth more than the barrel full, and then started on a chase after the army that ended at Appomattox.

(To be concluded next month.)

THE TALE OF A SKELETON.

BY W. DE WAGSTAFFE.

I AM a physician, and my skill is to probe the ills of humanity with a scalpel rather than the pen. I believe, however, that there are mysteries in the hollow shell that serves to frame our beings which the surgeon cannot fathom—sacred mysteries which the pen alone can convey. I have never tried myself to attain that proficiency in writing which belongs to the pages of a magazine, therefore this manuscript is the only one I ever completed. It was written when I was much younger than I am now, and consists mainly of a statement of facts that I set down on paper for the purposes of record only. Circumstances surrounding the narrative which this manuscript

reveals have induced me to publish it. There is a woman somewhere in the world who, when she reads this tale, will answer the plea it makes to her. I do not pretend to any profound knowledge of psychology; I do not believe that sentiment acts upon the same motives or from like consequences in any two women. There are two classes, the good and the bad, and the distinguishing degrees of virtue and villainy are so minute that there must be a difference of sentiment in every woman.

She for whom this manuscript is revised may be an angel or a fiend, a nun or an adventuress, I cannot tell, and the voice that could alone speak