AN ARTIST'S STORY OF THE WAR.

BY EDWIN FORBES,

SPECIAL ARTIST with the Armies in the field:
Author of "LIFE STUDIES OF THE GREAT ARMY;"
CENTENNIAL MEDAL—HIGHEST ART AWARD;
MEMBER OF THE FRENCH ETCHING CLUB,
ETC., ETC.
When the Civil War broke out, one of the most brilliant and famous editors of New York said, "This war will absorb public attention and be the ruin of the newspapers." On the contrary, it was the making of the newspapers. The correspondents in the capital and in the field leaped to their opportunity, and suddenly developed elements of quickness, sagacity and comprehension that were potent factors of public education in all that the war was.

Among those who won fame in that daring pursuit of information was a young artist whose graphic sketches and pictures in the very midst of the varied scenes of camp, march, hospital, bivouac and battlefield, made their reality familiar to the home public through the illustrated papers of the day, and whose accumulated material gave him in later years the means of vividly recalling those exciting times in a series of forty large etchings, published as "Life Studies of the Great Army."

It was no small honor to Edwin Forbes, when the International Art Commission at our Centennial Exposition of 1876 gave to him the highest award in their power, privately expressing their wonder that one man should have been able to produce such a splendid array of artistic plates; and this was followed by unsought honorary memberships of the foreign Etching Clubs.

What is perhaps of even more interest to us in these present days, is the strong and uniform witness of men to whom every phase of army life in that war was familiar, that Forbes' pictures are in very truth "life studies," and reproduce with startling realism the almost forgotten miniatize of the scenes they portray—the beauty, the fun, the tragedy and comedy, the brightness and dullness, the gayety and the toil, the infinite variety of picturesque fact in all arms of the service. The series of large etchings, of course, are on the United States War Office walls, but they are only a small part of his interesting material.
Sherman at Atlanta.
KIND of traveling human locust dressed in faded blue, is a phrase that might have been truthfully applied to the Union soldier; always hungry, never satisfied, and willing to join a foraging party on the shortest possible notice. At times he literally cleared parts of our country of all bounties acceptable to man and beast; and yet deprivations were laughed at and forgiven, for the little obtained by the brave "boys in blue" was but slight recompense for the great service rendered to the land.

Many were the ludicrous scenes in those memorable campaigns. At the back door of every cabin or farm-house on the line of march could be seen groups of irrepressible Yankee soldiers with one question: "Got any pies for sale, Aunty?" and when such things were obtainable, eager hands stretched forth to receive them. Often hoe-cake and biscuits were offered instead of pies, and seemed just as desirable to the hungry men. They always paid liberally for such supplies, and many poor people made considerable sums of money in thus catering to their wants.

A party of "the boys" on scrounging through the barn-yards would often chase up a nimble porker, whose ridiculous efforts to escape would greatly amuse them; but a final corral in some fence corner and a quick thrust of the bayonet would end the noise and life of the unfortunate pig. Or perhaps a proud-stepping old rooster who had been a neighborhood tyrant would come in their way. Age was no objection to such healthy appetites, and the wringing of the old fellow's neck was only a question of very limited time. A bee-hive was a strong attraction to the soldier's "sweet-tooth," but a capture of it sometimes resulted in more bodily pain than had been counted on.

The remains of a pillaged vegetable garden suggested the visit of a cyclone; everything would disappear in a twinkling, and the men always seemed to confiscate the onions with especial relish. But first of all delights was the sudden sight of a cherry-tree in full bearing. How with a bound and a cheer the soldiers would run to it! In scarcely more than a moment of time all small limbs would be broken off and feasted upon in the ranks when on the march. The sight of fresh meat always increased the already ravenous appetites. When, after pitching camp at evening, the regimental butcher would select a fine steer from the division herd, and rifle plant a bullet expectation prevail be removed in the time, and almost before it would be dis odor of beef-steak air. Berries in their growth, with bullets with his Springfield in the forehead, great ed. The skin would shortest possible ore the meat was tributed, and the would soon fill the season were a luxu able. Many a veteran during the heat of eat a handful of a crowded under whistling by, would
discover a patch of huckleberries, and at a taste of them memory would go back to the old outing-parties and the juicy home-pies made from the culled fruit.

Luxuries for the mess often came from the river or sea. When an old net was obtainable, streams would be drawn, and the suckers, bull-heads, and black bass secured would make a welcome variety to the scanty fare. If near the shore, oysters and clams would be sought for, and were gratefully devoured by the men who were subject to so much hardship. Game could sometimes be procured, and an old shotgun if obtainable was a great prize. With the colonel's permission to fire near camp, the fields would soon be beaten and rabbits, quail or perhaps a wild turkey would be added to the bill of fare. But many times the troops were limited to plain scant rations, and anything eatable was accepted then. Green horse-corn was often gathered from the fields, thrown on a fire of burning fence rails and scorched to a good deep brown. Without salt or other condiment it would be devoured with all the zest of a great luxury.

When Sherman marched to the sea his orders were, "The army will forage liberally on the country during the march. To this end each brigade commander will organize a good and sufficient foraging party under the command of one or more discreet officers, who will gather near the route traveled, corn or forage of any kind, meat of any kind, vegetables, corn-meal, or whatever is needed by the command, aiming at all times to keep in the wagons at least ten days' provisions for his command and three days' forage. Soldiers must not enter the dwellings of the inhabitants, or commit any trespass; but during a halt or camp they may be permitted to gather turnips, potatoes, and all vegetables, and to drive in stock in sight of the camp. To regular foraging parties must be intrusted the gathering of provisions and forage at any distance from the road traveled."

How well the troops obeyed this order, their good condition on their arrival at Savannah bore evidence. General Sherman relates that although the foraging was attended with much danger and hard work, there seemed to be a charm about it that attracted the soldiers, and they thought it a privilege to be detailed on a party. He said that he was often amused at the strange collections that were secured of mules, horses, and even cattle, packed with old saddles and loaded with hams, bacon, bags of corn meal and poultry. While walking up to a house on a plantation where a bivouac was made, General Sherman passed by a soldier who had a ham on his musket, a jug of sorghum molasses under his arm and a big piece of honey in his hand, from which he was eating. Catching Sherman's eye he remarked sotto voce to a comrade, "Forage liberally on the country!"

One could conclude in a measure how much food it took to supply an army by watching the enormous trains of laden wagons. I heard it stated that the wagon-train of the Army of the Potomac would cover a distance of sixty miles if stretched along a single road. To see the enormous piles of hard-tack and pork barrels at the railroad depots near camp convinced one of the truth of the old adage that "an army marches on its stomach." When supplies failed, only those in command knew how plans miscarried.
VI.

THE DRUMMER-BOYS.

HOSE omnipresent youngsters whose pranks gave so much life to camp or march deserve more than a passing tribute to their characteristic personality. Through rain or sunshine, at rest or in action, they seemed imbued with the same good-nature; and whether beating the drum or marching with it slung over the shoulder, they were the most picturesque little figures in the Union army.

Many of them were boys of twelve or thirteen, youths in years, but after a season of army life, men in experience. Parents no doubt sent them forth (or learned of their running away to the army) with grave apprehensions of the dangers they would be exposed to, but if they could have had an occasional glimpse of them in their newly acquired self-reliance and persistency, part of their sympathy might have been bestowed on those with whom the boys came in contact.

I am sure that many of the housewives of the country through which we marched long remembered the modest and innocent-faced youths who so often pestered them in their hunger. Nothing seemed to escape their prying eyes; no well was deep enough to make butter secure from them, and no cellar was sufficiently dark to keep the goodies it contained from their grasp. In camp, any mischief that was set on foot could be safely attributed to the drummer-boys and their confederates the fifers. A stern hand was necessary to make them obedient to military discipline, and a week in the guard-house or half a day's penance carrying a log, proved to them that a soldier's life had restrictions as well as pleasures. And yet they served an important as well as pleasing purpose, for what like their marching rattle-clangor or their sudden camp-calls stirred the soldier's pulse! And the march on the parade-ground during dress-parade or brigade-drill often inspired hearts that were despondent. Both drummers and fifers were in their special element at a grand review, when they appeared with white gloves and shining brasses. None were so proud in all the glorious array. When the order to "fall in" was given, they stepped majestically forward, and as the regiment approached the point of review, where perhaps the President or commanding general was posted, they glanced toward the reviewing officer with an expression of self-consciousness which suggested to a looker-on that the parade would have little importance were it not for their presence.

Painters of military pictures are fond of placing a broken drum in the fore-ground of their battle-scenes; but no representation could be more incorrect, for during a battle the musicians and drummers are detailed to the rear for hospital service, and may often be found behind some fence enjoying a quiet cup of coffee. They were sometimes made use of by the surgeon to bring the wounded men out from under fire on the battle-field, or to carry water to those sick with fever and whose patience in suffering was remarkable. With quick steps and bright faces they did good service and brought hope and cheer to many sufferers. They had their hours of drill under a drum-major, and in some quiet spot near camp would practice the calls and marches. But their unfailing good-nature lightened their many burdens and a volume of anecdotes might be related of their original ventures and ready wit.

An incident occurs to me now that happened in Virginia, after an order had been
issued from headquarters which forbade foraging. In the early part of the war it was looked upon as trespassing, and those in command failed to appreciate that all civilians outside of our lines were our bitter enemies. One commander thus conscientious met a drummer-boy carrying off a rooster by the heels. "Did you not know," said the officer, "that foraging had been forbidden?" "Yes," answered the boy sheepishly (but keeping a tight hold on the rooster) "I know I have done wrong." Then he looked up with a saucy twinkle: "But, General, he got up on a fence and hurrahed for Jeff Davis, so I killed him." The general's face relaxed; he laughed, and said, "Well, go on to camp with your chicken, but no matter whom the next one cheers for, you must not touch him."

Ah! well, the soldiers would have missed other comrades far less than the lively little drummers, and many marches through scorching sun and suffocating dust would have been much harder to bear had it not been for these little musicians. Lagging foot-steps often quickened and weary faces brightened at the sudden sound of drum and fife, and many a "God bless you, boys; you give us cheer" went out to them in the long march. There is many a duty of war that tries the courage and nerve of the soldier more than the battle-field, with its wild excitement. Marching is one of them; and when it is remembered that these little chaps were hot and tired and dusty and drooping, as well as the men, it may be seen that it often required genuine heroism in them to unsling their drums and tune up their fifes for the inspiring of the veterans' long line of march. They have been celebrated in song and story, and to those who returned to civil duties, memory of army life must seem like a dream. The scenes in which they mingled are now read as history by our children, and when we think of the drummer-boys, may we say fervently:

"Sweet is the dew of their memory,
And pleasant the balm of their recollection."
VII.
WINTER HUTS.
THE COMMISSARY'S HEADQUARTERS.

O THOSE reared amid comfortable surroundings, and who had left bright fires and home luxuries for the field of battle, life in an army hut must, for a time at least, have seemed a strange existence; but after the hardships of campaigning, the exposure on the picket-line, or sentry and fatigue duty in winter, the little shelter became a haven of rest. Much of original skill was displayed by the soldier-architects in the designing and erecting of these structures. Their materials were more than limited, and as for tools, the dull army ax was about the only building-instrument that could be made available.

A winter camp was generally located on a well drained hillside, convenient to water and accessible to supply teams. After selecting a site the limits of the camp were designated, streets laid out and arrangements vigorously carried forward that the men might get under cover before the inclement weather began. Ax-men were detailed to the nearest pine woods for logs, while others scoured the country in search of further building material. Sometimes an abandoned house would be discovered, which the men would swarm over and take away piece by piece, until at the end of two or three days nothing would be left of it but the foundation. Everything that could be called a board was of value, and window-frames, doors and sashes were treasures indeed, and seized upon with the greatest eagerness. Even the foundation was not always left to mark the spot where the house had stood, for the stones were available for chimneys, and were often carried away with the rest.

The walls of the huts were made of pine logs joined together at the corners, and their interstices plastered with yellow mud. Space for a doorway was left at one end, and a chimney at the other. This was usually made of stones plastered with mud, and extended on the top with one or two barrels, the latter improving the draft, and, in the soldiers' eyes, adding to the style of architecture. The roofs were often made of canvas, although some of the men were ingenious enough to build them of boards, which gave much more warmth and were rain-proof.

The commissary's headquarters in the illustration gives faithful delineation of a style of structure to which the soldiers were most partial. It was furnished quite luxuriously with home-made chairs and benches, a bunk to sleep in, and a fireplace from which came a gentle warmth. The walls were more or less tastefully decorated with pictures cut from the illustrated newspapers, and a visitor, glancing at the interior, would conclude that there were some genial spots in a soldier's experience.

Exterior comfort was also considered in neatly laid walks before the door, made of barrel staves. This made a dry spot to sit upon, and the soldiers were often seen together there chatting in the sun. Wash-tubs was also improvised, by cutting barrels in halves and attaching handles to each section. Protection to horses was a necessary consideration as well as to men, and the arrangement of pine boughs against the chimney in the picture was a stable contrived for the sergeant's favorite horse.

It was interesting to watch the groups of men that continually gathered about these
headquarters. The greatest number were seen when rations were issued to the mess. Then pork was weighed out, and hard-tack, coffee and other supplies distributed. Now and then a soldier would appear, to obtain a barrel for a chimney-top, or a hard-tack box to make a seat for his hut.

Notwithstanding the great effort made by the men to have their huts habitable, they experienced much discomfort at times. Roofs would leak, and it was not an uncommon sight to see them blown off altogether; then the rain would pour in and cause much consternation until damages could be repaired. Or perhaps an easterly wind would blow down a chimney and so fill the hut with pine smoke that the occupants would be driven into the open air. Then they would scheme anew to remedy the difficulty, and after placing a board across the barrel and trying other experiments, the quarters could be again occupied.

The winter evenings presented varied scenes in the huts. Many times the men would be sitting before the fire discussing the coming spring campaign, or retailing bits of camp gossip gathered during the day. Again I would find them enjoying a quiet game of euchre or draw-poker by the dim light of a tallow dip furnished by the commissary; while by the same insufficient light a soldier with thoughtful face would be laboriously penning a letter to the "old folks at home." Story-telling would often be in order, and the best romancer in the regiment would at times regale the boys with bits of real personal history, and again would trust entirely to his fertile imagination.

Evenings were also spent in song, and the sound of the manly, mellow voices fell sweetly on the ear. They were often accompanied by the insinuating strains of a violin or the twanging of the banjo. Popular military songs of the period were indulged in with great spirit, and the recollection of their effective influence has always remained vividly in my mind.

"Home is where the heart is;" and the soldier's home for long months was in his hut. When the spring campaign opened, it was with a pang that the hand of destruction was laid on the shelters, and when the order to "fall in" was given and the column made its way over the hill to the ford to meet the enemy, regretful glances were cast backward at the disman-liked winter-town, soon to be occupied by crows and turkey-buzzards, and fast about them. Now, I spared to live the scenes again, and the refusals I listen to stories winter camps.
VIII.

A SCOUTING PARTY.

ANT of occupation or dullness of time were complaints that rarely came from the army scout, as the demand for his services at headquarters was constant. To penetrate the enemy's lines and locate his out-posts and main body often be a sudden and peremptory order. Then the necessity of burning a bridge to impede the enemy's progress would unexpectedly present itself, and the frequent intelligence received of the activity of bushwhackers and guerrillas would cause the scouts to be despatched beyond the lines to abate, if possible, that never-ending annoyance.

The scouts connected with the army were an active and wiry body of men, who were expert horsemen, splendidly mounted. They usually traveled in small parties to escape observation, and were dressed in gray homespun to look as much as possible like the inhabitants of the country where active operations were carried on. They were always well armed with carbines and revolvers.

I had the pleasure of accompanying several scouting parties during the war, and remember most vividly my exciting experiences with that branch of the service. During the many campaigns in the Shenandoah Valley I scoured the country on both sides of the pike from Harper's Ferry to Port Republic in company with scouts from the various commands; and later, under Gen. Grant, during the campaign from the Wilderness to Petersburg had a number of adventures with the scouts of Sheridan's cavalry.

Shortly after the battle of the Wilderness a party of six scouts were sent by Gen. Grant to locate the enemy's right flank, and to discover whether the bridges over the North Anna River were held by a strong force, and also if Lee's army, which then occupied Spotsylvania Court House, was receiving heavy reinforcements from Richmond. I received permission to accompany this party and started with them at midnight from camp near Todd's Tavern. We moved to the left in the direction of Port Royal. On the first day we did not meet any force of the enemy and about noon entered the town, consisting of but few houses, a blacksmith's shop and a tavern. Ascertaining from contrabands that a small force of Stuart's cavalry was posted a few miles to the south, beyond the Mattaponi River, we succeeded in slipping past by crossing a ford below them. We proceeded at a trot in the direction of the North Anna River, with an advance guard of two men three hundred feet ahead, meeting with no adventure until five o'clock. Then our guard come back at a gallop, with pistols drawn, and reported having come face to face with three Confederate cavalrmen at a turn in the road a short distance ahead. Preparations were at once made to receive an attack from the body to which that advance guard of three probably belonged; but after waiting about five minutes, our own advance was sent cautiously forward again and found that the enemy had disappeared.

Later in the afternoon we saw clouds of dust in the south and west, and moving cautiously that way, we were able to get a view of large bodies of troops moving in the direction of Spotsylvania. A battle was evidently in progress at that place, as we could hear the steady growling of guns in the distance. We esconced ourselves in a piece of woods on a hill-top
three-quarters of a mile from the road where the enemy's troops were marching, and watched them with intense interest till sundown.

Feeling unsafe in such close proximity to the armies, we accosted an old contraband, evidently a slave, and asked if we could reach a certain point by riding over the farm where he was. "No, sah!" he replied. "Massa wouldn't let nobody ride ober his farm, but you might go down the road by the ole mill and git thar that way." Our ideas of "Massa's" rights, however, differed from those of the old negro and we started across country. Toward daylight we neared the North Anna River and learned from negroes that the stream was held by a force of cavalry, and that the railroad-bridge was strongly fortified and guarded.

On approaching the enemy's position carefully, we were able to see, with the aid of a field-glass, men at work on the earthworks. At intervals we could hear the rumbling of trains and the screech of a locomotive whistle, showing that Gen. Lee was still in communication with Richmond. We posted a sentinel near the edge of some woods and rested within them until nightfall, when the commanding officer wisely determined to return to the army.

Starting, we avoided as much as possible the main road and moved cautiously northward. Toward midnight we saw the glare of camp-fires on a hill a mile or two distant, and were obliged to make a detour to the eastward to avoid possible capture. Toward daylight we struck the road leading to Fredericksburg and came in sight of a party of the enemy's cavalry, who made a dash to capture us. Two of the scouts were slightly wounded, but hard riding saved us, and we reached the right of the Union lines near Spottsylvania just as Gen. Grant's army was moving by the left flank in the direction of the North Anna River.

The country lying between the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Orange and Alexandria Railroad was thoroughly scouted during the war, as large parties of guerrillas under the redoubtable Mosby made life miserable for the Union forces in that section of Virginia. In the West, scouts of the Union army did splendid service, often penetrating hundreds of miles into the enemy's lines and returning with information of great value to the commanding generals. During the Atlanta campaign Gen. Sherman relied greatly on the work of scouts, and had large numbers of them out in the enemy's country in front. In West Virginia and East Tennessee the scouts were natives of the mountains, true Union men, whose spirit for our success was intensified by sufferings endured and outrages inflicted by the hands of their Secession neighbors. Brother often fought against brother, and family feuds commenced then have been continued to the present day. West of the Mississippi the scouts were generally recruited from the men of the plains, Indian fighters and hunters, and in some cases half-breed Indians were vice of this corps. Solidated into one branch of the army bravery which will long as the war it- ans should seek to this brave and dar-
SOME CRITICAL OPINIONS.

THOUGH the proof of the pudding is the eating, and the best way for a man to be satisfied of the truthfulness and beauty of these war-stories told to the eye is to see them, yet we all like to know what the best judges of fact and art think about such things. So highly are Forbes' sketches rated as historical data that a bill has been introduced into Congress to purchase his collection of pencilings for the Government archives of the War Department. Here are given a few brief expressions, which are to the point, concerning the "Studies."

President GRANT,
Writing to Mr. Forbes about the "Life Studies," took pains to express his "appreciation of this valuable work of art."

A. S. Grant

General SHERMAN.
* * * "I considered them most valuable; so much so, that I had already instructed my A. D. C., Colonel Audenried, to purchase the first set of proofs now on exhibition at the Centennial in Philadelphia, which set I design for the decoration of my new office in the War Department, when finished. I am sure that these pictures will recall to the survivors the memory of many scenes which are fading in the past."

M. U. Merryman

General SHERIDAN.
* * * "A capital reminder of the days when we were in the field against the enemies of the republic. I take great pleasure in testifying to their artistic excellence and accuracy."

Phil. H. Schomberg

HORACE BINNEY SARGENT,
Commander Dept. of Mass. Grand Army of the Republic.
* * * "Very life-like and interesting. They vividly and in a most spirited manner recall the old scenes. For the halls of Grand Army Posts I can conceive of no more delightful decoration."

Rev. EDWARD EVERETT HALE, D.D.
South Cong'l Church, Boston.
* * * "They have remarkable interest, both as works of art and as a memorial of the experience of thousands of our friends which we cannot afford to forget."

The BOSTON ADVERTISER.
"It is only necessary to commend the etchings as combining in an exceptional manner realistic representation of scenes peculiarly American, and historical as well, and to declare them worthy a place in any collection. Mr. Forbes has proved himself an artist of special talent, and his etchings rank him among the first in his profession."

The BOSTON TRANSCRIPT.
* * * "A work creditable in the highest degree to American art, and a worthy commemoration of the great episode in American life which it so vividly illustrates. These etchings, simply, the collection will be sought for by amateurs of art, and not a few of the pictures will find a worthy place framed and hung beside the best examples of modern art."

The CENTURY MAGAZINE.
* * * "The portfolio of etchings is one of the most authentic and valuable series of illustrations of the war. The etchings are well known to collectors and others."

The ARMY AND NAVY JOURNAL.
* * * "They present the most perfect idea of the army of the American Rebellion that has yet been given to the public."

The NEW YORK HERALD.
* * * "The subjects of these works have an appearance of nature, which is so seldom seen except in the sketches of artists, and Mr. Forbes' experience as an army artist correspondent for one of the New York illustrated papers gave him unusual opportunities for obtaining material for the work."

The CHRISTIAN UNION.
"No such series has ever been completed with a degree of skill sufficient to command the general attention of artists and connoisseurs. * * * And these are no fancy sketches. As a 'field artist,' Mr. Forbes followed the fortunes of the Union armies during their hardest and most important campaigns, and filled his sketch book with memoranda and finished drawings which now afford him an inexhaustible mine from which to make up a truthful record of the private soldier as he lived in camp or trench, in the bivouac or on the march, on foot or on horseback, in rain, sun, summer or winter."

Mr. THOMAS OLDHAM BARLOW.
Hon. Secretary London Etching Club.
* * * "The etchings were very much admired by the members, and I am instructed to convey to you their best thanks, I have the pleasure to communicate to you that Mr. Redgrave, R. A., proposed you as a Foreign Honorary Member of the London Etching Club. Mr. Mills, R. A., seconded the proposition, and you were unanimously elected."

COPY OF CENTENNIAL AWARD.
The undersigned having examined the product herein described "Life Studies of the Great Army," respectfully recommend the same to the United States Centennial Commission for award, for the following reasons, viz.: FOR EXCELLENT STUDIES FROM NATURE AND LIFE, FIRMNESS IN TONE AND SPIRITED EXECUTION.

[Signed by the Ten Group Judges.]
Number Three of the "ARMY LIFE SERIES"

WILL CONTAIN

Equestrian Portrait (from oil painting) of McClellan at Antietam.

A Night March.

Through the Woods at Night.

Christmas at the Front.

A Christmas Dinner.

The Army Herd.

Beef on the Hoof.

The Moving Column.

Types from the March.

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