

VIII

NEWPORT, KENTUCKY

IN July, 1856, at Newport, Ky., Stuart, then twelve years old, was taken ill from eating cherries and then going to swim in the river. The mosquitoes and the stifling heat were almost intolerable. I literally gave up my whole time to his care—though I was going to be confined in November. I watched with him, slept with him and carried him in my arms whenever he was to be moved. I would even run with him in my arms up and downstairs. I read to him nearly all of Scott's and Cooper's novels to keep him quiet. Dr. Tripler was, of course, much engaged with his lectures in the Cincinnati Medical College and his outside duties generally. But I lived with and for my boy—as I lived afterward with Dr. Tripler in his illness—and with Allie in hers. It is no wonder that now my heart is in tatters. One thing surely was in my favour in these long physical strains. I could always eat heartily and with thankfulness that I had the ability.

During his five years at Newport Dr. Tripler studied Astronomy and often assisted

Prof. Mitchell in his observations at Mount Adams. The two men became very intimate from the similarity of their tastes.

The Rev. Charles Page, Chaplain at Newport (Priest of the Church), complained to Dr. Tripler that the men did not come to his service. Dr. Tripler said, "Well, Sir, when you wear the dress proper to your calling, perhaps the men will more respect your office." Mr. Page replied, "Yes, I wish I had a black gown." "No," said Dr. Tripler, "you ought to have surplice and stole—and I will provide them if you will pledge yourself to wear them." The offer was not accepted. Mr. Page said to Col. Heintzleman, "Colonel, if you will attend service you may influence the men." The Colonel replied very slowly, "Well, I agree if Mrs. Page will write all the sermons."

On an Easter Even the wife of Col. Buchanan said to me, "Oh, to-morrow is Easter and I have made no preparation at all for it. It is really necessary that the Colonel should have something new to wear. I must go to Cincinnati and get it for him at once." And she went and bought her husband a new undershirt. Even that, I thought, was better than nothing.

One day, while at Newport, Dr. Tripler came home and asked me, "Whom do you

suppose I saw in Cincinnati to-day? Old Fox Morris and Arthur's widow." Dr. Tripler's acquaintance with Capt. Benj. Arthur dated from the Seminole War, and the two had served together also in Mexico and were both founders of the Aztec Club.

In the Winter of 1860 to '61 at Newport, Dr. Tripler wrote his "Handbook for Military Surgeons." If this could have been generally circulated through the Medical Corps it would have been a great boon to the Army and country. Dr. Tripler later wrote by circular to all Medical officers under him to make formal requisitions for things needed. Sometimes these officers hardly knew what a requisition was. The Army needed an efficient General Staff. In "Gen. McClellan's Own Story" this is made very clear by him.

It was while we were in Newport that I prevailed on my Mother to go to Washington and apply for a pension—for I felt the justice of her claim, though my Father had died actually out of the service. On this errand my Mother went to Washington in the Winter of 1858-'59. She staid with a family named Fillebrowne, whom she had befriended and really for a time supported in their extreme poverty years before. They were now

in easy circumstances and insisted on keeping my Mother as their guest.

There was a hackman named Earle who made himself known to my Mother as a former friend of my Father's and who volunteered his aid and gave it on several occasions. He said my Father had helped him and he was now glad to return the favours. The bread cast on the waters had come back.

My Mother did not know exactly to whom to apply for help. But she knew the City of Washington and had hosts of Army friends. Still their advice was conflicting and confusing. My Mother, however, decided to see Jefferson Davis, Senator from Mississippi, who had been Secretary of War in Pierce's Cabinet, 1853 to '57. She called at the hotel where the Davises were staying. It proved to be their breakfast-hour. Mrs. Davis came forward and received my Mother. In a short time Mr. Davis also appeared with a newspaper in hand. Mrs. Davis introduced my Mother and stated her errand in a few words. My Mother took breakfast (or rather coffee, for she had breakfasted) with the Davises. They had a private table. My Mother's mode of speech was very touching and effective. She told Mr. Davis she wished to relieve Dr. Tripler of the burden of her care. Mr. Davis' advice was, "Go and see Mr. Crittenden (Sen-

ator from Kentucky) and tell him your case just as you have told it to me, but don't tell him I sent you." This my Mother did. She afterward saw Jeff Davis at the Capitol and he gave her more advice, handing her a written list of a number of Congressmen whom she should see, and assuring her he had himself seen a number in her interest. She saw Senator Seward of New York and he said to her, "You had better see Senator Clay of Alabama. If you can get him to say nothing when your case comes up in committee it will be a great advantage." Clay was on the Pension Committee. He said, "Mrs. Hunt, I have made it a rule never to vote for private pension bills. But your case is a just one. Yet I cannot break my rule." My Mother bowed her head and said simply, "I am so sorry." Senator Clay added, "I will do this: When your case comes up in Committee, I will leave the room." On the advice of friends, my Mother went on a certain day to the reception-room of the Committee on Pensions and waited there. Presently the door opened and Mr. Clay came out. He bowed to her in silence. My Mother knew then that her bill was being considered, and, soon, that it was favorably reported. It was an interesting occasion in the Senate when the bill was finally passed. Senator Crittenden proposed to in-

crease the amount from that first recommended. This was at once agreed to. Mr. Crittenden then rose and bowed in a stately way to my Mother who was seated in the gallery. He was a gentleman of the old school and this small act was graceful and gracious. In six weeks from the time she left home my Mother was back with the pension paid from the date of application. Jefferson Davis said to my Mother, "Mrs. Hunt, come to Washington next year and get your back pension" (from date of my Father's death). But "next year" brought other matters to Jefferson Davis. The pension granted my Mother was \$420 per year, *i. e.*, one-half the pay proper of a Captain at that time (other allowances were for forage, quarters, servant, transportation, etc.). The weak points in my Mother's application were, first, the fact that my Father was not in actual service at the time of his death. Secondly, the records of the War Department were burned in 1814 when the British took Washington. No records exist now in the Adjutant General's office back of that date. In 1859, however, Gen. Jessup was Quarter Master General. He had been a companion and fellow-prisoner of my Father and gave his testimony as to this fact and as to their capture and exchange. The very next year Gen.

Jessup died. Gen. Gibson, Commissary General, also testified to my Father's coming to Washington while suffering and his being long under treatment there. The testimony of these two was most helpful.

When my Mother's bill passed, Gen. Palmer (of the Engineers) sent a telegram to Dr. Tripler (in Newport). The telegram read, "My bill passed half an hour ago. Four twenty per year." I saw Dr. Tripler open the envelope. He threw his cap into the air and cried out, "Hurrah for Grammy."

To this time Dr. Tripler had been giving to my Mother \$200 per year, to my Sister Ellen \$300 and to his own mother \$200.

Dr. Tripler took an intense dislike to Jefferson Davis while Secretary of War. His orders were injudicious and tyrannical, arbitrary and hard to be carried out. I have often wondered why he treated my Mother so courteously and really believe her beauty had much to do with it.

When Jefferson Davis was confined in Fortress Monroe in 1865 and 1866 my son Stuart was a Lieutenant and stationed there. As officer of the day he repeatedly walked by Mr. Davis' side when he was out for exercise. Stuart told Mr. Davis he was Mrs. Hunt's Grandson—whom Mr. Davis said he well remembered. My Mother wrote to

Stuart to tell Jeff Davis she was still mindful of his kindness. This Stuart did, and Mr. Davis was much moved. Stuart said Mr. Davis was a very interesting man from the width of his information. One day he pointed out a little insignificant shrub growing on the ramparts. "That is so-and-so. It is good for such a purpose." He talked to Stuart one day about certain varieties of rare birds. On another occasion he gave him some prescriptions for certain horse diseases. They never talked of politics, but Stuart was impressed with the depth of Mr. Davis' sorrow and disappointment as a broken-spirited man.

At Newport in January, 1861, the wife of Col. James Ebert (formerly a Miss Taylor), being a rank secessionist, said to me, "Our Army is worthless; it has no spirit; it is the scum of the earth." I said to her, "Answer for yourself. My husband does not belong to the scum of the earth."

At this same time at the lowering of the flag at sundown, women secessionists of Newport would stamp and spit upon it, and an order was issued forbidding women to enter the grounds. A Col. James Taylor, cousin of President Zachary Taylor, announced that on a certain day he would have a flag-raising at his place, a few blocks distant, his house occupying a noble and commanding site. All

his family were secessionists, and on this occasion Mrs. Taylor even drew down the curtains of the house and would not show herself. I attended this flag-raising—though really to accompany my daughter Allie, who teased to go and who was wearing the universal cockade of red, white and blue. Col. Taylor's speech was thrilling. He explained that he had selected this day as the anniversary of the day his Father's family had arrived in Newport after their long journey of hundreds of miles down the Ohio. He dwelt upon their constant danger from the Indians and the perils of their wilderness life while the journey lasted. "But on this day we saw a little flag which seemed hardly larger than a pocket-handkerchief, floating from this point against the blue sky—and then we knew we were safe—and we've been safe ever since. And shall we be ingrates now? Let the flag wave." And instantly the beautiful great standard went up. I was deeply moved.

Senator Crittenden followed. "You are going to let them drag Kentucky out of the Union. Then here will be the battle-field and you yourselves homeless. Do not be caught by these tricksters and designing men of the South."

The first secession sentiment I ever heard

proclaimed was by a Major Macklin, a Paymaster, in Newport. I arose at once and said, "Well, this is the first disunion speech I have ever listened to:—and it is in my own house. I will excuse myself. Good evening, Major Macklin." And I withdrew.

I never saw cruelty of any sort shown toward the slaves who were, as I remember them, universally cheerful and content. Dr. Tripler had a niece who, when a young married woman, visited us in Newport. She employed a poor colored woman, who had been a field hand in the South, as wet-nurse for her child. This negress was from the most ignorant and hopelessly degraded class. She was so strange to the interior of a house that she went upstairs on all fours, and in descending she would always back downward. I understood she had once been beaten with an iron poker for some act of insubordination—but I believe such treatment was very rare. Surely it should have been unknown.

Gen. William T. Sherman we used to see frequently while at Newport. He was often at our house. In California Dr. Tripler had attended his little son when ill, and, as Gen. and Mrs. Sherman always said, saved his life. The first time the Shermans came to our house in Newport Col. Sherman stood the little fellow on a chair, and, speaking in the

first person as in the boy's stead, made a little speech of gratitude to Dr. Tripler for what he had done for him in California a few years before. Some time afterward this boy died. Dr. Tripler had known Gen. Sherman when a cadet at West Point.

While in Newport Dr. Tripler became impressed with the magnitude of the impending civil conflict and tried to prepare for it. He had studied the Crimean War and other modern conflicts. He said in every well-contested battle one-third of the men are put *hors de combat*. In the Winter of 1860 to '61 he delivered a course of lectures on Military Surgery in the Cincinnati Medical College, foreseeing what was coming. The students were eager for this instruction. My husband through life was tried and irritated by the unfitness and unpreparedness of the general body of medical students. He deplored the admission into his chosen profession of so many young men of defective education, and such men had no chance to become Army Surgeons if they appeared before him while he was at the head of the Board of Examiners.

While in the field, the course Dr. Tripler adopted was to send soldiers North for treatment in hospitals whenever feasible, and there he wanted the volunteer surgeons to be put.

He wanted the regular Army Surgeons with him in the field, for many of these he himself had trained.

Once Dr. Tripler was dining with Gen. Scott at his hotel. Gen. Scott had been ill and was under strict rule of diet prescribed by Dr. Tripler. Gen. Scott, who was a great gourmand, gave his order with much emphasis, calling for a most sumptuous repast. Dr. Tripler said nothing, but as soon as the General's plate was filled, said, "Waiter, remove the General's plate." Gen. Scott's face fairly flamed as the two looked at each other. Then he said, "You are right, Doctor. I am under your orders now." Had Gen. Scott taken another course Dr. Tripler would no longer have attended him and Gen. Scott knew this.

Dr. Tripler admired Scott in a certain way. He was the only big General we then had. He liked to talk of his own achievements. Officers, young and old, flattered him, and there was a good deal of what Dr. Tripler called "boot-licking." This was natural, because a Commanding General has such power to make under officers comfortable or uncomfortable. As an officer Dr. Tripler was himself always as firm as a rock. He obeyed an order on the instant and never sought an excuse. Yet Dr. Tripler would say, "Every one has some

weak point. Perhaps most of us have points not so harmless as Scott's." For myself, I despised Gen. Scott and my husband and I used earnestly to disagree as to his character.