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SOME ODD STORIES.

INTERESTING INCIDENTS RELATED BY ALFRED R. CALHOUN.

The Daring Escape of a Union Officer Captured in the Chattanooga Campaign in November, 1863—A Story of the Civil War.

(Copyright, 1892, by American Press Association.)

A Union officer captured in the Chattanooga campaign in November, 1863, recalls the following as among his most thrilling prison experiences.



In the center of the inclosure there stood a large brick chimney, the house to which it had been attached having been burned down.

"You can just bet I'm a friend, clear through and through; but don't say so how you've forgotten Cap. Walker," and the man bent over that I might the better see his bronzed, clean-cut face.

I shook hands with him again, for I recalled him as a brave, patriotic soldier and one of the best guides and scouts in the west.

When the war broke out he was following his trade as machinist in the railroad shops at Atlanta. Like all the other mechanics, he was sworn against his will into the service of the Confederacy...

On his being brought to Atlanta as a prisoner he was recognized at the railroad station by some of his former associates, and was at once tried for desertion and sentenced to be shot.

While he was speaking I could feel "bones flesh" rising all over my body, and when he had concluded I asked, "My God, Walker! is there no help for this?"

He then outlined his plan of escape. He had made a saw of a knife he got from one of the prisoners and had cut the rivet, so that with a little effort he could free himself from the ball and chain.

"But there are the guards," I interposed, "and outside the stockade there is a bridge in camp."

"That's what yer help'll come in," he said. "They're only home guards, and if you can get a lot of the boys just at 12 tonight to creep near the dead line and heave bricks at the guards—up at the north end, they'll all run down thar and leave the south end clear for me."

To draw the fire of the guards was rather a desperate scheme, but then Walker was in a desperate situation. I told my friends what was wanted, and to my great joy I found every man ready to risk his own life for the condemned man "a show for his life."

I was very nervous, but the darkness prevented its being seen. At 9 o'clock the guards began shouting the half hours from their posts. Soon after half past 11 was announced I crept over to the chimney and found that Walker had freed himself from the ball and chain and was fastening a waist belt to the upper end of the stretcher.

of bricks rattled against the stockade, and so well directed was the aim that the guards were either thrown off or they jumped off.

Firing into the inclosure as they ran, the other guards hurried to the point of attack and the south end was clear.

I saw Walker running with the stretcher in his hands. He placed it against the stockade, sprang to the top, swung the top of the wall, and then with the swing of a gymnast on a trapeze and a yell that told of victory, he was over!

Within a few minutes we heard a cheer in the far distance, the signal that told he had cleared the camp and was free.

Soon after a company was marched into the stockade. They found ranks of sleeping men and a ball and chain, but no one who had "heaved a brick" or who knew of Walker's escape.

While dueling is dying out in the south, there are still many excellent men there who believe the code affords the only proper means of redress for a gentleman who has been, or who imagines he has been, offended.

The next day, Saturday, Captain Wells secured a second and despatched him over the Sabine line by a pre-emptory challenge for Lawyer Phillips.

Mr. Phillips, his mind troubled by other matters, went to church the next day with his wife and six children, from whom he had kept all knowledge of the duel.

At his leaving the church with his wife and family, the lawyer was not little surprised at seeing the captain outside, and still more surprised at seeing that hotspur doffing his hat to Mrs. Phillips and the children.

That night the captain's second appeared at the Phillips mansion with a note marked "private," and which read as follows:

"At the risk of being set down in this community as a fool or a poltroon, I beg the honor to permit me to withdraw my challenge and to confess that I have been greatly to blame in sending it."

"I am at a loss, sir, to understand your conduct. Why did you withdraw the challenge?" "Because, Mr. Phillips," was the reply, "you and I cannot meet on the field as equals."

"Am I not your equal?" asked the lawyer hotly. "I will concede that you are. But you know that I am a single man, with no dependents."

"Yes, I understand that, captain." "You have a wife and six children, Mr. Phillips. I saw them at church yesterday and I saw then that I had taken an undue advantage of you."

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ORIGIN OF A FINANCIER.

Why Fred P. Olcott Preferred Business to Politics.

NEW YORK, April 7.—The men of New York state who have gained repute by reason of their achievements usually devote themselves either to politics or to literary pursuits.

Mr. Fred P. Olcott is attracting attention to himself by reason of certain achievements which he has consummated in the financial world, and while his name may not appear in the newspapers as frequently as does that of some of the men who are prominent in New York state politics, yet Mr. Olcott is a man of greater influence perhaps than any politician, because through his management he controls millions and millions of dollars.

Mr. Olcott has recently attracted to himself the attention of financiers, not only in this country, but in Europe, because he seems to have been able to arrange for the reorganization of railroad properties which practically gridiron the entire south.

The securities of the various companies involved in this reorganization amount to more than \$400,000,000, a much larger sum than at the beginning of the civil war it was thought that the national government would have to provide in order to pay the expenses of that contest.

The arrangement also involved the management of nearly 9,000 miles of railway, or practically almost all of the railroad communication between the states east of the Mississippi river and south of the Ohio and Potomac.

Mr. Olcott some years ago was doubtful about his career. He had been bred in Albany as a banker in the office of his father. The senior Olcott was president of a bank in that city at a time when Albany was almost as important a monetary center as New York city.

The politicians of the north made Albany their center and some of them established the closest relations with the senior Olcott.

Olcott was a mere lad when these men used to meet in his father's back parlors, but as he heard their conversation he became impressed with the idea that the basis of political parties is, after all, a financial one, and the great issues which divide the parties are also financial.

Young Olcott, impressed with this idea, came to New York just after the close of the war. He had many friends



FRED P. OLCOTT.

who were of great influence in the banking and financial world. Roscoe Conkling, who at that time was just beginning his career as United States senator, was a warm friend of the young man's, and used frequently to say to him that there was no more important relation between politics and business than that which the bankers of Wall street controlled.

Francis Kernan, who was a senator from New York also, was much interested in this young man, and used sometimes to say that the opportunities offered for a career as a financier were far more tempting than any of the allurements of politics.

Mr. Olcott spent some twelve years on Wall street, learning the methods of that great financial whirlpool.

To his surprise he was offered the appointment of comptroller of New York state by Governor Lucius Robinson. To be comptroller of New York is practically to be the banker of the state.

When Mr. Olcott became comptroller he realized the very great political advantage which he held in that position, and when the politicians of his party said to him "We will now nominate you for governor," the temptation was very great to listen to such proposition.

But Mr. Olcott had already received proposals from men who controlled vast amounts of money to return to Wall street as the head of a banking institution, and after a good deal of deliberation he decided that the rewards of a financial career were far more tempting than those of politics.

He therefore went to Wall street about ten years ago, and he became known as the man who did not desire to destroy properties, but to preserve them. In that capacity he took rank with Mr. Pierpont Morgan, who is generally regarded as the greatest financial and constructive genius that Wall street has known in the present generation.

Olcott is esteemed a more audacious and risky man than Morgan, and some of those who have found fault with his methods have insisted that some day he might go too far and entail ruin upon himself and the properties which he undertakes to preserve.

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