

A WAR DAY WITH SEC. ALGER

Watching the Daily Grind of the Big Military Mill at Short Range

BUSINESS REQUIRING ENERGY AND TACT

A Typical American Personality at the Helm of Our Military—Facts About the United States Army of June, 1898.

By 9 o'clock in the morning the western corridors of the big gray building which shelters the State, War and Navy departments of the United States are thronged with men. In every room officials and their clerks are busy with some detail of the greatest business enterprise launched in this country since the rebellion—the handling and equipment of an army of 200,000 men.

Along the hall hurry officers in uniform and clerks in civilian dress engaged in some errand connected with the work. In and around the offices of the secretary and his assistants is gathered a crowd of senators and congressmen, newspaper reporters, contractors, men with schemes and men looking for appointments, all clamoring for attention. Gradually these early callers are dispersed or directed into proper channels by the uniformed attendants who guard every door, but their places are taken by others, and all day long, until the big doors close against the public, the rush continues. It is the busiest spot in the United States. The army that flies through the War department every day is probably as large as that intended to subdue the Philippines.

Between 9 and 10 the head of this vast establishment makes his appearance. Secretary Alger is a tall, spare man with a fresh, ruddy complexion, a well-trimmed military

will be investigated and directs his secretary to look into Henry's case.

A summons comes from the president and the secretary puts on his hat and walks across to the White House for a consultation with the president and the commander of the army in regard to the pending military operations. These consultations are very frequent, for President McKinley keeps in constant touch with all the operations of the army and navy.

In an hour the secretary is back at his desk, and in company with Assistant Secretary Meiklejohn, goes over some orders and drafts which it is necessary for him to sign. Then there are more callers, more solicitations for appointments, and more papers to be signed.

These brief examples may give some idea of the variety of subjects on which the secretary of war must keep a constant mental grasp; they can convey no impression of the intense physical and mental strain to which he is daily and continually subjected. All the multifarious activities of the various bureaus in his department come before him for final consideration and review. He must keep the president informed of the work done; he must obtain from congress the funds to do it with; he must see that it is done promptly and economically.

The Secretary's Personality. All this entails a great stress of mind and body, which only a man accustomed to dealing with large affairs would be equal to. Happily the present secretary of war is such a man. He is typically American in this respect. He does not become excited in dealing in millions or facing grave problems that require instant decision. The impression he gives one at first meeting is that of a man of careful, conservative, well-balanced mind. His manner is deliberate and in conversation he speaks slowly, almost to the point of hesitation; but he shows the ability to grasp a situation and to go right to the heart of a problem.

In spite of General Alger's sprightly movements and untroubled countenance, the

and buy transports to carry the troops against a foreign enemy—and to do it all in little more than a day's notice.

This great enterprise has been successfully launched and is now fairly under way. The work has been done so promptly, with so little noise and friction, that few, except those to whom the task has been entrusted, appreciate the labor that it has entailed. It has been treated as a business undertaking, directed by men accustomed to dealing with large affairs and it ranks as the greatest business achievement this country has seen since the rebellion. EARL W. MAYO.

HE WROTE DIXIE.

Dan Emmett Lives to See Both Sections Sing His Famous Song.

Perhaps very few people know that Dan Emmett, who wrote "Dixie," is still living. His home is in Mount Vernon, O., where he was born and where he hopes to end his days. The old man is a picturesque figure on the streets of the town, relates the Philadelphia Times. In his prime he was one of the mid-century dandies of New York City, but now, with calm indifference to the conventional, he usually carries a long staff and wears his coat fastened in at the waist by a bit of rope.

His home is a little cottage on the edge of the town, where he lives entirely alone. On almost any warm afternoon he can be found seated before his door reading, but he is ready enough to talk with the chance visitor, whose curiosity to meet the composer of one of the national songs of America has brought him out from town.

It was this curiosity that took me to the cottage. The old composer was seated in the shade by his house with a book open before him. As I went up the path I said, for I had some doubt in my own mind: "Are you Dan Emmett, who wrote "Dixie"?"

"Well, I have heard of the fellow; sit down," and he motioned to a stool.

"Won't you tell me how the song was written?"

"Like most everything else I ever did, because it had to be done. One Saturday night, in 1859, as I was leaving Bryant's theater, where I was playing, Bryant called after me, 'I want a walk-round for Monday, Dan.'"

"The next day it rained and I stayed indoors. At first when I went at the song I couldn't get anything. But a line, 'I wish I was in Dixie,' kept repeating itself in my mind, and I finally took it for my start. The rest wasn't long in coming. And that's the story of how "Dixie" was written."

"It made a hit at once, and before the end of the week everybody in New York was whistling it. Then the south took it up and claimed it for its own. I sold the copyright for \$500, which was all I ever made from it. I'll show you my first copy." He went into the house and returned in a moment with a yellow, worn-looking manuscript in his hand.

"That's "Dixie," he said. "I am going to give it to some historical society in the south one of these days, for, though I was born here in Ohio, I count myself a southerner, as my father was a Virginian."

Half a century ago Emmett was a famous "nigger" minstrel. Those were the balmy days of burnt cork and art, when Bryant's theater on lower Broadway was one of the most popular resorts in New York City. Emmett began his life as a printer, but soon abandoned his trade to join the band of a circus company. He was not long in making a name for himself as a composer of songs of the kind in use by clowns. One of the finest of these was "Old Dan Tucker" of pleasant, if inelegant memory. His success was so great that Emmett followed it with many others. They were all negro melodies, and they all won popularity.

Finally he took to negro impersonations, singing his own songs in the ring, while he accompanied himself on the banjo. He made a specialty of old men, and he assured me with pride that when he had blackened his face and donned his wig of kinky white hair he was "the best old negro that ever lived." He became such a favorite with the patrons of the circus in the south and west that at last, partly by chance and partly through intention, he invaded the stage himself.

This was some time in 1842, at the old Chatham theater, in New York City, when, with two companions, he gave a mixed performance, made up largely of songs and dances typical of slave life and character. The little troupe was billed as the "Virginia Minstrels," and their popularity with the public was instantaneous.

This was the beginning of negro minstrelsy. From New York the pioneer company went to Boston, and later on sailed for England, leaving the newly discovered field to the host of imitators who were rapidly dividing their success with them.

Emmett remained abroad for several years, and when he returned to New York joined Dan Bryant's Minstrel company at 472 Broadway. He was engaged to write songs and to walk around and talk in the nightly performances. It was while he was with Bryant that "Dixie" was composed.

Strangely enough, "Dixie," or "Dixieland," referred not to the south or to any part of the south. It was the name of an estate on Manhattan island, the property of a man named Dixy, who was one of the largest slaveholders of his day until the rapid growth of the anti-slavery movement in the north compelled him to sell his slaves south. It was from these blacks and their descendants that the words "Dixie" and "cork" came, expressing their love and longing for their former home and master.

A WAR TIME LUXURY.

Some Observations on the Utility of Army Rations.

While some of the "old boys" were talking over the stirring times when they played so prominent a part, says the Detroit Free Press, the colonel took a hand with hardtack as his subject.

"I never saw a company of volunteers go out yet," he said, "that they did not kick good and plenty against the army cracker. It was so when I went as lieutenant with a lot of raw recruits. There was next thing to a mutiny. They vowed that hardtack had less taste than spit, water, sponge or cork. They designated it as solidified nothing brittle in a desert heat. The government was inveigled against as the worst kind of a provider and the growlers would punish each other by telling what good things they used to get at home. I have heard a groan from a hundred throats when some fellow would yell 'pie' just as a taunt and self-relief."

"On the first expedition entrusted to the boys I managed to have bread issued for them and they were tickled beyond expression. Before the end of the second day the bread was sour. The next day it was far worse and simply defied anything better than a starving appetite. Before we got back to camp they were fairly crying for hardtack as children do for ginger bread when on a picnic excursion. Later we had a worse and more convincing experience. Our army was making a forced march and ran out of regular rations. Flour was issued instead of the crackers. Occasionally orders to advance came before we had time to prepare any sort of bread, and away we'd go carrying our allowance of flour. When caught in a rainstorm the flour would be changed to paste, and when we tried to cook it in this form it was about as digestible as grape and cantaloupe. We had half-baked dough that would send an all-



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effect produced upon the eater. When we struck a point where hardtack could be issued, the boys cheered as lustily as though they had won a hard battle.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN SOLDIERS.

They Are the Pick, Physically, of All the Troops.

The splendid physical condition of the regiments recruited in the Rocky mountain region and from the plains lying at their

base, where the cowboys flourish, is a frequent subject of remark among the western papers. The dwellers in these regions are from the same stock as their eastern fellow countrymen, many of them indeed are natives of the east, but the magnificent climate of the mountains and the simple outdoor life of the inhabitants does its work even for those born elsewhere.

Four more train loads of troops reached this city this morning, and have now gone into camp at Bay District Encampment. They were all negro soldiers, and they all were well equipped; indeed, large numbers of the soldiers have no equipment whatsoever beyond a cartridge belt with scabbard and bayonet, against which, when they marched, rattled a tin cup, plate, fork, knife and

spoon. But what the volunteers lacked in their outward appearance of war they made up in strength of limb and breadth of shoulders. Fresh from the mountainous regions of Montana, where in the mines they had worked so hard and developed much muscle, the Montana troops really are herculean in size. The Oregon volunteers have been favorably commented upon in this respect, but thus far Montana surpasses even the web-footers and all others beside.

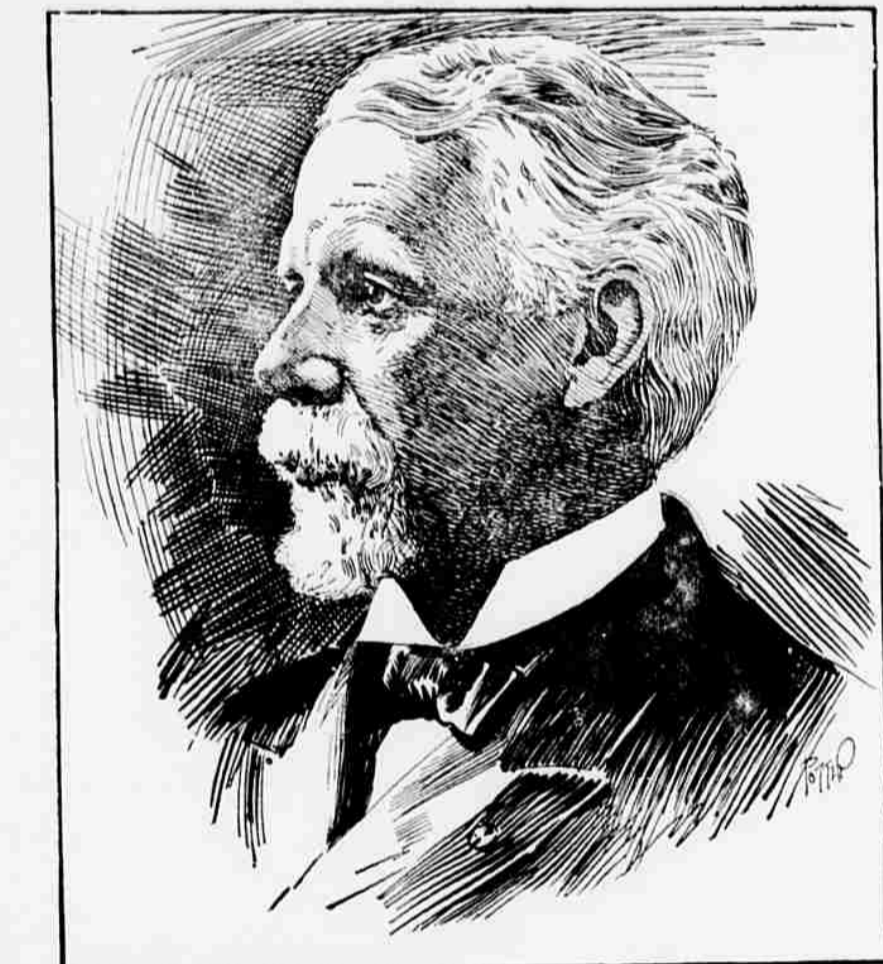
Company A, from Great Falls, is by far the best equipped of the Montana soldiery. They are a splendid lot of men physically, too, and it is a matter of pride to the officers and members alike that in the medical examination this company made a better record than any other company in the United States. There are other companies in this regiment who are larger proportioned, but for perfect physical health Company A yields the palm to none. Among the giants is Company I. As evidence of this it may

be cited that when they fall into line the eleven man, beginning from the right of the column, is 5 feet 11 1/2 inches in height. As the alignment is governed according to height, some idea of the proportions of the soldiers may be gained.

Empty Promises. Detroit Journal: Where the ocean chafes ceaselessly against its rocks the maiden wandered alone.

"Men's promises," she exclaimed bitterly, "are empty words!"

Western Massachusetts is getting to a point of considerable antiquity when the First Church in West Springfield can celebrate its 200th anniversary, as it did recently.



GENERAL RUSSELL A. ALGER. (From his latest and best photograph.)

heard of gray-white and a pair of kindly gray eyes deep set under shaggy brows. He carries his 62 years effectively concealed somewhere about his well knit, vigorous person and enters his office with a sprightly step and a pleasant smile for any of his acquaintances whom he happens to meet. He makes his way rapidly through the waiting crowd in the ante-room to his private office, where he at once seats himself at the desk and runs through the papers which his secretary has arranged for his inspection. Then he is ready for the deluge of callers.

A Variety of Callers.

First comes a prominent senator. The son of one of his friends waits an appointment to a staff position in the army. The young man has had no particular experience, but he is a bright fellow and can soon pick up the duties of the place, and at any rate one such appointment cannot injure the service, and the president will certainly make it if the secretary will give his endorsement. General Alger interposes one or two objections, but the senator is insistent and is sent off to see the adjutant general of the army. His request, or some slight variation of it, is repeated a score of times before the morning is over.

A member of the committee on appropriations comes briskly in, greets the secretary familiarly, and at once plunges into a discussion of the amount of money required by the War department for carrying on its work. General Alger is evidently primed on this subject, for he produces typewritten sheets covered with estimates, which he explains to the congressman.

The routine business of the office is suspended for a few moments, while a foreign charge d'affaires and his two uniformed attaches are ushered in to pay their respects. The attaches are marvels of brilliant color and gold braid, each with a row of decorations across the front of his uniform, but it cannot be said that they appear to advantage beside the quiet, dignified man in plain civilian dress who is the moving power behind one of the great armies of the world.

After these callers have stiffly bowed themselves out, a western congressman escorts an agitated woman into the room. The secretary listens patiently while the woman explains that her son has been court-martialed for leaving his regiment without permission, and to her assurances that "Henry is a good boy, and didn't mean to do anything wrong," he assures her that the matter

impression he makes on one in conversation with him is that of a man who is very tired. One who has seen the tide of humanity that beats against him in his office, and the mass of hard work that he wades through every day will readily believe that the air is not assumed. Still it cannot be said that the wear and tear of his position is using him up. He assured the writer that his health was good, that he could not wish to feel better, and that he was sanguine of lasting through this war and a good many years of peace.

The career of the present secretary of war is as typically American as the man himself. As has been the case with many another man who has taken a prominent part in public affairs, his birthplace was Ohio, on a pioneer's farm near the little town of Lafayette, in Medina county. His parents had moved westward from New England and came of a sturdy Scotch and English stock.

When he reached his majority young Alger remained in the little Ohio town. He worked on the farm in summer and attended the Richfield academy in winter. For two winters he varied this program by teaching school, and then, with a few dollars saved, he went to Akron, O., and began the study of law. It was admitted to the bar in 1859, but decided that the law provided too slow a way of getting on in the world, and so went to Michigan in 1860 to engage in business.

His Brilliant War Record.

That was at the beginning of the great struggle between the states, and young Mr. Alger was soon drawn into it. He enlisted in September, 1861, and was made a captain in the Second Michigan cavalry. He was gradually promoted until he became colonel of the Fifth Michigan cavalry in June, 1863. He was severely wounded at Boonsboro, Maryland, the following month, but continued in the army till the close of the war, when he was made a brevet brigadier general and major general of volunteers for gallant services.

The young man had made a good record, but he had not got along in the world as fast as he expected. He was 30 years old and a poor man when he went back to Michigan and started in the lumbering business with money advanced to him by friends. But he did not long remain poor or unknown. He made a fortune, became governor of his state, and was prominently mentioned for the presidency.

General Alger is fortunate in his present onerous position in having efficient and experienced assistants and subordinates. The adjutant general looks after the voluminous work of organizing the army; the commissary general, the quartermaster general and the surgeon general see to the provision of the stores which they need in their departments; and so thoroughly is their work done that it requires little more than supervision on the part of the secretary. Assistant Secretary Meiklejohn takes a large part of the load off his shoulders. But as a good business man, the secretary insists on being cognizant of all the details of his establishment, and just now it is by all odds the biggest business establishment in the country, of its immensity only one who has seen its workings at close range can form any conception.

The United States Army of Today.

At present the army of the United States contains, in round numbers, 200,000 men. Within two months it has been increased eight-fold. That two-thirds of this vast host, which in single rank would form a solid line 100 miles long, was in camp, mustered into the service, and organized into properly-offered regiments, three weeks after the first call for volunteers, was in itself a notable achievement. But in reality this has been the smallest part of the work that was necessary to obtain uniforms and arms for a great part of this 100 miles of



J. D. BERGHOFF.

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