

**THE WIDOW IN CAMP.**

[TownTopics War Correspondent.]

Being on the inside track—and you know we widows have a way of getting there—does give one such a clear-cut view of political—and otherwise—fears, scrambling and floundering. I cannot help smiling at the grimness of things, and I cannot see, for my life, why we should “investigate” after the war is over and after the soldier has been buried, or sent home dead or sick.

I cannot see clearly the sense of quietly dropping the Miles-Alger-Shafter-Corbin controversy. It surely needed no investigation. There was nothing left clouded even to the dustiest mind. A blind man could see that, after what might have been erring judgment, from somewhere, from some one or more in the beginning, “secret cablegrams” and controverted authority were simply a drowning man catching at straws. General Shafter taking a cablegram, sent him from General Corbin through the war department, or from the war department through General Corbin, to encourage him and stiffen him up, and to keep him from succumbing to his despondency, as placing him in supreme power, was only in accordance with the rest of his Santiago career.

By the way, that now famous cablegram may have been secret so far as Shafter—his keeping it so—over in Cuba was concerned, but it was not secret here. It was given out to the press in this country at the time, and so, too, was the impression that General Miles had gone in his own position as commander of the United States army. I remember distinctly the impression made upon myself and several army officers as well at Chickamauga, in reading of this cablegram to Shafter; that it was only to brace him up, and inform him that he was not to be recalled or publicly disgraced in any way for the weakening he had shown in his cablegram that he “must fall back because of the thinness of his lines.” And, by the way, we had this cablegram also on our bulletin board at Lookout Inn on the day it was received in Washington. I have wondered many times since—and do now—how it is that there has been so much contradiction and controversy about these two cablegrams. Was that Lookout Inn bulletin board giving away court secrets? If so, where did it get them? There must be an awful sieve somewhere in Washington.

If this kind hearted and humane arrangement at headquarters—the sending of General Miles to the rescue, and the encouraging cablegram to Shafter—are to be hopped on and clutched at by a sinking commander and twisted and turned into what would end in a congressional fight, it is, as I say, wise to ignore it, and as I said a minute ago, in perfect accordance with six-miles-in-the-rear-nam-mock management.

Deliver us from our friends!—or from Michigan—should think would be the cry of Secretary Alger.

General Shafter's suppressing exact conditions and situations in his report will not do away with facts. Thousands of soldiers are returning to tell the story. With their fighting qualities the American soldiers have fine mental calibre. Garbled statements will not hold. A clear investigation, a giving out to them of facts in all cases of which they themselves have been a part and which they recognize as justice, may turn the scale of elections regardless of political party.

Camp Thomas at Chickamauga has come in for its share of criticisms.

Nature has done a great deal for this place. If nature had \$60,000 or \$75,000 to help her out in the way of water Thomas would be an Elysian Field for our soldiers. There have been since the middle of May, 50,000 to 75,000 men to be taken care of at this place, and it seems to me there has been some wonderful work done. Barring the vegetating generals of some of the departments at Washington, who could not seem to understand immediate necessities—principally in the medical, ordnance and quartermaster departments—the work at Camp Thomas has been most satisfactory. In complaints made, in every instance, I will venture to say, the blame should be placed on the officers of individual regiments. Where there has been no trouble among officers of regiments you will find that there has been no complaints made of bad treatment by the government. Competent officers have seen to it that their men did not suffer. The men did not suffer unnecessarily, because they themselves did their duty, waiting patiently for the call to the front that never came, yet never shirking in any particular the daily drill and preparation for active service. I have in my mind particularly Colonel Young's First Illinois cavalry and “Colonel Grigsby's Cowboys.” Sickness came to them—death came; but everything was done that could be done for Uncle Sam and for themselves by both officers and men. They were men—command, line, rank and file—from the best walks in life. Has anyone heard complaints from them? They shouldered their own responsibilities and took what came to them.

One thing in which the government was very wise was sending to this immense mobilizing camp the most competent regular army officers to take charge of the different departments and as inspector-generals. One officer in particular has been looked upon as a perfect wonder in his executive ability, and that one is Col. James G. C. Lee, the chief quartermaster. He went to Chickamauga the last of April, and will probably, in the deserting of the camp, be the last officer to go away. Statistics show that he has handled 13,000,000 articles of clothing, 55,000 articles of equipment, 58,000 articles of larger tentage, 85,000 articles of shelter tentage and 4,000 regiment and company books. Sixteen large store houses have been constructed, four shops, six coras and one forage platform. The troops have been equipped for the field; transportation for men, for cavalry and artillery horses, for tools and appliances, has been furnished, in sending them to other camps and their respective states. The statistics show 3,000 or more officers, 70,000 men, 8,500 horses, 7,000 mules, 3,000 carloads of freight, 11,000 cords of wood have been distributed, 14,000,000 pounds of hay, 10,000,000 pounds of oats, 200,000 pounds of bran, 2,500 pounds of straw, 182 ambulances, 200 spring wagons, 2,100 wagons and 8,400 sets of harness have been taken care of. For assistants Colonel Lee has had Captain McCarthy and Captain Zalinsky, Captain Young and Captain Thompson. Of these are left—two having gone on sick leave and one taken by General Breckinridge when he left for Lexington—only Captain Thompson. With having executive ability and efficient help, Colonel Lee's personality has won for him hosts of friends. With all the complaints to meet and many times orders unfilled or red tape unwound at Washington, prompt in meeting exigencies and personally, attending to harrowing details, he is always the same courteous gentleman. There was not an officer or man who came in contact with Colonel

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