

We propose to subvert this entire system of oligarchical despotism. We think there should be some legislation for decent white men, not alone for negroes and slaveholders. Slavery lies at the root of all the shame, poverty, ignorance, tyranny and imbecility of the South; slavery must be thoroughly eradicated; let this be done, and a glorious future will await us.

Helper, Hinton Rowen, "A Poor White's Opinion of Slavery," *The Romance of the Civil War*, New York: The McMillan Company, 1903



## CADET GRANT AT WEST POINT

by Ulysses Simpson Grant

A MILITARY LIFE HAD  
NO CHARMS FOR ME,  
AND I HAD NOT THE  
FAINTEST IDEA OF  
STAYING IN THE ARMY  
EVEN IF I SHOULD BE  
GRADUATED, WHICH I  
DID NOT EXPECT.

IN the winter of 1838-39 I was attending school at Ripley, only ten miles distant from Georgetown, but spent the Christmas holidays at home. During this vacation my father received a letter from the Honorable Thomas Morris, then United States senator from Ohio. When he read it he said to me, "Ulysses, I believe you are going to receive the appointment." "What appointment?" I inquired. "To West Point; I have applied for it." "But I won't go," I said. He said he thought I would, and I thought so too, if he did.

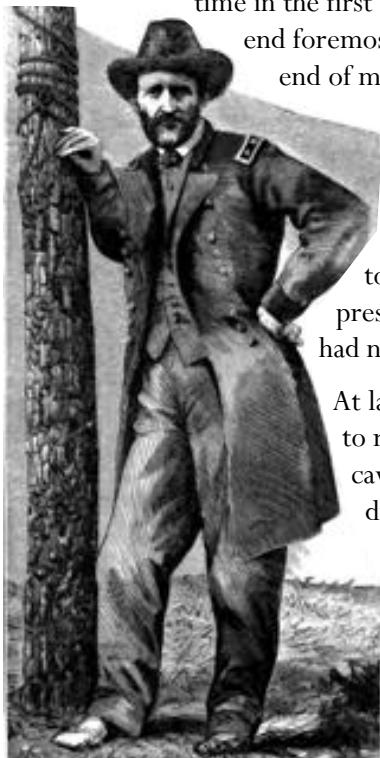
Besides this argument in favor of my going to West Point there was another very strong inducement. I had always a great desire to travel. Going to West Point would give me the opportunity of visiting the two great cities of the continent, Philadelphia and New York. This was enough. When these places were visited I would have been glad to have had a steamboat or a railroad

collision, or any other injury happen, by which I might have received a temporary accident sufficient to make me ineligible, for a time, to enter the Academy. Nothing of the kind occurred, and I had to face the music.

A military life had no charms for me, and I had not the faintest idea of staying in the army even if I should be graduated, which I did not expect. The encampment which preceded the commencement of academic studies was very wearisome and uninteresting. When the 28th of August came — the date for breaking up camp and going into barracks — I felt as though I had been at West Point always, and that if I staid to graduation, I would have to remain always. I did not take hold of my studies with avidity, in fact I rarely ever read over a lesson the second time during my entire cadetship. I could not sit in my room doing nothing. There is a fine library connected with the academy, from which cadets can get books to read in their quarters. I devoted more time to these than to the books relating to the course of studies. Much of the time, I am sorry to say, was devoted to novels, but not those of a trash sort. I read all of Bulwer's then published, Marryat's, Scott's, Washington Irving's works, Lever's, and many others that I do not now remember. Mathematics were very easy to me, so that when January came, I passed the examination taking a good standing in that branch. In French, the only other study at that



Birthplace of General Grant



time in the first year's course, my standing was very low. In fact if the class had been turned the other end foremost I should have been near the head. I never succeeded in getting squarely at either end of my class, in any one study, during the four years. I came near it in French, artillery, infantry and cavalry tactics, and conduct.

During my first year's encampment, General Scott visited West Point, and reviewed the cadets. With his commanding figure, his quite colossal size and showy uniform, I thought him the finest specimen of manhood my eyes had ever beheld, and the most to be envied. I could never resemble him in appearance, but I believe I did have a presentiment for a moment that some day I should occupy his place on review, although I had no intention then of remaining in the army.

At last all the examinations were passed, and the members of the class were called upon to record their choice of arms of service and regiments. I was anxious to enter the cavalry, or dragoons, as they were then called, but there was only one regiment of dragoons in the army at that time, and attached to that, besides the full complement of officers, there were at least four brevet second lieutenants. I recorded, therefore, my first choice, dragoons; second, infantry; and got the latter.

Having made alternate choice of two different arms of service with different uniforms, I could not get a uniform suit, until notified of my assignment. I left my measurement with a tailor, with directions not to make the uniform until I notified him whether was to be for infantry or dragoons. Notice did not reach me for several weeks, and then it took at least a week to get the letter of instruction to the tailor, and two more to make the clothes and have them sent to me. This was a time of great suspense.

Two incidents happened soon after the arrival of the clothes, which gave me a distaste for military uniform that I never recovered from. Soon after the arrival of the suit I donned it, and put off for Cincinnati on horseback. While I was riding along a street of that city, imagining that everyone was looking at me, with a feeling akin to mine when I first saw General Scott, a little urchin, bareheaded, barefooted, with dirty, ragged pants held up by a single gallows, turned to me and cried, "Soldier! will you work? No, sir-ee; I'll sell my shirt first!"

The other circumstance occurred at home. Opposite our house in Bethel stood the old stage tavern where man and beast found accommodation. The stable-man was rather dissipated, but possessed a sense of humor. On my return I found him parading the streets, and attending in the stable, barefooted, but in a pair of sky-blue nankeen trousers, just the color of my uniform trousers, with a strip of white cotton sheeting sewed down the outside seams in imitation of mine. The joke was a huge one in the minds of many people, and was much enjoyed by them; but I did not appreciate it so highly.

---

Grant, Ulysses Simpson, "Cadet Grant at West Point," *The Romance of the Civil War*, New York: The MacMillan Company, 1903



## A SOUTHERN OFFICER TO HIS BOYS

By Captain Robert E. Lee (1847)

SHIP MASSACHUSETTS, OFF LOBOS, February, 27, 1847

MY DEAR Boys :

I received your letters with the greatest pleasure, and, as I always like to talk to you both together, I will not separate you in my letters, but write one to you both. I was much gratified to hear of your progress at school, and hope that you will continue to advance, and that I shall have the happiness of finding you much improved in all your studies on my return. I shall not feel my long separation from you, if I find that my absence has been of no injury to you, and that you have both grown in goodness and knowledge, as well as stature. But, ah! how much I will suffer on my return, if the reverse has occurred! You enter all my thoughts, into all my prayers; and on you, in part, will depend whether I shall be happy or miserable, as you know how much I love you. You must do all in your power to save me pain.

You will learn, by my letter to your grandmother, that I have been to Tampico. I saw many things to remind me of you, though that was not necessary to make me wish that you were with me. The river was so calm and beautiful, and the boys were playing about in boats, and swimming their ponies. Then there were troops of donkeys carrying water through the streets. They had a kind of saddle, something like a cart-saddle, though larger, that carried two ten-gallon kegs on each side, which was a load for a donkey. They had no bridles on, but would come along in strings to the river, and, as soon as their kegs were filled, start off again. They were fatter and sleeker than any donkeys I had ever seen before, and seemed to be better cared for. I saw a great many ponies, too. They were larger than those in the upper country, but did not seem so enduring. I got one to ride around the fortifications. He had a Mexican bit and saddle on, and paced delightfully, but, every time my sword struck him on the flanks, would jump and try to run off. Several of them had been broken to harness by the Americans, and I saw some teams, in wagons, driven four-in-hand, well matched and trotting well.

We had a grand parade on General Scott's arrival. The troops were all drawn up on the bank of the river, and fired a salute as he passed them. He landed at the market, where lines of sentinels were placed to keep off the crowd. In front of the landing the artillery was drawn up, which received him in the centre of the column, and escorted him through the streets to his lodgings. They had provided a handsome gray horse, richly caparisoned, for him, but he preferred to walk, with his staff around him, and a dragoon led the horse behind us. The windows along the streets we passed were crowded with people, and the boys and girls were in great glee, the Governor's Island band playing all the time.

There were six thousand soldiers in Tampico. Mr. Barry was the adjutant of the escort. I think you would have enjoyed with me the oranges and sweet-potatoes. Major Smith became so fond of the chocolate that I could hardly get him away from the house. We only remained there one day. I have a nice state-room on board this ship; Joe Johnston and myself occupy it, but my poor Joe is so sick all the time I can do nothing with him. I left Jem to come on with the horses, as I was afraid they would not be properly cared for. Vessels were expressly fitted up for the horses, and parties of dragoons detailed to take care of them. I had hoped they would reach here by this time, as I wanted to see how they were fixed. I took every precaution for their comfort, provided them with bran, oats, etc.,





and had slings made to pass under them and attached to the coverings above, so that, if in the heavy sea they should slip, or be thrown off their feet, they could not fall.

I had to sell my good old horse Jim, as I could not find room for him, or, rather, I did not want to crowd the others. I know I shall want him when I land. Creole was the admiration of every one at Brazos, and they hardly believed she had carried me so far, and looked so well. Jem says there is nothing like her in all the country, and I believe he likes her better than Tom or Jerry. The sorrel mare did not appear to be so well after I got to the Brazos. I had to put one of the men on her, whose horse had given out, and the saddle hurt her back. She had gotten well, however, before I left, and I told Jem to ride her every day. I hope they may both reach the shore again in safety, but I fear they will have a hard time. They will first have to be put aboard a steamboat and carried to the ship that lies about two miles out at sea, then hoisted in, and how we shall get them ashore again, I do not know; probably throw them overboard, and let them swim there.

I do not think we shall remain here more than one day longer. General Worth's and General Twiggs's divisions have arrived, which include the regulars, and I suppose the volunteers will be coming on every day. We shall probably go on the 1st down the coast, select a place for debarkation, and make all the arrangements preparatory to the arrival of the troops. I shall have plenty to do there, and am anxious for the time to come, and hope all may be successful. Tell Rob he must think of me very often, be a good boy, and always love papa. Take care of Speck and the colts. Mr. Sedgwick and all the officers send their love to you.

The ship rolls so that I can scarcely write. You must write to me very often. I am always very glad to hear from you. Be sure that I am thinking of you, and that you have the prayers of your affectionate father,

R. E. LEE.

---

Lee, Robert E., "A Southern Officer to his Boys," *The Romance of the Civil War*, New York: The MacMillan Company, 1903



## CONFEDERATE COLONY IN BRAZIL

By Dr. John H. Blue

Judge John Guillet, an old and highly-esteemed citizen of Carroll county, with several families, and a Mr. Reavia, of Cooper county, Missouri, with his interesting family, are now here (August), making about forty Americans in all, the nucleus of a good settlement around Colonel M.L. Swain, of Louisiana, who has located and paid for a body of land on the Assunguy, a branch of the Serra-Negro river, which empties into this bay from the northwest, and which is the only practicable route to the mines, and to the rich open country beyond. We already have houses and a little store, and will soon have a little blacksmith shop and a school house, the Government giving us five hundred milreis a year to support a school. We have small crops of corn, beans, and potatoes, growing finely, and expect to keep ahead of the wants of new-comers, in the way of food. All of this dates from about the time that I came into the bay, a period, a period of less than three months.

Blue, Dr. John H., *DeBow's Review*, January, 1866





OBSTRUCTING THE TRAIN



THE FIRST TENNESSEE CAVALRY ESCORTING REBEL PRISONERS

## "MY SON—HAS HE COME?"

There is something most touching in the following narration of the intensity of maternal sorrow and love—a grandeur, indeed, in the conduct of this poor lone mother, whose affection had made her mad, and who thus yearned for one her poor faded eyes could never see again. During the progress of the war, her son, a member of one of the Connecticut regiments, was taken prisoner and confined with other Union soldiers at Andersonville, Georgia. A short time afterwards several were exchanged. His mother, in Connecticut, hearing of it, and believing that he was among the number, left her desolate home, and went to Camp P——, which was situated two miles from Annapolis, to seek her treasure among the boat loads landed on the Severn. She waited, wearily waited, day after day, for the coming of her boy; but though many came, he was not among them. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick," and so it was with her. Broken-hearted by constantly recurring disappointments, her mind, already shaken by grief, at last gave way, and thus months rolled away, and with them the events borne on the wings and waves of time.

During all this period she continued to visit the office of Dr. Vanderkieft, the surgeon in charge, to ascertain whether any boat loads of released prisoners had arrived. When, finally, the last detachment came in, she seemed overjoyed, and went, with throbbing heart, from skeleton to skeleton, scanning them eagerly, anxiously. But, her son was not there; and each day she went, heavy and weary in spirit, back to her home. The good-hearted surgeon—such he truly was—although he knew and had told her many times that her son had been officially reported as dead, still answered her every day with the same monotonous, but very kindly spoken, "No!"

SHE WOULD GAZE  
WISTFULLY,  
LONGINGLY, OVER  
THE BLUE WASTE,  
AS IF HER VERY  
EAGERNESS  
WOULD HASTEN  
ON THE BARK.

Thus came this broken-hearted, shattered, but loving mother, every day, always provided with a shirt, a pair of drawers, pantaloons, boots and cap, and when informed, regularly, that her son had not yet arrived she would go down the graveled path across the lawn to the very end of the long wharf. There she stood looking over the broad waters of the Chesapeake for fully an hour. Clad ever in the same neat dress and closely fitting bonnet, she would gaze wistfully, longingly, over the blue waste, as if her very eagerness would hasten on the bark she imagined would bear back to her her child. But her tear-swollen eyes at last grew dim, her strength failed, and with the empty void aching in her breast, she slowly and finally turned her steps from that long-accustomed pathway, never again to retrace them, nor again to ask so piteously, "My son—has he come?"

---

Kirkland, Frazer, The Pictorial Book of Anecdotes and Incidents of the War of the Rebellion, Hartford: Hartford Publishing Company, 1867



## CHALLENGING THE SENTINEL

It was the custom of the colonel of the Eighty-fifth Pennsylvania Volunteers to make the rounds every night in person, and satisfy himself that every sentinel was, at his post and doing his duty. On one occasion, while in the discharge of that self-imposed duty, he approached a post, and received the challenge as usual, "Who comes there?"

"Friend with the countersign," was the colonel's reply.