

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE EVACUATION.

Senator Wigfall's Volunteer Mission.—Terms of Evacuation Settled.—The Question of Casualties on the Other Side.—Salute to the Flag.—Occupation of the Fort by Southern Troops.—Embarkation.—Welcome in New York.—Conclusion.

There was a large, first-class wooden hotel, near the shore, on Sullivan's Island, called the Moultrie house. It was only kept open during the summer, and was a favorite resort, for planters and others, to enjoy the fresh sea-breeze, and the beautiful drive up the beach at low tide. Since the rebel occupation of Fort Moultrie, this hotel had been used as a *dépot* and barracks for the troops in the vicinity. Just before the attack was made upon us, the Palmetto flag, which had waved over the building, was taken down; but I noticed with a spy-glass that there was still quite a number of people, apparently troops, remaining in the house. I saw no reason why the there lowering of the flag should prevent us from firing at them. I therefore aimed two forty-two pounder balls at the upper story. The crashing of the shot, which went through the whole length of the building among the clapboards and interior partitions, must have been something fearful to those who were within. They came rushing out in furious haste, and tumbled over each other until they reached the bottom of the front steps, in one writhing, tumultuous mass.

When we left Fort Sumter, a South Carolina officer, who seemed to feel aggrieved in relation to this matter, asked me why we fired at that building. Not caring to enter into a discussion at that time, I evaded it by telling him the true reason was, that the landlord had given me a wretched room there one night, and this being the only opportunity that had occurred to get even with him, I was unable to resist it. He laughed heartily, and said, "I understand it all now. You were perfectly right, sir, and I justify the act."

About 2 p.m., Senator Wigfall, in company with W. Gourdin Young, of Charleston, unexpectedly made his appearance at one of the embrasures, having crossed over from Morris Island in a small boat, rowed by negroes. He had seen the flag come down, and supposed that we had surrendered in consequence of the burning of the quarters. This visit was sanctioned by the commander of Morris Island, Brigadier-general James W.

Simons. An artillery-man, serving his gun, was very much astonished to see a man's face at the entrance, and asked him what he was doing there. Wigfall replied that he wished to see Major Anderson. The man, however, refused to allow him to enter until he had surrendered himself as a prisoner, and given up his sword. This done, another artillery-man was sent to bring an officer. Lieutenant Davis came almost immediately, but it took some time to find Anderson, who was out examining the condition of the main gates. I was not present during this scene, or at the interview that ensued, as I was engaged in trying to save some shells in the upper story from the effects of the fire. Wigfall, in Beauregard's name, offered Anderson his own terms, which were, the evacuation of the fort, with permission to salute our flag, and to march out with the honors of war, with our arms and private baggage, leaving all other war material behind. As soon as this matter was arranged, Wigfall returned to Cummings Point.

In the mean time, Beauregard having noticed the white flag, sent a boat containing Colonel James Chestnut, and Captain Lee, Colonel Roger A. Pryor, and Colonel William Porcher Miles, to ascertain the meaning of the signal. A second boat soon followed, containing Major D. K. Jones, who was Beauregard's adjutant-general, Ex-Governor J. L. Manning, and Colonel Charles Alston.

Miles and Pryor were exceedingly astonished when they heard that Wigfall had been carrying on negotiations in Beauregard's name, and stated that, to their certain knowledge, he had had no communication with Beauregard. They spoke of the matter with great delicacy, for Wigfall was a parlous man, and quick to settle disputed points with the pistol. Anderson replied with spirit that, under the circumstances, he would run up his flag again, and resume the firing. They begged him, however, not to take action until they had had an opportunity to lay the whole subject before General Beauregard; and Anderson agreed to wait a reasonable time for that purpose. The boat then returned to the city. In due time another boat arrived, containing Colonels Chestnut and Chisholm, and Captain Stephen D. Lee, all aids of Beauregard. They came to notify Major Anderson that the latter was willing to treat with him on the basis proposed. Colonel Charles Alston soon came over with Major Jones (who was chief-of-staff to Beauregard, and adjutant-general of the Provisional Army), to settle the details of the evacuation. There was some difficulty about permitting us to salute our flag; but that, too, was finally conceded. In case we held out for another day, the rebels had made arrangements to storm the fort that night.

During all these operations, our officers and men behaved with great gallantry. Hall, Snyder, and Meade had never been under fire before, but they proved themselves to be true sons of their Alma Mater at West Point.

The first contest of the war was over, and had ended as a substantial victory for the Secessionists. They had commenced the campaign naked and defenseless; but the General Government had allowed them time to levy an army against us, and we had permitted ourselves to be surrounded with a ring of fire, from which there was no escape. Nor had we employed to the fullest extent all our available means of defense. No attempt had ever been made to use the upper tier of guns, which contained our heaviest metal, and which, from its height, overlooked the enemy's works, and was, therefore, the most efficient part of our armament. Although the fire of our columbiads, under ordinary circumstances, could not quite reach the city, we had arranged one of them to point upward at the maximum angle. As the carriage would not admit of this, the gun was taken off, and made to rest on a bed of masonry. Seymour and myself thought, by loading it with eccentric shells, we could increase the range of the guns so that the balls would reach that part of Charles-

ton which was nearest to us; but we were not allowed to use the gun at all. It seemed to me there was a manifest desire to do as little damage as possible.

About eighteen hundred shot had been fired into Fort Sumter, and the upper story was pretty well knocked to pieces. To walk around the parapet, we had constantly to climb over heaps of débris. With all this expenditure of ammunition, we had but one man dangerously wounded. This was John Schweirer, foreman of the Baltimore brick-layers. He was struck by a piece of shell while standing near the open parade-ground. So long as our men fought in the lower casemates, which were shell-proof, the vertical fire could not reach them; and by drilling them to step one side of the embrasure whenever they saw the flash of a gun opposite, they escaped the danger of being struck by any ball which might enter the opening; so that, on the whole, they ran very little risk. Had they used the guns on the parapet, the number of casualties would have been greatly increased, but our missiles would have been much more effective.

When William Porcher Miles was about to enter the boat to return to Charleston, he told our commander that none of the secession soldiers were injured by our fire. Anderson raised his hands and ejaculated, "Thank God for that!" As the object of our fighting was to do as much damage as possible, I could see no propriety in thanking Heaven for the small amount of injury we had inflicted. I have since had reason to suspect, from several circumstances, that the contest was not as bloodless as it was represented to be at the time. The coxswain of the boat that brought Miles over heard him make the remark that no one was hurt on the rebel side. The man stared at him for a moment in undisguised amazement, and then stepped aside behind an angle of the work, where he could indulge in a hearty fit of laughter. His whole action was that of one who thought his chief had been indulging in romance. Of course Miles believed the assertion, or he would not have made it.

The fact is, Fort Moultrie was all slivered and knocked to pieces; and as I heard so much in reference to the narrow escapes of officers and soldiers there, I concluded that, if no one was hurt, a miracle must have taken place. The rebel who carried dispatches between Fort Moultrie and Mount Pleasant in a small boat was in a position to know, and he told Peter Hart, some years after the war, that a schooner, to his certain knowledge, came from Charleston during the battle, and took off a number of killed from Fort Moultrie, who were taken to Potter's Field, on Cooper River, and buried there on Saturday, at 4½ A.M. I had previously seen the same story published as coming from Charleston. A similar statement was made, on his arrival in New York, by the mate of the schooner *D. B. Pitts*, and it purported to be founded on his own observation.

When we left Fort Sumter for New York, a man of my company, named Fielding, was seriously injured by an explosion, and left behind in the hospital at Charleston. He was frequently visited there by an old comrade, named Galloway, who was one of our discharged soldiers. Galloway laughed at the idea that no one had been injured, and told Fielding that he himself had served in Fort Moultrie during the bombardment, and had seen with his own eyes a number of killed and wounded there. If Galloway's story is true, Ripley may have concealed his losses, as he did not wish to have us appear more successful than he had been. I believe there were a great many Irish laborers enlisted in Fort Moultrie, and their loss would hardly have excited a remark in aristocratic Charleston. It is said, too, that a list of killed and wounded was posted up on a bulletin-board in the city, and afterward torn down, for fear that it might discourage the troops. On the other hand, the assertion of men holding high official position on the other side, that no one was killed

or injured, would seem to leave little room for doubt.

When Beauregard received notice that Anderson was willing to ratify the terms agreed upon, he sent over another boat, containing Colonel Niles, Colonel Pryor, Ex-Governor Manning, Major Jones, and Captain Hartstein, to arrange the details of the evacuation.

Almost a fatal accident occurred to Roger A. Pryor shortly after his arrival in the fort. He was sitting in the hospital at a table, with a black bottle and a tumbler near his right hand. The place was quite dark, having been built up all around with boxes of sand, to render it shell-proof. Being thirsty, and not noticing what he did, he mechanically picked up the bottle, poured some of the liquid into the glass, and drank it down. It proved to be iodide of potassium, which is quite a poisonous compound. When I saw him, he was very pale, and leaning on the shoulder of Dr. Crawford, who was taking him out on the grass to apply the stomach-pump. He was soon out of danger. Some of us questioned the doctor's right to interpose in a case of this kind. It was argued that if any rebel leader chose to come over to Fort Sumter and poison himself, the Medical Department had no business to interfere with such a laudable intention. The doctor, however, claimed, with some show of reason, that he himself was held responsible to the United States for the medicine in the hospital, and therefore he could not permit Pryor to carry any of it away.

All of the preliminaries having been duly adjusted, it was decided that the evacuation should take place the next morning. Our arrangements were few and simple, but the rebels made extensive preparations for the event, in order to give it the greatest *éclat*, and gain from it as much prestige as possible. The population of the surrounding country poured into Charleston in vast multitudes, to witness the humiliation of the United States flag. We slept soundly that night for the first time, after all the fatigue and excitement of the two preceding days.

The next morning, Sunday, the 14th, we were up early, packing our baggage in readiness to go on board the transport. The time having arrived, I made preparations, by order of Major Anderson, to fire a national salute to the flag. It was a dangerous thing to attempt, as sparks of fire were floating around everywhere, and there was no safe place to deposit the ammunition. In that portion of the line commanded by Lieutenant Hall, a pile of cartridges lay under the muzzle of one of the guns. Some fire had probably lodged inside the piece, which the sponging did not extinguish, for, in loading it, it went off prematurely, and blew off the right arm of the gunner, Daniel Hough, who was an excellent soldier. His death was almost instantaneous. He was the first man who lost his life on our side in the war for the Union. The damage did not end here, for some of the fire from the muzzle dropped on the pile of cartridges below, and exploded them all. Several men in the vicinity were blown into the air, and seriously injured. Their names were George Fielding, John Irwin, George Pinchard, and Edwin Galway, and, I think, James Hayes. The first-named being very badly hurt, was left behind, to be cared for by the rebels. He was sent over to Charleston, where he was well treated, finally cured, and forwarded to us without being exchanged.

The salute being over, the Confederate troops marched in to occupy the fort. The Palmetto Guard, Captain Cuthbert's company, detailed by Colonel De Saussure, and Captain Hollinquist's Company B, of the regulars, detailed by Colonel Ripley, constituted the

new garrison under Ripley.<sup>21</sup> Anderson directed me to form the men on the parade-ground, assume command, and march them on board the transport. I told him I should prefer to leave the fort with the flag flying, and the drums beating Yankee Doodle, and he authorized me to do so. As soon as our tattered flag came down, and the silken banner made by the ladies of Charleston was run up, tremendous shouts of applause were heard from the vast multitude of spectators; and all the vessels and steamers, with one accord, made for the fort. Corporal Bringhurst came running to tell me that many of the approaching crowd were shouting my name, and making threatening demonstrations. The disorder, however, was immediately quelled by the appearance of Hartstein, an ex-officer of our navy, who threw out sentinels in all directions, and prevented the mob from landing.

The bay was alive with floating craft of every description, filled with people from all parts of the South, in their holiday attire. As I marched out at the head of our little band of regulars, it must have presented a strange contrast to the numerous forces that had assailed us; some sixty men against six thousand. As we went on board the *Isabel*, with the drums beating the national air, all eyes were fixed upon us amidst the deepest silence. It was an hour of triumph for the originators of secession in South Carolina, and no doubt it seemed to them the culmination of all their hopes; but could they have seen into the future with the eye of prophecy, their joy might have been turned into mourning. Who among them could have conceived that the Charleston they deemed so invincible, which they boasted would never be polluted by the footsteps of a Yankee invader until every son of the soil had shed the last drop of his blood in her defense—who could have imagined that this proud metropolis, after much privation and long-suffering from fire and bombardment, would finally surrender, without bloodshed, to a negro regiment, under a Massachusetts flag—the two most abhorred elements of the strife to the proud people of South Carolina? Who could have imagined that the race they had so despised was destined to govern them in the future, in the dense ignorance which the South itself had created, by prohibiting the education of the blacks?

My story is nearly done. We soon reached the *Baltic*, and were received with great sympathy and feeling by the army and navy officers present. Among the latter was Captain Fox, who afterward became the Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

It is worthy of remark that, after we had left the harbor, Bishop Lynch, of Charleston, threw the Catholic influence in favor of the Secessionists by celebrating the Southern victory by a grand *Te Deum*.

We arrived in New York on the 19th, and were received with unbounded enthusiasm. All the passing steamers saluted us with their steam-whistles and bells, and cheer after cheer went up from the ferry-boats and vessels in the harbor. We did not attempt to land, but came to anchor in the stream, between Governor's Island and the Battery. Several distinguished citizens at once came on board, and Major Anderson was immediately carried off to dine with Mr. Lloyd Aspinwall. As somebody had to remain with the troops and attend to their wants, I accompanied them to Fort Hamilton, where we soon found ourselves in comfortable quarters. Nearly all of the officers obtained a furlough immediately; but I remained in command of the fort during the temporary absence of Major Anderson, who was soon after permanently detached from us.

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<sup>21</sup> Edmund Ruffin entered the fort as a volunteer ensign of the Palmetto Guard; Captain Samuel Ferguson received the keys of Fort Sumter, and raised the Confederate flag over the ramparts; Lieutenant-colonel F. J. Moses raised the State flag. Moses has since figured as the Republican governor of South Carolina.

Our captivity had deeply touched the hearts of the people, and every day the number of visitors almost amounted to an ovation. The principal city papers, the *Tribune*, *Times*, *Herald*, and *Evening Post*, gave us a hearty welcome. For a long time the enthusiasm in New York remained undiminished. It was impossible for us to venture into the main streets without being ridden on the shoulders of men, and torn to pieces by handshaking. Shortly after our arrival, Henry Ward Beecher came down to the fort to meet us, and made a ringing speech, full of fire and patriotism. It seemed as if every one of note called to express his devotion to the cause of the Union, and his sympathy with us, who had been its humble representatives amidst the perils of the first conflict of the war.

As I have stated, of the officers who were engaged in the operations herein narrated, but four now survive.

George W. Snyder was the first to leave us. He was present in the battle of Bull Run, attained the brevet of captain, and died in Washington, District of Columbia, on the 17th of November, 1861.

Theodore Talbot became assistant-adjutant-general, with the rank of major, and died on the 22d of April, 1862, also in Washington.

Richard N. Meade was induced, by the pressure of social and family ties, to resign his commission in our army. He became a rebel officer, and died at Petersburg, Virginia, in July, 1862.

Norman J. Hall became colonel of the Seventh Michigan Volunteers, and received three brevets in the regular army, the last being for gallant and distinguished services at Gettysburg. He died on the 26th of May, 1867, at Brooklyn, New York.

John L. Gardner received the brevet of brigadier-general, and was retired at the commencement of the war. He died at Wilmington, Delaware, on the 19th of February, 1869.

Robert Anderson was made a brigadier-general, and afterward a brevet major-general, for his services at Fort Sumter. He served about six months as Commander of the Department of Kentucky and of the Cumberland, and was then obliged to leave the field in consequence of ill health. He was retired from active service on the 27th of October, 1863, and died at Nice, in France, on the 26th day of October, 1871.

Lastly, John G. Foster, after a brilliant career as commander of a department and army corps, died at Nashua, New Hampshire, September 2d, 1874.

Each of us who survive became major-general during the rebellion, and each now holds the same grade by brevet in the regular army.

Mr. Edward Moale, the citizen who remained with us, did excellent service in the war. At present he is a brevet lieutenant-colonel in the regular army.

This statement of events was completed at New York, April 14th, 1875, on the fourteenth anniversary of the evacuation of Fort Sumter.