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Subjects.

Sketches about,-

McDonald, Priv. Chas. 4th R. I. Vol.
Duncan, Captain WM, 10th Ill Cav.
McIntyre, 1st Lieut. Wm, 61st N.Y. Vols.
Eastman, Chaplain W. R. 72nd N. Y. Vols.
Private Chas. McDonald, 4th R. I. Vols.
Captain Wm. Duncan, 10th I1ls. Cavalry,
1st Lieut. Wm. McIntyre, 61st N.Y. Vols.
Chaplain Wm. R. Eastman, 72nd N.Y. Vols.

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It is a duty as well as a pleasure to give prompt record of the deeds of worthy soldiers.

When in Camp California where my brigade was located, substantially in line of battle, perhaps a half a mile in advance of the Fairfax Seminary, I caused the detail of Private Charles McDonald, from the 4th Rhode Island Regiment. The duty assigned him was at first that of hostler and little later he became an orderly. He was habitually in attendance upon me in my rides both on and off duty. But we may say that he was always on duty, as in fact in those days I was so regarded even in my visits to neighboring camps or to Washington. When General Burnside made up his small army in the winter of 1861 & 1862 for the expedition to Roanoke Island, the 4th Rhode Island was detached from my command. By special permission I was allowed to retain McDonald so that he was with me in all the campaigns and battles of the Army of the Potomac, in which I was engaged from and after his detail, and in all the battles of the West till he was wounded at the Battle of Kolb's Farm, July 1864. I was reconnoitering, having with me two or three officers, each officer with myself having an orderly; we were within the artillery range of the enemy. I hardly thought that their rifle-bullets could reach us at the high point where we were observing. But I was mistaken. Suddenly McDonald rode to my side and said with some show of feeling "General Howard, I have been hit", then he held up his foot toward me, and showed me where a bullet had passed through it. I told him I was very sorry and directed him to go back to the field-hospital. As he was turning his horse to go there he looked in my face and said gently:— "This will cost me my life, but I am glad I was wounded and not you". I tried to rally him and said: "Oh, nonsense McDonald, it is not a dangerous wound, though it is painful (as such wounds through the foot always are), you will soon be well and with me again". "No, no, General" he answered, "how glad I am you were not struck!" I promised to visit him at the hospital, whither he went properly attended.
The same evening I went there according to my promise, but owing to some sudden order, probably of the Medical Director, the Medical Department had been sent back to the General Hospital then on the top of Lookout Mountain. It grieved me greatly that I could not see McDonald again. Never after was I able to trace his name, and fear that his expressed apprehension was indeed a premonition of death.

McDonald had but little education, was what would be called a rough man when he joined my headquarters, but during the first winter he came to the readings, which we had of a Sunday evening, and a great change took place in his habits and character. As I recall him now, I remember him as a modest, brave and self-denying man, in fact to me a devoted Christian friend. With no special pretension but to do without fear and without reproach the duty in hand. He had a wife and children in Rhode Island, and often came to me to address his letters, especially when he sent them his pay, declaring that the letter would go straighter if I "backed" it.

This is one of the instances where my own tenderness is great toward a humble friend, for I feel in my heart that on that occasion he was wounded for me, and on that occasion he gave his life.
Captain WILLIAM DUNCAN, 10th Illinois Cavalry, was a long time on duty at my Headquarters in Western Campaigns. He commanded a company of cavalry, and later a squadron which performed every sort of duty, namely, orderly, scouting, reconnoitering and escort. Sometimes these duties brought his command into the fiercest of combats; he himself was a bold cavalryman as I ever saw.

Once during the spring of 1865, as my Army was passing beyond Columbia, eastward he with his little squadron met unexpectedly near Darlington, S. C., a brigade of Confederates. It was during a dark night; he instantly attacked them without regard to numbers and checked their march long enough to bring off his command with small loss. Once in his bold scouting he was cut off and captured by the enemy; each time he managed to escape. Once on the march springing away from the guard through the bushes and thickets, and the other time creeping out at night beneath the floor of an old guard-house. Stripped of his uniform and equipments, he was in a sorry plight when he came back to me with a griveous story to tell of the hardships and ill-treatment that he had undergone.

Previous to this during our Carolina Campaign & March to the Sea, when we came near the Savannah canal, I selected Captain W. Duncan, Sergeant Myron J. Amick, 15th Illinois, and Captain George W. Quimby, for the boldest enterprise of the Campaign, namely to take a canoe (an old dugout) and to paddle down the Ogeechee River for some 15th or 20 miles, through the enemies lines, past the Ogeechee Bridge, various rice plantations quite largely peopled and on if possible near Fort McAllister, Confederate defended not only by its garrison but by neighboring gunboat. The hairbreadth escapes of this party, and the adroitness and skill with which the whole journey was accomplished and connection made with one of the tugs of our fleet sent out in the offing, make an eventful tale of probings, hardly surpassed in romance. Here is what Admiral Dahlgren reports to the Secretary of the Navy concerning this party: "Could Captain Duncan’s story be well told, he would receive special brevets and the medal of honor. Infirmity has come upon him, and he is struggling half blind endeavoring to obtain an honest living."
In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

[Handwritten text with visible damage and faded content, making it difficult to transcribe accurately.]
1st Lieutenant WILLIAM MC. INTYRE, 61st N. Y. Vols.

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As part of my brigade that was not detached embraced the 61st N.Y., Colonel Francis C. Barlow, Commanding, this regiment I had the honor of personally conducting in line of battle across the railroad near Fair Oaks Station, Virginia, the 1st day of June 1862. The Confederates called this battle of two days, "Seven Pines", that being the name of a hamlet, about a mile south-west of the station. We call the battle "Fair Oaks", from the railroad station itself. In our forward movement, the 61st and 64th New York regiments being abreast, we swept on - passed the enemies skirmish line, and through what appeared to be his main line, taking many prisoners. At last when in sight of some of the tents, which General Casey had abandoned the day before, we received a severe fire from a Confederate force, apparently kneeling among the trees behind the tents. I had been wounded a second time - just when my horse was struck and one of his legs badly broken. Much excitement appeared as the officers were locating their lines and endeavoring to return the fire. Lieut. Mc. Intyre of the 61st New York rose from a place of comparative safety, ran to the side of my horse; he with one of his men, whose name I never knew, seized me and, pulling me from the saddle, quickly put me under a slight cover of the ground nearby, while the Lieutenant remarked: "General, you shall not be killed!" Feeling faintness coming over me from loss of blood, for my arm by the last wound had been badly shattered, I quickly rose up, and called for Colonel Barlow to take command of the two regiments and continue the contest, saying that I was faint and must go to the hospital. I said further that I would send him help right away. I remember Barlow's exceeding coolness. Nothing is so satisfactory to a commander as to feel that he entrusts his men to one who is not mentally disturbed by danger. In a short time after I left that dangerous field, Lieut. Mc. Intyre near the spot where he gave me such generous protection was himself struck by a bullet and slain. Here again whenever this battle comes to my mind, I say to myself: "Who could show a greater devotion than Mc. Intyre; he gave the best he had, his life! He gave his life for me!"
Chaplain WILLIAM R. EASTMAN, 72nd N.Y. Volunteers, is a veteran officer whom I have occasionally met. After the battle of the third day at Gettysburg, July 3rd 1863, the chaplain who had been busy during the previous operations succoring the wounded and attending the dying, at last met with a most painful injury; his horse slipped and fell with him, wrenching his leg and badly bruising his knee. The accident occurred on the field where there were many lifeless remains and wounded men, not yet removed from the places where they fell. The night came on when the chaplain who had probably found himself lying helpless on the ground; he several times endeavored to rise only to fall back prostrate with increased suffering. He bolstered himself up upon a knoll as well as he could, and thought that he would wait until relief came in some shape. He knew that before long the hospital attendants would be coming over the field with their stretchers, and probably men would be seeking for absent comrades among the fallen. While he was so meditating, he heard a groan not far from him and then apparently swearing. He said to himself: "Surely no one is cursing here"; then listening more attentively, he detected the voice of prayer, as if from lips unused to such petition. He called to the man who immediately begged him to come to his relief; as the chaplain could not rise nor walk, it occurred to him to work his way by rolling over and over much pain he rolled till he reached the wounded soldier. With him he remained, helping him to lift up his heart and ever spiritual strength, while his life-blood slowly ebbed away. He had hardly closed the man's eyes in death, when the party came upon him as he had anticipated and were out there to do what they could for the wounded. "Here chaplain," said the leader of the party, "is a man who wants your services." "But I cannot walk, I am so badly hurt myself" said the chaplain. "I'll go if you will carry me." So all that night without heeding his own pain, Chaplain Eastman had himself carried from dying man to dying man in that terrible field.

It has struck me that there was no display of self-abnegation and generous heroic conduct at Gettysburg superior to that of Chaplain William R. Eastman. Is not this a case of Noblesse oblige?