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Father Henry

Chapter VIII.

Father Henry's diary — Welcome
intelligence — Surrender of Vicksburg
— His letter to the Father Provincial —
Father comes across his "^{birdies} Quakers" —
A gay young March — The Conclusion

July 4th — Immediately after this most welcome
announcement. (towards evening of that day and whilst
I was in General Sherman's tent with Gen. Hugh
Ewing and several other general officers and their
staff the news reached us that the ^{Confederate} Rebel General
Pemberton had sought and had an interview
with General Grant and agreed to surrender
unconditionally Vicksburg and her garrison of
33,000 men). nearly all the general officers
and their staff went to Vicksburg for the purpose
of getting as soon as possible an insight into the
Rebel works and witnessing the ^{debris} ~~work~~ which our
powerful guns had done to the city. General Mc
Sherman was appointed governor of the city with
General Logan's division to protect and guard
it. — All the ^{Confederate} ~~Rebel~~ soldiers, ^{who} had been previous
~~were~~ ordered to stack their arms and occupy
the new quarters assigned them. (in a little
pleasant valley in the rear of the fallen city
and outside the corporation limits) General
McSherman had no sooner taken possession of
his important office than he vigorously commen-
ced the ~~big~~ operation of paroling the whole

Confederate ~~rebel~~ army forces of X and, at the same time distributing rations to the prisoners and the ^{stepping} inhabitants of the ~~steaming~~ city. For six days he was engaged in the tedious work of ~~paroling~~ ^{paroling} the prisoners.

I did not go to Vicksburg that day notwithstanding many pressing invitations to do so, as I wanted to write some letters (to my old Father in France and to my Sup^{rior} and friends at Notre Dame) besides I desired to pack up my things in order to be all ready to move ^{early} the next day ^{early}, as we had been ordered to do. I wrote to....

N. N. N. N. to whom I had promised to write when Vicksburg would fall, I considered it honorable ^{to} to redeem my promise as promptly as possible. The following is a copy of the letter to my Superior written on wall paper (which I ~~sent him the following morning from Vicksburg~~ ^{sent him the following morning from Vicksburg} ~~at 8 or 9 o'clock~~ ^{at 8 or 9 o'clock}). I then went with Captain C a most exemplary Catholic, a very brave man, and great friend of mine, to inspect the most advanced works (parallels) of the rebel army. I was surprised to find that those works were not more than a quarter mile distant from my tent and quite close to our own works (in the Blaine division).

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Letter from Father Carrier, written on the Margins of the
Vicksburg Citizen (which was printed on wall paper) to
the Rev. Chas. Foster Shinn
Sent him after paying a visit to the Captive City
New and Dear Father Provincial:

I send
you this trophy from Vicksburg. I obtained it from
the pious and devoted assistant Pastor (The Pastor
is following the Confederate army somewhere in
Alabama) of the Catholic Church of the City.
Please to preserve this memento of a beleaguered
City but now fallen stronghold: it will show
to all future generations to what extremities the
^{Confederates} Rebels were reduced - having to print their only
paper (daily) on wall paper!! This was the last
No issued. -

The Catholic Church of the city - the largest
and best edifice of the place, was but slightly
injured, but the Priests house is very much
shattered; the barn and stable are completely
destroyed. Good Father Mengis lived for 15 days
in his cellar not daring to occupy his ordinary
apartment for fear of the shells. - There is not
(at least ^{anywhere} not seen any) one single house in the
whole city which has not been more or less dam-
aged. It really saddens ^{most} to see so many ruins.
Father Mengis is a Breton, and esteems our
Congregation. He even has some notions of joining our
Band... We fraternize most agreeably and amic-
ably he provided me most generously, with a
bottle of genuine wine and some hosts. The bottle
of wine costs him \$15.00! - To day the "Red Rover"
was just before Vicksburg, at anchor, but I had

no time to pay a visit to our Sisters who are still on board of her: we have just been ordered to move immediately towards Jackson, Miss... —

~~The Big Black~~ July 6th 1863

~~It took an hour to halt to finish and forward my letter to you.~~
 We are now ~~camping on the bank of that~~ ^{camping on the bank of that} sluggish dirty river. ~~General Sherman is the~~ ^{General Sherman is the} Commander in chief of all the moving forces. I took supper with him ~~yesterday~~ ^{last} night with a crowd of Gen^l officers; we had marched that day twenty miles ^{under} a scorching sun, and through a most dense column of fine dust that penetrated ^{our} very pores!... I felt very much exhausted; nevertheless, my health is pretty good, and am in excellent spirits. I passed the night under a tree without other ~~cover~~ ^{covering} than the bare ground, and other covering than the canopy of heaven. So did Genl Curing, and all. We shall march again today. — Every one treats me, here, with the greatest distinction and respect. I don't know why; but it is really so.

I have to correct a statement sent to ^{Notre} Dame two days ago, regarding the capture of Vicksburg. We actually took 30,000 prisoners, 50,000 muskets; 136 field guns; 104 siege guns, and a large amount of ~~small~~ ^{other} ammunition. ~~The Rebels~~ ^{Confederates} have lost, it is asserted 55,000 men since Grant moved in May last. We are going on... on to Mobile Bay.

I have sent several letters to you and other persons at Notre Dame; did you receive them all? Send your letters in care of General Sherman.

Yours respectfully
 J. C. Barrier

(16) The words of my army
July 5th — At 1 o'clock A.M., I awoke with the thought uppermost in my mind — that the keys of the rebel city were in our hands; but it took me several seconds of time to fully realize that that thought was a reality, a fact, and not a dream or the result of a dream. I immediately got up; dressed quickly, and prepared myself to say Mass (a duty I never missed during my stay in the Army). It was Sunday, a good many soldiers were outside of my tent, sitting on a little knoll about fifteen or twenty feet from the entrance ^{of my double tent} of my double tent (one serving as a chapel and the other as a residence) awaiting for his "Reverence," to awake at the "portals" of the Holy of Holies and hear their Confessions. All this having been duly done, I celebrated the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass — good Captain Cornyn serving at the altar. I addressed a very brief discourse to my congregation and dismissed them with my blessing. It was seven o'clock when I took my breakfast. Having supplied my soul and my body with their respective needs, I directed my faithful orderly (an ex-slave named Krishnan) to saddle my fine black mare and get ready to accompany me to Vicksburg. This was done instantly. As General Ewing was expecting orders to move his Brigade towards Jackson, he could not accompany me to Vicksburg, but he gave me, besides my mounted orderly, a young man, a civilian, the son of the Hon.^{ble} Member of Lancaster Ohio, and a convert to the Catholic Church. We started together at a rapid speed towards Vicksburg where we arrived about 9 o'clock. My first object in reaching the City was to pay a visit to the Pastor, but I was told that he had left.

the city in April with the Sisters of Mercy and
 gone to Selma Alabama. However, I found in the
 Pastoral residence his worthy assistant, a pious young
 priest, who had suffered terribly during the siege
 both for want of sufficiently nutritious food and
 of care during a severe and protracted attack
 of malarious fever. He received me with
 open arms. His poor emaciated countenance
 brightened up instantly as I told him that I was
 a Frenchman (he had left France but a few months
 before) and a Religious of the Congregation of the
 Holy Cross. He introduced me to a "confere",
 Father B. of St. Louis, and Chaplain of a Missouri
^{Infantry} Regiment, who was about to say the high
 Mass in the fine, and imposing Catholic Church,
 and which had been but slightly damaged by
 our guns. Father B. struck ^{me} as much by his stalwart
 form and distinguished features as ~~for~~ the intensity
 of his abhorrence of the Yankee and of Yankeesdom
~~in general and every body and every thing that~~
~~came from the north of "Mason and Dixons line"~~
~~were Yankee Yankees!~~ His greatly intense were
 his feeling of sadness at seeing the church filled
 almost exclusively with our soldiers that he
 positively refused to sing Mass and would not
 preach, ~~although he had promised the assistant~~
~~pastor to do both.~~ He, therefore said a low Mass
 and I preached the sermon (I several weeks afterwards,
 had occasion to preach and lecture many times in Vicksburg

~~Many weeks~~

Well shall I say it? --- It really had been painful for me to pull down my tent and leave my nice cosy quarters! I had become strongly attached to the place: its wild aspect, the beautiful and spacious terrace built by our Catholic Soldiers for the tent-chapel and their "Fathers' tent, the winding foot paths through the deep precipitous ravine; the shade of the grand magnolias and the large forest trees which had not been totally shattered by the enemies bomb shells, (not a few were sadly wrecked mere skeletons of their former gorgeous foliage and transcendent glory) and most especially a nest - the nest of

The cliff — swallow (~~Mimulus~~ ~~hirsifrons~~ ~~Sw.~~)
 which the ~~parent~~ birds had built on the south
 west corner of my tent; besides the many pleasant
 associations which the spot recalled, all contributed
 to render the place most dear to me... and
 I really felt loath to depart ~~hence~~. For instance
 it seemed cruel to pull down my tent and leave
 unsheltered ^{and} the little family of five newly hatched little
 birds. But I had to do it! Then farewell my little
 birdies! — I left Vicksburg at 1 o'clock P.M. to the
 great sorrow of good Father Kengsi, who had ~~most~~ ^{recently}
~~recently~~ implored me to stay with him and aid
 him in the ministerial duties of a priest, which
 his imperfect knowledge of the English language
 made it difficult for him to discharge properly; but
 I owed my services to our Catholic soldiers —
 especially to the soldiers of the 15th army corps; and
~~desired~~ to accompany them wherever they would go,
 I was bound to do so; so, giving a warm hand and
 a hearty farewell to my friend, I turned my face
 from hospitable Vicksburg and proceeded towards
 Jackson, whither our army had been ordered to
 rendezvous. But where was the 15th army
 corps? where were the headquarters of either
 Sherman, or Ord, or Blair, or Ewing. (for anywhere
 I would have been at home)? That was indeed
 the question. Well! I trusted to my star; but
 more particularly to the devotedness of my big
 hearted orderly, and the indefatigable ^{and} generosity

of my young scout Wm Thomas Hunter, who had become much attached to me; ~~first on account of spiritual intercourse, and afterwards, by reason of compatibility of temper and natural inclination.~~

Before leaving the city we visited many of the ^{Confederate} Rebels works; then we passed through a cluster of big trees, not one of which had a single branch left, besides being all decapitated at various heights. Those trees stood just between the guns of the two armies and of course had passed through the terrible and truly "fiery" ordeal of a two months constant fire. No wonder that they were ^{dismally} shattered. It was indeed a sight most striking and most painful to behold, I cannot forget it! I had got a longing desire to see the place of our long and somewhat eventful encampment; we turned from the Jackson road in order to view, a last time, the spot where we had pitched our tents. But all was gone and deserted; and where the day before all was life and ^{hurry} ~~noise~~, there now reigned the silence of death. Not one soldier, not one horse, not one wagon, not one tent, could be now discerned where hundreds could be seen twenty four hours before. How grandly dismal the scene now appears. An indescribable sense of melancholy oppresses you; you dream vaguely, the world seems empty and life itself undesirable; you are half enshrouded in a mantle of death. We go hence slowly, silently, musingly until we come

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to Jackson's road, and then our drooping spirits
revive; for we again meet life in various forms
a straggling soldier here; and a Negro there; a
four mule ambulance yonder; dust everywhere
dust so fine ~~so~~ ^{so} impalpable, that it rises high in
the air, like a column of smoke in ~~purified~~
~~air~~, and penetrates through the texture of your
clothes, ~~and~~ ^{and} coming in contact with the abundant
perspiration of your body, makes a kind of dirty
and irritating deposit on the skin, ~~and~~ which
makes you long ^{for} after a pailful of clear and
cool water! It is dark, nearly nine o'clock,
and we are told that Sherman's head quarters
are close by. Turning to our right under the
guidance of a friendly Colonel, we pass through a
little grove, and presently we are before General
Sherman's tent, who immediately rises and ~~greet~~
heartily greets me. ^{then} "How do you do Father?"
we thought you had fallen into the hands of the
^{English} ~~English~~; come in and have supper. ^{it is} ~~it is~~ ^{to} ~~to~~.

^{and big Galathea}
Having passed a pleasant hour or so with the
General I enquired of General Ewing where were
our wagons. (Regimental wagons). "I am sorry to say
I ~~do~~ ^{do} not ^{know} where they are ~~left~~ ^{left}." But General what
will I do I have ~~only my hotel dinner~~ with me
my breviary is with my effects and I must say my
office for tomorrow; besides, I certainly desire to
say ~~good~~ ^{good} tomorrow; and my cot! Well Father
I have sent several ^{messengers} ~~messengers~~ to inquire where

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our wagons are and, when found, to bring them here. I expect them every moment." But they were not to come before three or four o'clock next morning and consequently, I as well as the General had to sleep "à la belle étoile" (in the open air and on the ground) with our saddles for pillows!....

July : — I will content myself with simply copying a long letter written in French to my Provincial describing my journey to Jackson covering a period of five days. I wonder if that letter will ever reach its destination, as it is not prepaid, not having any stamp with me, and no body has any!....

Here it is: Tout n'est pas rose ici bas, tant s'en faut." ("all is not color of rose here below, far from it") etc. etc. etc.

The heat becomes so excessive and so oppressive that our soldiers could hardly bear it. Often were we obliged to halt in order to betake ourselves under the shade of thicket of wood or solitary trees by the way side. But we cannot always do so for we have frequently to pass through immense fields of Maize (no Cotton has been planted this year in the South: only corn and beans, ~~and beans and corn~~ and nothing else) and of course not a tree could we find to rest a while under the shade of its foliage.... We made but little progress the second day

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of our march (the 17th of July) either on account of the pervid heat, or because of a crossing we had with the 9th army corps (General Parker) ^{which} ~~who~~ had anticipated us a little. It took at least five hours for that army corps to ^{be} ~~to~~ ^{defile} before us, with its long columns, wagons and field artillery.

We then resumed our march; but we had not advanced ^{two hundred} 200 furlongs when an order came to us from General Blair to halt: the enemy had engaged the division of Osterhaus. Whilst we were waiting for further orders, the rumor spread that Osterhaus had had many of his men killed or wounded. Thereupon, I felt it my duty to immediately proceed to where the skirmish had taken place; and that was not far from where we stood as I learned from General Steele. I consequently went off with an aid-de-camp of General Ewing; but, ^{where} we reached the field of combat, Osterhaus had moved on, and we could not learn what had been done with the wounded (only four or five of his men had been killed, for the engagement had been most grossly exaggerated). I was forced therefore to return to camp without doing anything. When I reached General Ewing's brigade I found them all encamped. We lit a little fire (for it was forbidden to make too large fires as such might serve as signal for the enemy to attack us during the night).

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full day, awaiting the completion of the bridge.
Our "Corps de genie" were throwing across it.
Towards evening we crossed the celebrated river
(a muddier river I never saw in my life)
and bivouacked a few miles off, ^{at one} ~~at~~ clock in
the morning of the next day. It took us not
less than six hours to reach a certain position
where we were to pass the night - three
miles only east of the Big Black. Never in my
life have I been so exhausted for want of food,
sleep, and rest. Oh! those interminable halts!
Well we slept as we did the night before, minus
a supper and plus a little bed of leaves which
my excellent and devoted orderly (a good and
pious Irish soldier) made for me.

At 6 o'clock ~~A.M.~~ ^{P.M.} the 7th we got up, I said a
little of my breviary and went to take a little
breakfast which consisted of a few ears of
fresh corn, cooked on a slow fire, and a few
hard crackers, and departed shortly afterwards.
A day of extreme heat, several soldiers were
sun struck, and also many horses, and nearly all
who were struck died. We dined on hoppers
but not victuals, and reached Bolton -
The midway ^{R.R.} Station between Vicksburg and Jackson.
- at about six o'clock P.M. It was indeed, high
time to stop, for I verily believe, I could not have
gone any farther, so exhausted ^{did I feel} I felt, ^{or} five days
on horseback had stiffened me like a piece of

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dry wood. I had yet nearly all my office to say. I bravely took hold of my Breviary, and God aiding finished the office for the day. Our good God ^{sent us} ~~rained~~ that night, a ^{veritable} deluge. I happily we had foreseen the storm and were able to put up two tents - and two only: one for the General, Captain Cornyn and myself, and the other for the rest of the staff officers. (which tent being low built was entirely submerged during the night and put the poor fellows in a most pitiful, if not, actually ludicrous position).

The following day was devoted to rest (although it was not Sunday) and we needed it, most of the men were as wet as drowned rats.

~~Evening~~ ^{Evening} The General and Capt Cornyn were also pretty thoroughly drenched, as they had put their little cots too near the borders of the tent. As for me, I was nearly all right. At 4 o'clock P.M. an order came to resume the "March". We stopped for the night, two miles this side of Clinton; it was passed midnight ~~when we again pitched our tents.~~

This night's march was if possible still more harassing than that of the 14th.

Again ~~this night~~ ^{Again} we went to ~~bed~~ ^{bed} supperless and bedless. I was no sooner stretched out on the bare ground, than a terrible intestine war was being waged within me. Hunger warring against sleep, at last after many sharp "passes" the latter got the victory: famine surrendered unconditionally.

"Ventre affamé n'a point d'oreilles" say the French adage. The following day the 10th ^{of July} we started at 10 o'clock en route again for Jackson. ~~road, over the river - went in boat - 2. P. M.~~