Nurse Heroines of the Confederacy

By Mary Louise Marshall, *Librarian*

Tulane University School of Medicine
New Orleans, La.

WITHIN the eighty years which have elapsed since the close of the War between the States innumerable studies of the social history of the South have been made. The knowledge made possible by such a perspective leads to increasing wonder that the War could have lasted four years in a disparity so great as existed between the opposing sides in numbers, in materials, and in the achieved organization for conflict. It is possible that this very disparity was a compelling force in demanding from the people of the South a devotion to the cause and a unity of purpose more widespread and more intense than was usual in the North. Certainly the impact of hostilities was felt by men and women, old and young, fit and unfit. The War was fought almost entirely on southern soil and the resulting destruction was thus a personal matter affecting not only members of the family in active service but the very homes and families from which the soldiers came. The white population of the Confederate States was estimated at five and a half millions as opposed to twenty-two million in the northern States. The Confederate forces never exceeded 600,000 in contrast to a Union force of 2,800,000. Of this 600,000, one-third were either killed or died of disease and wounds, one-third were captured, one-half of the remainder were lost by discharge or desertion, so that in the final year of the War the active force numbered scarcely 100,000, almost all of them had been wounded or suffered illness. In the entire Confederate Army to care for their own forces and for Union prisoners, it is estimated that there were not more than 1,927 Surgeons and 3,854 Assistant Surgeons; of these only 24 medical officers had seen military service.

No military or political organization existed in the South at the opening of hostilities. In addition, it was soon evident that the South was caught on the horns of an economic dilemma. There were few factories to manufacture even the cotton it raised, and all machinery, tools, and household furnishings had been imported from the North. Blockades soon cut off these sources of supply and it was in this emergency that women in thousands of plantation and city homes undertook the weaving of "Confederate Gray" and its cutting and sewing into uniforms. They even wove and made army tents, the while they managed their plantations in the absence of the men.

The scarcity of medicines was soon felt both at home and in the Army since the supply of prepared drugs was cut off by the blockade, and a study of indige-

nous plants which could serve as substitutes was maintained throughout the War. The plant substitutes were gathered all over the South and used by the women who were charged with maintenance of health at home, as well as by the doctors in field and hospital. Hague tells us that "the castor oil plant, native in the South, was soon cultivated for the beans from which castor oil, thick and transparent, was extracted." The beans were crushed in mortars, the oil passing through an opening near the base. Water was added and when the liquid was raised to a boil, impurities were strained away and the oil dipped from the top of the water. Berries of the dogwood tree were used for quinine; a cordial for dysentery was made from blackberry roots or persimmons; an extract of the bark of wild cherry, dogwood, poplar, and wahoo trees was used for chills and fever; for coughs, a syrup was made from leaves and roots of the mullein plant, globe flowers, and wild cherry bark. Many women cultivated poppies in their gardens to make opium from which laudanum was extracted, and ashes of corncobs were used for soda.

Home medical care was all the more important since almost all physicians eligible for military duty were in the armed services. Food crops attained increasing importance as it became more and more necessary for local communities to be self-sufficient, both because of economic stringency and because foods from elsewhere were no longer available. In view of the increased responsibility only an indomitable spirit and sincere devotion could have maintained the women throughout the dark years of War, and the darker years which followed it.

Women were engaged not merely on the home front and in the service of supply, however. Many of them smuggled drugs through the lines as urgently needed medicines became scarce. Cable tells of a woman who filled a doll's head with quinine, then dressed the doll and packed it in her luggage. When it was found, she said the doll was for a little crippled girl and was allowed to keep it. Opium and quinine encased in small bags were quilted into the full skirts of the ladies passing from north to south.

In the presence of limited facilities for transportation and imperfect organization for the movement of military personnel from one point to another, it was soon evident that women could give practical and valuable aid through societies formed for the care of the sick and wounded at railroad junction points—a veritable canteen and emergency relief service. The first such organization was effected at Columbia, South Carolina in the summer of 1861, just after the Battle of Manassas. This group was called the Young Ladies Hospital Association and was originally planned to care only for the sick and wounded. In the winter of 1861–62, as the number of casualties increased a food service also was established both here and at Charlotte, North Carolina, near the depots. Rooms were secured for the soldiers' use in houses near the depot under the name of "Soldiers' Rest," where wounds were dressed and the injured were given tem-

porary lodging. The young women were assisted and supervised in their labors by older ladies and old men. Establishment of relief stations such as these soon sprang up all over the South. They were called Wayside Hospitals and operated until the end of the War.

One such refuge at Millen, Georgia, is described by E. T. Deloache as a building weatherboarded with rough planks running straight up and down. It consisted of four large rooms to the front furnished with cots and here a volunteer nurse was always in attendance. Behind were a large dining hall and a kitchen. The tables were always supplied with gifts from the women of Burke County. Local ladies acting as matrons worked on schedule with three assistants. Regular servants and extra help were engaged as needed. Young girls were allowed to help as visitors. This home operated for two years, being destroyed by Union troops in the last days of the War.

In High Point, North Carolina, a hotel, a girls' school, as well as the Methodist and Presbyterian churches were used as such relief centers. As wounded were able to be moved, they were transferred to military hospitals. At this station only 50 died out of some 5,800 who were cared for, all nursing being done by local women. From here one volunteer nurse elected to go to a pest-house with the soldiers when an epidemic of smallpox broke out, finally dying with it herself. Records of this hospital are extant in the Archives of the North Carolina Historical Commission. Mrs. Catherine Gibbon of North Carolina is noted in the records for her outstanding service in the Yorktown area for the wounded from her own state.

Certain women of wealth assumed personal responsibility for supplying military units with all necessities. Mary Ann Buie of Wilmington, North Carolina, uniformed an entire company and traveled about during the entire period of the War attending sick and distressed soldiers and soliciting funds for relief work. One South Carolinian woman and her dependents supplied an entire company of soldiers with its necessities. Mrs. John T. Johnson of Mississippi maintained one company for the length of the War and furnished clothing for two hundred other soldiers. Mrs. William Hart of Virginia furnished ten gallons of milk per day for three years, as well as eggs, poultry, fruits, and vegetables to units in the area near her.

In the absence of a strong, centralized government in the early days of the War, military organization functioned at the state level and casualties from individual states were sent to hospitals named for these states; thus, in the Richmond area there were several hospitals so assigned, as the Alabama Hospital, the Louisiana Hospital, to which the sick and wounded from these states were taken. These hospitals were often supported and supplied by the Relief Societies in their own states, and women from these states volunteered as nurses to care for their own casualties. Even after the Confederate government assumed control of the medical service and hospitals, women continued to do

most of the work and furnish supplies, working as nurses, matrons, and supervisors; in addition, the sick and wounded were received into private homes, especially for convalescent care.

Hospitals were even founded by Relief Societies, as in the case of the Southern Mothers' Hospital at Memphis established by the Southern Mothers' Society in rooms loaned for this purpose. This institution grew from thirty to several hundred beds. In Montgomery, Alabama, women founded the Ladies' Hospital, later called the Soldiers' Home, where as many as five hundred men were cared for at one time.

It was soon evident, however, that volunteer agencies were not enough; the hospitals were suffering from lack of discipline and a centralized governmental authority. Late in 1861, therefore, the Confederate government assumed control and partial support of soldiers' hospitals. Women still continued to supply food and clothing and to serve as hospital matrons and even as managers. The government attempted to supply flour, meat, lard, sugar, and fuel, but all other foods including all perishables were supplied by local women.

It was not until the fall of 1862, however, that the position of women as matrons in hospitals was given legal sanction by the Act of September 27, 1862. The Act provided for each hospital two matrons, two assistant matrons, two ward matrons for each ward, and one ward master for each ward "giving preference to females." Nurses were to be employed by the surgeons. The matron's duties included seeing that the orders of the surgeons were carried out, supervising sanitary and commissary arrangements, satisfying the individual needs of patients as nearly as possible, dressing wounds which needed more careful handling than the soldier nurses could provide, and the preparations of slings and paddings. They scheduled and planned the activities of nurses and in some cases even made trips through the countryside soliciting food, cloth for bandages, and other supplies. The salaries of the chief matron, assistant matron, and ward matron were fixed at forty, thirty-five, and thirty dollars per month respectively.

One woman physician, a Miss Orrie R. Moon, of Albemarle County, Virginia, served in the medical department of the Confederacy. Since only men were eligible for appointment as Surgeons and Assistant Surgeons, Miss Moon served as a nurse in the General Hospital at Charlottesville. She was a graduate in 1857 of the Female Medical College of Pennsylvania (now the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania). Warren says of her: "She was a lady of fine character and of fine intelligence, and though she failed to distinguish herself as a physician, she made an excellent nurse, and did good service in the wards of the hospital."

The women who acted as matrons faced many and difficult obstacles. Perhaps the greatest was the fact that bedside nursing was done by enlisted men, convalescent from illness or wounds. These men, though usually willing, were com-

pletely untrained. As convalescents they were themselves unable to do heavy work and as rapidly as they became stronger and had been taught to be of real help, they were ordered back to the front, so that attendants were constantly changing, always untrained, and requiring constant supervision. Even then, there was continual complaint from military headquarters that men were kept too long in hospital, so badly were they needed at the front. In 1862, a Confederate Congressional Investigating Committee advised a corps of women nurses for camps and hospitals but there is no record that any such body was ever formed.

Another difficulty faced by those who worked in the hospitals was that of women visitors who defied hospital routines, gave patients food they should not eat and even recommended therapy contrary to the orders of the physicians. Such practices sometimes resulted in serious and even fatal consequences. Families often came from a distance expecting to live in the hospital and care for their own, according to their own rules. Many such relatives resented direction, authority, and even advice, creating serious complications.

There was in addition a general prejudice against women serving in hospitals, even on the part of the physician in charge. Appointments were given only grudgingly even to mature women. This prejudice tended to reduce the number of women willing to ignore public opinion and to discourage applications from many women of the better classes. Only in Virginia was this not true. In the hospitals, the prejudice of administrative officers in this regard resulted in the women being assigned inadequate quarters. Mothers and wives of hospital patients resented the fact that other women were allowed to live in the hospital and made every excuse for fault-finding. Kate Cumming comments that, "when certain so-called Christian, high-toned and educated women criticized her she found it strange that women in America considered it a disgrace to do what Florence Nightingale and other aristocratic women of Great Britain had done with honor." Only the indomitable spirit and devotion of these women led them to continue their hospital service.

Sick and wounded prisoners were given the same treatment and care as Confederate troops, by government order. Mrs. Annie E. Johns, matron of the hospital in Danville, Virginia, is mentioned in this regard. When in the Confederate retreat her hospital was moved further South, Mrs. Johns elected to remain behind with a group of seriously ill Union prisoners, until their care could be assumed by the Union medical officers.

It should be realized that training of nurses as we know it was unknown at this time. Although several Catholic sisterhoods had included nursing among their activities since the time of the Crusades, the first training schools for nurses were not established until early in the nineteenth century in Germany and in 1840 in England. In the United States, the Catholic sisters were the first nurses, working with the Jesuit fathers. Actually the War between the

States may be said to mark the beginning of all organized concentration of women in this country in public duties. It is estimated that approximately 2,000 women, North and South, were engaged in nursing and hospital administration in the years 1861–65. It is noteworthy that in the United States as in England the establishment of trained nursing as we know it came as a result of participation in a war. There Florence Nightingale went from her work in the Crimea into nurses' training; here, many women engaged in relief services in our War, later established schools for nurses' training.

Fortunately for historians, this was the day of diaries, memoirs, and the cultivation of the art of letter-writing, and many volumes have been published recounting personal experiences or retelling the experience of others. Several of the women who served in hospitals and as nurses elsewhere have left such volumes of memoirs. The experience of others is told, bit by bit, in the uncounted publications dealing with this period. The drama incident to autobiographical narrative can seldom be duplicated in the retelling, and in writing of individual women workers in Confederate hospitals numerous quotations have here been used.

Accounts of service in Richmond and its environs differ to a marked degree from those dealing with service with the Army of the Tennessee and the two groups are thus separated in this study. Richmond, the capitol of the Confederacy for almost the entire duration of the War, was a hospital center, at one time being the site of some thirty military hospitals, in addition to the innumerable private homes in which convalescents received individual attention and care. In and around Richmond, hospitals were, for the most part, in permanent buildings and organization once established could be maintained through months and even years. On the Western front, however, hospital organization and personnel moved from place to place, following the exigencies of war and no lasting arrangements could be made. Lack of adequate transportation as well as an almost complete lack of facilities for communication added immeasurably to the difficulty. One marvels at the devoted fortitude of the women, enabling them to survive during these tragic years of military service. The surroundings and circumstances differed as greatly from those in Virginia as did the life of the pioneer differ from the life of the city dweller on the Eastern seaboard.

Mary Boykin Chestnut was a regular visitor in Richmond. In her *Diary from Dixie*, she describes one day's activities: "Oh! such a day! Since I wrote this morning I have been with Mrs. Randolph to all the hospitals. I can never again shut out of view the sights I saw there of human misery. . . . There is enough to think about now, God knows. Gilland's was the worst, with the long rows of ill men on cots, ill with typhoid fever, of every human ailment; on dinner tables for eating and drinking, wounds being dressed; all the horrors to be taken in at one glance.

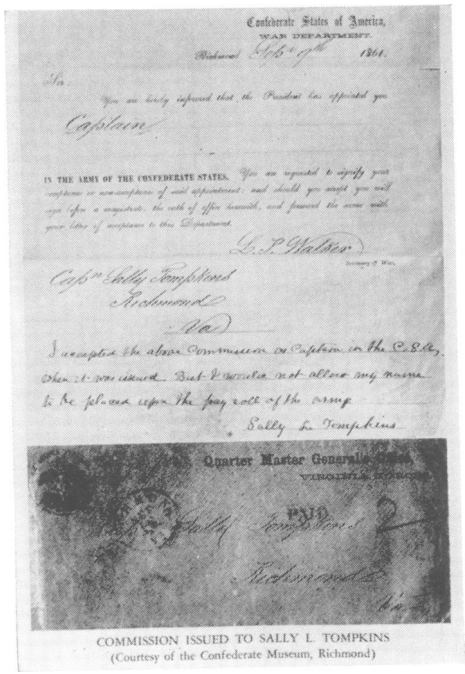
"Then we went to the St. Charles. Horrors upon horrors again, want of organization, long rows of dead and dying, awful sight. . . .

"From there we went to Miss Sally Tompkins' hospital, loaded with good things for the wounded. The men under Miss Sally's care looked so clean and comfortable—cheerful, one might say. They were pleasant and nice to see."

Miss Sally Louise Tompkins, to whom she refers, was one of the most interesting women in the Confederacy. Of distinguished lineage and of ample means, she was twenty-eight years old and living in Richmond when the War began. She was small in stature and frail in body, but possessed of indomitable courage and great determination. Within ten days after the battle of Manasses, when Richmond was crowded with thousands of wounded, the Confederate government appealed to the people to open their homes for the care of casualties. Miss Sally secured the use of Judge John Robertson's residence and, after fitting it at her own expense, opened it as a hospital. She recruited a staff of volunteer nurses who either worked themselves in a weekly schedule, or furnished food from their own kitchens on designated days of the week. She personally directed the hospital, procuring necessary food and drugs not otherwise supplied. Although medicines were often scarce, there was always cleanliness and careful nursing. In the summer of 1861, by Executive order, all hospitals treating soldiers were placed under government control and were required to be under the direction of a medical officer. Miss Sally went directly to President Davis with her records, which showed for her hospital the lowest death rate for any institution in Richmond, in spite of the fact that many desperate cases had received treatment there. In order to comply with the law and still keep the Robertson Hospital in operation, President Davis commissioned Miss Sally as a Captain, without assignment, in the Confederate Service. She accepted the commission but returned the pay to which it entitled her, to the government. Her commission, however, gave her the right to issue orders and draw supplies to supplement what she could secure by gift. She was the only woman to receive a commission in the Confederate Army and was fondly called "Captain Sally" until her death in 1916.

Actively working with her were Mrs. E. T. Semmes, Mrs. Mary A. Page, Miss A. P. Tabb, Miss Eliza A. Davenport, Mrs. B. Trigg, Mrs. James A. Jones, Mrs. John McGuire, Mrs. Williamson, Mrs. Baylor, Miss Agnes Haxall, Miss Bettie and Miss Mollie McMurdo, Miss Kitty Heath, Mrs. Bowen, Mrs. William Bell, Miss Rebecca Jones, Mrs. Deas and Mrs. J. S. Wellford, all from Virginia, and Mrs. Sandaige of Louisiana. The Robertson Hospital cared for 1,334 patients from August, 1861 to April 2, 1865 of whom only 73 died.

Another woman who devoted the four years of the War to the care of the sick and wounded in Confederate service, was Mrs. Juliet Ann Opie Hopkins, wife of Chief Justice Arthur F. Hopkins of Alabama. Unfortunately she has



Confederate States of America,
WAR DEPARTMENT.

Richmond 6th of July 1861.

Sir:

You are hereby informed that the President has appointed you

Captain

IN THE ARMY OF THE CONFEDERATE STATES. You are required to signify your acceptance or non-acceptance of said appointment: and should you accept you will take & subscribe the oath of office herewith, and forward the same with your letter of acceptance to this Department.

L. P. Walker
Secretary of War.

Capt. Sally Tompkins
Richmond
Va.

I accept the above Commission as Captain in the C.S.A., when it was issued. But I decline not above my name to be placed upon the pay roll of the army.

Sally L. Tompkins

Quarter Master General's Office
VIRGINIA FORCES

Sally Tompkins
Richmond Va

COMMISSION ISSUED TO SALLY L. TOMPKINS
(Courtesy of the Confederate Museum, Richmond)

Figure Ia—Commission of Captain Sally Tompkins.

Mrs. Fannie A. Beers

Figure Ib—Mrs. Fannie A. Beers.

left no memoirs. She was forty-five years old, affluent, and the mother of several children when the War began. She followed the Alabama troops to Virgina and organized the Alabama Hospital in Richmond. During the course of the War, she and her husband gave more than $200,000 to the support of this hospital and other similar agencies. Her picture was placed on two of the banknotes issued by Alabama. While working with the injured on the battlefield at Seven Pines, she was wounded twice, and as a result was lame for the rest of her life. She is buried in Arlington Cemetery.

Perhaps the most colorful of these Confederate nurses was Mrs. Phoebe Yates Pember. Born Phoebe Levy, she had been twice widowed at an early age. A native of South Carolina, she went to Richmond soon after the War began to serve in any way she could. She is described as "brisk and brilliant . . . with a will of steel, under a suave refinement and a pretty, almost creole accent." Her *Southern Woman's Story* is the most circumstantial and detailed of the several accounts which have come down to us. Soon after the law was passed by which women could act as matrons in hospitals, she applied for such an appointment, was accepted, and was assigned to a wing of the Chimbarazo Hospital having a capacity of 600 beds. On reporting for duty she discovered that no provision had been made for a "female department." However, the chief surgeon promised to send carpenters to build partitions and shelves for an office, parlor, laundry, pantry, and kitchen. She found available for her use only a small, rusty stove, and as the sickest patients were to be fed from her kitchen, was faced with the problem of supply immediately, but succeeding in securing chickens, she made chicken soup the first evening. She herself tells us she was saved by her ability to cook.

Gradually conditions improved. She describes her schedule as: breakfast at 7 in summer, 8 in winter, and trays for the very sick prepared in her kitchen. Dinner was at 2 p.m. and supper at 6. All delicacies coming in as gifts were saved for her patients: ice was only available as saved in ice-houses from the preceding winter. Each morning and afternoon she visited patients on the list of the very sick.

Early difficulties of her position are noted as poor pay from the government, depreciation of currency, and need of special foods for the sick. The law assigned the monthly quota of whiskey to her department and it was often stolen before she could dispense it for her patients on doctor's prescription, until, insisting on compliance with the law, she appealed to the surgeon-in-charge and put it under lock and key, completely under her control.

These were the final days of the conflict. Although orders had been received to move the hospital and every patient who could crawl had left, Mrs. Pember decided to remain with the patients unable to leave their beds. When the city was ordered to be evacuated, quartermaster and commissary stores were thrown open to the public. After Federal troops occupied Richmond, her pa-

tients remained in her care and she cooked for them and nursed them as best she could. When her last remaining hospital supplies were ordered confiscated, she dressed for a trip to Federal headquarters. She describes her costume of "boots of untanned leather tied with thongs, a Georgia-woven homespun dress in black and white blocks,—the white, cotton yarn, the black, an old silk, washed, scraped with broken glass into pulp, then carded and spun; white cuffs and collar of bleached homespun and a hat plaited of the rye straw picked from the field back of the hospital, dyed black with walnut juice, a shoe string for a ribbon to encircle it; and knitted worsted gloves of three shades of green —the darkest bottle shade being around the wrist, while the color tapered to the loveliest blossom of the pea at the finger-tips." Allowed to have back her wagon-ambulance, she took some of the rations she had saved from her personal allotment and went to market where she bartered them for a live calf. This, with the remnants of food which came to her by gift, enabled her to feed her patients. She remained with them until all the men were transferred, discharged, or dead.

She was left with only ten cents—and Confederate money. Friends divided with her their scanty hoards of food until she was able to find means to return to Georgia. Her book closes with the cogent comment on women as hospital nurses: "There is one subject connected with hospitals on which a few words should be said—the distasteful one that a woman must lose a certain amount of delicacy and reticence in filling any office in them. How can this be? There is no unpleasant exposure under proper arrangements, and if even there be, the circumstances which surround a wounded man, far from friends and home, suffering in a holy cause and dependent upon a woman for help, care and sympathy, hallow and clear the atmosphere in which she labors. That woman must indeed be hard and gross, who lets one material thought lessen her efficiency. In the midst of suffering and death, hoping with those almost beyond hope in this world; praying by the bedside of the lonely and heart-stricken; closing the eyes of boys hardly old enough to realize man's sorrows, much less suffer by men's fierce hate, a woman *must* soar beyond the conventional modesty considered correct under different circumstances. If the ordeal does not chasten and purify her nature, if the contemplation of suffering and endurance does not make her wiser and better, and if the daily fire through which she passes does not draw from her nature the sweet fragrance of benevolence, charity and love,—then indeed the hospital has been no place for her."

Among the other women who served in the East are Mrs. Lucy Mason Webb who had a long engagement as matron of the Officers' Hospital in Richmond; Mrs. Martha Milledge Flournoy Carter of Augusta worked in the Georgia hospital in Virginia, even helping to bury the dead. Mrs. Emily Virginia Mason, a niece of the Confederate Commissioner to Great Britain, was active in Greenbriar, White Sulphur Springs, Norfolk, Charlottesville, and Lynch-

burg. She was later Chief matron at Windsor Hospital in Richmond, where she was associated with Roman Catholic Sisters, Catherine Armistead Rowland, Mrs. Laure Ann Thomson Chilton, Mrs. Archibald Cary and her daughter Mrs. Burton Harrison. Mrs. Louisa Susanna McCord of South Carolina, after serving as President of the Soldiers' Relief Association and the Ladies' Clothing Association of Columbia, gave her whole time to hospital work, scheduling assistant nurses, arranging for provisions, receiving and distributing supplies. Corn bread and thick broth were prepared in her own kitchen every day; provision crops were planted on her plantation, where looms and workshops for making shoes were installed. Rabbit hair was saved and, combined with silk combings, made into yarn. She herself spent most of her days in the hospital.

Mrs. Fannie A. Beers, later of New Orleans, was the only one of the Confederate nurses whose service was divided between the hospitals of Richmond area and those which cared for casualties from the Army of the Tennessee. Mrs. Beers, although of northern birth, had married a Southerner and was living in the South when the War began. After her husband enlisted, she returned to her mother's home in New York because of ill health. Her sympathies were with the Confederate cause, however, and as the War fever heightened, resentment toward her rose to such an extent that her friends smuggled her out of town with her little boy, to start her return home. Arriving in Baltimore, she was able, thanks to friends, to secure passage on a steamer to Newport News. From here only a Masonic document which her husband had left with her enabled her to travel through the lines in an ambulance to the Confederate encampment and on to Richmond. Here she joined the group of women who were caring for the sick and wounded as an aide to Mrs. Hopkins, previously mentioned. At first she was not allowed to work in the hospitals because of her youth, but her opportunity came when she was given nursing charge of a serious case in the Soldiers' Rest, and under her care her patient eventually recovered. Learning of Mrs. Beers' skill in nursing, Mrs. Hopkins enlisted her help in the opening of an emergency hospital in a large tobacco factory. Here she lived with her little boy and a servant in the rooms which had been the offices of the factory. In the summer of 1861 her child had typhoid fever and this anxiety in addition to her hospital duties brought her to the verge of a nervous breakdown, forcing her to go to her husband's relatives in Alabama. After working on the home front for some months, collecting food and linens to send to hospitals, spinning and dyeing cloth, knitting, sewing, and packing supplies for shipment, she answered a published appeal from a Surgeon with the Army of the Tennessee for a lady to assist him in organizing a hospital and was given the appointment because of her earlier experience in this work. Leaving her son with relatives, she went to Gainesville, Alabama and the Buckner hospital. This was a Confederate government hospital, not a state

hospital, and organization was hampered by official red tape. Conditions were quite different in this area, for hospitals were greatly overcrowded and supplies were scarce. She was hardly able to bring about some order before the hospital was moved to Ringgold, Georgia, the patients being sent elsewhere. Mrs. Beers made the three-day trip to her new hospital with a horse and buggy, stopping overnight wherever she happened to be. Established in Ringgold, the hospital received the wounded from the fighting incident to Bragg's retreat in Kentucky. This hospital was housed in the courthouse and Mrs. Beers was given charge of the most seriously ill on the second floor. In her *Memories* she tells of such emergencies as the arrival of 200 wounded with space for only 50; of commandeering use of the only remaining church where beds of straw were installed; of 15-year old soldiers with gangrene and frozen feet and of serious shortages in food. Mule meat was issued, meal was musty, and there was no flour. She herself undertook foraging trips through the surrounding countryside. Again the changing front necessitated moving the hospital and she describes the terrible suffering of the wounded, crowded on flat cars, with only water from roadside ditches to drink. On arrival in Newman, Georgia some order was again restored. She was here able to care for her own husband in a severe attack of dysentery.

When the Union Army neared Newman, both Union and Confederate wounded were brought to her hospital and she even describes a trip with the doctors to the battlefield three miles away. She later worked in a hospital in Macon, Georgia and in a tent-hospital near the front which cared for over two hundred sick and wounded. In the last year of the War her health failed and she made her way with difficulty back to Alabama. It is said of her, "She was the moving spirit in the hospital, officially and practically. The first object of her ministrations was to relieve suffering and to save life. The next was to fit men for service. When health was restored, she would brook no shirking but with the power of kindly words impelled patients to the field. Her zeal sprang from profound convictions of the righteousness of the cause and with the vehemence of sincerity she wielded a great influence over those who had recovered under her care."

Another woman who, although crippled from birth, served as a nurse and matron in the western area was Mrs. S. E. D. Smith who describes her experiences in a small volume called "The Soldiers' Friend." Unique in this book is an appendix containing a collection of letters written to Mrs. Smith during the four years of war by her patients and members of their families. Mrs. Smith was older than were most of the women who served in the hospitals and the regard of her associates is attested by the fact that she is fondly called Grandma Smith in many of these letters.

Miss Kate Cumming has left two small volumes describing her experiences as a nurse. Born in Scotland, Miss Cumming's family had made their home

Figure IIa—Miss Kate Cumming.

Figure IIb—Mrs. Ella King Newsom (later Mrs. Trader).

in Mobile and were strongly sympathetic with the Confederate cause, her Scottish father helping to form a company of Scotch guards. In 1862, when an appeal was made from the pulpit of her church, for ladies to go to the front to nurse the sick and wounded, about forty volunteered, among them, Miss Cumming. Her friends contributed to her outfitting, which included a spirit lamp, a mattress, pillows, quilts, boxes of eatables, and a large trunk, and the volunteers left for the Mississippi-Tennessee line in April of 1862, under the leadership of their pastor. Arriving in Corinth, Mississippi, they went to work immediately in the hospital tents filled with Union and Confederate wounded. Many of the men were lying on blankets just as they had been carried from the battlefield. It had been raining for days and the tents stood in a slough of mud. Although inexperienced under such necessity, the girls learned fast. In the urgency of such an emergency no system was possible. After several weeks the hospital was moved to Okolona, Mississippi, the first of a succession of moves in the wake of battle, when on many occasions Miss Cumming had as many as 500 patients in her care. She says: "In war, the men fight and the women nurse the sick and wounded. These are the words I have always quoted. I have no patience with women whom I hear telling what wonders they would do if they were men, when I see so much of their legitimate work left undone. Ladies can be of much service in hospitals. I have heard surgeons say if they could get the right kind they would have them in almost every department. All have not the gift of nursing, but there are few who cannot do housekeeping and there is much of that to be done in a hospital. A woman's respectability must be at a low ebb if it can be endangered by going into a hospital."

Following the battle of Chickamauga she went with a minister and a servant to help care for the wounded on the battle field. She visited several field hospitals to distribute the supplies she had brought with her before returning to her own post. Her hospital continued to move with the advance of the Union forces so that it was always in unsatisfactory, temporary quarters, and was even twice partially burned. The end of the War found her in Griffin, Georgia, with a hospital in tents. She made her way home by train, open wagon, by steamer, by rowboat, and even on foot, the trip requiring ten days. Miss Cumming lived to be 83 years old and besides these two volumes of memoirs wrote two historical novels.

Relief activities of the women in the western area were varied. Mrs. Felicia Grundy Porter of Tennessee was head of the Women's Relief Society of the Confederate States. Her service included not only work in hospitals but also the raising of money all over the South for the purchase of artificial limbs. Mrs. Betsy T. Phelps, also of Tennessee, was called the mother of the Orphan Brigade, working for the destitute children of Confederate soldiers. Mrs. Betsy Sullivan was an Irish woman who came to be called the mother of the First Tennessee Regiment, attaching herself to this unit, and nursing, cooking,

mending, and sometimes washing for them throughout the War. She actually served on the battle fields carrying bandages and canteens of water. Mrs. Isaac Winship organized the first military hospital in Atlanta. Mrs. Piety Lucretia Hadley of Houston, formed "Leisure" women's societies which collected and delivered to the front carloads of hospital supplies and clothing. She is said to have been the first to organize a bazaar for war charities. Miss Julia LeGrand and her sister of New Orleans nursed the sick and wounded of Joe Johnston's Army in Georgia, Mississippi, and Alabama. Mrs. Sallie Phelps Keller reorganized the Overton Hospital in Memphis, then started the Old State Hospital where Dominican Sisters were put in charge. Mrs. Ann Toulmin Hunter of Mobile worked both in camps and hospitals. Mrs. Margaret Isabella Walker Weber nursed in government hospitals in Alabama and Georgia, the while her husband fought in the Union Army. Miss Augusta Evans Wilson, better known as a novelist, served in the Summerville Camp Hospital.

Best known of the Southern nurses with the Army of the Tennessee was Mrs. Ella King Newsom, later Mrs. Trader. She was a native of Brandon, Mississippi and the widow of Dr. Frank Newsom. Left as a young and wealthy widow, she devoted her life and her fortune to hospital work for the Confederacy. From her home in Winchester, Tennessee, when the War began, she took her servants and a quantity of hospital supplies and went to Memphis. Here she worked in the City Hospital under the direction of Roman Catholic Sisters who trained her as a nurse; later she was in the Southern Mothers' Home and the Overton Hospital. As the War advanced she took sole charge of the hospitals around Bowling Green, Kentucky, where she remained until the fall of Forts Donaldson and Henry. Going to Nashville she organized a hospital in the Howard High School and when capture of the city was imminent, she had her sick and wounded placed on flat cars and taken to Winchester, Tennessee where she established them in churches and other buildings. Later moves took her to Corinth, Mississippi then to Chattanooga. Illness necessitated a leave for a time after which she returned to hospital work with her sister, Miss Fannie King, remaining in the service until the end of the War. In appearance she is described as "youthful, even girlish with a countenance expressing gentleness, goodness and purity." She was known throughout the Confederacy for her perseverance, energy, and zeal.

The only women in the South who had had training as nurses and in hospital administration were the Sisters of Roman Catholic orders who worked in camps and hospitals and on the battle fields. Most skilled and devoted, these brave women observed no distinction of race, nationality, nor partisanship. Since most of the Sisters were either foreign-born or from the North, they were at first sometimes received with suspicion, but this was quickly changed to confidence and admiration from all those with whom they came in contact.

As early as 1861, the Bishop of Louisville, after the Battle of Louisville,

offered the services of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth as nurses in government hospitals. From here they extended their service to Bardstown, Calhoun, Paducah, and Lexington. Of them an old negro is quoted as saying, "De Sisters, dey ain't for de Noff, nuh de Souf, dey's for God." One Sister gave her life in a fever ward and was given a military funeral. In all, thirty-one Sisters of Charity of Nazareth nursed in military hospitals.

The Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul have always followed in the wake of wars. Within several days after official declaration of War they were in charge of two hospitals in Richmond, and later took charge of others. They won commendation for service from high officials in both Armies. Two hundred and thirty-two Sisters of this order are known to have nursed in military hospitals and on the battle fields, North and South. Since their mother-house was near Gettysburg, they gave signal service in this area.

The Sisters of St. Dominic had charge of a hospital in Memphis and also one in Springfield, Kentucky. This convent of St. Catherine was converted into a hospital. The names of forty Sisters are on the service roll of this order.

In the siege of Vicksburg, the Sisters of Mercy opened a hospital in their school and here cared for the sick and wounded from December, 1862 to July, 1863. During the forty-five days of the second siege of the city 21,078 from both Armies were killed and wounded. The Sisters took over the deserted homes for the use of casualties. They also established a large hospital in Mississippi Springs where about eight hundred sick and wounded received care. Later they extended their activities to Jackson, Mississippi to nurse several hundred wounded, housed in the Deaf and Dumb Institute, and then established a hospital in the buildings of the State University in Oxford. Unfortunately the names of only eight of the Sisters of this order are on record in Washington.

Throughout the War the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in Charleston nursed in their own hospital and in other facilities converted to hospital use. They worked also in White Sulphur Springs and other military installations. Sisters of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in New Orleans volunteered for service in Louisiana hospitals, aided by the ladies of the Bon Secours Confraternity. When the War reached Galveston, the Sisters of St. Ursula offered their monastery as a hospital and themselves as nurses. They gave outstanding service in the Battle of Galveston and theirs was the first base hospital in Texas. Wherever the "Nuns of the Battlefield" were present, their skill, bravery, and devotion won high commendation. The only pity is that there were not more in the South, as it is thought that not more than two hundred served in the Confederate States.

Because of its social system, the ladies of the South who entered any type of public service faced even greater difficulties than did those of the North doing the same work, and their success in meeting and overcoming these ob-

stacles of prejudice and custom, in addition to the hardships of their war service, may well be considered the turning point in the status of Southern women. The cause for which they labored was defeated, and the years of war were followed by the even more difficult years of Reconstruction. In the consequent social upheaval, the contribution of these devoted, untiring women has been little known in the North, but they won a place in the heart of every Confederate soldier; for themselves, in the consciousness of a contribution to their country's need, notably achieved, they marked the path to a new way of life for the women of the South.

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