

Institution and too powerful.....to be overthrown by petty combinations of its enemies, either domestic or foreign.

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As the sound of the cannon, the roar of musketry, together with their curling columns of smoke, die away in the distance and are cleared away from our view, and in their stead we hear the echoes of the welcome voice of peace reverberating over the bosom of our country, and see the cheerful, beaming and joyful rays of gladness emanating from the face of our people generally, we are made to exclaim as one, of ancient days did and say: "Behold! how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity: It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments' As the dew of the Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for ever more." While we are thus joyfully greeted with these pleasant subjects of consideration, we see that Reason has resumed her seat in the judgment of man and that Justice is standing ready to minister to the wants of her votaries. We see that our courts are again in operation, that by the execution of our constitutional and organic law we are again made secure in our lives, liberty and property.

While we view the foregoing with delight, and interest, we look, with equal delight and interest, upon the result of our Military Courts which are divided into two genera, one of which is for the trial officers and soldiers, the other for the trial of citizens who by their acts and expressions otherwise under themselves amenable to the military arms of our government. The former genera is known as Courts Martial, the latter is known as Military Commission and it is to the results of this latter that I have reference. They have been organized at various times and places for the last four years wherever our army has been for the purpose here tofore stated. They have generally been composed of officers of the army whose profession was that of

low previous to the beginning of this most direful of rebellions. I have the honor, of having been admitted to the circle of the acquaintance of many gentlemen, and officers composing them, and from my facilities to gain a knowledge of the sublim and fundamental principles which underlie the actions of every faithful and honest jurist. I have invariably regarded them as jurists and dispensers of justice.

When Reason and Justice were dethroned and exiled from our land by fanatics and rebels, and human life was regarded as a trifle and our property as naught when the beautiful form of Liberty was mutilated and her bright and comely garments trailed in the dust and she recieved outrage added to outrage and insult added to insult, we were then begining to experience in a practical sense a dark night and reign of tyranny; but occasionally we could see a faint ray of light as we thought reflected upon us from the eyes of Reason and Justice so rapidly recedeing from our view by the edicts of some rebel chief.

Thus we groped our way in darkness and distress till our General officers, ordered by Superior authority, convened Military Commissions with whom Reason and Justice found refuge and protection from their vile and reckless persecuter. For years have we seen Reason and Justice steady attendants in those Commissions the one demanding and analysing, the other carefully weighing testimony adduced in the trial of those who had formerly assisted in dethroning and exiling them from some portion of their legal domain. One of the Commissions in which they officiated very considerably was the one organized by our brave and much beloved Major General Lovel H. Rousseau then in command of the District of Tennessee. This Commission was composed of the following named officers, viz: Major Collin Ford 100th U.S.C.I., President of the Commission District of Middle Tennessee, Captain E. C. Hatton, A.A.G. of Volunteers, Captain O. B. Simmons 15th U.S.C.I., Captain M. B. Thompson 154th Illinois Infantry volunteer Captain Thomas H. Osborn, 4th Ohio Cavalry Volunteers, 2nd Lieutenant Collin P. Leiter, 15 Ohio Infantry Volunteers, 2nd Lieutenant Wm. O. Baterman 7th Pennsylvania Cavalry Volunteers and Captain H. C. Blackman, 42nd U.S.C.I.

Judge Advocate., with the most of whom I am intimately acquainted. My knowledge of the grand and sublime principles of truth and justice which form a basis of all their official transactions, forbid my passing them without a brief notice of each in connection with the rebellion and the trial of Champ Ferguson the border rebel, guerrilla, robber and murderer, who by his, almost innumerable, acts of inhumanity has cast a gloom of impenetrable sadness over many happy homes and caused throes of bitter anguish to seize upon and revel in the hearts of their inmates; notwithstanding the violent acts of inhumanity charged against Mr. Ferguson, who was one of the South's boasted sons of modern chivalry and who was such a terror to both Union Soldiers and Citizens when he was at large roaming over and rendering desolate our country, he was allowed by the officers and gentlemen of this commission, every facility to bring in his witnesses to disprove the acts alleged to have been, by him committed. And so scrupulously careful were they in conducting the trial that when there was even the shadow of doubt as to the legality of propounding or answering any question tending to involve the life or liberty of the prisoner they would invariably give him the benefit of their decision. So desirous were they that the prisoner should have all the benefits of a legal court of justice, that from the 11th of July to the 11th of September inclusive, a period, sixty days, was consumed in his trial, thus calmly and cautiously advancing, guarding well their steps lest they should transcend the bounds circumscribed by their constant and ever faithful guides, Truth, Reason and Justice. Here allow me to say that whatever be the fate of this unfortunate man, Mr. Ferguson, or, whether he shall have been acquitted or executed, rest assured, gently reader, that this Commission will never feel otherwise than that they have performed their duty, in this case, in accordance with their conscientious convictions as to his guilt or innocence. And when they shall have left the scenes of carnage and arena of deadly conflict to be welcomed home by many anxiously waiting friends and relatives, to receive the fond salutations and bask in the cheerful smiles of faithful and devoted wives and beautiful and loving maidens,

and they retroflect their official conduct and acts herewith connected their pillows at night will not have lost any of their quiet and undisturbed repose for them, but their minds through sweet repose will be refreshed and invigorated fully prepared for the duties of life which devolve upon them and demand the intricate workings of the mind for their discharge. They will hug themselves in safe security and bid defiance to the midnight walking ghosts and phantoms which prowl around and frighten sleep from the pillows and couch of all whose lives have been spent otherwise in accordance with moral and Christian practices. Captain E. C. Hatton, assistant Adjutant General of volunteers--An officer of much business and legal experience--was appointed a member of this commission, probably with reference to his peculiar fitness for the position, who for high-toned integrity and a scrupulous regard for the obligations of duty has won the esteem of all parties, with whom he has transacted business, during the protracted period he has been in the United States service and particularly while on duty in the city of Nashville, Tenn. Always kind, affable and polite, no perplexity has interposed a barrier to his success. Plodding, careful, and without ostentation, he is capable of performing a amount of business, with that quiet assurance which carries with it integrity of purpose and the unmistakable impression that he will abuse no responsibility which may be placed in his hands.

Captain Hatton entered the army, as Captain of Company "A" 22nd Regiment of Michigan Infantry Volunteers, in July 1862, and was with his command through all the campaigns of Kentucky of that year, commencing with the siege of Cincinnati and ending with the defeat of Pegram at Somerset in March 1863., his regiment in the April following being ordered to the Department of the Cumberland. In May following he was ordered on detached duty by Major General Rosecrans, as Commissioner for the adjudication of claims of citizens growing out of the Military occupancy of Tennessee by the Federal army, which position he continued to fill for more than eighteen months. When we consider the ever rolling change of Military usage, we can interpret this in no other way

than as a marked compliment to his ability and business discretion exercised in a most responsible and orderous duty. In June last he was appointed by President Johnson, Assistant Adjutant General of Volunteers, in recognition of his services as a faithful and efficient officer in the varied duties he had been required to perform, and although his age--fortyesix years--precludes his performing active field service, his administration abilities will made him a favorite where they are fully known. Captain Hattan was a politician, of some local note, of the Democratic School, previous to the breaking out of the rebellion--he espoused the cause of the Government from the beginning and rendered the loyal cause efficient service by his bold denunciations of treason and by admonishing his party that the only hope of the oppressed every where was in our own Democratic institutions, and that the party should not prove recreant to old memories by turning its back on the government in the present struggle for the ascendancy of those institutions.

Captain Hatton has been marked through life, as I am reliably informed, by a most obliging air of courtesy and civility, which may perhaps partly be attributed to his early education. His mien and carriage are always so very bold and respectful that he can not but win the confidence and respect of all with whom he is acquainted. Never was any man farther from that unwarrantable rudeness and moroseness which I have known many officials to assume and willingly affect or carelessly indulge frequently to the reproach of their calling.

Major Collin Ford, President of the Military Commissions District Middle Tennessee, is a highly valuable officer and gentleman of hightoned integrity of the legal profession. At the beginning of the war in 1861 he was Superintendent of the High School in Lebanon, Ohio. His frail constitution, physically kept him out of the army for a while and on the 22nd of August 1862 he was commissioned by Governor Todd as 1st Lieutenant in the 79th O.V.I. where he rendered much efficient service till June 17th 1864 when he was commissioned Major of the 100th U.S.C.I. the speedy organizations of which was due the

energy of himself. He drilled, diciplined and led this regiment in battle through the Tennessee till January 20, 1865. He was engaged in the siege of Johnson'sville, confronting the rebel General Forest--also in the battle of Nashville on the 15th and 16th of December 1864, and persued Hood for 700 miles after which he was very much fatigued and his health became very bad. He was some months after appointed as President of the aforesaid commission and the ability he has evinced in a legal point of view is sufficient to introduce him without further comment from me.

2nd Lt. Collins P. Leiter Co. F. 15th Ohio Volunteer Veteran entered the United States service on the 7th of September 1867^(?) as private and served as such up to the 4th day of November 1863 when he recieved his appointment as his present rank indicates and remained with his old Company as Lieutenant. He lost his right hand in the battle of Pickets Mills, Ga., on the 27th of May 1864, his arm was taken off, I think, near the lower third of the forearm, notwithstanding the furious onset of the desperate foe Lieutenant Leiter stood firm and unflinchingly and amid the roar of musketry, the clang of arms and the groans of the wounded and dying our gallant little friend recieve the fatal wound which results in the amputation of his right hand. No one who has the enjoyment and free use of both hands can ever concieve the great inconvenience and many disadvantages that a person experiences in the erreparable loss of a right hand. Lieutenant Leiter was appointed first Lieutenant in August 1864 and was Commissioned Captainin the 15th Ohio Veteran Volunteers in January 1865., but being unable yet for field duty and absent from his Command on detached duty he was not mustered on his commission as Captain and therefore his rank officially at this time is as we have given it at the beginning of this biography.

At the beginning of this war we find him making an honest and independent living, working at his trade as a carpenter and house-joiner, at his home in Shelby, Richland County, Ohio. Steadily engaged in his industrial persuits, plying with intent his saw, hammer and other tools at his bench, he is brought

to a sudden halt. Hark! He hears the echoes of that fatal gun opened on Fort Sumpter. He reads of the menacing of our glorious old "Star Spangled Banner" by disgraceful epithets pronounced by traitors. He hears of its contaminations by polluted hands--it is more that his respect and reverence for it can bear and he, for the time, forsakes his vocation, enters the ranks of its defenders and rushes on to rescue the maltreated old banner. He forsakes a position of affluence and ease and takes upon him-self the privations, hardships and exposure of a private soldier. He fights gallantly, sustains the cause he expoused most nobly and today he is wearing a wreath of laurels upon his brow which the hand of time can not make dim--a rich legacy to be transmitted to his posterity, while each generation will add a rich luster to its beauty. Lieutenant Leiter is near 24 years of age, unassuming and modest, courteous and kind, an excellent officer, a true patriot and a devoted friend of constitutional liberty. He is a gentleman of merit and Ohio and her people cannot but be cognisant of the almost incalculable sacrifice made by him in this war, and it is vain to believe that they will treat him otherwise than as he meritoriously deserves.

I have not the facts as to the Military history of the other officers of this Commission but suffice it to say that they are able and efficient officers and men of high toned integrity.

Captain M. B. Thompson is a gentleman thirty two years of age, residing at or near Urbana, Champaign County, Illinois, of fine legal qualifications, having been admitted to the bar as a practicing Attorney prior to the rebellion. Notwithstanding the bright prospects of the future which presented themselves for his consideration, he laid them aside, counted them as naught when compared to our country and its blessings, and boldly and fearlessly expounded the great cause in which we have struggled for more than four years--the preservation of our Union and Universal liberty--and in which we have eventually triumphed over those who were trying to destroy the best form of government known to man.

Captain Thompson has been in the service of the United States since 1861, formerly a member of the 25th regiment of Illinois Infantry Volunteers; but now of the 154th regiment of Illinois Infantry Volunteers, During one and a half years of his time in connection with the army he has been an acting staff officer rendering much and efficient services. The many very important and interesting legal questions raised, discusses and decided upon, which will be found in the following pages in which is displayed in a practical light makes further comment as to his legal abilities superfluous and as his qualifications and deportment as a soldier and an officer are beyond cavil, we may here come to the conclusion that Captain M. B. Thompson is a gentleman, a jurist and a true and devoted patriot and a valuable and efficient officer. He is modest and unassuming in his address, kind and generous in his deportment; but firm and inexorable when he assumes a position and by reason is satisfied that he is right.

Captain O. B. Simmons is, truly speaking, a soldier. He entered the United States service on the 2nd day of May 1861, seeing the glorious old flag of our country menaced and torn from its proud position at Fort Sumpter he entered the army, rallied to its rescue and has faithfully defended the principles represented by it and won for himself a fame imperishable to be transmitted to his posterity.

Captain Simmons, after having served for three months in the beginning of the rebellion, was mustered out of service on the 3rd of August 1861, and not content with the time and service devoted to the safety of our country and her civil and religious institutions, he re-enlisted on the 17th day of September 1861 as Orderly Sergeant of Company "I" 46th Pennsylvania Infantry Volunteers, he was in this position for near a year when his ability as an officer became known to superior officers and soon we see him promoted as 2nd Lieutenant on the 9th day of August 1862, his promotion as 2nd Lieutenant gave him an opportunity to exercise his abilities to a greater extent and we see that a little more than one month elapsed when he was promoted as first Lieutenant.

in Company "D" in the same regiment and very soon after was detailed as Assistant Aid D'Camp to Brigadier General Joseph F. Knipe with whom he remained until after the battle of Chancellorsville at which place he was wounded from the effects of which he was compelled to resign.

Captain Simmons, after suffering for a long time with his wound, was appointed Captain of the 15th Regiment of U.S.C.I., on the 1st of March 1864, by order of the Secretary of war and was with his command for a few months when he was detailed on special duty by order of Major General W. T. Sherman on the 18th day of August 1864, and acted in that capacity up to December the 10th 1864, when he was detailed as Provost Marshal General 7th Div. C.C.M. Div. and acted as such up to April 13th 1865 when he was made Provost Marshal of the Cavalry forces of the Department of the Gulf in which capacity he acted until the 25th day of June 1865 when he was ordered to report to General Thomas at Nashville, Tennessee at which place he arrived in the early part of July and on the 18th day of July 1865 he was detailed as a member of the Military Commission, District of Middle Tennessee where the present writing leaves him faithfully discharging the duties of that office as he has those of each and every other with which he has been trusted during a period of more than four years.

When we begin with Captain Simmons and follow him through all the meandering paths of his eventful career in connection with the army of the United States and see the many privations, hardships and onerous duties devolved upon him in consequence of the various official capacities in which he has been placed, and see, that with satisfaction to his superior officers and credit to himself, he has performed them all faithfully what other conclusion can we come to than that Captain O. B. Simmons is a true patriot, a faithful soldier, an honest officer and a gentleman of uprightness of purpose in all his varied transactions of an official character or that of a domestic nature. Truly the unprejudiced and candid man can logically arrive at no other. Captain Simmons is a man of near 27 years of age, kind and respectful in his address,

reserved in his deportment and in short a gentleman and an officer of merit.

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