

reinforce the enemy with thirty or forty thousand disciplined troops at that time. An immediate resumption of exchanges would have had that effect without giving us corresponding benefits. The suffering said to exist among our prisoners South was a powerful argument against the course pursued, and I so felt it.

## HILL TO BLAINE.

During the amnesty debate in the House of Representatives in 1876, Hill, of Georgia, replying to statements of Blaine, discussed the history of the exchange of prisoners, dwelling on the fact that the cartel which was established in 1862 was interrupted in 1863, and that the Federal authorities refused to continue the exchange of prisoners. "The next effort," he said, "in the same direction was made in January, 1864, when Robert Ould, Confederate agent of exchange, wrote to the Federal agent of exchange, proposing, in view of the difficulties attending the release of prisoners, that the surgeons of the army on each side be allowed to attend their own soldiers while prisoners in the hands of the enemy, and should have charge of their nursing and medicine and provisions; which proposition was also rejected."

Continuing, Mr. Hill said: "In August, 1864, there were two more propositions. The cartel of exchange had been broken by the Federals under certain pretences, and the prisoners were accumulating on both sides to such an extent that Mr. Ould made another proposition to waive every objection and to agree to whatever terms the Federal Government would demand, and to renew the exchange of prisoners, man for man, and officer for officer, just as the Federal Government might prescribe. That proposition was also rejected. In the same month, August, 1864, finding that the Federal Government would neither exchange prisoners nor agree to sending surgeons to the prisoners on each side, the Confederate Government officially proposed, in August, 1864, that if the Federal Government would send steamers and transports to Savannah, the Confederate Government would return the sick and wounded prisoners on its hands without an equivalent. That proposition, which was communicated to the Federal authorities in August, 1864, was not answered until December, 1864, when some ships were sent to Savannah. The record will show that the chief suffering, the chief mortality at Andersonville, was between August and December, 1864. We sought to allay that suffering by asking you to take your prisoners off our hands without equivalent, and without asking you to return a man for them, and you refused."

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## ANDERSONVILLE PRISON.

TESTIMONY OF DR. ISAIAH H. WHITE, LATE SURGEON CONFEDERATE STATES ARMY, AS TO THE TREATMENT OF PRISONERS THERE.

[*Richmond Times*, August 7, 1890.]

Recently several articles have appeared in leading magazines and journals in the country agitating the treatment of prisoners at Andersonville and other Southern prisons during the late war between the States.

In order that the true condition of this subject might be learned, a reporter for *The Times* called upon Dr. Isaiah H. White yesterday, who was chief surgeon of military prisoners east of the Mississippi during those days, and his headquarters were for a time at Andersonville.

As evidence of the efficiency of Dr. Isaiah H. White in the position which he held the "Medical and Surgical History of the War of the Rebellion," in referring to one of his sanitary reports, says: "The following extract shows him neither insensible to the suffering around him nor ignorant of the cause."

## DR. WHITE'S POSITION.

"The papers published by the committee of the House of Representatives show that Dr. Isaiah H. White, surgeon in charge of the prison camp, repeatedly called the attention of his superiors to the condition of the prisoners, appealing for medical and hospital supplies, additional medical officers, and adequate supply of cooking utensils, hospital tents, &c. The medical profession owes a debt of gratitude to this gentleman and his colleagues in their labors for the unfortunate men confined at Andersonville."

## FACTS FROM KNOWLEDGE.

When asked to give his knowledge of the facts connected with the reports of the inhuman treatment of Federal prisoners by Confederate authorities, Dr. White said: "It is not easy to see what purpose is served by the publication of these articles. Under circumstances like those of the civil war, the remembrance is painful."

## SADDEST EPISODE.

It was the saddest of its episodes not to be willingly recalled either

carried from the fields a sufficiency of clothing and blankets to protect them from weather changes. The depression of spirit consequent on defeat and capture, the home-sickness of the prisoners, and the despondency caused by the thought that they had been left by their own Government in the hands of the enemy with no prospect of exchange, conspired to render every cause of disease more potent in its action, and were the main factors in the production of disease and death.

"How were you off for medical supplies, Doctor?" asked the reporter.

"We were sadly deficient in medicines, the United States Government having declared medicines contraband of war, and by the blockade prohibiting us from getting them abroad, we were thrown largely on the use of indigenous remedies."

## GRANT'S TESTIMONY.

The following testimony of General Grant may be of interest. In his testimony before the Committee on the Conduct of the War, February 11th, 1865, General Grant's answers were as follows:

*Question.* It has been said that we refused to exchange prisoners because we found ours starved, diseased, unserviceable when we received them, and did not like to exchange sound men for such men.

*Answer.* There never has been any such reason as that. That has been a reason for making exchanges. I will confess that if our men who are prisoners in the South were really well taken care of, suffering nothing except a little privation of liberty, then, in a military point of view, it would not be good policy for us to exchange, because every man they get back is forced right into the army at once, while that is not the case with our prisoners when we receive them. In fact, the half of our returned prisoners will never go into the army again, and none of them will until after they have had a furlough of thirty or sixty days. Still the fact of their suffering as they do is a reason for making this exchange as rapidly as possible.

*Question.* And never has been a reason for not making the exchange?

*Answer.* It never has. Exchanges having been suspended by reason of disagreements on the part of agents of exchange on both sides before I came in command of the armies of the United States, and it being near the opening of the spring campaign I did not deem it advisable or just to the men who had to fight our battles to

by the North or South. If its history is to be written, however, it is better for it to be based upon facts than fiction.

"It is a well-known fact," said Dr. White, "that the Confederate authorities used every means in their power to secure the exchange of prisoners, but it was the policy of the United States Government to prevent it, as is well shown by a letter of General Grant to General Butler, dated August the 18th, 1864, in which he said:

'It is hard on our men held in Southern prisons not to exchange them, but it is humanity to those left in the ranks to fight our battles. Every man released on parole or otherwise, becomes an active soldier against us at once, either directly or indirectly. If we commence a system of exchange which liberates all prisoners taken, we will have to fight on until the whole South is exterminated. If we hold those caught they amount to no more than dead men.

'At this particular time to release all rebel prisoners North would insure Sherman's defeat and would compromise our safety here.'

"This policy," continued the Doctor, "not only kept our men out of the field, but threw upon our impoverished commissariat the feeding of a large number of prisoners."

#### TREATMENT OF PRISONERS.

In refutation of the charge that prisoners were starved, let it be noted that the Confederate Congress in May, 1861, passed a bill providing that the rations furnished to prisoners of war should be the same in quantity and quality as those issued to the enlisted men in the army of the Confederacy. And the prisoners at Andersonville received the same rations that were furnished the Confederate guard. That this was sometimes scant, every old rebel in the field can testify. But this was due to our poverty.

#### MORTALITY.

"According to the report of Secretary of War Stanton, the number of Federal prisoners who died in Confederate prisons is 22,576, and according to the same authority the number of Confederate prisoners who died in Northern prisons is 26,436. According to the report of Surgeon-General Barnes the number of Confederates held in Northern prisons during the war was 220,000, and the number of Federal prisoners held in Confederate prisons was 270,000."

"It is to be observed that in all of the calculations of mortality

made by the writers of these articles the figures relate to Andersonville which was acknowledged the most unhealthy of any of our prisons, and yet the mortality rate will compare favorably with that of Alton, Ill., which was 509.4 annually per thousand."

#### CAMP AT ANDERSONVILLE.

The camp at Andersonville was established on a naturally healthy site in the highlands of Sumpter county, Georgia. The officers sent to locate this prison were instructed to prepare a camp for the reception of ten thousand prisoners. For this purpose twenty-seven acres, consisting of the northern and southern exposures of two rising grounds, between which ran a stream from west to east, was selected. In August, 1864, nearly thirty-three thousand prisoners were crowded together in this area, in consequence of the refusal of the United States Government to exchange prisoners, we having no other prison to which to send them at that time.

#### CAUSE OF DISEASE.

The sudden aggregation of these men at a camp unprepared for their reception, originally designed for only ten thousand men, developed many unsanitary conditions, which combined with pre-existing causes, evolving sickness and stamping it with a greater virulence. The most prominent of these were: The men came from a higher latitude and unaccustomed to a Southern climate in the most unhealthy season of the year, August. The temporary detective police of the camp, and the insufficient protection in quarters, and the bread ration, consisting of corn-meal used largely in the South, to which they were unaccustomed, contributed to the spread of diarrhoea and dysentery, which was the cause of eighty-six per cent. of the entire number of deaths. But the evil influences exercised by the camp conditions and diet would not have been followed by the same mortality had the same ground and shelters been crowded to the same extent with well-disciplined troops waiting for the opening of a campaign.

#### BROKEN DOWN PHYSICALLY.

These men on their arrival were broken down physically by previous hardships, hurried marches, want of sleep, deficient rations, and exposures in all kinds of weather, by night and by day that precede and attend the hostile meeting of armies. The prisoners seldom