

er enemy, disease, for surely the day will come to open the prison doors and loosen the fetters which bind you, when you will be free to go back to that dear old mother and little sister, who pray for your safe return; and not only to them, but to another, whose prayers will not go unheard, but will ascend to heaven in your behalf.

Hope had given way to despair in the breast of Mrs. Norwood. She had prayed for the return of her son, or tidings that he lived, but day after day went by until almost a year had passed, and still no word from her missing boy. Little Mamie was now almost seven years old, and but for the love of the dear child, the good woman would have broken down under the weight of anxiety for the fate of her son. During the many months of waiting, Amy Harrington was a great comfort to Mrs. Norwood, scarcely missing a day without paying her a visit. Mrs. Harrington, too, made frequent calls at the house of the sorrowing widow, cheering her up as best she could.

One day, near the first of July, the post master was seen to leave his office and walk rapidly in the direction of Mrs. Norwood's. It was an unusual thing for the old man to walk in such a brisk manner, and those who saw him wondered what could be the matter. He met Mamie at the gate, of whom he inquired for Mrs. Norwood.

"Mamma is in the house," answered the child.

As the post master started up the steps and was about to knock at the door, Mrs. Norwood appeared, and recognizing her caller, said—

"Why, Mr. King, what brings you out this time of day?" Then noticing an anxious look upon his face, and the letter in his hand, she continued: "I hope you bring me news of Thomas."

"I trust so; here is a letter which came but a few minutes ago, which may be from him, and I hope it may bring you good news."

"You are very kind, and I thank you very much for your thoughtful consideration for me," she replied, taking the letter and breaking the seal. Turning to the bottom of the page, her eyes rested on the name of her son.

"Thank God, it is from Thomas; he still lives," she exclaimed, covering her face with her hands and sobbing aloud for joy. It was some minutes before she could control herself sufficiently to read the letter. Remembering the good old post master, she dried her eyes and turned to speak to him, but he was gone. When he learned that the letter was, as he supposed, from Tom, he concluded it was no place for him there, at that time, and quietly went away.

Finding herself alone, Mrs. Norwood succeeded, through her tears, in reading the letter, which proved

to be the one written by Captain Norwood while in Andersonville prison. When she had finished reading it she called to Mamie, and told her to go over and ask Amy to come and see her. It was not long until Amy made her appearance, and found Mrs. Norwood in tears.

"Why, Mrs. Norwood, what has happened?" she asked, eagerly.

"My dear child, Thomas still lives, but oh! in such a place."

Handing the letter to Amy, she again burst into tears. Poor Amy, her grief was equal to Mrs. Norwood's, although she tried hard to control herself as she read the following sorrowful letter from the absent son and lover:

ANDERSONVILLE PRISON, Georgia, May 12, 1864.

*My dear, dear mother:*

Never before have I longed for and felt the need of a mother as now, and at the same time, when I look around me and see the utter hopelessness of ever getting out of here alive, I realize that I shall never look upon your dear face again.

Together with nearly all my company, in fact, all who were not killed, I was taken prisoner at the battle of Chickamanga, on the nineteenth day of last September, and after days of suffering on the march we reached this prison, where we have been ever since and are likely to remain until, like thousands who have gone before, we are hauled out in the dead cart. I should have written you on my arrival, but learned that no letters are permitted to go beyond the office of Captain Werz, our jailor. Should this reach you it will be through the kindness of some fellow prisoner, more fortunate than myself, one who will be able to get this through the lines. Just how this will be I am as yet unable to say, but shall trust to some friendly interposition of Providence to assist me.

My dearest mother, I am at a loss for words to correctly convey to you the terrible condition of affairs in Andersonville and the unfortunate men confined here. I had heard before I came here horrible tales about the place, and of the cruel treatment of prisoners, and at the time thought much of what I heard was the creation of a vivid imagination; I could not believe that men endowed with human feelings and human instincts could be guilty of what these people are charged with, but I am now prepared to say that the half has not been told. No, dear mother, the tongue can scarcely form into words language which could convey all the dreadful suffering undergone by us.

As I write these lines, hundreds of the lifeless bodies of our unfortunate comrades lie in the streets of the prison awaiting the arrival of the dead cart to carry them outside the stockade, where they will be dumped into a long trench, with as little ceremony as the burying of a beast. The bodies are entirely nude, having been stripped of their few rags by desperate men who wish to cover their own miserable bodies, and will not hesitate to rob the dead for that purpose; this, too, with the full knowledge that perhaps in a few days they may lie in the places now occupied by their comrades. Mother, we are being systematically starved to death, and it is only a question who will be next in the long list of the thousands who have gone the same way. It will be hard for you, as it was for me, to believe that this is being done by a people who, for years, have boasted of their chivalry. Yes, we are being slowly, but no less surely, starved by this man, or more properly speaking,