

Loneliness and Sorrow of Civil War Stays In Southern Indiana Recalled

By S. J. RICHARDSON.

In 1830 Wren Grayson and family left a small farm near Memphis, Tenn., and took up a government claim on the banks of Sand creek, three miles due south of Westport, on land that was to be the last farm in Decatur county, adjoining Jennings county on the south. Mr. Grayson left the South because he was opposed to slavery and foresaw the coming of that great struggle, known to all Southerners as "the war between the states." Mrs. Grayson was a Williamson, of the famous family of that name, living in Breathett county, Kentucky. Their first baby was born on that night when the oldsters say "the stars fell," which was Nov. 14, 1833. This pioneer family reared a dozen boys and girls in all, but our story has to do mainly with one of the older boys, Beryl P. Grayson.

In 1859 it was freely predicted that Civil War was assured, and doubly sure if Abraham Lincoln was elected President. Col. Hagerman Tripp sent out word to various points in Jennings county and in southern Decatur county that an important meeting would be held in the old Courthouse at Vernon to discuss conditions and that a company of home guards might be organized. The Grayson boys—Beryl, Will, Hyrum and John, the father included, attended this meeting and all of them, including many neighbors, signed up for military duty when called.

Beryl Is Slighted.

When the firing on Fort Sumpter came and President Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers John, Hyrum and Will Grayson were called at once. Beryl expected to be called any day, but for some reason he was overlooked—and naturally somewhat peeved at the turn of matters.

Beryl had a sweetheart, Miss Jane McCammon, a daughter of the late James McCammon, who lived on the opposite bank of Sand creek, in Jennings county. As no call to war came these young people decided to get married. They located two miles east of the parental home, on a farm between Sand creek and Rock creek—this farm of late years was known as the Harve Barnes place, and is just north of the New Bethel Church in Pierceville.

It was early spring and young Grayson set to work and built a new log barn. The parents had each contributed a horse which made a team for the farm work. Wheat had been planted the previous fall and a large cornfield had been planted. Beryl was happy in his work while the wife was busy with her loom, being expert at weaving cloth and carpets—and the neighbors, the Barneses, Matthews, McCammons, Smiths, Richardsons, Davises, Jacksons, Clarksons, Boicourts, Bakers, Hunters and others, kept Mrs. Grayson more than busy with the weaving.

Two Girls Born.

Beryl had harvested his first wheat crop, which Amos Little and his crew of threshermen had pronounced the finest of the season. In the meantime two girl babies had arrived—Annie and Minnie, named for relatives on both sides of the family. Beryl was busy going over the 20-acre cornfield for the last time, "laying by," as the term was used.

Dinner was over and water was being drawn for the team before

going to the field which he expected to finish plowing that afternoon. A buckboard with two young soldiers drove up to the front gate and as soon as they had hitched the team they came forward and asked for Beryl Grayson. All was confusion in that new country home. The spokesman told him that they had come for him as he was listed, but no doubt he would be excused when the officials found out that he was married and had a wife and two babies. Beryl unharnessed the team, kissed his wife and babies good-by—the wife fainted, and after she had been revived he gave her a few instructions about the work on the farm. The wheat crop had been harvested and was in the granary, the corn was "laid by" and he told her that the neighbors would help take care of the crop—and he was gone.

Sent to Camp Morton.

At North Vernon he was enlisted in Company E, 88th Indiana volunteer infantry, with Capt. George W. Kendrick. They first went to Camp Morton, Indianapolis, for a short training period, and then to Madison, the old town on the river—from there to Louisville. The 82d regiment was mustered in Aug. 30, 1862, and Morton C. Hunter was the colonel. While the various soldier units were gathering at Louisville

Beryl had time to write home. A copy of his letter follows:

Louisville, Ky.,
Sept. 5, 1862.

"My Dear Wife and Babies:

"This is the first time I have found a chance to write you since that short note from Indianapolis at Camp Morton. We went from North Vernon to Indianapolis on the old Madison & Indianapolis railroad, but most of us only had flatcars and boxcars to ride in. At Camp Morton I saw quite a few boys I knew but the thrill was to see Governor Morton who came out every day and always had a good word for us. Aaron Boicourt of Horseshoe Bend, near Greensburg, was there with his drum, trying hard to enlist. He sure could beat that snare drum, and Governor Morton gave him a \$5 goldpiece after he had beat "the long roll" at the Governor's request. I doubt if Aaron gets into the service as he is very young and too small.

Men With Aspirations.

"Melvin A. Higgs of Brewersville was there and he had enlisted as a musician (fifer) in the

MARGARET BARBARA

By MAX EHRMANN.

A bachelor of 60, the youngest of five children, is looking at a youthful portrait of his mother, who passed on nearly 30 years before:

"Hello, Margaret Barbara, pretty girl, father's girl. Why did you have me? You already had four children.

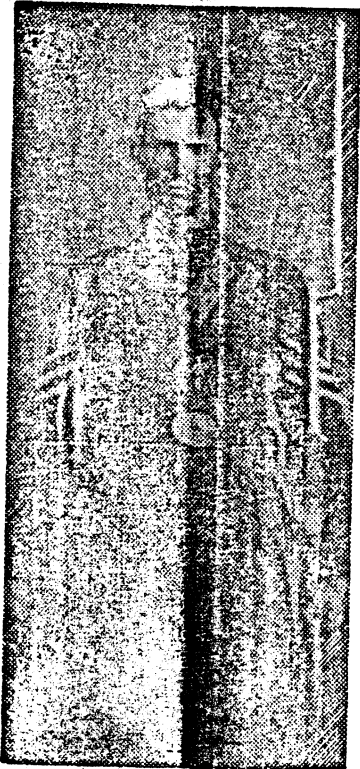
"Why did you bring me into this world? You told me once you didn't want me, but that you loved me as much as the others once I was here.

"It's a terrible world, Margaret Barbara, you brought me into. But I am glad you did.

"It's terrible. But I am glad to have seen it. I know its cruelties. Still I am glad to have seen it.

"I shall be leaving it soon. It is now evening twilight for me.

"Is there anything where you are? Or is that mound at the cemetery all that there is, Margaret Barbara?"



BERYL P. GRAYSON.

120th Indiana. He confided in me by telling me that if he got back safe and sound from the war he hoped to be my brother-in-law. You can tell sister 'Kit' this if you like. I talked with a Confederate soldier here in Louisville. He had been captured at Shiloh and he told me that he had belonged to a company under a "Maj. Grayson" who with two sons were in an Arkansas regiment. They are undoubtedly relatives and I hope we do not meet in battle. Our soldiers all think the war will not last long as the

North has the men and the supplies. I think we go up the Cumberland River from here to join Buell. We are all anxious to get into the fray and have it over—then we can return to our homes and be with our own once more. I'll write as often as I can and you and friends keep up your courage 'till this cruel war is over."

"Yours affectionately,

"BERYL."

The above letter was marked "Soldier's Letter" and directed to Mrs. Beryl (Jane) Grayson, care of James McCammon, Brewersville, Ind., and the postage was paid to David Brewer, postmaster.

Take Part In Battles.

The 82d was assigned to a brigade in Buell's army and left Louisville in October, 1862. They took a prominent place in the battle of Stone river Dec. 30, 1862, and Jan. 1, 1863. After this they marched into Murphreysboro with the victorious army of Rosecrans and the following June took part in the battle of Hoover's gap. Then followed a cam-

paign in east Tennessee and Georgia, finally landing the regiment near Chattanooga, where they fought with Hooker "above the clouds." Next finds the 82d at the foot of Mission ridge. Here they were told to advance to a certain position, but the orders were not understood and the regiment swept like an avalanche up the ridge in the face of the bristling canon which were soon captured and turned on the fleeing Confederates.

Just as the ridge was scaled one of those one-ounce musket balls struck Beryl, severing an artery in a leg, and he nearly bled to death before he was taken to a field hospital. His regiment in this assault lost 21 killed and 72 wounded. Beryl had a serious siege before he was able to be moved when he with others were sent to a base hospital at Nashville where he stayed during November, December, 1863, and January and February, 1864. Here he apparently made a good recovery.

He was told that he would be

discharged and sent home. It was a proud day when the commandant in charge of the hospital gave him a bright new uniform with two "V" stripes on the sleeve and a letter from his old captain (Hendricks) telling him he had been promoted to corporal for his work at Mission ridge. The old daguerreotype in his new uniform was taken that same day by a Nashville art gallery. But Beryl was never to see his captain or comrades again. Word was sent to his father in Decatur county, telling him that the son could come home, but someone should come after him. His father, "Uncle Wren" Grayson, planned the trip to far-away Nashville. He managed the fare to Indianapolis and there laid his case before Governor Morton. The Governor said that will be easy. Taking out a small notebook from his pocket, he wrote in his own hand with an ordinary lead pencil the following:

"All conductors on the L. & N. Railroad, and all roads in Indiana—please pass Wren Grayson

and son Beryl P. Grayson, a discharged wounded soldier, over your lines.

"OLIVER P. MORTON,
 Governor of Indiana."

The Union Army was in control of the L. & N. Railroad to Louisville and the pass was honored in every instance. From Louisville they came to Madison on a boat, and then to North Vernon on the old Madison & Indianapolis Railroad.

Beryl Arrives Home.

It was a cold wintry day in early March, 1864, when they arrived at North Vernon. The father-in-law, James McCammon, had sent a wagon and team to North Vernon to meet them. Blankets and comforts were placed on a bed of straw to make the soldier as comfortable as possible, but he soon complained of the pain caused by the jolting along the rough road of that day. By the time he arrived at the McCammon home he asked to remain, where his wife and two girls were awaiting his coming.

His father went ahead two miles to his own home, expecting

Beryl to be able to come on to the old home in a few days, but it was not to be. Beryl's condition became grave, gangrene had set in, and the happiness of the relatives was turned to sadness at his death. He was buried in the old McCammon graveyard on the farm, high up on the banks of Sand creek where he had spent so many happy boyhood days. His tombstone reads: "Died March 14, 1864."

His widow died only eight years ago at the home of her son James Armstrong, two miles south of Westport. She was known to everybody during the many years since the war as "Aunt Jane Armstrong." Only one son is living Robert Armstrong, on the old home place, Route 3, out of North Vernon. At Aunt Jane's death her last request was that she be buried by the side of Beryl, her first sweetheart and husband. In the old McCammon cemetery south of Westport you will find the graves side by side, with those of the two baby girls, Minnie and Annie, near by.