Danville.Va,2,April,1901.

Miss Ida M.Tarbell,

My dear madam,

The Magazine containing your article on the disbandment of the Confederate Armies, was received and read with great interest;and as a Confedate who felt a deep interest in all the occurrences of thos e days,I thank you for the kind words of commendation of Courage of the men who wore the Gray and for years"held up the great Confederate Government upon their bright bayonets". They have for the most part been misunderstood in the North.They have been unable to present their case to the people of that section.News-papers and magazines have refused to publish anything showing a justification of the course of the South in 1861-5. In silence,conscious of the rectitude of their action,they have worked on,determined to do their duty to their reunited country. Studying the political history of their country and the causes of the war,after a lapse of more than 36 years they are more firmly convinced than ever of the righteousness of their cause; and this opinion is not inconsistent with a patriotic purpose to stand by the Constitution and the Union.Like Washington and his copatriots they fought to repel an invader of their soil and of their rights,-for freedom,not for slavery,after a vain endeavor for 40 years to secure peace and the Union by compromise.

Permit me to call attention to one mistake in your article,as to the numbers ~~of~~ of the respective armies of Lee and Grant in April,1865.

Col:W.H.Taylor,Adjutant General

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on Gen:Lee's staff,shows that on the 31st March 1865,Gen: Lee had but 33000 muskets with which to defend our 30 miles in front of Grant;that at Five Forks subsequently,the divisions of Pickett and of Bushrod Johnson were well nigh annihilated,the loss being about 7000 men;that in encounters at other points on the 31st March,1st April and in the general assault by Grant on the lines made the 2nd April,the loss was heavy,perhaps 6000.So that when Gen: Lee withdrew his army during the night of the 2nd April,he had not over 20000 muskets available.The cavalry had also suffered heavily,and of all arms not over 25000 began the retreat that terminated at Appomattox C.H;that at the surrender on the 9th April,the returns from the various commands show an aggregate of 8000 muskets in line of battle.

"Four Years With Gen Lee".W.H.Taylor.

It seems that the Federals counted as surrendered at Appomattox,those taken at Five Forks and the stragglers forced to forage by extreme hunger,taken during the retreat and who came in after the surrender,to make up the 28000, more than Lee started with from Petersburg!

Col:Taylor's ~~xx~~ book is deemed most conservative and is dedicated to the 8000 men who surrendered at Appomattox C.H.

Now a few rambling reminiscences of the course of the returned Confederates after all hope was gone of the establishment of the Government for which they had fought so strenuously for four years.

To a correct understanding it is necessary to pre~~xx~~sent a partial picture of the region in which the writer

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livedprior to the bursting of the cloud of war which soon devastated the whole South;and this description is typical of the general situation elsewhere.

The writer lived at that time in Fauquier Co: on the Rappahannock River,near where the railroed from the North crosses that river,this railroad was the called the Orange and Alexandri a railroad.Across the river was Culpeper County,beyond that County and the Rapidan River,was Orange County,North-west of Fauquier Co:was Loudon Co:. All of these Counties were beautiful, fertile and in a fine atate of cultivation,especially Culpeper Fauquier and Loudon,They were inhabited by happy and prosperous people.The whole country "blossomed as the rose";fine crops of the cereals dotted the land every year,cattle,horses sheep and hogs abounded.It is not possible for one who did not witness it,to conceive of the happiness which pervaded that section;the slaves were also happy songful and gay.Nothing marred the peace and quiet until in Oct:1859,John Brown made his raid into Virginia at Harpers Ferry,prepared to instigate the contented slaves to servile insurrection,at which time the first to fall by his gang .was a negro shot because he ran from them.Then was aroused a fearful spirit of indignation at this base attempt upon their peace and at the laudation accorded him in the North;and th us,was thought,began the war which two years later called forth the whole strength of the South to repel other armed invasionsfrom the same source. How that war was fought,how the Confederate soldier for four years,in rags,barefooted,half fed,without pay,uncomplaining followed their leaders in the earnest desire to free themselves from the domination of the North,is known of the

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world,and the South is not ashamed of the record.

The writer,a small boy when the struggle began,looked on with the most intense interest and hope for success of the Southern cause.He wanted to go and fight too,and felt that he would unflinchingly obey any order of Lee or President Davis even to the facing instant death at the cannon's mouth.Later on in October,1864,he joined Col:John S Mosby's Battalion of Partisan Rangers.This battallion has frequently been erroneously called a band of guerrillas by the uninformed.It belonged to the Army of Northern Virginia and was under the command of Gen:R.E.Lee,to whom Col; Mosby made his reports through Gen:J.E.B.Stuart up to the time of the latter's death at Yellow Tavern,May,1864, Col:Mosby commencing with about nine men early in 1863,as a private,at the close of the war had eight companies "of the finest cavalry in either army"according to the inspector General.

It was some days after the surrender by Gen:Lee before Mosby's men had definite information of the fact up in Fauquier and Loudon."Mosby's Confederacy",Rumors of the surrender reached us,but were not believed until fully confirmed after some days.Then there was an armistice agreed upon by Col:Mosby and the General Commanding in the Valley. Gen Hancock,-for a few days pending negotiations ~~for~~ with reference to a surrender of the Battallion. Mosby decided not to surrender,but assembled his men at Salem Fauquier Co:on the 21st April,1865,and delivering them a farewell address he disbanded them,and taking a few men he proceeded further South and was subsequently paroled.

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The men thus disbanded felt almost heart-broken at this termination of their hopes.Sadly they wended their way in small parties to their homes.The writer returned to the neighborhood of his home,on the Rappahannock.His home hd been burned in 1862 by Popesarmy on its retreat from Culpeper while being flanked by Jackson.All the houses of a village at Rappahannock Station and four other residences in that immediate neighborhood,had also been burned by the same army.The writer's Grandfather's house where we were then staying,was saved at the time from the torch by Gen: Duffie of the Federal army commanding the rear guard and turning away those who came to burn by order, as they said. The whole country around in Culpeper and Fauquier wasutterly devastated and denuded of trees,fences,outhouse,vacant residences,and churches,and almost all living things had departed.Such a scene of desolation is now inconceivable save by those who saw it.Within a radius of four miles five churches had been destroyed by the Federals,pulled down to build their huts for the most part.A woolen factory in Orange,on the Rapidan belonging to minor children,of whom the writer was one,was also burned;There seemed nothing from which to make a start again in life,but land and there were no implements with which to work it or capital with which to restock it.For some time the soldiers were dazed and knew not what to do.But they soon rallied and went to work with their cavalry horses,those who had them, in putting in a crop to supply the pressing needs of the immediate future.The Country was all open and the first crop gathered was a crop of hay which grew luxuriantly every where.With the proceeds of this crop many gained a lit-

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tle money with which to buy much needed things whereby they might continue work.Partridges,undisturbed by the hunter for four years had increased largely and huntsmen made money by killing them in season and selling in the Cities at 25 cents a piece.Some of the soldiers continued at farming some obtained clerkships in stores &C.The writer first acted as agent at the railroad station at Rappahannock then as clerk in a dry goods store at Culpeper C.H.then express agent,then went to Richmond College for four years,then taught school four years,then went to the University and studied law the practice of which he has followed since at Danville;The above account thuogh apparently egotistical is given as typical of the course pursued by the returned Confederate.There was no giving away to des air,although every thing was lost but courage and strenghh.The men who were unutterably distressed at the result of their struggle with no sympathy from those wh o had fought them,vilified as "rebels" and "traitors" with grim determination set to work to rebuild their waste places.

Respectfully.

F. F. Bruce

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