

Confederate Veteran

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RECREATION IN ARMY LIFE

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The man or woman who imagines that "Johnnie Reb" had a hard time from start to finish, that his sky was always obscured by clouds and his hours spent among the doldrums, is very much off his or her imagining.

Despite the stories by politicians of how we suffered the pangs of hunger, etc., etc., every veteran who actually soldiered can recall many blue spots on the sky of his memory; many days and nights when pleasure led the march and love burnished life with gold. One fortunate thing for us was that we had our games. Marbles, played with all the zest and avidity of school-boy days; cards, running the gamut through smut, loo, euchre, three-card monte, poker, cribbage and whist; checks, and the royal game of chess. Then, we had men with voices—voices of intriguing tenor of loftiest tone; bass, deep with pathos, sweet with harmony; and thrilling baritone rich with melody. Almost indescribable was the power of those voices to please and enthrall the soul when assembled and mingled. It was not exactly grand opera, nor, thank the Lord, was it either "ragtime" or "jazz." The songs were the old familiars, the rich melodies of the Southland, mingled with the popular Scotch and Irish ballads. The very woods would ring with "Swanee River," "Annie Laurie," "Massa's in de Cole, Cole Ground," "Lorena," "Mary of Argyle," "Kathleen Mavourneen," etc., etc. Our "Truthful James" used to declare that when one of these concerts was running at full speed the song birds of the forest would come and perch overhead and take notes.

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