

ROMANTIC

EXPERIENCES

OF YOUNG MEN

Neither the school of romanticism or that of realism, in either past or present day fiction, contains any more remarkable or exciting story of "adventure with a happy ending" than that which one can hear from the lips of John Mautte, of 33 Douglas street, Hamden, who without doubt is the youngest veteran of the Civil War. If perchance any one is living who took part in the Rebellion at a more tender age, it is believed that Mr. Mautte, who enlisted at 14, certainly is the youngest man to have served through the entire struggle. Unlike the fiction story tellers Mr. Mautte always gives the "happy ending" of his unusual life history at the beginning of a conversation. He says:

"When I mustered out of the service in December, 1865, I was 19 years of age and before my next birthday had married Miss Lizzie Ginter, of Hamden, who was then a maid of 16. We have had 12 children, 11 of whom are living. I have been chief engineer in Winchester hall at the Sheffield Scientific school 19 years and have lived in my present home 45 years."

"You don't make many changes when you set out on a certain thing," observed the reporter.

"No, I always stick to what I have in hand," he said, "you know a rolling stone never has and never will gather moss. When I went into the war I set out to see the rebels whipped, and I stuck to it until Lee surrendered. It's been the same ever since. Whatever I start I stick to."

The veteran campaigner, now but 64 years of age, took part in the battles of Newburg, North Carolina, Cedar Mountain, Antietam, the first and second engagements at Suffolk, the charge on Fredericksburg, the battle of Petersburg and those at Fredericksburg and Drury's Bluff. He was captured with 21 others of the company in this latter engagement on May 16,

1864, and but four of them came back alive from the Confederate prisons. He was two weeks in the infamous Libbey prison, six months in Andersonville, and then went to Florence prison from which he was released February 28, 1865.

HORRORS UNSPEAKABLE.

Of prison life he says:

"You couldn't print the horrors of life at Libbey or Andersonville for they are unspeakable history, something which no books can record and of which a man cannot talk in public."

When Mr. Mautte was in Andersonville the northern soldiers hung six of their comrades there for the murder of other prisoners and enacted one of the most dramatic and spectacular incidents of the entire war. Twice he gave himself up for lost because he was on the point of starvation.

Such were some of his experiences but, to begin the story aright, one must go back to the Fatherland. Mr. Mautte's grandfather was a Frenchman who emigrated into Germany and married a German by whom he had one daughter and one son, Andrew. His son was by profession a soldier, and in the revolution of 1848 was a colonel in command of a rebel regiment. This rebellion was suppressed and Colonel Andrew Mautte, like all the other officers above the rank of captain in the rebel army, was ordered to leave the country inside of 48 hours. He could not make arrangements to take his wife and baby, so Colonel Mautte took passage for America alone and joined the regular army of the United States expecting later to send for his wife and son, who was then but a year old. The father was, however, ordered to the frontier for Indian warfare and was killed with a comrade while reconnoitring. So little John Mautte and his widowed mother had lived in Dueewangen for 10 years when the mother married Jacob Ringwald with whom she and the boy came to New Haven in the spring of 1859. John

was then 12 years old, having been born in Dueewangen, County of Beltingen, in the Kingdom of Wittenburg, the 18th of September, 1847.

THE FAMILY ENLISTS.

When war broke out the family had been in New Haven two years. Jacob Ringwald, the husband, enlisted in the Sixth Connecticut, and John, his mother's right hand man after the departure of the father, was selling newspapers in partnership with Gus Traeger. The two lads made their stand at the old railroad station, on the sight of the present new Merchants' National bank. Here the entrainment and departure of troops stirred the blood of the newsboy, John, whose father had died in the regular army service. When Sumpter was fired on the newsboys caught the fever of patriotism with which the business center of the city was teeming. When the federal army was routed at Bull Run the last straw was added and John, of large stature for a lad of 14, succeeded in enlisting at the recruiting barracks on the central green. His mother saw John's name among the enlisted men and securing an attorney proved his age and the army officers discharged him.

One day an officer in the German company of volunteers being recruited in Hartford, was standing in the railway station when John heard him say in German: "We need a drummer boy." The little newspaper merchant stepped forward and said in just as good German: "I'm your boy." The lad had no money to get to Hartford so he gave his papers to a comrade and set out on foot for the city up state. After walking all the way he reached the Hartford recruiting office and enlisted as a regimental guide, instead of a drummer.

News of John's enlistment reached his mother, of course, and she sent John Liefeld of this city up to Hartford to bring back her boy. Liefeld was a young man himself and when he reached Hartford the military fever got into his veins. Instead of his

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MR. JOHN MAUTTE

persuading the lad to home. John persuaded