AMENITIES OF THE CAMP IN 1864

This photograph, taken at Brandy Station, Virginia, is an excellent example of the skill of the war photographers. When we remember that orthochromatic plates were undreamed of in the days of the Civil War, the color values of this picture are marvelous. The collodion wet-plate has caught the sheen and texture of the silk dresses worn by the officers' wives, whom we see on a visit to a permanent camp. The entrance to the tent is a fine example of the rustic work with which the Engineer Corps of the various armies amused themselves during periods which would otherwise be spent in tedious inactivity. The officers' quarters received first attention. Thus an atmosphere of indescribable charm was thrown about the permanent camps to which the wives of the officers came in their brief visits to the front, and from which they reluctantly returned without seeing anything of the gruesome side of war. A review or a parade was usually held for their entertainment. In the weary waiting before Petersburg during the siege, the successful consummation of which practically closed the war, the New York engineers, while not engaged in strengthening the Federal fortifications, amused themselves by constructing a number of rustic buildings of great beauty. One of these was the signal tower toward the left of the Federal line of investment. Near it a substantial and artistic hospital building was erected, and, to take the place of a demolished church, a new and better rustic structure sprang into being.