In 1861 there arrived the first great opportunity to study warfare in the field since the campaigns of Napoleon, and these young men of royal blood expected at no distant day to be the leaders of a war of their own to recover the lost Bourbon throne of France. The three distinguished guests of the Army of the Potomac seated at the farther end of the camp dinner-table are, from right to left, the Prince de Joinville, son of King Louis Phillippe, and his two nephews, the Count de Paris and the Due de Chartres, sons of the Due d’Orleans. They came to Washington in September, 1861, eager to take some part in the great conflict for the sake of the experience it would give them. President Lincoln welcomed them, bestowed upon each the honorary rank of Captain, and assigned them to the staff of General McClellan. Officially merely guests at headquarters, they acted as aides-de-camp to McClellan, bearing despatches and the like, frequently under fire. They distinguished themselves at the battle of Gaines’ Mill. The Prince de Joinville made a painting of that engagement which became widely published.

In the lower picture the Count de Paris and the Due de Chartres are trying their skill at dominoes after dinner. Captain Leclerc, on the left, and Captain Mohain, on the right, are of their party. A Union officer has taken the place of the Prince de Joinville. It was to perfect their skill in a greater and grimmer game that these young men came to America. At Yorktown they could see the rehabilitated fortifications of Cornwallis, which men of their own blood had helped to seize, now amplified by the latest methods of defensive warfare. Exposed to the fire of the Napoleon field pieces imported by the Confederacy, they could compare their effectiveness with that of the huge rifled Dahlgrens, the invention of an American admiral. General McClellan testified that ever in the thick of things they performed their duties to his entire satisfaction. At the close of the Peninsula Campaign the royal party returned to France, but watched the war with great interest to its close.