mean id mit all your might. It vould pe much petter for you to pount de tamt het off a Seegond Lieudenand, ven you mean effery vort, dan to agesidendally slap a Colonel's face. And dot so?"

"Be me sowl, Oi expict it is," answered Quin. "Well, what's done can't be undone, syven by the Pope himsilf. Since Oi've got to be punished, anyway, Oi'm almost sorry Oi didn't give the ould tyrant a divil av a weltin' whoilst Oi was at it. Oi owed him a larrupin' for the way he's trated us, an' now Oi may nivver hev another opporchunity to pay me debt. Oi moight ez well be hung for an ould shape ez a lamb, an' Oi ought to 've taken satisfaction out av him for all av us, so Oi ought. Well, b'ys, Oi suppose you've come for me."

"Yes, Quin," answered Bert; "the Colonel sent us for you."

"All raight, Oi'll go along wid ye. Dutchy, look out for me things. If Oi'm to be shot, divide thim among the rest of the b'ys, wid me blessin."

We found the Colonel in full uniform seated with some other officers on the bow of the boat. Job, guarded by two men, was standing in front of him.

"Private Cartwright," said the Colonel to Job, "ever since you have been in the regiment you have been a disturber. Your turbulence and insubordination have been very prejudicial to its discipline. You have been refractory and stiff-necked under necessary regulations; you have questioned and condemned the orders of your officers, and you have been a brawler among your comrades. This is at least the sixth fight that I have known of your being engaged in since we have been on this boat. What have you to say in your defense?"

"Just this, Colonel," answered Job, with perfect calmness; "I didn't cease to be a free-born American citizen when I enlisted. I kept the right to my opinions, and to express 'em. It don't foller that because I'm fighting for my country I'm to be a dummy, and let everybody that wants to run over me."

"When you enlisted," answered the Colonel, "you surrendered many of the privileges of citizenship, and became subject to the will of the officers placed over you. It is your duty to obey their orders instantly, cheerfully, and without question or comment. They know much better than you do what is necessary to be done, and what is best for you and the service. You are not to think for yourself; it is their duty to think for you."

"That's all very fine for Regular soldiers," said Job with curling lip; "but I'm not a Regular, and so long's God continues the reason he has given me, I'll not be. I'll never surrender my birthright of free thought, free speech and free action. I didn't come into the army to be made a machine, and I won't be. I came here to fight for my country, with all the strength and brains I've had given me. I'm here for just exactly the same purpose that you are. You are appointed to lead and direct me, —that's all. You're supposed to know more about this business than I and the rest do, because the Government's educated you in it, and me and other citizens have paid for that education, and given you a salary. We're both servants of the people of the United States. If I don't think you're doin' your part right I've got the right of every free-born American citizen to say so, and I'm goin' to say so, as long's I have breath in my body. It's your duty to see that I do my duty properly, and it's mine to see that you do yours. When you find that I'm doin' something wrong, shirking or sneaking, you've got the right to punish me, and you should do it. When I believe your course aint for the best I'm going to say so, and no power on earth can stop me. As for my fightin' with others, I can say with truth that I've very rarely struck the first blow."

I could see the color rise in the Colonel's face, but he spoke as evenly and calmly as ever.

"You are not here to make Fourth-of-July speeches. The army is no place for them. It is not a town meeting or a country debating society. It is a place where the officers order, without having to give reasons for their orders, and the men obey—implicitly and without question. They have no business to criticize or discuss orders; their part is to do what they are ordered, and leave the responsibility for results upon those intrusted with command. I have borne a great deal of your insubordination, but I shall bear no more. Now, I ask you for the last time if you will turn over a new leaf, and perform a soldier's duty as a soldier should?"

"And I answer you," said Job, with a firm voice, "that I'm goin' to do my duty in the way that I believe I should do it, accordin' to my own conscience. I'm goin' to obey your orders when I think they're right, and I'm not goin' to obey 'em when I think they're wrong. I'm goin' to give my opinions of 'em at all times. No man livin' shall bind my tongue or trammel my conscience. I'd rather die where I stand."

"I shall waste no more time in discussion with you," said the Colonel severely. "Your obduracy is inveterate. I shall see if a court-martial cannot treat it more effectively. You will remain under guard until you can be brought before one. In the meantime you will turn in your arms and equipments to your Captain, and be employed by the Quartermaster at hard labor unloading this boat when we get to Washington, and in doing whatever else he can find for you afterward, until you can be tried."

"Now, Private Bohannon, I shall attend to your case. You have been guilty of one of the worst offenses known to military law—that of striking your superior officer, and that, too, while engaged in suppressing a disturbance. The 9th Article of War punishes with death any officer or soldier who shall, under any pretext whatever, strike or offer violence to his superior officer. This is declared to be very much worse when the violence is offered an officer discharging his duty in suppressing an affray. What have you to say?"

"Well, Colonel, it wuz only a wee tap Oi gev ye. Oi hope ye won't be harrd on me for a trifling thing loike that."

"The Articles of War punish with death anyone who so much as offers violence to his superior officer."

"O, Quame av Heaven, thin Oi'm gone intoirely. But, Colonel, ye must remimber that Oi didn't know it wuz you. Ye know ye didn't hev on your cocked hat and shoulder-straps, and widont thim ye lookt jist loike wan av taim durrity admahouns av the Fourtayuth, who are picking on our b'ys all the whoile. Widout your uniform you're ez loike wan av thim spalpanes ez wan pay is loike another."

"Thanks for the compliment to my personal appearance," said the Colonel dryly. "But it does not alter the case to say that you did not recognize me because I was not wearing the insignia of my office. You should be so well acquainted with your officers as to know them instantly, however dressed. What makes the matter worse is that your blow was struck against an officer while engaged in the high duty of quelling an affray. Even a superior who strikes an inferior so engaged is punished with the utmost severity."

"Sailpater won't save me," said Quin resignedly, turning to me. "Tracy, me b'y, here's me watch and pocketbook. Kape thim for yourself. You'll foind some things in me knapsack which you can give the other b'ys who want kapesakes av me. Say if you can foind a praste somewhere!"

"Private Bohannon," said the Colonel, "you will also remain under guard, and at hard work, until a court-martial can be convened to try you."

The offenders were dismissed with a wave of the Colonel's hand. The next day we marched off the steamer at Washington, and through the dusty, dirty, thronged streets to the commanding hights above the city, leaving Job and Quin toiling under guard to transfer our baggage and stores from the vessel to the wagons which were to follow us.

In a few days they came up to where we had established the camp, sullen almost to desperation, and I dreaded lest something goad them into some act which would prove their ruin. The Quartermaster, however, treated them as kindly as was possible under his orders. Ezra Grimsted was encouraging and consolatory, and Lan, Herman and I were with them as much as our duties and theirs would permit. Except the fact that they were in disgrace and under guard, their condition was no harder than ours, for we worked like slaves strengthening the forts near us, in anticipation of an attack by the victorious rebel army.

One day the news thrilled us that the rebels had turned off to the westward, crossed the Potomac 30 or 40 miles up the river, and were swarming into Maryland to "redeem the State" and invade the North. We were to march at once to head them off and drive them back into Virginia.

Early next morning saw the whole army in motion, filing every road leading northward and northwestward with endless columns of armed men. Knapsacks, overcoats, etc., were ordered left behind, that we might march with the utmost rapidity.

The interest and excitement of the march were not so great as to keep us from pleasantly comparing the lovely country through which we were passing with the dreary swamp-land in which most of our campaigning had so far been done. The firm, solid roads, the clear streams, rich cornfields and comfortable houses of Maryland were a delightful change from the dreary morasses of North Carolina. The dust and the heat were very trying in the daytime, but the camps at nightfall on the springy turf of meadows beside purling brooks, with a bracing coolness in the September air, were very pleasant.

We were heading for Frederick, where it was reported the rebel army was in force, ready to give us battle for possession of the State. At every hilltop we expected that we would see their outlying forces in battle array, but not until we got to Newmarket, a little town six miles from Frederick, on the afternoon of the 11th, did we see any number of the enemy. Even then it was only a small body, stationed in observation, and which retreated very promptly after receiving a scattering fire from our skirmishers. We moved forward a short distance, and went into camp in line-of-battle, in readiness for a night attack, or to move forward in the morning and engage the rebels, should they be found in position and mood for battle. The day had been fatiguing as well as exciting, and as soon as we had supper Lan, Herman and I spread our blankets on the sod, with our feet to the fire, and were soon fast asleep. It must have been near midnight when I was awakened by a determined shaking of my shoulder.

"Is this you, Tracy?" asked a voice, which I recognized as Job's.

"Yes," I answered, sleepily, but wakening as I comprehended who it was.

"Where are Lan and Herman?" asked Job.

"Lying right here beside me. How in the world did you get here, Job?"

"S-s-sh. Don't speak so loud. Move along a little, so's we can lay down alongside o' you. Quin's with me. We was determined to go into this fight with you boys, if it cost us our necks. We couldn't think of you being in battle without us. Besides, we felt sure that this is going to be the last battle o' the war, and we wouldn't miss it on that account for anything. We've been at the Quartermaster for hours, beggin' and coaxin' him to let us go. We promised him everything, on our sacred word of honor; pledged him that as soon as the fight was over we'd report right back to him if we come through all right. If we're killed, it won't make much difference to him or anyone else, except ourselves. The Colonel 'd be mighty glad to get rid of us that way. We want you to go to Ezra Grimsted first thing in the morning and tell him we're here and what we've done. Ask him to be kind enough to take no trouble to see us. We'll keep in the rear rank, and out o' sight as much as possible, so's there'll be no actual need o' his knowin' that we're present for duty."

"An' bedad, Oi think that ould Bark-and-Blow, bad-loock to him," said Quin, "will hev all that he can attind to lucking out for the rijimint, widout payin' no attintion to us. It's the first toime he's ever taken it into a battle, and he'll be so badly rattled that he'll not know whether he's afoot or horseback—whether he's tin min wid him, or tin thousand. The curse av the bogies on the ould scarecrow."

It seemed to me that I had scarcely gotten asleep again when I was awakened with the rest by Bert Connors, and ordered to fall into line with my gun and equipments, to be prepared for any surprise that the rebels might attempt. So sleepy and tired that the thought of so much as opening an eye-lid seemed torture, we leaned wearily on our rifles, and waited for the day to break or the rebels to come. Our precaution was unnecessary. No sounds broke the stillness in front but the crowing of cocks and the strident notes of the field-crickets. The slowly-increasing light of a glorious September morn developt the portentous masses of blackness before us into nothing more dangerous than a line of graceful willows bordering a creek and haystacks and wheat-ricks on the crest beyond. Then I sought Ezra Grimsted, and told him of the presence of Job and Quin.

"I'll not see them if I can help myself. Tell them not to make themselves any more conspicuous than is absolutely necessary," he answered, and ordered the company to break ranks, get breakfast, and roll blankets, preparatory for the day's work.

We were sure that a fight was only a question of a few hours. Already sharp rattling of shots came from the distant right and left, where the cavalry was engaging scouting parties of the enemy. Regiments and brigades in dirty brown could be seen forming on distant eminences, and the cannon began booming far away, as we moved forward, with every man in his place, and every heart beat high with anticipation.

"They are falling back behind the Monocacy," said Ezra Grimsted, as the battle-lines we saw in front dissolved and disappeared behind the hills. "The Colonel says they will probably resist our passage of that river, which is a little over two miles away."

I looked at Col. Satterlee. I had noticed him once before, while we were rolling our blankets. Then he was seated on a pile of rails, being carefully shaved by Biles, his colored servant. I saw that he wore a starched shirt of dazzling whiteness, his cravat was neatly tied, and his collar fresh and firm.

"We're jest sho' to have a big fight ter-day, boys," said Biles, as he stopped a moment in passing us. "De Kunnel's fixin up so. He's allus very 'tickler 'bout hisself, but he gets mous'sously 'tickler when he t'inks he's gwine inter a fight, an' I never knowed him ter be so 'tickler 'bout dressin' as he is dis bressed mornin'."

As I saw him now, he was seated rigidly erect on his superb horse, gauntleted, with every detail of his uniform in perfect order, riding some distance in front of the regiment, with his eyes fixed on the enemy. Much reason as I felt I had for disliking him, I was compelled to admit to myself that I had never seen a man in appearance more of the ideal soldier and commander.

"We'll soon see how he acts under fire," said Lan, to whom I had expressed something of this. "That's the test. Handsome is as handsome does."

The haze-crowned summits of the Catoctin Mountains, looming up toward the blazing sky, drew nearer at every step.

"It may be that they'll fall back to them, and give us battle there," said Ezra Grimsted, pointing to the blue summits. "It'd be more like the reptiles, to avoid meeting us in the open field, and make a stand among the dens of their fellow-reptiles, the rattlesnakes and copperheads."

"We'll overcome them wherever the devil prompts them to fight," said Lan solemnly. "The God of Battles will deliver them into our hands though mountains be their bulwarks and eternal rocks their shields."

We were now moving through a gently-sloping meadow that bordered the Monocacy River, with the Colonel riding fully 150 yards ahead, accompanied only by his bugler. Suddenly puffs of smoke shot out of a fringe of brush on the opposite side of the bank, and there was a rattle of shots, bullets sang over our heads, and the Colonel's horse, stung by a bullet in his flank, reared up, but was brought back by the rider's firm grasp on the reins.

"Jehovah, there they are, sure enough," exclaimed Ezra Grimsted.

The Colonel turned as deliberately in his saddle as if we had been on drill, and his voice rang out in firm, clear, measured enunciation of every syllable of the command:

"Attention, battalion! Forward, quick time! Guide right—March!"

We swept forward until we were in line a little distance in advance of him, when he commanded:

"Halt! Right dress! Front! Load at will—Load!"

Was ever anything so deliberate? The rebels were firing rapidly, and the motionless Colonel was as fine a target as they could wish. His horse was standing as rigid as if carved out of stone.

There was a pause, it seemed to me an awful long one, after every ramrod was sent back into its sheath, and the snapping locks told that we had capped.

The Colonel looked deliberately down the line.

"You men in Co. C bring your pieces to a shoulder," he called out. Then,

"Ready!"

All the guns fell like a straight, gleaming wave.

"Fire!" rang out from the Colonel's lips.

The 900 rifles crashed as one piece. The fringe of brush seemed to wither under the awful blast. From it rose shrieks and yells from the rebels who had been stricken down. The unhurt ones were seen rushing away in a panic. We reloaded as quickly as possible and sent dropping shots after them.

"Cease firing," commanded the Colonel.

Stillness followed, broken only by the shrieks of the wounded on the opposite bank.

Our musicians, carrying stretchers, came up and carried back five or six of our own men who had fallen under the rebel fire.

"Battalion! right dress! Front! Right face! Forward, file left!—March!" commanded the Colonel. He led us on to the road, across the bridge, and after the retreating rebels as undemonstratively as if the recent event had been a mere drill exercise. He did not even seem to look at the frazzled brush, which had been the lair of the rebels, but moved steadily onward in pursuit.

We saw no more of the enemy, but later in the day passed through the beautiful little city of Frederick, the loyal inhabitants of which were in a ferment of enthusiasm over our appearance, and welcomed us with waving banners, decorated houses, and glad cheers. Only when a flag was shaken out of a window, or he passed under one stretched across the street, did the Colonel seem to notice these demonstrations. Then he would gravely salute the banner as he rode steadily onward.

We halted a few miles outside of Frederick, and went into camp in a velvety meadow, under the long shadows cast by the sun sinking behind Catoctin Mountain.

"I find it necessary to make some change in my opinion of Col. Satterlee," said Job, filling his pipe, as we sat around the fire after supper for a few minutes' chat. "He's a good deal more of a man than I've given him credit for. I ain't in love with his ways, as a general thing, but I must admit that he put that volley into them rebels accordin' to Gunter."

"Mother av Heaven, wasn't it foine!" ejaculated Quin. "Did ye iver say anything so charming? Wan, two, three—wh-o-o! and the ribbels wuz knocked seventane ways for Sunday. Ivery gun wint off at the same wink av your oi. Saints preserve us, but it samed to me that that brush curled up and died whin that breath av hell struck it."

"It certainly was very effective," said Lan. "But it would have been very much better if it had been a minute or two sooner. I wish the Colonel hadn't been quite so deliberate. I think we lost at least one man that wouldn't have been lost if the Colonel hadn't waited to dress the line."

"I don't agree with you, Lan," said Job. "That's my idea of the real way to fight. Get right up to your man, see where he is, and then give it to him for all you're worth right where he lives. It was ever so much better than our way down in North Carolina, where we begun poppin' away as soon's we caught sight of the rebels, and then stood off at long range for hours and fired away, where not one shot in a hundred hit anything. Come up close, buckle right in, and bust or be busted in short meter, is my style, and in this the Colonel suits me better'n any man we've ever been with. I only hope he'll keep up the gait clear through the next battle."

"Vasn't he grant," put in Herman, "as he stoot oud dere all by himself, unt ortered us up to him, instead of goming pack to us? He bald no more addention to de reppel pullets dan if dey het been vlies. I forgifs him, den, for making me garry dat rail down by Lewinsville."

"That was because you had been payin' too much attention to rebel pullets, Herman," said Job; "you had been foragin' on a rebel henroost."

We all laughed at Job's pun, which had to be laboriously explained to Herman.

It was clear that Colonel Satterlee had risen greatly in general estimation since morning.

The fatigue and excitement of the day had made us too weary to discuss even the fateful probabilities of the morrow at any length, and we were soon rolled in our blankets and fast asleep.

The next morning we were wakened again long before daybreak, and repeated our dreary performance of standing in line in readiness for a "surprise," which the rebels did not attempt. The dark slopes of the Catoctin, which walled in the western horizon and towered to the clouds, proved to be as free of the enemy as the fields and slopes we had watched through the graying dawn of the previous morning.

But cannons boomed far off to the right and left, growing more frequent as the bright sun rose upon a cloudless sky, and from the far southwest came a continuous thunder.

"That's at Harper's Ferry," Ezra Grimsted explained. "The rebels have surrounded the place, and are trying to force it to surrender, but the garrison will hold out until we can defeat the rebels in our front, when we will go to its relief."

"Great Jehosephat!" exclaimed Job, "let's get at these whelps in front at once and finish them up and go to the help of the Harper's Ferry folks. Don't let's lose any time dawdlin' around here."

"The rebels have fallen back from the Catoctin," Ezra continued, "and have taken up a stronger position where the National road crosses South Mountain, six miles from here. There's where we'll strike them, and they'll make it ugly for us."

"They tried to do that in North Carolina," Job persisted, "and they had stronger positions than they can find here, but we got away with them in short order, and we can do it again, if we go at it with a whereas. There seems to be plenty of men here for any sort of a job the Johnnies may set up."

This seemed true, for the whole country near was blue with soldiers. Every road was filled with marching columns, and they were swinging over the open fields in great waves. Around us were the whole of two corps—the First and the Ninth—under the command of our beloved old leader of North Carolina—Gen. Burnside—and with him to lead we felt that nothing was impossible. Besides, Gen. McClellan was reported to be near, and that we were to go into battle under his immediate eye.

We soon took our place in the line of march, and became part of the great river of armed men which rolled up the slopes of the Catoctin and down into the beautiful valley, in the center of which was the pretty little village of Middletown. Beyond the rugged crests of South Mountain reached up to the very sky and frowned down upon us. Huge bowlders stood out like mediæval castles, and beetling, unscalable cliffs jutted directly in our faces. The glint of the bright sun on thousands of musket-barrels moving across the occasional open spaces, with the puffs of smoke and echoing booms from the crests, showed us where the rebels were massing to receive us.

"There's our work cut out for us," said Job, indicating the mountain-side with a wave of his left hand. "If the rebels ever mean to fight—and they most always do, blast 'em—they've struck the strongest place in this whole neck o' woods. There'll be a he-old scuffle before we get to the top o' that mountain, but we're goin' there as sure as the sun's goin' down behind it."

"With God's help we shall," said Lan. "This is Sunday—God's own day—the best of all days to do his appointed work. I believe He is smiling on us just as firmly as I believe that His bright sun is shining down on us out of a cloudless sky."

Col. Satterlee rode slowly down the line, scrutinizing one by one every man in it. His eye fell upon Job and Quin, and his stern set face grew wrathful.

"What are you two men doing here?" he asked. "Who released you from confinement, and returned you to duty?"

"Nobody did," Job answered boldly. "We escaped from the guard, and made our way to our company to go into battle with it."

"You have no right to be with it. You have no right to associate with honorable soldiers, while you are under charges and awaiting trial. Lieut. Grimsted, I am surprised that you have countenanced this breach of discipline. Were we not on the eve of battle I should put you under arrest for it. Order a Corporal and guard to take these men back at once to the Provost-Marshal."

"Hold on, Colonel," cried Job, in a tone of entreaty; "I've never asked a favor of you yet, and I'll promise you solemnly I'll never ask another of you. Don't send us back; let us go into this battle. It may be the last one of the war. We ought to be allowed the privilege o' goin' in on that account. It's goin' to be a severe one. You'll need every gun you can muster. Maybe our two may turn the tide at some critical moment. Nobody can tell. Let us go in on that account. If you do we'll promise on our sacred words o' honor that as soon as the fight's over we'll report back to the guard, without an 'if' or an 'and,' and stand our trial like men, without a whimper."

"The thing is wholly irregular, and contrary to regulations," said the Colonel, with a softening face. "But I will do it on two conditions: that you pledge me that you'll report back to your guard after battle, without further action on my part, and that you'll not attempt to make your going into battle now an offset to your previous misconduct—not urge it as a bar to your trial."

"We'll promise you that," said Job.

"Mighty gladly," echoed Quin.

"Very well; your arrest is suspended till after the coming engagement," said the Colonel, in his usual curt, cold manner, and rode on down the line.

The endless billows of war, of which we were part, rolled on through Middletown and up to the base of South Mountain. We had left the great National road, along which we had been moving, at the bridge across Catoctin Creek, which the rebels had burned; had forded the shallow stream and gone off to the left, along the "old Sharpsburg road." We halted at last, and came to "place rest" in the lower edge of a long meadow that sloped gently upward to the woods.

Momentarily the prelude to the awful storm of battle became more intense and angry. Since early morning Pleasonton's cavalrymen had been keeping up a bickering fire in the woods and on the hilltops northward of the pike, and regiment after regiment of infantry and batteries of artillery had gone to their assistance. Later Cox's Kanawha Division had disappeared in the woods to the left, and crashes of musketry, the deeper bass of the artillery, and cheers and yells floating down to us told that fierce battle was being waged there, with varying fortunes. A constantly-growing procession of wounded men drifted back down the mountain-side. They were all hopeful, though some were frightfully mangled.

"We're driving the whelps! They're on the run! Hurrah for the Union!" they would shout as they were carried by us.

Regiments and brigades, marching in quick time—frequently at double-quick—were hastening hither and yon to give aid where it was needed or take a threatening position. Rebel cannon thundered out shot and shell from unexpected parts of the mountain-side to disorganize, disperse or delay them. Our own batteries, coming down the pike in a whirl of dust, dashed across fields and through quickly-dismantled fences to eminences whence they could reach the enemy's guns with their rifled bolts. Six-mule wagons laden with ammunition were urged with whips and profane shouts up the steep, tortuous roads to where their precious freight could conveniently replenish the emptied cartridge-boxes of the fighting regiments.

All this time there was flowing over the crest of the Catoctin, behind us, an incessant stream of men—Generals, with their flaunting headquarter flags and dashing staffs, regiments marching in solid, well-closed ranks, bands of music playing patriotic airs, batteries manuvering to the signals of silver-voiced bugles, and all the might and majesty of war.

It was as if the country was flowing with Potomacs of armed men instead of water, and this beautiful valley the sea which received them all.

For awhile I had been deprest with dread of the awful ordeal upon which we must soon enter. Now this was succeeded by a fierce eagerness to get at the enemy and hurt him terribly. The marshaling of the rebel regiments seemed to me an insulting parade; I longed to help pour a volley into those odious ranks. The batteries had annoyed and frightened us for hours, their shots had repeatedly come near sweeping away whole platoons of our regiment. I was burning to rush on them and bayonet their gunners by the side of their hateful, death-dealing cannon.

I looked at Job. He was chafing visibly at our idleness in the midst of so much motion and excitement.

"Great Buny Visty," he would say; "why are we kept dawdling here? There is certainly somewhere that 900 of us strong, willing men can be made useful. We ain't earnin' our salt standin' here lookin' on. Let 'em set us at somethin', if it's only carryin' ammunition to the fellers that are fightin'!"

Lan said nothing, but sat quietly on the ground reading his Testament, when not watching the manuvers or developments around us.

Quin had produced a pack of cards from his pocket, and was playing an endless game of solitaire with himself on the back of his knapsack.

Herman and I were too much excited by the grand scene around us to do anything but lean on our muskets and watch. Every moment brought some new feature of intense interest into the wonderful panorama.

The sun stood directly over our heads. It was noon. The Colonel ordered the regiment to break ranks, build fires with the rails from a neighboring fence, cook coffee and eat dinner.

"Eat hearty, men," said he. "You will need it. We will have plenty of work between now and sundown."

I could not eat. I was so absorbed in the scene that was going on within view, but the appetites of the rest did not seem to be affected by their surroundings.

As they were finishing, an Aid dashed up to the Colonel.

"Colonel, the General presents his compliments, and begs leave to inform you that the enemy are posted behind that stone wall," said he, indicating a wall at the upper end of the field. "They will take our column in flank when we advance. He requests that you move your regiment forward at once and carry the wall."

"Very well," answered the Colonel, returning the officer's salute. "Give my regards to the General, and say to him that it shall be done immediately."

Then, in a clear, sonorous voice, that was echoed back by the cliffs above:

"Attention, battalion! Unsling knapsacks! Captain of Co. B will detail two men to guard knapsacks. Shoulder *arms!* Right *dress!* Order *arms!* Load at will! Fix bayonets! Shoulder *arms!* Right shoulder, shift arms! Now, men, pay strict attention to orders. No man must fire until he gets the order, and must stop firing at the order. Forward! Guide center! Quick time!—MARCH!"

We swept forward over the yielding sod in perfect alignment.

We had not seen a sign of the rebels behind the wall before we started.

Suddenly its top developt what seemed an extraordinary growth of large, odd-shaped, queer-colored toadstools. These were the weather-beaten slouch-hats of the men crouching behind it. Protruding from beneath the hats was a level row of glistening gun-barrels, but not a shot came from them. They were waiting to deliver their fire in our faces. The thought was appalling. Above the briers and brush behind the wall flashed the swords of the officers in command of the rebels.

We were half-way up the slope, and still not a shot came from the foe.

The suspense was terrible. Would not the volley, when it came, simply annihilate us?

"Hell's fires!" muttered Job. "Them fellers mean murder."

In another minute we were within 100 yards of the wall, and the long line of barrels blazed at once with an awful burst of flame that seemed to blind us. Men dropt to the right and left, the colors went down, with their bearers and the entire guard killed or wounded. The flags were immediately snatched up by other hands and waved in the face of the enemy. I felt a sting along my left side and saw Lan stagger and place his hand to his temple, from which the blood was streaming. He recovered himself at once and moved on erect. Herman, Job and Quin seemed unhurt.

"Battalion *halt!*" shouted the Colonel. "Right dress! *Ready,* AIM, FIRE!"

As I pulled the trigger I saw through the smoke the toadstool hats fly off, showing that our shots were well aimed, and a savage joy filled my heart. At the same instant our volley was delivered another blinding one came from the second rank of the rebels.

Herman sank down with a bullet through his thigh. The colors dropt a second time, and were again seized by other hands and held up. Ezra Grimsted received a bullet through his brain, and fell backward on the sod with his sword still firmly grasped. A hasty glance down the line, as I reloaded with nervous hands, showed me our once-compact ranks shattered and gaping. The Major and Adjutant's riderless horses were galloping to the rear, neighing with terror.

As I capt my gun, a rebel officer leapt on the wall, waved his sword and shouted:

"Now, boys, up and at ——"

Before he could finish the sentence my bullet struck him in the breast, and he fell backward.

"Battalion, *forward! Charge* BAYONETS!" shouted our Colonel. The words reached my ear along with the crash of a volley from the left, where a rebel regiment had hurried into line to enfilade us. I looked in that direction. Our colors still waved, but to the left of them the line was entirely gone; the men who had stood there were stretched on the ground. The Colonel was struggling to extricate himself from his fallen horse. Job and Quin ran to his assistance.

A rush of shells screamed over our heads from a battery which had dashed into position on a knoll to our right and rear, and landed squarely within the ranks of the regiment which had enfiladed us. Another battery to our left and rear also opened, with exact range. Small trees were cut down, branches flew into the air and the rebels fled back into the woods.

Our sinking hearts rose at the sight.

"Steady, men!" shouted the Colonel, rising to his feet and limping forward, supported by Quin. "Close up on the colors! Rally on the colors!"

A bank of smoke had settled down in the hot, still air between us and the rebels behind the stone wall, so that neither could see what the other was doing. They had kept up a sharp fire all the time, however, but had fortunately overshot us. We learned afterward that they were in confusion from the loss of so many officers. Still their fire was heavier than we could return from our reduced ranks. It was becoming momentarily more searching, and was telling fearfully upon us, standing out there on the smooth sward without a particle of protection. "My God, we must do something at once!" cried Job, in anguish, as he saw one after another drop around us. "We must either go ahead or go back. Colonel, give an order. Either send us into them with the bayonet or back to shelter."

"Silence, sir," commanded the Colonel, with his usual sternness. "Take your place in the ranks, sir, and do not presume to give directions to me. Battalion, cease firing. Right dress! Front! About face! Forward, right oblique—March!"

As we faced about and started diagonally across the field to the nearest place of shelter, I saw Herman's eyes look up appealingly. Job, Quin, Lan and I left the ranks to lift him up and carry him with us.

The Colonel, hobbling along behind, saw us, and shouted:

"Go back to your ranks, there. What do you mean by leaving your places? Go back at once."

"You'll haf to leaf me here, poys," said Herman, a resigned look filling his great blue eyes. "Go mit de retchiment, und ket oud of here if you gan. Gott safe you all."

We laid him down and ran back to our places.

We heard someone among the rebels behind the stone wall shout out:

"Hurrah! There the Yankees go, boys. Cease firing! Fix bayonets! Now over the wall and after them! Charge bayonets!"

"Attention, battalion," commanded our Colonel. "Load at will. Steady."

The loud, long, wolfish "Ki-yi-yi" of the rebels filled the air as they swarmed over the wall in fierce pursuit.

My heart beat tumultuously, but we did not quicken our pace from the calm, deliberate step of common time.

"Steady, men; steady," called out the Colonel. "Slower there on the left. The guide is right."

The yells were so near that I expected at the next to feel the thrust of a bayonet.

"Battalion"—commanded the Colonel, in as slow, even tones as if on parade, "Halt! About, face. Right dress. Front."

He passed through the ranks to the rear of the colors.

The fierce swarm of ki-yi-yi-ing rebels was swinging forward within 50 paces of us. The ki-yi-yi died away instantly as we faced about.

"Steady, men," repeated the Colonel. "Ready, aim. Aim at their waist-belts, men. FIRE!"

Heavens, how the whole scene changed as our rifles crashed out together. The green sod became a dirty brown, from the killed and wounded stretched upon it.

"Forward, charge bayonets!" shouted Col. Satterlee.

"Their colors! Their colors! Let's take their damned rag," yelled Job, and we four rushed forward to where their flag was defiantly floating. The rebels saw our aim, and clustered around to defend it.

Quin burst through the group between it and him, and drove his bayonet into the rebel Color-Sergeant's side. At the same instant a musket-barrel wielded by a stalwart rebel crashed on his head and sent him senseless to the sod. I lunged at the rebel, and my bayonet entered his shoulder. Job snatched the flag from the dead Sergeant's hand, flung it to me, and stept between me and a gigantic rebel who sprang forward to reclaim it. Job "shortened on the right" for a thrust at his enemy's stomach, and the rebel drew back his musket for an overhand blow with the barrel. The movements of both were like flashes of lightning. Job's was the quickest, and his bayonet sank into the rebel's body to the shank as the latter's blow, grazing Job's head, descended upon his shoulder with sufficient force to break the shoulder-blade. Lan had interposed himself before two men who had rushed up from my right, and had caught the blow from one of their gun-barrels on his own, but the other rebel had sent a bullet through his lungs, and the fight for the flag was over, with the coveted banner in my hands.

While this was going on the rest of the rebels were being driven back to the shelter of the wall, but men were constantly struck down on both sides. The fleetest-footed of the rebels had already gained its protection, and had begun firing back at us, as opportunity afforded to do so without danger of injury to their own friends.

"Forward to the wall!" shouted Col. Satterlee, limping after us. "Take the wall and hold it!"

A shot from the wall struck him above the sword-belt, and he fell to earth. Job, who had recovered sufficiently from the stun of his blow to follow the line, and I ran to help him with his unhurt arm.

"No, no, leave me alone," said he in his old imperative way. "Take your places in the ranks; I'm done for. Do not mind me. Tell Capt. Quigsley to take command of the regiment. He is the ranking officer now. Tell him to carry the wall at once, and dispose the men to hold it, for the rebels are sending reinforcements down the mountain-side. Make haste, sir."

I started off, but he recalled me.

"Also, tell Capt. Quigsley that it is my orders that the charges against Privates Cartwright and Bohannon be withdrawn, and that they be restored to duty."

I ran forward to find Capt. Quigsley. I found he had already assumed command, gained possession of the wall, and was directing the men to fire at the rebels flying through the woods.

Other regiments were marching up the slope to our assistance, and a brigade swinging in from the right had caught in flank the reinforcements the rebels were hurrying forward, and scattered them with a few volleys at close range.

At the sound of this I climbed up on the wall to peer into the woods and ascertain what it meant. I had scarcely straightened up when a Parthian shot fired by some sullenly-retreating rebel struck me on my left leg midway between the knee and foot, breaking, but fortunately not shattering, the small bone.

As twilight was falling I with the rest of the wounded were removed to the field hospital at Middletown, where our hurts were solaced by the reception of the news that we had forced the passage of the Gap, gained a glorious victory, captured many prisoners, cannon and colors, and driven the enemy in confusion toward the Potomac, whither they would be pursued in the morning and their destruction completed.

The other part of the army, under Gen. Franklin, had been equally successful at Crampton's Gap, six miles to the south, so that the day was a glorious one, and retrieved our disasters in front of Washington.

A few days later the Surgeons made a careful examination of our wounds, and pronounced their verdicts. It was conclusive against the Blue Jay Mess, individually and collectively, being of any further military use to the country. It was doubtful if Herman's life could be saved without amputating his leg. It would be a day or two before that could be determined. Lan would recover, but it was very unlikely if ever able to take the field again; my leg and Job's shoulder-blade would knit again, but only after a tedious while; the war would probably be over a long time before we were fit for active service. Quin's skull had miraculously escaped fracture, but he received a severe brain-concussion, from which his recovery was exceedingly dubious.

"In short, Major," said the Medical Director of the Division to the Surgeon in charge of our ward, after the two had finished a careful inspection of the inmates, "you have got a collection of seriously-injured men here, not one of whom is ever likely to be of further value to the Government as a soldier. The best thing to be done with them is to make out their discharges and send them home as fast as they are able to be removed thither without danger. They will recover much better at home than here, and the Government is already overburdened with the care of the immense numbers permanently disabled by wounds or disease. We must clear them out as rapidly as possible, to lighten the Government's expenses, and have our facilities to meet other demands made upon us. We confidently hope that the war will be ended before even the least hurt of these men are able to do duty again. Make out their discharges, then, as rapidly as their condition will admit, and I will countersign them promptly."

Job, Lan and I have already received parchments bearing the arms of the United States, which, after reciting our names, describing our personal appearance, and giving some facts of our personal history, states that we are hereby honorably discharged from the Army of the United States, by reason of disability from wounds received in battle. Quin's and Herman's await further developments in their cases.

You good people of Cohosh must be prepared to receive any day a consignment of badly-damaged humanity—what is left of some of those whom the war orators are fond of escribing as "your valiant and stalwart sons." We are your sons as much as ever, but we are not as valiant, and far from being as stalwart, as we once were. This is probably the last letter I shall write you. Soon after you receive it I hope to be once more in the arms of the dearest, sweetest mother in all this wide world. Again in my own loved home, with your companionship and nursing, and your cooking, I shall be nearly as good as new by the time the rest of the boys come marching triumphantly home, after their total destruction of the rebel armies. I shall try to bring Herman home with me, since, poor fellow, he has none of his own to go to. Job and Lan will do the same with Quin.

Your affectionate son, TRACY.

(The end.)

EX-PRISONERS OF WAR.

The View Taken by an Officer who was Confined 14 Months.

The following letter was written to Senator Hawley July 11. It explains itself:

LOUISVILLE, KY., July 11, 1890.

HON. JOSEPH R. HAWLEY, Washington, D. C.

MY DEAR SENATOR: You will recall me as a Member, 39th and 40th Congresses, from this State, and as having actively aided you in your State in your first fight and victory for Governor. In the Senate debates some time since, and also recently at a Fourth of July celebration, I have seen you quoted as hostile to the bill reported in the House to pension prisoners of war. A strong admirer and friend of yours, I have greatly regretted this. I was 14 months in Libby Prison, from March, 1863, to May, 1864. I have a personal experience, but my own was surpassed in misery in many respects by thousands. Could the Senators and Members only believe (they cannot realize) the stories of mental and physical agony told of those prison-pens of torture and death; picture only one-half the actual sufferings we endured, I am sure everyone of you would reflect upon yourselves every night before you retire, so long as you fail to pass this bill.

I am quite sure you cannot find a survivor of rebel prisons, who was in their hands after June, 1863, who will not tell you he would have gladly charged the enemy in the field every day of the year, and taken his chances for life, in preference to remaining a day as the situation was in rebel prisons.

Grant and the War Department may have been right in refusing to exchange prisoners, on the theory that by so doing we gave to the other side an army of strong men in exchange for our starved soldiers; and that to allow us to starve and suffer and die, saved thousands of soldiers who were in our armies in the field; and rendered new recruits not needed. That is, we were thus weakening the enemy. So we were.

War is always cruel. This was the cruelty of cruelties. It was a most extraordinary position of most heroic sufferings, which our Government compelled us to undergo, and it entitles us to extraordinary consideration, and special honors. Aye, if you wish to put it so, "rewards."

It is the basest of slanders to say that any soldiers in our armies after June, 1863, when the cartel was suspended (yes, and before), was voluntarily a prisoner. The history of our war and its battles sh