

... THE ... RED BADGE OF COURAGE.

An Episode of the American Civil War.

BY STEPHEN CRANE.

[Copyright, 1911, by the Author.] CHAPTER IX.—CONTINUED.

The tattered man stood musing. "Well, he was reg'lar jim-dandy for nerve, wasn't he?" said he finally in a little awe-struck voice.

"The youth desired to screech out his grief. He was stabbed. But his tongue lay dead in the tomb of his mouth. He threw himself again upon the ground and began to brood.

"Look a here, pardner," he said, after a time. He regarded the corpse as he spoke. "He's up an' gone, ain't he, might as well begin 't look out for ol' number one."

The youth, awakened by the tattered soldier's tone, looked quickly up. He saw that he was swinging uncertainly on his legs and that his face had turned to a shade of blue.

"Good Lord," he cried, in fear, "you ain't going to—no you too."

The tattered man waved his hand. "Nary die," he said. "All I want is some pea-soup an' a good bed. Some pea-soup," he repeated dreamfully.

"The youth arose from the ground. 'I wonder where he came from. I left him over there,' he pointed. 'And now I find 'im here. And he was coming from over there, too.' He indicated a new direction. They both turned toward the body as if to interrogate it.

"Well," at length spoke the tattered man, "there ain't no use in our stayin' here an' tryin' 't ask him anything."

The youth nodded an assent, wearily. They both turned to gaze for a moment at the corpse.

"Well, he was a jim-dandy, wasn't he?" said the tattered man as if in response.

They turned their backs upon it and started away. For a time, they stole softly, reading with their toes. It remained laughing there in the grass.

"I'm commensin' 't feel pretty bad," said the tattered man suddenly breaking one of his little sentences. "I'm commensin' 't feel pretty damn bad."

The youth groaned. "Oh, Lord," he said. "You're a witness of another encounter?"

But his companion waved his hand reassuringly. "Oh, I'm not goin' 't die yet."

As they plodded on the tattered soldier continued to talk. "Besides, if I died, I wouldn't die 't way that feller did. That was 't' funniest thing. I'd jest flop down, I would. I never seen a feller die 't way that feller did."

Then he made a calm announcement: "There's two of 'em, little ones, but they're beginnin' to kin walk with me now. I don't believe I can walk much furdar."

The youth went slowly on in silence. "Yeh look pretty pecked yerself," said the tattered man, at last. "I bet yeh've got a worse one than yeh think. Where is it located?" But he continued to harangue vaguely without waiting for a reply.

The youth had been wriggling since the other had begun to speak of wounds. He now gave a cry of exasperation and made a furious motion with his hand. "Oh, don't bother me," he said. "Now, don't bother me," he repeated, with desperate menace.

"Well, Lord knows I don't want to bother anybody," said the tattered man. "There was a little accent of despair in his voice as he replied. 'Lord knows I've got 'nough 'n own 't' tend to.'"

The youth, who had been holding a bitter debate with himself and casting glances of hate and contempt at the tattered man, here spoke in a hard voice. "Good-by," he said.

The tattered man looked at him in gaping amazement. "Why—why, pardner, where yeh goin'?" he asked, unsteadily. The youth looked at him, could see that he, too, like the other one, was beginning to act dumb and animal-like. His thoughts seemed to be floundering about in his head.

"Now—now—look—here you—now. I won't have this—this here won't do. Where—where yeh goin'?"

The youth pointed vaguely. "Over there," he replied.

"Well, now, look-a-her—now," said the tattered man, rambling on in idiot fashion. His head was hanging forward and his words were slurred. "This thing won't do, now. Yeh want go trompin' off with a bad hurt. It ain't right—now—it ain't. Yeh want leave me take keer of."

"THEY COULD HEAR THE YOUTH'S VOICE. HE WASN'T TATTERED MAN BREAT-FIGHT—IT AIN'T."

He became aware that the furnace-cool of the battle was flowing louder. Great brown clouds had gathered to the still heights of air before him. The noise, too, was approaching. The woods filtered men and the fields became dotted.

As he rounded a hillock he perceived that the roadway was now a crying mass of wagons, teams and men. From the heaving tangle issued exhortations, commands, imprecations. Fear was sweeping it all along. The cracking whips bit and horses plunged and tugged. The white-topped wagons strained and stumbled in their exertions like fat sheep.

Presently the calm head of a forward-going column of infantry appeared in the road. It came swiftly on. Avoiding the obstructions gave it, the sinuous

movement of a serpent. The men at the head butted mules with their musket stocks. They prodded teamsters, indifferent to all howls. The men forced their way through parts of the dense mass by strength. The blunt head of the column pushed. The raving teamsters swore many strange oaths.

As the youth looked at the regiments, the black weight of his own returned to him. He felt that he was regarding a procession of chosen beings. The separation was as great to him as if they had marched with weapons of flame and banners of sunlight. He could never be like them. He could have wept in his longings.

He discovered that he had a searching thirst. His face was so dry and grimy that he thought he could feel his skin crackle. Each bone of his body had an ache in it and seemingly threatened to break with each moment. His feet were like two sores. Also, his body was calling for food. It was more powerful than a direct hunger. There was a dull, weight-like feeling in his stomach, and when he tried to walk his head swayed and he tottered. He could not see with distinctness. Small patches of crimson mist floated before his vision. While he had been tossed, by many emotions he had not been aware of ailments. Now they beset him and made clamor.

A certain moth-like quality within him kept him in the vicinity of the battles. He had a great desire to see, and to get news. He wished to know who was winning.

The column that had butted stoutly at the obstacles in the roadway was barely out of the youth's sight before he saw dark waves of men come sweeping over the woods and down through the fields. He knew at once that the steel fibers had been washed from their hearts. They were bursting from their coats and their equipments as from entanglements. They charged down upon him like terrified buffaloes.

Behind them blue smoke curled and clouded above the tree-tops and through the thickets he could sometimes see a distant pink glare. The voices of the cannon were clamoring in interminable chorus.

The youth was horror-stricken. He stared in agony and amazement. The fight was lost. The dragons were coming with invincible strides. The army, helpless in the matted thickets, and blinded by the overhanging night, was going to be swallowed. War, the red animal, war, the blood-sweater, would have bloated him.

Within him, something bade to cry out. He had the impulse to make a rallying speech, to sing a battle hymn but he could only get his tongue to call into the air: "Why—why—what—what's the matter?"

Soon he was in the midst of them. They were leaping and scampering all about him. Their blanched faces shone in the dusk.

The youth turned from one to another of them as they galloped along. His incoherent questions were lost. They were heedless of his appeals. They did not seem to see him. They sometimes gabbled insanely. One huge man was asking of the sky: "Say, where de plank road? Where de plank road? It was as if he had lost a child. He jest in his pain and dismay."

Presently, men were running hither and thither in all ways. The artillery booming, forward, rearward, and on the flanks made jumble of ideas of direction. Landmarks had vanished into the gathered gloom. The youth began to imagine that he had gotten into the center of the tremendous quarrel and he could perceive no way out of it. From the mouths of the fleeing men came a thousand wild questions, but no one made answers.

The youth after rushing about and throwing interrogations at the heedless hands of retreating infantry, finally clutched a man by the arm. They swung around face to face.

"Why—why—stammered the youth, struggling with his balky tongue. The man screamed: "Let go me! Let go me." His face was livid and his eyes were rolling uncontrolled. He was heaving and panting. He still grasped his rifle, perhaps having forgotten to release his hold upon it. He tugged frantically and the youth being compelled to lean forward was dragged several paces.

"Let go me! Let go me." "Why—why—stuttered the youth. "Well, then—" bawled the man in a lurid rage. He adroitly and fiercely swung his rifle. It crashed upon the youth's head. The man ran on.

The youth's fingers had turned to paste upon the other's arm. The energy was smitten from his muscles. He saw a man in the wings of lightning flash before his vision. There was a denfening rumble within his head. Suddenly his legs seemed to die. He sank CRUSHED UPON THE YOUTH'S HEAD.

He tried to arise. In his efforts against the numbing pain he was like a man wrestling with a creature of the air.

There was a sinister struggle. Sometimes, he would achieve a position half-crawled, battle with the air for a moment, and then fall again, grabbing at the grass. His face was of a clammy pallor. Deep groans were wrenched from him.

He swung unsteadily toward the fire. He could see the forms of men throwing long shadows in the red light, and as he went nearer it became known to him in some way that the ground was strewn with sleeping men.

Of a sudden he confronted a dark and monstrous figure. A rifle barrel caught some glinting beams. "Halt, halt." He was dismayed for a moment, but he presently thought that he recognized the nervous voice. As he stood tottering before the rifle barrel he called out: "Why, hello, Wilson, you—you—here!"

He fought an intense battle with his body. His dulled senses wretched him to swoon and he opposed them stubbornly, his mind portraying unknown dangers and mutilations if he should fall upon the field. He went in tall-soldier fashion. He imagined secluded spots where he could fall and be unmolested. To reach one, he strove against the tide of his pain.

Once, he put his hand to the top of his head and timidly touched the wound. The scratching pain of the contact made him draw a long breath through his clenched teeth. His fingers were dabbled with blood. He regarded them with a fixed stare.

Around him, he could hear the grumble of jolted cannon as the scurrying horses were lashed toward the front. Once, a young officer on a be-splashed charger nearly ran him down.

He turned and watched the mass of guns, men and horses sweeping in a wild curve toward a gap in a fence. The officer was making excited motions with a gauntleted hand. The guns followed the teams with an air of unwillfulness, of being dragged by unskillful hands.

Some officers of the scattered infantry were cursing and railing like fishwives. Their scolding voices could be heard above the din. Into the unappreciable jumble in the roadway, rode a squadron of cavalry. The faded yellow of their facings shone bravely. There was an angry altercation.

The artillery was assembling as if for a conference.

The blue haze of evening was upon the fields. The lines of forest wore long purple shadows. One cloud lay along the western sky partly smothering the red.

As the youth left the scene behind him, he heard the guns suddenly roar out. He imagined them shaking in black rage. They belched and roared like brass devils guarding a gate. The soft air was filled with the tremendous remonstrance. With it came the shattering peal of opposing infantry. Turning to look behind him, he could see sheets of orange light illumine the shadowy distance. There were subtle and sudden lightnings in the far air. At times he thought he could see hearing masses of men.

He hurried on in the dusk. The day had faded until he could barely distinguish places for his feet. The purple darkness was filled with men who leapt and jabbered. Sometimes he could see them gesticulating against the somber sky. There seemed to be a great rack of men and munitions spread about in the forests and in the fields. The little, narrow roadway now lay lifeless. There were overturned wagons like sun-dried bowlders. The bed of the former torrent was choked with the bodies of horses and splintered parts of war machines.

It had come to pass that his wound pained him but little. He was afraid to move rapidly, however, for a dread of disturbing it. He held his head very still and took many precautions against stumbling. He was filled with anxiety, and his face was pinched and drawn in anticipation of the pain of any sudden mistake of his feet in the gloom.

His thoughts, as he walked, fixed intently upon his hurt. There was a cool, liquid feeling about it and he imagined blood moving slowly down under his hair. His head seemed swollen to a size that made him think his neck to be inadequate.

The new silence of his wound made much woe. The little, blistering voices of pain, that had called out from his scalp, were, he thought, definite in their expression of danger. By them, he believed he could measure his plight. But when they remained ominously silent, he became frightened and imagined terrible fingers that clutched into his brain.

He held cautious arguments to as to whether he should lie down and sleep at some near spot, or force himself on until he reached a certain haven. He often tried to dismiss the question, but his body persisted in rebellion and his senses nagged at him like pampered babies.

At last he heard a cheery voice near his shoulder: "Yeh seem 't be in a pretty bad way, boy?" The youth did not look up, but he assented, with thick tongue. "Uh."

He turned and watched the mass of guns, men and horses sweeping in a wild curve toward a gap in a fence. The officer was making excited motions with a gauntleted hand. The guns followed the teams with an air of unwillfulness, of being dragged by unskillful hands.

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The owner of the cheery voice took him firmly by the arm. "Well," he said, with a round laugh, "I'm goin' your way. Th' hell with it, yeh know your way. An' I guess I kin give yeh a drink." They began to walk like a drunken man and his friend.

As they went along, the man questioned the youth and assisted him with the replies like one manipulating the mind of a child.

In the search which followed he seemed to possess a wand of a magic kind. He threaded the mazes of the tangled forests with a strange fortune. In encounters with guards and patrols he displayed the keenness of a detective and the valor of a gamine. Obstacles fell before him and became of assistance. The youth, with his chin still on his breast, stood woefully near while his companion beat ways and means out of sullen things.

The forest seemed a vast here of men buzzing about in frantic circles, but the cheery man conducted the youth without mistakes until at last he began to chuckle with glee and self-satisfaction. "Ah, ther yeh are. See that fire?"

The youth nodded stupidly.

"Well, there's where your reg'ment is. An' now good-by, ol' boy, good luck 't yeh."

A warm and strong hand clasped the youth's hand and fingers for an instant, and then he heard a cheerful and audacious whistling as the man strode away. As he who had so befriended him was thus missing out of his life, it suddenly occurred to the youth that he had not once seen his friend. He went slowly toward the fire indicated by his departed friend. As he receded, he bethought him of the welcome his comrades would give him. He had a conviction that he would soon feel in his sore heart the barbed missiles of ridicule. He had no strength to invent a tale; he would be a soft target.

He made vague plans to go off into the deeper darkness and hide, but they were all destroyed by the voices of exhaustion and pain from his body. His ailments clamoring, forced him to seek the place of food and rest at whatever cost.

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RAILROAD TIME-TABLES. Central Railroad of New Jersey. (Lehigh and Susquehanna Divisions) Attention is called to the fact that the following table is subject to change without notice. Trains leave Scranton as follows: For Philadelphia, 8:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m. For Atlantic City, 8:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m. For New York, 8:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m. For Mauch Chunk, Allentown, Bethlehem, Easton and Philadelphia, 8:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m. For Long Branch, Ocean Grove, etc., at 8:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m. For Reading, Lebanon and Harrisburg, via Allentown, 8:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m. For Puttville, 8:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m. Returning, leave New York, foot of Liberty Street, North River, at 9:15 a.m., 1:15 p.m., 4:15 p.m., 8:15 p.m. For Mauch Chunk, Allentown, Bethlehem, Easton and Philadelphia, 8:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m. For Long Branch, Ocean Grove, etc., at 8:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m. For Reading, Lebanon and Harrisburg, via Allentown, 8:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m. For Puttville, 8:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m.

Delaware and Hudson Railroad. Commencing Monday, July 23, all trains will arrive at new Lackawanna Avenue station as follows: Trains will leave Scranton station for Philadelphia, 8:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m. For Atlantic City, 8:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m. For New York, 8:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m. For Mauch Chunk, Allentown, Bethlehem, Easton and Philadelphia, 8:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m. For Long Branch, Ocean Grove, etc., at 8:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m. For Reading, Lebanon and Harrisburg, via Allentown, 8:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m. For Puttville, 8:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m.

High Valley Railroad. Nov. 18, 1894. Train leaves Scranton for Philadelphia at 8:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m. For Atlantic City, 8:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m. For New York, 8:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m. For Mauch Chunk, Allentown, Bethlehem, Easton and Philadelphia, 8:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m. For Long Branch, Ocean Grove, etc., at 8:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m. For Reading, Lebanon and Harrisburg, via Allentown, 8:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m. For Puttville, 8:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m.

Del. Lack. and Western. Trains leave Scranton as follows: Express for New York and all points East, 8:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m. Express for Easton, Trenton, Philadelphia and the south, 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Washington and way stations, 3:30 p.m. Tohanna accommodation, 12:30 p.m. Express for Hinghamton, Oswego, Elmira, Corning, Bath, Danville, Mount Morris and Buffalo, 12:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m., making close connections at Buffalo and all points in the West, Northwest and South. Bath accommodation, 9 a.m. Binghamton accommodation, 12:30 p.m. Nicholson accommodation, at 6:15 p.m. Binghamton and Elmira Express, 6:05 p.m. Express for Cortland, Syracuse, Oswego, Utica and Richfield Springs, 2:35 a.m. and 1:21 p.m. Utica, 2:35 a.m. and 1:21 p.m. For Northumberland, Pittston, Wilkes-Barre, Plymouth, Elmira and Eastville, making close connections at Northumberland for Williamsport, Harrisburg, Baltimore, Washington and the South. Northumberland and intermediate stations, 8:08 a.m. and 1:30 and 6:07 p.m.