A POST OF DANGER.

Green Recruit Went Through All the Tortures of Actual Encounter with Enemy.

When the pulse of the nation throbbed in response to Father Abraham's call for "seventy-five thousand men," the rush to arms was so great that the maximum number of companies was exceeded by the enrollment of beardless boys in some instances. The veterans of the Mexican war were in request. One of these was deemed sufficient to season a whole company. The raw young men were eager for the fray—how eager we all remember sadly, so many bright boys went bravely to their death.

The Twelfth Pennsylvania regiment in the three months' service were stationed on the Northern Central railroad; they did guard duty. That road was all important—it was the great highway over which the troops that were to fight the union's battles were dispatched to the capital. The regiment was stretched out over an interval of 30 miles. It relieved the First New York infantry, if my memory serves me. There is one thing there can be no doubt about. The First New York "stunned" the Twelfth Pennsylvania. We lit down there in the evening. Before the First New York left the ground a number of the Twelfth Pennsylvania imagined there was a confederate soldier behind every tree and rock near the roadbed.

HE STOOD WITH HIS HANDS GRASPING HIS GUN.

It will not be deemed remarkable, says Corporal Cloverside, who tells the story in the American Tribune, if I add that half the boys comprising Company "I" requested to be put on "posts of danger."

One of these patriots I will call L. His request was not gratified. He had the mortification of witnessing others detailed for duty at dusk. His opportunity arrived with the second relief. His ears were strained, his eyes ditto when the "corporal of the guard" responded to the nervous queries propounded by the men on the posts. When it came to his turn to be left all alone at the foot of a big tree his frame of mind may be imagined when I state that the man he relieved whispered before leaving him:

"Keep a sharp lookout back of you. There are a lot of negro huts up there. I thought I saw some one move between them, and, mind, there is only one post beyond you."

L. was deeply depressed by the manner, as well as the words of his messmate. He strained his eyes in the direction of those huts—or where the huts ought to be—it was pitch dark—until his head ached. He adhered rigidly to the advice given him by the man he had relieved; refrained from coughing; did not budge from the tree an inch; grasped his gun—at full cock—with both hands; thus he stood for four mortal hours. Four hours! they seemed weeks—months—ages! The bats flitting past struck terror to his heart—until he remembered there was such a thing as bats. The first hoot of an owl caused him to run—until he realized it was an owl. But might it not be a signal? What could be easier than for a confederate to hoot like an owl—to lull him into fancied security, pounce on him, disarm him and cut his throat? The owl's hoot was listened to with an earnestness that would have served a brigade.

A twig snapping seemed as loud to the listener now as the cracking of a saw-log. Every sense was tense. The guard on a dangerous post, resolved not to be caught napping, yet unused to midnight vigils, exhausted his faculties before the first hour passed. The remaining hours were simply torture. He caught himself dozing—he, on a post of danger—absolutely dozing. Time and again he was within an ace of falling—only his grasp on his musket prevented it. His eyelids were weighted with tons of sand—of lead. It was impossible to keep his eyes open.

If he dare walk! If he could walk around the tree! If he dare sit—or hum a low tune! But he was not a tobacco chewer—could not even ruminate like a cow in the shade.

Lights gleamed here and there through the trees. They might be fire-flies—and they might not. What if they were not? Would the relief never come?

It is always the darkest before dawn. L. thought there was darkness sufficient that morning for half a dozen dawnings. He wondered if all war was like his experience. It could make a man gray or bald-headed in a year or less time. Then he wondered who was sleeping in his bed. It was a mighty comfortable bed. If he ever got home safe he'd compliment that bed in a way—

The guard on the dangerous post was sound asleep by this time; as sound as though his head was lying on his pillow. He stood with his hands grasping his gun near the muzzle, his chin resting on the muzzle, and his back against the tree. The stillness was profound, when suddenly, and without an instant's warning, a sound like that of a man falling from a great height smote the calm morning air. The guard jumped—jumped straight up at least six inches, and settled back in his tracks with every sense as alert as though his soul's salvation depended on their instant and effective exercise.

A man! And lodging in a tree like that! It was not possible he made that noise jumping. Could it be? Yes, it was possible the confederate had dropped—fell from his perch. But why did he not cry out?

In vain the guard pricked up his ears. No sound was heard. Yes, there was something rustling in a field near by. Would he shout? No! He would fire his gun off. Pooh! and he laughed out. The man on a dangerous post concluded to keep his own counsel. He was glad he did.

When the relief came along the corporal was laughing and talking. "It must be a great country for coon hunting. He saw one as big as a shoat strike into a cornfield down the road a mile or two."

L. listened and smiled. He was immensely relieved in a double sense. The sound—the appalling sound—that startled him was explained. A coon had dropped, with all the weight of 30 or 40 pounds, from the tree near him, and ran away through the cornfield.

All Products of the Mine.

Much of our textile materials now comes from the mines. Silk rustles with 36 per cent. of salt of tin, flannel is weighted with epsom salts and linen table cloths are made from cotton filled with china clay and starch.

AN ANECDOTE OF LINCOLN.

The Newspaper Man Had to See the President and He Did in His Night Shirt.

Col. Holloway in this letter gives the following characteristic anecdote of President Lincoln: "William H. Byrington, now American consul at Naples, who was one of the Washington staff of the New York Tribune during the civil war, told me last summer that late one night following the receipt of the news that Sherman had cut loose from Atlanta for the sea, he received a message from the managing editor of the Tribune to see President Lincoln at once, and tell him the Tribune wanted to send two correspondents to meet Sherman when he reached the sea, and desired to know to what point to send them.

"This was late at night, but Byrington must obey orders. He went to the White House. The president had retired, but the Tribune man insisted that the attendant take his card to the president, as it was important that he should see him immediately. The Tribune man was taken to the corridor on the second floor. The attendant entered the president's room and a moment later the chief executive came out in his night shirt. The correspondent apologized for intruding at such an unseemly hour, but delivered his message.

"Mr. Lincoln looked puzzled for a moment, and then said: 'I don't know;' a curious look came over his face as he added, 'but if I were going to guess I would say send one to Mobile and the other to Savannah. Now, if Stanton knew I told you he would kill me. Don't tell him.'

"The correspondent then thanked him. As he started to go the president yawned as he was going back to his bed and said: 'He'd kill me, kill me.'"

Not That Verb.

"Did he really tell you I had a case of stage fright?" asked the amateur actress. "No," replied the dearest friend, "he said you were."

An Unattained Sacrifice.

BY DUDLEY JAMES.

She looked into his eyes with the self-effacing devotion pertaining to women. He looked into hers with the expression of the hunted stag.

There was that in his face, however, which relieved it from the suggestion of fear and painted into his personality the mark of the hero.

She saw it and understood—understood not at all what his trouble and his fear was, but understood that it was the desperation of a brave man; and her heart of hearts yearned to help him and comfort him.

She was no longer a girl, yet retained the ineffable charm of "sweet 16." Her attitude toward the man was unmistakable. She was his sweetheart, his very own—patient, passionate, loving and self-abnegating.

He was a handsome fellow—or would have been had it not been for the lines of care and suffering in his frail face. There were great lines in the face and the head was marvelous in its shape and proportions, and the wide, straight mouth and the steady eyes told of indomitable purpose to conquer physical weakness.

They had been lovers for so long that they had forgotten the measure of the years. Since early childhood they had been playmates and chums, but since one memorable day—ah! the woman remembered the very day and date, after all—they had been accepted lovers the one to the other. It was very, very long ago, 15, 16, 17—perhaps as much as 20 years back in the past.

It was all so full of promise and happiness then. He was young, brilliant, rich, with every prospect ahead of him, when he asked her for her promise, obtained it, and went bravely away to college to fit himself for a great career. And in all the land lived no such happy girl. She had found her own true knight and he had broken his lance at her very feet. All she had to do was to wait and dream. What more could fair maid desire? And so, 'neath sunny skies, with no cloud on the horizon, the two fond hearts waited the fruition of their hopes, impatient only at the length of the days and nights which intervened between them and bliss.

Then came the crash, and in a single moment Clarence learned he was the orphan of a bankrupt and a suicide—and his loved and respected father would have been a convict had he not forestalled it all by taking his own life.

It was a terrible blow, but Clarence never wavered. He left college within the hour, never to return, and bravely took up the burden left by his father. It was an awful task for an inexperienced youth, without business training, who had always been taught that, come what might, the fortune of the family was safe and that his ambitions were to find an outlet in other ways than money-getting. Besides, he loathed business with the true abhorrence of the born aristocrat.

But he never flinched. He mastered the situation and started in to work out the problem. After the remnants of his father's fortune had been gathered together and paid to his creditors, despite the protests of his mother and sisters, Clarence obtained employment with a business concern and pushed along doing work at which his very soul abhorred. He supported his mother and the family, educated his younger brother and, above and beyond it all, paid in year by year what he could save to reduce his father's debts.

But the years were long and dreary and the great cloud of the debts hid the sunlight beyond. Only one ray of light did he have—excepting Alice, of course—and that was that certain articles he wrote were accepted from time to time by magazines of the better class. Upon these articles and their acceptance Clarence and Alice built their fondest hopes. For Alice never wavered in her love and accepted the years of waiting as her very heritage.

The strain on the man was fearful, and he felt things giving way within him. One day he consulted a physician and emerged from his office with an expression on his face which combined resolution with fear. After this he ever looked haunted, but always resolute.

The debts had been paid, the boy educated, the girls married and the mother dead. Then came an offer from a great magazine to take up a series of investigations along the lines of his writings on the basis of a very liberal salary. A representative of the magazine had come to see him and close with him. The interview was over and he had come straight to Alice.

So they stood, she looking into his eyes with self-effacing devotion, and he looking into hers with the expression of a hunted stag.

"How did it come out, dear?" she asked, eagerly.

"I have signed with them," he said, gravely.

"Oh, Clarence," she said, clasping her hands, "and were they nice about the salary?"

"They pay me more than I ever hoped to earn," he replied, looking at her with an inscrutable expression.

She flushed like a schoolgirl and her eyes sought the carpet.

A great spasm of pain crossed the man's face.

"Alice," he said, harshly, "I have something to tell you."

"Yes," she said, simply.

"Our engagement must end."

The woman looked at him, stunned. Then she smiled—a rare, sweet smile, such as only Alice had.

"Come, no joking," she said. "It's too happy a night."

"It is true," said he, fiercely. "I tell you I am going out into the world now and I will not be hampered by any woman."

She looked at him, at first with incredulity, then with horror; then:

"As you desire, Clarence—so it is for your best interest. Remember, though, you are not so strong as you were 20 years ago. Be careful of yourself."

A look of agony came into his eyes. Then followed an expression of masterful determination.

"Let us part without a scene," he said, coldly. "Neither of us want it. I—I have many things to look after tonight. I leave in the morning. Goodby."

He took her hand coldly and hastened away.

The woman dropped her face in her hands and the sobs came straight from her heart.

"It is not true!" she said again and again to herself. "It is not true! He is not disloyal. He is not cold. What is it? What is it?"

A low sound like a moan aroused her, and she hastened to the door. There was a huddled heap on the sidewalk outside. She flew down the steps and in a moment had Clarence's unconscious head in her lap. She unloosed his collar and called for help. Water, brandy and chafing presently brought him around.

"Alice!" he whispered, "Kiss me."

"What is it all about?" she asked, as she lifted her lips from his.

"This is it," he said. "The doctors warned me years ago. It is the beginning of the end. I could not let you sacrifice your life to my broken one. I knew you would if I gave you a chance, so I resolved to drive you away."

"Sacrifice!" she exclaimed—then, laughing hysterically, "You great goose."

"What did the doctors say?" she demanded.

"That I might be stricken down at any moment unless I gave up all work and went into the country and lived without worry and nervous excitement. This is only a warning. But it presages the end."

"We will go into the country, Clarence," she said, simply. "I have a small inheritance and plenty of strength. We will get a small place and you can cultivate it. I can make ends meet on very little and maybe you can write some from time to time as you get stronger."

The glory of love-light came into the man's face. Then the cloud of despair.

"I cannot accept the sacrifice," he said, determinedly.

"Sacrifice!" she exclaimed, again. Then, with the same hysterical laughter as before, she added, "You goose!"

Whereupon she bent down and placed her lips on his, where they remained a long time.

And he threw his arms about her and all the determination and all the resistence faded from his face.

Wonderful Eyesight of Eagles.

The sharp-eyed hawk can spy a lark upon a piece of earth almost exactly the same color at 20 times the distance it is perceptible to man or dog. A kite soaring out of human sight still can distinguish and pounce upon lizards and field mice upon the ground, and the distance at which the vultures and eagles can spy their prey is almost incredible. Recent discoveries have inclined naturalists to the belief that birds of prey have not the acute sense of smell or hearing that has hitherto been accredited them. Their keen sight seems better to account for their action, and they appear to be guided by sight alone, as they never sniff at anything, but dart straight after the objects of their desire. Their counterparts in the ocean, doubtless smell and see, but are more guided by smell than sight. In both sharks and rays the eyes are good and have a distinct expression, though since they scent their prey from a short distance and swim up to it with greatest rapidity, smell may be called their real eye.

Sleepy Policeman's Mistake.

An urban councillor of Milton, Sittingbourne, England, got into a compartment at Barking in which a policeman and a prisoner were traveling.

Presently the policeman fell asleep and when the train reached Plaistow the prisoner, failing to arouse his custodian, quietly got out. When the policeman woke up he mistook the urban councillor for his prisoner and tried to force him out to the platform. The councillor resisted, and the train went on to Bromley-by-Bow.

Here the policeman succeeded in hauling the victim out and took him back to Plaistow by train. After a long cross-examination the councillor was liberated and reached home by cab in the small hours of the morning.

It is better to decide a difference between enemies than friends, for one of our friends will certainly become an enemy, and one of our enemies a friend.—Bias.

"The best hearts are ever the bravest," said Sterne.