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SI KLEGG

THRU THE STONE RIVER CAMPAIGN AND IN WINTER QUARTERS AT MURFREESBORO.

By John McElroy

Book Two

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SI AND SHORTY AS FORAGERS.
(CHAPTER XXI.)

SI KLEGG

—
THRU THE STONE RIVER CAMPAIGN AND IN
WINTER QUARTERS AT MURFREESBORO.

—
BY JOHN MCELROY.



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CONTENTS

[PREFACE](#)

[SI KLEGG](#)

[CHAPTER I. THROUGH MUD AND MIRE](#)

[CHAPTER II. SECOND DAY'S MARCH](#)

[CHAPTER III. STILL ON THE MARCH](#)

[CHAPTER IV. THE SUNSHINE OF LIFE](#)

[CHAPTER V. LINING UP FOR BATTLE](#)

[CHAPTER VI. BATTLE OF STONE RIVER](#)

[CHAPTER VII. AFTER THE FIRST DAY](#)
[CHAPTER VIII. A GLOOMY NEW YEAR'S DAY](#)
[CHAPTER IX. VICTORY AT LAST](#)
[CHAPTER X. THE VICTORIOUS ARMY](#)
[CHAPTER XI. WINTER QUARTERS](#)
[CHAPTER XII. ADDING TO THEIR COMFORT](#)
[CHAPTER XIII. "HOOSIER'S REST"](#)
[CHAPTER XIV. DEACON KLEGG'S SURPRISE](#)
[CHAPTER XV. DEACON KLEGG'S ARRIVAL IS MISTAKEN](#)
[CHAPTER XVI. IN A NEW WORLD](#)
[CHAPTER XVII. THE DEACON'S INITIATION](#)
[CHAPTER XVIII. THE DEACON IS SHOCKED](#)
[CHAPTER XIX. THE DEACON IS TROUBLED](#)
[CHAPTER XX. THE DEACON BUTTS IN](#)
[CHAPTER XXI. THE PERPLEXED DEACON](#)
[CHAPTER XXII. TRYING TO EDUCATE ABRAHAM LINCOLN](#)

ILLUSTRATIONS

[The Aid Spatters Mud on si 18](#)
[Si Sat Down Hard 20](#)
[Stop Beatin' Them Mules' 22](#)
[Frozen in the Mud 29](#)
[What Do You See, Shorty?' 33](#)
[Si Reports to the Colonel 38](#)
[Preparing Supper 40](#)
[After the Mules Stampeded 44](#)
[The Adjutant Smiled on si and Shorty 49](#)
[The Prisoners 50](#)
[A Close Shave 62](#)
[Groundhog Fled 64](#)
[Earning Thirteen Dollars a Month 57](#)
[A Frightened Teamster 70](#)
[A Lucky Fall 81](#)
[Finding a Good Thing 85](#)
[Si's Challenge 90](#)
[A Disagreeable Awakening for Shorty and Si. 94](#)
[Si Klegg Fell Without a Groan 113](#)
[Shorty Thinks si Does Not Look Like a Ghost. 118](#)
[Shorty Retaliates. 126](#)

[*The House Beautiful. 133*](#)
[*Solid Comfort. 135*](#)
[*"Am I a Soldier of the Cross?" 139*](#)
[*Shorty Confiscates the Caboose Door. 143*](#)
[*Si Defended the Plunder. 148*](#)
[*Si Floors the Wagonmaster. 154*](#)
[*A Stoutly-built, Farmer-looking Man Entered the Train 164*](#)
[*The Free Fight. 169*](#)
[*Mr. Klegg Ready for Action. 172*](#)
[*Deacon Klegg and the Knight of The Golden Circle.*](#)
[*The General Interrupts the Game 184*](#)
[*Meeting Between si and his Father. 189*](#)
[*His Honor and the 'attorney' Bucked And Gagged.*](#)
[*Shorty Admonishes the Orderly 198*](#)
[*The Deacon is Shocked. 210*](#)
[*Trying to Conquer the Deacon's Scruples. 212*](#)
[*'How Much'd You Give for This?' 216*](#)
[*Deacon Klegg Looks over the Larder. 220*](#)
[*Hit My Jug a Welt With his Sword 231*](#)
[*'Pulled out a Fat Roll of Greenbacks. 235*](#)
[*I'm Gwine Ter Kill Ye, Right Here 246*](#)
[*Do You Hear? Git on Your Mule at Onct.'*](#)
[*"I'll Invite Your Attention to the Emancipation Proclamation 264 "*](#)
[*The Deacon Gives Abe a Lesson in Wood Chopping 269*](#)

PREFACE

"Si Klegg, of the 200th Ind., and Shorty, his Partner," were born years ago in the brain of John McElroy, Editor of THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE.

These sketches are the original ones published in THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE, revised and enlarged some what by the author. How true they are to nature every veteran can abundantly testify from his own service. Really, only the name of the regiment was invented. There is no doubt that there were several men of the name of Josiah Klegg in the Union Army, and who did valiant service for the Government. They had experiences akin to, if not identical with, those narrated here, and substantially every man who faithfully and bravely carried a musket in defense of the best Government on earth had some times, if not often, experiences of which those of Si Klegg are a strong reminder.

THE PUBLISHERS. THIS BOOK IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED TO THE RANK AND FILE OF THE GRANDEST ARMY EVER MUSTERED FOR WAR.

SI KLEOG

CHAPTER I. THROUGH MUD AND MIRE

DUTY'S PATH LEADS THE 200TH IND. SOUTHWARD FROM NASHVILLE.

"SHORTY" said Si Klegg, the morning after Christmas, 1862, as the 200th Ind. sullenly plunged along through the mud and rain, over the roads leading southward from Nashville, "they say that this is to be a sure-enough battle and end the war."

"Your granny's night-cap they do," answered Shorty crossly, as he turned his cap around back ward to stop the icy current from chasing down his backbone. "How many thousand times 's that bin stuffed into your ears? This is the forty-thousandth mile we've marched to find that battle that was goin' to end the war. And I'll bet we'll march 40,000 more. This war ain't goin' to end till we've scuffed the top off all the roads in Kentucky and Tennessee, and wore out God's patience and all the sole-leather in the North. I believe it's the shoe-makers that's runnin' this war in the interest o' their business."

The cold, soaking rain had reduced the most of the 200th Ind. to a mood when they would have disputed the Ten Commandments and quarreled with their mothers. 16

"There's no use bein' crosser'n a saw-buck, if you are wet, Shorty," said Si, walking to the side of the road and scraping off his generous-sized brogans several pounds of stiff, red mud. "They say this new General with a Dutch name is a fighter from Wayback, an' he always licks the rebels right out of their boots. I'm sure, I hope it's so. I like huntin' ez well ez anybody, an' I'll walk ez fur ez the next man to find something to shoot. But I think walkin' over two States, backward and forward, is altogether too much huntin' for so little shootin'. Don't you?"

"Don't worry," snapped Shorty. "You'll git all the shootin' you want before your three years are up. It'll keep."

"But why keep it so long?" persisted Si. "If it can be done up in three months, an' we kin git back home, why dribble it out over three years? That ain't the way we do work back home on the Wabash."

"Confound back home on the Wabash," roared Shorty. "I don't hear nothin' else, day and night, but 'back home on the Wabash.' I've bin on the Wabash, an' I don't want to never see the measly, muddy, agery ditch agin'. Why, they have the ager so bad out there that it shakes the buttons off a man's clothes, the teeth out of his head, the horns off the cows. An' as for milk-sickness."

"Shorty!" thundered Si, "stop right there. If you wasn't my pardner I'd fight you this minute. I kin join in jawin' about the officers an' the Government. A great deal of your slack that I can't agree with I kin put up with, but you mustn't say nothin' against my home in the Wabash Valley. That I won't stand from no man. For fear that I may lose my temper I'm goin' away from you till you're in better humor." 17

With that Si strode on ahead, feeling as cross and uncomfortable internally as he was ill-at-ease externally. He hated above all things to quarrel with Shorty, but the Wabash Valley, that gardenspot of earth, that place where lived his parents, and sister, and Annabel but the subject was too sore to think about.

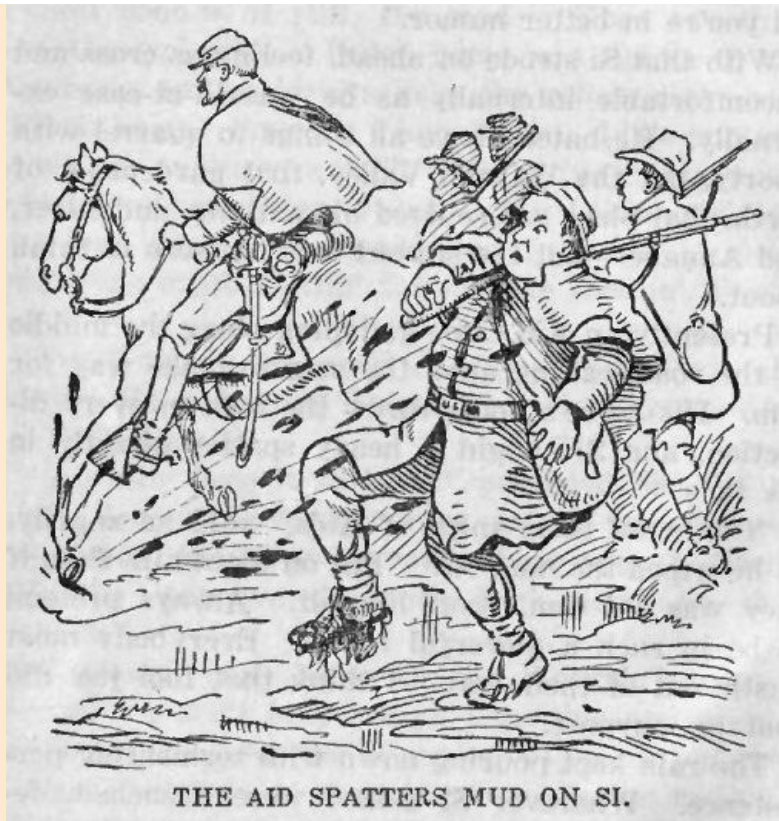
Presently an Aid came galloping along the middle of the road, calling upon the men to make way for him. His horse's hoofs threw the mud in every direction, and Si caught a heavy spatter directly in his face.

"Confound them snips of Aids," said he angrily, as he wiped the mud off. "Put on more airs than if they was old Gen. Scott himself. Always pretend to be in such a powerful hurry. Everybody must hustle out of their way. I think that fool jest did that on purpose."

The rain kept pouring down with tormenting persistence. Wherever Si looked were drenched, de pressed-looking men; melancholy, steaming horses; sodden, gloomy fields; yellow, rushing streams, and boundless mud that thousands of passing feet were churning into the consistency of building-mortar.

Si had seen many rainy days since he had been in the army, but this was the first real Winter rain he had been out in. 18

Jabe Belcher, the most disagreeable man in Co. Q, was just ahead of him. He stepped into a mudpuddle, slipped, threw the mud and water over Si, and his gun, which he flung in the effort to save himself, struck Si on the shoulder.



THE AID SPATTERS MUD ON SI.

"Clumsy lunkhead!" roared Si, as ill-tempered now as anybody. "Couldn't you see that puddle and keep out of it? You'd walk right into the Cumberland River if it was in front of you. Never saw such a bat-eyed looney in my life."

"If the Captain wasn't lookin'," retorted Belcher, "I'd shut up both of them dead-mackerel eyes o' your'n, you backwoods yearlin'. I'll settle with you after we git into camp. Your stripes won't save you."

"Never mind about my stripes, old Stringhalt. I kin take them off long enough to wallop you."

Si was in such a frame of mind that his usual open-eyedness was gone. The company was wading across a creek, and Si plunged in without a thought. He stepped on a smooth stone, his feet went from under him and he sat 'down hard and waist-deep in much the coldest water that he ever remembered.

"O, Greenland's icy mountains," was all that he could think to say.

The other boys yelled:

"Come on to camp, Si. That's no place to sit down."

"Feet hurt, Si, and goin' to rest a little?"

"This your day for taking a bath, Si?"

"Thinks this is a political meetin', and he's to take the chair."

"Place Rest!"

"When I sit down, I prefer a log or a rail; but some men's different."

"See a big bass there, Si, an' try to ketch him by settin' down on him?"

"Git up, Si; git up, an' give your seat to some lady."



SI SAT DOWN HARD.

Si was too angry to notice their jibes. He felt around in the icy water for his gun, and clambered out on the bank. He first poured the water out of his gun-barrel and wiped the mud off. His next thought was the three days' rations he had drawn that morning. He opened his haversack, and poured out the water it had caught. With it went his sugar, coffee and salt. His hardtack was a pasty mess; his meat covered with sand and dirt. He turned the haversack inside out, and swashed it out in the stream.

20

Back came Capt. McGillicuddy, with water streaming from the down-turned rim of his hat, and his humor bad. He was ignorant of Si's mishap.

"Corporal Klegg, what are you doing back here? Why aren't you in your place? I've been looking all around for you. The company wagon's stalled back somewhere. That spavin-brained teamster's at his old tricks. I want you to take five men off the rear of the company, go back and find that wagon, and bring it up. Be smart about it."

"Captain," remonstrated Si, "I'm wetter'n a drowned rat!"

"Well, who in thunder ain't?" exploded the Captain. "Do I look as dry as a basket of chips? Am I walking around in a Panama and linen clothes? Did you expect to keep from getting your feet wet when you came into the army? I want none of your belly-aching or sore-toeing. You take five men and bring up that wagon in a hurry. Do you hear me?"

And the Captain splashed off through the red mud to make somebody else still more miserable.

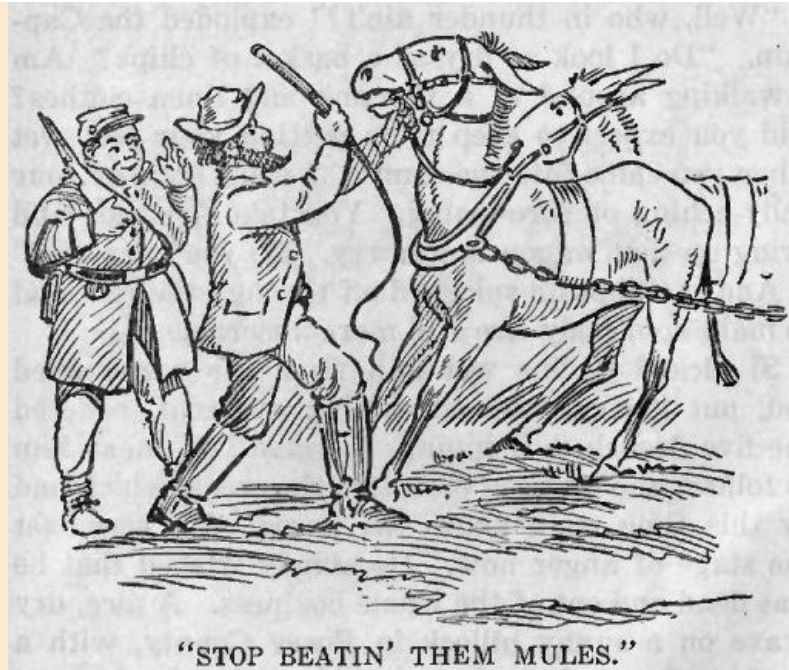
Si picked up his wet gun from the rain-soaked sod, put it under his streaming overcoat, ordered the five drenched, dripping, dejected boys near him to follow, and plunged back into the creek, which had by this time risen above his knees. He was past the stage of anger now. He simply wished that he was dead and out of the whole business. A nice, dry grave on a sunny hillock in Posey County, with a good roof over it to keep out the rain, would be a welcome retreat.

In gloomy silence he and his squad plodded back through the eternal mud and the steady downpour, through the miry fields, through the swirling yellow floods in the brooks and branches, in search of the laggard company wagon.

22

Two or three miles back they came upon it, stuck fast in a deep mud-hole. The enraged teamster was pounding the mules over the head with the butt of his blacksnake whip, not in the expectation of getting any further effort out of them he knew better than that but as a relief to his overcharged heart.

"Stop beatin' them mules over the head," shouted Si, as they came up. Not that he cared a fig about the mules, but that he wanted to "jump" somebody.



“STOP BEATIN’ THEM MULES.”

"Go to brimstone blazes, you freckle-faced Posey County refugee," responded Groundhog, the teamster, in the same fraternal spirit. "I'm drivin' this here team." He gave the nigh-swing mule a "welt" that would have knocked down anything else than a swing mule.

"If you don't stop beatin' them mules, by thunder, I'll make you."

"Make's a good word," responded Groundhog, giving the off-swing mule a wicked "biff." "I never see anything come out of Posey County that could make me do what I didn't want to."

Si struck at him awkwardly. He was so hampered by his weight of soggy clothes that there was little force or direction to his blow. The soaked teamster returned the blow with equal clumsiness.

The other boys came up and pulled them apart.

"We ain't no time for sich blamed nonsense," they growled. "We've got to git this here wagon up to the company, an' we'll have the devil's own time doin' it. Quit skylarkin' an' git to work."

They looked around for something with which to make pries. Every rail and stick within a quarter of a mile of the road was gone. They had been used up the previous Summer, when both armies had passed over the road.

There was nothing to do but plod off through mud and rain to the top of a hill in the distance, where there was a fence still standing. A half an hour later each of the six came back with a heavy rail on his shoulder. They pried the wagon out and got it started, only to sink again in another quagmire a few hundred yards further on.

Si and the boys went back to get their rails, but found that they had been carried off by another squad that had a wagon in trouble. There was nothing to do but to make another toilsome journey to the fence for more rails.

After helping the wagon out they concluded it would be wiser to carry their rails with them a little way to see if they would be needed again. 24

They were many times that afternoon. As dark ness came on Si, who had the crowning virtue of hopefulness when he fully recognized the unutterable badness of things, tried to cheer the other boys up with assertions that they would soon get into camp, where they would find bright, warm fires with which to dry their clothes, and plenty of hot coffee to thaw them out inside.

The quick-coming darkness added enormously to the misery of their work. For hours they struggled along the bottomless road, in the midst of a ruck of played-out mules and unutterably tired, disgusted men, laboring as they were to get wagons ahead.

Finally they came up to their brigade, which had turned off the road and gone into line-of-battle in an old cotton-field, where the mud was deeper, if possible, than in the road.

"Where's the 200th Ind.?" called out Si.

"Here, Si," Shorty's voice answered.

"Where's the fires, Shorty," asked Si, with sinking heart.

"Ain't allowed none," answered his partner gloomily. "There's a rebel battery on that hill there, and they shoot every time a match is lighted. What've you got there, a rail? By George, that's lucky! We'll have something to keep us out of the mud."

They laid down the rail and sat upon it.

"Shorty," said Si, as he tried to arrange his aching bones to some comfort on the rail, "I got mad at you for cussin' the Wabash this morning. I ain't a fluid talker such as you are, an' I can't find words to say what I think. But I jest wisht you would begin right here and cuss everybody from Abe Lincoln down to Corporal Si Klegg, and everything from the Wabash in Injianny down to the Cumberland in Tennessee. I'd like to listen to you." 25

CHAPTER II. SECOND DAY'S MARCH

THE LONG COLUMN CRAWLS THROUGH RAIN AND COLD TO MURFREESBORO.

SI KLEGG was generous with his rail, as he was with all things among his comrades. He selected the softest part, in the center, for him self and Shorty, and then invited the other boys to share its hospitalities. They crowded up close to him and Shorty on either side, and there seemed to come a little warmth and dryness from the close contact of their bodies.

Si was so mortally tired that it seemed a great relief just to sit still and rest, though the rain continued to pour down.

Shorty fished some hardtack and fried pork out of his haversack, and also gave him a handful of ground coffee. Si munched the crackers and meat, with an occasional nip at the coffee. His spirits began to rise just a trifle. He was too healthy in body and mind to be totally downcast for long.

"'Tis n't much of a supper," he said to himself, "but it beats nothin' at all miles and miles. Besides, I was mighty lucky in gettin' the biggest rail. Some that the other boys has are no good at all. They'll let 'em right down in the mud. And most o' the boys has no rails at all. I'm awfully sorry for 'em."

Then he began to wonder if they were not overcautious about the nearness of the enemy. He had been in the army just long enough to have contempt for the stories that were always current with a certain class about the proximity and strength of the enemy. Shorty was not of that kind; but, then, Shorty was as liable to be imposed upon as anybody. 27

"How do you know there's a rebel battery on the hill out there?" he finally asked Shorty.

"They belted into the Oshkosh Terrors, out there to our right, killed a mule, scared two teamsters to death, and knocked over three or four kittles of coffee. It was awful unlucky about the coffee," answered Shorty.

"How long ago was that?"

"O, several hours ago. Just after we turned into the field, and long before you come up."

"Mebbe they've gone off now. Mebbe, if they're there yet, their ammynition's so soaked that they can't shoot. What do you say to startin' a little fire? It'd be an immense comfort. Unless we can dry out a little we'll be soaked into such mush before morning that we can't keep our shape, and they'll have to ladle us up with dippers."

"It's strictly against orders."

"You mean it was against orders several hours ago. I can't see nothin' on that hill over there. I've been watchin' for half an hour. There's nothin' movin'. Mebbe the orders has been changed, an' you haint heard about it," persisted Si. "Mebbe the Orderly that was bringing 'em 's stuck in the mud. Mebbe the rain's soaked 'em so's they can't be read. If anybody's got any dry matches I'm goin' to chance it." 28

Word was passed along the rail, and at length one of the boys was found to have some matches in a tin box which was proof against the rain.

Si got out his knife and whittled down a corner of the rail until he came to the dry part, and got off some shavings. Splinters were contributed by the others, and after several failures a small flame was started.

"Here, what in the world are you men doing there?" came in the stentorian tones of the Colonel, who it startled Si to discover was sitting a short distance behind him. "Put that light out this instant."

Even before the command could be obeyed, four great flashes burned out like lightning in the murky darkness on the hill-top. Four cannon roared, and four shells screeched toward Si and his companions, who instinctively toppled over backward into the mud. One of the shells struck in the mud a few yards in front, burst with a deafening report, and sent over them a deluge of very wet Tennessee real estate.

"The battery's out there yit, Si," said Shorty, as they gathered themselves up and carefully stamped out every spark of fire.

"It's 'tendin' strictly to business," remarked Wes Williams.

"Its ammynition don't seem to be a mite wet," added Jim Hutchinson.

"There, you see, now," said the Colonel sternly. "I'll tie up by the thumbs the next man that dares scratch a match."

"You jest kin if I do," muttered Si, scraping off some of the superabundant mud, and resuming his seat on the rail. "This dog's cured of suckin' eggs." He set the butt of his gun down in front of him, clasped his hands around the barrel, leaned his head on them, and went to sleep. 29

He was so tired that he could have slept anywhere and in any position. He was dimly conscious during the night that the rain ceased and that it turned bitter cold. He was not going to wake up for trifles like that, though. When Si went to sleep he devoted himself entirely to that and nothing else. It was one thing that he never allowed any interference with. 30

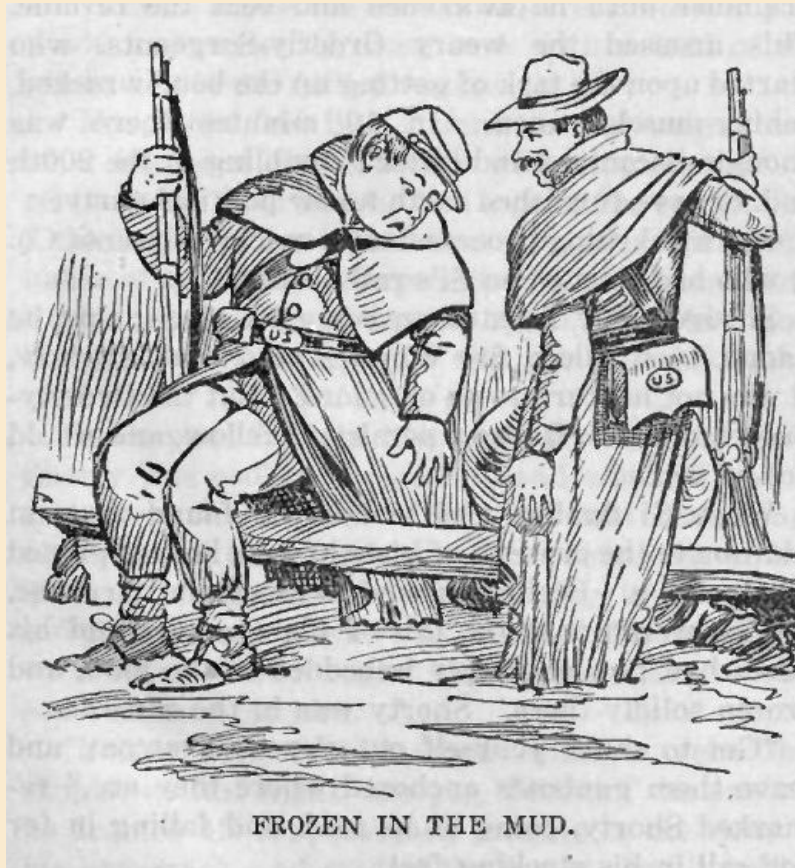
But with the first gray streaks of dawn in the east some uneasy, meddlesome spirit in the 200th Ind. happened to be awake, and he awakened the Adjutant, who cuffed and shook the headquarters drummer until he awakened and beat the reveille. This aroused the weary Orderly-Sergeants, who started upon the task of getting up the bone-wracked, aching-muscl'd men. In 10 minutes there was enough discontent and bitter grumbling in the 200th Ind. to have furnished forth a new political party.

The awakening process finally reached those of Co. Q who had roosted on Si's rail all night.

Si vigorously insisted on being let alone; that he hadn't been asleep five minutes, and that, anyhow, it was not his turn to go on guard. But the Orderly-Sergeant of Co. Q was a persistent fellow, and would not be denied.

When Si finally tried to rise he found that, in addition to the protests of his stiff legs, he was pinned firmly

down. Feeling around to ascertain the cause, he discovered that the tail of his overcoat and his shoes had become deeply imbedded in the mud, and frozen solidly there. Shorty was in the same fix.



FROZEN IN THE MUD.

"Got to shuck yourself out o' your overcoat, and leave them gunboats anchored where they are," remarked Shorty, doing as he said, and falling in for roll-call in his stocking feet.

After roll-call Si got a hatchet from one of the boys and chopped his and Shorty's shoes out. The overcoats were left for subsequent effort, for the first thing was to get some wood and water and cook breakfast. 31

The morning was bitter cold and the sky overcast, but Si felt that this was a thousand times better than the cheerless rain, which seemed to soak his very life out of him.

He pounded most of the frozen mud off his shoes, picked up the camp-kettle, and started off for wood and water, broke the ice on the creek, took a good wash, and presently came back with a load of dry pine and a kettle full of water.

"My joints feel like I think an old wagon does after it's gone about a year without greasing," he remarked to Shorty, who had a good fire going; "but I think that after I get about a quart o' hot coffee, inside of me, with a few pounds o' pork and crackers, I'll be nearly as good as new again. My, how good that grub does smell! An' did you ever see such a nice fire?"

He chopped his and Shorty's overcoats out while Shorty was cooking breakfast, and when at last he sat down on one end of his rail and ate enough toasted hard bread and crisp fried side-meat to feed a small family for a week, washing it down with something near a quart of black coffee sweetened with coarse brown sugar, life began again to have some charms for him.

"You're sure that dumbered battery's gone that shot at us last night, are you, Shorty?" he said, as he drained his cup, fastened it again to the strap of his haversack, and studied the top of the hill with a critical eye.

"They say it is," said Shorty, between bites. "While you was down at the crick a man come over from the camp o' the Oshkosh Terrors, and said two o' their companies 'd been onto the hill, and the rebels had gone." 32

"I wish them Oshkosh fellers'd mind their own business," said Si, irritably, as he picked up his gun and began rubbing the mud and rust off. "They're entirely too fresh for a new regiment. That battery was none of theirs. It was ours, right in our front, an' if they'd let it alone till after breakfast we'd gone up and taken it. It was just the right size for the 200th Ind., and we wanted a chance at it. But now they've had to stick in and run it off."

"Don't worry," said Shorty, fishing out another cracker; "it hasn't gone too far. 'Taint lost. You'll have a chance at it some other time. Mebbe to-day yet."

The army began to move out very promptly, and soon the 200th Ind. was called to take its place in the long column that crawled over the hills and across the valleys toward Murfreesboro, like some gigantic blue serpent moving toward his prey.

Miles ahead of the 200th Ind.'s place in the column the rebels were offering annoying disputation of farther progress. Lines as brown as the dried leaves on the oak trees would form on the hilltops, batteries would gallop into position, and there would be sharp bangs by the cannon and a sputter of musketry-fire.

Then the long, blue serpent would wriggle out of the road into the fields, as if coiling to strike. Union batteries would rush on to hilltops and fire across valleys at the rebel cannon, and a sputter of musketry would answer that from the leaf-brown ranks on the hilltops, which would dissolve and march back to the next hilltop, where the thing would be gone over again. The 200th Ind. would occasionally see one of these performances as it marched over and down one of the hills. 33

As the afternoon was wearing away the 200th Ind. kept nearing the front, where this was going on. Finally, 34

when the dull day was shading into dusk, and the brigade ahead of it was forming in the field at the foot of a hill to open a bickering fire against the dun line at the top, the 200th Ind. was taken off the road and marched away over to the left, where it was put into line in front of a dense grove of cedars.

"Capt. McGillicuddy," commanded the Colonel to the Captain of Co. Q, "advance your company as skirmishers to the edge of the cedars, and send a Corporal and five men into the thicket to see if there is anything there."

"Corporal Klegg," said the Captain, "take five men off the left of the company and go in and see what's in there."

Si was instantly fired with the importance of the duty assigned him. He sent two of his men to the left, two to the right, while he and Shorty, a little distance apart, struck for the heart of the thicket. They made their way with difficulty through the dense chaparral for some minute's, and then stopped, as they heard voices and the crashing of branches in front.

Si's heart thumped against his ribs. He looked over to his left, and saw Shorty standing there peering earnestly into the brush, with his gun cocked and ready to fire. He ran over to him and whispered:

"What do you see, Shorty?"



"Nothin' yit, but I expect to every minute," replied Shorty, without turning his intent eyes. Si's gun was already cocked, and he bent his head forward eagerly, to get a better view. But he could see nothing, except that the tops of the bushes were shaking. 35

"Shall we skip back an' report?" asked Si.

"I ain't goin' till I see something," said Shorty, stoutly.

"Nor me," echoed Si, rather ashamed that he had suggested it.

"Steady, there; steady, on the right! Come for ward with that left company," called out a stern voice in front.

"Must be a full regiment in there," whispered Si, craning his neck still farther. The tramping and crashing increased.

"Steady, men, I tell you! Steady! Press on the center," commanded the unseen Colonel. "Forward! Forward!"

In spite of his perturbation, Si noticed that the sounds did not seem to be coming any nearer.

"We must get a squint at 'em," he said, desperately, to Shorty. "Let's git down an' crawl forward. There must be an openin' somewhere."

They got down on their hands and knees, so as to avoid as many as possible of the thickly-interlaced branches. Soon they came to a rift which led to an opening of some rods in circumference. Raising their heads cautiously above a moss-covered log, they saw in the opening a stalwart Sergeant with five or six men. The Sergeant was standing there with his eyes fixed on the tops of the trees, apparently thinking of the next series of commands he was to give, while the men were busy breaking limbs off the cedars.

Si and Shorty immediately grasped the situation.

"Forward, Co. Q!" yelled Si at the top of his lungs. "Surrender, you consarned rebels, or we'll blow your heads off," he added, as he and Shorty jumped forward into the opening and leveled their guns on the squad.

"What'n thunder was you fellers makin' all that racket fur," Si asked the Sergeant as he was marching him back to the skirmish-line.

"Ouah Cunnel," explained the Sergeant, "wuz afeared you'ns 'd try to flank us through the thicket, and sent me down to make a rumpus and hold you back while he fit you in front. But whar's your company?"

"We'll come to it soon," said Si.

CHAPTER III. STILL ON THE MARCH

SI AND SHORTY STOP ON THE WAY LONG ENOUGH TO BAG SIX REBS.

SI CALLED out to the other boys by name to come up and join him.

The rebel Sergeant mentally tallied off each name as it was called. A flush of shame and anger mounted to his face as Si concluded.

"Gol darn hit," he said, "you'uns hain't got ez many ez we'uns; they hain't nigh ez good men ez we'uns, an' they'uns ain't heah. We'uns air Tennesseans, an' you'uns hain't."

"We've got enough, an' they're good enough," said Si sententiously. "Injianny turns out better men than Tennessee ever dreamed o' doing."

"I don't believe hit a mite," said the Sergeant, stooping down and picking up a piece of cedar, which made a formidable club. "We'uns is not a-gwine back with yo'uns nary a step. By rights, we'uns orter take yo'uns back with we'uns. But I'm willin' to call hit off, and let yo'uns go ef yo'uns 'll let we'uns go. Is hit a bargain?"

"Not by 40 rows o' apple trees it ain't," said Si, stepping back a little to get a better range, and fixing his bayonet. "I've set my heart on takin' you back to Co. Q, an' back to Co. Q you'll go, if Si Klegg knows himself." 38

"And you'll go in a hurry, too," said Shorty. "It's gettin' late, and I'm always afraid to be out after dark. Mosey, now!"

The other rebels were picking up clubs similar to the Sergeant's and casting their eyes on him for the signal to attack.

"See here," said Si desperately, cocking his gun. "Don't waste no more time in words. This hain't a debatin' society. You're goin' back to Co. Q or going somewhere else thunderin' quick. Sergeant, if you make a move agin me I'll surely blow your head off en you, an' jab my bayonet through the next man. My partner, Shorty, is a worse man than I am, an' I can't tell how many of you he'll kill. He's awful quick-tempered, too, towards evening, an' liable to begin shooting any minute without warnin'. It'll save several lives if you start right off on the jump, straight toward the rear, an' keep it up, with out looking to the right or left, until you reach Co. Q. You'll find the trail we made comin' in. Take it this minute."

The rebel Sergeant's eyes looked directly into the dark muzzle of Si's gun. They glanced along the barrel, and met one eye looking directly through the sights, while the other was closed, in the act of taking deliberate aim. He decided with great promptness that there were many reasons why he should prefer to be a live rebel in a Yankee prison, rather than a badly-disfigured dead one in a lonely cedar thicket. He dropped his club, turned around, and made his way along the path over which Si had come. The rest followed, with Si and Shorty a few paces in the rear.

Palpitating with pride, Si marched his prisoners up to the company, who gave him three cheers. The Captain ordered him to report with his prisoners to the Colonel.



SI REPORTS TO THE COLONEL.

The Colonel praised him with words that made his blood tingle.

40

The skirmishing off to the right had now ceased. The rebels had fallen back to the next hilltop, and the 200th Ind. was ordered to go into camp where it stood.



PREPARING SUPPER.

It was a fine place for a camp. The mud of the day before was frozen into stony hardness. The wagons had no difficulty in coming up. There was wood and water in abundance, and it seemed that the command "Break ranks March!" had hardly been uttered when great, bright, comfort-giving fires of fragrant cedar rails flashed

up all along the line.

Si and Shorty found several cedar stumps and logs, which they rolled together, and made a splendid fire. They cooked themselves an ample supper of fried pork, toasted hardtack, and strong, fragrant coffee, which they devoured with an appetite and a keen enjoyment only possible to healthy young men who have had a day of active maneuvering and marching in the crisp, chill air of December.

Then they gathered a lot of cedar branches, and made a thick mattress of them near the fire, upon which to spread their blankets for the night.

This was a new suggestion by Shorty, and an amazing success.

"I declare, Shorty," said Si, as he lay down on the bed to try it, "I often wonder where you get all your ideas. For a man who wasn't raised on the Wabash you know an awful sight. Mebbe, if you'd actually been born in Posey County you'd a-knowed enough to be a Jigadier-Brindle. Then I'd a lost you for a pard. This's a great invention. Why, it's softer and comfortabler than one of mother's feather beds. When I get out of the army, I'm going to sleep on nothin' but cedar boughs."

"There, you're at it again the Wabash forever," returned Shorty, good-humoredly. "They raise the finest corn and cattle in the world on the Wabash, I'll admit, and some fairly good soldiers. But where'll you get any cedars there to make beds with? You'll have to go back to sleepin' on wheat straw and corn husks, with chicken-feather pillers. But after the way you stood up to that rebel Sergeant to-day I'll never say another word about ager and milk-sick en the Wabash, and I'll lick any other feller that does. There wasn't a speck of ager in your gizzard when you ordered him forward, or you'd blow his Southern Confederacy head off."

"There was more ager there than you thought, Shorty," Si admitted softly. "I was awfully scared, for there was six to us two, and if that feller 'd had the right kind of sand he'd a-jumped me at once, before I could get my gun up. The moment he began to palaver I knowed I had him. But I'd 'a' died in my tracks before I'd let him go, and I knowed you would, too. You're the best pard a feller ever had."

And he reached over and took Shorty's rough hand and squeezed it affectionately.

"I can bet on you every time, even when I don't think it's quite safe to bet on myself. And, Shorty," he continued, with his eyes kindling, "it was worth all that we've gone through since we've been in the army, even all that time in the rain, to have the Colonel speak as he did to us before the rest of the boys. I'd be willing to enlist three years more if father and mother and sisters, and and Annabel could have heard him. I tell you, war has some glorious things in it, after all."

He sat there on his bed before the fire, with his feet curled up under him in the comfortable way that it takes months of field service to acquire, and gazed steadily into the bank of glowing coals. They suffused his face and body with their generous warmth, and helped lift his soul toward the skies.

He was much happier than he had ever been before in his life. The trials of the day before were hardly more than a far-away dream. The fears and anxieties of the coming battle were forgotten. The ruddy embers became a radiant vista, which Pride and Hope and Joy filled with all that he wanted to see. He saw there the dear old home on the Wabash, his father seated by the evening lamp reading the paper, while his mother knit on the other side of the table. His sisters were busy with some feminine trifles, and Annabel had come in to learn the news. They would hear what he had done, and of the Colonel's words of praise before the regiment, and his father's heart would glow with pride and his mother's eyes suffuse with tears. And Annabel but it passed words, passed thought, almost, what she would say and think.

Just then tattoo rang out clear and musical on the chill night air. The rattling military "good night" had never before had any special charms for Si. But now he thought it an unusually sweet composition.

"I declare," he said to Shorty, "that sheepskin band of our'n is improving. They're getting to play real well. But I ought to write a few lines home before taps. Got any paper. Shorty?"

"Much paper you'll find in this regiment after that rain," said Shorty contemptuously, as he knocked the ashes out of his pipe, and started to fall in for roll-call. "Every mite of paper anybody has was soaked to spitwads. But mebbe the Orderly might have a sheet."

After roll-call Si went to the Orderly-Sergeant.

Nothing in reason could then be refused Si, and the Orderly tore a couple of leaves out of the back of his treasured diary, which had escaped the rain, and handed them to him. Si fished his stub of a pencil out of his blouse-pocket, laid the paper on the back of a tin plate, and began:

*"Somewhere in Tennessee,
December the 27th, 1862.*

*"Dere Annabel: We're movin' on Murphysboro,
where we expect a big fite. There's bin fitin' goin'
on ever since we left Nashville, but the 200th Ind.
hain't had no hand in it so far, except this after
noon me and Shorty"*

He stopped, stuck his pencil in his mouth, and began to study just what words he should use to describe the occurrence. He wanted to tell her all that was bubbling in his heart, and yet he was afraid she would think him an intolerable boaster, if he told it in just the words that came to him. He was more afraid of that little country girl's disapproval than of all the rebels in Murfreesboro.

There were yells, the rattling of chains, and the sound of galloping hoofs coming toward him.

"Hi, there; stop them condemned mules!" shouted the voice of a teamster.

Si jumped to his feet, for the mules were charging directly for his fire, and were almost upon him. He dropped paper, pan and pencil, and jumped to one side, just in time to avoid a rush which scattered his fire, his carefully-prepared bed, and all his belongings under 24 flying, hard-pounding hoofs.



AFTER THE MULES STAMPEDED.

"Blast mules, anyhow," said the driver, coming up with his whip in his hand. "I didn't hev nothin' for them to eat but a cottonwood pole that I cut down in the bottom. But they must have smelt fodder over there somewhere, and they broke for it like the devil beatin' tanbark. Hope you weren't hurt, pard."

Si and Shorty fixed up their fire again, rearranged their scattered cedar boughs, and did the best they could with their torn blankets. 46

Si found that a mule's hoof had landed squarely on his tin plate, mashed all future usefulness out of it, and stamped his letter to Annabel into unrecognizability.

He threw the rent fragments into the fire, sighed deeply, and crawled under the blankets with Shorty, just as three sounding taps on the bass-drum commanded silence and lights out in the camp.

48

CHAPTER IV. THE SUNSHINE OF LIFE

SI FEELS ONCE MORE THAT LIFE IS REALLY WORTH LIVING.

THERE come times in every man's life when he feels himself part of the sunshine that illumines and warms the earth:

The lover, after he has won his best girl's consent.

The candidate, after he has been elected by a big majority.

The valedictorian, after his address has been received with bursts of ringing applause.

The clerk, after he has been admitted into partnership.

The next morning the camp of the 200th Ind. seemed to Si Klegg one of the most delightful places on earth.

The sun shone brightly and cheerily through the crisp December air. The fires of cedar rails sent up a pungent, grateful fragrance. Hardtack, pork and coffee tasted better than he had ever known them.

Everybody noticed him and spoke pleasantly to him. The other boys of Co. Q called out cheerily to him from their fires. Those from other companies would stroll over to take a look at him and Shorty, and his comrades would point them out proudly as fair specimens of Co. Q, and what it was capable of doing when called upon in an emergency.



THE ADJUTANT SMILED ON SI AND SHORTY.

The Captain spoke very cordially to him and Shorty, the busy Adjutant stopped and greeted them smilingly, and even the grave Colonel singled them out for a pleasant "Good morning" and an inquiry as to whether they had everything they wanted. It did not seem to Si that there was anything more on earth just then for which he could ask.

The 200th Ind. having been at the head of the column when it halted, was to take the rear for that day's march, and so remained in camp for a while to let the rest pass on. 49

After getting things ready for the march Si and Shorty took a stroll through the camp to see what was to be seen. They came across their prisoners seated around a fire, under guard.

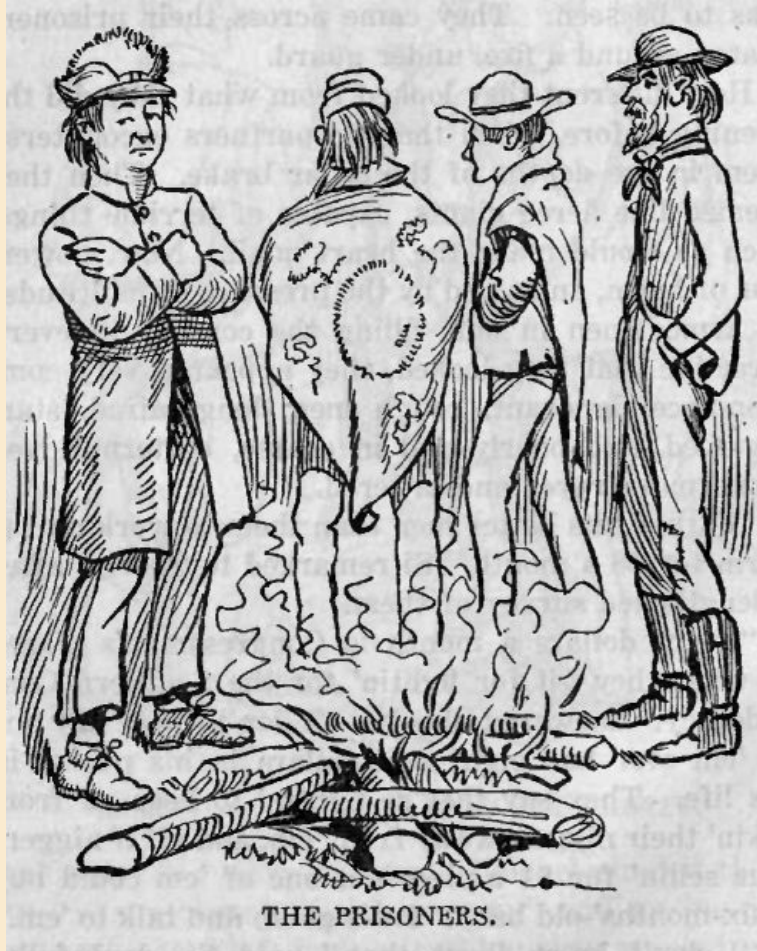
How different they looked from what they did the evening before, when the two partners encountered them in the depths of the cedar brake. Then they seemed like fierce giants, capable of terrible things, such as would make the heart quail. Now, powerless of harm, and awed by the presence of multitudes of armed men in blue filling the country in every direction that they looked, they appeared very commonplace, ignorant, rough men, long-haired, staring-eyed, and poorly-clad in coarse, butternut-dyed homespun, frayed and tattered.

"Father gits better men than them to work on the farm for \$8 a month," Si remarked to Shorty, after a lengthened survey of them.

"Eight dollars a month is Congressman's wages to what they git for fightin' for the Southern Confederacy," answered Shorty. "I don't s'pose any one of 'em ever had eight real dollars in his pocket in his life. They say they're fightin' to keep us from takin' their niggers away from 'em, and yit if niggers wuz sellin' for \$1 a-piece not one of 'em could buy a six-months'-old baby. Let's go up and talk to 'em."

"I don't know 'bout that," said Si, doubtfully. "Seems to me I wouldn't be particularly anxious to see men who'd taken me prisoner and talked very cross about blowin' my blamed head off." 50

"O, that's all right," answered Shorty confidently. "Words spoken in the heat of debate, and so on. They won't lay them up agin us. If they do, and want any satisfaction, we can give it to 'em. I kin lick any man in that crowd with my fists, and so kin you. We'll jest invite 'em to a little argyment with nature's weepens, without no interference by the guard. Come on."



The prisoners returned their greetings rather pleasantly. They were so dazed by the host of strange faces that Si and Shorty seemed, in a measure, like old acquaintances.

"Had plenty to eat, boys," asked Shorty, familiarly, seating himself on a log beside them and passing his pipe and tobacco to the Sergeant.

"Plenty, thankee," said the Sergeant, taking the pipe and filling it. "More'n we'uns 've had sence we left home, an' mouty good vittles, too. You Yanks sartinly live well, ef yo'uns don't do nothin' else."

"Yes," said Shorty, with a glance at his mud-stained garments, "we're bound to live high and dress well, even if we don't lay up a cent."

"You sartinly do have good cloze, too," said the Sergeant, surveying the stout blue uniforms with admiration. "Yo'uns' common soldiers 've better cloze than our officers. We'uns got hold o' some o' yo'uns' overcoats, and they wear like leather."

"There's leather in 'em," said Shorty unblushingly. "I tell you, old Abe Lincoln's a very smart man. He saw that this war was costin' a heap of money, especially for clothes. He got a bright idee that by soaking the clothes when they were new and green in the tan-vats, jest after the leather wuz taken out, they'd take up the strength o' the leather out o' the juice, and wear always. The idee worked bully, and now old Abe goes every morning to where they're makin' clothes and sees that every stitch is put to soak."

"Nobody but a Yankee'd thought o' that," said the rebel reflectively.

"You bet," assented Shorty. "Jeff Davis'd never think of it if he lived to be as old as Methuselah. But that's only the beginnin' of Abe Lincoln's smartness."

"He's a durned sight smarter man than we'uns thought he wuz when we begun the war," admitted the Sergeant. "But we'uns 'll wollop him yit, in spite of his smartness."

"We kin tell more about that a few months later," returned Shorty. "It's never safe to count the game until the last hand's played. We hain't fairly begun to lead trumps yit. But what are you fellers fighting for, anyhow?"

"We'uns foutin' for our liberty, and t' keep yo'uns from takin' our niggers away."

The reply that came to Shorty's lips was that they seemed to be losing a great deal of liberty rather than gaining it, but he checked this by the fear that it would be construed as an ungentlemanly boast of their capture. He said, instead:

"I never knowed as any of us wanted your niggers—me particularly. I wouldn't take a wagon load of 'em, even if the freight was prepaid. But, let me ask you, Sergeant, how many niggers do you own?"

"I don't own nary one."

"Does your father own any?"

"No, he don't."

"Does your mother, or brothers, uncles, aunts, or cousins own any?" persisted Shorty.

"No, thar ain't nary one owned in the hull family."

"Seems to me," said Shorty, "you're doin' a great deal of fightin' to keep us from takin' away from you something that we don't want and you hain't got. That's the way it looks to a man from north o' the Ohio River. Mebbe there's something in the Tennessee air that makes him see differently. I'll admit that I've

changed my mind about a good many things since we crossed the river."

"I've alluz said," spoke another of the prisoners, "that this wuz a rich man's wah and a pore man's fout."

"Well," said Shorty, philosophically, "for folks that like that sort o' fightin,' that's the sort o' fightin' they like. I'm different. I don't. When I fight it's for something that I've got an interest in."

While the discussion was going on Si had been studying the appearance of the prisoners. In spite of their being enemies his heart was touched by their comfortless condition. Not one of them had an overcoat or blanket. The Sergeant and a couple of others had over their shoulders pieces of the State House carpet, which had been cut up into lengths and sewed together for blankets. Another had what had once been a gaudy calico counterpane, with the pat tern "Rose of Sharon" wrought out in flaming colors. It was now a sadly-bedraggled substitute for a blanket. The others had webs of jeans sewed to gether.

The buttons were gone from their garments in many essential places, and replaced by strings, nails, skewers and thorns. Worst of all, almost every one of them was nearly shoeless. A sudden impulse seized Si.

"Shorty," said he, "these men are going up where the weather is very cold. I wish I was able to give each of them a warm suit of clothes and a blanket. I ain't though. But I tell you what I will do; I'll go down to the Quartermaster and see if he'll issue me a pair of shoes for each of 'em, and charge it to my clothin' account." 54

"Bully idee," ejaculated Shorty. "I'll go you halves. Mebbe if they git their understandin' into Yankee leather it'll help git some Yankee ideas into their understandin'. See?"

And Shorty was so delighted with his little joke that he laughed over it all the way to the Quarter master's wagon, and then rehearsed it for that officer's entertainment.

Fortunately, the Quartermaster had a box of shoes that he could get at without much trouble, and he was in sufficiently good humor to grant Si's request.

They added a warm pair of socks to each pair of shoes, and so wrought up the A. Q. M.'s sympathies that he threw in some damaged overcoats, and other articles, which he said he could report "lost in action."

They came back loaded with stuff, which they dumped down on the ground before the prisoners, with the brief remark:

"Them's, all yours. Put 'em on."

The prisoners were overwhelmed by this generosity on the part of their foes and captors.

"I alluz thought," said the Sergeant, "that you Yankees wuz not half so bad ez I believed that yo'uns wuz. Yo'uns is white men, if yo'uns do want to take away our niggers."

"Gosh," said the man who had uttered the opinion that it was a rich man's war and a poor man's fight, "I'd give all my interest in every nigger in Tennessee for that ere one pa'r o' shoes. They're beauties, I tell you. I never had so good a pa'r afore in all my life." 55

57

CHAPTER V. LINING UP FOR BATTLE

THE 200TH IND. GUARDS THE WAGON TRAIN, AND DEFEATS AN ATTACK.

"RAIN agin to-day," said Shorty, disgustedly, as, on the morning of Dec. 30, 1862, he crawled out of the shelter which he and Si had constructed by laying a pole in the crotches of two young cedars, and stretching their ponchos and pup-tents over it. "Doggoned if I don't believe Tennessee was left out in the flood, and they've been tryin' to make up for it ever since. I'd rather have the flood at once, and be done with it, for then I'd join the navy instead of paddlin' 'round in this dirty glue that they call mud." "Never saw such a grumbler, Shorty," said Si cheerily, as he punched the soaked embers together to start a blaze to boil their coffee by. "Last Summer the dust and dry weather didn't suit you. Do you want to do your soldierin' in heaven?"

"Hurry up with your grub, boys," said the Orderly-Sergeant, who came spattering through the muck of leaves and mud into which the camping-ground had been trampled. "The regiment's to move in 15 minutes. The 200th Ind. guards wagon-trains to-day. Yesterday Wheeler's cavalry got in among our wagons and raised thunder—burnt about a mile of 'em."

Shorty grumbled: "That means a tough day's work pryin' wagons out of the mud, and restin' ourselves between times runnin' after a lot o' skippin', cavortin' cavalry that's about as easy to ketch as a half-bushel o' fleas. Anything I hate it's rebel cavalry all tear-around and yell, and when you git ready to shoot they're on the other side o' the hill." 58

"Well," said Si, removing a slab of sizzling fat pork from the end of his rammer, laying it on his hardtack, and taking a generous bite, "we mustn't allow them to take no wagons away from the 200th Ind., slosh around as they may. We want all that grub ourselves."

"Well, hump yourselves," said the Orderly-Sergeant, as he spattered on; "fall in promptly when assembly blows. Got plenty o' cartridges?"

Two or three hours later every man in the 200th Ind., wet to the skin, and with enough mud on him to be assessable as real estate, was in a temper to have sassed his gentle old grandmother and whipped his best friend. He believed that if there was any thing under heavens meaner than Tennessee weather it was an army mule; the teamsters had even less sense and more contrariness than the mules; the army wagon was a disheartening device of the devil, and Tennessee roads had been especially contrived by Jeff Davis to break the hearts of Union soldiers.

The rain came down with a steady pelt that drove right through to the body. The wagon wheels sank into every mud-hole and made it deeper. Prying out the leading ones seemed only to make it worse for the next.

The discouraged mules would settle back in the breechings, and not pull an ounce at the most critical moments. The drivers would become blundering idiots, driveling futile profanity. In spite of all the mud the striving, pushing, pulling, prying, lifting, shouting 200th Ind. gathered up on their hands and clothes, it increased momentarily in the road.

59

The train had strung out over a mile or more of rocky ledges and abysses of mire. Around each wagon was a squad who felt deeply injured by the certainty that their infernal luck had given them the heaviest wagon, the worst mules, and the most exasperating driver in the whole division.

"I couldn't 've made a doggoneder fool than Groundhog, that teamster," said Shorty, laying down his rail for a minute's rest, "if I'd 'a' had Thompson's colt before my eyes for a pattern. That feller was born addled, on Friday, in the dark of the moon."

"Them mules," dolefully corroborated Si, scraping an acre, more or less, of red Tennessee soil from his overcoat with a stick, "need to be broke again with a saw-log. Luck for old Job that the devil didn't think o' settin' him to drive mules. He'd 'a-bin a-goner in less'n an hour."

"Doggone it, here they come," said Shorty, snatching up his gun.

Si looked in the direction of Shorty's glance. Out of the cedars, a mile or more away, burst a regiment of rebel cavalry, riding straight for the front of the train.

With his tribe's keen apprehension of danger, Groundhog had jumped from his saddle, nervously unhitched his mule, and sprung into the saddle again, ready for instant fight.

"Get off and hook that mule up agin," commanded Si sternly. "Now get on your mule and go to the head of your team, take the leaders by the bridles, and stay there."

"If you ain't standing there holding your mules when we come back I'll break your worthless neck."

60

The bugle sounded "Rally on the right flank," and Si and Shorty joined the others in a lumbering rush over the miry fields toward the right. Their soaked clothes hung about them like lead. They had not a spoonful of breath left when they got to where, half-a-mile away, Co. A had taken a position in the briars behind a rail fence, and had opened a long-ranged fire on the cavalry, which was maneuvering as if trying to discover a way to take the company in flank. Another fence ran at right angles away to the right of Co. A's position. The cavalry started for that.

"Capt. McGillicuddy," shouted the Colonel, "take your company back to that fence as quick as you can, run along back of it, and try to keep those fellows on the other side."

Away the panting company rushed for the fence. The field was overgrown with those pests of the Southern plowman, called locally "devil's shoe strings," which stretch from furrow-ridge to furrow-ridge, and are snares to any careless walker. The excited Indianians were constantly tripped on these, and fell headlong in the mud. Down Si and Shorty went several times, to the great damage of their tempers. But in spite of all rain, mud, lack of breath and devil's shoe-strings the company got to the fence in advance of the cavalry, and opened a scattering fire as each man could get his damp gun to go off. Si and Shorty ran back a little to a hillock, from which they could get long-distance shots on where the cavalry would probably try to tear down the fence.

"It's all of 600 yards, Si," said Shorty, as he leaned against a young oak, got his breath back in long gulps, and studied the ground. "We kin make it, though, with our Springfields, if they'll give us time to cool down and git our breaths. I declare I want a whole Township of fresh air every second. That last time I fell knocked enough breath out o' me to fill a balloon."

"There, they're sendin' out a squad now to go for the fence," said Si, putting his sight up to 600 yards. "I'll line on that little persimmon tree and shoot as they pass it. I'll take the fellow on the clay bank horse, who seems to be an officer. You take the next one on the spotted bay."

"Better shoot at the hoss," said Shorty, fixing his sight. "Bigger mark; and if you git the hoss you git the man."

The squad made a rush for the fence, but as the leader crossed the line Si had drawn on the persimmon tree through his sights, his musket cracked, and the horse reared and fell over in the mud. Shorty broke the shoulder of the next horse, and the rider had to jump off.

"Bully shots, boys. Do it again," shouted the Captain of Co. Q, hurrying some men farther to the right, to concentrate a fire upon the exposed point.

Si and Shorty hastily reloaded, and fired again at the rebels, who had pressed on toward the fence, in spite of the fall of their leader. But not having an object in line to sight on, Si and Shorty did not succeed in bringing anybody down. But as they looked to see the effect, they also saw a cannon-flash from a hill away off behind the cavalry, and the same instant its rifled shot took the top off the young oak about six feet above Si's head.

62



A CLOSE SHAVE.

Shorty was the first to recover his wits and tongue. "Doggoned if somebody else hain't been drawin' a bead on trees," he said, looking into Si's startled face. "Knows how to shoot, too."

"I didn't notice that measly gun come up there. Did you, Shorty?" said Si, trying to get his heart back out of his mouth, so that he could speak plainly.

"No. I didn't. But it's there all the same, and the fellers with it have blood in their eyes. Le's run over to where the other boys are. I'm a private citizen. I don't like so much public notice."

They joined the squad which was driving back the rebels who had started out to break the fence.

Presently the cavalry wheeled about and disappeared in the woods. The rear was scarcely out of sight, and the 200th Ind. was just beginning to feel a sense of relief, when there was a sputter of shots and a chorus of yells away off to the extreme left.

"Just as I expected," grumbled Shorty. "They are jumping the rear of the train now."

Leaving Co. A to watch the head of the train, the rest of the regiment bolted off on the double-quick for the rear. They did not get there a moment too soon. Not soon enough, in fact. As they came over the crest of the hill they saw Co. B, which had been with the rear, having more than it could attend to with a horde of yelling, galloping rebels, who filled the little valley. Co. B's boys were standing up manfully to their work, and popping away at the rebels from behind fences and rocks, but the latter had already gotten away from them a wagon which had been far to the rear, had cut loose the mules and run them off, and were plundering the wagon, and trying to start a fire under it.

The fusillade which the regiment opened as the men gained the crest of the hill, put a different complexion on the affair. The rebels recognized the force of circumstances, and speedily rode back out of range, and then out of sight. As the last of them disappeared over the hill the wearied regiment dropped down all around to rest.



GROUNDHOG FLED.

"We can't rest long, boys," said the sympathetic Colonel; "we've got to start these wagons along." Presently he gave the order:

"Go back to your wagons, now, and get them out as quickly as you can."

Si and Shorty took a circuit to the left to get on some sod which had not been trampled into mortar. They heard a volley of profanity coming from a cedar brake still farther to the left, and recognized the voice of their teamster. They went thither, and found Groundhog, who had fled from the scene, after the manner of his race, at the first sound of firing, but had been too scared to fasten up his traces when he unhitched his saddle mule. These had flapped around, as he urged his steed forward, and the hooks had caught so firmly into the cedars when he plunged into the thicket that he was having a desperate time getting them loose.

"You dumbled, measly coward," said Si. "I told you I'd blow your head offen you if you didn't stay by them mules. I ought to do it."

"Don't, Si," said Shorty. "He deserves it, and we kin do it some other time. But we need him now in our business. He hain't much of a head, but it's all that he's got and he can't drive without it. Le's git the mule loose first."

They got the mule out and turned him around toward the wagons.

"Now," said Shorty, addressing Groundhog, "you white-livered son-in-law of a jackass, git back to that wagon as fast as you kin, if you don't want me to run this bayonet through you."

There was more straining and prying in the dreary rain and fathomless mud to get the wagons started.

"Shorty," said Si, as they plodded alongside the road, with a rail on one shoulder and a gun on the other, "I really believe that this is the toughest day we've had yet. What d'you s'pose father and mother'd say if they could see us?"



EARNING THIRTEEN DOLLARS A MONTH.

"They'd probably say we wuz earning our \$13 a month, with \$100 bounty at the end o' three years.," snapped Shorty, who was in no mood for irrelevant conversation.

So the long, arduous day went. When they were not pulling, pushing, prying, and yelling, to get the wagons out of mudholes, they were rushing over the clogging, plowed fields to stand off the nagging rebel cavalry, which seemed to fill the country as full as the rain, the mud, the rocks and the sweeping cedars did. As night drew on they came up to lines of fires where the different divisions were going into line-of-battle along the banks of Stone River. The mud became deeper than ever, from the trampling of tens of thousands of men and animals, but they at least did not have the aggravating rebel cavalry to bother them. They found their division at last in an old cottonfield, and were instantly surrounded by a crowd of hungry, angry men.

"Where in blazes have you fellers bin all day?" they shouted. "You ought to've got up here hours ago. We're about starved."

"Go to thunder, you ungrateful whelps," said Si. "You kin git your own wagons up after this. I'll never help guard another wagon-train as long as I'm in the army."

CHAPTER VI. BATTLE OF STONE RIVER

THE 200TH IND. IS PRAISED FOR BRAVERY.

THE fagged-out 200th Ind. was put in reserve to the brigade, which lay in the line-of-battle. After having got the train safely into camp, the regiment felt that it was incapable of moving another foot.

While their coffee was boiling Si and Shorty broke off a few cedar branches to lay under them, and keep out the mud. The rain still drizzled, cold, searching and depressing, but they were too utterly tired to do anything more than spread their over coats on the branches, lay their blankets and ponchos over, and crawl in between.

In the few minutes which they allowed to elapse between getting into camp and going to sleep they saw and heard something of the preparations going on around them for the mighty battle, but body and brain were too weary to properly "sense" these. They hardly cared what might happen to-morrow. Rest for to-day was everything. They were too weary to worry about anything in the future.

"It certainly looks, Shorty," said Si, as he crawled in, "like as if the circus was in town, and the big show'd come off to-morrow, without regard to the weather."

"Let it come and be blamed to it," snorted Shorty. "They can't git up nothin' wuss'n we've bin havin' to-day, let them try their durndest. But I tell you, Mr. Si Klegg, I want you to lay mighty still to-night. If you git to rollin' around in your usual animated style and tanglin' up the bedclothes, I'll kick you out into the rain, and

make you stay there. Do you hear me?"

"You bet I'll lay quiet," said Si, as together they gave the skillful little kick only known to veteran campaigners by which they brought the blankets snugly up around their feet. "You could sooner wake up a fence-rail than me. I want to tell you, too, not to git to dreamin' of pryin' wagons out of the mud, and chasin' rebel cavalry. I won't have it."

The reveille the next morning would have promptly awakened even more tired sleepers than Si and Shorty. Even before the dull, damp drums began rolling and the fifes shrieking the air of enforced gaiety along the sinuous line of blue which stretched for miles through red, muddy cottonfields and cedar tangles wet as bathroom sponges, there came from far away on the extreme right a deepening roll of musketry, punctuated with angry cannon-shots and the faint echo of yells and answering cheers.

"That's McCook opening the battle," said the officers, answering the anxious looks of the men. "He's to hold the rebels out there, while Crittenden sweeps around on the left, captures Murfreesboro, and takes them in the rear."

Miles away to the left came the sound of musketry and cannons, as if to confirm this. But the firing there died down, while that to the right increased with regular, crashing volleys from muskets and artillery.

69

The 200th Ind. was in that exceedingly trying position for soldiers, where they can hear everything but see nothing. The cedar thicket in which they stood shut off the view in every direction. The Colonel kept officers and men standing strictly in place, ready for any contingency. Si and Shorty leaned on their muskets and anxiously watched the regimental commander as he sat rigidly in his saddle, with his fixed gaze bent in the direction of the awful tumult. The Adjutant had ridden forward a little ways to where he could get a better view. The other officers stood stiffly in their places, with the points of their drawn swords resting on the ground, and their hands clasped on the hilts, and watched the Colonel intently. Sometimes they would whisper a few words to those standing near them. The Captain of Co. Q drew geometric figures in the mud with the point of his sword.

Constantly the deafening crash came nearer, and crept around farther to the right.

Si gave a swift glance at Shorty. His partner's teeth were set, his face drawn and bloodless, his eyes fixed immovably on the Colonel.

"Awful fightin' goin' on out there, Shorty," said Si, in hushed voice. "I'm afraid they're lickin' our fellers."

"Confound it!" snorted Shorty, "why in thunder don't they move us out, and give us something to do? This is hell standin' here listenin'."

A teamster, hatless and coatless, with his hair standing up, came tearing through the brush, mounted on his saddle-mule.

70

A chorus of yells and curses greeted his appearance. It was immense relief for the men to have something to swear at.



"Run, you egg-sucking hound.
Run, you scald-headed dominie."

"Somebody busted a cap in your neighborhood, old white-liver."

71

"Seen the ghost of a dead rebel, Pilgarlic?"

"Pull back your eyes, you infernal mulewhacker. A limb'll brush 'em off."

"Look at his hair standin' up stiffer'n bristles on a boar's back."

"Your mules got more sand 'n you. They're standing where you left 'em."

"Of course, you're whipped and all cut to pieces. You was that when you heard the first gun crack."

"Get out of the way, and let him run himself to death. That's all he's fit for."

"You've no business in men's clothes. Put on petticoats."

"Go it, rabbit; go it, cotton-tail you've heard a dog bark."

"Chickee chickee skip for the barn. Hawk's in the air."

"Let him alone. He's in a hurry to get back and pay his sutler's bill."

The teamster gasped out:

"You'd better all git out o' here as fast as the Lord'll let you. Johnson's Division's cut all to pieces and runnin'. There'll be a million rebels on top o' you in another minnit."

"Capt. McGillicuddy," said the Colonel sternly, but without turning his head, "either bayonet that cowardly rascal or gag him and tie him to a tree."

The Captain turned to give the order to Corp'l Klegg, but the teamster struck his mule with his whip, and went tearing on through the brush before the order could be given.

Some severely-wounded men came slowly pushing their way through the chaparral.

"It's awful hot out there," they said. "The rebels got the start of us, and caught our battery horses off to water. They outflanked us bad, but the boys are standin' up to 'em and they're gettin' help, an 'll lick the stuffin' out of 'em yet."

The regiment gave the plucky fellows a cheer.

A riderless horse, frantic from his wounds and the terrific noise, tore through the brush, and threatened to dash over Co. Q. Si and Shorty saw the danger, and before the Captain could give an order they sprang forward, and, at considerable risk, succeeded in getting hold of the reins and partially calming the poor brute. The eagles on the saddle cloth showed that he belonged to a Colonel. He was led to the rear, and securely haltered to a young cedar. The incident served a purpose in distracting for awhile the attention of the regiment.

The noise in front and to the right swept farther away for a little while, and the men's hearts rose with a cheer.

"Now the reinforcements are getting in. Why in the world don't they send us forward?" they said.

The Colonel still sat rigidly, with his face straight to the front.

Then the noise began to roll nearer again, and the men's hearts to sink.

The wounded men coming back became a continuous procession. They spoke less confidently, and were anxious to know what was taking place on other parts of the line.

"The whole infernal Southern Confederacy's out there," said one boy, who was holding his shattered right hand in his left, with his thumb pressed hard on the artery, to stanch the blood, "in three lines-of-battle, stretching from daybreak to sunset. The boys have been standing them off bully, though, but I don't know how long they can keep it up. Thomas and Crittenden ought to be walking right over every thing, for there can't be anybody in front of them. They're all out there."

Two musicians came laboring through, carrying a stretcher on which was an officer with part of his face shot away. Si felt himself growing white around the mouth and sick at the stomach, but he looked the other way, and drew in a long, full breath.

The storm now seemed to be rolling toward them at railroad speed. Suddenly the woods became alive with men running back, some with their guns in their hands, many without. Some were white with fear, and silent; some were in a delirium of rage, and yelling curses. Officers, bareheaded, and wildly excited, were waving their swords, and calling regiments and companies by name to halt and rally.

The Adjutant came galloping back, his horse knocking the fugitives right and left. He shouted, to make himself heard in the din:

"The whole division is broken and going back. Our brigade is trying to hold the rebels. They need us at once."

The Colonel turned calmly in his saddle, and his voice rang out clear, distinct, and measured, as if on parade:

"Attention, 200th Indiana!"

"Load at will LOAD!"

A windrow of bright ramrods flashed and weaved in the air. A wave of sharp, metallic clicks ran from one end of the line to the other.

"Shoulder ARMS!"

"Right FACE!"

"Forward MARCH!"

What happened immediately after emerging from the cedars Si could never afterward distinctly recall. He could only vaguely remember as one does the impression of a delirium seeing, as the regiment swung from column into line, a surging sea of brown men dashing forward against a bank of blue running along a rail fence, and from which rose incessant flashes of fire and clouds of white smoke. The 200th Ind. rushed down to the fence, to the right of the others; the fierce flashes flared along its front; the white smoke curled upward from it. He did not remember any order to begin firing; did not remember when he began. He only remembered presently feeling his gun-barrel so hot that it burned his hand, but this made him go on firing

more rapidly than before. He was dimly conscious of his comrades dropping around him, but this did not affect him. He also remembered catching sight of Shorty's face, and noticing that it was as black as that of a negro, but this did not seem strange.

He felt nothing, except a consuming rage to shoot into and destroy those billows of brown fiends surging incessantly toward him. Consciousness only came back to him after the billows had surged back ward into the woods, leaving the red mud of the field splotted with brown lumps which had lately been men.

75

As his mind cleared his hand flinched from the hot gun-barrel, and he looked down curiously to see the rain-drops turn into steam as they struck it. His throat was afire from the terrible powder thirst. He lifted his canteen to his lips and almost drained it. He drew a long breath, and looked around to see what had happened since they left the cedars. Shorty was by his side, and unhurt. He now understood why his face was so black. He could feel the thick incrustation of powder and sweat on his own. Several of Co. Q were groaning on the ground, and the Captain was detailing men to carry them back to where the Surgeon had established himself. Two were past all surgery, staring with soulless eyes into the lowering clouds.

"Poor Bill and Ebe," said Si, gazing sorrowfully at the bodies. "Co. Q will miss them. What good boys they—"

"Were" stuck in his throat. That those strong, active, ever-ready comrades of a few minutes before now merely "were" was unspeakable.

His thoughts were distracted by a rebel battery on the hill sending a volley of shells at the fence. Some went over, and tore gaps in the cedars beyond. One struck the corner of the fence near him, and set the rails to flying.

"I like fence-rails in their place as well as any man," said Shorty, as they dodged around; "but a fence-rail's got no business sailin' 'round in the air like a bird."

An Aid rode up to the Colonel.

"The General's compliments, Colonel. He directs me to express to you his highest compliments on the splendid manner in which you have defended your position. You and your men have done nobly. But we are outflanked, and it will be necessary to retire to a new position about a half-mile to the rear. You will withdraw your regiment by companies, so as to attract as little attention from the enemy as possible. As soon as they are under cover of the cedars you will move rapidly to the new position."

76

"Very well," said the Colonel, saluting. "You will be good enough to say to the General that my men and myself appreciate highly his praise. We are proud to receive it, and shall try to deserve it in the future. His orders shall be immediately obeyed."

"They call this a civil war," said Shorty, as an other volley of shells tore around. "Seems to me sometimes that it's too durned civil. If we're goin' to git out of here, we might save compliments for a quieter time."

One by one the companies filed back into the cedars, Co. Q being last. Just as they started the rebels on the opposite hill discovered the movement, raised a yell, and started across the field.

"Halt Front!" commanded the Captain. "Those fellows are too tumultuous and premature. We must check them up a little. Wait till they come to that little branch, then everybody pick his man and let him have it. Aim below the belt."

The frenzy of the first struggle was now gone from Si's mind; instead had come a deadly determination to make every shot tell.

"I'm goin' to fetch that mounted officer on their right," he said to Shorty and those around him.

"Very well," said Shorty. "I'll take that Captain near him who's wavin' his sword and yellin'. The rest o' you fellers pick out different men."

77

The rebel line was in the weeds which bordered the branch when the Captain gave the order to fire.

When the smoke arose the mounted officer and the yelling Captain were down.

"If somebody else didn't get them, we did," said Shorty, as they turned and rushed back into the cedars.

The rebels were only checked momentarily. They soon came swarming on, and as Co. Q crashed through the cedars the rebels were yelling close behind. Fortunately, they could not do any effective firing, on account of the brush. But when they came to the edge of the thicket there was a long run across a furrowed, muddy cottonfield, to reach the knoll on which the brigade was re-forming. The battery was already in action there, throwing shells over the heads of Co. Q at the rebels swarming out of the cedars in pursuit.

Si and Shorty threw away overcoats, blankets, haversacks and canteens everything which would impede their running, except their guns and cartridge-boxes. Their caps were gone, and Si had lost one shoe in the mud. They all sat down on the ground for a minute and panted to get their breath.

The rebels were checked, but only temporarily. They were thronging out in countless multitudes, lining up into regiments and brigades, preparatory to a rush across the field upon the brigade. Away to the right of the brigade rebel batteries had been concentrated, which were shelling it and the ground to the rear, to prevent any assistance being sent it.

78

"Captain," said the Colonel, riding up to Co. Q, "the General says that we have got to stay here and hold those fellows back until the new line can be formed along the pike. We haven't ammunition enough for another fight. You'll have to send a Corporal and a squad back to the pike to bring up some more. Pick out men that'll be sure to come back, and in a hurry."

"Corp'l Klegg," said the Captain, without an instant's hesitation, "you hear what's to be done. Take five men and go."

Si looked around to see if there was someone he could borrow a shoe from. But that was hardly a time when men were likely to lend shoes. He picked Shorty and four others. They flung down their guns and started on a run for the pike.

The batteries were sweeping the fields with shells, but they were so intent on their errand that they paid no attention to the demoniac shrieks of the hurtling pieces of iron.

They gained the other side of the field, but as they entered the welcome shelter of the woods they

encountered an officer with a drawn sword, commanding a line of men.

"Stop there, you infernal, cowardly rascals," he yelled. "Pick up those guns there, and get into line, or I'll shoot you. You, Corporal, ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"We're after ammunition for the 200th Ind.," gasped Si. "We must have it right away. Where's the division ammunition train?"

"That ammunition story's played. Can't work it on me. Where's your regiment? Where's your caps? Where's your shoes? Where's your guns? You're rattled out of your senses. Stop here and cool off. Pick up guns there and fall into line." 79

"Name o' God, Lieutenant," said Shorty excitedly. "This's no time for any foolishness. Our regiment's out there on the hill without any ammunition. The rebels are gittin' ready to jump it, four or five to one. Don't fool, for heaven's sake. There's not a minute to waste. Come with us and help us git the ammunition. That's a blame sight more important than stoppin' these here runaways, who're no good when they are stopped. Come along, for God's sake."

His earnestness impressed the Lieutenant.

"Lieut. Evans," he called out, "take command of the line while I go back with these men to the ammunition-train. I can get it quicker for them than they can. Your Colonel should have sent a commissioned officer with you."

"The Colonel needs all the officers he has left with him," panted Shorty, running ahead of the rest. "Everybody back there's got all he can attend to, and we couldn't really be spared."

There was a crowd of similar men surging around the ammunition wagons, each eager to get his load and rush back. The covers of the wagons had been torn off, and a man stood in each, pitching the boxes to the clamoring details. All were excited and reckless. The pitching would be wild, or the catching bad, and occasionally a box would strike a man on the head or body and knock him down. He would scarcely stop to swear, but snatch up his precious box and rush off toward his regiment. 80

"Open out here, let us in," commanded the Lieutenant, striking right and left with the flat of his sword. It was not a moment for gentle courtesies. The crowd opened up, and Si and Shorty pushed in near the wheels.

"Now give us six boxes in a hurry," commanded the Lieutenant.

Si caught the first box, Shorty the second, and before the Lieutenant was hardly done speaking the rest had theirs, and started back on the run, accompanied by the Lieutenant. The boxes were very heavy and the mud was deep, but they went faster than they had ever done, even when running from the rebels.

"I'm awfully afraid you'll have a time getting across the field there," said the Lieutenant, as they came to the edge, and he surveyed the ground in front doubtfully. "Lieut. Evans says they've moved a battery up closer, and are sweeping the field with canister."

"We don't care what they're shootn'," said Si resolutely. "We're goin' back to the regiment with these boxes, or die a-tryin'."

"Go on, then, and God help you," said the Lieutenant. "I'd go with you if I could do any good."

Si arranged his box for a desperate rush. A blast of canister swept through, cutting down shrubs, splattering the mud, and shrieking viciously.

"Let's get as far as we can before they fire again," he shouted, and plunged forward. Half-way across the field his foot caught in a devil's shoe-string, and down he went in the mud, with the heavy box driving him deeper. 81

Just then another blast of canister hurtled across the field.



A LUCKY FALL.

"Golly, it was lucky, after all, that I was tripped," said Si, rising, stunned and dripping. "That load of canister was meant for me personally."

Two minutes later he flung the box down before the company, and sank panting on the ground. The others came up after. Some had teen grazed by canister, but none seriously wounded. They arrived just in the nick of time, for the regiment had expended its last cartridge in repulsing the last assault, and was now desperately fixing bayonets to meet the next with cold steel. The lids of the boxes were pried off with bayonets, and the Sergeants ran along the companies distributing the packages. The assault was met with a stream of fire, given with steady deadliness, which sent the rebels back to their covert.

An Aid dashed across the field to the brigade commander.

"The line is now formed," he said. "Retire your command to it."

That night, after the battle had ceased, Si and Shorty were seated on a rail by the Nashville pike munching rations which they had luckily found in a thrown-away haversack. They were allowed no fires, they had no blankets nor overcoats, and it was bitter cold.

"Shorty, you said last night you was sure that they couldn't git up nothin' to-day that'd be as bad as what we had yesterday," said Si. "I bel'eve that I'd rather guard wagon-trains and fight cavalry than have such another day as this."

"I think the lake of brimstone'd be a pleasant change from this," snorted Shorty.

CHAPTER VII. AFTER THE FIRST DAY

THE DISCOMFORTS OF THAT LAST NIGHT OF 1862.

IT WAS so desperately cold and comfortless that Si and Shorty felt that they must do something or perish.

There were some fragments of cracker-boxes near. With these they dug a hole several inches deep, put some splinters in, and started a stealthy blaze. They were careful to sit on the side toward the rebels, the better to hide from them any sight of it. It was a very small fire, but there was more relief in it than Si had before gotten from those a thousand times larger. It kept his unshod foot from freezing, and brought the blood back to his numb hands.

"Just think, Shorty," said Si; "night before last we had a whole panel of fence on the fire, and all our

blankets and overcoats, and yet you kicked. I believe this is a judgment on you for not being thankful for what you receive."

"Judgment be blowed," ejaculated Shorty. "This ain't no judgment; it's just durned luck that is, what isn't foolishness in sendin' a boy to mill. If we'd had only half as many men out there in the cedars as the rebels had we'd licked thunder out of 'em. We simply couldn't whip four or five to one. McCook didn't size up his job right."

"Well, we have something to be thankful for," said Si, determined to see the bright side of things. "Neither of us got hurt, which is a blessing."

"Don't know whether it is or not. If we are goin' to freeze to death before mornin' I'd rather've bin shot the first volley."

The misty darkness around them was filled with noise and motion. Men who had become separated from their regiments were wandering around trying to find them, in the bewildering maze of men, wagons and animals. Officers were calling aloud the names of regiments to bring together stragglers. Aids were rushing around to find Generals and Colonels to give and receive orders and instructions. Regiments and batteries were marching hither and yon to get into position and complete the formation of the line for the morrow's battle. The 200th Ind., which had fallen back in good order with its brigade, was well together, and made an island around which a restless sea of humanity flowed and eddied. Cheer less as was its bivouac in the cold mud, yet it was infinitely preferable to being lost in the inextricable confusion that reigned over those cottonfields on that sorrowful night of Dec. 31, 1862.

"I'm not goin' to freeze to death," said Si, starting up, at last. "I'm going to look around and see if I can't find something to make us more comfortable. Shorty, hold on to that hole in the ground. It's all that we've got left in the world, and if we lose that I don't know what'll become of us."

"Better stay here, and not go wanderin' off into that mob," remonstrated Shorty. "You'll git lost entirely, and never find your way back."

"I'll not get lost," responded Si. "I've got the lay o' the ground in my mind. If I did," he continued proudly, "it'd be easy to find you agin. Everybody knows where the 200th Ind. is."

He went only a little ways, and carefully, at first.

He was rewarded by kicking against an object which upon examination proved to be a well-filled haver sack, which someone had flung away in his hurry. He carried it back, rejoicing, to Shorty.



FINDING A GOOD THING.

"Finders is keepers," said Shorty, unbuckling the knapsack. "We'll just call this fair exchange for what we've thrown away in to-day's hustle. Let's open her up."

"Some new recruit's," said Si, as they examined the inside. "Looks like the one I packed from Injianny. What's this? I declare if it ain't a pair o' new shoes, and about my size; and some socks. I tell you, Shorty, I'm in luck."

He pulled the muddy socks off his shoeless foot, and drew on one of the warm, homemade affairs, and then the shoe. Both fitted well. He put on the other sock and shoe, and life at once seemed brighter.

"Shorty," said he, "I shouldn't wonder if I could find a blanket and an overcoat. You keep on holding that hole down, and I'll go out agin. I won't be gone long, for I'm dead tired. Just as soon as I find an overcoat or a blanket to put between us and the mud, I'll come back and we'll lay down. Every joint in me aches."

He started off less carefully this time. His new shoes made him feel more like walking. He was some distance from the regiment before he knew it. He found an overcoat. It had been trampled into the mud by thousands of passing feet, but still it was an overcoat, and it was not a time to be too nice about the condition of a garment. Presently he found a blanket in similar condition. He pulled on the overcoat, and threw the blanket over his shoulders. He felt warmer, but they were very heavy. Still, he thought he would go on a little ways farther, and perhaps he would find another overcoat and blanket, which would fix out both him and his partner.

87

All this time men were sweeping by him in companies, regiments and squads; batteries were moving in all directions, and mounted officers were making their way to and fro. Filling up the spaces between these were hundreds of men, single and in small groups, wandering about in search of their regiments, and inquiring of everyone who would stop to listen to them as to the whereabouts of regiments, brigades and divisions. No one could give any satisfactory information. Organizations which had formed a line two miles long in the morning had been driven back, frequently in tumult and disorder, for miles through the thickets and woods. Fragmentary organizations had been rallied from time to time. A fragment of a regiment would rally at one point with fragments of other regiments and make a stand, while other regiments would rally at widely-separated places and renew the fight, only to be pushed back again toward the Nashville Pike. Regiments and brigades that had remained nearly intact had been rapidly shifted from one point to another, as they were needed, until the mind could not follow their changes, or where nightfall had found them, or whither they had been shifted to form the new line.

At last Si succeeded in picking up another over coat and blanket out of the mud, and started to go back to the regiment.

88

But where was the regiment? He had long since lost all track of its direction. He had been so intent upon studying the ground for thrown-away clothing that he had not noticed the course he had taken.

It suddenly dawned on him that he was but one drop in that great ocean of 35,000 men, surging around on the square miles lying between the Nashville Pike and Stone River. He looked about, but could see nothing to guide him. His eyes rested everywhere on dark masses of moving men. Those immediately around him were inquiring weariedly for their own regiments; they had no patience to answer inquiries as to his own. Discouraged, he determined to walk as straight ahead as possible in the direction which he had come, and see where that would bring him. He was so tired that he could scarcely drag one foot after another, but he plodded on. At length he drew out of the throng a little, and saw that he was approaching the banks of a large stream. This disheartened him, for they had not been within miles of Stone River during the day. He saw a group of men huddled around a larger fire than had been permitted near the front. This, too, was discouraging, for it showed that he had been forging toward the rear. But he went up to the group and inquired:

"Do any o' you know where the 200th Ind. is?"

The men had become wearied out answering similar questions, and were as cross as soldiers get to be under similar circumstances.

"The 200th Ind.," snapped one; "better go back to the rear-guard and inquire. The straggler-ketchers 've got 'em."

89

"No," said another; "they skipped out before the rear-guard was formed, and were all drowned trying to swim the Cumberland."

"They say the Colonel went on foot," said a third, "and was the first man in the regiment to reach Nashville. Made the best long-distance run on record."

"You infernal liars," roared Si; "if I wasn't so tired I'd lick the whole caboodle of you. But I'll say this: Any man who says that the 200th Ind. run, or that our brave Colonel run, or that any man in it run, is a low-down, measly liar, and hain't a grain a' truth in him, and he daresn't take it up."

It was a comprehensive challenge, that would have met with instantaneous response at any other time, but now the men were too exhausted for such vanities as fisticuffs.

"O, go off and find your rattled, lousy Hoosiers," they shouted in chorus. "Go talk to the Provost-Marshal about 'em. He's got the most of 'em. The rest are breaking for the Wabash as fast as their legs can carry them. Don't be bothering us about that corn-cracking, agery crowd."

"Where'd you leave your regiment, you chuckle-headed straggler?"

"You were so rattled you couldn't tell which way they went."

"Where's your gun?"

"Where's your cartridge-box and haversack?"

"Where's your cap?"

"You were so scared you'd 'a' thrown away your head if it'd been loose!"

"Clear out from here, you dead-beat."

90



SI'S CHALLENGE.

Si was too sick at heart to more than resolve that he would remember each one of them, and pay them off at some more convenient time. He turned and walked back as nearly as possible in the direction in which he had come. He knew that his regiment was at the front, and he had been forging toward the rear. He knew vaguely that the front was some where near the Nashville Pike, and as he wearily wound around and through the bewildering masses, he inquired only for the Nashville Pike.

He reached the Pike, at last, just as he was sinking with fatigue. The dreary rain had set in again, and he had determined to give the thing up, and sit down, and wait for morning. He saw a feeble glimmer of light at a distance, and decided to make one more effort to reach it, and inquire for his regiment.

"Partner, have you any idee where the 200th Ind. is?" he said meekly to the man who was crouching over the fire in the hole.

"Hello, Si," said Shorty. "I had given you up long ago. Of course, you went off and got lost in that mob, as I told you you would. Next time you'll have sense enough to mind what I say."

"O, Shorty," groaned Si, "don't say nothing. I've nigh walked my legs offen me. I think I've tramped over every foot of ground betwixt here and Overall's Crick. But I've brought back two overcoats and two blankets."

"That's bully," answered Shorty, much mollified. "Say, I've got an idee. D'you see that white thing over there? That's a wagon. The mules 've been taken away, and it's been standing there for an hour. I've seen the Lieutenants and the Orderly-Sergeant sneak back there, and I know what they're up to. They're goin' to sleep in the wagon. Of course, they're officers, and got the first pick. But we kin lay down under it, and get out of the rain. Be sides, it looks as if the ground was drier up there than it is down here."

92

They slipped quietly back to the wagon, and were lucky enough to find a little hay in the feed-box, which they could lay down to spread their blankets upon. They pulled the tail-gate off and set it up on the side from which the rain was coming.

"There," said Shorty, as they crawled in. "Si, what'd you do without me? Ain't I a comfort to you every minute of your life?"

"You certainly are, Shorty," said Si, as he fell asleep.

CHAPTER VIII. A GLOOMY NEW YEAR'S DAY

THE TWO ARMIES LIE FROWNING AT EACH OTHER.

SI WAS awakened the next morning by the rain dashing down squarely on his upturned face. He was lying on the flat of his back, sleeping the sleep of the utterly outworn, and he got the full force of the shower.

"Plague take it, Shorty," said he, kicking his snoring partner, "you're at your old tricks again scrougin' me out o' the tent while I'm asleep. Why can't you lay still, like a white man?"

"It's you, dod rot you," grumbled Shorty, half-awakening. "You're at your old tricks o' kickin' the tent down. You need a 10-acre lot to sleep in, and then you'd damage the fence-corners."

They were both awake by this time, and looked around in amazement.

"We went to sleep nice and comfortable, under a wagon last night," said Shorty, slowly recalling the circumstances. "The two Lieutenants and the Orderly had the upper berth, and we slept on the ground-floor."

"Yes," assented Si; "and someone's come along, hitched mules to our bedroom and snaked it off."

"Just the way in the condemned army," grumbled Shorty, his ill-humor asserting itself as he sat up and looked out over the rain-soaked fields. "Never kin git hold of a good thing but somebody yanks it away. S'pose they thought that it was too good for a private soldier, and they took it away for some Major-General to sleep under."

94



"Well, I wonder what we're goin' to do for grub?" said Si, as his athletic appetite began to assert itself.

"Our own wagons, that we had such a time guarding, are over there in the cedars, and the rebels are filling themselves up with the stuff that we were so good to bring up for them."

"It makes me jest sizzle," said Shorty, "to think of all we went through to git them condemned wagons up where they'd be handiest for them."

Si walked down the line toward where the Regimental Headquarters were established under a persimmon tree, and presently came back, saying:

"They say there's mighty small chance of gettin' any grub to-day. Wheeler burnt three or four miles of our wagons yesterday, and's got possession of the road to Nashville. We've got to fight the battle out on empty stomachs, and drive these whelps away before we kin get a square meal."

Jan. 1, 1863, was an exceedingly solemn, unhappy New Year's Day for the Union soldiers on the banks of Stone River. Of the 44,000 who had gone into the line on the evening of Dec. 30, nearly 9,000 had been killed or wounded and about 2,000 were prisoners. The whole right wing of the army had been driven back several miles, to the Nashville Pike. Cannon, wagon-trains, tents and supplies had been captured by the rebel cavalry, which had burned miles of wagons, and the faint-hearted ones murmured that the army would have to surrender or starve.

There was not ammunition enough to fight an other battle. The rebel army had suffered as heavily in killed and wounded, but it was standing on its own ground, near its own supplies, and had in addition captured great quantities of ours.

The mutual slaughter of the two armies had been inconceivably awful inexpressibly ghastly, shuddering, sickening. They had pounded one another to absolute exhaustion, and all that sullen, lowering, sky-weeping

96

Winter's day they lay and glared at one another like two huge lions which had fanged and torn each other until their strength had been entirely expended, and breath and strength were gone. Each was too spent to strike another blow, but each too savagely resolute to think of retreating.

All the dogged stubbornness of his race was now at fever point in Si's veins. Those old pioneers and farmers of the Wabash from whom he sprang were not particularly handsome to look at, they were not glib talkers, nor well educated. But they had a way of thinking out rather slowly and awkwardly it might be just what they ought to do, and then doing it or dying in the effort which made it very disastrous for whoever stood in their way. Those who knew them best much preferred to be along with them rather than against them when they set their square-cornered heads upon accomplishing some object.

Si might be wet, hungry, and the morass of mud in which the army was wallowing uncomfortable and discouraging to the last degree, but there was not the slightest thought in his mind of giving up the fight as long as there was a rebel in sight. He and Shorty were not hurt yet, and until they were, the army was still in good fighting trim.

The line of the 200th Ind. was mournfully shorter than it was two days before, but there were still several hundred boys of Si's stamp gathered resolutely around its flag, the game little Colonel's voice rang out as sharply as ever, and the way the boys picked up their guns and got into line whenever a sputter of firing broke out anywhere must have been very discouraging to Gen. Bragg and his officers, who were anxiously watching the Union lines through their glasses for signs of demoralization and retreat.

"We licked 'em yesterday, every time they come up squarely in front o' the 200th Ind.," Si said to Shorty and those who stood around gazing anxiously on the masses of brown men on the other side of the field. "We can do it again, every time. The only way they got away with us was by sneakin' around through the cedars and takin' us in the rear. We're out in the open ground now, an' they can't get around our flanks." And he looked to the extreme right, where every knoll was crowned with a battery of frowning guns.

"They got their bellies full o' fightin' yesterday," added Shorty, studying the array judicially. "They hain't none o' the brashness they showed yesterday mornin', when they were jumpin' us in front, right, left and rear at the same minute. They're very backward about comin' forward acrost them fields for us to-day. I only wish they'd try it on."

But the forenoon wore away without the rebels showing any disposition to make an assault across the muddy fields. Si's vigilant appetite took advantage of the quiet to assert its claims imperiously.

"Shorty," said he, "there must be something to eat somewhere around here. I'm goin' to look for it."

"You'll have just about as much chance of findin' it," said Shorty dolefully, "among that mob o' famished Suckers as you would o' findin' a straw-stack in the infernal regions. But I'll go 'long with you. We can't lose the regiment in the day time."

"By the way, Shorty," said Si, happening to glance at the sleeves of the overcoats which he had picked up, "we both seem to be Sergeants."

"That's so," assented Shorty. "Both these are Sergeant's overcoats. We'll take our guns along, and play that we are on duty. It may help us out somewhere."

Things looked so quiet in front that the Captain gave them permission, and off they started. It seemed a hopeless quest. Everywhere men were ravenous for food. They found one squad toasting on their rammers the pieces of a luckless rabbit they had cornered in a patch of briars. Another was digging away at a hole that they alleged contained a woodchuck. A third was parching some corn found in a thrown-away feed box, and congratulating themselves upon the lucky find.

Finally they came out upon the banks of Stone River at the place to which Si had wandered during the night. Si recognized it at once, and also the voices that came from behind a little thicket of paw paws as those of the men with whom he had had the squabble.

Si motioned to Shorty to stop and keep silent, while he stepped up closer, parted the bushes a little, looked through, and listened.

Two men were standing by a fire, which was concealed from the army by the paw-paws. Four others had just come up, carrying rolled in a blanket what seemed to be a dead body. They flung it down by the fire, with exclamations of relief, and unrolled it. It was the carcass of a pig so recently killed that it was still bleeding.

"Hello," exclaimed the others joyfully; "where did you get that?"

"Why," exclaimed one of the others, "we were poking around down there under the bank, and we happened to spy a nigger cabin on the other side of the river, hid in among the willers, where nobody could see it. We thought there might be something over there, so we waded across. There wasn't any thing to speak of in the cabin, but we found this pig in the pen. Jim bayoneted it, and then we wrapped it up in our blanket, as if we wuz taking a boy back to the Surgeon's, and fetched it along. We couldn't 've got a hundred yards through that crowd if they'd dreamed what we had. Jerusalem, but it was heavy, though. We thought that pig weighed a thousand pounds before we got here."

"Bully boys," said the others gleefully. "We'll have enough to eat, no matter how many wagons the rebels burn. I always enjoyed a dinner of fresh pork more on New Year's Day than any other time."

Si turned and gave Shorty a wink that conveyed more to that observant individual than a long telegram would have done. He winked back approvingly, brought up his gun to a severely regulation "carry arms," and he and Si stepped briskly through the brush to the startled squad.

"Here," said Si, with official severity; "you infernal stragglers, what regiments do you belong to? Sneaking out here, are you, and stealin' hogs instead of being with your companies. Wrap that pig up again, pick it up, and come along with us to Headquarters."

For a minute it looked as if the men would fight. But Si had guessed rightly; they were stragglers, and had the cowardice of guilty consciences. They saw the chevrons on Si's arms, and his positive, commanding air finished them. They groaned, wrapped up the pig again, and Si mercifully made the two who had waited by the fire carry the heaviest part.

97

98

99

100

Si started them back toward the 200th Ind., and he and Shorty walked along close to them, maintaining a proper provost-guard-like severity of countenance and carriage.

The men began to try to beg off, and make advances on the basis of sharing the pork. But Si and Shorty's official integrity was incorruptible.

"Shut up and go on," they would reply to every proposition. "We ain't that kind of soldiers. Our duty's to take you to Headquarters, and to Headquarters you are going."

They threaded through the crowds for some time, and as they were at last nearing the regiment a battery of artillery went by at as near a trot as it could get out of the weary horses in that deep mire. The squad took advantage of the confusion to drop their burden and scurry out of sight in the throng.

"All right; let 'em go," grinned Si. "I wuz jest wonderin' how we'd get rid o' 'em. I'd thought o' takin' them into the regiment and then givin' them a chunk o' their pork, but then I'd get mad at the way they talked about the 200th Ind. last night, and want to stop and lick 'em. It's better as it is. We need all that pig for the boys."

101

Si and Shorty picked up the bundle and carried it up to the regiment. When they unrolled it the boys gave such lusty cheers that the rebels beyond the field rushed to arms, expecting a charge, and one of our impulsive cannoneers let fly a shell at them.

Si and Shorty cut off one ham for themselves and their particular cronies, carried the other ham, with their compliments, to the Colonel, and let the rest be divided up among the regiment.

One of their chums was lucky enough to have saved a tin box of salt, and after they had toasted and devoured large slices of the fresh ham they began to feel like new men, and be anxious for some thing farther to happen.

But the gloomy, anxious day dragged its slow length along with nothing more momentous than fitful bursts of bickering, spiteful firing, breaking out from time to time on different parts of the long line, where the men's nerves got wrought up to the point where they had to do something to get the relief of action.

Away out in front of the regiment ran a little creek, skirting the hill on which the rebels were massed. In the field between the hill and the creek was one of our wagons, which had mired there and been abandoned by the driver in the stampede of the day before. It seemed out of easy rifle-shot of the rebels on the hill.

Si had been watching it for some time. At length he said:

"Shorty, I believe that wagon's loaded with hard tack."

"It's certainly a Commissary wagon," said Shorty, after studying it a little.

102

"Yes, I'm sure that it's one o' them wagons we was guardin', and I recollect it was loaded with hard tack."

The mere mention of the much-abused crackers made both their mouths water.

"Seems to me I recognize the wagon, too," said Shorty.

"Shorty, it'd be a great thing if we could sneak along up the creek, behind them bushes, until we come opposite the wagon, then make a rush acrost the field, snatch up a box o' hardtack apiece, and then run back. We'd get enough to give each o' the boys a cracker apiece. The wagon'd shelter us comin' and goin', and we wouldn't get a shot."

"It might be," said Shorty, with visions of distributing hardtack to the hungry boys warping his judgment. "The fellers right back o' the wagon couldn't shoot to any advantage, and them to the right and left are too fur off. If you say so, it's a go."

"If the boys could only have one hardtack apiece," said Si, as his last hesitation vanished, "they'd feel ever so much better, and be in so much better shape for a fight. Come on, let's try it."

The rest overheard their plan, and began to watch them with eager interest. They made a circle to the right, got into the cover of the brush of the creek, and began making their way slowly and carefully up to a point opposite the wagon. They reached this without attracting notice, parted the bushes in front of them carefully, and took a good survey of the wagon and the hill beyond.

The wagon was a great deal nearer the hill than had appeared to be the case from where the regiment lay, and even where they stood they were in easy range of the rebels on the hill. But the latter were utterly unsuspecting of them. They were crouching down around fires, with their guns stacked, and the cannoneers of a couple of guns were at some distance from their pieces, under a brush shelter, before which a fire smoldered in the rain.

103

"It's awful short range," said Si dubiously. "If they were lookin' they'd tear us and the wagon all to pieces. But our boys is a-watchin' us, and I don't want to go back without a shy at it. Them fellers seem so busy tryin' to keep warm that we may get there without their noticin' us."

"I never wanted hardtack so much in my life as I do this minute," said Shorty. "I don't care to live forever, anyway. Let's chance it."

They pulled off their overcoats, carefully tied up their shoes, shifted around so as to be completely behind the wagon, and then started on a rush through the mud.

For several hundred steps nothing happened, and they began to believe that they would reach the wagon unnoticed. Then a few shots rang out over their heads, followed a minute later by a storm of bullets that struck in the mud and against the wagon. But they reached the wagon, and sat down, exhausted, on the tongue, sidling up close to the bed to protect them from the bullets.

Si recovered his breath first, caught hold of the front board and raised himself up, saw the boxes of coveted hardtack, and was just putting his hand on one of them when a shell struck the rear end and tore the canvas cover off. Si sank back again beside Shorty, when another shell burst under the wagon, and filled the air with pieces of wheels, bed, cracker-boxes and hardtack.

104

"I don't want no hardtack; I want to find the bank o' that crick," yelled Shorty, starting back on the jump, with Si just six inches behind.

The bullets spattered in the mud all around them as they ran, but they reached the creek bank with out

being struck. They were in such a hurry that they did not stop to jump, but fell headlong into the water.

"Them hardtack wuz spiled, anyway," said Shorty, as they fished themselves out, found their overcoats, and made their way back to the regiment.

They received the congratulations of their comrades on their escape, and someone fished out all the consolation that the regiment could offer a couple of brierwood pipes filled with fragrant kinnikinnick. They sat down, smoked these, and tried to forget their troubles.

The cheerless night drew on. No fires were allowed, and the men huddled together on the wet ground, to get what comfort they could from the warmth of each other's bodies.

The temper of the rebels became nastier as the day wore away, and under the cover of the dark ness they pushed out here and there and opened worrying fires on the Union line. Suddenly a battery opened up on the 200th Ind. from a bare knoll in front. The rebels had evidently calculated the range during daylight, and the shells struck around them in the most annoying way. They threw up showers of mud, scattered the groups, and kept everybody nervous and alarmed. The regiment stood this for some time, when an idea occurred to Si and Shorty. They went up to the Colonel and explained: 105

"Colonel, we've studied the ground out there purty carefully, and we know that the knoll where that battery is in close range o' that crick where we went up this afternoon. If you'll let a few of us go out there we kin stop them cannons mighty soon."

"Sure of that?" said the Colonel alertly.

"Dead sure."

"Very well, then," said the Colonel promptly. "I've been thinking of the same thing. I'll take the whole regiment out. Put yourselves at the head, and lead the way."

The regiment was only too eager for the movement. It marched rapidly after Si and Shorty up the creek bed, and in a very few minutes found itself on the flank of the obnoxious battery, which was still banging away into the line which the 200th Ind. had occupied. It was scarcely 200 yards away, and the men's hearts burned with a fierce joy at the prospect of vengeance. With whispered orders the Colonel lined up the regiment carefully on the bank, and waited until the battery should fire again, to make sure of the aim. Every man cocked his gun, took good aim, and waited for the order. They could distinctly hear the orders of the battery officers directing the shelling. Three cannon were fired at once, and as their fierce lights flashed out the Colonel gave the order to fire. A terrible simoon of death from the rifles of the 200th Ind. struck down everything in and around the battery.

"That dog's cured o' suckin' aigs," said Shorty, as the Colonel ordered the regiment to about face and march back.

The 200th Ind. heard no more from that battery that night.

CHAPTER IX. VICTORY AT LAST

SI REAPPEARS AS FROM THE GRAVE, WITH AN APPETITE LIKE PRAIRIE FIRE.

ON THEIR way back from "settling the battery," Si and Shorty each broke off a big armful of cedar branches. These they spread down on the ground when the regiment resumed its place in the line-of-battle, and lay down on them to spend the rest of the night as comfortably as possible. The fire with which they had roasted the pig, and from which they had drawn much comfort during the day, had had to be extinguished when darkness came on. But it had dried out and warmed the ground for a considerable space around, and on this they made their bed.

"We seem to play in fair luck right along, Shorty," said the hopeful Si, as they curled up on the boughs. "Most of the boys 've got to lay down in a foot of mud."

"Don't get to crowin' too loud," grumbled Shorty. "If they find out what a good thing we have, some Jigadier-Brindle'll snatch it away for himself." But Si was fast asleep before Shorty finished speaking.

Sometime before midnight the Orderly-Sergeant came around, and after vigorous kicking and shaking, succeeded in waking them.

"Get up," he said, "and draw some rations. The wagons've got in from Nashville." 108

"My gracious!" said Si, as soon as he was wide enough awake to understand the Orderly-Sergeant's words, "is it possible that we're going to have plenty of hardtack and pork and coffee again? Seems to me a hundred years since we drew a full ration."

He and Shorty jumped up and ran over to where the Quartermaster-Sergeant and his assistants were dealing out a handful of crackers and a piece of pork to each man as he came up.

"Mebbe I oughtn't to say it," said Si, as he munched away, taking a bite first off the crackers in his right and then off the meat in his left, "but nothing that ever mother baked tasted quite as good as this."

"This does seem to be a specially good lot," assented Shorty. "Probably a wagon load that they intended for the officers and give us by mistake. Better eat it all up before they find it out."

The morning of Jan. 2, 1863, dawned bleak and chill, but this at least brought the great comfort that the dreary rain was at last over. The sharp air was bracing, and put new life and hope into the hearts of the Union soldiers. Many wagons had been gotten up during the night, bringing food and ammunition for all. Soon after daylight cheerful fires were blazing everywhere, and the morning air was laden with the appetizing fragrance of boiling coffee and broiling meat. The sun began to rise over Murfreesboro' and the

rebel camps, giving promise of a bright, invigorating day.

"I hope this thing'll be brought to a focus to-day, and the question settled as to who shall occupy this piece of real estate," said Shorty, as he and Si finished a generous breakfast, filled their boxes and pockets with cartridges, and began knocking the dried mud off their clothes and rubbing the rust from their guns. "I want them gents in brown clothes to clear out and leave. It frets me to see them hangin' 'round. They're bad neighbors." 109

"I hope," said Si, carefully picking out the tube of his gun with a pin, "we won't put in to-day as we did yesterday layin' 'round making faces an' shakin' our fists at one another. Let's have the thing out at once."

Evidently the rebels were of the same frame of mind. They saluted the dawn with a noisy fusillade that ran along the miles of winding line. It was spiteful, crashing and persistent, but as the Union lines lay beyond good musket range and the rebels showed no disposition to advance across the fields and come to close quarters, the noise was quite out of proportion to the harm done.

The two rebel batteries on the opposite side of the river opened up a terrific fire upon one of our batteries, and the air seemed torn to shreds by the storm of howling missiles.

The 200th Ind. was too far away to have more than a spectacular interest in this tempestuous episode. They stood around their gun-stacks and watched and listened while the hours passed in ineffective noise, and wondered when the crisis of action was going to arrive.

"They seem to have lost their appetite for close acquaintance with the 200th Ind.," remarked Shorty. "They found that Jordan was a hard road to travel whenever they came across the fields at us, and are tryin' to scare us by makin' a racket. I think we kin stand it as long as their powder kin. But I'm gittin' hungry agin. Let's have somethin' to eat." 110

"Good gracious, it is noon," answered Si, looking up at the sun. "I believe I do want some dinner."

They had scarcely finished dinner-eating when the 200th Ind. was ordered to move over toward Stone River. It halted on a little rise of ground on the bank, which commanded an extensive view on both sides of the river. There was a portentous flow in the great, dark-blue sea of men. The billows, crested with shining steel, were rolling eastward toward the river.

"Something's goin' to happen; meetin's about to break up; school's goin' to let out," said Shorty eagerly. "Isn't it a grand sight."

"Gracious me!" said Si, devouring the spectacle with his eyes. "How I wish that father and mother and sister could see all this. It's worth going through a great deal to see this."

It was by far the most imposing spectacle they had yet seen. The whole Army of the Cumberland was crowded into the narrow space between the Nashville Pike and Stone River. Its compact regiments, brigades, and divisions showed none of the tearing and mangling they had endured, but stood or moved in well-dressed ranks that seemed the embodiment of mighty purpose and resistless force.

Around its grand array, a half mile away, lay the somber, portentous line of brown-clad men. Beyond them rose the steeples and roofs of the sleepy old town of Murfreesboro', with crowds of men and women occupying every point of vantage, to witness the renewal of the awful battle. 111

It was now long past noon. The bright sun had long ago scattered the chill mists of the morning, and radiated warmth and light over the dun landscape. Even the somber cedars lost some of the funereal gloom they wore when the skies were lowering.

"There go two brigades across the river," said Si. "We're goin' to try to turn their right."

They saw a long line of men file down the river bank, cross, and go into line on the high ground beyond. Their appearance seemed to stir the brown mass lying on the heights a mile in front of them to action. The rebels began swarming out of their works and moving forward into the woods.

Presently a thin line of men in butternut-colored clothes ran forward to a fence in front, and began throwing it down. Behind them came three long, brown lines, extending from near the river to the woods far away to the left. Batteries galloped in the intervals to knolls, on which they unlimbered and opened fire.

It was an overpowering mass of men for the two little brigades to resist. Si's heart almost stood still as he saw the inequality of the contest.

"Why don't they send us over there to help those men?" he anxiously asked. "They can't stand up against that awful crowd."

"Just wait," said Shorty hopefully. "Old Rosy knows what he's doin'. He's got enough here for the business."

The artillery all along the line burst out in torrents of shells, but Si's eyes were glued on the two little brigades. He saw the white spurts from the skirmishers' rifles, and men drop among the rebels, who yet moved slowly forward, like some all-engulfing torrent. The skirmishers ran back to the main line, and along its front sped a burst of smoke as each regiment fired by volley. The foremost rebel line quivered a little, but moved steadily on. 112

Then a cloud of white smoke hid both Union and rebel lines, and from it came the sound as of thousands of carpenters hammering away industriously at nails.

Presently Si was agonized to see a fringe of blue break back from the bank of smoke, and run rapidly to the rear. They were followed by regiments falling back slowly, in order, and turning at the word of command to deliver volleys in the faces of their yell ing pursuers.

Si looked at his Colonel, and saw him anxiously watching the brigade commander for orders to rush across the river to the assistance of the two brigades.

Suddenly there was a whirl in front. A battery galloped up, the drivers lashing the horses, the cannoneers sitting stolidly on the limbers with their arms folded. It swept by to a knoll in front and to the right, which commanded the other side of the river. Instantly the gunners sprang to the ground, the cannon were tossed about as if they were play things, and before Si could fairly wink he saw the guns lined up on the bank, the drivers standing by the horses' heads, and the cannons belching savagely into the flanks of the horde of rebels.

Then another battery swept up alongside the first, and another, until 58 guns crowned the high banks and thundered until the earth shook as with the ague. A deluge of iron swept the fields where the mighty host of rebels were advancing. Tops were torn out of trees and fell with a crash, fence-rails and limbs of oak went madly flying through the air, regiments and brigades disappeared before the awful blast. 113

For a few minutes Si and Shorty stood appalled at the deafening crash and the shocking destruction. Then they saw the rebels reel and fly before the tornado of death. 114

A great shout arose from thousands of excited men standing near. Regiments and brigades started as with one impulse to rush across the river and pursue the flying enemy. The 200th Ind. was one of these. No one heard any orders from the officers. The men caught the contagion of victory and rushed forward, sweeping with them the lately-defeated brigades, hurrying over the wreckage of the cannon-fire, over the thickly-strewn dead and wounded, and gathering in prisoners, flags and cannon.

They went on so, nearly to the breastworks behind which the rebels were seeking shelter.

Si and Shorty were among the foremost. A few hundred yards from the rebel works Si fell to the ground without a groan. Shorty saw him, and ran to him. The side of his head was covered with blood, and he was motionless.



"Stone dead—bullet plum through his head," said the agonized Shorty. But there was no time for mourning the fallen. The pursuit was still hot, and Shorty's duty was in front. He ran ahead until the Colonel halted the regiment. Fresh rebels were lining up in the breastworks and threatening a return charge which would be disastrous. The Colonel hastily re-formed the regiment to meet this, and slowly withdrew it in good order to resist any counter-attack. After marching a mile or more the regiment halted and went into bivouac. The rejoicing men started great fires and set about getting supper. But the saddened Shorty had no heart for rejoicing over the victory, or for supper. He drew off from the rest, sat down at the roots of an oak, wrapped the cape of his overcoat about his face, and abandoned himself to his bitter grief. Earth had no more joy for him. He wished he had been shot at the same time his partner was. He could think of nothing but that poor boy lying there dead and motionless on the cold ground. He felt that he could never think of anything else, and the sooner he was shot the better it would be. 115

The other boys respected his grief. At first they tried to tempt him to eat something and drink some coffee, but Shorty would not listen to them, and they drew away, that he might be alone.

He sat thus for some hours. The loss of their sturdy Corporal saddened the whole company, and as they sat around their fires after supper they extolled his good traits, recounted his exploits, and easily made him out the best soldier in the regiment.

Presently the fifes and drums played tattoo, and the boys began preparations for turning in.

Shorty had become nearly frozen sitting there motionless, and he got up and went to the fire to thaw out. He had just picked up a rail to lay it on the fire in better shape, when he heard a weak voice in quiring:

"Does anybody know where the 200th Ind. is?"

Shorty dropped the rail as if he had been shot, and rushed in the direction of the voice. In an instant he came back almost carrying Si Klegg.

There was a hubbub around the fire that kept everybody from paying the least attention to "taps."

"Yes, it's really me," said Si, responding as well as he was able to the hearty handshakings. "And I ain't no

ghost, neither. I've got an appetite on me like a prairie fire, and if you fellers are really glad to see me you'll hustle up here all the grub in the Commissary Department. I can eat every mite of it. I was hit by a spent ball and knocked senseless. But I ain't going to tell you any more till I get something to eat."

118

CHAPTER X. THE VICTORIOUS ARMY

SI AND SHORTY FINALLY SUCCEED IN GETTING OUT OF THE WET.

THE BOYS were so glad to see Si back again alive that they robbed themselves of any choice morsel of food they might have saved for to-morrow's delectation.

"Here, Si," said one, "is a nice knuckle-bone o' ham, that I pulled back there at the General's when his cook returned to the tent for something. You ought t've heard the nigger cussing as I walked away, but he couldn't recognize the back o' my head, nor see under my overcoat. Me and my chum 've had supper off it, and we wuz saving the rest for breakfast, but I'll brile it for you."

"Some of them Kentucky fellers," said another, "found a sheep in the briars and killed it. I traded 'em my silk handkerchief for a hunk o' the meat. I'm going to cook a slice for you, Si."

"Si, I'll bile some coffee for you," said a third.

"I'll toast some crackers for you," added a fourth.

Shorty roused. He felt so much gladder than any of them, that he was jealous of their attentions.

"See here, you fellers," said he, "this is my partner, an' I'm able to take care of him. I'll bile all the coffee an' toast all the crackers he kin eat; though I'm much obliged to you, Jim, for your ham, and to you, Billy, for your mutton, though I'm afraid it'll taste too much of the wool for a wounded man."

"Don't mind about that," said Si; "I'm hungry enough to eat the wool on the sheep's back, even. Hand over your mutton, Billy, and thankee for it. My appetite's not delicate, I can tell you. Woolly mutton won't faze it more'n bark would a buzz-saw." Si didn't over-state the case. He ate everything that was cooked and offered 119 him, until he declared that he was so full he "could touch it with his finger."



"I'm sure you're not a ghost, from the way you eat," said Shorty, who was beginning to recover his propensity for sarcasm. "If ghosts et like you there'd have to be a steam bakery an' a pork packery run in connection with every graveyard."

"And I'd never take no ghost to board," said Billy.

"Come, Si," said Jimmy Barlow, filling his briarwood pipe with kinnikinnick, lighting it from the fire, taking a few puffs to start it, and handing it to Si, "tell us just what happened to you. We're dyin' to hear."

"Well," said Si, settling down with the pipe into a comfortable position, "I don't know what happened. Last thing I knowed I wuz runnin' ahead on Shorty's left, loadin' my gun, an' tryin' to keep up with the Colonel's

hoss. Next thing I knowed I wuz wakin' up at the foot of a black-oak. Everything was quiet around me, except the yellin' of two or three wounded men a little ways off. At first I thought a cannonball' d knocked my whole head off. Then it occurred to me that if my head was knocked off I couldn't hear nor see."

"Nor think, even," injected Shorty.

"No, nor think, even. For what'd you think with?"

"I know some fellers that seem to think with their feet, and that blamed awkwardly," mused Shorty.

"I kept on wakin' up," continued Si. "At first I thought I had no head at all, an' then it seemed to me I was all head, it hurt so awfully. I couldn't move hand nor foot. Then I thought mebbe only half my head was shot away, an' the rest was aching for all.

120

"I tried shuttin' one eye an' then the other, an' found I'd at least both eyes left. I moved my head a little, an' found that the back part was still there, for a bump on the roots of the oak hurt it.

"By-and-by the numbness began to go out of my head an' arm, but I was afraid to put my hand up to my head, for I was afraid to find out how much was gone. Nearly the whole of the left side must be gone, an' all my schoolin' scattered over the ground. I lay there thinkin' it all over how awful I'd look when you fellers came to find me and bury me, an' how you wouldn't dare tell the folks at home about it.

"Finally, I got plum desperate. I didn't seem to be dyin', but to be gettin' better every minute. I determined to find out just however much of my head was really gone. I put up my hand, timid-like, an' felt my forehead. It was all there. I passed my hand back over my hair an' the whole back of my head was there. I felt around carefully, an' there was the whole side of my head, only a little wet where I'd got a spent ball. Then I got mad an' I jumped up. Think of my makin' all that fuss over a little peck that might have been made by a brick-bat. I started out to hunt you fellers, an' here I am."

"Yes, but you wouldn't 've bin here," philosophized Shorty, examining the wound, "if the feller that fired that shot'd given his gun a little hunch. If that bullet'd went a half-inch deeper, you'd be up among the stars a bow-legged Wabash angel."

"Well, we've licked the stuffin' out of 'em at last, haven't we?" asked Si.

"Well, I should say we had," replied Shorty with an impressive whistle. "I thought the artillery would tear the foundations out of the whole State of Tennessee, the way it let into them. There won't ba more crashin' an' bangin' when the world breaks up. I'd a-bin willin' to serve 100 years just to see that sight. Lord, what a chance the cannoneers had. First time I ever wanted to be in the artillery. The way they slung whole blacksmith shops over into them woods, an' smashed down trees, and wiped out whole brigades at a clip, filled my soul with joy."

121

"We must go over there in the mornin' an' take a look at the place," said Si drowsily. "It will be good to remember alongside o' the way they slapped it to us the first day."

Si and Shorty woke up the next morning to find the chill rain pouring down as if the country had been suffering from a year's drouth, and the rain was going to make up for it in one forenoon.

"Lord have mercy," said the disgusted Shorty, as he fell into line for roll-call. "Another seepin', soppin', sloshin', spatterin' day. Only had 14 of 'em this week so far. Should think the geese 'd carry umbrellas, an' the cows wear overshoes in this, land of eternal drizzle. If I ever get home they'll have to run me through a brick-kiln to dry me out."

In spite of the down-pour the army was forming up rapidly to resume the advance upon Murfreesboro', and over the ground on the left, that had proved so disastrous to the rebels the day before.

While the 200th Ind. was getting ready to fall in, the sick-call sounded, and the Orderly-Sergeant remarked to Si:

"Fall into this squad, Corporal Klegg."

"What for?" asked Si, looking askance at the squad.

122

"To go to the Surgeon's tent," answered the Orderly-Sergeant. "This is the sick squad."

"That's what I thought," answered Si; "an' that's the reason I ain't goin' to join it."

"But your head's bigger'n a bushel, Si," remonstrated the Sergeant. "Better let the doctor see it."

"I don't want none of his bluemass or quinine," persisted Si. "That's all he ever gives for anything. The swellin' 'll come out o' my head in time, same as it does out o' other people's."

"Corporal, I'll excuse you from duty to-day," said the Captain kindly. "I really think you ought to go to the Surgeon."

"If you don't mind, Captain," said Si, saluting, "I'll stay with the boys. I want to see this thing to the end. My head won't hurt me half so bad as if I was back gruntin' 'round in the hospital."

"Probably you are right," said the Captain. "Come along, then."

Willing and brave as the men were, the movements were tiresomely slow and laggard. The week of marching and lying unsheltered in the rain, of terrific fighting, and of awful anxiety had brought about mental and physical exhaustion. The men were utterly worn out in body and mind. This is usually the case in every great battle. Both sides struggle with all their mental and physical powers, until both are worn out. The one that can make just a little more effort than the other wins the victory. This was emphatically so in the battle of Stone River. The rebels had exhausted themselves, even, more in their assaults than the Union men had in repelling them.

When, therefore, the long line of blue labored slowly through the mud and the drenching rain up the gentle slopes on the farther side of Stone River, the rebels sullenly gave ground before them. At last a point was reached which commanded a view of Murfreesboro' and the rebel position. The rebels were seen to be in retreat, and the exhausted Army of the Cumberland was mighty glad to have them go.

123

As soon as it was certain that the enemy was really abandoning the bitterly-contested field, an inexpressible weariness overwhelmed everybody. The 200th Ind. could scarcely drag one foot after another as it moved back to find a suitable camping-ground.

Si and Shorty crawled into a cedar thicket, broke down some brush for a bed, laid a pole in two crotches, leaned some brush against it to make a partial shelter, built a fire, and sat down.

"I declare, I never knew what being tuckered out was before," said Si. "And it's come to me all of a sudden. This morning I felt as if I could do great things, but the minute I found that them rebels was really going, my legs begun to sink under me."

"Same way with me," accorded Shorty. "Don't believe I've got strength enough left to pull a settin' hen offen her nest. But we can't be drowned out this way. We must fix up some better shelter."

"The Colonel says there's a wagon-load o' rations on the way here," said Si, sinking wearily down on the ground by the fire, and putting out his hands over the feeble blaze. "Let's wait till we git something to eat. Mebbe we'll feel more like work after we've eaten something."

"Si Klegg," said Shorty sternly, but settling down himself on the other side of the fire, "I never knowed you 124 to flop down before. You've always bin, if any thing, forwarder than me. I was in hopes now that you'd take me by the back o' the neck and try to shake some o' this laziness out o' me."

"Wait till the rations come," repeated Si listlessly. "Mebbe we'll fell livelier then. The shelter we've fixed up'll keep out the coarsest o' the rain, anyway. Most o' the boys ain't got none."

When the rations arrived, Si and Shorty had energy enough to draw, cook and devour an immense supper. Then they felt more tired than ever. Shorty had managed to tear off a big piece of the wagon cover while he was showing much zeal in getting the rations distributed quickly. He got the company's share in this, and helped carry it to the company, but never for a minute relaxed his hold on the coveted canvas. Then he took it back to his fire. Si and he spent what energy they had left in making a tolerable tent of it, by stretching it over their shelter. They tied it down carefully, to keep anybody else from stealing it off them, and Shorty took the additional precaution of fastening a strip of it around his neck. Then they crawled in, and before night come on they were sleeping apparently as soundly as the Seven of Ephesus.

126

CHAPTER XI. WINTER QUARTERS

THEY BUILT THEM A HOUSE AND GOT IN OUT OF THE RAIN.

THE NEXT day Sunday after the battle dawned as clear, bright and sparkling as only a Winter's day can dawn in Tennessee, after a fortnight of doleful deluges. Tennessee Winter weather is like the famous little girl with the curl right down in the middle of her forehead, who,

*"When she was good, she was very, very good,
And when she was bad, she was horrid."*

After weeks of heart-saddening down-pour that threatened to drench life and hope out of every breathing thing, it will suddenly beam out in a day so crisp and bright that all Nature will wear a gladsome smile and life become jocund.

When the reveille and the Orderly-Sergeant's brogans aroused Si and Shorty the latter's first thought was for the strip of canvas which he had secured with so much trouble from the wagon-cover, and intended to cherish for future emergencies. He felt his neck and found the strip that he had tied there, but that was all that there was of it. A sharp knife had cut away the rest so deftly that he had not felt its loss.

Shorty's boiler got very hot at once, and he began blowing off steam. Somehow he had taken an especial fancy to that piece of canvas, and his wrath was hot against the man who had stolen it.



SHORTY RETALIATES.

"Condemn that onery thief," he yelled. "He ought to be drummed out o' camp, with his head shaved. A man that'll steal ought to be hunted down and kicked out o' the army. He's not fit to associate with decent men." 127

"Why, Shorty," said Si, amused at his partner's heat, "you stole that yourself."

"I didn't nothin' o' the kind," snorted Shorty, "and don't want you sayin' so, Mr. Klegg, if you don't want to git into trouble. I took it from a teamster. You ought to know it's never stealin' to take anything from a teamster. I'll bet it was some of that Toledo regiment that stole it. Them Maumee River Muskrats are the durndest thieves in the brigade. They'd steal the salt out o' your hardtack if you didn't watch 'em not because they wanted the salt, but just because they can't help stealin'. They ought to be fired out o' the brigade. I'm going over to their camp to look for it, and if I find it I'll wipe the ground up with the feller that took it. 'Taint so much the value of the thing as the principle. I hate a thief above all things."

Si tried to calm Shorty and dissuade him from going, but his partner was determined, and Si let him go, but kept an eye and ear open for developments.

In a few minutes Shorty returned, with jubilation in his face, the canvas in one hand and a nice frying-pan and a canteen of molasses in the other.

"Just as I told you," he said triumphantly. "It was some o' them Maumee River Muskrats. I found them asleep in a bunch o' cedars, with our nice tent stretched over their thievin' carcasses. They'd been out on guard or scoutin', and come in after we'd gone to sleep. They were still snorin' away when I yanked the tent off, an' picked up their fryin'-pan an' canteen o' molasses to remember 'em by." 128

"I thought you hated a thief," Si started to say; but real comrades soon learn, like husband and wife, that it is not necessary to say everything that rises to their lips. Besides, the frying-pan was a beauty, and just what they wanted.

It became generally understood during the day that the Army of the Cumberland would remain around Murfreesboro' indefinitely probably until Spring to rest, refit and prepare for another campaign. Instructions were given to regimental commanders to select good camping ground and have their men erect comfortable Winter quarters.

The 200th Ind. moved into an oak grove, on a gentle slope toward the south, and set about making itself thoroughly at home.

Si and Shorty were prompt to improve the opportunity to house themselves comfortably.

Si had now been long enough in the army to regard everything that was not held down by a man with a gun and bayonet as legitimate capture. He passed where one of the Pioneer Corps had laid down his ax for a minute to help on some other work. That minute was spent by Si in walking away with the ax hidden under his long overcoat. Those long overcoats, like charity, covered a multitude of sins.

The ax was not sharp no army ax ever was, but Si's and Shorty's muscles were vigorous enough to make up for its dullness. In a little while they had cut down and trimmed enough oak saplings to make a pen about the size of the corn-crib at Si's home. While one would whack away with the ax the other would carry the poles and build up the pen. By evening they had got this higher than their heads, and had to stop work from sheer 129

exhaustion.

"I'll declare," said Si, as they sat down to eat supper and survey their work, "if father'd ever made me do half as much work in one day as I have done to-day I should have died with tiredness and then run away from home. It does seem to me that every day we try a new way o' killing ourselves."

"Well," said Shorty, arresting a liberal chunk of fried pork on the way to his capacious grinders to cast an admiring glance on the structure, "it's worth it all. It'll just be the finest shebang in Tennessee when we git it finished. I'm only afraid we'll make it so fine that Gen. Rosecrans or the Governor of Tennessee 'll come down and take it away for him self. That'd just be our luck."

"Great Scott!" said Si, looking at it with a groan; "how much work there is to do yet. What are we goin' to do for a roof? Then, we must cut out a place for a door. We'll have to chink between all the logs with mud and chunks; and we ought to have a fireplace."

"I've bin thinkin' of all them things, and I've thunk 'em out," said Shorty cheerfully. "I've bin thinkin' while you've bin workin'. Do you know, I believe I was born for an architect, an' I'll go into the architect business after the war! I've got a head plumb full of the natural stuff for the business. It growed right there. All I need is some more know-how an' makin' plans on paper."

"O, you've got a great big head, Shorty," said Si, admiringly, "and whatever you start to do you do splendid. Nobody knows that better'n me. But what's your idee about the roof?"

130

"Why, do you see that there freight-car over there by the bridge" (pointing to where a car was off the track, near Stone River), "I've bin watchin' that ever since we begun buildin', for fear somebody else'd drop on to it. The roof of that car is tin. We'll jest slip down there with an ax after dark, an' cut off enough to make a splendid roof. I always wanted a tin-roofed house. Old Jack Wilson, who lives near us, had a tin roof on his barn, an' it made his daughters so proud they wouldn't go home with me from meetin'. You kin write home that we have a new house with a tin roof, an' it'll help your sisters to marry better."

"Shorty, that head o' your'n gits bigger every time I look at it."

Si and Shorty had the extreme quality of being able to forget fatigue when there was something to be accomplished. As darkness settled down they picked up the ax and proceeded across the fields to the freight-car.

"There's someone in there," said Si, as they came close to it. They reconnoitered it carefully. Five or six men, without arms, were comfortably ensconced inside and playing cards by the light of a fire of pitch-pine, which they had built upon some dirt placed in the middle of the car.

"They're blamed skulkers," said Shorty, after a minute's survey of the interior. "Don't you see they hain't got their guns with 'em? We won't mind 'em."

They climbed to the top of the car, measured off about half of it, and began cutting through the tin with the ax. The noise alarmed the men inside. They jumped out on the ground, and called up:

131

"Here, what're you fellers doin' up there? This is our car. Let it alone."

"Go to the devil," said Shorty, making another slash at the roof with the ax.

"This is our car, I tell you," reiterated the men. "You let it alone, or we'll make you." Some of the men looked around for something to throw at them.

Si walked to the end of the car, tore off the brake-wheel, and came back.

"You fellers down there shut up and go back in side to your cards, if you know what's good for you," he said. "You're nothing but a lot of durned skulkers. We are here under orders. We don't want nothin' but a piece o' the tin roof. You kin have the rest. If any of you attempts to throw anything I'll mash him into the ground with this wheel. Do you hear me? Go back inside, or we'll arrest the whole lot of you and take you back to your regiments."

Si's authoritative tone, and the red stripes on his arm, were too much for the guilty consciences of the skulkers, and they went back inside the car. The tearing off the roof proceeded without further interruption, but with considerable mangling of their hands by the edges of the tin.

After they had gotten it off, they proceeded to roll it up and started back for their "house." It was a fearful load, and one that they would not have attempted to carry in ordinary times. But their blood was up; they were determined to outshine everybody else with their tin roof, and they toiled on over the mud and rough ground, although every little while one of them would make a misstep and both would fall, and the heavy weight would seem to mash them into the ground.

132

"I don't wonder old Jake Wilson was proud of his tin roof," gasped Si, as he pulled himself out of a mudhole and rolled the tin off him and Shorty. "If I'd a tin roof on my barn durned if my daughter should walk home with a man that didn't own a whole section of bottom land and drove o' mules to boot."

It was fully midnight before they reached their pen and laid their burden down. They were too tired to do anything more than lay their blankets down on a pile of cedar boughs and go to sleep.

The next morning they unrolled their booty and gloated over it. It would make a perfect roof, and they felt it repaid all their toils. Upon measurement they found it much larger each way than their log pen.

"Just right," said Shorty gleefully. "It'll stick out two feet all around. It's the aristocratic, fashion able thing now-a-days to have wide cornishes. Remember them swell houses we wuz lookin' at in Louisville? We're right in style with them."

The rest of Co. Q gathered around to inspect it and envy them.

"I suppose you left some," said Jack Wilkinson. "I'll go down there and get the rest."

"Much you won't," said Si, looking toward the car; "there ain't no rest."

They all looked that way. Early as it was the car had totally disappeared, down to the wheels, which some men were rolling away.

133

"That must be some o' them Maumee River Muskrats," said Shorty, looking at the latter. "They'll steal anything they kin git away with, just for the sake of stealin'. What on earth kin they do with them wheels?"

"They may knock 'em off the axles an' make hearths for their fireplaces, and use the axles for posts," suggested Si.

"Here, you fellers," said Shorty, "give us a lift. Let's have a house-raisin'. Help us put the roof on."

They fell to with a will, even the Captain assisting, and, after a good deal of trouble and more cut hands, succeeded in getting the piece of tin on top of the pen and bent down across the ridge-pole. Si and Shorty proceeded to secure it in place by putting other poles across it and fastening them down with ropes and strips of bark to the lower logs.

"Your broad cornice is aristocratic, as you say," said the Captain, "but I'm afraid it'll catch the wind, and tip your house over in some big storm."



"That's so," admitted Shorty; "but a feller that puts on airs always has to take some chances. I don't want people to think that we are mean and stingy about a little tin, so I guess we'll keep her just as she is."

The next day they borrowed a saw from the Pioneers, cut out a hole for the door, and another for the fireplace. They made a frame for the door out of pieces of cracker-boxes, and hung up their bit of canvas for a door. They filled up the spaces between the logs with pieces of wood, and then daubed clay on until they had the walls tight. They gathered up stones and built a commodious fireplace, daubing it all over with clay, until it was wind and water tight.

"What are we goin' to do for a chimney, Si?" said Shorty, as their fireplace became about breast-high. 135
"Build one o' sticks, like these rebels around here? That'll be an awful lot o' work."



SOLID COMFORT.

"I've had an idee," said Si. "I ain't goin' to let you do all the thinkin', even if you are a born architect. When I 136 was helpin' draw rations yesterday, I looked at the pork barrels, and got an idee that one of them'd make a good chimney. I spoke to Bill Suggs, the Commissary-Sergeant, about it, and he agreed to save me a barrel when it was empty, which it must be about now. I'll go down and see him about it."

Si presently came back rolling the empty barrel. They knocked the bottom out, carefully plastered it over inside with clay, and set it up on their fireplace, and made the joints with more clay. It made a splendid chimney. They washed the clay off their hands, built a cheerful fire inside, cooked a bountiful supper, and ate it in the light and comfort of their own fireside. It was now Saturday night. They had had a week of severer toil than they had ever dreamed of performing at home, but its reward was ample.

"Ah," said Shorty, as he sat on a chunk of wood, pipe in mouth, and absorbed the warmth, "this is something like home and home comforts. It's more like white livin' than I've had since I've bin in the army. Let's act like men and Christians tomorrow, by not doin' a lick o' work o' any kind. Let's lay abed late, and then wash up all over, and go to hear the Chaplain preach."

"Agreed," said Si, as he spread out their blankets for the night.

It had been threatening weather all day, and now the rain came down with a rush.

"Ain't that music, now," said Shorty, listening to the patter on the roof. "Nothin' sounds so sweet as rain 137 upon a tin roof. Let it rain cats and dogs, if it wants to. The harder the better. Si, there's nothin' so healthy to sleep under as a tin roof. I'll never have anything but a tin roof on my house when I git home. And we've got the only tin roof in the regiment. Think o' that." But Si was too sleepy to think.

CHAPTER XII. ADDING TO THEIR COMFORT

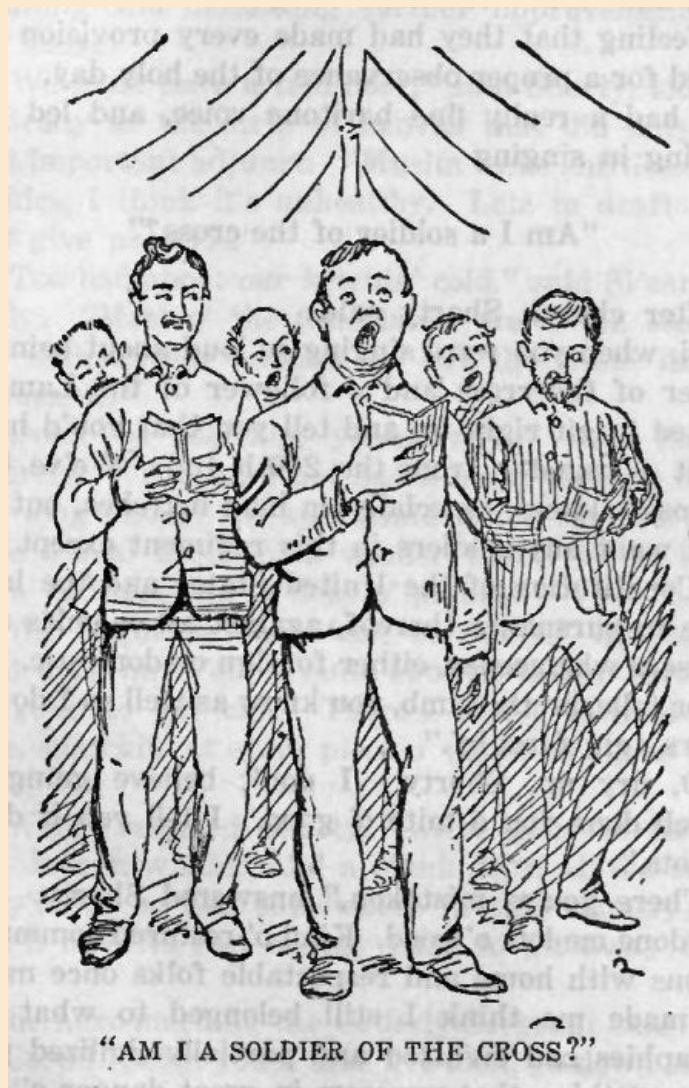
MAKING ADDITIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS TO THEIR "HOME."

SI AND Shorty kept Sunday as planned. They really did not know how tired they were until they formed the resolution to give the day to absolute restfulness. Then every joint and muscle ached from the arduous toil of the past week, added to the strains and hardships of a week of battle.

"Used to seem to me," said Shorty, "that when Sunday come after the first week's plowin' in Spring that I had a bile in every limb. Now I appear to have one in every j'int, and in my brains as well. I didn't ever suppose that I could be so tired, and yit be able to set up and take nourishment."

"Same here," said Si. "Feel as if I ought to be wrapped in cotton battin' an' sweet oil, an' laid away for awhile."

The only thing about them which did not show deadly lassitude was their appetites. Fortunately, the Commissary took a liberal view of the Regulations as to rations, issuing enough to make up for those they had not drawn during the times when his department was not in working order. They ate all these and wanted more.



The Quartermaster had also succeeded in re-establishing relations. They drew from him new under-clothing 139 to replace that which they had lost, took a thorough wash the first good one they had had since Christmas morning, beat and brushed much of the accumulated mud representing every variety of soil between 140 Murfreesboro' and Nashville out of their clothes, cleaned and greased their heavy brogans, and went with their comrades to divine service, feeling that they had made every provision required for a proper observance of the holy day.

Si had a really fine baritone voice, and led the meeting in singing

"Am I a soldier of the cross?"

After church Shorty said:

"Si, when you were singing so loud about being a soldier of the cross and a follower of the Lamb I wanted to git right up and tell you that you'd have to git a transfer from the 200th Ind. We've lots of cross soldiers, especially on mud marches, but we don't want any soldiers in this regiment except for the Constitution of the United States and the laws made in pursuance thereof, against all enemies and opposers whatsoever, either foreign or domestic. An' as for follerin' the lamb, you know as well as I do the orders agin foragin'."

"O, dry up, Shorty. I don't believe going to church done you a mite o' good. I tell you it done me lots."

"There you're mistaken," answered Shorty. "It just done me lots o' good. Kind o' restored communications with home and respectable folks once more, an' made me think I still belonged to what the jographies call civilized and partially-civilized people, something that we seem in great danger o' forgettin', the way we've bin goin' on."

The good Chaplain's fervent appeals to devote the day to earnest consideration of their soul's welfare could 141 not keep them from spending the hours in planning and discussing further improvements on the house.

"We must have a real door," said Shorty, looking critically at the strip of canvas that did duty for that important adjunct. "Muslin looks shiftless, an', besides, I think it's unhealthy. Lets in drafts, an' will give us colds."

"Too bad about our ketchin' cold," said Si sardonically. "Most o' the time lately we've bin sleepin' out with nothin' around us but the State line of Tennessee."

"Don't be too flip, young man," said Shorty severely. "You have not had a home with its blessin's long enough to appreciate it. I say we must have a real door an' a winder that'll let in light, an' a bedstead, an' a

floor o' planks."

"We ought to have 'em, certainly," agreed Si. "But must have 'em is quite another thing. How are we goin' to git 'em? There's 40,000 men around here, snatchin' at every piece o' plank as big as your hand."

"Well," retorted Shorty, "we're goin' to have a real door, a winder, and a plank floor, all the same. They're to be had somewhere in this country, an' they'll have to run mighty hard to git away from us."

The next morning the Orderly-Sergeant said:

"Corp'l Klegg, you'll take five men, go down to the railroad, and report to the Commissary to load the wagon with rations."

Si took Shorty and four others and started off on this errand. He was soon so busy rolling heavy pork 142 barrels from the car into the wagon that he failed to notice that Shorty was not with him. Finally they got the wagon loaded and started, with them walking alongside, puffing and sweating from their vigorous labor.

They were not 100 yards away from the train, when the Conductor came storming up:

"See here, Lieutenant," he said to the Commissary, "some o' them men o' yours sneaked around and stole the hind door off my caboose while you was loading up."

"I don't believe a word of it," said the Commissary, firing up at once. "Mine ain't that kind of men. I'd have you know they don't steal. What reason have you for saying so?"

"The door was on the car when I came out to meet you, and now it's gone, and there's been no body near the caboose but your men."

"I know my men were working hard all the time right under my eyes," said the Lieutenant, growing angrier every minute. "They're not the men to steal anything, and if they were they didn't have any chance. They were too busy. You can satisfy yourself that they didn't. You see none of them have the door with them, and you can search the wagon. Get right in there and look for it."

The Conductor climbed into the wagon and looked carefully through.

"No, it's not there," he said ruefully.

Then the Commissary's wrath flamed out. "There, confound you, you are at it again, you infernal civilian, 143 slandering and abusing men who are fighting for their country. Charging them with stealing your old caboose door. Think of your disgraceful impudence, villifying men who are shedding their blood for their country by 144 such shameless charges.



"What'd they want with your old car door? Get away from here, before I lose my temper and do you damage."

The Conductor walked away muttering:

"Blasted thieving whelps o' soldiers, what'll they steal next? Lost all my train tools at Lavergne, swiped the bedding at Smyrna, got away with our clothes and dishes at Antioch, stole stove and lanterns at Overall's

Crick, and now they've begun on the cars. I'll be lucky to have enough wheels left on the engine to run her back to Nashville."

The Commissary continued to fume about the disgraceful charges brought against his men until they reached camp. The wagon was unloaded and the squad dismissed.

As Si came up to the "house" he saw Shorty busily engaged in hanging the caboose door by means of hinges which he had improvised from some boot tops.

"Why, Shorty," gasped Si, "how did you git away with it?"

"Easy enough," answered his partner. "I saw you fellers gittin' very busy over them pork barrels, an' all the train hands helpin' you. I meandered back to the caboose, gently lifted the back door offen its hinges, slipped down into the weeds in the ditch, an' kept under cover o' them till I was out o' sight. Say, isn't it just a bully door?"

That afternoon Si and Shorty walked over to where a detail of men were at work building a bridge across Stone River, under the direction of a Lieutenant of Pioneers. They had an idea that an opportunity might occur there to pick up something that would add to their home comforts. The Lieutenant was bustling about, hurrying the completion of the work before night. As the detail was made up of squads from various regiments, he was not acquainted with the men, and had much difficulty assigning them to the work that would suit them best. He came up to Si, who still wore the artillery Sergeant's overcoat he had picked up during the battle, and said sharply:

"Here, Sergeant, don't stand around doing nothing. Set the men a good example by pitching in lively. There's plenty to do for everybody. If you can't find anything else, help dig down that bank, and roll those big stones into the fill. Hold on; I've thought of something else. I want a reliable man to send over for some lumber. Put one of your men on that wagon there, and go with him, and take this letter to Capt. Billings, over at the saw-mill. It's a requisition for a load of lumber. Avoid the camps as much as possible on your way back, or they'll steal every inch of it away from you."

"Very good, sir," said Si, saluting. "Shorty, jump on the wagon there, and gather up the lines."

Shorty very obediently took his place on the seat of the two-horse wagon employed by the Pioneers for their jobs.

"Hurry up," enjoined the Lieutenant; "we need those boards at once."

"Very good, sir," said Si, saluting.

"This is what I call a puddin'," said Shorty, oracularly, as they drove away. "The Lord always kin be trusted to help the deservin', if the deservin' only keep their eyes peeled for His p'inters. This comes from not workin' 146 yesterday and goin' to church."

They drove down to the sawmill, delivered their requisition, and had their wagon loaded with newly-sawn plank. The Captain had the planks carefully counted, the number and feet entered upon the record, and set forth upon the return which he gave to Si to be delivered to the Lieutenant of Pioneers.

"Too dod-gasted much bookkeepin' in this army," remarked Si, rather disconsolately, and he put the paper in his blouse pocket, and they drove away. "Wastes entirely too much valuable time. What'd he count them boards for? Looked like he suspicioned us. How are we going to git away with any o' them?"

"I wouldn't have that man's suspicious mind for anything," answered Shorty. "He don't trust no body. All the same, we're goin' to have enough boards for our floor."

"How are we goin' to manage it?" asked Si.

"Lots o' ways. There's no need o' your carryin' that paper back to the Lootenant. I might pick up several hundred feet and sneak away without your knowin' it. Say," as a bright idea struck him, "what's the use o' goin' back to the Lootenant at all? Neither of us belongs to his detail. He don't know us from a side o' sole-leather. What's the matter with drivin' the wagon right up to camp, and swipin' the whole business, horses, wagon and all?"

"I hain't been in the army as long as you have, Shorty," said Si doubtfully. "I've made some progress in petty larceny, as you know, but I ain't yit quite up to stealin' a span o' horses and a wagon. Mebbe I'll come to 147 it in time, but I ain't quite ready for it now."

"That comes from goin' to church yesterday, and hearin' the Chaplain read the Ten Commandments," said Shorty wrathfully. "I don't believe they ought to allow the Chaplains to read them things. They ain't suited to army life, and there ought to be a general order that they're prejudicial to good order and military discipline. Where'd the army be if they obeyed that one about not covetin' a horse or other movable property? I tell you what we'll do, since you're so milky on the thing: We'll drive up in front of our house, unload enough boards for our floor, you git out your gun and bayonet and stand guard over 'em, and I'll drive the wagon down near the bridge, and jump off and leave it."

"All right," said Si; "that'll do splendidly, if you think you kin dodge the Lootenant."

"O, he be darned," said Shorty scornfully. "I could git away from him if I wasn't 10 years old."

They carried out the plan. They drove up in front of their residence, and threw off a liberal quantity of the boards. The other boys raised a yell, and made a break for them. But Si ran inside, got his gun, and established himself on guard.

"Don't you budge an inch from there till I git back," shouted Shorty, as he drove away. "Don't let one of Co. Q lay a finger on them. They're the durndest thieves outside the Jeffersonville Penitentiary. You can't trust one o' them farther than you could sling a bull by the tail. I'll be back soon."

Shorty drove gaily down until he got close to the bridge. The Lieutenant had been impatiently expecting 148 him, and as soon as the wagon came up it was surrounded by a crowd of men to unload it. The Lieutenant looked over the load.



SI DEFENDED THE PLUNDER.

"I wonder if he sent enough. Let me see your return," he said, looking up at the seat, where he expected to find the Sergeant he had put in charge. But the seat was empty. Shorty had jumped down, prudently mingled with the crowd, avoided the Lieutenant's eye with much more than his usual diffidence, and was modestly making his way back to camp behind a thicket of hazel bushes. When he got to the house he was delighted to find Si still master of the situation, with all the boards present and accounted for. They quickly transferred them to the interior, and found that they had enough for a nice floor, besides a couple of extra ones, to cut up into a table and stools.

"You done good work in keepin' the other boys offen 'em, Si," said he. "I was afraid you wouldn't. The only thing I've got agin Co. Q is that the boys will steal. Otherwise they're the nicest kind o' boys."

A couple of days later they got a pass to go down to Murfreesboro' and look the sleepy old town over. They were particularly interested in the quaint old courthouse, which had once been the capitol of Tennessee. They happened into one of the offices, which was entirely deserted. On the wall hung a steel engraving of Jeff Davis in a large oak frame.

"That blamed old rebel picture oughtn't to be hangin' there, Si," observed Shorty.

"Indeed it oughtn't. Jeff ought to be hung to a sour-apple tree, and that glass'd make a nice winder for our house."

"Indeed it would," Shorty started to answer, but time was too precious to waste in speech. In an instant he had shoved an old desk up to the wall, mounted it, and handed the picture down to Si. They wrapped it up in their overcoats, and started back for camp. They had seen enough of Murfreesboro' for that day.

CHAPTER XIII. "HOOSIER'S REST"

SI AND SHORTY CHRISTEN THEIR PLACE AND GIVE A HOUSE-WARMING.

WITH a tin roof, a real door, a glazed window and a plank floor, Si and Shorty's house was by far the most aristocratic in the cantonment of the 200th Ind., if not the entire Winter quarters of the Army of the Cumberland. A marble mansion, with all the modern improvements, could not more proudly overshadow all its neighbors than it did.

Even the Colonel's was no comparison to it. A tent-fly had been made to do duty for a roof at the Colonel's. It could not be stretched evenly and tight. It would persistently sag down in spots, and each of these spots became a reservoir from which would descend an icy stream. A blanket had to serve as a door, and the best substitute for window glass were Commissary blanks greased with fat from headquarters' frying-pan. The floor, instead of being of clean, new plank, as Si's and Shorty's, was made of the warped and weather-beaten boards of a stable, which had been torn down by a fatigue detail.

Si and Shorty took as much pride and pleasure in their architecture as any nabob over his million-dollar villa. They were constantly on the alert for anything that would add to the comfort and luxury of their home. 151 In their wanderings they chanced to come across an old-fashioned bedstead in an out house. It was of the

kind in which the rails screw together, and the bed is held up by a strong cord crossing and recrossing from one rail to another. This looked like real luxury, and they at once appropriated it without any consultation with the owner, whoever he may have been.

"It'd be a waste o' time, anyhow," remarked Shorty. "He's a rebel, and probably over there in Bragg's army."

They made a tick out of the piece of wagon-cover, filled it with beech leaves, and had a bed which surpassed their most extravagant ideas of comfort in the army.

"Shorty," said Si, as they snuggled themselves in the first night, "this seems almost too much. Do you ever remember settin' the whole night on a rail, with nothin' over us but clouds leakin' ice-water?"

"Shut up," said Shorty, giving him a kick under the blankets. "Do you want me to have a night mare?"

They got a number of flat stones, and laid down a little pavement in front of their door, and drove an old bayonet into the logs to serve as a scraper. They rigorously insisted on every visitor using this before entering.

"For common Wabash-bottom fly-up-the-cricks and private soljers, you're puttin' on entirely too many frills," said Sol Murphy, the Wagonmaster, angrily, as it was firmly insisted upon that he stay outside until he carefully cleaned his shoes on the bayonet. "A man that's afraid o' mud hain't no business in the army. He 152
orter stay at home an' wear Congress gaiters an' pantalets. You're puttin' on too many scollops, I tell you. You knowed all 'bout mud in the Wabash bottoms. You had 'nuff of it there, the Lord knows."

"Yes, we had," replied Shorty; "but we was too well raised to track it into anybody's parlor."

"Parlor," echoed Sol, with a horse-laugh. "Lord, how fine we are, just becaze one o' us happens to be a measly little Corporal. In some armies the Wagonmasters have Corporals to wait on 'em an' black their boots. Now, I'll tell yo' what I've come for. I've lost my scoop-shovel, an' I've bin told that you fellers stole it, an' are usin' it to bake hoe-cakes on. I've come up here to see if you've got it, an' I'm goin' right in there to see for myself, mud or no mud."

"We hain't got your blamed old scoop-shovel; you can't git it; you ain't goin' in there until you clean your feet, an' not then unless we conclude to allow you," Shorty replied.

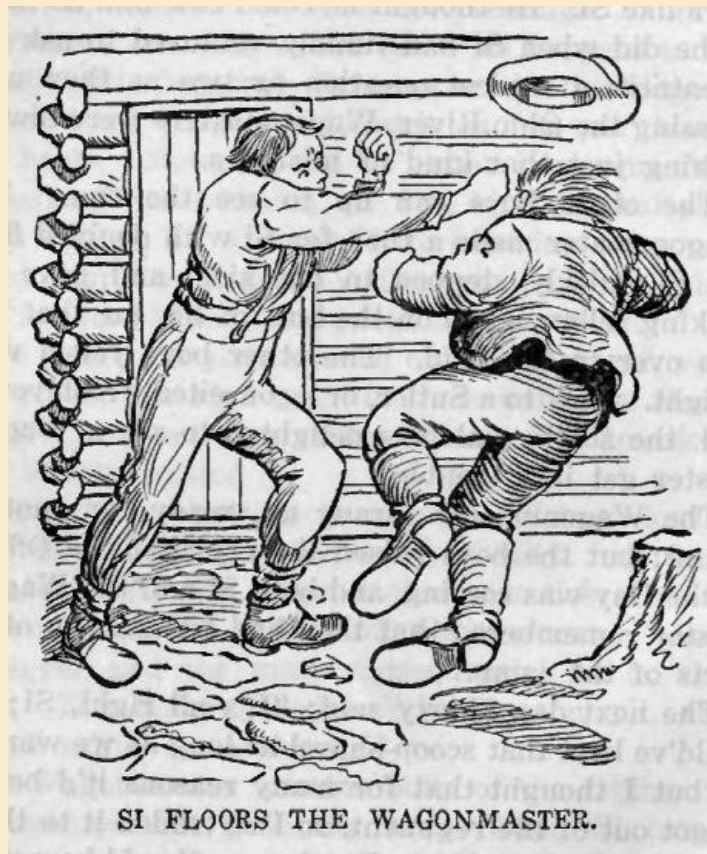
"I'm goin' in there, or break some Wabash loon's neck," said the Wagonmaster wrathfully.

"I always did like to get a chance to lick a mule-whacker," said Si, pulling off his overcoat. "And the bigger and the more consequential he is, the better. I've never licked a Wagonmaster yit, an' I'm just achin' for a chance."

The Wagonmaster was the bully of the regiment, as Wagonmasters generally are. When Si came into the regiment, a green cub, just getting his growth, and afraid of everybody who assumed a little authority and had more knowledge of the world than he, the Wagonmaster had been very overbearing, and at times 153
abusive. That is the way of Wagonmasters and their ilk. The remembrance of this rankled in Si's mind.

On the other hand, the Wagonmaster failed to comprehend the change that a few months of such service as the 200th Ind.'s wrought in verdant, bashful boys like Si. He thought he could cow him as easily as he did when Si had timidly ventured to ask His Greatness a modest question or two as they were crossing the Ohio River. Wagonmasters were always making just that kind of mistakes.

The other boys ran up to see the fun. The Wagonmaster made a rush for Si with doubled fists, but Si quickly stepped to one side, and gave the hulking fellow a tap on the butt of his ear that laid him over in the mud. The other boys yelled with delight. Next to a Sutler, or a conceited, fresh young Aid, the soldiers always delighted to see a Wagonmaster get into trouble.



SI FLOORS THE WAGONMASTER.

The Wagonmaster sprang up, ready for another round; but the boys raised the cry that the Officer of the Day was coming, and both Si and the Wagonmaster remembered that they had business in other parts of the camp.

The next day Shorty said: "It's all right, Si; we could've kept that scoop-shovel as long as we wanted to, but I thought that for many reasons it'd better be got out of the regiment, so I've traded it to them Maumee Muskrats for a Dutch oven they'd borrowed from their Major."

"Bully," answered Si. "I'd much rather have the Dutch oven, anyway."

Si produced a piece of board, which had been painted white, and evidently done duty as part of the door of a house in Murfreesboro', looked at it critically, and then selected a piece of charcoal from the fire, and sat down with an air of studious purpose. "What are you up to now, Si?" asked Shorty curiously. 154

"Why," explained Si, "I've noticed, whenever we've bin in any big place, that all the fine houses have signs or numbers, or something else onto 'em, to name 'em. I've bin thinkin' o' something for our house. How does 'Hoosier's Rest' strike you for a name?" 155

"Splendid," said Shorty. "Couldn't be better."

"And," continued Si, "I've got this board to make a sign to nail up over the door. Do you know how to spell Hoosier, Shorty?"

"Blest if I do," answered Shorty. "It wasn't in our book. At least, we never got to it, if it was. You see our spellin'-school broke up just as we got to 'incompatible.' The teacher got too fond o' Nancy Billings, that I was castin' sheep's eyes at myself. He got to givin' her easy words, to keep her at the head o' the class, and pickin' hard ones for me, to send me to the foot, where I'd be fur away from her. I wouldn't stand it always, so me an' him had it out one night before all the scholars; I got away with him, and he left the country, and busted up the school."

"Hoosier," repeated Si to himself. "I never saw it spelled. But there must be some way to spell it. Let me see: 'W-h-o spells who.'"

"That's so," assented Shorty.

"I-s spells 'is,'" continued Si. "Who-is that's right so far. H-e-r-e spells 'here.' 'Who-is-here?' That seems almost right, don't it, Shorty?"

"It certainly does," replied Shorty, scratching his head to accelerate his mental action. "Or it might be, Si, w-h-o, who; i-s, is; and y-e-r, yer. You know some ignorant folks say yer for you. And they say the name came from the people who first settled in Injianny sayin' 'Who's yer?' to any new comer."

"I believe you're right, Shorty," said Si, bending over the board with the charcoal to begin the work. "We'll make it that way, anyway." 156

The next day passers-by saw a white board nailed up over the door, which contained a charcoal sketch of a soldier seated on a chunk of wood, with a pipe in his mouth, taking as much ease as Si could throw into the outlines of his face and body, and with it was this legend:

"WHO IS YER'S REST."

The next idea that came into the partners' minds was that the requirements of society demanded that they give a housewarming in their sumptuous abode. They at once set about making it a memorable social event.

While out with a wagon after forage they found an Indiana man who had settled in that country. He had a good orchard. They bought from him a barrel of pretty hard cider and several bushels of apples. His wife knew how to make fried dough nuts of real Indiana digestibility. They would be luxuries for the boys, and a half-bushel were contracted for. The farmer was to bring them all in his wagon, and Si and Shorty were to meet him at the pickets and guard the treasures to their abode.

They bought a little bale of fragrant Kinnikinnick tobacco from the sutler, made a sufficiency of corncob pipes, swept off the ground in front of their house, which, as there had been no rain for several days, was in good condition, with brooms of brush, that it might serve for a dancing-floor, gathered in a stock of pitch-pine knots for their fire, spoke to Bunty Jim to bring his fiddle along, and to Uncle Sassafras, the Colonel's cook, to come down with his banjo, and their preparations were completed. 157

It was a crisp, delightful Winter evening, with the moon at full, the fire burning brightly, and every body in the best of spirits. The awful week of marching, enduring and suffering; of terrific fighting, limitless bloodshed; of wounds and death to one out of every four men in the ranks; of nerve-racking anxieties to all might as well have been centuries ago for any sign that appeared on the bright, animated faces of the young men who gathered in front of the cabin. They smoked, danced old-fashioned country dances to the music of the fiddle and the banjo, and sang songs which lamented the death of "Lily Dale," mourned that "My Nelly was sleeping in the Hazel Dell," adjured the "Silver Moon" to "roll on," and so on through the whole repertoire of the sentimental ballads of that day. 158

Then they were invited into the house to inspect its complete, luxurious appointments, and feast themselves to bursting on apples, hard cider, and doughnuts that would have tried any stomach but a young soldier's.

Billy Gurney, who had been back to Nashville as one of the guard to a train-load of wounded, was induced to favor the company with the newest song, which had just reached that city. He cleared his throat with another tincupful of cider, and started off with:

"When this cruel war is over."

Rapturous applause followed the first verse, and Billy started in to teach them the chorus, so they could all join.

A loud explosion came from the fireplace, a campkettle full of cider that was being mulled by the fire was spattered over the company, scalding some of them severely; stones from the fireplace and bullets flew about the room. They all rushed out. Footsteps could be heard running in the distance. They looked in that direction, and recognized Sol Murphy's broad back and bushy head. 159

"That blamed Wagonmaster dropped a nosebag with a lot o' cartridges in it down the chimbley," said Shorty,

who had made an inspection of the fireplace. "Mad because he wasn't invited. You bet, I'll salivate him well for that little trick."

CHAPTER XIV. DEACON KLEGG'S SURPRISE DECIDES TO VISIT MURFREESBORO' AND MEETS WITH ADVENTURES.

"MOTHER," said Mr. Josiah Klegg, Sr., suddenly laying down the County paper, and beginning to polish his spectacles with his red bandanna, "do you know what I've the greatest mind in the world to do?"

It was an evening in February, 1863, and the family had been sitting for some hours after supper around the bright fire, engaged in various occupations.

"No, father," said Mrs. Klegg, looking up from her knitting with such interest that she dropped several stitches. The girls stopped their sewing, and turned expectant eyes on their father. When Mr. Josiah Klegg, sr., announced that he had a great mind to do anything, that thing stood in imminent danger of being done. He was not given to ordinary schemes, still less to idle speech. He thought slowly and doggedly, but when he had arrived at a conclusion there were 200 pounds of solid, stubborn unchangeable Indiana farmer behind the conclusion.

"What is it, father?" asked Mrs. Klegg, making an automatic effort to gather up her lost stitches.

"I've a good mind to go down to Murfreesboro' and see Si," responded the father. 161

"Why, father!" gasped the three "wimmen folks."

"Go down there among them gorillas?" ejaculated Mrs. Klegg.

"And John Morgan raiders," echoed Maria.

"And Secesh soljers, butternut brigands, rebel rascals," added Tilda.

"Well," answered Mr. Klegg, deliberately, "they've been peggin' away at Si for a good many months now, and they haven't killed him by a jug full. Guess I kin stand 'em for a few days. The papers say that the army's settled down at Murfreesboro' for the Winter, and that the railroad's runnin' all right from Looyiville clean there. I kin do nothin' 'round the farm for the next three or four weeks, till Spring opens, except the chores about the house, which Jimmie Watkins kin tend to as well as I kin. I've got all my fences in good shape, and split all the rails I need. There's wood enough cut to last the Winter out. I've hauled all the wheat to town I'm goin' to till prices go higher. I finished gittin' out my clover seed yesterday, and now there's nothin' left for a month but to do boy's work 'round the house, or talk politics down at the store. I'd rather go down and see Si."

"Why, father," remonstrated Mrs. Klegg, "how kin you ever git along in them camps, and live the way them soljers do?"

"You forgit," said her husband, with a touch of dignity, "that I druv team for a whole week in the Black Hawk war. I wanted to enlist, but I was too young. Then I turned out and drilled with the militia as long as there was any musters. I know a good deal more about war than you think." 162

"How do you s'pose you'll ever find Si in all that ruck o' men?" said Mrs. Klegg doubtfully.

"O, they all know Si by this time," returned the father confidently. "Besides, he's an officer now. I'll go right to Gen. Rosecrans's Headquarters. He's probably right near him, where he kin have him at any time. But don't write to Si that I'm comin'. I want to surprise him."

As soon as it was seen that the father was determined to go, mother and daughters entered upon the scheme with the greatest enthusiasm.

Each began to think of some useful thing that they could send to Si to add to his comfort. Mrs. Klegg had already knit a couple of pairs of lambs'-wool socks, and was at work on a third. Maria had knit a pair of mittens, gay with the National colors and representing the flag. The blue field with the white stars around the wrists, while the red and white stripes ran down the fingers. When they were put on the effect was picturesque, not to say startling.

"When Si holds up his hands," remarked Matilda, "they'll look like big hollyhock blossoms, and the men'll wonder where he got posies in Winter."

Matilda contributed a red flannel shirt, upon which she had been engaged since the beginning of Winter reminded her that such a present would be very acceptable to Si. She had done a lot of her finest stitching upon it. Si's initials were wrought in white thread on the cuffs, and on the bosom was a maze of white lines representing hearts, anchors, roses and flags of the Union. In the center of these, in letters of bold outline but rugged execution, was the legend: "Josiah Klegg. His shirt. From Tildy." 163

*"Round is the ring,
That has no end;
So is my luv for you,
My dearest friend."*

"I know it ain't quite right to speak of Si as a friend," she explained, when she spread the shirt out for the family's examination and admiration; "but I couldn't think of nothin' to rhyme with brother."

"I could," said Maria, in her superior way. "I'd said somethin' like this:

*"The ring's no end
From which to t'other;
So is the love I send*

"Maria, you always was so much smarter'n me in writin' poetry," admitted Matilda. "It would've bin ever so much nicer. But it's too late now to do it over agin."

Annabel was sorely puzzled what to send. She wanted something that would be indicative of her feelings toward Si, and yet maiden modesty restrained with the fear of sending something that might be too significant. She spent a sleepless night thinking it over, and finally decided to send a new ambrotype of herself, with a lock of her hair. It is needless to say that this kept Si warmer than a whole bale of flannel shirts would have done.

A thousand things occurred to the family that Si would enjoy, from a couple of feather pillows to a crock of 164 "head cheese," of which Si used to be immensely fond. The old hair trunk was brought down from the garret, and its dimensions studied. But the next evening Jim Wilkins, of Co. Q, who was home patching up a leg which had caught a bullet at Stone River, came in, and his advice was asked.

"No, sir-ree," said he, emphatically. "Don't you never take no trunk nor no box. Don't you take nothin' that you can't hang on to, and keep your eye on every minute. I think the Army o' the Cumberland is the most honestest army in the whole world. I'd knock any man down in a minute that hinted there was a single thief in it. All the same, the only sure way to keep anything you want is to never let go of it for a second. You'd better only take a carpetsack, and look mighty sharp after that, the nearer you git to the army. Keep one eye on it all the time after you cross the Ohio River, and both eyes on it when you git to Murfreesboro'."



"A STOUTLY-BUILT, FARMER-LOOKING MAN ENTERED THE TRAIN."

A week later a strongly-built, farmer-looking man entered the Nashville train at Louisville and looked anxiously around among the crowd of soldiers with which it was filled. His full, resolute face was destitute of whiskers, except a clump of sandy hair on his chin. He wore a coarse but warm overcoat, a black slouch hat, around his neck was a voluminous yarn comforter, and mittens of the same generous proportions were on his hands, one of which held a bulging blue umbrella and the other a large striped carpetsack.

He found a vacant seat beside a rough-looking soldier, who had evidently been drinking, placed his precious carpetsack between his heavy, well-oiled boots, stuck his umbrella beside it, unwound his comforter, laid it back on his shoulders, took off his mittens, unbuttoned his overcoat, and took from his pocket a long plug of navy tobacco, from which he cut off a liberal chew, and then courteously tendered the plug and knife to his neighbor, with the remark:

"Have a chaw, stranger."

The soldier took the plug, cut it in two, put the bigger part in his own pocket, sliced off a liberal portion off the other for his own mouth, and then rather reluctantly handed the remainder, with the knife, back to Mr. Klegg, without so much as a "thankee."

"Manners seem a little different in the army from what they are in Injianny," thought Mr. Klegg; "but mebbe the soldier's not had a chance to git any terbaker for a long time."

He chewed meditatively for some minutes, and then made another friendly advance toward his seat-partner.

"S'pose we'll start purty soon, won't we, stranger?"

"The devil you do," responded the other surlily, and sending over a strong whisky breath. "Don't know much about this blamed old start-when-it-pleases and stop-when-you-don't-want-to railroad. We'll start when some young sardine with shoulder-straps finishes his breakfast, and stop when John Morgan tears up the track. If you didn't feed your hog's any better'n this train runs, old Hayseed, they'd starve to death in a month."

"He ain't jest what you'd call perlite," thought Mr. Klegg, as he meditatively chewed for a little while longer. "But mebber that's the way in the army. Probably Si's got jest that way, too."

He chewed meditatively for a few minutes longer. The air was getting very redolent of the fumes from his neighbor's breath. "I hope Si ain't got to drinking like that," he sighed, as a particularly strong whiff reached him. "If he has, I won't rest a minute till I've yanked him up before Gen. Rosecrans and made him take the pledge. Gen. Rosecrans can't afford to have officers around him who drink. 'Tain't right to trust men's lives to 'em."

"Say, ole Sorrel-top," said the soldier, turning to ward him, "give us another bite o' that terbaker o' yours, will you?"

Mr. Klegg did not like the tone nor the manner, but he produced his tobacco, and began prudently clipping off a fair-sized chew for his companion him self.

"O, the devil, that ain't no chaw," said the other, pulling the tobacco and knife from his hand. "Don't be stingy with your terbaker, old Hawbuck. You kin git plenty more."

He sliced a strip off clear across the plug, and stuffed it into his mouth.

"You don't chaw terbaker. You jest eat it," remonstrated the long-suffering Mr. Klegg.

"Here, I'll take some o' that, too," said another soldier on the seat in front, snatching at the knife and tobacco.

"No you won't, you sardine," angrily responded the first soldier. "This gentleman's a friend o' mine. I won't see him robbed."

The reply was a blow, and the two were soon mixed up in a savage fight. Mr. Klegg was alarmed, lest one of them should be hurt with the heavy, sharp knife, and he mixed in to get it in his hand. In the scuffle his hat, mittens and comforter were thrown to the floor and trampled in the tobacco juice. The provost-guard rushed in, a stalwart Sergeant separated the combatants, jammed the first soldier down in the seat until the timbers cracked, banged the other one's head against the side of the car, and remarked:

"Confound you, don't either o' you raise a hand or open your mouths, or I'll break both your necks. Old man, you keep mighty quiet, too. Hain't you got no sense, to mix up in such a row? You're old enough to know better. I'll snatch you off this train if you make any more disturbance."

Mr. Klegg's blood was up. He wanted to thrash the whole crowd, including the Sergeant, and felt equal to it. But the cry was raised that the train was going. The Sergeant hastened off, with a parting admonition to him to keep still if he knew what was good for him.

"I'm afeared the army's a mighty rough place," thought Mr. Klegg, as he gathered up his soiled belongings and tried to straighten them out. "I wonder if it'll git wuss the nearer we git to the front?"

The train pulled out of Louisville, and he became interested in the great banks of red earth, crowned with surly, black-mouthed cannon, where the forts were, the rows of white tents in the camps, the innumerable droves of horses and mules in the corrals, and the long trains of army wagons.

"I'm goin' to stock up with some horses when I git back," he said to himself. "The Government seems to need a powerful sight o' them, and prices is goin' up faster'n wheat."

Things had now been tolerably quiet in the car for over half an hour, entirely too long for a party of soldiers returning to the front. Monotonous peace was obnoxious to them. A two-fisted young fellow up toward the front rose up, drained the last drops from a pint flask, dashed the bottle on the floor, and yelled:

"Here's for a quiet life, and peace and good will. I belong to John F. Miller's Brigade, the best brigade in the Army of the Cumberland, and the only one that captured any guns at Stone River. I can lick any man in McCook's Corps."

The answering yell that went up seemed to indicate that nearly all in the car belonged to McCook's Corps. There was a general peeling off of overcoats, and a rush forward of answerers to his bold challenge. A few yelled,

"Hooray for Miller's Brigade!"

"Hooray for Crittenden's Corps!"

"Hooray for Pap Thomas!"

and started in to help out the Miller man. Mr. Klegg rose to his feet in dismay. Before he could think the soldier beside him picked up his carpetsack and flung it at the Miller's Brigade man. Mr. Klegg groaned as he thought of the consequences to a jar of honey and a crock of butter, which Mrs. Klegg had put in for Si's delectation.



THE FREE FIGHT.

The combatants came together with the hearty zeal of men who had been looking for a fight for a straight month. The soldier beside Mr. Klegg snatched up the umbrella and began laying about him. The crash was fearful. The backs of the seats were wrenched off, the carpetsack trodden under foot, the windows broken out, and finally Mr. Klegg found himself on the floor of the car under a mass of struggling, fighting, striking and kicking men.

The train came to a halt at a station. The guards on the platform rushed in, and by dint of a vigorous use of gun-butts and other persuasives, and more strong language than Mr. Klegg had ever heard before in all his life, succeeded in quieting the disturbance and making the men take their seats. Mr. Klegg recovered his carpetsack, his comforter, mittens, hat and umbrella, and sat down again. He turned around and glared at the soldier by his side. 171

"If it warn't for startin' another fight," he said to himself, "I'd punch his infernal head."

But the soldier had gone to sleep; he lolled his head over in Mr. Klegg's lap and snored loudly.

For two or three hours afterward the train rattled along without particular incident. Mr. Klegg recovered his composure, and got very much interested in the country through which they were passing, and its farming possibilities. These did not strike him favorably, and he was more than ever convinced that the Wabash Valley was the garden spot of the world. Finally, the train stopped and backed on to a switch to allow another to pass.

An enterprising man had put up a shanty near the track, with a long shelf in front, upon which were displayed sandwiches, pies, boiled eggs, and other eatables. The men all rushed out of the car. Mr. Klegg had begun to feel hungry himself, and joined them.

"How much for that pie?" he asked, pointing to one.

"Half-a-dollar," answered the keeper. "Fifty cents for pies, 25 cents for sandwiches, 10 cents for a cup of coffee."

"Too blamed much," shouted a chorus of voices. "An infernal pirate come down here to skin the soldiers. Let's clean him out."

Before Mr. Klegg fairly understood the words everything was snatched up. Those who did not get hold of 172 any of the viands began on the shed. It was torn to pieces, the stove kicked over, the coffee spilled on the ground, and the eating-house keeper and his assistants scuttled away out of danger. The whistle sounded, they all rushed back into the cars, and Mr. Klegg had to stay his hunger with another chew of tobacco.

Again there was tolerable peace for several hours, broken at last by the sudden stoppage of the train out in the country, the sound of shots, and the yell of "Guerrillas! Guerrillas!"

Everybody bolted out of the cars. Those who had guns buckled on their cartridge-boxes, and formed in line, ready for orders. A squad of rebel cavalry had been trying to tear up the track, but were surprised by the unexpected appearance of the train. They had fallen back to the top of the hill, to see how many were aboard, and whether it looked profitable to make an attack. They were keeping up a desultory fire at long range.

Mr. Klegg had seen a gun standing in the corner as he ran out. He picked it up and joined one of the squads. He was no coward, and if there had to be fighting, he was willing to do his share.



MR. KLEGG READY FOR ACTION.

"Bully for you, old Hayseed," said the man who had wanted to whip any man in the right wing of the army. "You're made of the right stuff, after all."

Others around him nodded approval, and Mr. Klegg was conscious that the social atmosphere was more pleasant for him.

The guerrillas finally decided to give the job up, and rode away, after yelling some 'very uncomplimentary things about Yankee soldiers generally.

When Mr. Klegg returned to his seat he found his carpetsack, umbrella, mittens, and comforter gone. Likewise the man who had been riding with him. He waxed very wroth, and lifted up his voice to let them know it. Several around began to gibe him, but suddenly the man from Miller's Brigade forced his way 174 through the crowd and asked:

"What's the matter, 'Squire?'"

Mr. Klegg explained.

"Well, you've got to have every one of them things back again, if I've to lick every man on the train. I'll not see an old man and as good a man as you are mistreated where I am. I've got a father my self."

This time he was in the large majority. All of McCook's men were with him. A general hunt was instituted through the train, and one by one his possessions were recovered and brought back to him.

"Thankee, gentlemen; thankee very kindly. Will any o' you gentlemen have a chaw of terbaker? It's all I have to offer you, but it's good."

When the train pulled into Nashville that night a very tired old farmer got off and inquired:

"How much farther is it to Murfreesboro'?"

"About 25 miles," someone answered.

"I'm awful glad to hear it. If it was 30 miles I don't believe I could stand it."

CHAPTER XV. DEACON KLEGG'S ARRIVAL IS MISTAKEN

FOR A KNIGHT OF THE GOLDEN CIRCLE.

"THINGS don't look so tumultuous-like on this train," said Mr. Klegg, with a sigh of satisfaction, as he seated himself in the car for Murfreesboro' and deposited his valuables by his side. "I know that boys will be boys, and I like to see them have fun just as well as any other man, but I must say that they made things on that other train a little too lively for a middle-aged Deacon of the Baptist Church."

A broad-shouldered Provost-Sergeant walked through the car, with an air of authority, and gave orders to

several who were seated in it.

"Must be the Constable, or Sheriff, or Town Marshal," mused Mr. Klegg. "I hope he'll stay on the train till we reach Murfreesboro', and keep order."

Mr. Klegg was right. The irregularities and disorders of the "rear" ended at Nashville. There the strict discipline of the "front" began under the iron sway of the Provost-Marshal, whose guards were everywhere, particularly at the depots and on the cars. The occupants of the car were as orderly as the boys at a country school when the master is on his throne, with his eyes about him.

It was a bright day, and the country roundabout of surpassing interest to the Indiana farmer. He saw the domed, stately capitol of Tennessee crowning the highest hill, and lording a glorious landscape of hill and valley, through which the Cumberland River flowed in majestic sweeps, like a broad girdle of sparkling silver. Then came the frowning forts, with beetling banks of blood-red clay, with terror-striking black guns, with rugged palisades, and a porcupine bristle of abatis. Sentries with gleaming muskets paced their high parapets. Every mile, as far as he could see, was full of objects of engrossing interest. 176

He became so absorbed in the feast of his eyes that he did not observe that a middle-aged, clean shaven man in a suit of dusty black had sat down beside him, and was studying him with attention.

"How do you do, my friend?" said he at length, putting out his hand.

Mr. Klegg turned with a start, and instinctively put out his hand.

"Howdy," he said, with a tone of little encouragement, for he would much rather have continued watching the country than indulge in purposeless conversation. The stranger grasped his hand warmly, and pressed his thumb upon the first joint of Mr. Klegg's, and caught his little finger in a peculiar way. Deacon Klegg had been initiated into the Odd Fellows, and he dimly recognized this as a "grip," but he could not associate it for the moment with any of the degrees of the brotherhood of the Three Links.

"Were you out late last night," said the stranger in a low, deeply-impressive tone. 177

"Not pertickerlerly," answered Deacon Klegg, turning to catch a view of the stockade at La Vergne, where the 1st Mich. Eng. had made such a gallant defense. "I'd a mighty bothersome day, and was purty well tuckered out. I found a good place to sleep, and I turned in rather airly. Say," continued he, pointing to the wreckage of battle, "the boys seem to have poked it to 'em purty lively out there."

"It was a very sharp fight," returned the other; "but for once our friend Wheeler made a mistake, and lost heavily. Down the road farther you'll see evidences of his more successful work in some miles of burnt wagons."

"Bad man, that Gen. Wheeler," said the Deacon, looking steadfastly out of the window.

The stranger looked a little disappointed, but he rallied, and presently gave the second grand hailing sign of the Knights of the Golden Circle, in the same low, impressive tone:

"Did you see a star last night?"

"Can't say that I did," responded Mr. Klegg rather indifferently. "There was lots of gas-lamps burning, and I was rather taken with them, so that I didn't notice the moon or stars. Besides, as I told you before, I turned in purty airly, for I was tired with my ride from Looyville, and I wanted to git in good shape for the trip to-day."

A cloud of annoyance came upon the stranger's face, and he did not speak again for a minute or two. Then he said:

"You are from Indiana, are you not?"

"Yes," said Mr. Klegg.

"From Posey County?" 178

"Yes."

"I knew so. I've been looking for you for several days."

"Looking for me?" said Deacon Klegg, turning around in amazement. "How come you to be lookin' for me? What business have you got with me? How'd you know I was a-comin'? Nobody knowed it outside o' Mariar, my wife, and my family." 179



DEACON KLEGG AND THE KNIGHT OF THE GOLDEN CIRCLE.

"Come, come, now," said the other impatiently. "Don't try to play off on me. You needn't be afraid. I'm all right. I'm Deputy Grand Organizer for the Knights for Southern Indiana and the jurisdiction of Louisville generally. You ought to remember me. I recollect you perfectly. I organized the Lodges in Poseyville, and all through your County. I planted the seed there for a big crop of Butternuts that'll help hurl the tyrant Lincoln from his bloody throne, and give the country back into the hands of the white man. I got word that you were coming down with important information from your section for Gen. Bragg and John Morgan, and I've been on the lookout for you."

An understanding of what the man was, and what he was driving at, began to slowly filter into Deacon Klegg's mind, and his temper to rise.

"Confound you, you pizen Copperhead," he said wrathfully. "What do you take me for? Do you take me for a miserable, traitorous Knight o' the Golden Circle? I'm a member o' the church, or I'd punch your pizen head. I'm a loyal man, and I've got a son fightin' for the Union."

"H-u-s-h," said the unconvinced man, laying his hand on the Deacon's arm. "Don't talk so loud. They're watching us."

Klegg shook his hand off angrily, but the warning came too late. The Provost-Sergeant had been watching them, at the instigation of a sharp-eyed, clerkly-looking man in semi-uniform.

The Sergeant strode toward them, followed by a soldier with a gun.

"I arrest you both," said he. "You are men that we've been looking for. You'll stay right there in your seats till we get to Murfreesboro', and this man 'll see that you do." 180

The soldier took position at the end of the seat, and dropped the end of his musket on the floor with an I've-got-my-orders-an'-I'm-going-to-stay-right-here look on his face.

"You've been lookin' for me," gasped Deacon Klegg. "Who else's been lookin' for me, I'd like to know? Is the whole State o' Tennessee lookin' for me? What was you lookin' for me for? Think I've run away from Injianny without pay in' my debts? Think I want to desert my wife and children? Young man, you don't know Josiah Klegg. I've got a quarter section of as good land as there is in the Wabash bottoms, and I don't owe a dollar on it. As for leavin' Maria Klegg, I wouldn't do it for the whole State of Injianny. What've you been lookin' for me for, I'd like to know?"

"Old man, I haven't time to talk to you, and it ain't my business. You'll find out soon enough, when you git to headquarters, and so will your partner there."

"My partner," echoed Deacon Klegg. "This man's no partner o' mine. I never laid eyes on him till a half-hour ago."

"Continue your speech at headquarters," said the Sergeant, as he moved off. "I haven't time to listen to it now. You'd better save your breath till then, for you'll have to do some mighty slick talkin' to save your spying neck, I can tell you that."

Deacon Klegg sank back in the seat dumfounded. "What on airth kin he mean?" he gasped. 181

"It's another of the outrages of the despot Lincoln," answered his companion. "It's another of the arbitrary arrests by his military satraps. Liberty is dead in this country until we can overthrow that nigger-loving usurper."

"Shut up," said the Deacon savagely. "If you say another word I'll mash you. I won't be disturbed when I'm tryin' to think things out."

"I want that carpetsack and umbrella of yours," said the Sergeant, coming back. "I've no doubt you've got 'em both full of treasonable documents and information for your rebel friends. Guard, watch both these men closely, and see that they don't destroy any papers, nor throw anything out the window."

"Young man," said the Deacon resolutely, "you can't have that carpetsack or that umbreller. They're my property. If you tech 'em I'll have the law on you. I'll sue you for trespass, larceny, assault and battery, and intent to provoke. I hain't done nothin' to justify it. I'm Josiah Klegg, of Posey County, Injianny, Deacon in the Ebenezer Church, on Mill Crick. I'm goin' down to Murfreesboro' to visit my son, Josiah Klegg, jr., o' the 200th Injianny Volunteers. You all know him. He's an officer; he's the boy that tried to git a commissary wagon away from the rebels durin' the battle, and he and Shorty 've got a house with a tin roof."

The other occupants gathered around and laughed derisively.

"Twon't do, old man," said the Sergeant, trying to wrest the carpetsack away. "You tell a pretty story, and you're well disguised, but we're onto you. We got full particulars about you from Louisville. You're a bad lot down there in Posey County. There's a Knights of the Golden Circle Lodge under every sycamore. You'd be at Gen. Bragg's headquarters to-morrow night if we let you alone." 182

He pulled hard at the carpetsack, and Deacon Klegg resisted with all his sturdy might. His strength was quite a match for the Sergeant's, but other soldiers came to help the latter. The handles came off in the struggle, and the Deacon was forced down into his seat. The other man took advantage of the confusion to work his way through the crowd to the door and jump off. This angered the Sergeant, and coming back to where Mr. Klegg sat, exhausted and intensely mad, he said:

"I'll make sure that you don't get away, anyhow. I ought to've done this at first."

So saying, he snapped a hand-cuff over Mr. Klegg's wrist and then over the arm of the seat.

The Deacon was never so humiliated in his life. He was simply speechless in his rage and mortification.

Among the many of Gen. Rosecrans's eccentricities and vagrant fancies was one for prowling around through his camps at night, wearing a private's overcoat and cap. One night he strolled into the camp of the 200th Ind. The superior architecture of Si and Shorty's cabin struck him, and he decided to look inside. He knocked on the door.

"Come in," shouted Si. 183

He entered, and found Si engaged with Tom Billings in a game of checkers for the championship of the 200th Ind. Shorty was watching the game intently, as Si's counselor, and Zeke Tomkins was giving like assistance to Tom Billings. Two other crack players were acting as umpires. The light from the fire shone brightly upon them, but left the front of the room, where the General stood, in complete darkness. They were so absorbed in the game that they merely looked up, saw that the newcomer was a private soldier, and supposed that he had merely dropped in to watch the game.

"Did you clean your feet on the bayonet outside the door?" demanded Shorty, as he fixed his eyes again on the red and white grains of corn, which represented the men on the board.

"No, I forgot," said the General quietly. "Well, go right outside and clean 'em off," ordered Shorty. "Don't want no mud tracked in here for us to carry out agin."

The General, much amused, went out, carefully scraped his boots, and then returned.

"All right," said Shorty, looking up as he reentered. "Now look all you like, but don't say nothin'. Nobody s allowed to say a word but the players and the umpires."

The game proceeded in silence for several minutes, and the General became much interested. It was one of his peculiarities that he could not help getting interested in anything that his soldiers were doing, from the boiling of a cup of coffee or the pitching of a tent to the alignment of a company. Si was getting a little the better of Billings, and the General's sympathies naturally went toward the loser. He touched Billings on the shoulder, as he was about to make a move, and said: 184



THE GENERAL INTERRUPTS THE GAME.

"Don't do that. You'll open your king row.

"Move—"

Shorty was alert on the instant.

"Shut up," he commanded. "You've no business talkin'; I told you when you come in you weren't allowed to say nothin'."

"Excuse me," said the General; "I quite forgot."

"Well, see that you don't forgit agin," growled Shorty. "We've got quite enough talent in the game already. We don't want no more to come in."

Again the game proceeded in intent silence for some minutes. Then Si called out:

"Hold on; you can't jump backwards with that man. That ain't no king."

"I say it is a king," said Billings. "I got him into the row half an hour ago, and crowned him. You knocked the crown off when you moved."

"I know better," said Shorty. "I've been watching that piece right along, and he's never been nearer the king-row than he is this minute."

A hot discussion ensued. The General forgot him self and joined in in his usual positive, authoritative way.

"I say the man had been crowned. I saw him crowned and the crown afterward knocked off. There's the crown by the side there."

Shorty's wrath rose. "I told you when you come in here," he said sharply, "not to mix into this game. You've got no business in it. Keep your advice till it's asked for, or git out o' the tent. If you don't git out I'll put you out."

"Be careful, my man," said the General, speaking in his usual way. "You are talking to an officer."

"I don't care if you are a Lieutenant or a Captain, even," Si chimed in; "you have no business mixing in a quiet little game o' checkers between enlisted men."

"I am more than a Captain," said the General, opening his overcoat slightly, to show his double row of buttons.

"Dern' a Major or a Colonel don't make it much better," said Si, obdurately, but with much more respect.

"I'm higher than a Colonel," said the General, amusedly, and opening his overcoat a little farther.

"Excuse us, General," they all murmured, rising to their feet, and taking the position of a soldier.

"You don't command our brigade, do you?" said Shorty, trying to get a better view of his face.

"I command this brigade, and several others," said the General, smilingly enjoying their confusion.

"Lord, a Major-General commanding a corps," gasped Shorty, backing up with the rest into line, and saluting with the profoundest respect.

"Still higher," laughed the General, stepping forward to where the light fell full on his face. "I'm Maj.-Gen. Rosecrans, commanding this army. But don't be disturbed. You've done nothing. You are all entitled to your opinions, as free American citizens; but I will insist that that man had been in the king row, and should be crowned. But you settle that among yourselves.

"I merely dropped in to compliment you on the skill you have shown in building your house and its comfort.

I'm glad to find that it looks even better inside than out. I know that you are good soldiers from the way you take care of yourselves. But so fine a house ought to have a better checker-board than a barrel-head, with grains of corn for men. Who are the owners of the house?"

187

"Me and him," said Shorty, indicating himself and Si.

"Very good," said the General; "both of you report at my Headquarters to-morrow morning at 10 o'clock. Good night."

"Three cheers and a tiger for Old Rosey," yelled Shorty as soon as he could get his scattered wits together enough to say a word.

They gave three such rousing cheers that the rest of Co. Q came running out of their tents, and joined in cheering, as fast as the news could be communicated to them.

The next morning a squad of prisoners was being conducted toward Army Headquarters. At their head walked a stout, middle-aged farmer, carrying a portly blue umbrella. He had spent the night among the riotous spirits in the guard-house, and had evidently undergone much wear and tear. He looked as if things had not been going his way at all. By him marched the stalwart Provost-Sergeant, with a heavy striped carpetsack under his arm.

Gen. Rosecrans rode up at the head of his staff, from an early morning inspection of some part of the camp. The men saluted and cheered.

"Whom have you here, Sergeant?" said the General, reining up his horse beside the squad.

"That's Gen. Rosecrans," said one of the guards to Deacon Klegg.

"Nobody of importance," replied the Sergeant, "except this old man here. He's a Knight of the Golden Circle, that we've been watching for for some time, going through with information and other things from the Knights of Indiana to the enemy in Tullahoma. I've got his carpetsack here. I expect it's full of papers and contraband stuff. It feels as if it had lead in it. I am taking him to the Provost-Marshal's for examination."

He set the heavy carpetsack down on the ground, to rest for a minute.

"Gen. Rosecrans, it's all a plaguey lie," burst out Deacon Klegg. "I'm as loyal a man as there is in the State of Injianny. I voted for Abe Lincoln and Oliver P. Morton. I've come down here to visit my son, Josiah Klegg, jr., of the 200th Injianny Volunteers. You know him, General. He's one o' your officers. He's a Corporal. He's the boy that tried to take a commissary wagon away from the rebels durin' the battle, and he's got a house with a tin roof. You recollect that, don't you?"

Some of the staff laughed loudly, but the General checked them with a look, and spoke encouragingly to the Deacon.

"Yes, General," continued Mr. Klegg, "I knowed you'd know all about him the minit I mentioned him to you. I told this over and over agin to these plaguey fools, but they wouldn't believe me. As to that carpetsack havin' things for the enemy, it's the biggest lie that ever was told. I'll open it right here before you to show you. I've only got some things that my wife and the girls was sendin to Si."

He fumbled around for his keys.

"Possibly you have made a mistake, Sergeant," said the General. "What evidence have you?"

189

"We'd got word to look out for just such a man, who'd play off the dodge of being an old plug of a farmer on a visit to his son."



MEETING BETWEEN SI AND HIS FATHER.

"He was on the train with a man whom all the detectives know as one of the worst Knights in the gang. They were talking together all the way. I arrested the other one, too, but he slipped away in the row this man made to distract our attention." 190

In the meantime Deacon Klegg had gotten his carpetsack open for the General's inspection. It was a sorry sight inside. Butter, honey, shirts, socks, boots, and cakes are excellent things taken separately, but make a bad mixture. Deacon Klegg looked very dejected. The rest grinned broadly.

"I don't seem to see anything treasonable so far," said the General. "Sergeant, take the rest of your prisoners up to the Provost-Marshal, and leave this man with me."

"Gen. Rosecrans," said a familiar voice, "you ordered us to report to you this mornin' at 10 o'clock. We're here."

The General looked up and saw Corporal Si Klegg and Shorty standing at a "salute."

"Si!" said the Deacon, joyously, sticking out a hand badly smeared with honey and butter.

"Pap!" shouted the Corporal, taking the hand in rapture. "How in the world did you git down here?"

They all laughed now, and the General did not check them.

"Corporal," said he, "I turn this man over to you. I'll hold you responsible that he don't communicate with the enemy. But come on up to Headquarters and get your checker-board. I have a very nice one for you."

192

CHAPTER XVI. IN A NEW WORLD

DEACON KLEGG HAS A LITTLE EXPERIENCE OF LIFE IN THE ARMY.

"Pap" said Si, by way of introduction, "this is Shorty, my pardner, and the best pardner a feller ever had, and the best soldier in the Army of the Cumberland."

"Glad to see you, Mr. Klegg," said Shorty, reddening and grasping the father's outstretched hand; "but you orter 've broke that boy o' your'n o' lyin' when he was young."

"He never did lie," said the Deacon cheerfully, "and I don't believe he's lyin' now. I've heard a great deal o' you, Mr. Shorty, and I'm sure he's tellin' the truth about you."

"Drop the Mister, Pap," said Si. "We never call each other Mister here, except when we're mad."

Si took the carpetsack under his arm, and they trudged up toward Army Headquarters.

Relieved of anxiety as to his own personal safety, and having found his son, Deacon Klegg viewed everything around him with open-eyed interest. It was a wonderfully new and strange world into which the

sober, plodding Indiana farmer had dropped. The men around him spoke the speech to which his ears were accustomed, but otherwise they were as foreign as if they had come from the heart of China.

193

Their dress, their manners, their actions, the ways in which they were busying themselves, had no resemblance to anything seen on the prosaic plains of the Wabash in his half-century of life there. The infantry sweeping over the fields in endless waves, the dashing cavalcades of officers and staffs, the bewildering whirl of light batteries dazed him. Even Si awed him. It was hard to recognize in the broad-shouldered, self-assured young soldier, who seemed so entirely at home in his startling surroundings, the blundering, bashful hobbledehoy boy of a few months before, whose feet and hands were constantly in the way, and into everything else that they should not be.

"Somehow, Si," he said, looking at his offspring with contemplative eye, "you seem to have growed like a cornstalk in July, and yit when I come to measure you you don't seem no taller nor heavier than when you went away. How is it?"

"Don't know, Pap," Si answered. "I feel as if I'd had more'n 10 long years o' growth since we crossed the Ohio River. Yit, you don't seem a minute older than when I went away."

"I didn't feel no older," returned the father, "until I got in that guard-house last night. Then I could feel my hair gittin' grayer every hour, and my teeth droppin' out."

"I'm afraid you didn't git much chance to sleep, Pap," said Si sympathetically.

"Loss o' sleep was the least part of it," said the Deacon feelingly. "I kin stand a little loss o' sleep without any partickler bother. It wasn't bein' kept awake so much as the way I was kept awake that bore on me."

"Why, what happened?" asked Si.

"Better ask what didn't happen," groaned his father. "Used to have some mighty rough shivarees when I was a boy, and'd jest settled on the Wabash. Lots o' toughs then, 'specially 'mong the flatboat-men, who'd nothin' to drink but new sod-cornwhisky, that'd fight in every spoonful. But for sure, straight-out tumultuousness that guard-house last night gave six pecks for every bushel of a Wabash shivaree."

Shorty looked meaningly at Si. "Guard-house fellers's likely to be a ructionary lot o' roosters. Awful sorry you got in among 'em. Was they very bad?"

"Well, I should say. When I was chucked in they wuz havin' a regular prize fight, 'cordin' to rules, as to whether Rousseau or Negley wuz the best General. The Rousseau man got licked, and then the other Rousseau men wuzent satisfied, and proposed to lick all the Negley men in the guard-house; but the Sheridan men interfered, and made the Rousseau men cool down. They they turned their attention to me. They raised a row about a citizen being put in among them. It was a disgrace. The guard house was only intended for soldiers and gentlemen, and no place for condemned civilians. Then some one said that I had been arrested as a Knight o' the Golden Circle, on my way to Bragg, with information from the Injianny Knights. Another insisted that he knowed me, and that I wuz Vallandigham himself, brought down there to be sent through the lines. Then I thought sure they'd kill me on the spot. I begged and pled and denied. Finally, they organized a court-martial to try me for my life.

194

"They had an awful tonguey feller that acted as Prosecutin' Attorney, and the way he blackguarded me was a shame. He said the word 'traitor' was wrote in every liniment o' my face; that I wuz a dyed-in-the-wool butternut, and that the bag I'd brung along with me contained the muster-rolls of 100,000 Injiannians who'd bin swore in to fight for Jeff Davis.

"The feller that they appinted to defend me admitted the truth of all that the other feller'd said. He said that no one could look in my Southern Injianny face without seem' Secession, treason and nigger-lovin' wrote there in big letters. He could only ask the honorable court for mercy instid o' justice, and that I be shot instid o' hung, as I deserved.

"When they asked me what I'd got to say in my own defense I told 'em the truth, and said that I'd come down here to visit my son, who they all knowed they must know Si Klegg. o' the 200th Injianny Volunteers, who was an officer, and had a house with a tin roof.

"Then they all got up and yelled. They said they knowed Si Klegg only too well; that he wuz the meanest, oneriest soljer in the army, and that he looked just like me. They had him in the guard house now. He'd bin put in for stealin' a hoe-cake from a blind nigger half-way back to Nashville durin' the battle.

"They brought up the dirtiest, scaliest lookin' man in the guard-house, and said that was Si Klegg, and that he resembled me so much that they wuz sure he wuz my son. They asked him if he reckernized me as his dad, and after they kicked him two or three times he said he did, but he wuz goin' to cut his throat now, since they'd found it out. He couldn't stand everything. Then they said they'd postpone execution on condition that I'd kneel down, drink a pint o' whisky, take the oath o' allegiance to Abe Lincoln, and sing 'We'll hang Jeff Davis on a sour-apple tree.'

195

"I told 'em I wuz perfectly willin' to take the oath to Abe Lincoln as often as they pleased; that he wuz my man from start to finish; that I wanted Jeff Davis hung the minit we ketched him. I'd sing the song if they'd learn it to me, though I've not sung anything but hymns for the last 25 years. As for the whisky, I wouldn't tech it on no account, for I belonged to the Good Templars.

"They all seemed pacified with this except one man, who insisted that I should drink the whisky. One o' the Sheridan men knocked him down, and then the fight between the Rousseau men and the Negley men broke out afresh, and the guard come in and quieted things. By the time they'd done this they found that the man who had reckernized me as his father wuz tryin' to hang himself with a piece o' tent-rope. They cut him down, larruped him with the tent-rope, and then started another court to try me for havin' sich a son. But some officer come in and took out the Prosecutin' Attorney and the lawyer for the defense and the Presidin' Judge and bucked and gagged 'em. This cooled things down agin till mornin'."



"HIS HONOR" AND THE "ATTORNEY" BUCKED AND GAGGED.

"We might walk over to the Provost-Marshal's," suggested Shorty, "and watch for them fellers as they come out, and take a drop out o' some of 'em."

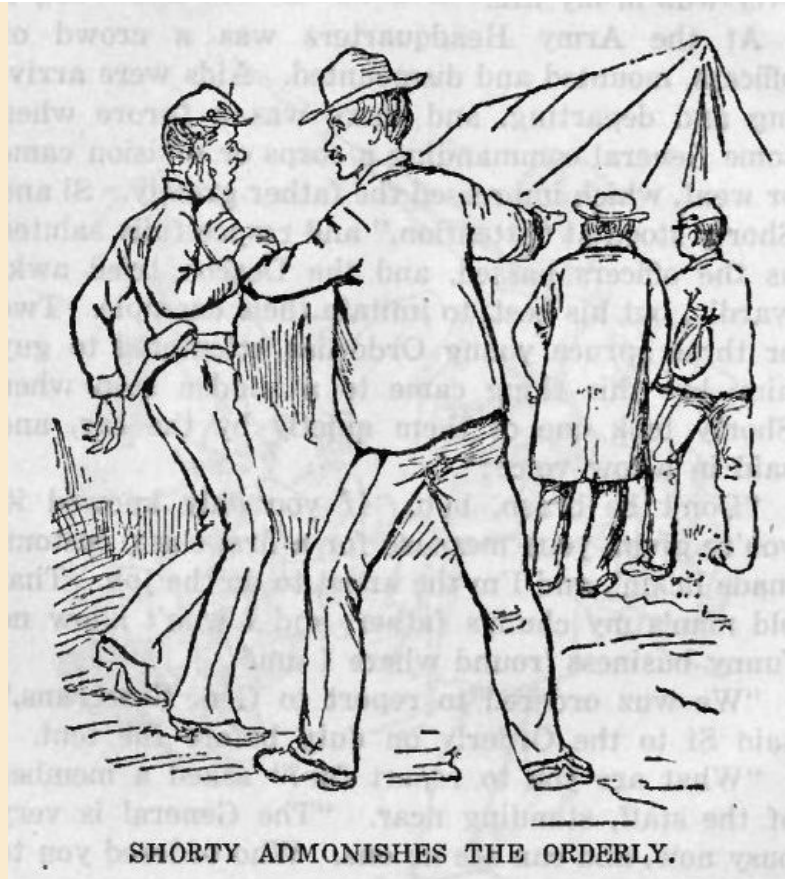
196

"It'll be a waste o' time," said Si, with a shrug of his shoulders. "They'll all be doing hard labor for the next 30 days, and by that time we'll likely have a good deal else to think about. Let's report at Headquarters, and then take Dad over and show him our new house."

"Yes, I'm dying to see it," said the Deacon, "and to git somewhere that I kin sit down in peace and quietness. Seems to me I haven't had a moment's rest for years, and I'm as nigh tuckered out as I ever wuz in my life."

197

At the Army Headquarters was a crowd of officers, mounted and dismounted. Aids were arriving and departing, and there was a furor when some General commanding a corps or division came or went, which impressed the father greatly. Si and Shorty stood at "attention," and respectfully saluted as the officers passed, and the Deacon tried awkwardly, but his best, to imitate their example. Two or three spruce young Orderlies attempted to guy him. but this thing came to a sudden stop when Shorty took one of them quietly by the ear, and said in a low voice:



SHORTY ADMONISHES THE ORDERLY.

"Don't be brash, bub. If you only knowed it, you're givin' your measure for a first-class, custom-made lickin', and I'm the artist to do the job. That old man's my chum's father, and I won't allow no funny business 'round where I am."

"We wuz ordered to report to Gen. Rosecrans," said Si to the Orderly on duty before the tent.

"What are you to report for?" asked a member of the staff, standing near. "The General is very busy now, and can see no one. Who ordered you to report?"

"The General himself," said Si.

The sound of his voice reached Gen. Rosecrans, in side, and busy as he was, arrested his attention. With the kindly thoughtfulness that so endeared him to his soldiers he instantly remembered his promise, dropped his pen, and came to the door.

198

"I ordered these men to report," he said to the Aid. "Bring me that checker-board which lies on my table."

The Aid did so. Gen. Rosecrans noticed the father, and, as usual, saw the opportunity of doing a kindly, gracious thing.

"You have found your son, I see," he said to him. "Sorry that you had so much trouble. That's a fine son you have. One of the very best soldiers in my army. I congratulate you upon him. Boys, here is your board and 199 men. I may drop in some evening and see you play a game. I'll be careful to clean my feet, this time."

Si and Shorty got very red in the face at this allusion, and began to stammer excuses. The General playfully pinched Si's ear and said:

"Go to your quarters now, you young rascal, and take your father with you. I hope he'll have a very pleasant time while he is in camp."

They saluted and turned away too full for utterance. After they had gone a little distance the Deacon remarked, as if communing with himself:

"And that is Gen. Rosecrans. Awful nice man. Nicest man I ever saw. Greatest General in the world. Won't this be something to tell Mariar and the girls. And the men down at the store. I'd 've come down here 40 times jest to 've seen him and talked with him. What'd last night in the guard house amount to, after all? A man must expect some trouble occasionally. Wouldn't have no fun if he didn't. Say, Si, remember Old Susy's chestnut colt?"

"Yes," answered Si.

"I thought he had in him the makin' o' the finest horse in Posey County."

"Yes," said Si.

"Well, he's turnin' out even better'n I thought he would. Shouldn't wonder if he could trot down somewhere nigh 2:40."

"You don't say so."

"Yes, indeed. You used to want that colt mighty bad, Si."

200

"I remember that I did, Pap."

"Well, Si, I'll give you that colt, and take good care o' him till you come home, for that 'ere checker board."

When they arrived at their house Si and Shorty arranged the things so as to give the Deacon a most comfortable rest after his trying experiences, and cooked him the best dinner their larder would afford. After dinner they filled him a pipe-full of kinni-kinnick, and the old gentleman sat down to enjoy it while Si and Shorty investigated the contents of the carpetsack. They found endless fun in its woeful condition. The butter 201

and honey were smeared over everything, in the rough handling which it had endured. They pulled out the shirt, the socks, the boots, the paper and books, and scraped off carefully as much as they could of the precious honey and butter.

"It's too good to waste the least bit," said Shorty, tasting it from time to time with unction. "Don't mind a hair or two in the butter, this time, Si. I kin believe your mother is a good buttermaker. It's the best I ever tasted."



"Well, the butter and the honey may be spiled," said Si, "but the other things are all right. My, ain't this a nice shirt. And them socks. Shorty, did you ever see such socks. Ever so much obliged to you, Pap, for these boots. Old Hank Sommers's make. He's the best shoemaker in the State of Injianny. No Quartermaster's cowhide about them. And—"

Si stopped. He had suddenly come across Anna bel's ambrotype. He tried to slip it into his pocket without the others seeing him. He edged awkwardly to the door.

"You look over the rest o' the things, Shorty," he said, with a blush that hid his freckles. "I've got to go down and see the Orderly-Sergeant."

Shorty and the Deacon exchanged very profound winks.

CHAPTER XVII. THE DEACON'S INITIATION

RAPIDLY ACQUIRES EXPERIENCE OF LIFE IN THE ARMY.

SI ASKED questions of his father about the folks at home and the farm until the old gentleman's head ached, and he finally fell asleep through sheer exhaustion.

The next day the Deacon took a comprehensive survey of the house, and was loud in his praises of Si and Shorty's architecture.

"Beats the cabin I had to take your mother to, Si, when I married her," he said with a retrospective look in his eye, "though I'd got up a sight better one than many o' the boys on the Wabash. Lays a way over the one that Abe Lincoln's father put up on Pigeon Crick, over in Spencer County, and where he brung the Widder Johnston when he married her. I remember it well. About the measliest shack there wuz in the country. Tom Lincoln, Abe's father, wuz about as lazy as you make 'em. They say nothin' will cure laziness in a man, but a second wife 'll shake it up awfully. The Widder Johnston had lots o' git up in her, but she found Tom Lincoln a dead load. Abe wuz made o' different stuff."

"Yes," continued the father, growing reminiscential. "There wuz no tin roof, sawed boards, glass winder nor plank floor in that little shack on the Wabash, but some o' the happiest days in my life wuz spent in it. Me and your mother wuz both young, both very much in love, both chock full o' hope and hard day's work. By the time you wuz born, Si, we'd got the farm and the house in much better shape, but they wuz fur from being what they are to-day."

"If we only had a deed for a quarter section o' land around our house we'd be purty well started in life for young men," ventured Si.

"I'd want it a heap sight better land than this is 'round here," said the Deacon, studying the land scape judiciously. "Most of it that I've seen so far is like self-righteousness the more a man has the worse he's off. Mebbe it'll raise white beans, but I don't know o' nothin' else, except niggers and poverty. The man that'd stay 'round here, scratchin' these clay knobs, when there's no law agin him goin' to Injianny or Illinoy, hain't gumption enough to be anything but a rebel. That's my private opinion publicly expressed."

"Pap," said Si, after his father had been a day in camp, "I think we've done fairly well in providin' you with a house and a bed, but I'm afeared that our cookin's not quite up to your taste. You see, you've bin badly pampered by mother. I might say that she's forever spilled you for plain grub and common cookin'."

"Your mother's the best cook that ever lived or breathed," said the Deacon earnestly. "She kin make plain cornbread taste better than anybody else's pound cake. But you do well, Si, considerin' that your mother could never git you to do so much as help peel a mess o' 'taters. Your coffee'd tan a side o' sole leather, and there's enough grease about your meat to float a skiff; but I didn't expect to live at a hotel when I come down here." 204

The Deacon strolled down near Regimental Headquarters. An Aid came up and, saluting the Colonel, said:

"Colonel, the General presents his compliments, and instructs me to say that he has received orders from Division Headquarters to send details of a Corporal and five men from each regiment there to-morrow morning at 7 o'clock for fatigue duty. You will furnish yours."

"Very good," answered the Colonel, returning the salute. "Adjutant, order the detail."

"Sergeant-Major," said the Adjutant, after a momentary glance at his roster, "send an order to Capt. McGillicuddy, of Co. Q, for a Corporal and five men for fatigue duty, to report at Division Headquarters at 7 to-morrow morning."

The Deacon walked toward Co. Q's quarters, and presently saw the Orderly hand the Captain the order from the Colonel.

"Orderly-Sergeant," said the Captain, "detail a Corporal and five men to report for fatigue duty at Division Headquarters to-morrow at 7 o'clock."

The Orderly-Sergeant looked over his roster, and then walked down to Si's residence.

"Klegg," said he, "you will report for fatigue duty at Division Headquarters to-morrow at 7 o'clock with five men. You will take Shorty, Simmons, Sullivan, Tomkins and Wheeler with you."

"Very good, sir," said Si, saluting. 205

"Si," said his father, with a quizzical smile, "I've bin wonderin', ever since I heard that you wuz an officer, how much o' the army you commanded. Now I see that if it wuz turned upside down you'd be on the very top."

"He leads the army when it goes backward," interjected Shorty.

"Gracious, Pap," said Si, good-humoredly, "I haven't rank enough to get me behind a saplin' on the battlefield. The Colonel has the pick o' the biggest tree, the Lieutenant-Colonel and Major take the next; the Captains and Lieutenants take the second growth, and the Sergeants have the saplins. I'm lucky if I git so much as a bush."

"Old Rosecrans must have a big saw-log," said his father.

"Not much saw-log for old Rosey," said Si, resenting even a joking disparagement upon his beloved General. "During the battle he wuz wherever it wuz hottest, and on horseback, too. Wherever the firm' wuz the loudest he'd gallop right into it. His staff was shot down all around him, but he never flinched. I tell you, he's the greatest General in the world."

The next morning after breakfast, and as Si and Shorty were preparing to go to Division Headquarters, Si said:

"Pap, you just stay at home and keep house to day. Keep your eyes on the boys; I tell it to you in confidence, for I wouldn't for the world have it breathed outside the company, that Co. Q's the most everlastin' set o' thieves that ever wore uniform. Don't you ever say a word about it when you get home, for it'd never do to have the boys' folks know anything about it. I'd break their hearts. Me and Shorty, especially Shorty, are the only honest ones in the company. The other fellers'd steal the house from over your head if you didn't watch 'em." 206

"That's so," asseverated Shorty. "Me and Si especially me is the only honest ones in the company. We're the only ones you kin really trust."

"I'd be sorry to think that Si had learned to steal," said the Deacon gravely, at which Shorty could not resist the temptation to give Si a furtive kick. "But I'll look out for thieves. We used to have lots o' them in Posey County, but after we hung one or two, and rid some others on rails, the revival meetin's seemed to take hold on the rest, and they got converted."

"Something like that ought to be done in the army," murmured Shorty.

"When you want anything to eat you know where to git it," said Si, as they moved off. "We'll probably be back in time to git supper."

The Deacon watched the squad march away, and then turned to think how he would employ himself during the day. He busied himself for awhile cleaning up the cabin and setting things to rights, and flattered himself that his housekeeping was superior to his son's. Then he decided to cut some wood. He found the ax, "condemned" it for some time as to its dullness and bad condition, but finally attacked with it a tree which had been hauled up back of the company line for fuel. It was hard work, and presently he sat down to rest. Loud words of command came from just beyond the hill, and he walked over there to see what was going on. He saw a regiment drilling, and watched it for some minutes with interest. Then he walked back to his work, but found to his amazement that his ax was gone. He could see nobody around on whom his suspicions could rest. 207

"Mebbe somebody's borrowed it," he said, "and will bring it back when he's through usin' it. If he don't I kin buy a better ax for 10 or 12 bits. Somebody must have axes for sale 'round here somewhere."

He waited awhile for the borrower to return the tool, but as he did not, he gathered up a load of wood and carried it up to the cabin.

"The boys'll be mighty hungry when they git back this evenin'," said he to himself. "I'll jest git up a good supper for 'em. I'll show Si that the old man knows some p'intns about cookin', even if he hain't bin in the army, that'll open the youngster's eyes."

He found a tin pan, put in it a generous supply of beans, and began carefully picking them over and blowing the dust out, the same as he had often seen his wife do. Having finished this to his satisfaction, he set down the pan and went back into the cabin to get the kettle to boil them in. When he returned he found that pan and beans had vanished, and again he saw no one upon whom he could fix his suspicions. The good Deacon began to find the "old Adam rising within him," but as a faithful member of the church he repressed his choler.

"I can't hardly believe all that Si and Shorty said about the dishonesty of Co. Q," he communed with himself. 208
"Many o' the boys in it I know they're right from our neighborhood. Good boys as ever lived, and honest as the day is long. Some o' them belonged to our Sunday school. I can't believe that they've turned out bad so soon. Yet it looks awful suspicious. The last one I see around here was Jed Baskins. His father's a reggerly ordained preacher. Jed never could 've took them beans. But who on airth done it?"

The Deacon carefully fastened the door of the cabin, and proceeded with his camp-kettle to the spring to get some water. He found there quite a crowd, with many in line waiting for their chance at the spring. He stood around awhile awaiting his chance, but it did not seem to get any nearer. He said something about the length of time it took, and a young fellow near remarked:

"Here, Uncle, give me your kittle. I'll git it filled for you."

Without a thought the Deacon surrendered the kettle to him, and he took his place in line. The Deacon watched him edging up toward the spring for a minute or two, and then his attention was called to a brigade maneuvering in a field across the river. After awhile he thought again about his kettle, and looked for the kindly young man who had volunteered to fill it. There were several in the line who looked like him, but none whom he could positively identify as him.

"Which o' you boys got my kittle?" he inquired, walking along the line.

"Got your kittle, you blamed teamster," they answered crossly. "Go away from here. We won't allow 209
teamsters at this spring. It's only for soldiers. Go to your own spring."

His kettle was gone, too. That was clear. As the Deacon walked back to the cabin he was very hot in the region of his collar. He felt quite shame faced, too, as to the way the boys would look on his management, in the face of the injunctions they had given him at parting. His temper was not improved by discovering that while he was gone someone had carried off the bigger part of the wood he had laboriously chopped and piled up in front of the cabin. He sat down in the doorway and meditated angrily:

"I'll be dumbed (there, I'm glad that Mariar didn't hear me say that. I'm afeared I'm gittin' to swear just like these other fellers). I'll be dumbed if I ever imagined there wuz sich a passel o' condemned thieves on the face o' the airth. And they all seem sich nice, gentlemanly fellers, too. What'll we do with them when they git back home?"

Presently he roused himself up to carry out his idea of getting a good meal ready for the boys by the time they returned, tired and hungry. He rummaged through the cabin, and came across an old tin bucket partially filled with scraps of paper. There did not seem to be anything of value in it, and he tossed the contents on the smoldering fire. Instantly there was an explosion which took the barrel off the top of the chimney, sent the stones rattling down, filled the room full of smoke, singed the Deacon's hair and whiskers, and sped him out of the cabin in great alarm. A crowd quickly gathered to see what was the matter. Just then Si appeared at the head of his squad. He and Shorty hurried to the scene of the disturbance. 210



DEACON KLEGG IS SURPRISED.

"What is the matter, Pap?" Si asked anxiously. "Why," explained his father, "I was lookin' round for something to git water in, and I found an old tin bucket with scraps o' paper in. I threwed them in the fire, and I'm feared I busted your fireplace all to pieces, But I'll help you to fix it up agin," he added deprecatingly.

"But you ain't hurt any, are you, Pap?" asked Si, anxiously examining his father, and ignoring all thought as to the damage to the dwelling. 211

"No," said his father cheerfully. "I guess I lost a little hair, but I could spare that. It was about time to git it cut, anyway. I think we kin fix up the fireplace, Si."

"Cuss the fireplace, so long's you're all right," answered Si. "A little mud 'll straighten that out. You got hold o' the bucket where me and Shorty 've bin savin' up our broken cartridges for a little private Fourth o' July some night."

"But, Si," said the Deacon sorrowfully, determined to have it out at once. "They're bigger thieves than you said there wuz. They stole your ax but I'll buy you a better one for 10 or 12 bits; they took your pan and beans, an' took your camp-kettle, and finally all the wood that I'd cut."

He looked so doleful that the boys could not help laughing.

"Don't worry about them, Pap," said Si cheerfully. "We'll fix them all right. Let's go inside and straighten things up, and then we'll have some thing to eat."

"But you can't git nothin' to eat," persisted the Deacon, "because there's nothin' to cook in."

"We'll have something, all the same," said Shorty, with a wink of enjoyable anticipation at Si.

The two boys carefully stowed away their overcoats, which were rolled up in bundles in a way that would be suspicious to a soldier. They got the interior of the cabin in more presentable shape, and then Shorty went out and produced a camp-kettle from somewhere, in which they made their coffee. 212

When this was ready, they shut the door and care fully unrolled their overcoats. A small sugar-cured ham, a box of sardines, a can of peaches, and a couple of loaves of fresh, soft bread developed.

"Yum-yum!" murmured Shorty, gloating over the viands.

"Where in the world did you git them, boys?" asked the Deacon in wonderment. 213

"Eat what is set before you, and ask no questions, for conscience's sake, Pap," said Si, slicing off a piece of the ham and starting to broil it for his father. "That's what you used to tell me."

"Si," said the father sternly, as an awful suspicion moved in his mind, "I hope you didn't steal 'em."

"Of course, not, Pap. How kin you think so?"

"Josiah Klegg," thundered the father, "tell me how you came by them things."

"Well, Pap," said Si, considerably abashed, "it was something like this: Our squad was set to work to unload a car o' Christian Commission things. Me and Shorty pulled off our overcoats and laid them in a corner. When we got through our work and picked up our coats we found these things in them. Some bad men had hid them there, thinkin' they wuz their overcoats. We thought the best way wuz to punish the thieves by takin' the things away with us. Now, here's a piece o' ham briled almost as nice as mother could do. Take it, and cut you off a slice of that soft bread."

"Si, the receiver's as bad as the thief. I won't touch it."

"Pap, the harm's been done. No matter who done it, the owner'll never see his victuals agin. Jest as like he

cribbed 'em from somebody else. These Christian Commission things wuz sent down for us soljers, anyhow. We'd better have 'em than the bummers around the rear. They'll spile and be wasted if you don't eat 'em, and that'd be a sin."



The savory ham was very appetizing, the Deacon was very hungry, and the argument was sophistical.

"I'll take it, Si," said he with a sigh. "I don't wonder that the people down here are rebels and all that sort o' 214 thing. It's in the air. I've felt my principles steadily weakenin' from the time I crossed the Ohio River."

CHAPTER XVIII. THE DEACON IS SHOCKED HE IS CAUGHT WITH THE GOODS ON HIM

AND IS RESCUED JUST IN TIME.

WITH the Deacon's assistance, the chimney was soon rebuilt, better than ever, and several homelike improvements were added. The lost utensils were also replaced, one by one. The Deacon was sometimes troubled in his mind as to where the pan, the camp-kettle, etc., came from. Si or Shorty would simply bring in one of them, with a sigh of satisfaction, and add it to the house hold stock. The Deacon was afraid to ask any questions.

One day, however, Shorty came in in a glow of excitement, with a new ax in his hand.

"There; isn't she a daisy," he said, holding it up and testing the edge with his thumb. "None o' your old sledges with no more edge than a maul, that you have to nigger the wood off with. Brand new, and got an edge like a razor. You kin chop wood with that, I tell you."

"It's a tolerable good ax. Wuth about 10 bits," said the Deacon, examining the ax critically. "Last ax I bought from Ol Taylor cost 12 bits. It was a better one. How much'd you give for this? I'll pay it myself."



"Do you know Jed Baskins thinks himself the best eucher player in the 200th Ind.," said Shorty, forgetting 216 himself in the exultation of his victory. "Jed Baskins the Rev. Jared Baskins's son a eucher player," gasped the Deacon. "Why, his father'd no more tech a card than he would a coal o' fire. Not so much, for I've often heard him say that a coal o' fire kin only burn the hands, while cards scorch the soul."

"Well, Jed," continued Shorty, "bantered me to play three games out o' five for this here ax agin my galvanized brass watch. We wuz boss and hoss on the first two games; on the saw-off we had four pints apiece. I dealt and turned up the seven o' spades. Jed ordered me up, and then tried to ring in on me a right bower from another deck, but I knowed he hadn't it, because I'd tried to ketch it in the deal, but missed it an' slung it under the table. I made Jed play fair, and euchered him, with only two trumps in my hand. Jed's a mighty slick hand with the pasteboards, but he meets his boss in your Uncle Ephraim. I didn't learn to play eucher in the hay lofts o' Bean Blossom Crick for nothin', I kin tell you."

An expression of horror came into Deacon Klegg's face, and he looked at Shorty with severe disapproval, which was entirely lost on that worthy, who continued to prattle on:

"Jed Baskins kin slip in more cold decks on green horns than any boy I ever see. You'd think he'd spent his life on a Mississippi steamboat or follerin' a circus. You remember how he cleaned out them Maumee Muskrats at chuck-a-luck last pay-day? Why, there wuzn't money enough left in one company to buy postage stamps for their letters home. You know how he done it? Why, that galoot of a citizen gambler that we tossed in a blanket down there by Nashville, and then rid out o' camp on a rail, learned him how to finger the dice. I was sure some o' them Maumee smart Alecks'd git on to Jed, but they didn't. I declare they wouldn't see a six-mule team if it druv right across the board afore 'em. But I'm onto him every minit. I told him when he tried to ring in that jack on me that he didn't know enough about cards to play with our Sunday school class on 218 Bean Blossom Crick."

"Josiah Klegg," said the Deacon sternly, "do you play cards?"

"I learned to play jest a little," said Si deprecatingly, and getting very red in the face. "I jest know the names o' the cards, and a few o' the rules o' the game."

"I'm surprised at you," said the Deacon, "after the careful way you wuz brung up. Cards are the devil's own picture-books. They drag a man down to hell jest as sure as strong drink. Do you own a deck o' cards?"

"No, sir," replied Si. "I did have one, but I throwed it away when we wuz goin' into the battle o' Stone River."

"Thank heaven you did," said the Deacon devoutly. "Think o' your goin' into battle with them infernal things on you. They'd draw death to you jest like iron draws lightnin'."

"That's what I was afeared of," Si confessed.

"Now, don't you ever touch another card," said the Deacon. "Don't you ever own another deck. Don't you insult the Lord by doin' things when you think you're safe that you wouldn't do when you're in danger and want His protection."

"Yes, sir," responded Si very meekly. The Deacon was so excited that he pulled out his red bandanna, mopped his face vigorously, and walked out of the door to get some fresh air. As his back was turned, Si reached slily up to a shelf, pulled down a pack of cards, and flung them behind the back-log.

"I didn't yarn to Pap when I told him I didn't own a deck," he said to Shorty. "Them wuzn't really our cards. 219 I don't exactly know who they belonged to."

The good Deacon was still beset with the idea of astonishing the boys with a luxurious meal cooked by himself, without their aid, counsel or assistance. His failure the first time only made him the more determined. While he conceded that Si and Shorty did unusually well with the materials at their command, he

had his full share of the conceit that possesses every man born of woman that, without any previous training or experience, he can prepare food better than anybody else who attempts to do it. It is usually conceded that there are three things which every man alive believes he can do better than the one who is engaged at it. These are:

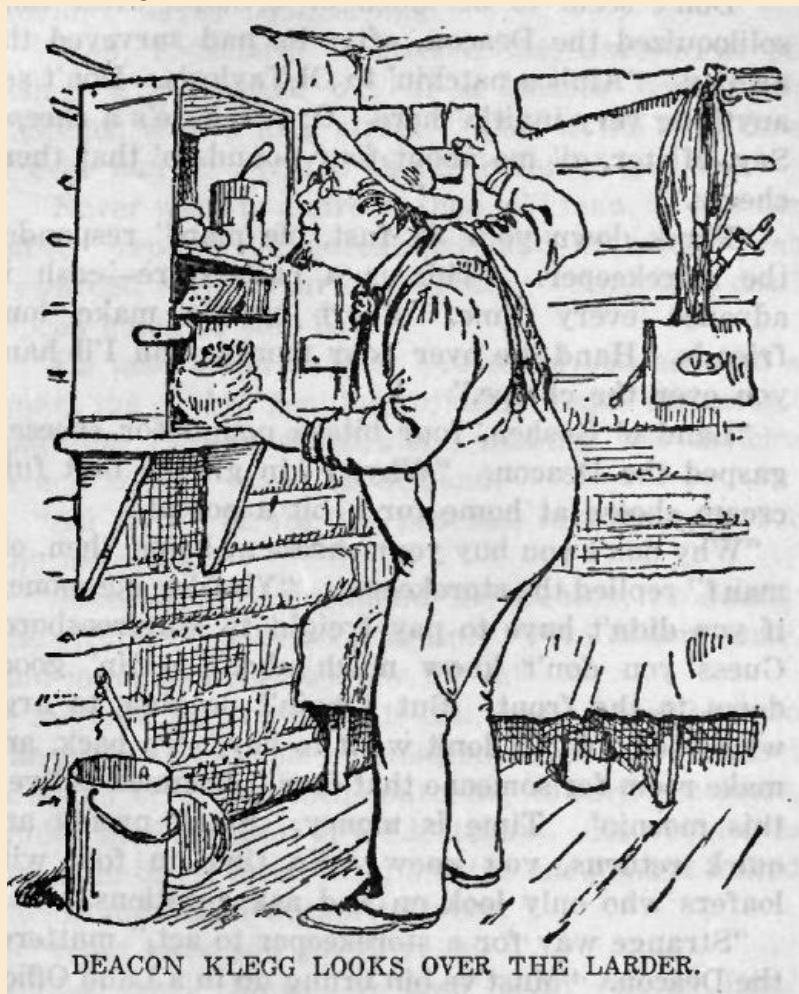
1. Telling a story;
2. Poking a fire;
3. Managing a woman.

Cooking a meal should be made the fourth of this category.

One day Si and Shorty went with the rest of Co. Q on fatigue duty on the enormous fortifications, the building of which took up so much of the Army of the Cumberland's energies during its stay around Murfreesboro' from Jan. 3 to June 24, 1863. Rosecrans seemed suddenly seized with McClellan's mania for spade work, and was piling up a large portion of Middle Tennessee into parapet, bastion and casemate, lunet, curtain, covered-way and gorge, according to the system of Vauban. The 200th Ind. had to do its unwilling share of this, and Si and Shorty worked off some of their superabundant energy with pick and shovel. They would come back at night tired, muddy and mad. They would be ready to quarrel with and abuse everybody and every thing from President Lincoln down to the Commissary-Sergeant and the last issue of pickled beef and bread especially the Commissary-Sergeant and the rations. The good Deacon sorrowed over these manifestations. He was intensely loyal. He wanted to see the soldiers satisfied with their officers and the provisions made for their comfort. 220

He would get up a good dinner for the boys, which would soothe their ruffled tempers and make them more satisfied with their lot.

He began a labored planning of the feast. He looked over the larder, and found there pork, corned beef, potatoes, beans, coffee, brown sugar, and hard tack.



DEACON KLEGG LOOKS OVER THE LARDER.

"Good, substantial vittles, that stick to the ribs," he muttered to himself, "and I'll fix up a good mess o' them. But the boys ought to have something of a treat once in a while, and I must think up some way to give it to 'em."

He pondered over the problem as he carefully cleaned the beans, and set them to boiling in a kettle over the fire. He washed some potatoes to put in the ashes and roast. But these were too common place viands. He wanted something that would be luxurious.

"I recollect," he said to himself finally, "seein' a little store, which some feller 'd set up a little ways from here. It's a board shanty, and I expect he's got a lots o' things in it that the boys'd like, for there's nearly always a big crowd around it. I'll jest fasten up the house, and walk over there while the beans is a-seethin', and see if I can't pick up something real good to eat." 221

He made his way through the crowd, which seemed to him to smell of whisky, until he came to the shelf across the front, and took a look at the stock. It seemed almost wholly made up of canned goods, and boxes of half-Spanish cigars, and play ing-cards. 222

"Don't seem to ba much of a store, after all," soliloquized the Deacon, after he had surveyed the display. "Ain't a patchin' to Ol Taylor's. Don't see anything very invitin' here. O, yes, here's a cheese. Say, Mister, gi'

me about four pounds o' that there cheese."

"Plank down your \$2 fust, ole man." responded the storekeeper. "This is a cash store cash in advance every time. Short credits make long friends. Hand me over your money, and I'll hand you over the cheese."

"Land o' Goshen, four bits a pound for cheese," gasped the Deacon. "Why, I kin git the best full-cream cheese at home for a bit a pound."

"Why don't you buy your cheese at home, then, old man?" replied the storekeeper. "You'd make money, if you didn't have to pay freight to Murfreesboro'. Guess you don't know much about gettin' goods down to the front. But I hain't no time to argy with you. If you don't want to buy, step back, and make room for someone that does. Business is lively this mornin'. Time is money. Small profits and quick returns, you know. No time to fool with loafers who only look on and ask questions."

"Strange way for a storekeeper to act," muttered the Deacon. "Must've bin brung up in a Land Office. He couldn't keep store in Posey County a week. They wouldn't stand his sass." Then aloud: "You may gi' me two pounds o' cheese."

"Well, why don't you plank down the rhino?" said the storekeeper impatiently. "Put up your money fust, and then you'll git the goods. This ain't no credit concern with a stay-law attachment. Cash in advance saves bookkeeping." 223

"Well, I declare," muttered the Deacon, as he fished a greenback out of a leather pocketbook fastened with a long strap. "This is the first time I ever had to pay for things before I got 'em."

"Never went to a circus, then, old man, or run for office," replied the storekeeper, and his humor was rewarded with a roar of laughter. "Anything else? Speak quick or step back."

"I'll take a can o' them preserved peaches and a quart jug o' that genuine Injianny maple molasses," said the Deacon desperately, naming two articles which seemed much in demand.

"All right; \$2 for the peaches, and \$2 more for the molasses."

"Sakes alive!" ejaculated the Deacon, producing the strapped pocketbook again. "Five dollars gone, and precious little to show for it."

He took his jug and his can, and started back to the cabin. A couple of hundred yards away he met a squad of armed men marching toward the store, under the command of a Lieutenant. He stepped to one side to let them pass, but the Lieutenant halted them, and asked authoritatively:

"What have you got there, sir?"

"Jest some things I've been buyin' for the boys' dinner," answered the Deacon.

"Indeed! Very likely," remarked the Lieutenant sarcastically. He struck the jug so sharply with his sword that it was broken, and the air was filled with a powerful odor of whisky. The liquor splashed over the Deacon's trousers and wet them through. The expression of anger on his face gave way to one of horror. He had always been one of the most rigid of Temperance men, and fairly loathed whisky in all shapes and uses. 224

"Just as I supposed, you old vagabond," said the Lieutenant, contemptuously. "Down here sneaking whisky into camp. We'll stop that mighty sudden."

He knocked the can of peaches out of the Deacon's arms and ran his sword into it. A gush of whisky spurted out. The Sergeant took the package of cheese away and broke it open, revealing a small flask of liquor.

"The idea of a man of your age being engaged in such business," said the Lieutenant indignantly. "You ought to be helping to keep the men of the army sober, instead of corrupting them to their own great injury. You are doing them more harm than the rebels."

The Deacon was too astonished and angry to reply. Words utterly failed him in such a crisis.

"Take charge of him, Corporal," commanded the Lieutenant. "Put him in the guard-house till tomorrow, when we'll drum him out of camp, with his partner, who is running that store."

The Corporal caught the Deacon by the arm roughly and pulled him into the rear of the squad, which hurried toward the store. The crowd in front had an inkling of what was coming. In a twinkling of an eye they made a rush on the store, each man snatched a can or a jug, and began bolting away as fast as his legs could carry him.

The storekeeper ran out the back way, and tried to make his escape, but the Sergeant of the provost squad threw down his musket and took after him. The storekeeper ran fast, inspired by fear and the desire to save his ill-gotten gains, but the Sergeant ran faster, and presently brought him back, panting and trembling, to witness the demolition of his property. The shanty was being torn down, each plank as it came off being snatched up by the soldiers to carry off and add to their own habitations. The "canned fruit" was being punched with bayonets, and the jugs smashed by gun-butts.

"You are a cheeky scoundrel," said the Lieutenant, addressing himself to the storekeeper, "to come down here and try to run such a dead-fall right in the middle of camp. But we'll cure you of any such ideas as that. You'll find it won't pay at all to try such games on us. You'll go to the guard house, and to-morrow we'll shave your head and drum you and your partner there out of camp."

"I ain't no partner o' his," protested the Deacon earnestly. "My name's Josiah Klegg, o' Posey County, Injianny. I'm down here on a visit to my son in the 200th Injianny Volunteer Infantry. I'm a Deacon in the Baptist Church, and a Patriarch of the Sons o' Temperance. It'd be the last thing in the world I'd do to sell whisky."

"That story won't wash, old man," said the Lieutenant. "You were caught in the act, with the goods in your possession, and trying to deceive me."

He turned away to order the squad forward. As they marched along the storekeeper said to the Deacon: 226

"I'm afraid they've got me dead to rights, old man, but you kin git out. Just keep up your sanctimonious appearance and stick to your Deacon story, and you'll git off. I know you. I've lived in Posey County myself. I'm going to trust you. I've already made a clean big profit on this venture, and I've got it right down in my pocket. In spite of all they've spiled, I'd be nigh \$500 ahead o' the game if I could git out o' camp with what

I've got in my sock. But they'll probably search me and confiscate my wad for the hospital. You see, I've been through this thing before. I'm goin' to pass my pile over to you to take keer of till I'm through this rumpus. You play fair with me, an' I'll whack up with you fair and square, dollar for dollar. If you don't I'll follow you for years."

"I wouldn't tech a dirty dollar of yours for the world," said the Deacon indignantly; but this was lost on the storekeeper, who was watching the Lieutenant.

"Don't say a word," he whispered; "he's got his eye on us. There it is in your overcoat pocket."

In the meantime they had arrived at the guard house. The Sergeant stepped back, took the store keeper roughly by the shoulders, and shoved him up in front of a tall, magisterial-looking man wearing a Captain's straps, who stood frowning before the door.

"Search him," said the Captain briefly.

The Sergeant went through the storekeeper's pockets with a deftness that bespoke experience. He produced a small amount of money, some of it in fractional currency and Confederate notes, a number of 227 papers, a plug of tobacco, and some other articles. He handed these to the Captain, who hastily looked over them, handed back the tobacco and other things and the small change.

"Give these back to him," he said briefly. "Turn the rest of the money over to the hospital fund. Where's our barber? Shave his head, call up the fifers and drummers, and drum him out of camp at once. I haven't time to waste on him."

Before he had done speaking the guards had the storekeeper seated on a log, and were shearing his hair.

"General," shouted the Deacon.

"That's a Cap'n, you fool," said one of the guards.

"Captain, then," yelled the Deacon.

"Who is that man?" said the Captain severely.

"He's his partner," said the Lieutenant.

"Serve him the same way," said the Captain shortly, turning to go.

The Deacon's knees smote together. He, a Deacon of the Baptist Church, and a man of stainless repute at home, to have his head shaved and drummed out of camp. He would rather die at once. The guards had laid hands on him.

"Captain," he yelled again, "it's all a horrible mistake. I had nothin' to do with this man."

"Talk to the Lieutenant, there," said the Captain, moving off. "He will attend to you."

The Lieutenant was attentively watching the barbering operation. "Cut it close closer yet," he admonished the barber.

"Lieutenant! Lieutenant!" pleaded the Deacon, awkwardly saluting.

"Stand back; I'll attend to you next," said the Lieutenant impatiently. "Now, tie his hands behind him." 228

The Lieutenant turned toward the Deacon, and the barber picked up his shears and made a step in that direction. Just in the extremity of his danger the Deacon caught sight of the Captain of Co. Q walking toward Headquarters.

"Capt. McGillicuddy! Capt. McGillicuddy! come here at once! Come quick!" he called in a voice which had been trained to long-distance work on the Wabash bottoms.

Capt. McGillicuddy looked up, recognized the waving of the Deacon's bandanna, and hastened thither. Fortunately he knew the Provost officers; there were explanations all around, and profuse apologies, and just as the fifes and drums struck up the "Rogue's March" behind the luckless storekeeper, who had to step off in front of a line of leveled bayonets, the Deacon walked away arm-in-arm with the Captain.

"I'm not goin' to let go o' you till I'm safe back in our own place," he said. "My gracious! think of havin' my head shaved and marched off the way that feller's bein'."

He walked into the cabin and stirred up the beans.

"The water's biled off," said he to himself, "but they hain't been in nigh as hot a place as I have. I guess the boys'll have to do with a plain dinner to day. I'm not goin' to stir out o' this place agin unless they're with me."

He put his hand into his pocket for his bandanna and felt the roll of bills, which he had altogether forgotten in his excitement.

His face was a study.

CHAPTER XIX. THE DEACON IS TROUBLED

DISPOSES OF THE \$500 "WHISKY" MONEY AND GOES OUT FORAGING.

FROM the door of the cabin the Deacon could see the fort on which the boys were piling up endless cubic yards of the red soil of Tennessee. As he watched them, with an occasional glance at the beans seething in the kettle, fond memories rose of a woman far away on the Wabash, who these many years had thought and labored for his comfort in their home, while he labored within her sight on their farm. It was the first time in their long married life that he had been away from her for such a length of time.

"I believe I'm gittin' real homesick to see Mariar," he said with a sigh. "I'd give a good deal for a letter from her. I do hope everything on the farm's all right. I think it is. I'm a little worried about Brown Susy, the mare,

but I think she'll pick up as the weather settles. I hope her fool colt, that I've give Si, won't break his leg nor nothin' while I'm away."

Presently he saw the men quit work, and he turned to get ready for the boys. He covered the rough table with newspapers to do duty for a cloth; he had previously scoured up the tinware to its utmost brightness and cleanliness, and while the boys were washing off the accumulations of clay, and liberally denouncing the man 230 who invented fort building, and even West Point for educating men to pursue the nefarious art, he dished out the smoking viands.

"Upon my word, Pap," said Si, as he helped him self liberally, "you do beat us cookin' all holler. Your beans taste almost as good as mother's. We must git you to give us some lessons."

"Yes; you're a boss cook," said Shorty, with his mouth full. "Better not let Gen. Rosecrans find out how well you kin bile beans, or he'll have you drafted, and keep you with him till the end o' the war."

After supper they lighted their pipes and seated themselves in front of the fire.

"How'd you git along to-day, Pap," said Si. "I hope you didn't have no trouble."

The Deacon took his pipe out of his mouth, blew a cloud of smoke, and considered a moment before replying. He did not want to recount his experiences, at least, until he had digested them more thoroughly. He was afraid of the joking of the boys, and still more that the story would get back home. Then, he was still sorely perplexed about the disposition of the money. He had not thought that out yet, by a great deal. But the question was plump and direct, and concealment and untruth were alike absolutely foreign to his nature. After a minute's pause he decided to tell the whole story.

"Well, boys," he began with a shamefaced look, "I had the flamboyantest racket to-day I've had yit."

The two boys took their pipes out and regarded him with surprise. 231

"Yes," he continued, with a deep sigh, "it laid away over gittin' down here, and my night in the guard-house, even. You see, after you went away I began to think about gittin' up something a little extry for you to eat. I thought about it for awhile, and then recollected seein' a little grocery that'd been set up nigh here in a board shanty."

"Yes, we know about it," said Shorty, exchanging a look with Si.

"Well," continued the Deacon, "I concluded that I'd jest slip over there, and mebbe I could find something 232 that'd give variety to your pork and beans. He didn't seem to have much but canned goods, and his prices wuz jest awful. But I wuz de termined to git something, and I finally bought a jug o' genuine Injianny maple molasses, a chunk o' cheese and a can o' peaches. I had to pay \$5 for it. He said he had to charge high prices on account o' freight rates, and I remembered that I had some trouble in gittin' things down here, and so I paid him. He wuz very peart and sassy, and it was take-it-or-leave-it-and-be-plaguey- quick-about-it all the time. But I paid my \$5, gathered the things up, and started back to the house. I hadn't got more'n 100 rods away when I met one o' these officers with only one o' them things in his shoulder straps."

"A First Lieutenant," interjected Si.

"Yes, they called him a Lieutenant. He spoke very bossy and cross to me, and hit my jug a welt with his sword. He broke it, and what do you suppose was in it?"



"Whisky," said Si and Shorty simultaneously, with a shout of laughter.

"That's jest what it wuz. I wuz never so mortified in my life. I couldn't say a word. The Lieutenant abused me for being a partner in sellin' whisky to the soldiers me, Josiah Klegg, Patriarch of the Sons o' Temperance, and a Deacon. While I wuz tryin' to tell him he jabbed his sword into the can o' peaches, and what do you suppose was in that?"

"Whisky," yelled Si and Shorty, with another burst of laughter.

"That's jest what it wuz. Then one o' the Lieutenant's men jerked the chunk o' cheese away and broke it open. And what do you suppose was in that?" 283

"Whisky, of course," yelled the boys in uncontrollable mirth.

"That's jest what it was. I wuz so dumfounded that I couldn't say a word. They yanked me around in behind the squad, and told me they'd shave my head and drum me out o' camp. The Lieutenant took his men up to the grocery and tore it down, and ketched the feller that wuz keepin' it. They put him alongside o' me, and tuk us up to the guard house. On the way he whispered to me that they wuz likely to salt him, 'cause they knowed him, but I'd likely git off easy. He'd made \$500 clean out o' the business already, and had it in his clothes. He'd pass it over to me to keep till the racket wuz over, when he'd divide fair and square with me. I told him that I'd rather burn my hand off than tech a dirty dollar o' his money, but he dropt it into my overcoat pocket all the same, and I wuz so excited that I clean forgot about it, and brung it away with me. When we got to the guard-house they tuk all the rest of his money away, shaved his head, and drummed him out o' camp."

"Yes, we saw that," answered Si; "but didn't pay no attention to it. They're drummin' some feller out o' camp nearly every day, for something or other."

"I don't see that it does any good," said Shorty. "It'd be a heap better to set 'em to work on the fortifications. That'd take the deviltry out o' 'em."

"When they'd got through with him," continued the Deacon, "they Burned their attention to me. I never wuz 234 so scared in all my born days. But luckily, jest in the nick o' time, I ketched sight o' Capt. McGillicuddy, and hollered to him. He come up and explained things, and they let me go, with lots o' apologies. When I got back to the house, I felt for my handkerchief, and found that scalawag's roll o' bills, which I'd clean forgot. Here it is."



He pulled out a fat roll of crisp greenbacks. Si took them, thumbed them over admiringly, counted them, and handed them to Shorty, who did the same.

"Yes, there's \$500 there," said Si. "What are you goin' to do with it, Pap?"

"That's jest what's worrying the life out o' me," answered his father. "By rights I ought to throw the condemned stuff into the fire, only I hold it a great sin to destroy property of any kind."

"What, burn all that good money up?" said Shorty with a whistle. "You don't live in an insane asylum when you're at home, do you?"

"'Twouldn't be right to burn it, Pap," said Si, who better understood the rigidity of his father's principles. "It'd do a mighty sight o' good somewhere."

"The money don't belong at all to that feller," mused the Deacon. "A man can't have no property in likker. It's wet damnation, hell's broth, to nourish murderers, thieves, and paupers. It is the devil's essence, with which he makes widows and orphans. Every dollar of it is minted with women's tears and children's cries of hunger. That feller got the money by violatin' the law on the one hand and swindling the soldiers on the other, and corruptin' them to their ruin. To give the money back to him would be rewardin' him for his rascality. It'd be like givin' a thief his booty, or a burglar his plunder, and make me his pardner." 235

"You're right there, Pap," assented Si. "You'd jest be settin' him up in business in some other stand. Five hundred dollars'd give him a good start. His hair'll soon grow agin."

"The worst of it," sighed Shorty, "is that it ain't good likker. Otherwise it'd be different. But it's pizener than milk-sick or loco-weed. It's aqua-fortis, fish-berries, tobacco juice and ratsbane. That stuff'd eat a hole in a tin pan." 236

"The Captain turned the rest o' his money over to the hospital," continued the Deacon. "I might do that."

"Never do it in the world, Pap," protested Si. "Better burn it up at once. It'd be the next worst thing to givin' it back to him. It'd jest be pamperin' and encouragin' a lot o' galoots that lay around the hospitals to keep out o' fights. None o' the wounded or really sick'd git the benefit of a cent of it. They wuz all sent away weeks ago to Nashville, Louisville, and back home. You jest ought to see that bummer gang. Last week me and Shorty wuz on fatigue duty down by one o' the hospitals. There wuzent nobody in the hospital but a few 'shell-fever' shirks, who're too lazy to work on the fortifications, and we saw a crowd of civilians and men in uniform set down to a finer dinner than you kin git in any hotel. Shorty wanted to light some shells and roll in amongst 'em, but I knowed that it'd jest make a muss that we'd have to clean up afterward."

"But what am I going to do with it?" asked the Deacon despairingly. "I don't want no money in my hands that don't belong to me, and especially sich money as that, which seems to have a curse to every bill. If we could only find out the men he tuk it from."

"Be about as easy as drivin' a load o' hay back into the field, and fitting each spear o' grass back on the stalk from which it was cut," interjected Shorty.

"Or I might send it anonymously to the Baptist Board o' Missions," continued the Deacon.

"Nice way to treat the little heathens," objected Si. "Send them likker money."

237

The Deacon groaned.

"Tell you what we might do, Pap," said Si, as a bright idea struck him. "There's a widder, a Union woman, jest outside the lines, whose house wuz burned down by the rebels. She could build a splendid new house with \$100 better'n the one she wuz livin' in before. Send her \$100.

"Not a bad idee," said the Deacon approvingly, as he poked the ashes in his pipe with his little finger.

"And, Pap," continued Si, encouraged by the reception of this suggestion, "there's poor Bill Ellerlee, who lost his leg in the fight. He used to drink awful hard, and most of his money went down his throat. He's got a wife and two small children, and they hain't a cent to live on, except what the neighbors gives. Why not put up \$200 in an express pack age and send it to him, marked 'from an unknown friend?'"

"Good," accorded the Deacon.

"And Jim Pocock," put in Shorty, seeing the drift. "He's gone home with a bullet through his breast. His folks are pretty poor. Why not send him \$100 the same way?"

"Excellent idee," said the father.

"That leaves \$100 yit," said Si. "If you care to, you kin divide it between Shorty and me, and we'll use it among the boys that got hurt, and need some thing."

A dubious look came into the Deacon's face.

"You needn't be afear'd of us, Pap," said Si, with a little blush. "I kin promise you that we won't use a cent ourselves, but give every bit where it is really needed."

238

"I believe you, my son," said the Deacon heartily. "We'll do jest as you say."

They spent the evening carrying their plan into execution.

At the 9 o'clock roll-call the Orderly-Sergeant announced:

"Co. Q to go out with a forage-train to-morrow morning."

This was joyful news a delightful variation from the toil on the fortifications. "Taps" found every body getting his gun and traps ready for an excursion into the country.

"You'd like to go with us, Pap, wouldn't you?" asked Si, as he looked over his cartridge-box to see what it contained.

"Indeed I would," replied the father. "I'll go any where with you rather than spend such another day in camp. You don't think you will see any rebels, do you?" he asked rather nervously.

"Don't know; never kin tell," said Shorty oracularly. "Rebels is anywhere you find 'em. Sometimes they're seldomer than a chaw of terbaker in a Sunday school. You can't find one in a whole County. Then, the first thing you know, they're thicker'n fleas on a dog's back. But we won't likely see no rebels to-morrow. There ain't no great passel o' them this side o' Duck River. Still, we'll take our guns along, jest like a man wears a breast-pin on a dark night, because he's used to it."

"Can't you give me a gun, too? I think it'd be company for me," said the Deacon.

"Certainly," said Si.

The Deacon stowed himself in the wagons with the rest the next morning, and rode out with them through the bright sunshine, that gave promise of the soon oncoming of Spring. For miles they jolted over the execrable roads and through the shiftless, run-down country before they found anything worth while putting in the wagons.

239

"Great country, Pap," said Si suggestively.

"Yes; it'd be a great country," said his father disdainfully, "if you could put a wagonload o' manure on every foot and import some Injianny men to take care of it. The water and the sunshine down here seem all right, but the land and the people and the pigs and stock seem to be cullin's throwed out when they made Injianny."

At length the train halted by a double log house of much more pretentious character than any they had so far seen. There were a couple of well-filled corn-cribs, a large stack of fodder, and other evidences of plenty. The Deacon's practiced eye noticed that there was no stock in the fields, but Si explained this by saying that everything on hoofs had been driven off to supply the rebel army. "They're now trying to git a corn-crib and a fodder-stack with four legs, but hain't succeeded so far."

The Captain ordered the fence thrown down and the wagons driven in to be filled. The surrounding horizon was scanned for signs of rebels, but none appeared anywhere. The landscape was as tranquil, as peace-breathing as a Spring morning on the Wabash, and the Deacon's mind reverted to the condition of things on his farm. It was too wet to plow, but he would like to take a walk over the fields and see how his wheat had come out, and look over the peach-buds and ascertain how they had stood the Winter. He noticed how some

240

service-trees had already unfolded their white petals, like flags of truce breaking the long array of green cedars and rusty-brown oaks.

The company stacked arms in the road, the Captain went to direct the filling of the wagons, and Si and Shorty started on a private reconnoissance for something for their larder.

The Deacon strolled around the yard for awhile inspecting the buildings and farm implements with an eye of professional curiosity, and arrived at very unfavorable opinions. He then walked up on the porch of the house, where a woman of about his own age sat in a split-bottom rocking-chair knitting and viewing the proceedings with frowning eyes.

"Good day, ma'am," said he. "Warm day, ma'am."

"'Tain't as warm as it orter to be for sich fellers as yo'uns," she snapped. "You'd better be in the brimstone pit if you had your just deserts."

The Deacon always tried to be good-humored with an angry woman, and he thought he would try the effect of a little pleasantry. "I'm a Baptist, ma'am, and they say us Baptists are tryin' to put out that fire with cold water."

"You a Babtist?" she answered scornfully. "The hot place is full o' jest sich Babtists as yo'uns air, and they're making room for more. We'uns air Babtists ourselves, but, thank the Lord, not o' your kind. Babtists air honest people. Babtists don't go about the country robbin' and murderin' and stealin' folks' corn. Don't tell me you air a Babtist, for I know you air a-lyin', and that's the next thing to killin' and stealin'." 241

"But I am a Baptist," persisted the Deacon, "and have bin for 30 year regular, free-will, close-communion, total-immersion Baptist. We have some Campbellites, a few Six Principle Baptists, and some Hard Shells, but the heft of us air jest plain, straight-out Baptists. But, speakin' o' cold water, kin you give me a drink? I'm powerful dry."

"Thar's water down in the crick, thar," she said, with a motion of her knitting in that direction. "It's as fur for me as it is for you. Go down thar and drink all you like. Lucky you can't carry the crick away with yo'uns. Yo'uns 'd steal it if yo'uns could."

"You don't seem to be in a good humor, ma'am," said the Deacon, maintaining his pleasant demeanor and tone.

"Well, if you think that a passel o' nasty Yankees is kalkerlated to put a lady in a good humor you're even a bigger fool than you look. But I hain't no time to waste jawin' you. If you want a drink thar's the crick. Go and drink your fill of it. I only wish it was a s'nic, to pizen you and your whole army."

She suddenly stopped knitting, and bent her eyes eagerly on an opening in the woods on a hill-top whence the road wound down to the house. The Deacon's eyes followed hers, and he saw unmistakable signs of men in butternut clothes. The woman saw that he noticed them, and her manner changed.

"Come inside the house," she said pleasantly, "and I'll git you a gourdful of water fresh from the spring." 242

"Thankee, ma'am; I don't feel a bit dry," answered the Deacon, with his eyes fastened on the hill top. "Si, Shorty, Capt. McGillicuddy," he yelled.

"Shet your head, and come into the house this minit, you nasty Yankee, or I'll slash your fool head off," ordered the woman, picking up a corn-cutter the advantage of his position and ran up to him.

The Deacon was inside the railing around the porch, and he had not jumped a fence for 20 years. But he cleared the railing as neatly as Si could have done it, and ran bareheaded down the road, yelling at the top of his voice.

He was not a minute too soon not soon enough. A full company of rebel cavalry came dashing out of the woods, yelling like demons.

Without waiting to form, the men of Co. Q ran to their guns and began firing from fence-corners and behind trees. Capt. McGillicuddy took the first squad that he came to, and, running forward a little way, made a hasty line and opened fire. Others saw the advantage of his position and ran up to him.

The Deacon snatched up a gun and joined the Captain.

"I never wuz subject to the 'buck fever,'" he muttered to himself, "and I won't allow myself to be now. I remember jest how General Jackson told his men to shoot down to New Orleans. I'm going to salt one o' them fellers as sure as my name's Josiah Klegg."

He took a long breath, to steady himself, as he joined the Captain, picked out a man on a bay horse that seemed to be the rebels' Captain, and caught his breast fully through the hindsight before he pulled the 243 trigger. Through the smoke he saw his man tumble from his horse.

"Got him, anyway," he muttered; "now, how in the world kin I load this plaguey gun agin?"

At that instant a rebel bullet bit out a piece of his ear, but he paid no attention to it.

"Gi' me that cartridge," he said to the man next to him, who had just bitten off the end of one; "I can't do it."

The man handed him the cartridge, which the Deacon rammed home, but before he could find a cap the fight was over, and the rebels were seek ing the shelter of the woods.

The Deacon managed to get a cap on his gun in time to take a long-distance, ineffective shot at the rebels as they disappeared in the woods.

They hastily buried one rebel who had been killed, and picked up those who had been wounded and carried them into the house, where they were made as comfortable as possible. Among them was the man whom the Deacon had aimed at. He was found to have a wound through the fleshy part of his hip, and proved to be the son of the woman of the house.

As soon as the fight was over, Si, full of solicitude, sought his father. He found him wiping the blood from his ear with his bandanna.

"It's nothin', son; absolutely nothin'," said the old gentleman with as much pride as any recruit. "Don't hurt as much as a scratch from a briar. Some feller what couldn't write put his mark on me so's he'd know me agin. But I fetched that feller on the bay hoss. I'm glad I didn't kill him, but he'll keep out o' devilment for

CHAPTER XX. THE DEACON BUTTS IN ENFORCES THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION.

"PAP," said Si, as they were riding back, comfortably seated on a load of corn-fodder, "now that it's all over, I'm awfully scared about you. I can't forgive myself for runnin' you up agin such a scrape. I hadn't no idee that there wuz a rebel in the whole County. If anything had happened you it'd just killed mother and the girls, and then I'd never rested till I got shot myself, for I wouldn't wanted to live a minute."

"Pshaw, my son," responded his father rather testily; "you ain't my gardeen, and I hope it'll be a good many years yit before you are. I'm mighty glad that I went. There was something Providential in it. I'm a good deal of a Quaker. I believe in the movin's of the spirit. The spirit moved me very strongly to go with you, and I now see the purpose in it. If I hadn't, them fellers might've got the bulge on you. I seen them before any o' you did, and I fetched down their head devil, and I feel that I helped you a good deal."

"Indeed you did," said Shorty earnestly. "You ought to have a brevet for your 'conspicuous gallantry in action.' I think the Colonel will give you one. You put an ounce o' lead to particularly good use in that feller's 245 karkiss. I only wish it'd bin a little higher up, where it'd a measured him for a wooden overcoat."

"I'm awful glad I hit him jest where I did," responded the Deacon. "I did have his heart covered with my sights, and then I pulled down a little. He was pizen, I know; but I wanted to give him a chance to repent."

"He'll repent a heap," said Shorty incredulously. "He'll lay around the house for the next six months, studyin' up new deviltry, and what he can't think of that secesh mother o' his'll put him up to. Co. Q, and particularly the Hoosier's Rest, is the only place you'll find a contrite heart and a Christian spirit cultivated."

"That reminds me," said Si; "we hain't licked the Wagonmaster yit for throwin' cartridges down our chimbley."

"Blamed if that ain't so," said Shorty. "I knowed I'd forgotten some little thing. It's bin hauntin' my mind for days. I'll jest tie a knot in my handker chief to remember that I must tend to that as soon's we git back."

"I'm quite sure that I don't want another sich a tussle," meditated the Deacon. "I never heerd any thing sound so murderin' wicked as them bullets. A painter's screech on a dark night or a rattler's rattle wuzzent to be compared to 'em. It makes my blood run cold to think o' 'em. Then, if that feller that shot at me had wobbled his gun a little to the left, Josiah Klegg's name would 've bin sculped on a slab o' white marble, and Maria would 've bin the Widder Klegg. I wish the war wuz over, and Si and Shorty safe at home. But their 246 giddy young pates are so full o' dumbered nonsense that there hain't no room for scare. But, now that I'm safe through it, I wouldn't 've missed it for the best cow on my place. After all, Providence sends men where they are needed, and He certainly sent me out there."

"Then, I'll have a good story to tell the brethren and sisters some night after prayer meetin's over. It'll completely offset that story 'bout my comin' so near gittin' my head shaved. How the ungodly rapsCALLIONS 247 would've gloated over Deacon Klegg's havin' his head shaved an' bein' drummed out o' camp. That thing makes me shiver worse'n the whistlin' o' them awful bullets. But they can't say nothin' now. Deacon Klegg's bin a credit to the church."

They were nearing camp. The Captain of Co. Q ordered:

"Corporal Klegg, take your wagon up that right-hand road to the Quartermaster's corral of mules, and bring me a receipt for it."

Si turned the wagon off, and had gone but a few hundred yards, when he and Shorty saw a house at a little distance, which seemed to promise to furnish something eatable. He and Shorty jumped off and cut across the fields toward it, telling the Deacon they would rejoin him before he reached the picket-line, a mile or so ahead.

The Deacon jogged on, musing intently of the stirring events of the day, until he was recalled to the things immediately around him by hearing a loud voice shout:

"Stop, there, you black scoundrel! I've ketched ye. I'm gwine to blow your onery head off."

He looked up and saw a man about his own age, dressed in butternut homespun, and riding a fine horse. He wore a broad-brimmed slouch hat, his clean-shaven face was cold and cruel, and he had leveled a double-barreled shotgun on a fine-looking negro, who had leaped over from the field into the middle of the road, and was standing there regard ing him with a look of intense disappointment and fear. 248



"I'M GWINE TER KILL YE, RIGHT HERE."

"You devil's ape," continued the white man, with a torrent of profanity, "I've ketched ye jest in the nick o' time. Ye wuz makin' for the Yankee camp, and 'd almost got thar. Ye thought yer 40 acres and a mule wuz jest in sight, did ye? Mebbe ye reckoned y'd git a white wife, and be an officer in the Yankee army. I'm gwine to kill ye, right here, to stop yer deviltry, and skeer off others that air o' the same mind."

"Pray God, don't kill me, massa," begged the negro. "I hain't done nuffin' to be killed foh."

"Hain't done nothin' to be killed for!" shouted the white man, with more oaths. "Do ye call sneakin' off to jine the enemy and settin' an example to the other niggers nothin'? Git down on yer knees and say yer prayers, if ye know any, for ye ain't a minnit to live."

The trembling negro dropped to his knees and be gan mumbling his prayers.

"What's the matter here?" asked the Deacon of the teamster.

"O, some man's ketched his nigger tryin' to run away to our lines, an's goin' to kill him," answered the teamster indifferently.

"Goin' to kill him," gasped the Deacon. "Are we goin' to 'low that?"

"'Tain't none o' my business," said the teamster coolly. "It's his nigger; I reckon he's a right to do as he pleases."

"I don't reckon nothin' o' the kind," said the Deacon indignantly. "I won't stand and see it done."

"Better not mix in," admonished the teamster. "Them air Southerners is pretty savage folks, and don't like any meddlin' twixt them and their niggers. What's a nigger, anyway?"

"Amounts to about as much as a white-livered teamster," said the Deacon hotly. "I'm goin' to mix in. I'll not see any man murdered while I'm around. Say, you," to the white man; "what are you goin' ter do with that man?"

"Mind yer own bizniss," replied the white man, after a casual glance at the Deacon, and seeing that he did not wear a uniform. "Keep yer mouth shet if ye know when y're well off."

"O, massa, save me! save me!" said the negro, jumping up and running toward the Deacon, who had slipped down from the fodder, and was standing in the road.

"All right, Sambo; don't be scared. He sha'n't kill you while I'm around," said the Deacon.

"I tell ye agin to mind yer own bizniss and keep yer mouth shet," said the white man savagely. "Who air ye, anyway? One o' them slinkin' nigger-stealin' Abolitionists, comin' down here to rob us Southerners of our property?"

He followed this with a torrent of profane denunciation of the "whole Abolition crew."

"Look here, Mister," said the Deacon calmly, reaching back into the wagon and drawing out a musket, "I'm a member o' the church and a peaceable man. But I don't 'low no man to call me names, and I object to swearin' of all kinds. I want to argy this question with you, quietly, as between man and man."

He looked down to see if there was a cap on the gun.

"What's the trouble 'twixt you and this man here?"

"That ain't no man," said the other hotly. "That's my nigger bought with my money. He's my property. I've ketched him tryin' to run away tryin' to rob me of \$1,200 worth o' property and give it to our enemies. I'm gwine to kill him to stop others from doin' the same thing."

"Indeed you're not," said the Deacon, putting his thumb on the hammer.

"Do you mean to say you'll stop me?" said the master, starting to raise his shotgun, which he had let fall a little.

"Something like that, if not the exact words," answered the Deacon calmly, looking at the sights of the musket with an interested air.

The master resumed his volley of epithets.

The Deacon's face became very rigid, and the musket was advanced to a more threatening position. "I told you before," he said, "that I didn't allow no man to call me sich names. I give you warnin' agin. I'm liable to fall from grace, as the Methodists say, any minnit. I'm dumbed sure to if you call me an other name."

The master glared at the musket. It was clearly in hands used to guns, and the face behind it was not that of a man to be fooled with beyond a certain limit. He lowered his shotgun, and spoke sharply to the negro:

"Sam, git 'round here in front of the hoss, and put for home at once."

"Stay where you are, till I finish talkin' to this man," commanded the Deacon. "Are you a loyal man?" he inquired of the master. 251

"If ye mean loil to that rail-splittin' gorilla in Washington," replied the master, hotly; "to that low-down, nigger-lovin', nigger-stealin'—"

"Shet right up," said the Deacon, bringing up his gun in a flash of anger. "You sha'n't abuse the President o' the United States any more'n you shall me, nor half so much. He's your President, whom you must honor and respect. I won't have him blackguarded by an unhung rebel. You say yourself you're a rebel. Then you have no right whatever to this man, and I'm goin' to confiscate him in the name o' Abraham Lincoln, President o' the United States, an' accordin' to his proclamation of emancipation, done at Washington, District o' Columbia, in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and sixty-three and of our Independence the 87th.

"Now, you jest turn your hoss around and vacate these parts as quick as you can, and leave me and this colored man alone. We're tired o' havin' you 'round."

The master was a man of sense. He knew that there was nothing to do but obey.

CHAPTER XXI. THE PERPLEXED DEACON

TROUBLED TO KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH THE FREEDMAN.

"WHAT is yer a-gwine tub do wid me, mas'r?" asked the negro, with a look and an attitude curiously like a forlorn stray dog which had at last found an owner and protector.

"Wish to gracious I knowed," answered the Deacon, knitting his brows in thought. "I don't know as I've anything to do with you. I've about as much idee what to do with you as I would with a whale in the Wabash River. I'm neither John Brown nor a colonization society. I've about as much use for a nigger, free or slave, as a frog has for a tail. You're free now that's all there is of it. Nobody's got nothin' to do with you. You've got to do with yourself that's all. You're your own master. You go your way and let other folks go theirs."

In the simplicity of his heart the Deacon thought he had covered the whole ground. What more could the man want, who had youth, health and strength, than perfect liberty to go where he pleased and strive for what he wanted?

The negro looked dazed and perplexed.

"Isn't yo' a-gwine tuh take me wid yo', mas'r?" he asked.

"Take you with me!" repeated the Deacon in astonishment and some petulance. "Certainly not. I don't want 253 you. And you mustn't call me master. You mustn't call any man master. You're no longer a slave. You're your own master. You're free; don't you understand?"

"But whah'm I tuh go?" reiterated the negro hopelessly.

"Go where you please," repeated the Deacon with impatience. "The whole world's open to you. Go to the next County; go to Kaintucky, Injianny, Ohio, Illinoy, Kamskatky, New Guiney, Jericho, or Polkinhorn's tanyard if you like."

"Afo' God, I don't know what tuh do, or wha tuh go," said the negro despairingly. "If yo' leab me here, I know dat ole mas'r 'll fin' me an' done kill me daid."

"Niggers is like mules," remarked Groundhog savagely. "They only know two places in the whole world: their master's place and somewhere else. They want to run away from their master, but they hain't nary idee whar to go when they run away. A hoss has more sense 'n either a nigger or a mule. When he lights out he's got some idee o' where he wants t' go. I tell you; jest give that nigger to me. I know what to do with him. I know a man that'll give me \$100 for him, and I'll whack up fair and square with you."

"Shut up, you mullet-headed mule-whacker," said the Deacon irritably. "You hain't got sense enough to take care o' mules right, let alone a man. I wouldn't trust you an hour with the poorest team on my place. I'll take care o' this man myself, at least, until I kin have a talk with the boys. Here, you nigger, what's your name?" 254

"Dey call me Sam, mas'r," replied the negro.

"Well, we'll change that. You're a free man, and I'll give you another name. I'm goin' to call you Abraham—Abraham Lincoln the grandest name in the world to-day. For short I'll call you Abe. You must stop callin' me, or anybody, master, I tell you. You just call be Mister Klegg."

"Mistuh what?" said the negro, puzzled.

"Well, jest call me boss. Now, Abe, climb up into the wagon here, and come along with me." 255

"He can't git into no wagon o' mine," said the teamster surlily. "Government wagons ain't no passenger coaches for runaway niggers. I didn't hire to haul niggers on pleasure excursions. That ain't no part of a white

man's bizness. Let him walk alongside."

"You dumb citizen," said the Deacon angrily. He had been in camp long enough to catch the feeling of the men toward the Quartermaster's civilian employees. "This man shall ride in this wagon along side o' me, and you'll drive us into camp, or I'll find out the reason why. Now jest gether up your lines and start."

"I won't take no slack from no old Wabash hayseed like you," responded the teamster cordially. "You can't boss me. You hain't no right. You can't ring me in to help you steal niggers, unless you divide with me. You come out here in the road and I'll punch that old sorrel-top head o' your'n."

And the teamster pranced out and brandished his blacksnake whip menacingly.

It had been many years since anybody on the Wabash had dared Deacon Klegg to a match in fisticuffs. The memory of some youthful performances of his had secured him respectful immunity. His last affair had been a severe suppression of a noted bully who attempted to "crowd the mourners" at a camp-meeting for the good order of which the Deacon felt himself somewhat responsible. It took the bully six months to get over it, and he went to the mourner's bench himself at the next revival.

The Deacon looked at the gesticulating teamster a minute, and the dormant impulse of his youth stirred 256 again within him. He laid his gun down and calmly slid from the fodder to the ground. He pulled off his coat and hat, and laid them on the wagon. He took the quid of tobacco from his mouth, carefully selected a place for it on the edge of the wagon-bed, laid it there on a piece of corn-husk, and walked toward the teamster, rolling up his sleeves.

The effect upon the monarch of the mules was immediate and marked. He stopped prancing around, and began to look alarmed.

"Now, don't you hit me," he yelled. "I'm the driver o' this team, and in Gov'ment employ. If you hit me I'll have you courtmartialed."



"I'm not goin' to hit you," said the Deacon, raising a fist as big as a small ham, "if you behave yourself. I want you to shut your mouth, and git on your mule and start for camp. If you don't 'tend to your bizness, or give me any more o' your sass, I'll pound the melt out o' you. D' you hear? Git on your mule at onct."



SI AND SHORTY AS FORAGERS.
(CHAPTER XXI.)

The teamster did as he was bid, and drove on till they came up to where the boys were sitting on a fence-corner waiting for them.

Si had a brace of chickens tied together by the feet, and Shorty a crock of honey in the comb, with a bag of saleratus biscuits and one of cornmeal, and a number of strings of dried apples.

"Bin waitin' for you a good while, Pap. What kep' you so long? Break-down?" said Si.

"No; had to stop and argy the fugitive slave law with a Southern gentleman, and then debate niggers' civil rights with the teamster," said the Deacon. Then he told them the story. "Here's the darky," he said, as he 257 concluded. "Seems to be a purty fair sort of a farm-hand, if he has sense enough to come in when it rains, which I misdoubt. What are we goin' to do with him?"

"Do with him?" said Shorty. "Do everything with him. Take him into camp first. Hire him out to the Quartermaster. Let him wait on the Captain. Take him back home with you to help on the farm while Si's away. Jehosephat, a big buck like that's a mighty handy thing to have about the house. You kin learn him more tricks in a week than he'd learn with his owner in a lifetime. Say, boy, what's your name?"

"S s-s," the negro began to say, but he caught the Deacon's eye upon him, and responded promptly, "Abr'm Lincoln."

"I believe the nigger kin be taught," thought the Deacon. "Probably this's some more o' Providence's workin's. Mebbe He brung this about jest to give me my share o' the work o' raisin' the fallen race."

"Boys," said he, "I'm glad you've got something good to eat there. Them chickens seem tol'ble young and fat. I hope you came by 'em honestly."

"Well, Pap," chuckled Si, "I don't know as a man who's been runnin' around for another man's nigger, and got him, is jest in shape to ask questions how other men got chickens and things; but I'll relieve your mind by sayin' that we came honestly by 'em."

"Yes; thought it would be interestin' to try that way once, for a change," said Shorty. "Besides, it wuz too near camp for any hornswogglin'. These fellers right around camp are gettin' on to the names o' the 258 regiments. They're learnin' to notice 200th Ind. on our caps, and' foller you right into camp, and go up to the Colonel. We're layin' altogether too long in one place. The Army o' the Cumberland oughter move."

"We paid full value, C. O. D.," added Si, "and not in Drake's Plantation Bitters labels nor in busted Kalamazoo bank notes, neither. I think fellers that pass patent-medicine labels and business-college advertisements on these folks for money, oughter to be tied up by the thumbs. It's mean."

"That's what I say, too," added Shorty, with virtuous indignation. "'Specially when you kin git the best kind o' Confederit money from Cincinnati for two cents on the dollar. I always lay in enough o' that to do my tradin' with."

"What's that? What's that?" gasped the Deacon. "Passin' Confederate money that you buy in Cincinnati at two cents on the dollar? Why, that's counterfeitin'."

"That's drawin' it a little too fine," said Shorty argumentatively. "These flabbergasted fools won't take greenbacks. I offered the woman to-day some, and she said she wouldn't be found dead with 'em. She wanted Confedrit money. You may call it counterfeitin', but the whole Southern Confederacy is counterfeit, from its President down to the lowest Corporil. A dollar or two more or less won't make no difference. This feller at Cincinnati has got just as much right to print notes as they have in Richmond."

"He prints 'em on better paper, his pictures are better, and he sells his notes much cheaper, and I don't see why I shouldn't buy o' him rather than o' them. I believe in patronizin' home industry." 259

"Si," said his father, in horrified tones, "I hope you hain't bin passin' none o' the Cincinnati Confederate money on these people."

"I hope not, Pap. But then, you know, I ain't no bank-note detector. I can't tell the Cincinnati kind from the Richmond kind, and I never try very hard. All Confedrt money's alike to me, and I guess in the end it'll be to them. Both kinds say they'll be paid six months after the conclusion of peace be twixt the Confederate States and the United States, and I guess one stands jest as good show as the other. The woman asked me \$2 apiece for these chickens, and I paid her in the Confedrit money I happened to have in my pocket. I didn't notice whether it wuz printed in Cincinnati or Richmond. I got it from one o' the boys playin' p——. I mean he paid it to see me." He gave Shorty a furtive kick and whispered: "Come mighty nigh givin' my self away that time."

There was a long hill just before they came in sight of the entrance to the camp, and they got out and helped the mules up. They walked on ahead until they came to the top. The Deacon looked at the entrance, and said:

"I declare, if there isn't that owner o' this nigger waitin' for us."

"That so?" said Si, turning his eyes in that direction. "And he's got some officers with him. There's some officers jest mean enough to help these rebels ketch their niggers. I'd like to knock their addled heads off." 260

"Jest wait till we git discharged, Si, and then we kin lick 'em as much as we want to," said Shorty. "But we've got to do somethin' now. They can't see us yit. Deacon, jest take yer nigger and cut down around through the crick there until you come to the picket-line. Then wait. Me and Si'll go on in, and come around and find you."

"All right," assented the Deacon, who was falling into camp ways with remarkable facility. "But you've got to look out for that teamster. He's meaner'n dog-fennel. He'll tell everything."

"Good point," said Si. "We must 'tend to him. See here, Groundhog," he continued, walking back to the teamster; "you don't know nothin' about that old man and nigger that got on your wagon. They slipped off into the woods when you wuzn't lookin', while you wuz busy with your mules, and you don't know whether they went to the right or to the left, up the road or down it."

"Do you s'pose I'm goin' to help steal a nigger, and then lie about it to the officers, for you galoots, and all for nothin'?" said the teamster. "You are blamed fools, that's all I've got to say."

"Look here, Groundhog," said Shorty, coming up close, with a portentous doubled fist. "You know me, and you know Si. You know that either of us can maul the head off you in a minute, whenever we've a mind to, and we're likely any time to have a mind to. We're a durned sight nearer you all the time than any o' the officers, and you can't git away from us, though you may from them. They may buck and gag you, as they ought to, 'bout every day, but that won't be nothin' to the welting one of us 'll give you. Now, you tell that story, jest as Si said, and stick to it, or you won't have a whole bone in your carcass by the end o' the week." 261

When they came up to the entrance there indeed stood the owner of Abraham Lincoln, holding his horse, and by him stood the Lieutenant-Colonel of the 200th Ind., a big, burly man, who had been a drover and an influential politician before he got his commission, and had a high reputation at home as a rough-and-tumble fighter. He had not added to his bellicose fame since entering the field, because for some mysterious reason he had been absent every time the regiment went into a fight, or was likely to. Consequently he was all the more blustering and domineering in camp, in spite of the frequent repressions he got from the modest, quiet little Colonel.

"Old Blowhard Billings is there," said Si. "Now we'll have a gust o' wind."

"Didn't know he was in camp," said Shorty. "I've a notion to bust a cap and scare him back to Nashville agin. Don't let him bluff you, Si, even if he is the Lieutenant-Colonel."

They rode up to the entrance looking as innocent and placid as if bringing in a load from the fields on the Wabash.

"Corporal Klegg," said the Lieutenant-Colonel sternly, "bring out that nigger from the wagon."

"We ain't got no nigger in the wagon, Colonel," said Si, with an expression of surprise.

"Come, now, don't fool with me, sir, or I'll make you very sorry for it. I'm no man to be trifled with, sir. If you ain't got a nigger in the wagon, what 've you done with him." 262

"We ain't done nothin' with him, Colonel," persisted Si. "I hain't had nothin' to do with no nigger since we started out this mornin'; hain't spoken to one. Sometimes niggers jump on our wagons, ride a little ways, and then jump off agin. I can't keep track of 'em. I generally make 'em git off when I notice 'em."

"Corporal Klegg, you're lyin' to me," said the Lieutenant-Colonel roughly. "I'll settle with you directly. Groundhog, have you got a nigger in the wagon?"

"No, sir," replied the teamster.

"Didn't you have' one?"

Groundhog looked up and caught Shorty's eye fixed unflinchingly on him.

"I b'lieve that one did git on," he stammered, "but he got off agin d'rectly. I didn't notice much about him. My mules wuz very bothersome all the time. They're the durndest meanest mules that ever a man tried to drive. That there off-swing mule'd—"

"We don't want to hear nothin' about your mules. We'll look in the wagon ourselves."

The search developed nothing. The Lieutenant-Colonel came back to Si, angrier than ever.

"Look here, Klegg, you're foolin' me, an' I won't stand it. I'll have the truth out o' you if I have to kill you. Understand?"

There was a dangerous gleam in Si's and Shorty's eyes, but they kept their lips tightly closed.

"This gentleman here," continued the Lieutenant-Colonel, "says, and I believe his story, against all that you may say, that the men with this wagon, which he's bin watchin' all along, took his nigger away from him and drove him off with insults and curses. They threatened his life. He says he can't reckonize either of you, and likely you have disguised yourselves. But he reckonizes the wagon and the teamster, and is willin' to swear to 'em. I know he's tellin' the truth, because I know you fellers. You're impudent and sassy. You've bin among them that's hollered at me. You've bin stealin' other things besides niggers to-day, and have 'em in your possession. You're loaded down with things you've stolen from houses. I won't command a regiment of nigger-thieves. I won't have nigger-thieves in my regiment. If I've got any in my regiment I'll break 'em of it, or I'll break their infernal necks. I believe you fellers got away with that nigger, and I'll tie you up by the thumbs till I get the truth out o' you. Sergeant o' the guard, take charge o' these men, and bring 'em along. Take that stuff that they've stolen away from them and send it to my tent."

Si and Shorty got very white about the mouth, but Si merely said, as they handed their guns to the guard:

"Colonel, you may tie us up till doomsday, but you'll git no help out of us to ketch runaway niggers and put 'em back in slavery."

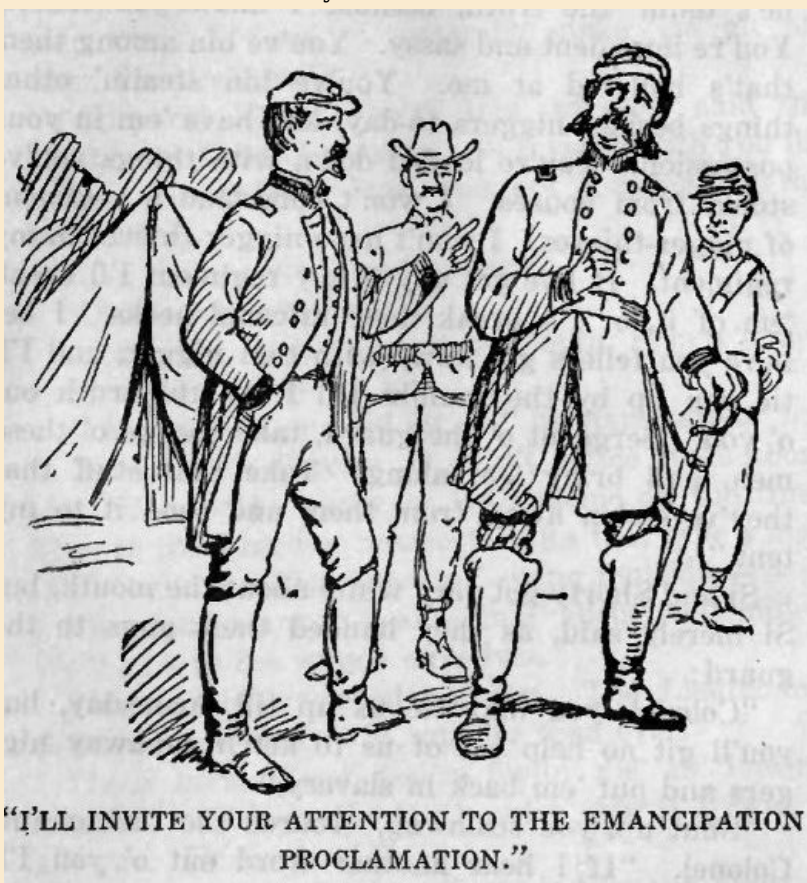
"Shut up, you scalawag," roared the Lieutenant-Colonel. "If I hear another word out o' you I'll buck-and-gag you."

They marched to Regimental Headquarters and halted, and the Lieutenant-Colonel renewed his browbeating, Si and Shorty continued obstinate, and the Lieutenant-Colonel, getting angrier every minute, ordered them tied up by the thumbs. While the Sergeant of the Guard, who was a friend of the boys, and had little heart for the work, was dallying with his preparations, the Colonel himself appeared on the scene.

"Ah, Colonel, you've got back, have you?" said the Lieutenant-Colonel, little pleased at the interruption. "I've just caught two of the men in a little job o' nigger-stealin', and I was about to learn them a lesson which will break them of the habit. With your consent I'll go on with the work."

"Nigger-stealing?" said the Colonel quietly. "You mean helping a slave to get away? Did you learn whether the owner was a loyal man?"

"I don't know as that makes any difference," replied the Lieutenant-Colonel surlily. "As a matter of fact, I believe he said he had two sons in the rebel army."



"Well, Colonel," said the other, "I'll invite your attention to the Emancipation Proclamation of President Lincoln, and the orders from the War Department, which prohibit the return of slaves to disloyal owners, and make it the duty of officers and men to assist in their escape. You had better dismiss the men to their quarters."

"If that's the case if I don't resign. I'm no

"Abolitionist. I didn't come into the army to free the niggers."

"I shall take pleasure in forwarding your resignation with a recommendation of its acceptance for the good of the service," said the Colonel calmly.

"Men, go to your quarters."

"Altogether, Pap, I consider this a mighty good day's work," remarked Si that evening after supper, as they sat around the fire smoking, with Abraham Lincoln snoring vigorously on the floor, in his first night's sleep as

CHAPTER XXII. TRYING TO EDUCATE ABRAHAM LINCOLN

TOO HIGH-PRESSURE SCHOOLING—THE BOYS ON PICKET.

ALL THREE of the men at once became guardians of Abraham Lincoln, and in their several ways heartily interested in his welfare.

The Deacon was fired by the missionary spirit of his kind and class.

"No use talkin' no more about the heathen 'On Greenland's icy mountains,' or any place else," he communed with himself that evening, as he sat and smoked, and occasionally glanced at the ebon face of the sleeper in the corner. "Providence has cut out a job for me, and sent it home. Rather, He sent me where I couldn't help stumblin' upon it, and reckonizin' it. The responsibility to Him is clear. I've got heathen enough to last me for a 'coon's age, to lift that poor, ignorant soul up, and bring it to a knowledge of Christian ways. He's not nice nor purty; never heard of a pagan that wuz. Wouldn't be pagans if they wuz. But he's a man and a brother, and the Bible says that I'm my brother's keeper. I'll keep him agin fifty-'leven o' that old snortin' rebel and Copperhead Blowhard Billings. I wuzzent brung up in the woods to be scared by the hootin' of an owl."

"We might take him along with us, Si," said Shorty, in a low tone, with a nod toward Abraham Lincoln. "We could make a bully cook out of him. We could have no end of fun with him. We could learn him lots o' tricks. He's as strong as an ox, and after I'd give him a few lessons in puttin' up his hands, he'd knock out that sassy nigger o' the Colonel's." 267

"I think so, too," acquiesced Si, with an estimating glance at the sleeper.

Abraham Lincoln's education began bright and early the next morning, when Shorty kicked and shook him into wakefulness at the sound of the reveille.

"Git up; git up," said Shorty. "Wash your hands and face, comb your hair, cut some wood and put it on the fire, and bring a kettle o' water from the spring."

"Wash my hands and face," said the negro, in a dazed way. "Wha' fo'? Don't got nufin on dem. Comb my ha'r? Nebber did dat in my life."

"Well, you've got to do it now every mornin', and be spry about it, too. Come, don't move around as if sawed out o' basswood. This ain't nigger-quarters. Git some springs in your feet."

And he emphasized his injunctions with a vigorous push.

The negro's face looked as if he began to have doubts as to whether freedom was all that had been represented to him. To have to get up early every morning, and wash his face and hands and comb his hair, seemed at the moment to be a high price to pay for liberty.

"Does I hab tuh do dat ebbery mornin', Boss?" he said, turning with a look of plaintive inquiry to the Deacon. 268

"Why, certainly," said the Deacon, who had just finished his own ablutions, and was combing his hair. "Every man must do that to be decent."

Abraham Lincoln gave a deep sigh.

"Washes himself as if he's afraid the water'd scald him," said the Deacon, watching the negro's awkward efforts. "He'll have to take more kindly to water, if he comes into a Baptist total immersion family. There's no salvation except by water, and plenty of it, too. Now," he continued, as the black man had finished, "pick up that ax and cut some wood to get breakfast with."

Abraham Lincoln took the ax, and began belaboring the wood, while the Deacon studied him with a critical eye. There was little that the Deacon prided himself on more than his skill as a wood chopper. People who think the ax is a simple, skill-less tool, dependent for its efficiency solely upon the strength and industry with which it is wielded, make a great mistake. There is as much difference in the way men handle axes, and in the result they produce, as there is in their playing the violin. Anybody can chop, it is true, as anybody can daub with a paint brush, but a real axman of the breed of the Deacon, who had gone into the wilderness with scarcely any other tool than an ax, can produce results with it of which the clumsy hacker can scarcely imagine. The Deacon watched the negro's work with disgust and impatience.

"Hadn't oughter named sich a clumsy pounder as that 'Abraham Lincoln,'" he mused. "Old Abe could handle an ax with the best of 'em. This feller handles it as if it was a handspike. If Si couldn't 've used an ax better'n that when he was 10 years old, I'd 'a' felt mortally ashamed o' him. Gracious, what a job I have before me o' makin' a first-class man out o' him." 269



He took the ax from the negro's hand, and patiently showed him how to hold and strike with it. The man apparently tried his best to learn, but it was a perspiring effort for him and the Deacon. The negro presently 270 dropped his ax, sat down on the log, and wiped his forehead with his shirtsleeve.

"Fore God, Boss, dat's de hardest way ob cuttin' wood dat I ebber seed. Hit'll kill me done daid to chop wood dat a-way."

"Pshaw!" said the impatient Deacon. "You're simply stupid; that's all. That's the only way to handle an ax. You kin cut with half the work that way."

He was discovering what so many of us have found out, that among the hardest things in life is that of getting people to give up clumsy ways for those that are better.

In the meantime the boys had gotten breakfast. Then Shorty, who was dying to train their new acquisition for a winning fight with the Colonel's negro, took him behind the house for a little private instruction in boxing. The field-hand had never even heard of such a thing before, but Shorty was too much in earnest to care for a little thing like that. He went at his task with a will, making the negro double his fists just so, strike in a particular way, make a certain "guard," and hit out scientifically. Shorty was so enthusiastic that he did not stop to think that it was severe labor for the poor negro, and when he had to stop his lesson at the end of half an hour to go on battalion drill he left his pupil in a state of collapse.

Ignorant of the new ordeal through which his charge had been going, the Deacon went out in search of him. He had just finished reading the news in the Cincinnati Commercial, ending with an editorial on "Our Duty 271 Toward the Freedmen," which impelled him to think that he could not begin Abraham Lincoln's education too soon.

"Now, Abe," said he briskly, "you've had a good rest, and it's time that you should be doin' some thing. You ought to learn to read as soon as possible, and you might as well begin to learn your letters at once. I'll give you your first lesson. Here are some nice large letters in this newspaper head, that you kin learn very easily. Now, the first one is T. You see it is a cross."

"Afo' de Lawd, Boss," wailed the desperate negro, "I jest can't l'arn no mo', now, nohow. 'Deed I can't. Hit's bin nuffin but l'arn, l'arn, ebbery minnit sense I got up dis mawnin', an' my haid's jest bustin', so hit is. I a'most wisht I wuz back wid my ole mas'r, who didn't want to l'arn me nuffin."

The astonished Deacon paused and reflected.

"Mebbe we've bin tryin' to force this plant too fast. There's danger about puttin' new wine into old bottles. It's not the right way to train anything. The way to break a colt is to hang the bridle on the fence where he kin see and smell it for a day or two. I'll go a little slow with him at first. Would you like something more to eat, Abe?"

"Yes, Boss. 'Deed I would," answered the negro with cheerful promptness, forgetting all about the pangs of the "new birth of freedom."

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