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Title: The Last Campaign of the Twenty-Second Regiment, N.G., S.N.Y. June and July, 1863

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Release Date: April 16, 2010 [EBook #32013]

Language: English

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE LAST CAMPAIGN OF THE
TWENTY-SECOND REGIMENT, N.G., S.N.Y. JUNE AND JULY, 1863 ***

**THE
LAST CAMPAIGN
OF THE
TWENTY-SECOND REGIMENT,
N. G., S. N. Y.
JUNE AND JULY, 1863.**

**New York:
C. S. WESTCOTT & CO., PRINTERS,
No. 79 JOHN STREET.
1864.**

Entered according to the act of Congress, in the year 1864,
By GEORGE W. WINGATE,
in the Clerk's office of the District Court of the United States for the Southern District of
New York.

**THE LAST CAMPAIGN OF THE
Twenty-second Regiment N. G., S. N. Y.**

On the 18th of June, 1863, it having been definitely ascertained that the rebel horde had

invaded Pennsylvania in force, the call of the President was issued to the Empire State, and her militia, leaving everything as it stood—their books unclosed, their ploughs in the furrow—hurried eagerly forward in response, to unite in the defence of our sister State. All day long blue and gray uniforms were dashing frantically backward and forward through the streets, and in and out of the various armories of the city, in search of essentials found missing at the last moment; and in military circles the flurry and commotion were indescribable, particularly at the Palace Garden in Fourteenth street, where the Twenty-second regiment N. G., S. N. Y., assembling in great haste, were preparing to be “off to the war” on their second campaign.

At last the manifold preparations were completed, and amid tumultuous cheering, the fluttering of handkerchiefs, the ringing of bells, and the thousand bewildering noises of an enthusiastic crowd, the regiment formed and marched away—where to, none knew and none cared, so long as they were doing their country a service.

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That night was spent in the cattle-cars of the Camden and Amboy Railroad, and the next morning found us entering the City of Brotherly Love, through which, after being fed and washed at the immortal “Cooper Shop,” we took our way for the capital of the state, cheered on by an enthusiastic ovation from the citizens, whose noble behavior and unstinted hospitality to the thousands of soldiers who have passed through the city since the beginning of the war, has obtained for Philadelphia the well-earned reputation of being the most patriotic city in the Union.

The distance from New York to Harrisburg, I believe, may be usually traversed in about eight hours, but (as there was a great need of men), the regiment was kept precisely three days in cattle-cars before being deposited at its destination, no insignificant omen of the fate that awaited its members in the future. Finally, after an immensity of tribulation, we got to Harrisburg, and spent the last of these three days quietly lying alongside of Camp Curtin; this camp, so celebrated in Pennsylvania annals, is a wide level expanse, in the vicinity of the city, and was then crowded with the newly-raised militia, whose general appearance and condition did not inspire us with that exalted idea of their efficiency that the newspapers seemed to have; on the contrary, it seemed to us, that a more indifferent, lazy, uncouth-looking set never was seen outside of rebeldom; but as their ideas of hospitality toward us were demonstrated in copperhead talk and chaffing us with hard names, these views may be prejudiced. At some distance from Camp Curtin, however, were a couple of batteries and some troops from Philadelphia, who really looked like soldiers, and whose appearance inspired the “Yorkers” with a feeling of respect which further acquaintance did not dispel.

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But notwithstanding the society, the time hung heavy on our hands, and it was no small relief, when, during the latter part of the afternoon, we were sent across the Susquehanna, some of us into the fortifications, and the others, including the Twenty-second, to camps in the different places near the river, to protect the various approaches and fords in the neighborhood of the city.

It was growing dusky as we arrived at our selected camp-grounds, and, as it was a singular characteristic of the climate of Pennsylvania during our brief sojourn, that darkness is synonymous with rain (for the sun scarcely ever went down before the elements were imitating the movement), it accordingly commenced to rain, and by the time it was fairly dark a heavy storm was raging.

Fortunately, an immense empty barn was at hand, into which the regiment wedged themselves, like sardines in a box, so tight, in fact, that those unfortunates who happened to find themselves under a leak in the roof—and there were many such—had to remain quiet under their douche, and take it coolly for the whole night. The Eleventh and one or two other regiments, being without either barn or tents, were obliged to sleep in the woods all night without any protection whatever, and were consequently regarded as suffering martyrs by all the rest of us, who wondered how they could possibly have lived through it.

Little did those think who shuddered when they talked about sleeping in the rain without cover, that in a very short time they would be doing that very thing themselves, and come to regard it as a mere matter of course, inconvenient to be sure, but so commonplace as to be hardly worth mentioning.

The next morning, having pitched our tents, we entered upon the usual routine of camp life, humdrum to the last extent. Hot as an oven, stupid and monotonous as a prison, the first few days passed quietly enough. It is true that the roofs and spires of the capital of Pennsylvania, which we had come to defend, were in plain sight, but a very few visits there, combined with the chilling reception we received in passing through it, put an effectual quietus on our hopes of the good time that was coming. Little bills, and big stories of little bills, for necessary purchases; fifteen cents for a cup of (rye) coffee, and other things in proportion, the general indifference of the inhabitants as to which side won in the contest which was impending, and the other annoyances which have been so fully ventilated in the New York newspapers, in a very short time destroyed the clamor for passes, and rendered useless the complicated system of signatures which had been devised to prevent the expected rush for those documents.

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By-and-by we were regaled by perusing in the New York papers the most astounding accounts of the dangers of our position, and of the uprising of Pennsylvania; unquestionably

it was all true, but we hadn't seen anything of the kind yet. Still, while laughing over much that we read, we could not help noticing, that as time wore on, a stream of skedaddlers, small at first, but rapidly increasing, was sweeping by the camp; and in a short time crowds of able-bodied natives, driving their flocks and herds, and followed by wagons heaped mountain high with their most precious household goods, blocked up every road leading into the city, and showed that the enemy were rapidly approaching.

Things, however, remained quiet, as far as we were concerned, but it was only the quiet which portends the storm. A night alarm, caused by the guard and pickets firing on spies escaping from the camp under cover of the darkness, more spies, both male and female, in the guard-house, more cattle, more scared natives rushing by as though a second exodus was at hand, soon put us on the alert.

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On Saturday, the 27th of June, that portion of the regiment not on picket was hastily marched down the turnpike, and set at work throwing up a line of rifle pits, to cover the road up which the enemy were now rapidly advancing, report said, only four miles off; but as companies C (Capt. Post), and G (Capt. Howland), had been previously sent some five miles down the same road as pickets, and had not yet been driven in, we took these figures with a slight discount. There was no question, however, but that they were near enough, and we dug away for dear life, from eleven A. M. to two P. M. (and the Sixty-ninth may be safely defied to produce a bigger hole than we had finished at that time); and in consideration of these unparalleled exertions, those in authority kindly allowed us to rest our wearied limbs—by chopping down a good-sized forest, which interfered with the range of the artillery.

Now, digging rifle pits in a hot sun is so very much like excavating a sewer, that axe-work was fun itself compared with it, so the boys, dropping their spades for axes, went to work with a *vim*, Col. Aspinwall himself setting the example, while each company did its best to outdo the others; and soon the big hickories, two and three feet in diameter, were crashing in all directions, shaking the very ground with their fall. This, by-the-by, was the "heavy cannonading at Harrisburg," which was telegraphed on to the New York papers, where it greeted our wondering eyes in print the next afternoon.

Of course the people of the vicinity lent their experienced arms to assist in obstructing the march of the enemy; the deputation of patriots present, up to seven o'clock P. M., numbering precisely four (and two of these were blacks, but none the worse choppers for that). After that hour, through the earnest solicitations of a guard despatched by Colonel Aspinwall, whose fixed bayonets presented an unanswerable argument, the surrounding male population volunteered (?) their aid and axes towards the completion of the work, while the tired troops sought their tents to sleep.

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No alarm broke the stillness of the night, and the regiment assembled the next (Sunday) morning in front of the Colonel's tent for religious services, feeling rather more disposed to be pious than usual, for none knew what might occur before another day was passed.

Those services never took place. The men were assembled, the prayer-books distributed, the Chaplain had risen and was on the point of announcing his text, when the Colonel dashed up at full gallop, with the order—"Go back to your company 'streets,' and strike tents at once!"

The men rushed back to their quarters, and preparations for breaking camp went on in the greatest possible haste, in the midst of which the Chaplain disappeared for parts unknown, and we never laid eyes on him from that day to this.

Company D (Capt. Thornell) was here ordered down to relieve the companies on picket, and in obedience to subsequent orders threw up a line of rifle-pits across the road, to defend the position to which they had been ordered; where they remained, lying on their arms, until they were called in on the morning of the 30th.

In a few minutes the camp was struck, and we were marching off, little thinking, as we took our leave of the pleasant spot where our nice new tents were being loaded in wagons pressed for the occasion, of the length of time that would elapse before our heads would get under their (or any other) shelter again—perhaps, if we had, the leave-taking would have been more affecting.

While one half of the remaining portion of the regiment was ordered to hold the rifle-pits, the remainder marched to Bridgeport Station opposite Harrisburg, and proceeded to barricade several houses commanding the approaches to the beautiful railroad bridge erected at this point, with as much industry as though they had not done a thing for a week. Companies A (then commanded by Lieut. Franklin, Capt. Otis being temporarily absent) and I (Capt. Gardiner), with beams, barrels of earth, bundles of lath, railroad sleepers and sand-bags, by ten o'clock P. M., had converted the engine-house in which they were stationed into a loopholed and casemated battery to protect two pieces of the Eighth N. Y. troop, placed there to rake the railroad. In the more laborious parts of this work, lifting railroad sleepers and carrying sand-bags, they were assisted by a detachment of negroes from the large body at work on the fortifications, and it was really touching to see the patient, uncomplaining way in which these poor men worked. All the preceding night and day with scanty covering they had toiled, digging, carrying heavy beams and sand-bags, and though almost wearied out, without the slightest compulsion, without the use of a single harsh word from their overseer, they still continued. The white volunteers from Harrisburg had long since

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abandoned the toilsome work; the weary soldiers stopped at nine o'clock; but the negroes kept on.

At twelve o'clock P. M., the Twenty-second and Thirty-seventh, were cautiously awakened and marched stealthily out to cut off the enemy's advanced guard, reported to be reconnoitring in our front. It was an imposing sight to see the long column dimly and silently winding down the roads and through the varying shadows of the night. Not a sound was heard—orders were given in a whisper; and as we drew nearer the enemy's position, the silence was so profound that the heavy breathing of the men was distinctly audible.

After a long march, whispered orders were passed down the line, and amid a death-like silence we halted and formed line of battle, fixing bayonets, and freshly capping our pieces in readiness for instant service. Every eye was strained through the darkness to discern the patrols of the enemy in the wavering shadows of the woods and fields, and every ear was stretched to its utmost tension to catch the expected challenge. But the silence was unbroken, and after a few moments' halt the column proceeded, feeling their way with the utmost caution, and expecting at every instant to hear the volley which would announce that the advanced pickets had been encountered; but our caution was unnecessary, the enemy had fallen back and there was nothing to be seen.

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The movement was splendidly managed, and only wanted one thing to be a magnificent success, that was—an enemy. "As there wasn't anybody to be captured, we could not capture anybody;" so after marching out some five miles past the pickets, we returned without seeing anything, and at five A. M. lay down by the railroad track to catch a few minutes' rest. Company B (Capt. Remmey), were not allowed even this rest; but were obliged to return to the picket station, down the New Cumberland road from which they had been recalled to join in the expedition, and which they did not reach until after seven o'clock.

The next day was spent in line of battle, waiting for an attack; but the rebels kindly allowed us to rest during the day, and to "turn in" at our usual hour at night, without molestation, for which we were exceedingly obliged to them.

In the meantime the preparations for the defence of Harrisburg went on with all possible speed; by this time the fortifications erected there were quite extensive, and it is probable that their looks went far toward dampening the ardor of the "Confeds." But it seemed to us that in the incessant hurry and bustle that were going on around, there was a great want of system; that there was no great mind overseeing everything, and watching that the right man was in the right place. Much of this is certainly unavoidable. A general cannot see everything done with his own eyes, but still the unusual manner in which things were managed—the rushing at a thing for half a day, then leaving that unfinished, and going at something else; the subordinates at a loss for orders, and almost every one doing what seemed right in his own eyes—was the subject of frequent comment, especially among the "thinking bayonets" of the rank and file. But in justice it must be said that their opportunities of judging were very limited.

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At about ten o'clock on the morning of the 30th of June, an order came from the General commanding, for the Twenty-second and Thirty-seventh New York to prepare for a *two-hours'* march, nothing to be carried but canteens. A hasty roll of the drum, a few hurried orders from the company officers, the line was formed, and in less than fifteen minutes the regiments were off, leaving everything behind them. They have not got back from that two hours' march yet!

After marching and counter-marching all over the country for some fourteen miles, the brigade, in the afternoon, encountered the enemy near Sporting Hill or Hampden, and quite a smart engagement ensued, the Twenty-second, supported by some Pennsylvania cavalry (who skedaddled at the first shell), advancing through woods and wheat-fields on the left—Co. A (Capt. Otis), being detached as a reconnoitring party to cover that flank in the advance—while the Thirty-seventh advanced on the right, as skirmishers, the Philadelphia battery having the centre. At first, a portion of the rebels, posted in one of the immense barns for which Pennsylvania is so celebrated, was enabled to annoy the brigade considerably, wounding a lieutenant and several others of the Thirty-seventh; but they were finally compelled to evacuate, and in a very short time their artillery was silenced, and they were in full retreat along the whole length of the line. This success must be ascribed in a great measure to the gallant conduct of the Philadelphia battery, which, as far as we were able to see, was unquestionably the most efficient of the organizations, that the invasion of her soil had elicited from Pennsylvania patriotism; and in the eyes of our boys, the Philadelphians therefore stood very high.

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In this affair the rebels lost some fifteen killed, and twenty or thirty wounded (this being the account given by themselves to the farmers in the vicinity). The Union loss was very slight, though, as usual, there were all sorts of semi-miraculous escapes. After a short pursuit, the approach of darkness admonished us of the necessity of caution; a halt was therefore ordered, and in a short time orders came to go back to camp. Full of life and spirits, although considerably exhausted by the fatigues of the day, the brigade took up their line of march for Bridgeport. A wagon filled with provisions, belonging to the Twenty-second, had been sent out from the latter place to meet the column as soon as it was known that there had been a "scrimmage," and hearing of the return of the troops, those in charge had halted

when some six miles out, and were busily engaged in preparing supper. Orders, however, were sent forward to repack and hurry everything back, so that the men would have supper ready on their arrival in camp.

Supper! how the word put fresh vigor into weary limbs, and kept up the flagging spirits. No one can know, till he has tried, what a difference it makes in the marching powers whether, after a prolonged fast, you are proceeding *toward* your supper or *away* from it.

While we were marching merrily along, suddenly the order came to *halt! Rest*. And then it was discovered that, for some unknown reason, the powers that be had decreed that the brigade should spend the night where they were; and there, drenched with perspiration, without rubber blankets, haversacks—anything, in the wet grass by the side of the road, in the midst of a drizzling rain, they lay down to sleep, about as uncomfortable as men could well be.

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When the wagon came up, a little coffee and hard tack were dealt out, but as this event did not take place till about two o'clock in the morning, the number of those who could keep awake to wait for it was very limited. At daylight in the morning, three crackers per man and *no* coffee composed a light and frugal repast, on which we started on our first long march.

At about four A. M., the regiments were massed in column to hear a speech from their Brigadier; but it was lamentably evident that, however skilled in the art of war he might be, the mantle of eloquence had never fallen on his shoulders. He stated to the men that *he* had endured as much as they had, slept and eaten as little; that *he* (on horseback) didn't feel tired, and therefore they (on foot) shouldn't; that *he* (on horseback) could go to Carlisle, and therefore they could.

Now as no one had objected, or in fact knew, that we were going to Carlisle at all, this assumption that we were trying to shirk our duty, at a time when all were flattering themselves for making extraordinary sacrifices, did not add many to the rapidly diminishing circle of the General's admirers.

At the time of starting, and for some time afterwards, it was supposed that Carlisle was in possession of the rebels, and that we would have to fight our way through. Skirmishers were therefore thrown out, and the column, composed of one (I) company of the Twenty-second as an advanced guard, another (B) company deployed as skirmishers, then the Thirty-seventh and Twenty-second (Col. Roome being senior to Col. Aspinwall) moved cautiously forward; but after going some five or six miles the skirmishers were drawn in, information having been received from paroled prisoners and farmers that the enemy had left the town (though their pickets were still in the immediate vicinity), and we proceeded without any precautions whatever.

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The day was beautiful, though rapidly becoming too warm for comfort, and the route lay through a most lovely country. Scarcely anywhere can the eye rest on finer scenery, more beautiful fields, more comfortable houses, or more magnificent barns (for magnificent is the only adjective applicable to those structures) than those of southern Pennsylvania. But alas! the houses were deserted, the farms pillaged—everything of value, everything that could walk, or be eaten, or—stolen, was gone—swept away by the invader, and the peaceful population driven from their homes by the ruthless hand of war.

A few hours' marching brought us past the scene of yesterday's "scrimmage," and enlivened by the prospect of another fight, as the fatigue and stiffness of the previous night wore off, the echoes of song and laughter floated down the column, taken up and re-echoed from company to company till they died away in the distance, "and all went merry as a marriage bell"—for a time.

The roads were good, the air pure, the halts frequent—there was nothing to find fault with. The people, hitherto the only objectionable feature of the country, were as kind and hospitable as we could desire; and in Hogestown, a little village on the "pike," and all along the road, wherever there were occupied houses, the women (and very pretty women some of them were, too) turned out *en masse*, with trays of bread and apple butter, and buckets of cool spring water, to help along the tired troops. A happy contrast with the customs of the capital we had left behind us.

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A regiment of Reserves, who had started fresh and well-fed from Harrisburg that morning, and had gained on us while we were retarded by the slow progress of the skirmishers through the tall grain and tangled wheat, hurried up when the rumor began to spread that Carlisle was evacuated, and in a manner displaying equal ignorance of the rules of war and politeness, undertook to push their way through the brigade, "to get in ahead of the Yorkers," and win the honors of the victory from those who had borne the burden and heat of the day. In attempting this they soon found that they had calculated without their host, and that the commanding officers of the Twenty-second had cut their eyeteeth long before putting foot in Pennsylvania. When they pushed up on the right, the head of the column gently obliqued that way; if they changed around, a simple "left oblique" rendered the movement needless; and when they attempted by high strategy to come up on *both* sides, the order, "*By company into line*," filled the road from fence to fence with a solid front of men, who serenely swept forward, refusing to budge from their path for all the "preserves" "ever pickled."

Then, letting down the fences, they took to the fields, and attempted to get by that way. At the sight of this a wild cry of "double quick" went up from the rear to the front of the column, and breaking into a "double" the brigade swept on for a mile or more, leaving their followers vanishing in their rear, whence, either from their being exhausted, or from hearing that the rebels had *not* left Carlisle, they never emerged to trouble us.

We had heard, it is true, from passing buggies, and straggling squads of paroled prisoners, that the village itself had been evacuated; but all had united in asserting that the rebels were still very near, several stating that they were just on the outskirts of the place. Under these circumstances an ordinary mind would think that there was no necessity for hurrying. The Reserves were "gone in," and if there was the least danger, common sense required that the men should be brought into the city as fresh as possible; but our commander did not see things in that light, and consequently walked deliberately into a trap, which came within a hair's breadth of proving fatal to the whole command.

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The skirmishers had been called in before this, and the march had been rapid; it now became "*forced*." That meant, in this instance, a march pursued without regard to the health, comfort or fatigue of the troops, against the expostulations of the surgeons; where speed is such an object that everything must be disregarded, and well or ill, suffering or not, the men must push on.

And we did push on, and from our halt, more than ten miles from Carlisle, till we prepared to meet the enemy in the city, no rest was allowed. When we arrived at Kingston, a small but patriotic village on the road, where the women stood at their doors with piles of bread and apple butter, all expected, as a matter of course, that we would be allowed to rest and eat something; but notwithstanding that no rations had been received since the morning of the previous day, (except a little bread obtained by a few of the lucky ones at Hogestown), and although it was now noon, yet our Brigadier refused to allow a moment's halt, and the men were compelled to close up and march away from the food that stood ready for them. Any one who thinks this was not a sacrifice had better try the experiment.

For a little while the march continued as usual. Thirteen miles passed; a few quietly dropped out; all were growling, not loud but deep. Fourteen, more vacancies—fifteen—the weather growing oppressive with the sultry heat of mid-day. No shade, no water, no rest; no complaining now, but men dropping out with frightful rapidity. All those who were not pure "grit" had given in previously, and from this time every man kept up till he fell from sheer exhaustion. On every side you would see men flush, breathe hard, stagger to the side of the road and drop almost senseless; but still the column went on.

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At one time the entire left wing of the Thirty-seventh, on arriving at the crest of a hill, rebelled, and halted where they stood. It would have been well if the whole brigade had followed their example; but as the Twenty-second pressed on, regimental pride was aroused, an officer snatched up the colors and rushed forward, cheering on his men; and closing up as best they could, every man, able to walk, rallied himself once more, and pushed forward. Colonel Roome, of the Thirty-seventh, gave out early, exhausted by illness and the fatigues of the previous day, but followed his regiment in a wagon; and many other officers were compelled to imitate his example. But as there were neither ambulances nor wagons, nothing in truth for the transportation of the sick but what could be picked up on the road, the great majority of the disabled not only here but throughout our subsequent march, had to be left where they gave out.

We finally halted a mile from Carlisle, and formed into line of battle to repel an attack from the rebels, then found to be in the vicinity. But in place of the two regiments, that started eleven hundred strong, only about three hundred men could be mustered on halting, and even these were almost completely exhausted; while the remainder of the brigade were stretched in groups along the roadside, striving to collect their scattered forces sufficiently to enable them to overtake the column, and *seven men* in the Twenty-second reported by the surgeon as ruptured, afforded an additional proof, if one were necessary, of the severity of the march.

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The mere distance marched was not so great, as necessarily to have produced such a result, the same troops subsequently marched much farther without a tithe of the suffering, but it was a great mistake to compel militia, exhausted by previous labor and privation, to undergo such an ordeal without food or rest, and its effect on the morale and discipline of the troops can readily be conceived by any one.

At last the march was finished, and we were at Carlisle, but so were the rebels. For awhile there was mounting in hot haste, riders galloping back to hurry up stragglers; and the brigade rapidly formed into line, amid hurried consultations of field officers, muttered curses from captains who, like Rachel, mourned for their companies "because they were not," and the other unmistakable signs which indicate nervous anxiety at headquarters. After an hour or so spent on tenter-hooks, somebody told somebody something which resulted in our marching ahead, expecting to have to fight at any moment. But no enemy exhibited himself, and passing through the principal street of Carlisle, we raised the American flag amid great enthusiasm.

Blessed be Carlisle—almost the only place since leaving Philadelphia where cheering had been heard. We could not appreciate too highly the grateful reception we met. The hurrahs

of the men, the smiles and waving handkerchiefs of the ladies, made us feel that patriotism still existed in the state; and when the tired and hungry men were shown to a substantial meal in the market-house, and waited on by the ladies of the village (who utterly eclipse any seen on the route for good looks as well as hospitality), it was unanimously resolved that "Mahomet's paradise was a fool to Carlisle."

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Having made some slight amends for their two days' fast, the Twenty-second marched through the city (without finishing their supper), having been ordered to support our friends, the Philadelphia battery, in a plan that had been formed at headquarters for cutting off a rebel detachment supposed to be around somewhere; a supposition that was strictly correct, for a very short time showed that they were *all around* us. On the way to the position—refreshed and almost as good as new—uproarious cheers were given for the ladies of Carlisle, the Thirty-seventh, Colonel Roome, for everything, in fact, *except* our Brigadier, whose approach, from that time forth, was the signal for the deadest kind of silence. A slight which, on this occasion, elicited from that neglected individual an order forbidding "this ridiculous (?) habit of cheering." Circumstances, you know, alter cases.

On reaching the crest of a hill, about two and a half miles south of the village, the artillery was placed "in battery," while the Twenty-second, now pretty well filled up by the arrival of those who had given out from the privation and heat of the march, formed line of battle as supports, and it may be remarked, as an instance of the pluck and the fatigue of the men, that, though an engagement was momentarily expected, more than three quarters of the rank and file coolly lay down in their places and went to sleep. An hour passed, and the heavy boom of a cannon, and the explosion of a shell, brought even the most weary to their feet. Nothing was to be seen in front; but the thick columns of smoke ascending from Carlisle, the bright flashes of light and the frequent reports of artillery from the surrounding hills, showed us that the rebels had surrounded the place in overwhelming force, and, without affording to the helpless women and children an opportunity to escape, had commenced to shell the town.

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Fortunately the moon had not yet risen, and the dusk of the evening concealed us as we stealthily crept back. On arriving we learned that a dash of cavalry had been made into the town, the government barracks and the gas-house fired, and the batteries had at once opened, without further warning. As there were inside, at that time, not more than eight hundred men, and one battery of four guns, and the attacking force numbered four thousand, with a much heavier force of artillery, things commenced to look as though our present journey would be continued *via* Richmond; but happily our division commander, General W. F. Smith, proved himself here, as everywhere else, fully equal to the emergency. While a portion of the Twenty-second were deployed as skirmishers on the flanks of the town, covered by sharpshooters, posted in the windows of the adjoining houses, behind which the artillery were placed, the centre of the town was protected by a force, mainly composed of the recent arrivals, concealed behind the heavy stone wall of the village cemetery. The Thirty-seventh, divided in like manner, were scattered around so as to make the largest possible show—some Reserves were also there—everywhere they should not have been—who were rushing around indiscriminately, and aggravating the Thirty-seventh tremendously by disturbing their ranks in so doing.

For the purpose of protecting our flanks, it was found requisite that out-lying pickets or scouts should be sent as far out to the front as they could go, to give all the notice possible of any advance of the enemy. The service was one of such danger, and the assurances of being "gobbled" by the rebels so great, that the cavalry detailed for that duty refused to perform it. Colonel Aspinwall, hearing of this, offered to supply their places. The offer was accepted, and a detail was made from Company D, who were stationed in the vicinity, guarding the barricade across the road. The three men selected, at once advanced without hesitation, and spent the whole night alone, in the extreme front, patrolling the approaches; and performed their difficult and arduous duty in such a manner as to earn a special compliment from Captain King of the Fourth regulars, the division chief of artillery.

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Why our friends, the enemy, did not attack and capture the whole party of us remains a mystery to this day—but it is conjectured that some skirmishers of the Thirty-seventh, who were captured at the commencement of the fight, being no way daunted thereat, coolly told such huge stories about the First Division N. Y. S. M., as to "bluff" their captors. It was very evident, at least, that the rebels were wholly in the dark (figuratively as well as literally) respecting the position of our forces; and being compelled to fire at random, threw their shell around in a manner most disagreeable to witness from our end of their cannon. After at least two hours' rapid firing, the rebels sent in a flag of truce, demanding the surrender of the place, very kindly allowing some fifteen minutes for the women and children, whom they had not already killed, to leave the town to escape the "certain destruction" which was threatened (*à la* Beauregard) if the request was refused; but refused it was by Gen. Smith, in terms more forcible than polite; so the batteries reopened.

It had now become a clear moonlight night; a portion of the artillery was so near that the commands of the officers could be distinctly heard, and the incessant flash and roar of the guns, the "screech" of shells flying overhead, and the heavy jar of their explosion among the buildings in the rear, seemed strangely inconsistent with the calm beauty of the scene. At times it seemed doubtful whether the incessant uproar was really the bombardment of a quiet village; for, during the momentary pauses of the cannonade, the chirp of the katydid,

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and the other peaceful sounds of a country summer night, were heard as though nature could not realize that human beings had sought that quiet spot to destroy each other.

It must not be supposed that any such sentiment, or in fact any sentiment whatever, was exhibited on our part; quite the contrary, for as soon as it became evident that no immediate attack would be made, the men, whether crouching at the house windows, or lying on their faces in the wet grass of the cemetery, went to sleep with a unanimity charming to witness; the heaviest shelling only eliciting a growl from some discontented private, that "it was a blasted humbug for the rebs. to try to keep a fellar awake in that manner;" the remark ending generally in a prolonged snore that proved the unsuccessfulness of the attempt.

Some time before dawn, preparations were made to receive the attack, which was expected to follow the instant that the first streak of daylight discovered our position. Officers bustled nervously around, the sleepers were cautiously awakened, and all stood to arms with the stern determination to resist to the bitter end; but judge of our gratification, when the shelling gradually ceased; and in a short time the announcement that the rebels had retreated, gave us an opportunity to look around, and ascertain the damages.

From the incessant uproar, the scream and report of the bursting shells, the glare of the flames, the smashing of buildings, and the other sounds incident to a bombardment, which had greeted our ears during the preceding night, the general expectation in the morning was to find the town a heap of ruins, and the great majority, both of troops and inhabitants, bleeding in the streets.

Never was there a greater mistake. It was really wonderful to think that so much cold iron could be fired into a place and cause so little loss of life and limb. To be sure much property had been destroyed, any amount of houses struck, many greatly damaged, and roofs and windows generally looked dilapidated enough; but, as in the other bombardments of the war, the destruction had been far from universal, and the escape of the occupants perfectly miraculous.

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The citizens, concealed in their cellars, and the soldiers lying flat behind the cemetery walls and in the fields, had almost entirely escaped the iron tempest; shells had gone under and over any amount of people, but had really *hit* very few. Some of the townspeople were hurt, but the exact number is unknown. A few of the Reserves who were rushing around the streets, instead of obeying orders and keeping under cover, suffered heavily; the Thirty-seventh, always unlucky, had some hurt; while the Twenty-second, with more than their usual good fortune, got off with one or two slightly bruised. The rebel loss is almost unknown, but is supposed to have been severe.

As soon as it was definitely known that the rebels had retreated, the brigade, dispensing with the little formality of breakfast, marched to the top of a hill, about a mile south of the town; and after forming line of battle in an oat-field, the men, exhausted by the twenty-five miles' march of the preceding day and the fatigue of the night, with one accord, lay down in the blazing sun and slept till late in the afternoon.

About four o'clock some breakfast (or rather supper), in the shape of a little pork and potatoes, was found; but just as we were getting ready to eat, the dulcet notes of the "*assembly*" burst upon our unwilling ears, and we had to "fall in," dinner or no dinner. Of course we obeyed; but not relishing the idea of marching away from the only meal that had been seen for twenty-four hours (a thing which we had been compelled to do more than once before), a grand dash was made at the pans; and the regiment fell in and marched off, every man with a piece of pork in one hand and a potato in the other, eating away for dear life, and forming a *tout ensemble* not often equalled.

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With the exception of a little picket duty, that night and the next day were spent in camp opposite the ruined barracks, and were devoted by all hands to the most energetic resting. To some, the day was blessed by the receipt of their overcoats and rubber blankets. Happy few! But their joy only made more melancholy the condition of the great majority whose portables still remained behind, safely stowed in Harrisburg; so safely, that as far as the owners were concerned, they might as well have been in New York; so safely, in fact, that the owners of one half of them never found them again. In truth, from the commencement of our "two hours" march until we arrived in New York (just three weeks), neither officers nor privates were ever enabled to change even their under clothing, but soaked by day and steamed by night in the suit they wore the day they started; a suit which, consequently, in no very long time assumed an indescribable color and condition. Many managed, by hook or by crook, during our subsequent marches, to beg, borrow, or "*win*," some rubber blankets; but at least one in six were without that indispensable article, whose absence renders camp life "a lengthened misery long drawn out," and more than one in four were without overcoats; while plates there were none; spoons were very scarce; and the use of such things as forks, combs, and even soap, was utterly forgotten, nor could they be procured. Soap, for instance, we would think could be obtained anywhere; but unfortunately the rebels entertained a notion that if they only washed they would be clean; an idea which any one, who ever saw them, will admit to be too preposterous to require contradiction. But preposterous or not, they acted up to it, and immediately on entering a place proceeded to appropriate every square inch of soap that could be found therein; so that when we came along a few days afterward, nothing saponaceous could be obtained for love or money, and in consequence, the absence of that essential frequently compelled us to imitate the habits

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of our "Southern brethren" much closer than was agreeable.

Our stay in Carlisle was pleasant—*very* pleasant—for in addition to the hospitable treatment we received as individuals, our regiment was honored by the presentation of a flag from the ladies of the city. But we could not stay there always; and at reveillé, on the glorious Fourth of July, without seeing as much as a single fire-cracker, or hearing an allusion to the American eagle, or the flag of our Union, we turned our backs on civilization and marched for the mountains, taking a bee-line for Gettysburg, where, although unknown to us, the greatest battle of the war was raging. General Smith having previously detailed the Twenty-second to remain as a guard for the city, we came very near being ingloriously left behind; but, at the urgent request of Colonel Aspinwall, and to our own infinite gratification, we were permitted to accompany the column to the front.

We now formed a portion of a division commanded by Gen. W. F. Smith, composed of that portion of the New York militia formerly stationed in the vicinity of Harrisburg, and who had joined us at Carlisle, consisting, I believe, of the Eighth, Eleventh, and Seventy-first regiments of New York, the Tenth, Thirteenth, Twenty-third, Twenty-eighth, Forty-seventh, Fifty-second, and Fifty-sixth of Brooklyn, the Seventy-fourth and Seventy-fifth of Buffalo, and one or two others from the interior of the state, besides two Philadelphia batteries, a few Pennsylvania troops, and the regular cavalry from the Carlisle barracks; and from this time until our return our adventures became identical with those of the whole division.

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The day was clear and beautiful, the roads good, and, as we reached the mountains, the scenery became magnificent. General Smith himself directed our progress, and everything seemed propitious. By noon we had accomplished twelve miles almost without fatigue, and took our noonday rest (for under an officer who understood himself, this essential was not tabooed) in the shade of the woods which fringed one of the mountain passes, eagerly seeking information about the battle, which we now learned was in progress, and this time our information was from authentic sources. About three thousand paroled prisoners (principally of the first corps of the Army of the Potomac, captured in the first day's fight at Gettysburg, and released on the Carlisle road, because the rebels had too much on hand to look after prisoners), passed us during the day, in a steady stream; and from them we learned that we were but one day's march from the battlefield, and would probably be able to turn the scale of victory if we arrived in time.

So eagerly were we engaged in discussing the chances of the battle, and seeking to reconcile the different accounts we received, that no one noticed a change in the weather, until the rapid drift of black clouds overhead, and the dull sighing of the trees, warned us that rain was close at hand; in the midst of hurried preparations it came—not a rain, but a deluge. Hour after hour, in steady perpendicular sheets, the rain descended. In vain were all the ingenious contrivances of leaves and boughs; in five minutes overcoats were soaked; in ten, shelter tents sheltered nothing but small lakes; in fifteen, even rubber blankets were useless; and in less than half an hour all were united in the common misery of a thorough ducking. In an incredibly short time, the whole scene was changed: what was formerly the road had been converted, by a stream from the hills, into a torrent mid-leg deep, through which the released prisoners trudged with all the coolness of veterans; the woods, banks—everything, was flooded with lakes and waterfalls; and in front, bridges rendered insecure, and fords impassable, showed what old Aquarias could do when he set fairly to work.

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One or two brigades in the advance, suspecting what was coming, pushed on and crossed the ford over Yellow Breeches creek before the worst had come; but by the time our brigade was ready to follow their example, the creek was no longer fordable, and we were obliged to wait some time before it was safe to attempt to get over; and even though the men eventually crossed, the baggage, on account of either the ford or the bridges, stayed behind; thereby acquiring a habit of doing so, which subsequently interfered very seriously with our comfort.

After long waiting, the waters subsided sufficiently to allow us to proceed, and the regiment started, drenched to the skin, but glad enough to get anywhere, if it was only away from those woods; and pushing rapidly forward, a short march over flooded roads gullied by the rain, brought us to what was called *the ford*.

The popular idea of a "ford" is a clear, shallow sheet of water, more or less broad;—at least we expected to see something of the kind. The actual ford we marched up to was a thick wood, filled with tangled thickets, logs, and the nameless floating things of a freshet, through which a mountain torrent, a hundred yards wide, tore and plunged like a mad thing. An hour before it would have been madness to cross; but now, by felling a few trees across the deepest holes, it had been made practicable, though exceedingly difficult, to get over. With pants rolled up as high as they could be coaxed (producing a most extraordinary appearance, as may well be imagined) the troops—by a series of climbing over the stumps, balancing along the slippery and unsteady logs which bridged the holes where the current was too swift and deep to be waded, creeping gingerly with bare legs through thorny thickets, and anon struggling waist-deep through the turbid stream, whose rapid current was filled with floating logs, which inflicted most grievous "wipes" on the extremities of the forders, besides rendering it almost impossible to stand without assistance—proceeded to cross.

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Notwithstanding the unpleasantness of the operation, the frequent duckings and the no less

frequent bruises from stumps and floating timber, the sight was so supremely ridiculous that the misery was forgotten in the fun. Roars of laughter greeted those unfortunates—and their name was legion—who, in their endeavor to keep piece, cartridge-box, coat-tails and other “impedimenta” out of the water, forgot about their footing, until they were reminded by a plunge from a slippery stump, head over ears into the depths of the stream, that that was the first, not the last point, to be kept in mind.

A short distance from the ford a halt was ordered, where the men collected as they struggled over; each company building huge fires and trying to render themselves a little less uncomfortable. Vain thought! Scarcely had the fires begun to throw a more cheerful light on the scene, when “Brigade, forward!” was heard from the front, and turning our backs on the comforts we had hoped for, we squattered up the road. “Squattered” is rather a singular word, but it is the only one available to describe the mode of progression up that road. And such a road! Considered a bad road in fine weather, in a region where there are *no* good roads, the most vivid imagination fails to depict its present condition. It wound along halfway up the side of a mountain; and between the steady pour of the rain, filling up every gully and making a mud lake of every hole, and the torrents which, rushing down from above, cut it into all sorts of hollows and trenches, as they swept across to precipitate themselves off the other side into the valley beneath, it presented every combination of evils which could appal a weary traveler. Along this road, mill-race, slough, stone bed—for it was all of these by turns—we pushed forward; but the pen fails in the endeavor to describe that march. Many things have we suffered and been jolly over, but it is unanimously voted that “for good, square misery,” the night of the 4th of July, 1863, is equaled by few and excelled by none in the annals of the Twenty-second regiment.

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As a pitchy blackness rendered everything invisible, a lantern was carried at the head of the column, to prevent those behind from being lost. Every few minutes we would be plunged into a mountain stream running across the road, and which could be heard falling an indefinite distance down the other side; wading across this, in an instant, more we would find ourselves struggling knee-deep in mud of an unequaled tenacity; and the efforts made to extricate ourselves generally resulted in getting tripped up by projecting roots and stumps. As those in front reached an obstacle, they passed the word down the line, “Stump!” “Ford!” “Stones!” “Mud-hole!” Frequently this latter cry became altered to “Man in a mud-hole!” “Two men in a mud-hole—look out sharp!!!”

The only way in which it was possible to move was by following exactly behind your file-leader, if you lost sight of him you were helpless; yet, amid all these difficulties, we continued our march, with a calm despair that was prepared for anything.

At eleven o’clock at night the head of the regiment halted per force—stuck in the mud—even the officers’ horses too tired to go another step; the brigade itself was lost, scattered for the last three miles, wherever a turn or twist in the road had hid the guiding lamp; less than two companies were on hand, and many of their number had been left in the various mud “wallows” on the way; all were perfectly exhausted, so we camped where we stood—such camping-ground ne’er before was seen by mortal man—but it was Hobson’s choice, that or none.

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Imagine a swampy, water-soaked, spongy compound of moss and mud, where the foot sank ankle-deep, covering a bank some twenty feet in width, which extended from the dense woods to the muddy road; no fence, no house for miles; every bit of wood and brush so soaked that one might as well have tried to start a fire with paving stones; and you will have a very faint idea of the cheerful place in which we lay down, tired, hungry, muddy, and wet as water could make us, to enjoy (?) a little sleep. At about one o’clock it commenced to rain—heavens, how it did rain! It takes considerable to arouse men as tired and worn out as those that lay around in that swamp; but one by one they got up with the melancholy confession that “the rain was once more too many for them.” By dint of patient industry a fire had been made, whose ruddy blaze seemed to cheer up the scene a little, and clustering around it the awakened sleepers sought a little comfort; but it was all in vain. Another sheet of rain; and the fire, a moment previous, blazing breast high, was a mass of water-soaked embers, around which huddled, for the remainder of the night, as disconsolate and miserable a set of bipeds as ever was seen. During the whole night but one solitary laugh broke the gloomy silence. A poor unfortunate corporal, who had been crouching all night on the end of a log, wrapped up in a rubber blanket, falling asleep in the vain endeavor to extract a little warmth from the embers of the extinguished fire, lost his balance while nodding to and fro, and rolled backward, heels over head, into the mud and water which composed the road; whence he emerged, such a pale drab-colored and profane apparition, as would have drawn a smile from the very Genius of Despair. In this general misery, rank was forgotten; even our Brigadier shared our fortunes, and slept in the mud like the lowest private. Arising before dawn—if that term can be used where no one had laid down—we pushed forward; and a most tiresome five-mile walk through the same horrible road, now drained into a sticky clay mud, knee-deep, brought us to Laurel Forge, a place composed of a dozen huts, a big forge, and nothing else, where, at about eleven A. M., we got a little something to eat, the first for more than thirty hours. But *our trains were behind*, broken down, stuck all along in the mud. This does not mean much to outsiders; but to us it meant that the shortest kind of short commons would be our fate in future, a prophecy which we found to our sorrow to be strictly correct. At about half-past eleven o’clock, the men having

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nearly all come up, and a chance having been afforded them to get a mouthful to eat (in consequence of the expostulations of the officers against the Brigadier's orders to go forward without waiting for food) we proceeded on our weary way; and about three hours' marching over very good, but awfully steep mountain roads, brought us to the spot designated for the division camp, where we went to sleep in the customary rain, which fatigue had now deprived of its powers.

At this portion of the march, Judge Davies (of the New York Court of Appeals) who had come to the front with despatches, joined the regiment, and shared its fortunes in the subsequent movements until he was compelled to return home, after our arrival at Waynesboro'. The Judge seemed to take a great interest in what was transpiring; and it would have considerably surprised those who have only beheld him on the bench, to have seen him, in an old linen coat "split down behind," scouring the country to the right and left of the line of march, in quest of supplies and information for the Twenty-second; displaying, in these pursuits, the most invaluable talents as a forager, and a capacity for enduring hardship and privation which put many of his juniors to the blush.

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The situation of our present camp was most picturesque, the scenery magnificent, the mountain air bracing. There was only one drawback—that the few wagons that had resisted the embraces of the mud could not be brought up to the crest of the mountain where the camp was situated. These wagons contained our rations (and precious little of them too); that we could not live without eating, at least once a day, was made evident, even to the great mind that controlled us; and so, as the mountain would not come to Mahomet, Mahomet had to go to the mountain, and the next morning we marched down the other side, in imitation of the king of France, of pious memory, to a camp where, by hard foraging, at about one o'clock, P. M., we secured our breakfast of bread, apple butter and meat—*real meat*, and never did breakfast taste so good in all this world.

It was well known by this time, that while we were stuck in the mud on the glorious Fourth, the rebels had retreated from Gettysburg, and were now endeavoring to escape through the mountain passes, and we were reluctantly compelled to abandon the hopes that had been entertained of earning immortal glory, by coming in at the eleventh hour to turn their defeat into a rout. It is evident to every one that it would have made an immense difference in the result of the contest, if our division of fresh troops, eight or ten thousand strong, could have been precipitated upon the flank of the rebel army, exhausted as they were by three days' fighting. But it was not to be; and therefore, turning away from Gettysburg, we bent our energies to prevent the rebels from securing the mountain passes. Marching hastily to one gap we would hold it, until the information that the rebels were going to another would cause a forced march for that. What would have taken place, if we had happened to strike a gap, just as half of Lee's army had got through, is a thing which we did not think about at the time, but which we now see would have been rather unpleasant.

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I will not enter upon the monotonous recital of the dreary marches that were performed in the three times in which we crossed the mountains, of the incessant rains, the horrible roads, the want of food! One meal a day was our usual allowance, and this generally consisted of bread (at a dollar a loaf), and apple butter. If we could get meat once in three days we accounted ourselves fortunate, and then the animal was driven into camp, shot, cut up, cooked and eaten in less time than it takes to write about it; and such meat, generally eaten without salt, was not very nourishing. Money was offered freely enough, but partly from the poorness of the country and partly from the ravages of the rebels, food could not be obtained. In this misery all the militia, whether New-Yorkers or Pennsylvanians, were common sufferers.

On the 6th day of July, we marched till late at night, expecting to cut off the rebel wagon-train at Newman's Gap. It was as dark as Erebus, but the numerous lights, and the sounds that were heard as we approached, convinced all that the movement had been successful, perhaps a little too successful, for it was evident that there were more infantry than wagons in our front. The surgeons took possession of a house and hung out their flag, a few hurried preparations were made, and the regiments moved cautiously up, when the return of one of our scouts disclosed that the supposed enemy was only some of the Brooklyn regiments, who had taken a shorter road, and come in ahead of our brigade. Considerably disgusted at this intelligence, we turned off into the fields which bordered the road, hungry and tired enough, and slept in the long wet grass, till in the early gray of the morning, we were ordered to "forward."

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On reaching Newman's Gap, we found that Lee's rear-guard had passed through, about eight hours before we got there, and that the fight, so confidently expected at this point, was "off" for some time yet; but, though disappointed in this respect, we were compensated by obtaining something to eat; and in addition had the pleasure of having pointed out to us, no less than six houses, in all of which Longstreet had died the previous night, and two others, where he was yet lying mortally wounded.

On the 7th of July, after an unusually fatiguing march over muddy roads, rendered almost impracticable by the passage of Lee's army, the division went into camp at Funkstown. The place selected was a level piece of ground in the midst of a beautiful grove, intersected by a rapid little brook, the whole forming one of the most comfortable spots imaginable. Rations had come up, and though we had to sleep on our arms for fear of an attack from Stuart's

cavalry, then in our neighborhood, we lay down in first rate spirits and slept the sleep of the just.

During the night it rained heavily; but too tired to wake up for any ordinary shower, we sheltered ourselves and our guns as best we might, and slept on. At about three o'clock it seemed as though the very fountains of the great deep had been broken up, and the rain came down in solid sheets, compelling the most tired to rise; we could stand a good deal, and, as one remarked, a common rain wasn't anything, but when the water got so deep as to cover his nose, he woke up in disgust.

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What a sight presented itself on rising! The beautiful grassy plain, level as a billiard-table, on which we had lain down so cheerfully the night before, was now a lake, beneath whose surface our guns, canteens, and other paraphernalia, were slowly disappearing; the little brook had become a torrent, almost equal to the far-famed Yellow Breeches, which a few Brooklyn boys were vainly endeavoring to ford, in order to rescue some of their traps swept away by its sudden overflow; the smooth grass had vanished, and on every side nothing was to be seen but mud, water, and wet and muddy soldiers.

From three to eleven o'clock A. M. that rain continued with unabated vigor. A fire was started under the shelter of a rubber blanket, and coffee made, which put new life into our limbs, and we became quite jolly. It is a noticeable fact, that where things become perfectly awful—when the mud is deepest and the rain the heaviest—there the spirits of the men appear to rise with the difficulties of the situation (except when they have nothing to eat), and they apparently enjoy themselves much more than if they were merely suffering from a temporary annoyance; and accommodate themselves to circumstances as though it was rather funny than otherwise; nevertheless, we were not in the least displeased when the order came to march.

On the 8th of July, the division arrived at Waynesboro', where we were annexed to the third brigade, second division of the sixth army corps (whose white cross, artistically carved out of cracker, was at once adopted by any quantity of the men), and in the subsequent manoeuvres which took place, became a part of the Army of the Potomac. We found Waynesboro', a pleasant little place, but so cleaned out by the rebels that you could not even buy a tin cup; and although our foraging parties scoured the country both in and outside the pickets with untiring zeal, the results were meagre enough; and during the three days we remained (most of the time expecting an attack), we had almost nothing to eat the first day, and but a bare sufficiency afterward.

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During these three days, by dint of sleeping about all the time, the brigade had got pretty well rested, and in the afternoon of the 11th took up their line of march for Maryland, in first-rate spirits.

We experienced some trouble on the way, and marched and countermarched a good deal, losing three hours' time and our tempers, in consequence of our General having forgotten that, in going through a strange country, he couldn't get on well without providing himself with a guide; and it was not till after dark that we got across the Antietam at Scotland's Bridge. Once across, however, a pleasant moonlight march over a first-rate road, soon brought us to the border, and when our officers announced, "That house marks the line, boys!" it was with no small gratification that we shook off the dust from our feet, singing with great empresentation the Union version of "Maryland—My Maryland," together with a number of parodies not very complimentary to the "men we left behind us."

A few miles from the line, we camped by division. Many, in reading of a camp by division, imagine a most picturesque scene, of long lines of snowy tents being pitched, while trees are felled for firewood, and all sorts of poetic things take place. Nothing of the kind occurs. On arriving at the selected spot (generally a large field), the regiments file in one after another, taking their places in the order in which they marched, and break to the rear so as to form column by companies. The orders are given: "Halt! Stack arms! *Go for rails!*" And every man simultaneously drops his traps where he stands, and makes a bee-line for the tall worm fences, which are vanishing in every direction, as if by magic. One of these rails must be contributed to the company fire, and happy is he who in addition to procuring his quota, can secure a couple more for himself! Serenely reposing on their sharp edges, covered by his rubber blanket, he defies at once the rain above and the mud below; or, more ambitious grown, the spoils of four are combined, and a shelter, à la rebel, is speedily constructed, which is roofed with two rubber blankets, and the proprietors lying underneath on the other two, are at once the admiration and envy of their comrades. The company rails being obtained, are split, a fire started, and supper cooked (if there is anything to cook), and the men, after smoking the pipe of peace, lie down, some around the fire, and the rest where they halted in the first instance, and in two minutes are fast asleep; blessing the memory of the discoverer of tobacco, and the man who invented sleep.

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At the first streak of daylight all are awake; a hurried breakfast is made, or not (generally not), ablutions are likewise dispensed with; the "assembly" sounds; rubbers and overcoats are hastily rolled and slung by those who are lucky enough to have them; a few hurried orders are passed along the line; the troops fall in and march off; and in half-an-hour the trampled ground, the ashes of numerous fires, and the ruined fences, alone tell that ten thousand men have camped there for the night.

For some time we had been pressing hard upon the heels of Lee's retreating army, and at every step new signs of the rapidity of his movements were to be seen. He moved in three columns, the cavalry and artillery taking the road, and the infantry the fields on each side, through which their trampling had cut a path as wide as a city street, destroying the crops they encountered, in a way fit to bring tears into a farmer's eyes; and throughout the whole route, numbers of wounded men were found, left in the houses by the roadside, and deserters without end were encountered, while broken wagons, abandoned ammunition, canteens, &c., &c., were strewed on every side. Yet, notwithstanding these appearances of demoralization, it was evident, from the accounts of the country people, that, though much dispirited by their late defeat, the rebel army was far from being the mere mob that it was believed by some to be.

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It is true that the mountains were full of stragglers, and our cavalry were constantly passing us with crowds of prisoners in their charge; yet the main army had a good deal of fight left in it still, and when it turned on its pursuers, as it frequently did, like a stag at bay, it was not to be despised.

From the formation of the ground, in that section of country, the retreating army derived a great advantage over their pursuers, and were constantly enabled to take positions too strong to be attacked with less than the whole Union army, and where a mere show of strength would check our advance; and then before Meade could concentrate his forces, Lee would be off. At Funkstown in particular, with the simplest materials, a steep slope, fronted by the Antietam, had been converted by the rebels into a second Fredericksburgh. This was all that saved them, for General Meade pressed the pursuit fast and furious.

On the morning of Sunday, the 14th of July, we found ourselves at Cavetown, almost used up. We had had no breakfast; and, from a variety of causes, the march had been one of the most wearisome we had yet experienced. The morning was sultry and exhausting beyond expression; the atmosphere heavy, with that peculiar feeling which precedes a thunder-storm—and, in addition, our shoes were so nearly worn out that the sharp stones, which covered and almost paved a most abominable wheat-field, through which we had passed on the route, had disabled many whose feet were just recovering from the blisters of previous marches.

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As soon as we had halted, the division formed line of battle, on the rise of a little hill fronting Hagerstown (to act as supports to General Kilpatrick, who had gone forward that morning to attack it), and we then lay down to rest, first sending details in all directions to forage for a meal.

While idling around, bemoaning the condition of our feet, and discussing the chances of capturing Hagerstown, the sultry promise of the morning was amply redeemed by one of the most tremendous thunder-storms ever seen; the rain fell in torrents (but this was a matter of course, and excited no remark), and the thunder pealed and the lightning flashed all around us—too near to some. Five men of the Fifty-sixth Brooklyn were struck, one of whom died instantly, and the others were badly hurt. A gun belonging to the Thirty-seventh was shattered to pieces by the electric fluid; and several men in the different regiments were reminded by slight shocks that the farther they kept from the stacks of arms the better.

During the afternoon our ears and eyes were gladdened, the one by intelligence that Hagerstown had been taken after a sharp fight, the other by the sight of our dinner (or breakfast) coming up the road, in the shape of an astonished ox, who, when he threw up his head in response to the cheers which greeted his entrée, was shot, skinned, and boiling, before he fairly knew what he was wanted for; and finally, the arrival and distribution of a case of shoes to those who were actually barefoot, put us all in the seventh heaven of delight. We also found some tobacco! To be sure it was poor stuff, apparently a villanous compound of seaweed and tea; but only those who have known what it is to see their stock of the precious weed vanish day by day, with no available means of replenishing it, can imagine our feelings on finding a supply, after we had been reduced to less than a quarter of a pound to a company.

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At about twelve o'clock the next day, the column camped by division, some three miles from General Meade's headquarters, about the same distance from Boonesboro', and within sight of the immense train of the reserve artillery, at a place where the old bivouacs of the Army of the Potomac filled the air with the nauseating smells invariably incident to deserted camps. In this delightful spot we waited for the battle which was to be brought on.

All were in high spirits;—it was universally supposed that the rains had made the Potomac unfordable, "and that Lee was a goner this time sure;" but as hour after hour passed without a sound of the heavy cannonading which marks "the battle's opening roar," and rumor after rumor filled the air, the talk, as time lengthened, grew less and less hopeful, and finally during the afternoon we learned definitely that "the play was played out." Lee was gone, boots and baggage, and our hopes of taking a hand in the contest which would probably have decided the war, were gone with him. Perhaps it was all for the best. If Lee gave battle, it would be on selected ground, against weary troops, where every man in the rebel army knew he was fighting with no hope of escape, and would consequently resist to the utmost; under these circumstances, the contest, if not doubtful, would unquestionably have been bloody beyond all precedent; and many desolated homes, and empty places in the armories of the Empire City, would have mourned for those who would return no more.

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We were now in the midst of the Army of the Potomac, and it is difficult for those inexperienced in such matters to form the least conception of the vast bulk of men and material which contribute to form that organization; yet, huge as it was, no confusion was visible, and everything went like clockwork, even during the difficulties of that hurried pursuit.

We only wished that the same could be said of us, but so far was this from being the case, that it was remarked by a regular officer that there was more destitution and suffering among our little division than among the whole Army of the Potomac, and no one acquainted with the facts can deny the correctness of the assertion.

It is impossible to express what a relief it was when we once became incorporated with this army; for to enter it, was coming once more from the scarcity and make-shifts of the backwoods, into the light of civilization. We found ourselves again among newspapers, and sutlers—people who could change a two-dollar bill and had things to sell; where greenbacks yet served as a medium of exchange, and provision trains were not more than two days behind time; and in our exultation, we even began to entertain vague hopes that, in the progress of events, our letters might be possibly forthcoming. It was now more than two weeks since a word of news had been heard, either from home or abroad; and we naturally were exceedingly anxious for a little information about matters and things in general. Our ignorance was painful on almost every subject. Vicksburg, we knew, had been captured, but this was all; and even the battle of Gettysburg, fought right under our noses, and a common topic of conversation, was to us “a tale untold.”

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On the 15th of July, our time was up, the rebels gone, and there being nothing more that we could do, General Meade told us “he was much obliged and we could go.” So, bidding General Smith a cordial good-by, we took up our line of march for Frederick City, *and home*; first, however, going a long way in the wrong direction, and having to countermarch back. This was nothing new, however, for, whether it was owing to ill luck, bad guides, indefinite orders, or stupidity, something of the kind took place at every movement that was ordered. The brigade never turned down a side-road, or took an unusual direction, without a general grumble arising—“Wrong road, of course! see if we don’t have to go back in a few minutes,”—and we generally did. In truth, we went back so often, that we began to hate the very word “countermarch.”

It is presumed that those in authority had been informed by telegraph respecting the riots in New York; but the first that the subordinates knew about the matter was, on obtaining, on the march, that memorable Herald, describing how the “military fired on the *people*.” If any of the editors of that veracious journal had happened to be in our vicinity about that period, it is more than probable that they would have been furnished with a practical illustration of their text, for a more angry set of men than the first division N. Y. S. M., never was seen.

It was sufficiently galling to know, that while we were away enduring all sorts of hardships to expel the rebels from Northern soil, an infamous set of copperheads had undertaken a counter-revolution in our very homes; and the additional reflection of the opportunity it would give our Pennsylvania friends to depreciate our state, lent the account an additional sting. That day was the first, and we hope the only time in our lives, that any one was heard to say that he felt ashamed to think that he was born in the city of New York.

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As may well be imagined, this intelligence, and the pleasing uncertainty existing in our minds respecting the welfare of our friends and homes, considerably accelerated our desire to get home again; and we pushed vigorously down the Fredericksburgh pike, breathing prayers, the reverse of benevolent, for the welfare of the rioters—until we could attend to them in person. Under any other circumstances it would have been a beautiful march; although oppressively hot in the early part of the day, the weather afterward was all that could be desired. The road was wide, smooth—tremendously hard, to be sure, for feet, as sore and badly shod as ours, and in its windings through the passes of the South Mountain, traversing a few more hills than were strictly agreeable—yet more beautiful scenery than it presents to the eye of the traveler can rarely be found.

That country is all historic ground. Those white boards on the right, “covering many a rood,” marked the last resting-places of the thousands of unknown heroes who sealed their patriotism with their blood in the battle of South Mountain; and all along the stone fences and among the trees on the left, the frequent bullet-marks tell how hot the conflict raged a year ago; for every foot of land for twenty miles around has been a battle-ground for the contending forces.

About sun-down we arrived at Frederick City, a bustling little place, full of soldiers, and with a large sprinkling of the fair sex, who, contrary to the experience of last year, loyally applauded the passing troops. Many would class it as a “one-horse town,” but to us it appeared a little paradise. It was a place where you could buy things, and although our predecessors turned up their aristocratic noses at the food there procurable, *our* only grievance was that we could not get any of it. Expecting to start directly for home, the division, without halting, continued its march through the city to within a quarter of a mile of the railroad depôt, which, for some unknown reason, is situated about three miles from the city, but, as usual, we were doomed to disappointment; whether the cars were ready or not, I cannot say; but, after a long consultation among the officers, it was settled that we

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could go no further, and at about eight o'clock we went into camp; having completed a march of over twenty-five miles since breakfast, with little or no straggling. This, we consider, is doing pretty well for militia.

The next day we "loafed," resting under the trees and devouring the stock in trade of the sutlers who had come down to see us, restlessly waiting all day under orders to be ready to start at a moment's notice.

At about six P. M., the Thirty-seventh and Eleventh struck camp and marched off for the cars, amid the cheering of the whole division; but no orders came for us, and after waiting till half-past nine P. M., we went to sleep. At exactly eleven o'clock an orderly dashed up: "The regiment was to take the cars forthwith." The word passed from mouth to mouth like lightning, and in less than no time the men were awakened, formed, and marching off "for home."

We had to go precisely a quarter of a mile and get into the cars which had been standing all day on the track; and how long can any outsider, unacquainted with military manœuvres, imagine it took to get us on board? Not an hour, nor half an hour, but *five hours and a half*, by the watch, elapsed from the time we started till we got into those cars; and as it was raining in torrents all the while, it is not difficult to imagine the benedictions that were freely bestowed on every one supposed to be concerned in the matter. When we had gone about a hundred yards from camp the order came to "halt." After a little time we were told to "rest." Seeing no signs of a movement, and a heavy rain having come up, the boys unrolled their rubber blankets, and the cooler hands wrapped themselves up and lay down to sleep in the middle of the road, while the others took it out in swearing. In about an hour "Fall in!" was heard. We woke up, shook ourselves, and marched another hundred yards, where the same scene was repeated. Marching off the third time, we turned away from the main road and struck along the field to the depot, thinking we were off this time, *sure*. Vain thought! When we got on the bank, overlooking the railroad track, not a car was to be seen, and there we stood in the midst of a drenching rain, on a slippery clay slope where it was impossible to sit down, tired and sleepy as men could well be, for nearly two hours before the cars, after a little eternity of backing and switching, were pronounced ready for us. The moment the cars were reached every one threw himself on the floor, and, in spite of wet clothes, dirty floors, and leaky roofs, knew nothing more till daylight dawned on us entering Baltimore.

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With the mention of the word *Baltimore*, the word *breakfast* is intimately associated in our minds.

Oh! that first good civilized breakfast, with forks and chairs, and the other appliances of civilized life—the pen fails in the endeavor to do justice to that repast!

Yet in spite of the threats that were made of the quantities that would be eaten; and although it was near one o'clock before we sat down, we were disgusted to find our systems so disorganized by a habit of taking breakfast late in the afternoon, and omitting the other meals altogether, that half the things that were ordered could not be disposed of; in fact, it was at least three days after our return to the bosom of our families, before we could manage three regular meals a day, without feeling uncomfortable; but this sensation soon wore off, and when it did, ample amends were made by all, for past abstinence.

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From Baltimore to New York was a short and uneventful journey, and on the 18th day of July we found ourselves swinging up Broadway, glad to be home once more, but sorry enough to think that we were denied the pleasure of a shot at the rioters in general, and our worthy ex-mayor in particular. And although a long and aggravating tour of duty at home was still before us, here ended our eventful campaign.

It has been a favorite argument against the militia organizations, to decry them as Broadway troops, good for playing soldier, but who would be found wanting if subjected to the stern realities of a soldier's life. This test has now been made, and the New York militia can proudly point to their record.

Marching one hundred and seventy miles in less than three weeks, in the most inclement weather, through mountain passes and over abominable roads, on ten days' rations, without a change of clothing, in expectation of an attack at any moment (our regiment alone forming line of battle over nineteen times), they point with pride to the thanks tendered to them by General Meade in his official report, and claim that they have done all that could be expected of them—if not more; and although smarting under the usage they received from those they went to protect, they stand ready, if an occasion of similar emergency should again arise, to meet again the same hardships, and undergo the same labors; but the next time we hope to be directed by generals who know *a little* about the details of their business, and will not have to learn at our expense.

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It is an elementary maxim that soldiers will not serve with any credit under a man they do not respect; and when they find their leaders ignorant of the first rules of military life, obliged to ask information from subordinates, and constantly sneered at as ignoramuses by those who *do* know what they are about, they speedily become discontented and suspicious, and in that condition are worse than useless.

Our Colonel and other officers had learned their duty in previous campaigns; and by the

manner in which they handled their men, and the care with which they regarded their welfare, earned at once the gratitude and respect of their command. And this remark is also true of such men as Colonel Roome of the Thirty-seventh, and Colonel Maidhoff of the Eleventh. But what would have happened to the militia generally, and to our brigade in particular, if it had not been for their regimental officers, it is difficult to foresee. When we think of what did take place, and what might have taken place, the New York militia fervently pray,

“From long marches, wet weather, short commons, and militia generals, good Lord deliver us.”

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE LAST CAMPAIGN OF THE TWENTY-SECOND REGIMENT, N.G., S.N.Y. JUNE AND JULY, 1863 ***

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