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REMINISCENCES  
OF  
A BOY'S SERVICE  
WITH THE 76th OHIO

In the Fifteenth Army Corps,  
Under General Sherman,  
During the Civil War, By  
that "Boy" at Three Score.



CHARLES A. WILLISON,  
PRIVATE SOLDIER

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It seems unfortunate that the brave old 76th Regiment, embracing in its ranks so many men of bright mind and literary qualifications—has not developed an historian eloquent to do the subject the justice its stirring record invites—as Capt. Kibler wrote the author of this little work when urging that these reminiscences be put in permanent form: “We haven’t in print a great deal of the history of the active part performed by the Regiment in the war, and pity it is that it is so.”

To the members of the dear old 76th—the few who yet survive—and the memory of the host who have passed over the divide, this little work is humbly dedicated.

THE AUTHOR.



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In the olden times, before books were as common as now, it was the custom of grandfathers to gather their children and children's children about them to relate their own personal experiences and adventures of some eventful period, and thus instil a spirit of patriotism and healthy ambition in the rising generation. With some such motive I have felt like gathering about me the boys and girls of the present time to tell them something of a period in the history of our own country and times that for excitement and adventure and suffering and bloodshed has never been surpassed or resulted in greater good to humanity. Among you to-day in almost every village are a score or more of old men, hardly noticed as you pass them by, any one of whom could, had they the gift of putting it into words, write a narrative out of their own actual experience during Civil War days that would be as stirring reading as any book of adventure in your libraries. On the breast of each of these old men, close to his heart, you may notice a modest little bronze button which he prizes above money value. Why? Because it is the certificate of his service—emblem of the Grand

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Army of which he is a member, an army of citizen soldiers which, dissolving victoriously out of one of the bitterest and hardest fought wars of history into the paths of peace has adopted for its motto, "*Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty.*" This badge no one else can wear but he who has the credentials of honorable service. The laws of our country forbid it. It cannot be bought. The right to wear it cannot be transferred. A Bishop, shaking hands with me and noticing my bronze button, remarked that he would give ten years of his life for the right to wear that badge—he having been too young to serve in the war.

After this little talk by way of introduction, I want to try to tell you of the experiences that just one boy went through in the great Civil War between the Northern and Southern states, and how he has come to view them in his later years. This is not a story of the imagination. The scenes and events related were actual, mainly recalled by means of the writer's army letters written to his home people at the time or from his memory when the events stand out clear. It will inform you what sort of boys made up that magnificent army; how they were dressed, what pay they received, how they were armed and equipped, what they suffered and endured and how they fought and died. Through their heroism you and all of us are enjoying the wonderful privileges of our national life to-day. And by their example I have no doubt,

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should the test ever be required, you boys will stand as firmly, shoulder to shoulder for the right and fight as bravely and manfully as they did, always bearing in mind, however, that as great, if not greater heroism is required for the righting of wrongs in time of peace as amid the glare and excitement and turmoil of war.

The Seventy-sixth Regiment, Ohio Volunteer Infantry, in which I served, was organized and mustered in at "Camp Sherman," Newark, Licking County, Ohio, on February 6, 1862. The ten companies composing it had previously been mustered into service at the same camp at various dates from October 1, 1861, to February 1, 1862. These companies had been raised at different points in the state—two (I and K) in my home county (Stark), one in Columbiana County and most of the others in Licking County and its vicinity. The original field and staff (regimental) officers were, if I am not mistaken, all from the latter county.

Attached to the regiment at its organization was a regularly enlisted band of musicians, about twenty in number. But for some reason the Government before long got rid of this band and its members were mustered out on August 16, 1862, by order of the War Department.

It is to be presumed the reason was that good, lusty young men with guns could render more effectual service than with musical instruments. At any rate this sort of a band was got rid of and their

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place taken by a "fife and drum" squad, which furnished all the martial music necessary from that time to the close of the war—a squad just kept alive by an occasional boy recruit or detail from the ranks. I recall clearly a sturdy little fellow about 12 years old, always at hand for duty. With his snare drum slung over his shoulder he kept up with the regiment in all its campaigning, absolutely tireless, as a sort of rallying point for the fluctuating drum corps throughout the war.

Regimental officers were a colonel, lieutenant colonel, major, surgeon, assistant surgeon, adjutant, quartermaster, sergeant major, quartermaster sergeant, commissary sergeant and hospital steward. From the organization of the regiment until October, 1862, we also had a chaplain, who was supposed to look after the spiritual interests of the troop. I remember him as a vivacious, good-hearted man, an Irishman, but the officers in command were a convivial set. He had headquarters and messed with them, and with his open hearted nature was led to cultivate spirituous rather than spiritual tendencies. He resigned in October, 1862, whether voluntarily or involuntarily I never learned, and from that time the government displayed no regard for any but the physical interests bearing on our carnal warfare. To the best of my recollection I did not hear a sermon in field or camp while in active service. Of religious organization among the troops within range of my observation there was

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none whatever. Our dead, as a rule, were buried without religious rite or ceremony. If this happened while in camp the band with muffled drums and an escort with reversed arms and slow and solemn tread to the tune of the "Dead March" accompanied the body to its last resting place. The coffin was lowered and a volley fired over the grave. Then with drums unmuffled and to the tune of some such lively air as "The Girl I Left Behind Me" the burial party, at quick step, returned to quarters. I remember our funeral march was the tune "Portuguese Hymn," to which we usually sing the hymn "How Firm a Foundation," and to this day I never hear or join in it but it seems I can almost hear the muffled roll of drums and the plaintive accompaniment of the fife as some poor comrade was being borne to his long home in the South Land. Army life is always a serious strain on youthful character. In times of peace, amid the elevating influences of home life the paths are straight and more easily kept. But in the rough, demoralizing conditions of a soldier's life—the absence of all the softening and restraining influences of religion, home and virtuous women, it is not strange that the test is too strong in many cases of bright young men who become reckless and demoralized in character. On the other hand, is it not a tribute to the strength of young American manhood that after years of the fiercest trials and temptations, so many returned to their homes strength-

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ened in all the qualities that mark the true man? These were the men that helped so nobly to bring order out of chaos in the national development after the war.

Coming now to the time and events of my own personal connection with the war as a soldier. I served through it as a member of Co. I, 76th Ohio Infantry. This company was recruited at Massillon, Ohio, and its members mustered into service from October 3, 1861 to January 9, 1862. They were mostly from Massillon and its vicinity. The commissioned officers were a captain, first lieutenant and second lieutenant. As to the personality of these officers on entering the service the captain was a man of staid character, about 40 years old. He had been superintendent of the Sunday school I attended, was a shop mate and old friend and neighbor of my father and held in excellent repute by the community. This reputation, I imagine, is what made him as successful as he was in recruiting his company. There was nothing of a military air about him—military tactics seemed to be outside his sphere—so that matters of drills and soldierly training, so far as I can recall, were left as much as possible to his subordinate officers. But he was a careful, moral, kindly dispositioned man; hence, if boys were determined to go to war parents were willing it should be under such a man.

Our first lieutenant, next in command, was a born fighter and took naturally to the tactical part of a



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military life. He was about 25 years old, liked his cups, but was a lively, companionable fellow and got along well with the boys.

Our second lieutenant was an easy going character, lacking force, and it did not take him long to discover he was not fitted for his position and work. The hardships and dangers of a soldier's life were not adapted to his temperament, so that he threw up the sponge by resigning his commission in the fall of 1862, returning to the more peaceful, less hazardous pursuits of civil life. The non-commissioned officers of the company consisted of three sergeants (the first being styled "orderly" sergeant) and eight corporals. A full company was supposed to consist of 100 men, but this was seldom if ever maintained after first organization, owing to losses from various causes and delay in securing new recruits. Just here it will be appropriate for me to say something about the characteristics of our particular company, which was perhaps typical of the Northern troops of the great war between citizen soldiers. All in all they were an intelligent, steady, sturdy lot of men—"boys" most of them would be called at home. Glancing over their muster roll, one would be impressed with the large proportion only 18 years old, the minimum age at which the government was supposed to permit enlistment. I have taken the pains to average the enrollment. During the period of the company's service from the beginning to the end of the war—a total of about

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170 names—and find it about 22 years. This perhaps is too high, considering that a number of nine months drafted men assigned to it in 1863 were well advanced in years. I have felt safe to conclude that the average age of all the volunteers in this company during the war did not exceed 20 years. They came from all sorts of occupations in civil life, shops, stores, offices, farms, with no inconsiderable portion of them out of the schools, breaking away from their studies to serve their country's need.

At this period of the war and for some time later the government endeavored to supply comfortable shelter and easy transportation facilities for its armies. With us each company was allotted two army wagons (four horses or six mules to each team) for the transportation of knapsacks, tents and camp equipage. This naturally created long, unwieldy trains, which choked up the roads, delayed marching and hindered rapid movement of the troops. Our company was supplied with perhaps a dozen good sized tents ("Wall," "Wedge," "Sibley," etc.), all of which demonstrates the impractical, inexperienced notions of our government authorities on the subject of warfare, especially one of the character and on the scale of that in which they were now involved. Any of our other wars of this generation had been boys' play in comparison. Everything had to be learned—mostly through dearly bought and disastrous experience.

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Among the first essentials was the getting rid of all impediments not absolutely necessary, and it was not till this was recognized and acted on that results began to crystalize. One has but to compare the soldier of the earlier period, fitted out with his comfortable tent, well filled knapsack and abundant transportation—expecting the government to make his work as light and life as comfortable as possible, with the same individual of a year or two later, to realize what an effective transformation had been brought about. Resulting in the careless, tough, seasoned veteran, happy, content to possess a change of clothing, a blanket or rubber poncho, a meal of bacon and hard-tack in his haversack and a bed of leaves or fence rails. Thus always in light marching order, ready for a quick move or sudden dash.

As to the personal equipment of a private soldier, clothing consisted of a dark blue blouse, light blue pants, forage caps, low, broad soled shoes (“bootees” the government styled them) and blue overcoat with cape. Each soldier carried a gray woolen blanket and a rubber blanket. Often in lieu of the latter a rubber “poncho” having a slit in the center to slip over the shoulders in case of rain. Extra clothing and various knick-knacks were carried in a black oilcloth knapsack attached to the back by a strap over each shoulder. Food was carried in an oil cloth haversack hung by a strap from one shoulder, and water in a round, flat tin canteen (sometimes

canvas covered, but generally without) suspended from the other shoulder. About the waist was worn a substantial leather belt fastened in front with an oval shaped brass buckle on which were the letters U. S. On this belt were strung the munitions of war—cartridges in a strong leather box with a flap cover, over the right hip, a leather bayonet scabbard over the left hip and a leather cap box toward the front from the bayonet scabbard. Cartridge boxes were fitted to hold forty rounds.

Our first guns were old second-hand Belgian rifles, a short, heavy, clumsy arm, with a vicious recoil. It is said to often happen in the din of battle that men cannot tell when their guns “go off.” These guns of ours always let us know without question when we fired them, for mine kicked hard enough to bruise my shoulder. They carried a 69-caliber conical ball, a ball as big around as my thumb and could by no means be relied on for accurate marksmanship. In December, 1862, however, we were pleased to exchange these for excellent bright, new Springfield rifles carrying a 58-caliber conical ball. These were of the most approved workmanship, thoroughly accurate, with adjustable sights, gauged for 500 and 1,000 yards. Cartridges for these were composed of a conical lead ball nearly if not quite an inch long, with a beveled hollow at the rear end. This was fitted and attached to a cylinder of heavy paper filled with powder, so constructed as to be readily torn by the teeth, ready for insertion

into the muzzle of the gun to be rammed home with the iron ramrod attached to the rifle. This shows that good teeth were essential to effective soldiering in those times. The distribution of these new guns was a memorable occasion for us. The metal quality and finish of all were exactly alike. The wooden stocks were all black walnut, but some were beautifully grained, while others were plain, straight grained, and naturally there was a good deal of good natured struggle to secure the nicest looking stocks. I hadn't any of the qualities of a football rustler, so stood no chance with the older and bigger fellows, but was perfectly satisfied with what was assigned to me, in comparison with the old Belgian rifle I discarded. It stayed by me till displaced accidentally during the siege of Vicksburg the following summer, as stated further on.

When in camp, periodical inspections were held. At these the regiment was drawn up as for dress parade. Every soldier was required to appear with his uniform clean and tidy, shoes polished, gun and accoutrements clean, with all metal polished, knapsack neatly packed and the rest of his equipment properly adjusted and in good order. In a short, quick campaign knapsacks were usually left back in store somewhere and only blanket and poncho carried in a long roll tied together at the ends and slung over the left shoulder around under the opposite arm. Now, as to pay, bounties, especially local, varied widely, apparently depending on the

degree of difficulty in raising the quota of troops called for by the government and assigned to each and every certain sub-district in the North. Where patriotism prompted voluntary enlistment such quotas were speedily and easily filled without the inducement of large bounties. Otherwise these bounties were larger according to the difficulty in filling the quota, which if not filled by volunteers, made all men between 18 and 45 years of age subject to draft and compulsory service. Up to the time of my enlistment government bounty was \$100 and township bounty in my township \$50. A year or year and a half later recruits who joined our regiment received \$300 government bounty and largely increased local bounties. In many instances men drafted or liable to be drafted paid other men very large sums to serve as substitutes.

In the course of the war our regiment presented a very decided variety of material from the mixture of these several classes. The earlier volunteers with least compensation, then drafted men who were soldiers under compulsion, then the later volunteers for heavy bounties and the substitutes serving for the large money consideration as representatives for other men. Naturally none were of the strong, even, steady timber of the first class—none better soldiers or better men than those of that class who, having served faithfully their three years, declined to re-enlist for any consideration. I do not design from the above comments that any one shall infer

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there were not excellent soldiers in all classes. What I have said applies only in a broad sense to them as classes.

A private's pay until about May, 1864, was \$13 per month; after that \$16. \$45 was allowed annually for clothing supplied by the government at a certain schedule of prices. Any excess of this \$45, should it be overdrawn in clothing, was deducted from pay, and in case the full \$45 was not drawn in clothing the difference was added to pay.

Theoretically each soldier was allowed a certain ration of food at a certain valuation, but in practice I never heard of any shortage—and there were frequent and lengthy periods when shortage was the rule—to be compensated for.

The summer of 1862 found extra levies of troops necessary. The South was pressing into service every able-bodied man from youth to old age. Hardly any exemption was allowed. President Lincoln called for 600,000 more men to fill up depleted ranks of the Northern army and create new regiments to carry on the war. Many of the young men of my associates and acquaintance were already at the front and the fever was in me to be with them. In August, 1862, the captain of Co. I happened to be at home in Massillon on a recruiting mission for the 76th Ohio, then in camp at Helena, Ark., after the Fort Donaldson, Shiloh and Corinth campaign, in which it had taken part. In his company were a number of my boyhood companions, among them a

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brother-in-law. The 104th Ohio was being organized in our locality and the war fever was stirred up with irresistible zeal and ardor, so that the regiment was being rapidly filled up with some of the best young men in our town and vicinity. I determined to enlist if possible. The government rule was not to enlist men under 18 years of age. I had just passed 16, but was sturdy, broad shouldered and had attained my full height. My father's consent was necessary, but the captain being a trusted friend, his presence and influence opened up my opportunity. Despite my youth I was accepted without question, not being subjected to the usual physical examination, except as to height, which was five feet five and one-half inches. This exemption I attribute to the captain's management of my case, as he knew all about me.

I will not dwell on the incidents of my enlistment, what plans for life were sacrificed by the act, the reluctant consent and sorrowful forebodings of my parents and all that. They were both intensely loyal; my father himself felt almost impelled to enlist, but a family of five children, beside myself, to provide for under his very moderate financial circumstances precluded his leaving them, to say nothing of his over 40 years of age; therefore, it seemed right that I, the only one possible, should represent our family in this patriotic undertaking in view of his confidence in my captain and faith in my physical and moral strength to stand up to it. He was



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a strong, self-controlled man in those times, but my heart goes out to him yet as I recall the quiver of his lips as I signed the enlistment papers committing me to such a hard, uncertain future. All honor to such parents! What they suffered in the years that followed, while I, and later my twin brother, were passing through the storms and dangers and hardships of the war, only they or those who have likewise suffered can tell.

I enlisted August 11, 1862, "for three years or during the war," and left home to join the regiment at Helena, Ark., on August 18. The only other recruit accompanying us at this time was an elderly man some 45 years old. I account for the captain's ill success in securing volunteers for his company to the interest then prevailing in organizing the new 104th Regiment, a recruiting camp for which had been established in West Massillon Grove. It was the center of recruiting energy and excitement and the accompanying military glamour and stirring patriotic appeal was attracting a high class of young men to that regiment, consequently it was not easy to interest men to enlist in older regiments down at the front, where newcomers would hardly be made to feel on a level with soldiers who had already the the prestige of considerable campaigning.

Our route from Massillon was by rail to Cincinnati, and from there down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers to our destination. We took with us a trunk containing our own belongings and sundry articles

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from friends and relatives for certain members of the company. The captain's business required his stopping over night at Columbus, the capital of Ohio, where the crowd was such that we had to try a half dozen or more hotels, and it was 2 o'clock in the morning before we succeeded in securing a place to lodge.

At Cincinnati we were obliged to wait two or three days for transportation, and in the meantime were quartered with a miscellaneous lot of soldiers in barracks in the north part of the city. Here I had my first taste of army fare and learned something of the sensations a decent, self-respecting, sensitive fellow feels or suffers when first compelled to herd with all sorts of characters and seemingly lose his individuality. This came to me in such experiences as the rush and struggle to get a place at a long rough board table, only to get a slice of plain bread and cup of black coffee. Just like a drove of pigs trying to get at a trough. These meals were served with tin plates and cups, with knives, forks and spoons to match. However, such experiences were necessary to comb down whatever self-conceit any of us may have brought from home and prepare us for the almost loss of our identity in the trying practice of warfare into which we were about entering. While in this city we were at liberty, under the care of our captain, to roam about as we pleased in it, and met a number of acquaintances. As yet we had been supplied with no government clothing, and I bought a rubber poncho for \$4 to insure protection

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against rain in case of delay or failure to get one on reaching the regiment. August 21 we embarked on a steamboat for the final stage of our journey. It need hardly be said that I was thoroughly wide awake to and enjoyed all the novelty of this new life to me. There were two or three stoppages along shore as we passed down the river which offered first-rate opportunity to become initiated into the practice of foraging, and I took advantage of it to get a supply of melons, roasting ears, etc. As my captain not only winked at the proceeding, but smiled amiably, made no protest, and helped partake of the forage, I cannot recall that my conscience troubled me in the least at this radical departure from my home life principles.

As we drew further into the South the grim signs of war were everywhere to be seen and the watchfulness of the military authorities more and more evident. We suffered no inconvenience from this till we reached Columbus, Ky., where our boat stopped and tied up a short time. It was night and pitch dark when we pulled out and doubtless the pilot or other officials misunderstood orders or made some mistake, for just after cutting loose from her moorings and starting down stream the dull boom of a cannon was heard, then another—then, as we continued on, another, followed by the whistle of a solid shot across the bow of our boat. It was only then that our boat was discovered to be the cause of all this racket and was brought back to shore with such a sharp right about that her paddle-wheels were injured. The difficulty, whatever it was, was

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soon adjusted, the damage repaired, and we were allowed to pursue our way down stream without further interference. I felt I had had an unusual experience in being so early under artillery fire in my new military life.

### HELENA.

Helena, Arkansas, was a small town, but an important military station on the west side of the Mississippi river some fifty miles below Memphis, occupied by General Steele's division, of which our regiment was then a part. An expedition of these troops had just returned from down the river about Vicksburg, and came very near capturing that stronghold which afterward caused us so much trouble and hardship. Our regiment was encamped a couple miles south of the town on high, level ground along the bank of the river, and it was here we joined them after a two weeks' trip from home. We were warmly received and immediately taken into the good graces of the company. Among the things brought down in our trunk were a lot of dainties—canned fruit, etc., which proved a welcome addition to the regular camp fare. I recall an amusing little incident which showed my "greeness." Our company cook, who was not averse to turning an honest penny by speculation, happened to have a barrel of apples to sell out to the boys. I had Ohio ideas of the value of apples, which, when I left home, were selling for about twenty-five cents a bushel, when not

given away, so I handed one of the boys a quarter and told him to pass the apples around. Imagine my sensations when he returned with just *three* little runts. The laugh was on me, but my exchequer was too limited to make good my intention at that rate. I was taken into the mess of which my brother-in-law was one and which occupied a "Sibley" tent at the extreme left of the company line. These Sibley tents are shaped like an inverted top, the center-pole standing on an iron tripod. Men lie in them with feet toward the center. With the help of my comrades I built a bunk of poles and old barrel staves which made as comfortable a bed as a cot. We two recruits were formed at once into an "awkward squad" and put to work to learn something of military tactics. For two weeks, in charge of some noncommissioned officer, we were drilled alone in the manual of arms, facings and marching. It must have been quite an amusing spectacle—my fellow recruit tall, long-limbed and loose-jointed—myself short, lithe and quick of movement. It was difficult for me to stretch my short legs and moderate my pace to the regulation step, and equally difficult for him to shorten his step and move his feet fast enough. However, in those two weeks we were accounted proficient enough to take place in the ranks and henceforward became one with them in the stirring experiences of the ensuing years of the war.

I question whether any company in this war aggregated better qualities as soldiers than the original mem-

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bers of this company—brave, clean-cut, intelligent young fellows most of them with whom I have always considered it an honor to have been associated, as well as with a regiment in whose record there is nothing to be ashamed of, its qualities being evidenced by the confidence and esteem in which it was held by commanders of national repute. There is certainly some significance in the fact that this regiment from nearly the first organization of the noted 15th Corps—Sherman's own—always maintained a leading place in the First Brigade, First Division of that corps. Other regiments were from time to time transferred from one organization to another, or consolidated and lost their identity so that the constituency of the brigade was constantly changing, but the 76th maintained its place and identity through all these changes, following closely at Sherman's heels from Vicksburg to the last grand review at the close of the war, in all the active campaigning of that superb and tireless commander.

The routine of soldier life at Helena was monotonous. Drill eight hours daily, with the ordinary details for fatigue duty, gave us all the needful physical exercise. Being close to the Mississippi, here about a mile wide, it was some pastime for me to watch the vessels moving up and down. The river bank was steep and abrupt. When the stream was low we got our drinking water out of springs that trickled out down along the face of the bank; but often it was full up to the brim and then we had to use the river water which, while muddy, was healthful. The rapid rise

and fall of the river was a marvel to me. Some of the more daring of the boys occasionally indulged in a swim, but the swift, turbulent stream made it extremely risky. Occasionally much excitement would be aroused in camp by sensational reports of Union victories in the East. At one time in September it was positively asserted that Richmond had been taken, Longstreet killed, Lee and Jackson prisoners, etc., etc., and that the gunboats were preparing to fire two hundred rounds to celebrate the victory. The exultation among the troops can be imagined over the prospect of a speedy end of the war. I cannot understand why such reports were put in circulation. While they spurred the soldiers up for the moment, the truth was bound to come out with a correspondingly depressing and discouraging effect.

But orders were received September 18 to get ready for movement at a moment's notice, and to my mind the above mentioned rumor was designed to inspire the troops for the undertaking, whatever it might be. We received intimation that we were to be sent into Missouri or somewhere up river. Camp life took on an unusual bustle and stir of preparation, in expectation of an active campaign, and on September 28 the regiment was called out for inspection, the first in which I took part. Naturally I felt a good deal of trepidation in going through the ordeal but seemed to pass the test as well as the others. This inspection stands out vividly in my memory because of some very unusual proceedings connected with it. I suppose the

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occasion was taken advantage of for a general cleaning up process in view of our being just about to break up camp at this place. After the inspecting officer had concluded his duties and before the regiment was dismissed to quarters, four men convicted by court martial were brought before it under guard. Three of these had been tried for desertion and one for insubordination. Their crimes and sentences were read to them in the hearing of the regiment and they were drummed in disgrace out of camp, one deserter to be taken to the military prison at Alton, Illinois, to work out the term of his enlistment and forfeit all pay from August 8, 1862, the date of his desertion. The other two deserters were sentenced to hard labor for six months and to forfeit \$10 of each month's pay for that period—from which it is to be inferred that there may be some extenuating circumstances attached to the serious crime of desertion, else the sentences of the last two would not have been so much less severe than that of the first. I did not learn the circumstances of any as it was before my connection with the regiment that they had deserted. The insubordinate, after being drummed out of camp, was dishonorably discharged—possibly a consummation he was devoutly glad for in order to get out of service. This condition of preparation and expectancy continued till October 6, with nothing in particular to vary the routine of camp life, the program of which one of my letters details as follows: Reveille, then breakfast; skirmish drill 7 to 8 A. M.; roll call at 10—again at 3 P. M.; drill an hour



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or more from 4; dress parade at sundown; taps at 8. The mention of skirmish drill suggests to me to explain that our company (I) always had position on the left flank of the regiment and Company A on the right, usually the march was in column with files of four men, Company A leading and ours in the rear. In line of battle, Company A on the right, ours on the left flank, colors in the center. In skirmishing these two flanking companies were deployed in advance of the rest, covering its front. When the enemy was encountered and took a stand these two companies fell back into their places with the regiment. This particular duty required that these two flanking companies become expert in skirmish drill which involved some tactics different from the ordinary.

### PILOT KNOB.

On October 6, 1862, having drawn ten days' rations and replaced the old cartridges in our cartridge boxes with fresh ones, we broke camp at Helena, boarded transports and started up the Mississippi. As this was for me the beginning of considerable river transport experience, it may be well to give a brief description of it. There is something pleasant about the idea of a steamboat ride, but with the limited number of boats at "Uncle Sam's" service and the crude accommodations, there was a good deal of discomfort in a trip of this kind. Men, horses, artillery and baggage were crowded together indiscriminately. The commissioned offi-

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cers of course had the cabin and cook-room accommodations, while the rest of us located wherever we could find space enough to lay a blanket. We had it so much better than the cattle that we might sleep in the gangway around the cabin, or on the hurricane deck with nothing but the sky above us. This latter, when the weather admitted, was preferable to the close, crowded conditions of the lower deck, though the cinders from the smokestacks and consequent smut were always annoying.

At the end of a five days' trip we disembarked at St. Genevieve, Missouri, on October 11, and lay there till the 17th. I cannot recall much about the little, old, dilapidated river town. One little thing I can't forget was the dropping overboard of a fierce-looking Bowie-knife out of its scabbard at my belt as I stepped down the gang-plank from bank to shore. This knife had been presented to me by a schoolmate just as I was leaving home with the intention that I was to shed the life-blood of a legion of foemen with it. No opportunity had yet presented itself to stain its bright blade with sanguinary gore—but meantime I had found it very convenient for heavy whittling and cutting bacon. On shore I was one of a detail to guard the dwelling of a citizen of the town—a very agreeable duty. Our hosts showed their appreciation of our services by a most generous hospitality, and it was indeed a treat to sit again at a table covered with home-like fare and served in home fashion. One article, however, was set before us that I had never found

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on our home table—Missouri peach brandy. It was seductively rich and mellow-looking and if our hosts hadn't called it brandy I probably would have taken it for peach syrup and become ingloriously "boozy." I abstained, but some of my companions drank it for what it was and got its natural effects. I never think of St. Genevieve but there comes to me the memory of its plank roads which our colonel took such a fancy to in showing us off at regimental drill—we could "order" arms so effectively.

October 17 we started inland for Pilot Knob, forty-five miles distant, reaching there after a three days' march. Here we remained in camp about a month, suffering a good deal from ill fare and cold weather. From some cause supplies were very backward in reaching us, close as we were to such a depot as St. Louis, and a riot was nearly precipitated till the threats of our colonel woke our commissary to more energetic efforts in behalf of his men.

I took a heavy cold accompanied by a distressing cough and retain a very grateful recollection of the motherly nursing of the captain's wife, who had come down to visit him during the period of our encampment at Pilot Knob. Pilot Knob is a great iron center, "Iron mountain," a mass of almost pure iron, being only a couple miles distant. At this camp I saw the only snow of my three winters of army life. What renders it more memorable is the circumstance of stepping out of my tent next morning and being shocked at the sight of the body of one of our boys

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who had died, lying exposed under an open tent-fly and nearly covered with snow. We suffered much for want of blankets and overcoats, which it seemed impossible for the quartermaster to supply. While here our second lieutenant returned from home on a furlough and brought for me a lot of very acceptable remembrances from my folks—comforter, mittens, wristlets, etc. He failed, however, to bring with him a box that had been expressed to me to St. Louis, containing boots and some other things. This box, by the way, never reached me and was never recovered. It appears the express companies refused to become liable for the loss of such packages during the war.

Leaving Pilot Knob about the middle of November, we marched back to St. Genevieve over the same road we had come. On the second day of this march I was connected with a little incident it may be of interest to relate. Somewhat enfeebled by my late sick spell and becoming very tired, I crept into one of the wagons in our train and found rather crowded quarters to lie down and rest on top of the load of tents. After a while a negro, also sick and faint, crept in. I made no objection and paid no attention to him, but a member of my company strolling by, somewhat primed with Missouri peach brandy, discovered the intrusion. With blood in his eye, he ordered my companion out, which not being done with sufficient alacrity my champion up with his rifle and put a bullet into the negro's hat. That hustled him off in a great hurry and I have always thought he might thank Missouri peach brandy that

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the bullet went through his hat instead of his head. Cussing the presumption of the colored man and with the air of having done his duty by his comrade, my champion pursued his uneven way.

Embarking at St. Genevieve we started on transports down the Mississippi again on an expedition that was the prelude of the long series of operations leading up to the siege and capture of Vicksburg. Something certainly was out of gear with our commissary department. We soon ran out of crackers and bread entirely, and were left with nothing but beans to subsist on. Our quarters on the boat were frightfully filthy. I had had no opportunity to wash clothing the last three weeks, so that my outfit consisted of two dirty shirts and a pair of dirty drawers in my knapsack, and the suit I had on. Vermin infested our quarters and persons and it was utterly impossible to get rid of them under the conditions.

At Memphis some provisions were brought aboard but the quality was execrable. The first hardtack I got hold of I laid down and contrived to break with my fist, liberating a fat maggot about an inch long. Assault on the next exposed three of the "critters." I had a strong stomach and ravenous appetite, but drew the line at maggots. I did not disturb any more of their abiding places in that lot of hardtack.

Twice on the way down we stuck on sand-bars. On the first occasion, about fifty miles above Cairo, in order to lighten the vessel the soldiers were put off on an island (Devil's Island) in the midst of a drizzling rain.

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A couple of us built a shelter of cordwood, but our quarters were so cramped my companion preferred outside conditions. In his straggling about hunting shelter he ran across a ferry-boat, "The Davenport," and we managed to get aboard it. Finding our way back to our transports next morning we found our haversacks had been rifled and the precious little food we had, gone.

### CAMP STEELE.

The evening of November 22 found us moored near our old camping station—Helena, Arkansas. The understanding was we were to disembark here and details had been made to unload the company goods, when the order was countermanded. Later an encampment was selected across the river and named "Camp Steele," in honor of our division commander. Here we went into comfortable quarters for several weeks pending organization for the great Vicksburg campaign which was soon to be inaugurated. While at this camp some two hundred to three hundred drafted men assigned to our regiment joined us, our company taking about thirty of them. Here, also, we discarded our old cumbersome Belgian rifles which, as heretofore mentioned, were replaced with new Springfields. As we were in position while stationed along the river to draw flour occasionally our officers made a dicker with the river men whereby to get funds for the purchase of a portable bakery.

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The regiment at its leisure was set to cutting wood for use of the river steamers, which they were only too glad to do in order to vary their monotonous hardtack diet with nice fresh bread. Unfortunately, we were never able to contrive any measures by which we could get butter to spread on it. Sutlers kept it sometimes, but sixty cents to one dollar per pound put it out of reach for thirteen-dollars-a-month men. Once or twice, in desperate yearning, I bought a pound and the delight to my palate is fresh in memory yet. I think I disposed of each at a single sitting. We had the good fortune to run across a good-sized hand-mill and were able to add mush and "pone" to our bill of fare, much to the satisfaction of an odd character of our company who liked mush and was often heard to sigh, "If I had some meal I'd have some mush, if I had some milk." About this period of the war it became apparent that for more effective service baggage would have to be cut down and wagon trains reduced, and radical measures were taken to bring this about. Orders were received that but six wagons were to be allowed hereafter to each regiment for quartermaster's use (provision and clothing supplies) and six for general regimental use. This meant, among other results, that we must carry our knapsacks on the march. Quite an undertone of dissatisfaction and resentment was aroused by the intimation that our company tents were to be discarded and each soldier, hereafter, like a snail, carry his own house. "Pup tents" these new contrivances were dubbed by the soldiers, for the reason

that, like a dog, one had to get down on all fours to crawl under them. "Shelter tents" they were designated by the quartermaster department, but the derisive term "pup tent" stuck to them during the war and after. These were simply oblong pieces of light, firm cotton ducking about the size of a small blanket. Each piece had a row of buttons along one edge and button-holes along the opposite edge. Each soldier was supposed to carry one. By fastening two together and setting them up in the form of a tent with an inverted gun, bayonet down, or a stick, at each end for support, quite a serviceable shelter was secured. Theoretically the idea seemed good and practical, but somehow or other they never became popular used in that manner, the ultimate result being that the seasoned veteran preferred taking weather chances with only his woolen blanket and rubber poncho, not considering the "pup tent" of sufficient value to warrant the labor of carrying it.

Nearly a month's rest and preparation in the invigorating atmosphere and healthful conditions of Camp Steele had put new vigor in the troops—the drafted recruits had been assimilated by continuous drill with the older soldiers so that they could take their place in the regimental evolutions; with our new rifles we felt equipped for more effective work, and everything seemed ripe and auspicious for a forward movement.



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### CHICKASAW BAYOU.

We left Camp Steele in the latter part of December, 1862, to take part in the ill-fated Chickasaw Bayou affair in an attempt to capture Vicksburg. The expedition was under command of General Sherman, who left Memphis with three other divisions of troops, thirty thousand men, December 20, and was joined by ours (Steele's), twelve thousand men, on the way down. The purpose of this expedition was to co-operate with a force under the direct command of General Grant, who had already started inland from Memphis on his march toward Vicksburg. However, by the disgraceful and disastrous surrender of Grant's depot of supplies at Holly Springs, Mississippi, on December 20—the very day Sherman started on his way down the river—Grant was compelled to retreat back to Memphis. It was impossible to get a dispatch to Sherman in time to head him off, and we were left, in ignorance of Grant's failure, to our hopeless undertaking. We reached Milliken's Bend, near the mouth of the Yazoo river, Christmas eve, and started up the Yazoo December 26, convoyed by Porter's gunboat fleet, landing at Chickasaw Bayou. Of this unfortunate and dismal enterprise I will mainly refer to what occurred under my own personal observation and in which I was directly involved. Here I was initiated into the terrifying, bloody realities of warfare, far different from anything I had yet experienced. No engagement in which I was afterward involved impressed me with the nightmarish sensations of this one. On the 27th the other three

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divisions of our army were deployed along the right toward Vicksburg, some fifteen miles distant, while we of Steele's division were assigned the extreme left, or east end, of the assaulting column. We were disembarked above a slough or bayou running into the Yazoo, north of Chickasaw Bayou, and our company was immediately thrown out as a skirmish line in advance of the regiment. Moving forward, our way was through a field overgrown with cockleburrs, a great thicket of them higher than our heads and crowned with the dry burrs which showered down on us at a touch. Midway in this my cap was knocked off and that instant my head was a mass of the prickly things which I had no time to stop and detach. I simply had to clap my cap on top until an opening was reached where we stopped a few moments to take breath and allign our ranks. Good suits were practically ruined by that brief cockle-burr raid, they stuck with such persistency. Getting out of this field we entered swampy forest land that blockaded further progress. The only means of getting through this was a single corduroy roadway running toward the enemy's lines at the bluff and which was covered by batteries that could have mowed our columns down as fast as they made an appearance. As it was they could have shelled us unmercifully, had they been aware of our position. But doubtless their attention was fully occupied meeting the assault of our men on the other side of the bayou. We could plainly hear their cheers and the roll of musketry as they made

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charge after charge, and were much elated with a report passed along the line, "Morgan's got the bluff," which, however, turned out to be untrue. We learned later that Sherman had ordered a charge by our division over the corduroy road in our front, but that General Steele, who had carefully inspected the situation, convinced him of the fearful slaughter and certain repulse that must result from such an attempt—so the order was withdrawn, very fortunately for us as shown by the facts afterwards ascertained.

With no chance to operate where we were, our division returned to the transports and was transferred to the south side of Chickasaw Bayou in support of the troops engaged there. We marched along the south bank of the bayou to where it turned southward, and crossed by a bridge into heavy timbered woods, where our brigade formed in support of troops already engaged in our immediate front. Our position here was extremely galling and trying to the nerves. While the regiments in our advance were assaulting, we were within easy range of the enemy's artillery fire, their shells crashing through the trees over and about us, while sharpshooters hidden out of sight were busy picking off officers in the regiments just in front of us. We were utterly helpless to defend or protect ourselves, and compelled to stand—or lie down—in line of battle and endure it. Added to this, ambulances loaded with wounded men from the front, and wounded men able to walk, were streaming past us to the rear from the storm of battle in

plain view and into which we were gradually moving forward. Night came on at this stage of affairs, compelling a cessation of hostilities, with the regiment still in battle line. I was detailed for picket duty off to the left and front of our position, where the woods ended at the border of a sandbar, which, considering the exhaustion caused by the arduous and trying day's work, was pretty near the limit of my endurance. Rain poured down in torrents all night and my rubber poncho, which I put up for shelter, did not save me from the thick, sticky, miry clay in which I had to wallow trying to get a little sleep when not on outpost duty. Then, too, the enemy searched the woods all night with shell, so that between the various causes of disturbance sleep and rest were well nigh impossible. While standing lonely and forlorn at my picket station, carefully scanning the sandy waste between me and the rebel lines, a screech-owl suddenly flew up near me with one of its unearthly cries and almost scared the wits out of me. I had never heard anything of the kind before and must admit it almost made my hair stand up. As day began to dawn we joined our regiment, which lay in the position we had left it. The fighting in our front was not renewed. The futility of further assault there became apparent, and Sherman decided to try something different, a "cold steel" night assault on the right flank of the enemy's line at Haines Bluff, a short distance up the Yazoo river. For this, ten thousand picked men, our regiment among them, were selected. With the utmost quiet and secrecy arrange-

ments were made for withdrawal from the front and the advance to the attack. Rifles were ordered unloaded, and carefully inspected to see this was done. After sundown, in the black darkness, we were noiselessly withdrawn from the front, guns at "trail arms" to avoid any reflection on gun-barrels, so that our movement might not be detected by the enemy. At the river this force embarked on transports (ours and two other regiments aboard the "Empress," so crowded there was only just standing room) and convoyed by Porter's gunboats in advance, started up stream toward Haines Bluff. The prevalent feeling was that this was a "forlorn hope." Officers braced themselves up with whisky and steadied "file closers" by the same means. Privates, I suppose, were slighted only because there wasn't enough of the stimulant to go round. But providentially, just at this juncture, so dense a fog settled down over the scene that Porter could not safely maneuver his gunboats and he advised a postponement of the attack, so it was put off till next night. That happened to be clear with a full moon not setting until about five o'clock in the morning, which would have made the assault practically a daylight affair and doomed to defeat, so it was abandoned—again very fortunately for us in the light of the situation as we afterwards learned it.

Grant's failure to co-operate as arranged and his retirement northward left the Confederate army free to consolidate their whole strength against Sherman's forces. With their full force and strong position con-

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fronting us and the almost impassable character of the flat, swampy land, covered with quicksands over which Sherman had to move his troops, and then only a couple points at which it was possible to get them across the bayou, made his case hopeless from the beginning. The Yazoo river was rising rapidly, threatening to overflow the low ground occupied by our army. Trees bordering the river bank showed high water marks a number of feet above the level of the land. There was nothing left to do but retreat, and accordingly the troops were rapidly embarked and the expedition withdrawn down the Yazoo to the Mississippi.

### ARKANSAS POST.

Reaching the Mississippi, Sherman surrendered command of his army to General McLarnand, by whom he had been superseded in the new shuffle that had been made by the war department, though he still retained a subordinate command. The result of this enterprise was exceedingly dispiriting and it is not strange that Sherman's star was for the time under a cloud. The fault of the failure was not his. No one under the circumstances could have accomplished more. Censure, if any, should be put upon Grant's command for its failure to co-operate according to agreement, and yet the causes for that could not be foreseen and were unavoidable so far as the commander was concerned. Sherman displayed his sterling loyalty, however, by his unswerving faithfulness and steady purpose under ill treatment by his superiors in authority, and misunderstandings

by his critics, newspaper men especially, who had such harsh, unkind things to say of him concerning his views and conduct. It must be admitted, too, that his soldiers up to this time had not come to recognize his able generalship displayed later in the war.

McLernand now assumed command of the 15th corps, of which we were part, and at Sherman's suggestion moved against Arkansas Post, or Fort Hindman. The fleet left Milliken's Bend January 4, 1863, ascending the Mississippi to White and Arkansas rivers, then up the latter to the fort one hundred and fifty miles from its mouth. Landing the regiment with other troops three miles below the fort, it was quickly invested and with the aid of gunboats in front, taken by assault on the 11th. In this affray our company lost fourteen killed and wounded, among the latter my brother-in-law. Hunting him up next morning I found him on a hospital boat with a severe musket wound in the hip, the ball ranging from the belt line downward toward the under side of the leg. Though his wound had been dressed the surgeons had not been able to locate and extract the ball. (This wound, by the way, discharged him, and quite a while after being home the ball worked itself to a place just under the skin, where he himself cut it out.)

The scene about this boat was significant of the horrors of battle. The river was low and a road had been cut through the bank down to the lower deck of the transport, that was being used for hospital purposes. Just beside this road, up on the bank, were several

fresh mounds where had been buried soldiers who died under or after operation. On the bow of the lower deck was a stack of coffins ready for use. Ascending the stairway to the cabin deck we passed through the office, then being utilized as an operating room, into the cabin. Just at that moment the surgeons had on the table a mere boy—one with a knife between his teeth probing a bullet wound in the head, others holding the victim down by main force. The long cabin was filled with wounded men lying in rows on the floor with feet to center and an aisle along the center. I found the object of my search at the farther end, feeling as buoyant and comfortable as the nature of his wound admitted. Just across the aisle from him lay a handsome fellow with both arms off at the shoulder. There was something about his look that has haunted me ever since—his eyes with a phosphorescent glow, and pale though not ghastly face. My brother-in-law afterwards told me he died before reaching St. Louis, where the wounded were sent. I mention this particular case because of a very strange coincidence connected with it in my after life. Some years after the war I removed to Wisconsin and some thirty-five years after its close happened on a brief visit in a city in the southwest part of the state. My host, a recent acquaintance, had been a soldier and we naturally discussed the experiences of that time, as old soldiers are wont to do. In some incidental reference to the battle of Arkansas Post he stated that his wife had lost a relative (a cousin if I remember correctly) in that fight and men-



tioned the peculiar nature of his wound—both arms taken off at the shoulder, and that he had died on a hospital boat on the way to St. Louis. This excited my interest and I related my hospital boat visit and described the man I had seen. It left no doubts in our minds of his identity. It certainly is wonderful that nearly forty years after this battle on a distant southern field, I was able to identify this stranger whom I had seen just for a moment and learn his name.

### YOUNG'S POINT.

Arkansas Post surrendered January 11, 1863. From there we descended the Arkansas river and the 17th found us at Napoleon, near its mouth. The events of this trip are foggy in my mind and I have no particular record of them, but Vicksburg was becoming the center of concentration for the next campaign, and the movements leading up to further operations against that stronghold sent us down the Mississippi again, to Young's Point, Louisiana, nearly opposite Vicksburg, where we encamped the latter part of January, 1863. Here we entered on a long series of attempts to get at that city, which had resisted capture for over five months. An interesting volume might be written of the scenes and events of this memorable campaign, and in telling those of my own personal observation and experience as a private soldier participant it is difficult to decide where to begin and where to stop. General Grant himself had taken charge, aggressive, tenacious,

and resourceful. War histories detail the efforts by various routes and expedients to reach the city and circumvent it. I need only to refer to those in which I happened to take part.

Young's Point is a tongue of land formed by a long bend in the river, just opposite Vicksburg. Across this point was cut the famous canal designed to enable our fleet to pass from above to below Vicksburg out of range of batteries on bluffs north and south of the city. Our regiment camped along the railway which terminated at De Soto (just across the river from Vicksburg), and we were about a mile from the canal. This point was low and flat, a level considerably below that of the river from which it was protected by strong levees. Sanitary conditions were unhealthy to an extreme from lack of good drinking water, bad drainage, and malarial surroundings. Drinking water was reached by digging only a couple of feet, and was stagnant. Dead bodies were buried when possible on the levee, otherwise in very shallow graves, on account of water being so close to the surface. The whole atmosphere of the place was gloomy and depressing, aggravated especially at night by the piping and creaking and croaking of all sorts of creatures in the woods and swamps.

At this place we lay for about three months, until just before the final movement began to get to the rear of Vicksburg by crossing at Grand Gulf down the river. We stopped a few days at Milliken's Bend, our depot of supplies on higher ground. These three

months were not spent in idleness. With much that was demoralizing, and dispiriting and pathetic, there was a mixture of happenings that were intensely interesting and exciting. The nine months drafted recruits suffered most from the unhealthy conditions, doubtless aggravated by homesickness; they seemed to succumb so easily and quickly when sickness seized them. We lost seven by death in our company alone in the short time we lay here. As much perhaps for exercise and to keep our thoughts occupied as for any expectation of its successful operation, we were set to work to dig the canal wider and deeper. This created a good deal of feeling of discontent and resentment among the troops, and much ominous grumbling over this and the general situation as expedient after expedient met with defeat. The men could and were perfectly willing to march and fight even unto death. But this helpless waiting and digging ditches, and disease and ignoble way of dying were very hard to endure with patience. However, our regiment was assigned a strip one hundred and sixty feet long, sixty feet wide and six feet deep to dig, and we set to work in line with other troops associated with us in this task. Still others were put to work on the roads, improving them. The soil was a stiff clay and our job a nasty, sticky one, as may be imagined. In this connection I had one of the few close views of General Grant that I was favored with during the war—the first I had seen of him. It impressed me strongly with the modesty and lack of pretense of this great general. He came without any os-

tentation, almost alone, to inspect the work being done on the canal, and stood a while watching our company. I remember the attitude so characteristic of him, as he stood smoking the inevitable cigar, and with one hand in his pants pocket. Eventually this canal was finished and the head-gates opened to let the waters of the Mississippi flow in. If there had been any expectation, or hope, that the channel would wash deeper, it was soon dispelled. The canal filled all right with a good current through it, but the stiff clay bottom refused to wash any deeper, consequently the river boats were never able to pass through. On the contrary, it was destined to cause us no little trouble before we got through with it. The inland embankment was a pathway for us on several expeditions along shore down the river. One day, while we were on one of these, this embankment gave way about at its center, washing a crevasse through which a fierce torrent swept, flooding the lower country. This compelled our return, and it was with considerable difficulty that the regiment was ferried around the break. The suction was so great that a couple of boatloads were drawn through the crevasse. On one of these our drum-major and a sergeant, becoming panic-stricken, jumped from the boat to a tree standing midway in the current, out of which they were rescued only after hard work and at considerable risk. This was finally effected by yawlsmen from the gun-boats who were expert in shooting the rapids, and after several attempts succeeded in getting both off safely, but nearly exhausted.

There seemed to be no means at hand to stop the crevasse. I do not recall that it was attempted. But piles were driven from the embankment above to that below, some distance out and around the break, and on top of them a perilous board walk constructed, over which passage was possible but very hazardous. We lost two or three of our men thus, but human life was not accounted much in those days, and if a private dropped off occasionally and was seen no more it caused but a momentary ripple of commotion. Violent rain and electric storms are characteristic of this locality. An instance: February 14 our whole company was sent out over night on picket duty some three hundred yards on the opposite side of the railway along which we were camped. Rain poured down in torrents all night and the lightning was terrific. It was dangerous to carry a gun, so we stuck them, bayonet down, in the ground, and walked our beat some distance off. On our return to quarters in the morning we learned that a tent in Company B had been struck, a sergeant killed and a corporal and several others severely injured. Camp was flooded and everything soaked. March 10 the paymaster put in an appearance and we received two months' dues, leaving our wages four months in arrears. I had been going barefoot the previous two weeks, being unable to procure a pair of army shoes, so was obliged to pay the sutler five dollars out of my twenty-six dollars for a pair of boots.

Though the days were getting to be uncomfortably warm we were subjected to four hours drill daily, two

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roll calls, dress parade and various details. If a man died a detail had to be sent up to Milliken's Bend, our depot of supplies, for a coffin. Which reminds me of an incident that illustrates how calloused men can become by familiarity with such gruesome scenes. One drafted man had died, and another was lying very low. In the detail sent to draw a coffin for the dead man was a young fellow who had a "Gol darn it" for everything that did not suit him. The trip was a tiresome one and he insisted on our taking back a coffin for the sick man. "Gol darn it, he'll be dead by the time we get back there," he argued. We couldn't do it—but sure enough, the sick man expired before we returned, and another detail had to be made on his account.

In the latter part of March we happened to be participants and witnesses in a very notable and interesting adventure. One Monday, just after dinner, the regiment was suddenly ordered to load up with sixty rounds of ammunition to each man and two days' rations in haversacks; then hurriedly marched down to Briggs' Plantation, below the canal, about eight miles from camp. We got around the crevasse over the frail board pathway heretofore mentioned, in process of which three men, overcome with dizziness, dropped off and were drowned. It was all I could do to make the passage safely. Arriving at the plantation about eight o'clock that evening, we bivouaced all night on the levee. It was bitterly cold, and having no covering but my poncho I nearly froze. We were held here all next day, waiting for what we knew not, but were

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soon to find out. The rams "Lancaster" and "Switzerland" were about to run the gauntlet of the Vicksburg batteries, and we were afterwards informed that in case they came down safely our regiment was to embark on them for an assault on Warrenton, across the river some ten miles below Vicksburg. About 9 P. M. we were posted behind the levee. As day began to dawn next morning we were aroused by heavy cannonading up the river as the devoted vessels started on their perilous way down. From some cause they were delayed too long, so that it was fair daylight when they got in range of the enemy's batteries. From where we viewed the scene these batteries, below Vicksburg, were in plain sight, and the spectacle opened up to us as the rams rounded the bend and the miles of batteries opened up their storm of shot and shell was magnificent beyond my powers of description. The Lancaster was riddled and sunk while rounding the bend. Most of her crew, we afterward learned, got ashore at De Soto, on our side, some in a horribly scalded condition. The Switzerland, disabled and badly cut up, came drifting down helplessly by the current, and as she approached our front was taken in tow by the gunboat Albatross, which, with the flagship Hartford, were in waiting. Just before this her daring crew could be seen streaming up on deck and as the vessel swung around with the current, gave the enemy a saucy parting shot. The disabled ram was brought to our shore and then we witnessed another spectacular scene. Farragut's flagship, Hartford, slowly

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steamed across the river to Warrenton and shelled the fortifications there. She was a double-deck vessel, and delivering broadside after broadside the air seemed full of bursting shells and must have made pretty hot quarters for the enemy. This ended this drama, which fortunate as we were in suffering no disaster I would not have missed for a good deal. We were ordered back to camp feeling amply repaid for the wear and tear undergone to witness it. What the result might have been had the rams succeeded in getting safely down is a problem that I quake to think about. It was told, after the fall of Vicksburg, that the enemy had observed our movement down the river and had hurried a brigade of troops to Warrenton; so, had it been the intention to attack that place we would have met with a warm reception.

Another interesting episode was what was called the Deer Creek expedition—one of Grant's several but ineffective attempts to get above Vicksburg on the Yazoo. Taking transports up the Mississippi we were landed at Greenville and marched forty-five miles inland to Deer Creek, a stream flowing southward into the Yazoo. The purpose was—in co-operation with other troops—to gain a lodgement above Haines Bluff, where we were repulsed the preceding winter. So far as concerned our detachment, some little skirmishing at Deer Creek was all that resulted. We were marched back to Greenville and returned to our camp at Young's Point. An amusing little side scene occurred on this trip that it may be worth while to relate. As



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we turned back from Deer Creek, a lot of colored people, as usual, accompanied us. Among those who had packed up with the intention of going was a typical old colored "mammy." With her bundles she boarded a raft on the other side of Deer Creek, here quite wide and swift and running the opposite direction from that we were marching. Her only propeller was a pole with which she pushed off from shore. She hadn't wit enough to put the pole in the stream and push, but instead jabbed it down on the end of the raft, pushing with all her might; meantime drifting as fast as the current could carry her in the opposite direction from ours, the boys yelling in great glee at her frantic efforts and her antics as she was wafted out of our sight.

The night of April 26 a number of barges of hay and provisions, guided by a couple of tugboats, ran the blockade to supply the lower fleet. Half a dozen gunboats and several transports had got through on the 16th and about half a dozen more transports on the 22nd, in preparation for the final movement about to be made by way of Grand Gulf, some thirty or forty miles down river, to the rear of Vicksburg.

### TO THE REAR OF VICKSBURG.

Failing in all his attempts from the front, General Grant now inauguraed the brilliant and daring undertaking of crossing the river below and, cutting loose from his base, putting his army in the rear of the enemy in their own country. The hazard of this can

be better understood when it is considered the forces of the Confederates were numerically greater than his own and on their own ground. Success was possible only by bewildering them, which Grant and his generals accomplished, backed by the bravery and dash of their veteran troops.

Coming now to our part in this movement which resulted in shutting up the rebel army in Vicksburg and the eventual surrender of that stronghold which had so long defied us, we started southward from Milliken's Bend on May 2, through rain and mud and over horrible roads, for Grand Gulf. Aside from the extreme fatigue and hardship of this tramp I retain no distinct recollection except a novel scene in passing around a bayou shortly before reaching Grand Gulf. This bayou was fairly teeming with alligators. Our road skirted the bayou and these ugly creatures were crawling everywhere, many of them on the roadway, and were run over by the artillery and baggage wagons. They were all sizes from a foot or so long to quite formidable dimensions, but did not appear to be at all dangerous or vicious, and created no disturbance. Crossing the river near Grand Gulf we marched rapidly toward Jackson. With the exception of a sharp skirmish at Fourteen-mile Creek our column met no serious opposition till reaching Raymond, where our advance had a severe engagement. This was over and the enemy in retreat before we got up, but the severity of the battle was evidenced as we passed along by the smashed caissons and bloated bodies of artillery horses

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strewn about. Arrived before Jackson, the capital of Mississippi, May 14. We struck it from the southwest, where the defense was comparatively feeble, but hard fighting was going on at our left in the neighborhood of the Jackson and Vicksburg road. The enemy soon left our front and our division immediately entered the city. Next day we (Steele's division) under Sherman's direction, devoted to the work of destruction. The government buildings, arsenal, factories, warehouses, etc., all public property—were burnt, and the railroads for some distance out destroyed. Pearl river bridge having been burnt by the enemy, its abutments were battered down by our artillery. This ruthless destruction was necessary for the protection of our rear, as we turned to the hard task yet before us toward Vicksburg.

It was sad indeed to see great quantities of valuable supplies given over to the flames. They would have been a boon to our army, but there was no way to take them along. We were in the lightest marching order and they could not be left for the use of our enemy. What grieved me most I think was to see the sugar warehouses with their tiers upon tiers of sugar hogsheads, going up in fire and smoke. I loved sugar—it had always been a luxury with me, how great was evidenced by my carrying eight or nine canteens of it, hung to my shoulders, as we marched out of the city. But my endurance proved not equal to my zeal for sugar. One by one the canteens had to go as the straps cut into my shoulder. An immense amount of

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plug tobacco was brought out by the soldiers, their hankering for the weed evidently on the same scale as mine for sugar. I think enough was left strewed over the ground at our first camp to thatch a good-sized village.

While we were thus occupied in Jackson—laying it waste, our advance moving toward Vicksburg had encountered Pemberton's army at Champion Hill and a fierce battle was going on. We were hurried up to the scene but it was decided before we reached there and the enemy in retreat toward Vicksburg. The severity of this engagement was suggested by the long double row of burial trenches skirting the road as we marched by next day. Driven from Black river, where Pemberton's army made their final stand outside the Vicksburg fortifications, they were sent pell-mell into the city and promptly shut in, not to get out again except as prisoners of war.

### THE SIEGE.

Our division followed the fleeing enemy to within three miles of the city, then took off to the right by by-roads and cross-cuts till we reached the banks of the Mississippi. Losing no time we took and held the position on Walnut Hills, directly north of Vicksburg and overlooking the river, which we occupied all through the following siege.

From here, in plain view across the river, was Young's Point, our late camping-ground, and we

could but congratulate ourselves on the successful issue of the hazardous stroke that had brought us by such an unlooked-for route from there to our present vantage ground. The dash for this position was not without a good deal of danger and excitement, secured after a series of rushes, Landgraver's (old "Leather Breeches") battery keeping up and advancing with us. At one place we passed the redoubtable Dutchman firing up a ravine, clapping his hands and shouting "Bully! boys," after a successful shot. A little later on as we advanced up the slope and the enemy was hustling across the ravine between their works and our line, his battery was seen rushing along the brow of the hill in our front off toward the right, drivers lashing their horses to a mad gallop, artillerymen holding on to the caissons like monkeys, cannons and caissons bouncing over logs and ruts as if they must upset. Then, with a final spurt, we reached the top of the ridge. It was getting dark and we set to work at once throwing up intrenchments so that by morning we were fairly protected. Between our regimental position and the enemy's line opposite was a wide, deep, almost impassable ravine, the outlet of a small creek emptying into the Mississippi. To our right, between us and the river, was one of the principal roadways out of Vicksburg leading northward toward the Yazoo. We gained our position on the 18th of May, and the investment of the city being complete a general assault was ordered on the 22nd. We fully expected to take part in this, but anticipating that in case of a success-

ful assault the enemy might attempt to break out on this road, our regiment was assigned the task of holding it. Thus we happened to be spectators of the assault within range of view around the line to our left, and a stirring picture it was. We could plainly see the advance, the charge, the slaughter, and repulse. Where the opposite hills sloped to the front we could distinctly observe the ranks of the enemy behind their works dealing out death to our brave men, but too far away for us to reach them. At night the attacking line was withdrawn and we could learn how the ranks of our comrades had been cut up. The enemy had an impregnable position, had evidently recovered from their panic, and we had no recourse but to settle down to regular siege work. Intrenchments were strengthened and approaches advanced wherever the nature of the ground admitted. This was more the case to our left around the line, where the ground was more irregular and tunneling and mining were possible. Owing to the deep ravine in our front nothing of this kind could be done, so that our efforts were mainly devoted to sharpshooting. Our company was divided into five reliefs, each manning the works two hours at a time daily for that purpose. The slightest exposure in the pits opposite called for a half dozen shots, and the enemy was no less vigilant watching and trying to "wing" us.

As our works grew more massive artillery was brought to the front, until there was along our regimental line one sixty-four-pound Dalgren, one forty-

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two-pound Dalgren, two thirty-two-pound Parrotts, one twenty-pound Parrott, one ten-pound Parrott, and three twelve-pound brass field pieces; the ten-pound Parrott being at an angle in our company front and operated by members of the company. Along the brow of the ridge facing the enemy was our main rifle pit, a strong earth embankment, just high enough for a man to stand and fire over (it had not yet occurred to us to use logs on top to protect our heads when firing, as became the custom later on). Back of this embankment for a short distance was level ground to a terrace some three feet high. In the edge of this terrace a number of us contrived lodging places—very much like graves with one end out. Over these, tent shape, were stretched our rubber blankets for shelter. They were insufferably hot in daytime but good and comfortable nights, which were cool. One of these was my “house” all during the siege. Drinking water of a passable quality trickled out of the hill a little way to our rear.

The enemy tried hard to reach us with shells, but never succeeded in dropping them down on us. They seemed to have no mortars and their shells invariably went too far overhead, exploding beyond our position. But if these heavier missiles missed us, we were not so exempt from the smaller messengers of death. May 25 a lieutenant of Company E came up to watch the operation of our Parrott gun. It had just been fired and as he peeped through the embrasure to see the effect of the shot, a rebel sharpshooter put a bullet

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through his head, killing him instantly. A little later on one of our boys standing near me in apparently the safest place behind our works was hit by a minnie ball which entered below his left eye and passed out of his neck on the opposite side. He dropped in a heap, blood gushing from his nose, mouth and the wound, but by some miraculous chance it missed a vital cord and he recovered.

May 27 the gunboat *Cincinnati* incautiously rounding the bend of the river was sunk in our plain view. A shot from a rebel water battery reached some vital part, disabling her machinery so that she became unmanageable. Thereupon the batteries went for her viciously, but the crew, while running up their signals of distress, contrived to work the vessel across to our shore, where she sank about a mile up river from us. A few nights after I was one of a detail to guard this boat. The river had fallen and it lay along the sloping shore partly out of water, so that we contrived to fish a number of articles out of the hold—revolvers and such things. I wanted very much to send some of these home for relics, but got no chance and they were too cumbersome to carry. The cannon from this gunboat were taken off and put in position at the front. It fell to my lot to be one of a detail to get off the last three—one eleven-inch and two seven-inch. This was a hazardous job, as the enemy had one of their most effective rifled cannon (the “Whistling Dick,” we termed it) trained to cover the wreck and quite accurate range of it, shelling at intervals during the night.



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A lookout was stationed at the stern of the wreck, while others were busy at work. At each flash of this gun, whose location we knew, the alarm was given and then there was prompt and energetic skeedaddling to get in hiding, either on the safe side of the ironclad or in rifle pits up on the shore, till the shrieking shell had burst or passed over in the woods beyond. I can yet recall my dubious, questioning sensations as I lay snuggled down closely as possible against the safe side of the ironclad, listening for the approaching shell and wondering where it would hit. We worked till 3 P. M., when the guns were safely on land. With the last one off we waited in the pits for another shot, then quickly gathering up our rifles and other traps lit out of the locality as fast as we could, leaving to future details the task of getting them over to the siege line.

The night of June 7 six deserters from the opposite line came through our camping lines. They reported the besieged army living on very restricted rations of poor beef, and bread made of peas. We fed three of them at our quarters and they ate voraciously. Our knapsacks had been left at Milliken's Bend when we started for the rear of Vicksburg and they did not reach us till well toward the middle of June. Our bodily condition can be imagined after a month and a half campaigning through rain and mud, heat and dust, without a change of underclothing and no chance to bathe. The "greybacks" fairly swarmed and were no disgrace to us under the circumstances, as it was simply impossible to get rid of them. Despite all these

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hardships, however, the health of the company was excellent, the weak members having been left behind or winnowed out. No man without a tough constitution could stand such experiences. In spite of continuous danger and trying conditions we contrived to get some fun out of the situation. There was a good deal of chaffing back and forth between us and the enemy at night. When darkness settled down there was a mutual truce in firing and we felt free to sit a-top our works to have a talk with the "Johnnies" across the way. Ordinarily this chaffing was good-natured and harmless. We had a quick-witted, ready-tongued character in our company who was the recognized spokesman for our side, and they had one of the same kind whom we dubbed the "Parson." It got to be a regular entertainment and General Sherman came to our quarters one evening to listen to the dialogue and have a good laugh over it. But on one occasion our man let his wit run away with his discretion by indulging in some insulting remarks neither fitting nor nice. In the darkness we were lolling on top the works taking things easy and listening to the conversation when this insult was passed over to our friends across the way. Suddenly, over there, there was a flash and before we realized a volley of grape and cannister whistled uncomfortably close overhead. The danger was past before we could move, but all the same there was some ungraceful tumbling to get on the safe side of our works. Luckily no one was hit and our speaker learned to be more discreet.

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The shelling of the city from the mortar fleet hidden behind Young's Point was a magnificent spectacle at night. The fuse of the bombs could be clearly seen as they made their graceful curve through the sky—sometimes three or four in the air at once like flying stars; the detonation as they exploded in and over the city shaking the very hills. An incident perhaps worthy of mention was a short truce we enjoyed on June 30 on account of some people claiming to be British subjects, over in Vicksburg, who wanted to get out. Pending negotiations, a truce was agreed on and in that interval our troops and the "Johnnies" met down in the ravine between the lines to enjoy a little friendly chat and exchange coffee and tobacco. As soon as the signal ending the truce was given all skurried back to their works and started in again trying to kill each other. During this truce I went down to the river bank in view of the enemy's water batteries and enjoyed sight of the green grass and trees over there. Our hills were barren and bare, the sun beating down with intense heat on our unshaded quarters. About the last of June the paymaster came around and we received two months' dues. I had assisted my company officers at times with their writing, making out pay rolls, etc., and occasionally officers of other companies solicited my aid and paid generously for it. It was work I liked, good practice, and helped eke out my limited finances.

During the siege I fired at least one thousand rounds. As before stated, sharpshooting was kept up

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constantly and systematically. I spotted a certain point across the way where a road ran down the slope toward us intersecting the rifle pits of the enemy. Here, in passing back and forth in their works, exposure was more common and quite risky. I made it my business to cover this, though it was a full thousand yards distant. My rifle was sighted for one thousand yards and practice enabled me to get accurate range of the spot so I could see the dust fly just where I wanted to hit. At this place I hit the only man I was *sure* of during the war. I could tell by the throwing up of his hands and a stretcher being immediately rushed to the spot.

Through a little piece of carelessness just before the siege ended I spoiled the rifle that had done me such good service. I had been in the practice at night of plugging up the muzzle with a "tompion," or wooden stopper, to keep out dampness. Getting out one morning early into the pits I blazed away and noticed a peculiar humming sound accompanying the report. Going about to reload I discovered the end of the barrel near the muzzle bulged out so that I could not put my bayonet on it. I had forgotten the tompion and could thank my stars the gun hadn't burst. This gun, by the way, while we were on the march a few days later toward Jackson I contrived to "swap" for a good one. A lot of us were filling our canteens at a spring, standing our guns together against an embankment while doing so. As I left, having filled my canteen, I selected a good Springfield out of the lot and got safely

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away with it. Doubtless the fellow that got mine passed it along likewise till it got into the "boneyard" of disabled rifles.

Vicksburg surrendered July 4, 1863. Our exultation was unbounded at the glorious termination of our hard, long and disastrous campaigning. We hoped now to enjoy a season of rest and recuperation after our arduous labors, but the requirements of the situation would not admit of any such good fortune just yet. Over across that ravine were some thirty thousand prisoners and big spoils of war we had helped to round up, but of which we were never to catch a glimpse. Sherman, with the three other divisions of our corps, was at Black river in our rear, keeping Joe Johnson off while the siege lasted. As soon as it ended we were ordered to join him for aggressive work against Johnson's army. We pulled out of the works we had occupied the last forty-eight days on the morning of July 5 in light marching order and started again toward Jackson, to which place Johnson retreated with his army, said to be thirty thousand strong. We reached Jackson over the most God-forsaken, worst-watered country I ever saw, about the 9th. Such had been the hurry of our start that no intrenching tools had been brought along. Johnson had taken a strong stand to hold the city and we were up against another stiff proposition. Up the long slope ahead of us was our artillery engaged with the enemy's in their intrenchments, and we got the benefit of the return fire they provoked, without any protection; consequently, had to take

some of the worst shelling we were ever under. We just had to maintain our position behind the guns and take chances. However, a kindly providence seemed to be over us, though there were many close escapes. One twenty-pounder Parrott shell scattered a rail shelter, under which a quartette of our boys were playing cards, without injuring any of them. Another tore a furrow alongside a hay-rick under which one was lying. They tore the limbs off the oak tree under which I made my bed of fence-rails, and we got accustomed to watching the higher ones as they flew overhead into the camp beyond. Other troops close by were not so fortunate, losing a number killed and wounded. One poor fellow in a company just to our left was struck while lying down and torn to pieces. I must acknowledge my hair was kept on end continually under such exposure and it was a blessed relief when the regiment was sent on a couple days' foraging expedition some dozen miles out into the country. This section was fertile and the ruthless hands of foragers had not yet despoiled it. We reveled in melon patches and peach orchards and, after loading our brigade teams with forage, returned to our dangerous position. Our worst hardship here was lack of good water. Frequently all we could get was out of rank-looking, scum-covered puddles, and much sickness resulted.

On the 16th we were detached on a raid of destruction to Canton, Mississippi, twenty-five miles north of Jackson. Stopped at Calhoun on the way to tear up a

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couple miles of railway track. Between there and Canton had a sharp skirmish with Confederate cavalry in which a couple of men of our company were wounded. At Canton destroyed all Confederate government property, burnt machine shops, cars and lumber, and tore up the railroad tracks. Among our captures here was a good-sized stack of Confederate currency notes—in sheets, yet unsigned—which the boys put into general circulation. Names at random were signed by them as officers of the issue and the average southerner who took them in payment for supplies didn't know the difference. They turned out to be as good as the legally issued by the time the war closed. Meantime they were the wildest kind of "wildcat" bills. On our return from this expedition we found Johnson had evacuated Jackson and our troops in possession.

### CAMP SHERMAN.

With Johnson and his army driven inland—able to keep out of our reach, and all fear of aggressive action against us on their part removed for the present—further pursuit was abandoned and we were sent back to Black river to go into camp for rest and recuperation until the authorities arranged plans for further campaigning, and decided where they wanted to use us. Beside, it was absolutely necessary that we secure some quartermaster supplies. We could not have been in much worse straits for clothing. The soldiers needed rest and healthful nourishment. The heat, destitution,

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and ill fare had become very debilitating. Such conditions in mid-summer in this climate were extremely dangerous. Personally, I was down to hardpan in the way of clothing. Our knapsacks were still back at Vicksburg. The shirt I had on was gone all but the front and one sleeve. Before we reached Black river I was shirtless, my pants were in an indescribable condition, my blouse all rags, and my only fairly respectable covering a forage cap. Had put in a requisition before leaving Vicksburg for two shirts and a blouse, but there was good prospect for going naked before they could be got to us and "W" was reached in issuing them. Usually supplies were issued to the company in the alphabetical order of its members' names and in case of shortage, which was not infrequent, we fellows at the tail end of the alphabet were "minus."

We marched leisurely back to Black river, making the third time we had covered this same road, and established Camp Sherman near that stream on July 31. Here our captain, who had been left back at Vicksburg sick, with a number of others, met us, having arrived the day before with our knapsacks and company goods. Five of our sick who had been left back with him died in the interval, and we lost by sickness three who had started from Vicksburg with us. The arrival of our knapsacks was timely. My pants had lost all covering qualities and I had thrown them away, compelled for a day or two to serve my country garbed in underwear only. With my knapsack at hand my first move was down to the creek near-by, where I took a thorough



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scrubbing. Washed my boots inside and out; then, after putting on clean shirt, drawers and socks, felt like a new being and in more comfortable condition to wait for the other clothing and equipment needed to complete my outfit we had been assured would be along soon. Here we enjoyed a refreshing two months' rest, recuperating and being fitted out with renewed equipment. Our camp ground was ridgy, and wooded, with deep ravines about us, and plenty of excellent spring water, a novelty and blessing not often vouchsafed us in my previous army experience.

Nothing occurred of a specially interesting or exciting character to disturb the peace and quiet of camp life at this place. A number of men were allowed thirty days furlough home, being furnished free transportation to Cairo and from there to destination paying their own fare at two-thirds rates. On August 3 clothing, canteens and haversacks were issued, but under the alphabetical proceeding before mentioned, the supply of the latter was exhausted before my name was reached. August 4 our nine months drafted men were mustered out of service, having been compelled by force of circumstances to serve a month over time. In that month several had been taken down sick and one died. These nine months men had certainly seen the hardest kind of service from the beginning to the end of their connection with our regiment in the operations around Vicksburg, and suffered ill effects out of all proportion with the other members. This may be attributed to the sudden and radical change from

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the conditions of home life to the conditions of service in the long drawn out Vicksburg campaign—unhealthy, arduous, and dispiriting. Homesickness disheartened many of them. When disease attacked them they appeared to give up without a struggle. Of the thirty assigned to our company, only nine or ten were fit for duty at the expiration of their term of service. The others were dead or sick at various hospitals.

In early August our captain went north on sick leave. The lieutenant left in command utilized me for company clerk and I tented with him. This excused me from ordinary details and saved me from a good deal of fatigue duty and exposure, as well as from the daily hour drill that had been instituted. I was obliged, however, to appear in my place at all regimental calls. The lieutenant had a darky waiter and cook who looked also somewhat after my comfort and I occupied some of my leisure in teaching the "contraband" to spell. He was a slow but grateful pupil. I remember, with some qualms of the stomach yet, his making pies for our dessert. I saw him working up the dough, out in the sizzling hot sun back of our tent, the sweat pouring down from his shining face and bare arms—and I let the lieutenant eat all the pies. I became very much attached to this lieutenant and our mutual regard has not slackened in the years since then. He was a man well advanced in middle life, of thoroughly clean character and habits, kindly disposition and something of a poet. He had been through the Mexican war and so was a trained and experienced campaigner. He was a

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regular correspondent in both wars for northern newspapers. In religious belief a Universalist, and an ardent champion for his faith. We had an equally ardent Methodist in his company, a consistent, intelligent fellow, and I used to listen with a good deal of interest to their arguments. While their discussions were sometimes heated, they always ended good-naturedly and no harm resulted, with the result that they never changed each other's belief an iota.

A peculiarity of the climate in this section was excessively hot days, while the nights were so cool that it was difficult to sleep comfortably with such covering as we had. Another characteristic of the country: it was a paradise for toads, lizards, bugs, mosquitoes, and such other creatures as tend to make day miserable and night hideous. Squirrels abounded, but shooting was prohibited.

August 28 the regiment went out into the neighboring country on an expedition after cotton and got over four hundred bales, a quite valuable acquisition for our government at that time. August 30 we were inspected and mustered for pay, receiving two months' dues. About September 1 our division was reorganized. Heretofore our regiment was in the Second Brigade. It was now assigned to the First Brigade, one of nine regiments composing the latter, a place we maintained during the remainder of the war. Our designation now was First Brigade (commanded by Charles R. Woods), First Division (commanded by P. J. Oster-

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haus), Fifteenth Army Corps (commanded by W. T. Sherman).

A fellow came around while we were here to take subscriptions for a Company "Memorial," or roster combined with a history of its war service up to the present time, size about twelve by twenty-four inches, suitable for framing, price two dollars, for which I was called upon to do the clerical work. My lieutenant started north on furlough September 8. I presume the captain had returned, but do not remember.

### TO THE RELIEF OF CHATTANOOGA.

About September 20 orders were received for another move and we took our departure from Camp Sherman to take part in another strenuous and notable campaign. Defeat and disaster had befallen the Union army at the center. Rosencrans was penned up in Chattanooga (having been driven from the battlefield of Chickamauga), practically in a state of siege. Sherman with his corps had been ordered to Chattanooga to his assistance. September 23 we embarked at Vicksburg for Memphis and the only glimpse we ever got of Vicksburg from the inside was from the middle of the road as we marched through it from our Black river camp down to the boat landing at the Mississippi, when we bade a final farewell to the locality made memorable to us by nine months of such varied and trying experiences.

At Memphis we left four of our company who, on

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account of disability, were transferred to the Veteran Reserve Corps—among these my fellow recruit with whom I had enlisted and left home. The pace was too much for his years and endurance and we were thus separated for the rest of the war. His aggressive usefulness had come to an end, while I was destined yet to a lot of terribly hard grinding between the upper and nether millstones of Uncle Sam's extremity before getting through with my soldiering. From here began our long, tiresome march to Chattanooga, some three hundred miles distant. At Corinth, about October 1, we left five of our company sick in the general hospital. Two of these who had been reckoned our healthiest, most seasoned veterans died within a week, which to my mind is suggestive of the depressing atmosphere of a hospital life. I too had been ailing and not fit for duty since leaving Vicksburg, suffering with dyspepsia and a racking cough. But having a horror of hospitals I continued to straggle along with the company, going to the regimental doctor at sick call daily for some time and being excused from duty. Our lieutenant returning from his furlough rejoined the command October 13, having been detained by sickness nine days over his allotted time. By the time we reached Iuka, Mississippi, I had gained strength enough to again take up light duties. Moving camp to six miles from that town we were paid off on October 17 and I sent home what little surplus I had by our sutler, who was going north. At Cherokee Station, Alabama, two members of our company who had been furloughed home rejoined us,

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bringing to me from my folks a pair of boots and a number of other useful articles and home letters. The boots, by the way, were unfortunately about two inches too long for me and I had to sell them. The particulars of this march for the next month up to the beginning of the fight at Lookout Mountain I am unable to recall. I made no memoranda of them and the letters in which it was my practice to detail the route of our travels, towns passed through and the various incidents considered worthy of note, from October 27 to December 31, 1863, have been lost. They were mislaid by my people at home and I never got to see them after my return. This period in my mind is more like a dream that is past and gone—very vague. The way was long and dreary and very wearisome, so much so that its scenes and incidents of the march made no impression on my mind. I was too worn and tired for anything but to plod along in the ranks and do just what the duties required of me. In a general way we followed the line of railway running from Memphis to Chattanooga; crossed the Tennessee river at Eastport, Mississippi, and passed through Florence, Huntsville, Larkensville, Bellefonte, and Stevenson among other places en route. As we neared Chattanooga the conditions were indescribably horrible. Troops and teams were being rushed to that center with the resultant congestion of the roads. Rains were constant, the muddy roads almost impassable, cut up and seemingly bottomless. Teams and artillery would stick and had to be pried out. This impeded and delayed advance of

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the troops and we had to stop and wait, throwing ourselves down along the roadside, knapsack on back, to get a moment of sleep, as we were on the go day and night almost continuously. In fact, it seemed to me sometimes that we slept as we marched. Then, too, as we neared Chattanooga, where Grant's army was in a partial state of siege with his line of supplies largely controlled by the enemy, our accumulating reinforcements had to suffer with them the scarcity of food. Our supplies had been absorbed, and for the last three days our haversacks practically empty, so that I recall how gratefully and eagerly I "snailed on" to a coarse brown biscuit I found in a haversack one of the "Johnnies" had thrown away as we followed them over Lookout Mountain in that fight.

### LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN, MISSIONARY RIDGE AND RINGOLD.

Although, as before mentioned, events up to the battle of Lookout Mountain are disconnected and indistinct in my memory, what happened the next three or four days from then I can today vividly recall without the aid of written record. They are as clear in my mind as events of yesterday. I mean my movements in the Lookout Mountain, Missionary Ridge, and Ringold battles, in which spectacular series of assaults Bragg was hurled from his strong and threatening position on those heights and put to flight by the splendid generalship of Grant and his subordinate commanders.

backed up by the courage and daring of their troops. Our corps reached the west bank of the Tennessee river in Lookout Valley just as the situation had become strained to its highest tension. Grant's chess-board had been all arranged and he was only waiting, anxiously, to put Sherman's veterans at the point he had planned for them. Sherman and his men did all that troops, inured to hardship as they were, could do to be on time, but bad roads delayed. Finally, reaching the river at high water, great difficulty was experienced getting the troops across to take the position assigned to them at the extreme left of our line, at Tunnell Hill, the northeast extremity of Missionary Ridge. The pontoons kept breaking. Three divisions of our corps got over safely, leaving our (Osterhaus's) yet on the west bank at the foot of Lookout. Grant could wait no longer. Immediate action was imperative. Therefore our place with Sherman was temporarily taken by a division from another corps and we were left to cooperate with Hooker's troops. These eastern troops were brave men, having seen hard and bloody service in the Army of the Potomac. But Grant had soldiered with the westerners and knew by personal experience to what extent he could rely on them. It is a matter of history that when he heard Osterhaus's division had been left with Hooker's men, he decided on and ordered the assault of Lookout Mountain, which, it appears, up to this point he had not contemplated. This explains how our division was the only body of western troops engaged in the battle of Lookout Mountain.



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Certainly when, on the morning of November 24, our regiment swung into line and marched down Lookout Valley toward the Tennessee crossing, we had not the remotest thought of being called upon to scale the mountain just to our right, occupied by the enemy. Of course we knew nothing about the tremendous game about to be played, in fact already begun. Between us and the other actors were the mountain and river. All we could comprehend was what was in our immediate front. We had no idea what link we were in a battle line which we later discovered was miles in length from the position we occupied on the extreme right to that held by our fellow corporals on the extreme left. Between them a host of men from all our armies. Neither did we know that our comrades of the Fifteenth Corps, away off at the other end of our line, were already engaged in the deadly assault on the enemy's flank at Tunnell Hill. Suddenly firing began on our right among the foothills along Lookout creek at the base of the mountain. We were right-faced and almost before we comprehended in the fray, on our way up and around the slope of the ascent. Immediately on crossing the creek our company was deployed as skirmishers and kept that formation to the close of the engagement, the more stubborn fighting up the mountain to our right as the line of assault swung around the mountain slope below the pallisades like a huge pendulum—Geary's men at the top just touching the pallisades—we at the bottom moving at a more rapid pace. We picked our way steadily through the forest, amid large bould-

ers, the enemy giving way as rapidly as we advanced so that I did not have occasion to fire more than three or four shots. While hazardous and exciting and romantic, I have always looked back upon this "battle above the clouds," as it has been termed, as a veritable "picnic" compared with a good many of our less renowned engagements. Doubtless its picturesque setting has contributed mainly to making it so notable. A drizzling rain was falling, clouds settled around the base of the mountain and it was misty, but I can't recall that our end of the column got above the clouds. Possibly the top of the mountain may have been.

As evening came on at the close of the engagement I had my first and only view of General Hooker. He rode to the front, where we were standing at rest awaiting further developments—just above the road winding over the lower slope of the mountain. He appeared to be examining the situation, and after a few words with our commander went back the way he came. That night we held the position we had taken and the troops above, who had run short of ammunition, were reinforced by a brigade of fresh men from Chattanooga, who came with a supply of ammunition strapped to their backs to replenish the cartridge-boxes of our companions up the hill.

Morning found the mountain evacuated by the enemy, who had hastily abandoned it to avoid being cut off from their main army on Missionary Ridge, and Geary's men took possession. The full force of the enemy was now on Missionary Ridge, their line ex-

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tending from Rossville Gap to Tunnel Hill. By a strange freak of fortune, the Fifteenth Corps had a hand in the operations at both these wide apart flanks. As day dawned we descended the mountain and started across the valley toward Rossville Gap. The bridge across Chattanooga creek had been destroyed by the enemy in their retreat, and we were delayed two or three hours getting over. Close by happened to be some bee-hives which gave some of the boys a little interesting pastime robbing them in order to get a lick of honey. Once across the creek we hastened to Rossville Gap, passed through it and, flanking the left of the enemy's line, marched some distance along the rear of Missionary Ridge and charged up. Brigadier General Charles R. Woods (our old colonel) followed on foot in the rear of our regiment, and Major General Osterhaus in the rear of a Missouri regiment at our left. The latter evidently comprehended the fix our foes were in, for he shouted gleefully as we started up, "We've got 'em in a pen," and we certainly soon proved this to be the case. It was certainly a picturesque and exciting rounding up—a fit scene for a painting. Just as we reached the summit amid the noise and tumult of battle and were wheeling to sweep up it, a brigade of the enemy was coming in wild confusion down, cut off further up the ridge by our troops charging from the front. Hedged about on all sides, they became a whirling, struggling mass of panic-stricken men, signalling frantically to make us understand they surrendered. Then firing ceased and we

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began to comprehend that victory was ours and the enemy retreating. Off in the distance to the rear of their right we could see their trains being withdrawn southward. That evening to our regiment and another was assigned the task of guarding our prisoners up to Chattanooga. We marched them up and after delivering them to the proper authorities, started back next morning to join in pursuit of the retreating rebel army. Moving southward out of Chattanooga we ascended Missionary Ridge and marched down its summit to Rossville Gap. The wreck of the previous day's battle was still strewn about. Bodies of many of our dead foemen were yet lying or reclining behind their intrenchments where death had found them, and while some of our boys had light, sarcastic comments to make about these, I could not but feel sad for the homes desolated by the loss of these brave men who died for a cause they thought just. Marching down the ridge we met Generals Grant and Thomas riding side by side, evidently consulting about the situation.

From Rossville Gap we moved southward toward Ringold, and next day caught up with the enemy's rear guard under General Pat Clabourne, at that place strongly posted on the railway gap at Taylor's Ridge, just beyond Ringold. Here he was promptly but rashly assaulted by our troops with the result that we suffered a very severe and unnecessary loss. Our regiment was double-quickened through Ringold to the scene, at such a pace that exhausted as I was from our long march I was unable to keep up. In the confusion

they were sent off to the left, while I, keeping straight on, got mixed up with the eastern troops in the thick of the fight directly in front. I can realize since then how it happens so many men in battle may go down and get into the classes of the "unknown" and "missing." Men were being hit all around me and had I been instantly killed among these strange troops, it is doubtful if my identity would have been ascertained, or my comrades ever found out what became of me. From my position I could look back over the bottom land approaching the Gap and see our columns advancing in line of battle. It seemed like senseless exposure of brave men. They were in unobstructed and easy range of the batteries posted on the ridge in the Gap, and were mowed down in swathes by the grape and cannister that swept the field. It was simply murderous, and horrifying to look at, but the brave survivors closed up their ranks and kept forward. Fear of being flanked soon drove the enemy from the ridge. I quickly found my regiment to learn that they had lost heavily and that our regimental standard had been captured, snatched from the grasp of a color-bearer as he went down. Years afterward I met a southerner who said he had been in that battle among our opponents and that this captured banner was torn in small bits and distributed among its captors as mementos. Coming down the mountain I found a number of our dead and wounded lying on the floor of a small log house on the mountain side. Among these, one case that was most pitiable—a fine-looking boy sixteen to

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eighteen years old, shot through the head, the ball entering at his left ear. His dying convulsions were fearful to witness and he appeared to be in great agony, though unconscious. No surgical care had reached him yet; probably nothing could have been done anyhow to relieve him. History says that Sherman acknowledged this attack was indiscreet and unnecessary—that the enemy could have been driven off without loss to us by flank movement. It is not strange that such mistakes are made in the rush and excitement of victory and pursuit of a retreating enemy. That had been demonstrated on occasions heretofore—notably on May 22 at Vicksburg and later on at Kenesaw Mountain. Considering the vast responsibility a commanding officer has to shoulder—the quick judgment often required in the face of doubtful conditions and lack of information, and the small weight of balance between victory and defeat, it is not wise to criticise harshly always if defeat happens. It may nip an able commander's reputation and usefulness in the bud, but Grant and Sherman had reached a stage in their careers when an error in judgment like these was overlooked. Those who felt the brunt of it were the poor fellows who went down in the storm of shot and shell as the result of such error.

This Ringold affair terminated the Chattanooga campaign and left that important point thereafter in undisputed possession of the Union forces. We were given another breathing spell. Grant's troops were drawn back for the winter and distributed in various

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camps, while plans were discussed and matured and means accumulated for next spring's campaigns. From December 5 to 20 we lay at Bridgeport, Alabama. Results of the last half of 1863 brought about a great change in the spirit and aspect of the war. At Gettysburg, Vicksburg, and Chattanooga had been wrought decisive victories for the cause of the Union. Loyal people of the north were inspirited and encouraged to renewed effort and sacrifice, while the Confederacy was correspondingly weakened if not depressed. So on the part of the north they took up the struggle with renewed heart and grip. Grant was made commander-in-chief, under the president, of all the Union armies, and Sherman given command of the Departments of Ohio, Tennessee, the Cumberland, and Arkansas, with their armies. Inspired by more hopeful prospects and by means of liberal inducements in the way of bounties, the depleted ranks were filled with new recruits and affairs put in trim for a final grapple to suppress the rebellion. My memoranda where they again take up the record of our movements find us at Bridgeport, Alabama, which place we left in the latter part of December, 1863. To give some idea of the experiences of this march to get into permanent winter quarters I will devote space to some of its particulars. From there we marched to Stevenson, ten miles distant. It seemed as if there was no bottom to the roads. Rain fell almost incessantly, and it was next to impossible to move the wagon trains. We had to wait at Stevenson a full day for them to come up. Next day

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we made but four miles, the route taking us through an extensive swamp. Made eight miles next day; then, on Christmas day, fifteen miles to Larkensville. By some sort of satanic inspiration I volunteered, on this Christmas occasion, as train guard in order to get my knapsack hauled. But between sitting still during a blockade, double-quicking to keep up when a good stretch of road presented, helping to pry wagons out of the mud and so forth, it would have been far better for me to trudge along in the ranks with knapsack on back. Had been routed out at four o'clock and started at six. Near Larkensville passed through a swamp two miles long, corduroyed the whole distance with loose logs, and reached that town about dark completely knocked up. I recall that my Christmas dinner consisted of raw pickled pork and hardtack. From here to Woodville, where the close of 1863 found us, was ten miles. We bivouaced on the side of a mountain that night and next day, New Year's, 1864, went into permanent camp at Paint Rock.

### PAINT ROCK.

Paint Rock was a mere station on the railroad and on the east bank of Paint Rock creek, a beautiful stream of clear water. The only house I remember was taken possession of and used for our brigade headquarters. This overlooked the spacious valley to the south, across the railroad, through which flowed the creek, and where our encampment was located. It



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was an ideal spot for a camp—level, clean, mountain-girt on the east, picturesque and beautiful, with abundant water of excellent quality, and convenient for supplies. Across the railroad from headquarters was a large boulder overlooking camp, on which the brigade bugler stood when sounding his calls. At night, especially, the effect was very pleasing as the clear notes floated over the encampment down the valley. Our regiment camped close to the foot of the mountain and put up comfortable quarters. Few who yet live have forgotten that bitterly cold New Year's day of 1864, when the whole country suffered. Far south as we were, it struck us severely as we started to put up our tent-covered shanties. By this time I had begun to be recognized as an attache of company headquarters, the commander making pretty steady use of me as company clerk. This was a common practice among officers who disliked or had not the ability for clerical work and such felt free to press into service some "high private" under their command to do it for them. I don't mean to intimate my old, honored lieutenant was of this sort. He was a faithful, capable man, well qualified for his position, but his war correspondence, and poetic muse, were more congenial to him than work on muster rolls and such writings pertaining to the conduct of his company. The arrangement suited me all right. I was glad to do it for the relief it gave me from more disagreeable and fatiguing duties. But from certain points of view, in other cases that came under my observation, it seemed an imposition, and

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unjust distribution of pay, for a commissioned officer to ask (which was equivalent to an order) one of his men to do the work for which the former got the pay and credit. Another thing, the last year and more of my service was devoted to a class of work for which the government was paying civilian clerks \$125 per month. The civilian clerk at our division headquarters had the same duties as myself at brigade headquarters, with less of detail, for which he received that pay. Uncle Sam saved the difference by ordering me, a sixteen-dollars per month enlisted man, to take the position at brigade headquarters. However, this is somewhat anticipating the order of events which I am weaving into this narrative. No such critical views bothered me at the time. I welcomed the change. It was more congenial than the ordinary detail duties of a private soldier and insured comfortable quarters, for I tented in company headquarters. But I could never depend on being relieved from the routine of drill, especially battalion, brigade, and division drill. Above all this it gave me experience and a reputation which in the course of events helped me into a much more satisfactory position—a position which not only moderated the hardships of my soldier life, but influenced and fixed my occupation in civil life when the war was over.

Our brigade quartermaster's clerk had been commissioned as a lieutenant and assigned to a command. Imagine my surprise and delight, at dress parade one evening, to hear read before the regiment :

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"Headquarters First Brigade, First Division, Fifteenth Army Corps, Paint Rock, Alabama, April 23, 1864. Special order No. 73:

"IX. Private Charles A. Willison, Company I, 76th Ohio Veteran Volunteer Infantry, is hereby detailed for special duty in the quartermaster's department and will report without delay to Lieutenant Joseph H. Flint, A. A. Q. M., of this brigade, for duty.

"By order of

"BRIG. GEN. CHARLES R. WOODS.

"Charles H. KIBLER, A. A. G."

A copy of this was served on me. But this is also anticipating the order of events, which I will now endeavor to follow more consecutively.

In accord with the newly adopted policy of our government to extend the term of service of its veteran soldiers, strong pressure was brought to bear on our regiment to persuade those who had served two years and over to re-enlist for another term of three years or during the war. The term of original enlistment would expire the coming fall and it seemed a wise precaution, at the beginning of the important operations now contemplated, to retain the services of the old, tried troops as long as possible, and to know just what proportion would drop out next fall. As an inducement \$402 government bounty and thirty days' furlough were offered to all who would re-enlist. One would think this an almost irresistible incentive, considering that there was nearly a year of unexpired

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service anyhow. In our company were forty who were eligible. Of these twenty-five were induced to accept the terms, and fifteen declined. My own case was singular. I had been in service but a year and a half, therefore while willing to re-enlist, was not eligible. However, on promise to re-enlist after I had served two years—in case the rule was still in force—I was permitted to accompany the veterans on their furlough home. These re-enlistments caused me a lot of work, which, however, I was perfectly willing to perform, being included in the furlough privilege. There were required three muster-out rolls, two muster-out and pay rolls, five muster-in rolls, and eight rolls for the bounty premium and advance pay, beside enlistment papers, discharge and descriptive rolls. It was a day and night job, as all concerned were, like myself, impatient to start home. The pay involved in this proceeding affected only those who re-enlisted. This left me short of funds for the trip and I had to borrow. Naturally, everyone concerned was in the highest anticipation of seeing home and dear ones again, and anxious for a creditable appearance when we got there. Our colonel especially was ambitious to show his regiment off and took vigorous measures to have it brush up. I recall his threat that if we were in camp next Sunday we would have “one of the d——st inspections we ever had.”

At the north the 76th received an ovation. Companies I and K left the balance of the regiment at Columbus, Ohio, ours stopping off at Massillon, and

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K at Canton, eight miles further east. Never will I forget our reception at Massillon. The population turned out en masse to meet us at the depot, with bands and guard of home militia. The train had no more than stopped till we were almost carried bodily out of the car. When finally we were able to form in line, the procession, headed by the band and militia, marched to the principal hotel of the city, where a banquet was in waiting. This over, we scattered to our various homes where loved ones were eagerly waiting, and the fullness of joy of the meeting after such long and trying separation and safe return through so many dangers is left to the imagination of my readers. During our stay we were treated as if nothing was too good for our entertainment. It appeared as if the community spent its time and effort those thirty days seeing how nearly they could overwhelm us with glory—nothing at the final home-coming at the close of the war more than a year later approached the enthusiasm of this mid-war ovation.

Returning to the field we were accompanied by some thirty to forty new recruits—among them my twin brother and a number of boyhood chums and acquaintances. Rejoining the balance of the regiment en route through Ohio we went by rail to Nashville, Tennessee. From there, in company with another regiment, we marched through to Huntsville, Alabama, distant about one hundred and fifty miles, as guard to a train of three hundred artillery horses, one hundred army wagons, and eighty or ninety ambulances. We eased

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the trip, however, by free use of the conveyances we were guarding. Pulling out of Nashville March 22 we went into camp two and a half miles out of the city, where we drew "pup tents" and the new recruits received their rifles and accoutrements. Delivering our charge safely at Huntsville, we expected to get back to Paint Rock, thirty-two miles east, by railroad, but instead were obliged to convoy another wagon and ambulance train there. Reached camp March 30 and found the whole brigade out with flying colors and best dress to welcome us back.

Great vigor was now put into the regimental drill and discipline in order to bring the new recruits up to standard with the old soldiers. The re-organization brought about many changes in our officers. Among them my old captain was promoted to major and was now one of the regimental staff. My good old lieutenant commander had "gone up higher" and was captain of another company. The lieutenant, his successor in command of our company, was a man of very different quality, and leaned hard on me as his scribe in keeping the company records and doing the bulk of his writing until, on April 23, I was detached for duty in the brigade quartermaster's department. This did not suit him at all. He offered me a sergeantry if I would throw up the position and return to the company, but I had traveled "foot-back" shouldering a knapsack and gun to my full satisfaction. The prospect was much more inviting to henceforth go horse-back, my "clothing, camp and garrison equipage"

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transported, enjoy the privileges of a headquarters attache, and last, but not least, get the scent of battle from afar off. So, in obedience to the special order hereinbefore quoted, I duly presented myself at brigade headquarters, on the other side of the railway track, introduced myself to Quartermaster Flint, and apparently fell into his good graces at sight. Found him a courteous, gentlemanly, intelligent officer, his worst failing an occasional over-indulgence at his cups. We formed a mutual liking for each other—on his side with a sort of fatherly air—and we got along together on the best of terms during the balance of the war.

I was leisurely inducted into the duties of my new position, which were easy for me and a radical relief from the wear and tear in the ranks as I had experienced them the previous year and a half. Henceforth I was at liberty to skirt the field of battle and gauge the distance from peril by my fears. I am willing to confess that I did not often, wilfully, put myself where shot and shell were flying very thickly. There was no longer any compulsion for me to court such danger, and I wasn't of the nature to dare danger for the fun of it.

### ATLANTA CAMPAIGN.

Here my active association with my company and regiment ceased, so that my narrative of the following events must take on a wider range. I was with them, but not of them, and our personal experiences of quite a different character. The activity of preparation that

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had been going on at our Paint Rock camp those four months was only a small part of the mighty force that was gaining form and strength for the next advance into the strongholds of the rebellion. Sherman, to whose magnificent generalship had been entrusted the conception and execution of the move in which we were about to take part, had gathered together in the neighborhood of Chattanooga an army of about one hundred thousand men with all necessary equipment.

May 1 we pulled out of Paint Rock to start into the Atlanta campaign, our ranks again filled, and the old soldiers recuperated by four months' rest. New life and energy had been put into the veterans, while over a month's drill and discipline associated with trained soldiers had given the new recruits the swing of military life. All they lacked was the practical experience of field and battle, and it was not long till they were thoroughly initiated into that. The fourth day out found us at Shell Mound. This was the third time I had campaigned over the same road, and I was able to realize how truly circumstances alter cases. The season of the year added to the brightness of the contrast. Our previous trips had been in the late fall and winter—bleak, stormy and uninviting in every aspect of nature. Then I had tramped the way on foot, cumbered with my equipment, too tired for anything, my only desire to get wherever we were going and a little rest. Now I was horseback, my baggage on the headquarters wagon—and how different the aspect of things to me as we passed along! Spring foliage on all sides,



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the woods full of flowers, mountain sides in places covered with clusters of giant cactus, our roadway amid the rich profusion of southern springtime. All this the nature of my new duties gave me ample leisure to thoroughly enjoy. During a brief stop here I rode over to see Nickajack Cave, a natural curiosity, and near it a stream of water large enough for a mill race gushing out of the foot of the mountain. At the camp here, our company captain, just back from the north, rejoined us, bringing with him a new set of regimental colors.

It is not desirable and I do not propose to take much time and space with details of our movements in the notable Atlanta campaign. With our Fifteenth Corps on the march headed for Chattanooga and trainload after trainload of troops passing us in the same direction, it was evident to us that some big project was at hand. On leaving Shell Mound (taking only a general view of the movements in which we were involved), we followed General McPherson's leadership by all sorts of checkerboard routes and movements in the operations of that brilliant campaign. Through Snake Creek Gap to Resaca, then southward along the railroad, fighting, flanking and driving the stubborn, splendidly handled Confederates by slow but sure process from position to position. We reached Big Shanty, Georgia, June 10. Here Kenesaw mountain, two or three miles in our front, with Pine mountain and Lost mountain, isolated spires off to our right, barricaded further progress for some time. For several days our brigade

lay about a quarter-mile south of the village, then moved forward one and a half miles and intrenched in front of the enemy's works. As we passed through Big Shanty I recall noticing Generals Sherman and McPherson conferring together on the porch of one of the residences, and the impression each made on my mind as I observed them in conversation. Sherman, tall, lithe, careless and plain in dress, restless, nervous, and decisive in his movements—McPherson, dignified and commanding in person, and trig and immaculate in uniform, with all the insignia of his rank. Both were regarded as skillful, brave leaders—very popular with their troops, the utmost confidence existing between the two generals, and between them and the men under their command. At this village we had emerged from the mountain range which bounded the horizon back of us,—Kenesaw, Pine, and Lost mountains, as before stated, being isolated spurs standing out like sentinels in advance of the range. These spurs, with lines connecting them, were held by our foes, and back of them lay Marietta, the next station southward on the railroad.

In front of this obstruction Sherman's army settled down for a season. The railway and bridges in our rear, which had been destroyed by the enemy as they retreated, were put into order again almost as rapidly as we advanced, so that by the 19th the railway trains came up with supplies and mail. The skill and resource exhibited by our pioneer corps, and other men taken out of the ranks for the various emergencies that arose

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throughout our armies, was remarkable and a great tribute to the quality of American soldiery. These armies were composed of men, intelligent and skillful, from all vocations of civil life, and among them were those who could be found to fit into every emergency that presented itself, whether it be to build railways and bridges, repair and run a locomotive, operate a telegraph line, run a mill, set type in a printing office, in fact anything professional or mechanical. Let the call be made and there were ready hands to do whatever was required. So, in the march along this line of road where so much destruction preceded the troops, we hardly got into camp until the saucy, defiant whistle of the locomotive could be heard just in our rear. Brigade headquarters were established only about a half mile to the rear of the 76th, and every once in while a "camp kettle," as we got to calling the enemy's larger shells, plunked down uncomfortably close to our quarters. Frequently I went forward to visit the boys at the front, always as a non combatant, however, ready to retreat at any outbreak of hostilities. Big Shanty, twenty-seven miles north of Atlanta, was already noted as the station from whence started the actors in the "Great Railroad Adventure" in their daring and wild ride northward in a stolen locomotive and couple of box cars. By a preconcerted plan the raiders, volunteers from Mitchell's army, got possession of the train while its conductor went in to dinner, and only some unfortunate mischance prevented their accomplishing their mission, after they had succeeded in getting a

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good start. Their object was to burn bridges south of Chattanooga in order to help along some military movement. The whole book with its story of this adventure and the fate of the raiders, is intensely interesting. William Pittenger, its author and one of the party, was shortly after the war pastor of my home church. The old locomotive, of such historic interest, is still preserved and has been exhibited at national encampments of the Grand Army of the Republic. I had the pleasure of seeing it at the Columbus, Ohio, encampment some time in the '80's.

Sherman made one of the mistakes of his career in directly assaulting Kenesaw, a position naturally almost impregnable. He gives his reason that he had hope of its success, but that at any rate he wished to convince the enemy he dared to fight as well as flank. Repulse and disastrous loss followed, and if the enemy were convinced in the way Sherman argued, it must have had a correspondingly depressing effect on his own army. After this bloody repulse of June 27, the old flanking tactics were resumed, compelling Johnson to abandon his last stronghold north of the Chattahoochee river. He retreated across the river, destroying the railroad bridge, and we followed him to his fortifications about Atlanta. Then began the couple months' memorable siege of that city. Till July 22 the enemy held a strong position along the south bank of Peach Tree creek. Our Fifteenth Corps was in the neighborhood of Decatur, some six miles east of Atlanta, our brigade headquarters being in Decatur, when Hood, on July 22,

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made his sudden and vicious attack on our left flank. For a while he swept things before him and dire confusion reigned about Decatur. We came near being swept into the whirlpool, but the Fifteenth and Seventeenth Corps were fighters, and while suffering severely at the first onset, soon, under Logan (McPherson being killed), rallied, drove back their assailants and recovered their lost ground and artillery. My regiment was involved in this battle and Company I lost a number of men. I am reminded as I write this, that my letter home was the first information received there telling who were killed and who wounded, and I afterwards learned of some pathetic incidents connected with the carrying of the news to relatives, especially one widowed mother whose only son, a lieutenant, was killed. But such is war. The bullet that lays the soldier low most always pierces the heart of one or more in the home of which he was the light or support. Defeated in this assault of the 22nd, the enemy withdrew from their line of works along Peach Tree Creek to their strong intrenchments just outside the city. Thereupon we were shifted from Decatur around to the north and west of Atlanta. Here, about August 1, the quartermaster, forage master and myself were ordered back to the Chattahoochee river bridge to procure and issue supplies for our brigade. The troops were reduced to serious extremities, but abundant supplies had been brought forward and in three or four days we were enabled to put them in comfortable condition again.

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While stationed here, engaged in this work, I had the good fortune to witness a piece of expert engineering, demonstrating the skill of our construction corps. As before stated, the Confederates in their retreat across the Chattahoochee had destroyed the railway bridge by burning it. Upon our army getting footing upon the other side the erection of a wooden trestle bridge was begun, but work was suspended by Sherman's order until he had, at least so rumor said, made a sure thing of Atlanta. On August 2 work on this bridge was resumed, gangs of men working from each end toward the middle, and in two days the immense structure was practically complete, ready for the rails. I estimated it to be seventy or eighty feet high above the water, and one hundred and fifty to two hundred yards long, built substantially, complete, safe for the heavy traffic it would have to bear in three or four days.

My notes make mention that up to this period our pay was nine months in arrears, six months at \$13 and three months at \$16, so that I was confined strictly to government rations and clothing. What the poor fellows did who had families to support back at the north is a puzzle to me which probably those dependent families only were able to work out by the help of loyal and sympathetic neighbors. It suggests a phase of the war—sacrifice and suffering on the part of women and children in the north—that we do not give them enough credit for while lauding the men at the front. We ought to take into consideration, too, what these men

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of family in our ranks had to suffer in addition to the rigors of war—mental and heart stress that we “foot loose” boys knew nothing about. Our war histories abound with the details of various flanking movements directed by Sherman to get at the enemy’s arteries of supplies, so I need merely mention those in which we were directly involved. By a series of over-lapping shifts, the several corps were gradually worked around west of Atlanta to the railroad below and east with the object of cutting off the southern communications of the city. This brought about severe engagements at Lovejoy Station, Jonesboro, etc., in which our regiment suffered loss. Eventually Sherman secured possession of these railroads with such a firm grip that the enemy was compelled to abandon Atlanta, and on September 3 we could hear the dull booms of explosion as they blew up their stores on leaving. Thus ended the historic Atlanta campaign, with our victorious army at the heart of the Southern Confederacy.

### AFTER ATLANTA.

Marching back from below Jonesboro, our brigade went into camp September 8 at East Point, on the railroad about five miles southwest of Atlanta. A letter written home by me at this time indicates what service devolved on me aside from clerical work in the quartermaster’s department, as well as preserves a very interesting (to me) record of our brigade organization in this campaign. Headquarters were established about

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one hundred yards from East Point, a railway junction, our regiment the 76th Ohio, just inside the fortifications at that place. Two others were just outside to the right, the rest of the brigade from one half mile to one and one-half miles toward Atlanta. The brigade comprised the 76th Ohio, 26th Iowa, 12th Indiana, 27th, 29th, 31st and 32nd Missouri, and detachments of the 3rd, 12th, and 17th Missouri. Each of these had to receive an order concerning quartermaster's supplies and I was obliged to hunt them up and deliver the order. It was no light job, considering these regiments were mixed up with the rest of the division and a soaking rain falling. I got no chance to scout around sight-seeing while here, we were so continuously occupied receiving and issuing supplies that came stringing along. Sick and wounded were sent back to hospitals, and the situation made clear for renewed work, which Hood's sudden and foolhardy break northward to our rear, soon forced upon us. Directly at this move of his, sufficient force was left in Atlanta to hold it, and the rest of us set out on a hot chase after him, back over the route by which we had so lately come to Atlanta. It seemed a very erratic game, this doubling on our tracks, but it was characteristic of Hood's peculiar tactics, which failed to accomplish any valuable results for the Confederacy. Instead, it ended in the almost utter destruction of his brave army a couple of months later when Thomas, at Nashville, crushed it to pieces.

Hood started from his position below Atlanta October 1 and we were in motion after him within three or



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four days. He first struck Altoona, where General Corse of our Third Division, with but two thousand men, successfully stood off and repulsed a division of the enemy after fierce and repeated assaults. The vicinity was still full of the Confederate wounded as we passed through immediately after, following but never able to catch up with their army in its swift march northward. It was here that General Sherman signalled to Corse while the fight was raging, "Hold the fort for I am coming," the message that suggested the poplar hymn with that title. During this trip the term of service of our first three years men, non-veterans, expired, and they left us to return home. Hood had got off the line, leaving communication open with the north. We saw these old, tried comrades depart with the deepest regret. They were among the very best timber of our company, brave men and loyal, and no reflection can be cast upon them for their declining to re-enlist and continue their arduous service. Each had his sufficient reason. Others of us were just as surfeited with soldiering, but bounties and furlough had proved too seductive an inducement. We bade them Godspeed and took up our further burden according to contract.

### MARCH TO THE SEA.

Driving Hood's army up toward Nashville to be taken care of by General Thomas, who had been reinforced by our Fourth Corps, Sherman turned his columns southward again and proceeded to get together

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the forces for his celebrated "March to the Sea." The railroad station between Atlanta and Chattanooga was abandoned after being rendered as useless as possible to the enemy. Atlanta was laid waste with a relentless and merciless hand. With foes of the character of the southern people, our fellow countrymen, Sherman recognized that nothing short of absolute impoverishment in men and means could bring about their conquest and the termination of the war. In view of this he determined that this center of supply in the heart of their country should be rendered useless as possible as a base of operation for the future operations of the Confederate armies. This caused what seemed cruel hardship and suffering to non-combatants and extreme bitterness on the part of the southerners, but Sherman justified the act as necessary to hasten the end of the war.

Then, sixty thousand strong, we set out on this famous march, romantic and dubious as to its outcome at the start, but destined to be the grandest "walk-away" that its participants had yet indulged in. Our command was in Howard's right wing of a column that swept a range of country some fifty to sixty miles wide down through a section of the Confederacy that had not yet been ravaged by the war. As to the column to which I was attached, the first town we passed through on our way was McDonough, county seat of Henry county; thence across the Ocmulgee river five miles east of Jackson, county seat of Butts county. Then through Clinton, county seat of Jones county, and

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crossed the railroad near Gordon. Met some opposition and our brigade had a pretty stiff little brush with the enemy at Griswold, a short distance westward on the road toward Macon, the capital of Georgia, only some twenty miles distant. Thence passed through Irwinton, county seat of Wilkinson county, crossing the Oconee river east of that town. From here our course lay through a sparsely settled country west of the Ogeechee river, which we crossed three miles above where the Cannoucha river enters it. After crossing the Ogeechee, marched up the south bank of Ogeechee canal to within four miles of Savannah, thence off to the right or southward to a point nine miles from the city, where we went into camp. I might say a few words about the character of the country along this line of march. That between Atlanta and Irwinton is fine, fertile, prosperous appearing, and attractive. From Irwinton eastward our route was through level pine forests, carpeted with the fallen dry foliage of these trees, so that it was like walking on soft Brussels. Miles apart in this forest we would occasionally come across a little clearing containing the poverty-stricken habitation of one of the "poor white trash" of the south—as densely ignorant specimens of humanity as can well be conceived. Judging from interviews I had with some of them, they stayed pretty close to home and got no information from the outside world. At one place they couldn't tell me the name of the nearest river or town. One "mossback" looking sort of a fellow of whom I enquired his age answered he would be "forty-

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five year old next peach crop." He looked to be sixty, but possibly there had been a number of "peach crop" failures and they didn't count. Many horses and mules were found hidden in the recesses of this forest, where they had been run off from neighboring farms. The 26th Iowa of our brigade made a rich haul of over fifty at one place and officials were supplied with fine horses thus captured.

Passing thus through new, well provisioned territory not heretofore foraged over, it need not be said that we "fared sumptuously every day." There was no lack of smoked hams, fresh pork, turkeys, chickens, sweet potatoes, molasses, honey, etc.—farm products of all kinds. Forage abundant and all the conditions so favorable that according to official report the condition of horses and mules with our army was improved at least twenty-five per cent by the time we reached Savannah. Personally, practically all the employment I had was to forage, and I certainly did not neglect my opportunities. Our men reveled in the profusion and variety of good things that I had no particular trouble in "swiping" as we passed along. Occasionally, at some abandoned house near our roadway, and as we approached our night camp, I could fetch in a sack full of china ware, so we could dine in style. Houses occupied by families were seldom seriously disturbed. Orders were strict that such were not to be entered or their occupants ill treated, although we usually made free with whatever was serviceable on the outlying premises, or that was good for food. But houses were often found

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deserted, and in such we felt more at liberty to ransack and take away what evidently had been left for us. Theoretically, perhaps, and in a humane sense, this may not have been right, but as we were "marching through Georgia" for the main purpose of crippling the enemy's resources, as well as whatever other object Sherman had in view, we felt justified in helping ourselves and conscience did not rebuke us.

This abundance, however, suddenly ceased when we reached the outskirts of Savannah, where Fort McAllister at the mouth of the Ogeechee, blockaded supplies from reaching us by way of our ocean fleet. In this interval our fare was limited to rice, threshed by all sorts of tedious processes from neighboring stacks. By the time our cracker line was opened, my appetite for rice was permanently disabled. The whole country about Savannah, at least in the neighborhood of our location east of the Ogeechee near its mouth, appeared to be cut up into rice fields, each plantation having its canals, the waters in which were higher than the level of the land. These rice fields were cut up into plats by ditches and at certain periods flooded with water from the canals, then after a suitable time drained off by means of the ditches. Rice farming had evidently been a prosperous vocation, judging from the fine, mansion-like dwellings of the planters and beautiful surroundings, all indicating wealth and luxury. On one of these plantations which I visited there were negro quarters sufficient to house from two hundred to three hundred slaves. Fort McAllister, guarding the mouth of the

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Ogeechee river, was taken by assault by our Third division about December 15, opening up communication with our ocean fleet, and putting us in the way of procuring much needed supplies.

We had been five weeks without any news whatever from the outside world, and were quite anxious to secure the large mail which we learned had been accumulating at Hilton Head. It can be imagined, too, that our relatives and friends in the north were more than anxious to know what had become of Sherman and his army, who had "gone into a hole at Atlanta and pulled the hole in after them." Savannah was evacuated by the enemy just in the nick of time to avoid being shut in. They got away northward across the Savannah river before the investment of the place could be completed. We entered December 21, our brigade among the first. I aimed to go in with them, but delay in piloting the train into camp, for which my services were required, prevented. Brigade headquarters were established in the southwest part of the city, but the 76th was encamped about two miles distant on the bank of the Savannah river. They were comfortably quartered in tents captured on entering the city. Our colonel, William B. Woods, was appointed provost marshal of the Eastern District of Savannah and his regiment assigned to provost guard duty. Procuring the necessary pass, as leisure from my duties permitted, I scouted about to see the places of interest, among them the beautiful Pulaski monument and park on Bull street, county jail, etc. What particularly impressed me was

the Catholic cemetery about two miles out of the city. With its grand old live-oak trees festooned with a heavy drapery of gray moss, its beautiful monuments and smooth winding roads, it was a place of sombre beauty long to be remembered. Many of the graves were covered with beautiful polished shells, such as ornament the parlor mantels in many northern homes. I noticed the streets of Savannah were narrow and unpaved, but there were many handsome residences, mostly brick, and something else I couldn't help noticing after a dearth of such visions—the very pretty girls. They were a feast to the eyes and refreshing to the soul viewed from a distance, but of their characteristics I can say nothing, for I had no means of getting acquainted with any of them, even so far as to speak to one. It is to be presumed they were all “unreconstructed” and that a “Yankee” boy would have had no chance of favor in their eyes. Anyhow, I never made the attempt. The previous Christmas day I had celebrated as train guard, partaking of my Christmas dinner of raw pickled pork and hard-tack, seated astride a log in a swamp near Larkensville, Alabama. This Christmas anniversary was spent in different fashion and environments. Also it happened to be Sunday. Our office and my quarters had to be moved nearer town and a nasty, dirty job it proved. First, about a foot deep of dirt and truck had to be removed from the rooms we were to occupy; then a bunk built and our office furniture brought over. After taking a bath in

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the water bucket I used the water to mop the floor, which indicates that water was scarce or I had one of my tired spells. All this being accomplished I was at leisure to enjoy my Christmas dinner of hardtack, boiled beef and sweet potatoes. I note that it rained hard that night and the gala spirit of the day was augmented by finding I had built my bunk under a hole in the roof through which the water trickled down on me all night. During our stay here we enjoyed the luxury of fresh oysters. There were beds near the city and occasionally some of my headquarters associates would go out in a skiff to dredge for them. I wanted to go along but their excursions happened at just such times as I could not get away.

### THROUGH THE CAROLINAS.

Sherman with his army stayed about Savannah only long enough to get ready for their northward march, which was to demonstrate, as the march through Georgia had largely done, that the Confederacy had become only a hollow shell, its resources of defenders exhausted. The "heft" of resistance had become centered about Richmond, where Lee's forces had been able so long to withstand all of Grant's efforts, and the aim now seemed to be to get his army between Grant's and ours, when surrender or annihilation was inevitable. In the sequel, however, the brave army of the Potomac effected that result of themselves before we reached there, and the credit is all theirs.

January 10, 1865, we loaded our belongings and



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moved to Fort Thunderbolt, on the bank of the Savannah near its mouth, preparatory to embarking on ocean steamers for Beaufort, South Carolina. That night the 76th got off. Others of the brigade followed as fast as transports arrived. The last to embark was the 26th Iowa, with whom we (quartermaster, adjutant general, orderly, myself and other headquarters employees) went. The ocean trip, short as it was, proved trying to the stomachs of a number of our passengers who suffered with seasickness, but I, fortunately, escaped any ill effects. Arriving at Beaufort we disembarked and lay at Gardner's Corners, fifteen miles out, until Monday, January 30. From here our column started that day on its arduous campaign through the Carolinas, which was to end the war and witness the collapse of the Southern Confederacy. The troops marched that day to McPhersonville, passing through Pocotaligo. Our men stopped at Pocotaligo over night for the shelter of a small, dilapidated house there, but the other fellows got hold of some bad whisky and kept up such a racket that I moved my traps and slept out-doors. Resuming the march northward we passed through Barnwell on February 1 and met some opposition at Hickory Hill, near which place we camped for the night. After this, nothing of particular note occurred until we struck the Charleston & South Carolina railroad at Bamberg, a small hamlet three miles west of Midway, six miles from South Edisto river, twelve from Branchville, and seventy-six from Charleston. On the way to Bamberg, crossed the Big Salkehatchie

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at Buford's bridge; also crossed the Little Salkehatchie and South Edisto rivers. It is remarkable how many small streams there are in this section of country, bordered by swampy land with a good deal of quicksand. Where we crossed the Big Salkehatchie the road lay through a dense swamp about half a mile wide as we approached, and had to be corduroyed the whole distance. On higher ground on the opposite side were formidable works commanding this road; but our advance troops had flanked the enemy out of these before we reached there. On entering South Carolina it was made apparent that the Union troops were displaying a notably different temper than in any of their previous campaigns. The spirit of destruction was always rampant enough, but heretofore the strongest official restraint was put on it and a large degree of discrimination was exercised in destroying property. Here, however, it seemed to be borne in mind that they were in the state that had been most active and vicious in breeding disunion sentiment; first and most bitter inaugurating the rebellion, and largely responsible for all the suffering that ensued. Remembering this our troops were disposed to take advantage of their opportunity to wreak retribution on the heads of its inhabitants. Our commander himself was always bold to insist that the people who started and kept up the war had no right to complain of its rigors and horrors, and he was relentless when it seemed to him necessary for the advantage of the Union armies. He firmly adhered to this policy, despite the protests and

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bitter denunciation of Confederate authorities and their pleas of its inhumanity. His reply on one occasion that "War is hell" became proverbial, and its truth cannot be questioned. Therefore, recognizing that South Carolina had invited all these ills by her own disloyal conduct and deserved a full measure of such calamity, he winked at the destruction that followed the march of his armies from their entrance to their exit from the state. From Pocotaligo our pathway could be traced by the column of smoke back of us. No harm was done to people in their homes, and such homes were not molested. All outlawry was strictly prohibited and violations sternly punished. But unoccupied property and all property considered of use to the Confederate armies was ruthlessly destroyed.

We reached Bamberg February 7 and brigade headquarters were established in the home of a citizen, who tendered the use of it for the protection it gave his property. Myself and a couple of General Woods orderlies had ridden ahead of the column and it curiously happened had captured several turkeys, chickens and other forage at this same house. Soon as located for the night we had one of the household servants, an excellent cook it proved, dress and roast our biggest turkey, weighing seventeen and one-half pounds dressed. This was done in the cook house detached from the main dwelling and then brought to our quarters. We observed the proprieties by sending to the lady of the house a generous portion served on a white platter

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embellished with hardtack, and received her courteous acknowledgement. Of course she had no knowledge it was a piece of her own turkey.

During our stop at Bamberg the troops were busily occupied destroying railway track. They had become adepts at this by much practice. Notwithstanding the hurry and rapidity with which it was done, it was done efficiently. Rails were detached from ties. Then the ties piled up in squares and the rails laid across the top, and fire set to the pile. When red hot the rails were twisted by means of strong iron tongs applied at each end, and thenceforth were useless until remelted and re-rolled. In the earlier part of the war it was discovered that rails heated and merely bent could soon be straightened and used again. Leaving Bamberg, we soon ran into something new and novel in the way of experience. Our progress northward brought us into pine territory, where the production of rosin appeared to be an extensive industry. The forest trees bordering our roadway had been "tapped"—that is, a patch of bark taken off, of a certain size and peculiar form (in shape a good deal like the picture of an open book). This exposed surface was gouged or furrowed up and down, with a channel cut across the bottom, and out of it the sap oozed to harden, on exposure, ready for gathering. It may be imagined a pine woods in this condition is a dangerous place for a fire to get started. By some means the forest ahead of us had got afire and we had to run the gauntlet. At one place, a short distance from the road had been stored

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several hundred barrels of rosin. This caught and the roar of its burning could be heard long before we reached the scene, creating such a dense smoke as to obscure the sun. It was as if Hades had been let loose. Trains dashed through on the run and it seemed almost miraculous that some of the ordnance wagons weren't blown up. Troops scattered through the woods at will and got through the best they could.

In the course of three or four days we crossed the North Edisto near Orangeburg, meeting with some resistance there. From here nothing worthy of note occurred until we arrived within five or six miles of Columbia, the capital of South Carolina, near the crossing of the Saluda river. Here, lively skirmishing opened up on the 14th. My brother, of our company, on picket that night had a very narrow escape from capture. While with a detail of others on outpost duty the enemy made a sudden and unexpected dash on them, capturing several men and getting his knapsack. Riding up behind the regiment next morning I found him destitute of everything but the clothing he had on, but was able to supply his needs by dividing what I had with him. I replenished my stock of blankets a little later on in the city just ahead of us. On the 15th the enemy retreated toward Columbia and we crossed the Saluda, entering on a wide, undulating plain extending to the city, four or five miles distant. Here, next day, I had a splendid view from a small eminence of the maneuvering of our whole corps. It was like a panorama. At one place on a road near to and run-

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ning parallel with the river (the Congaree), could be seen a column of our troops and teams double-quicking across an open space in plain view and easy range of a four-gun battery playing on them from heights across the river. The guns were worked as rapidly as they could be loaded, but the cannoneers must have been amateurs, the firing was so wild and damage so slight. Not a man in the column was hit, and the only damage done was a couple of mules killed and a pontoon wagon shot through. Our column moved on a parallel line to a point above the city, exposed to this same battery, but it did not bother us, being too busily occupied with the nearer target. During this movement I rode back to the wagon train to get my dinner, and on returning found De Greiss had planted one of his twenty-pound Parrott guns in the middle of the road running into Columbia and was sending an occasional shot into the city across the river. General Sherman was standing by the gun and directing the firing at knots of rebel cavalry as they showed themselves in the streets.

That evening our Second Division moved about two miles up the river and during the night several regiments were rafted across. As day dawned skirmishing began and I rode up to watch the proceedings. From where I sat on my horse viewing the scene, the ground directly across the river was low and flat, beyond that hilly. Away off to the left on high ground was an open field skirted with woods. Out of the woods, while our skirmishers were busy climbing the hills in our

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front, suddenly appeared a column of infantry into the open field, with the evident intent to flank our skirmishers. This was no sooner observed from my position than a twelve-pounder brass piece was rushed up, flew into position with a snap, quick aim taken and in less time than it takes me to tell it a shell burst just over the advancing column. The effect was simply ludicrous. That battalion dissolved as if by magic, the commander's coat-tails standing straight out as his horse galloped him off the field. It is to be presumed these were militia, not yet accustomed to the shriek of shells, as were our seasoned veterans under yesterday's artillery fire.

By noon pontoons were laid and our forces proceeded to cross. First, General Sherman and staff, next Howard and staff. Then Logan with staff and escort, followed by our division commander, Charles R. Woods and staff, and Brigadier General William B. Woods at the head of our brigade. I crossed with brigade staff, but by the time we entered the city was pretty well up to the front. Soon as the opportunity presented, I struck off into a side street. Stopping at the side entrance to the yard of a fine residence, the brigade saddler, who accompanied me, held our horses while I went in to prospect. Found a smoke-house and sent a darkey after the key. I presume we were objects of great curiosity to the lot of colored people who gathered in that back yard and at a respectable distance viewed the "Lincum" soldiers for the first time, and wondering what was going to hap-

pen. They were very obsequious and obedient and it wasn't long till my messenger handed me the key I wanted. Helping myself to four nice hams and a jug of molasses I relocked the smoke-house and sent the key back. Meantime, the lady of the house, a handsome, matronly woman, ventured out and pleaded with me to use my influence with General Sherman to have her property protected. Not having confidence in my influence with the general, and not caring to try it, I quieted her fears and suggested what I thought she had best do, then quietly departed. At next place visited got some fine, soft woolen blankets and a few other needed articles, and just got out of the way of General Sherman, who happened to take up his quarters at the same house.

Here let me confess to the only bit of burglary I was ever guilty of. About this stage of affairs as I wandered about, in an abandoned warehouse office we discovered a safe and proceeded to find out what was inside. By means of sledges and stones, after a great deal of hard labor, we contrived to pound the doors off and I grabbed a pocket-book which appeared to be the most valuable object in sight. Stepping aside to count its contents I found a single one-dollar Confederate note. The other contents of the safe were simply account books. Some members of our company, however, found rich booty during our occupation of Columbia, in the way of gold and silver ware, which they contrived to smuggle home; but the one-dollar Confederate bill was the extent of my stolen spoil, except



the relic hereinafter mentioned. Somehow or other I could not bring myself down to the practice of ransacking houses and stores for booty. This one piece of burglary was my first and last.

For brigade headquarters we occupied the house of an aide on Confederate General Perkins' staff, whose family had abandoned it. There were several fine libraries, one in the basement room which I occupied. There was nothing lacking for the most comfortable house-keeping and sleeping while we domiciled here, and we reveled in the luxury of rich china ware, bedding, books, etc. In the parlor I found framed and hanging on the wall a fac simile copy of South Carolina's ordinance of secession as originally drafted and signed. This I appropriated, taking it out of the frame and carrying it rolled up, eventually succeeding in getting it home, where I still possess it as one of my valuable war relics.

While Sherman was in possession of the city, our brigade commander and old colonel, William B. Woods, was assigned the position of provost marshal and our brigade held there for duty. The evening of our entry fire broke out in the southwest part of the city, concerning which there has been much controversy, and bitter recrimination against Sherman and his army on the part of southerners. To my mind there is no question but that the Confederate authorities were themselves responsible for its start. In abandoning the city they had set fire to a lot of cotton. The day was clear and a very stiff wind blowing. As we

marched into the city this cotton was being blown and scattered in large flakes. This I saw and am satisfied was the first cause of the conflagration that ensued. Started by such means, I have no doubt our exasperated soldiers—some of them—may have had a hand in keeping it going. Liquor was found in plenty, and the bulk of our army were not teetotalers. A Union soldier, filled with South Carolina whisky, in Columbia, the capital of South Carolina, the hot-bed of secession, would certainly not be expected to exercise much moderation or self-restraint under the circumstances which found us there—no matter what views righteous-minded critics may have of their conduct. As before intimated, our army did not feel bound by the ordinary restraints of humane warfare—while campaigning through this particular state. But be this side of the question as it may, our officers and a large majority of the men worked nobly to stay the conflagration. The rest of our division, which had gone into camp some distance out, was brought into the city and labored heroically with the fire engines and other means at hand to subdue the flames and prevent their spread. All in all, pandemonium reigned that night, and it was indeed a pitiable one for the helpless residents, mostly women and children, driven from comfortable houses and made destitute. My heart went out to them as I saw them huddled on their porches or in front of their homes, fearfully watching the advancing flames, ready to flee. But such is war—the helpless and innocent suffering with the guilty—and surely if any part of

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the south merited such retribution, it was this self-same city. When we departed northward many white refugees went with us, which would indicate the confidence they had in the honor of our army in spite of the disaster this army had brought to them. Of these refugees, some were homeless, others tired of the war—desiring to reach some temporary haven of protection. They accompanied the invaders undisturbed and in perfect safety as far as Fayetteville, if I remember correctly, and from there were sent down Cape Fear river to Wilmington. Another unique class of camp followers on this march, as on nearly all others of our armies through the slave states, were the negroes striking out for freedom. Here, as in the Georgia campaign, could be seen their long line, flanking our marching column, which had the right of way—as odd and grotesque a caravan as can well be imagined. Darkies old and darkies young—men, women and children, most of them walking, the older ones loaded down with something—worldly goods or babies. Others, with transportation of the most varied and primitive sorts—decrepit wagons and buggies, with rickety horses, mules and even cows harnessed to them. Occasionally might be seen a cow covered with a blanket containing several pouches, out of which was poked the woolly head of a pickaninny. Women carrying bundles almost as big as themselves on their heads—all trudging along tirelessly day after day toward, as they imagined, the Land of Canaan—to freedom, at least. The white refugees had some definite haven in view,

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but these ex-slaves were drifting into the blindest futurity. They dissolved out of our sight and knowledge, I didn't notice when, where, or how. We paid no attention to them.

Quitting Columbia February 20, we pursued our way northeasterly toward Fayetteville, crossing the Wateree, Big and Little Lynch creeks near where they fork, and the Great Pedee and Lumber rivers—beside creeks innumerable. Passed through Liberty Hill, Cheraw, Springfield and Laurel Hill. At Cheraw occurred a singular accident. I had crossed the Great Pedee river after passing through the town, and had ridden some distance beyond when I heard a loud explosion in the direction of the town. Looking back, I could see an immense column of light-colored smoke rising over it and hurried back to learn what had happened, as our troops were just passing through. Found that the enemy in evacuating Cheraw had dumped a lot of ammunition—powder, shells, etc., into a ravine, close by the road. Some thoughtless or reckless fellow of our troops had touched this off with a slow match as our column was passing by, and, it happened, just as our regiment was nearest,—killing one man and injuring a number. The concussion was terrific, shattering houses in the vicinity.

Reached Fayetteville March 12 and got into communication with Wilmington, several boats having come up Cape Fear river from there. Fayetteville had been an important military station for the Confederates and Sherman, with his characteristic tactics, made

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havoc with the arsenal there and whatever else might be serviceable to the enemy. We left here March 16, our brigade, with a couple of other regiments, as guard to a train of some seven hundred wagons pointed toward Bentonville. The roads were horrible and most of the way had to be corduroyed to be made passable for the teams. At Bentonville was met the last desperate resistance of our opponents under the Confederate General Joe Johnson, with whom we had become so well acquainted about Vicksburg. Heavy fighting had been going on before our arrival, and although worn out and nearly exhausted, our brigade no sooner left the train they had convoyed, than they were rushed into this action, destined to be their last in the war. I rode over the battle field next day and saw evidence of the sanguinary work done, especially at the field hospital site, where piles of amputated and mutilated limbs were yet exposed to view. Arrived at Goldsboro, Sherman's objective point when he started in on this campaign, on March 24, and went into camp for a couple of weeks, during which time I was kept constantly busy drawing and issuing clothing and other supplies to the brigade. Therefore got to see but little of this place, and retain no distinct impressions of it. I noted that despite the extremely wearisome and disagreeable marching through mud and water, the health and spirit of the troops after their steady two months' tramp, was excellent. They were eager to start out again, preferring active campaigning through new country, to camp life and fare. While in camp at

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Goldsboro we were electrified April 6, by news that Grant had destroyed Lee's army, captured twenty-five thousand prisoners and five hundred and twenty guns; that Lee had surrendered, and the Union troops in possession of Richmond, Petersburg, etc. Bulletins announcing this were posted up in the town and indescribable was the satisfaction and rejoicing. It brought the early close of the war in view and brightened our hopes for a return home before long.

But Johnson's army yet confronting us was first to be disposed of. Moving on to Raleigh, the capital of North Carolina, we entered that city about April 14. That night, camped about one and one-half miles north of the place. Here we first heard that Sherman and Johnson were negotiating for the surrender of the latter's army. I still have in my possession a clipping of Sherman's Special Field Order No. 58, of April 19, 1865, taken from the Raleigh Daily Progress next day, announcing "Suspension of hostilities and agreement with General Johnson and other high officials which when formally ratified will make *Peace* from the Potomac to the Rio Grande,' etc. The feeling of elation that glowed in me as I first read this order, thrills me yet as I look at the worn clipping to copy it.

Arrangements were at once discussed at headquarters for our homeward journey. It was announced that we were to march to Frederick, Maryland, some three hundred miles, and there be mustered out, the trip to be made at the moderate pace of ten miles a day.

But while in this exalted state of mind, like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky, came news of the assassination of our beloved President Lincoln, just as his labors and prayers for a saved Union were about to be realized. The excitement this produced in the army was terrific and a feeling of revenge rampant, everyone supposing the Confederate government in some way connected with or responsible for the deed. Had hostilities been continued under this impression, there is no telling what the result might have been. I need not relate the causes that led to the disapproval by those in authority, of Sherman's arrangements with Johnson. No doubt he did overstep the limits of his military authority in the excess of his zeal to end the war. The North was in a white heat of anger on account of the president's assassination, and at that particular crisis it may have appeared the rebel army was being let off on too easy terms. But be that as it may, the censure and criticism and cruel reflections cast on Sherman's motives were unwarranted and uncalled for. It is no wonder he resented it in his conduct thereafter toward the secretary of war, who had been particularly venomous in his censure. His single aim had been, in making these terms, for peace and the restoration of the Union. No one knew the southern temperament better than he, and like the great man he was, he felt he could afford to be magnanimous toward such foemen, hereafter to be our fellow citizens.

I want to note some of my impressions of Raleigh before quitting it. It appeared to me a beautiful little

city in one of the most pleasing sections of North Carolina I had seen. The principal public buildings were the State House, Deaf and Dumb Asylum, and Insane Asylum. Residences were generally fine, with beautiful, large, well shaded yards, the place having a suburban rather than citified appearance. I recall riding along the street at the foot of the deep, sloping lawn fronting a dwelling in which General Howard had his headquarters. It was Sunday, and in accordance with the custom of that Christian general, religious services were being held up in front of the house, the music being furnished by his splendid band. To me it was a very pleasing, edifying scene, of a kind I had not often been favored with in my army life. On the same Sabbath, riding about to view the city, I stopped to take a look at the Deaf and Dumb Asylum. General Sherman had just gone in and the inmates were gathered outside in groups, apparently in excited conversation by means of their sign language. They were a bright, intelligent-looking lot of people—nothing at all stupid about their appearance, or anything to indicate their affliction. Some of the young girls were especially good-looking.

After the delay in which Secretary of War Stanton turned down Sherman's peace arrangements with such a high hand, and the eventual adjustment of the matter to the satisfaction of the civil authorities, Sherman headed his veteran army toward Washington. It puzzles me that my memory has not retained more of the incidents and route of our final journey from Raleigh



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to Washington; but with the elements of suffering and danger removed, I seem to have stopped charging my mind with the scenes and what happened on our peaceful route, and ceased making notes of rivers crossed, towns passed through, etc., as had been my previous practice. I can account for it only on the theory that getting home must have been my all-absorbing thought. As we approached Petersburg, into country that had been the scene of so long and dreadful a struggle between our brave comrades of the Army of the Potomac and Lee's forces, we were much interested and impressed as we passed over the battle-fields still cut up with intrenchments and fortifications—where so much blood had been shed and suffering endured to help win the peace we were on our way to enjoy. Passing through Petersburg, we marched to Richmond, the late capital of the Southern Confederacy. All I can recall distinctly of our stop here is a visit to Libby prison, which had become so notorious as a prison pen for Union officers captured during the war. In the alley adjoining was still the hole out of which had escaped Colonel Straight and a number of others. On our way to Washington, passed through Mount Vernon, the old home of George Washington, and this quaint old dwelling and its surroundings as they appeared then, stand out very clearly yet in my memory, particularly the vault through the iron grating of which could be seen the resting place of our first president. At Alexandria we visited the old brick church in which

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Washington worshiped and were pointed out the pew he occupied.

Then followed the climax—the crowning glory of the war to these survivors congregated at our capital—the last “Grand Review.” To my mind no spectacle in the history of our nation can equal this in stirring pathos, and no wonder that strong men went wild in their enthusiasm as the conquering hosts filed by. The shadow over it all was that our beloved Lincoln, who had so wonderfully conducted the “Ship of State” up to its safe harbor, could not witness it. First was the passing of the “Army of the Potomac.” I did not see this, as we were too busy with our own affairs and preparation for the review of the Western Army next day. This I was fortunate enough to be in position to witness. Of course it would have been a matter of pride for me to have been, as I might have been, in the ranks with my company. But I preferred to secure a good position along the line of march and watch the grand western veterans as they filed by, led by our General Sherman, whom we had followed through these years of campaigning from Vicksburg to the glorious end. Who that saw it can ever forget the tremendous ovation that greeted Sherman as he appeared at the head of his column—and his bronzed, travel-stained, weather-beaten veterans? As they filed by in company front, with their faded uniforms, but proud bearing, lines as straight as arrows, my heart was in my throat with exultation.

Then followed the disbanding and separation—the

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putting off the panoply of war to assume the garb and avocations of peace; the end of war's turmoil and excitement and a settling down to the monotony of civil life—a new start to many of us. My special service secured for me an earlier discharge than the other members of my company, and I was mustered out at Crystal Springs, D. C., near Washington; the regiment being held in service until July 15, when it was mustered out at Louisville, Kentucky.

Thus ended about as strenuous a three years' experience as could well fall to the lot of youth. I was a veteran at nineteen. What seemed a special providence had saved me from wounds or any critical sickness. I did not have a single day's hospital record, and the worst that befell me was an occasional physical upset that required no more radical treatment than that at the daily regimental sick call. Nevertheless, an outraged stomach made havoc with my digestive organs, that time and the most careful habits have not been able to repair since. When other things failed, we nearly always had plenty of coffee—and good, strong, genuine coffee at that. Used intemperately, as the conditions compelled, a pint or more at a time, hurriedly swallowed, it could not but be ruinous to the digestion of a growing, undeveloped young man—and the effect has been, taken in connection with the other irregular diet, to make me subject to almost intolerable sick headaches ever since. But I can afford and am willing to thus suffer, for the memory of the scenes and experiences of those days. They will never fade while mem-

ory lasts. My mind seems to cling to them more vividly as the years go by, and, what is peculiar, the most fearful and trying have made the deepest impression. Many of the simple, ordinary details of every-day life in the army in its smooth, quiet moods have gone from me. Without the data supplied by my war-time letters I would be utterly unable to relate as much as I have done of the routine of camp life and incidents there and on the march. But a battle, or an adventure accompanied with the elements of unusual danger and hardship, or having some unusually striking features, can be recalled with remarkable detail, so that no written record is needed to bring them vividly to memory.

I never considered myself brave. On the contrary, as a boy was naturally fearful if not a rank coward, so that, I am free to confess, I could never face shot and shell with the indifference some claimed for themselves. Many a time, if not every time while we were waiting and expecting to be pushed into an engagement, would I have given almost anything to be out of it, back at the rear in some safe place. But despite such sensations, I always had enough strength of will and valued my reputation too much, to shirk—so was enabled to collar myself and compel myself to face the danger. But in the instances where we found ourselves suddenly, without time for forethought, under fire, or when once in the turmoil and excitement of battle, I declare I was not conscious of fear.

The memory of my old company associates remains very dear to me. As a rule they were a brave, loyal,

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reliable lot of young fellows, always zealous for the good name of the 76th and proud, as they have a right to be, of its record. They became as useful citizens as they were good soldiers, and not a few have attained enviable position in civil life. But many, most of them in the more than forty years since the close of the war, have gone over to answer to roll call with the vast army of their comrades beyond the shores of time—to join the great company who laid down their lives in battle, camp, and hospital during the years of our soldiering. We who yet survive are old men. I, for one, am grateful that it has been given me to live to a time when can be seen such magnificent fruits of that great strife in an undivided country and a re-united people—a great and prosperous nation commanding the respect and admiration of all nations. Before many years the last of us will have passed away—certain that none of us who stood shoulder to shoulder in those stern experiences of 1861 to 1865, will have lived in vain in having done his mite toward the salvation and unification of our beloved country. May those who succeed us be as true to its preservation, and growth in freedom and righteousness, as were the members of the old 76th Ohio.

FENNIMORE, WIS., April, 1908.













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