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# THE STORY OF SHILOH

BY DR. J. M. W. HILL







THE scenes of great events are common property of mankind. There is a subtle ownership of the soul covering all the tracts of glory that dot the rugged earth. This vast estate of the mind can not be vended away from us by the mere owners of lands. With an unbroken chain of title, we possess all the places which Fame has touched, from the Hill of Calvary to the Argonne Forest; to have and to hold forever.

And so it is that we possess the sacred places upon which rests this wondrous story.

The battle-scarred city of Corinth, the beautiful woods of Shiloh, and the road that lies between them belong to all the world. Never again will the soft shadows of seclusion rest upon them, for the spot-light of history will cast upon them an eternal ray.



# THE STORY OF SHILOH

*By* DELONG RICE

*Superintendent, Shiloh National Military Park*

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D E D I C A T I O N

**T**HIS humble commentary is dedicated to the valor of a hundred thousand Americans who fought in the great battle of Shiloh—to the memory of all the dead—to the spirit of reunion and good will between the living—to the eternal brotherhood of the sections, that our country may ever be, as it now is, the most potent unit in this world for humanity, justice and liberty.

—The Author.



## F O R E W O R D

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**I**T must ever be that battlefields where God-fearing men fear not to die will be sacred ground.

As I have walked through these far-famed woods and fields, I have often thought of how long they might have escaped the notice, and of how surely they would have missed the homage of the distant hurrying world had not the battle of Shiloh sounded in the ears of history. Now, these quiet places are the student's problem, the patriot's shrine, the poet's theme. Valor has drawn this wilderness into the libraries of the earth, clothed this isolated spot with immortality, and lifted it far above the plane of mere places and objects of nature.

Shiloh was the first great battle of the Civil War; it was the first great battle of this continent, within the view of history. More Americans perished here in two days than were killed in all the years of the Revolutionary War.

The first Red Cross tent field hospital ever set up on a battlefield was set up on the field of Shiloh.

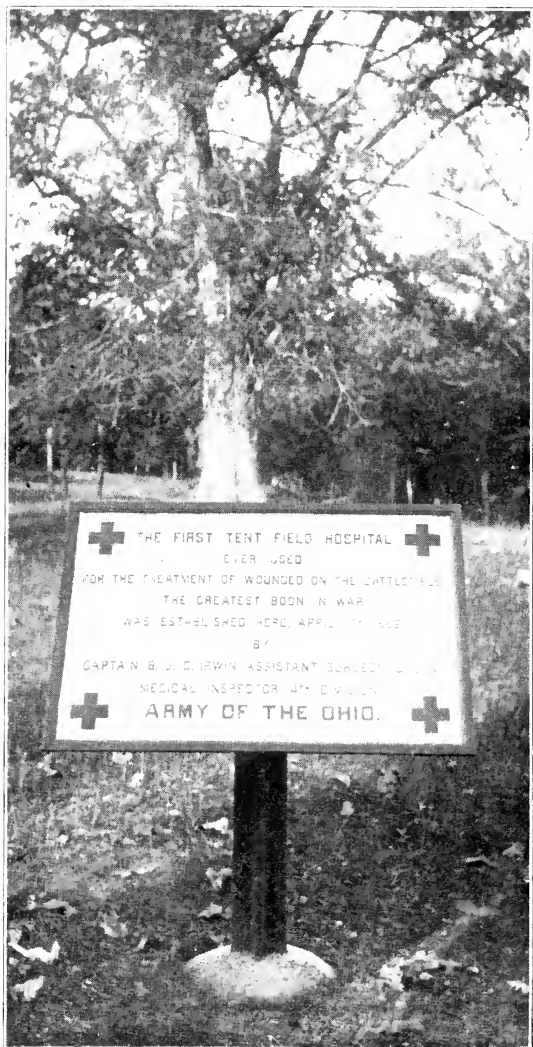
This was the only great battle of that destructive war on whose field there was not a breastwork, nor a trench, nor even a rifle pit. It was the closest and fiercest death grapple of the American manhood of that unhappy time.

Shiloh closed the wonderful life of Albert Sidney Johnston, and opened the great career of Ulysses S. Grant.

These startling facts are my excuse for this brief volume.

—The Author.





✚ THE FIRST TENT FIELD HOSPITAL ✚  
EVER USED  
FOR THE TREATMENT OF WOUNDED ON THE BATTLEFIELD  
THE GREATEST BLOOD BATH IN WAR  
WAS ESTABLISHED HERE, APRIL 4, 1862  
BY  
CAPTAIN B. J. IRWIN, ASSISTANT SURGEON, U. S. A.  
MEDICAL INSPECTOR, 47<sup>th</sup> DIVISION  
✚ ARMY OF THE OHIO. ✚

TABLET MARKING THE SPOT ON SHILOH BATTLE FIELD WHERE  
THE FIRST TENT FIELD HOSPITAL WAS ESTABLISHED



## THE STORY OF SHILOH



**V**ICTOR HUGO has sung to all the future, a sad and wondrous song of Waterloo. Under the spell of his descriptive genius we see a little cloud, recruiting from the mists of heaven, double-quick across the Belgian sky, outmarch the "Grand Army" and spread mud and mire across the pathway of its lumbering guns. We see the "Hollow Road of Ohain," that wide and fateful furrow of death, entomb the fortunes of earth's mightiest warrior, and, rich-watered with the blood of dead and dying Frenchmen, enfold the sad seed of St. Helena.

O, for the pen of a Hugo, to write the story of that other Waterloo where the armies of Grant and Johnston met!



Like the first, it had its Blucher and its Grouchy, for, though Buell came, Van Dorn did not come. It had its timely cloud which flew the flag of the Union cause. It had its "Sunken Road," a deceptive, seeming track of chance which had waited, unsuspected, in its unmolested shadows, through many a year, for the fulfillment of its destiny.

As some unknown pioneer of early Tennessee marked out that lonely highway by driving his rude wagon along the edge of the thick woods which the world now knows as the "Hornet's Nest" section of the Shiloh battlefield, little did he dream that he was breaking ground for the grave of the Southern Confederacy. Far down the years from his forgotten and uneventful journey, that road, bitten by many a hoof and wheel, and washed by many a rain, held the





brave lines of Prentiss and Wallace within its protecting banks, while charge after charge of the victory-flushed lines of gray fainted upon its bloody brink.

In presenting this brief commentary on the most fateful battle of our Civil War, it is not my purpose to invade the realm of the historian and usurp his tedious labors. Able pens have long since written the story of Shiloh—of its long marches, the clashes of its human lines, and every order which quickened or abated its tempest of death. Encomium has already given to its soldiers, the choicest flowers of love and gratitude; and, though narrow-minded criticism has shot its poisoned arrows from side to side, there is unscathed glory enough for both the blue and the gray. When deeds are golden they need but the light of truth upon them to make them dazzle the world.



Following the footsteps of fate that led to this sad, ensanguined field, let us view, through the sobering lenses of fifty-seven years, the motives, deliberations, impulses and accidents which caused this great battle to be fought when and where it was; and, with the smoke all blown away, and the mists of tears lifted a little by the winds of time, let us endeavor to read its result to the brief, impassioned fortunes of the Southern Confederacy.

Into the story of Shiloh, widely differing opinions have woven controversies which I shall not herein attempt to settle.

As to whether or not the Union army was surprised by the Confederate attack—as to whether General Sherman was a pillar of strength against the Confederate onrush of the first day, as General

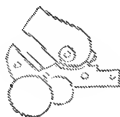


Grant has told us he was, or practically adrift in the wreckage of the storm, as General Buell has described him—as to the cause of the belated arrival of General Lew Wallace—as to whether General Beauregard, in withdrawing his army from action on the evening of the first day, committed a blunder and forfeited victory, or obeyed the necessities of an exhausted army, I deem it proper to reserve my opinions.

Rather let me swiftly unveil the great tragedy in its undisputed outlines, and bid you look upon its astounding array of immortal actors.

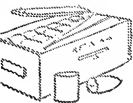
In imagination, I invite you, the reader of this sketch, to leave the present hour, and the place in which you sit, and go back with me to the time and place of Shiloh.

The day to which we have transferred our minds is Sunday, April



sixth, eighteen hundred sixty-two, and, in spirit, we are above the earth, gifted with the mystic vision that holds not only the present, but both past and future within its dreamy scope.

We are looking down on a remote and wooded landscape on the west bank of the Tennessee River, in Hardin County, Tennessee. In all its winding length of twelve hundred miles, this beautiful stream passes no more peaceful spot than was this place before these armies came to destroy its solitude forever, and place it on the map of the world. In astonishment, you speak to me, and ask: "Why should this tragedy of history take place here, removed from all centers of population, and twenty miles from a railroad? What manner of vantage is this timbered plain? I see no citadel



of power to invite the jealous clash of mighty armies. Why should these bannered legions come here to shoot the heart out of Nature and ravish with the cannon's roar, the thrush's sylvan song?"

I can but answer that Shiloh is a chance stage of action. Grant's objective was Corinth, Miss., twenty miles away on the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, where he had expected to find and attack Johnston's army; and his troops had assembled here for the march against Corinth.

The Tennessee River, gathering its waters from that wondrous country that raised up the heroes of Kings Mountain, and flowing by the unknown and unsung table land of Shiloh, volunteered a gleaming roadway to the transports of Grant, and brought his



troops to this high bluff which is, for him, the gateway to history and to glory.

The road which you see stretching away from this landing to the Southwest, marks the highest and driest route to Corinth, from any point along the river.

By his superior, General H. W. Halleck, who is stationed at St. Louis, General Grant has been ordered to delay the attack on Corinth until the arrival of Buell's army now marching from middle Tennessee to reënforce him.

Divining the purpose of his adversary, General Johnston decided not to await the attack, but to become the aggressor—to move swiftly against the army of Grant, in the hope of crushing it before Buell could join him.

From his headquarters in the Inge home, the veteran commander issued the order for the





SHELL-SCARRED WHITE OAK, SHILOH BATTLE FIELD, OVERSHADOWING THE SPOT WHERE GEN. ALBERT SIDNEY JOHNSTON FELL.

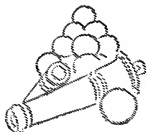




forward movement on the morning of April 3rd; and Corinth was delirious with hope and joy, as the music of drum and fife and piccolo floated on her languorous air, timing the eager tramp of the battle-bannered host.

But beyond the spell of the music and the thrill of the marching, was the sad preparation for the grim results of the coming combat. While these buoyant troops were swinging out from the gates of Corinth, busy hammers were already falling in the making of five hundred coffins which the commander had ordered before he rode away; homes had been disposed for hospitals; and physicians and nurses were silently waiting for the guns to begin.

The weary march is over, and in the light of paling stars, we see the long gray lines, yet silent and



still, over there to the Southwest, just three and one-half miles from this Landing, and only a little more than one mile beyond the sleeping lines of blue.



**A**ND now, before those lines close in their blighting embrace, let us glance along their separate ranks and see what immortals are there. We can not enumerate the heroes, for every man of all the thousands is a hero. There is not a conscript in either army. Every soldier is a volunteer, and yet, in all the threatening scene, there is nothing of the aspect of the gathering mob, for the spirit and decorum of West Point are presiding there.

Of the more than thirty Generals guiding the two hosts to the hour of fate, many are counted among the ablest products of the United



States Military Academy; many are veterans of the Mexican War, former classmates, friends and comrades, marching against each other with the best blood of the divided Nation behind them.

First we look along the lines of blue. Beyond the battle field our vision encompasses the distant camp of Wallace's Third Division, the absent but hurrying columns of Buell, and the headquarters of the commander, eight miles away. It is difficult to believe that that plain, firm-jawed man, quartered in the quiet little village of Savannah, Tennessee, is beginning an endless march into the fadeless light of history. He is not forty years old, and yet adversity has left its inevitable lines of sadness in his face, and he appears much older. Long before he shall reach fifty, he will be proclaimed the



savior of a Nation; and the crowned rulers of the old world will receive him in their palaces with all the pomp of earthly glory, for he is Ulysses S. Grant.

Had his stage of action been set two thousand years ago, he would have been one of Plutarch's men.

Yonder, close by the little log church called Shiloh, is W. T. Sherman, slender, grim and shrewd of countenance. His is the discerning vision that, e'er long, will look beyond the dictionaries of all languages and find the truest definition of War.

Able, fearless, and superb, Don Carlos Buell looks like some knight of another century riding into the picture which our spirits behold.

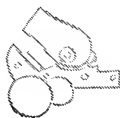
Five miles away is Lew Wallace; and we observe him with peculiar sadness, for his conduct of this day will involve him in a bitter and



lifelong controversy with his chief. But, regardless of the merits of that controversy — regardless of Shiloh, he is one of the country's immortals, and, looking down the years, we see the State of Indiana fix his image in marble, to stand as one of her two contributions to the Hall of Fame in the National Capitol.

There are Prentiss and McClelland, and W. H. L. Wallace, and Crittenden and Lauman, and McCook and Nelson and Rousseau and Wood, conspicuous figures of the gathered and gathering host of blue.

That mellow-voiced young Brigadier of Ohio with the head of a statesman and the manner of a college professor, in nineteen years from this day will be President of the United States, for he is none other than James A. Garfield.



Behold the thick-lipped young officer not yet twenty-nine years of age, riding at the head of the Eleventh Illinois Cavalry—he of the strangely heavy features, but deep and soulful eyes that gather into his brain all the poetry of rivers, woods and fields. Though his insignificant part in this great battle will but claim a passing glance from the historian, in a little while he will be known as the Demosthenes of the nineteenth century, and his thoughts, clothed with incomparable beauty, will be printed in every language of the civilized world. He is Robert G. Ingersoll.

Over there in the Thirtieth Indiana Infantry is a young Lieutenant of nineteen years, who will take no conspicuous laurels from this field, but long after this breach of the States shall have



been healed, he will serve the Nation in places of distinction. Looking far down the coming years, we see him following old Geronimo through the wilds of Mexico. We see him at El Caney, and in the far away Philippines, where he is to die on the firing line beneath the stars and stripes. He is Henry W. Lawton.

With the Twenty-fifth Kentucky is Benjamin H. Bristow, destined to be a conspicuous figure in the cabinet of a President, a pioneer in the yet distant fight against the power of the Trust.

That brilliant young officer in the Twenty-fifth Indiana is John W. Foster, who, in the future diplomacy of the reunited Nation, will serve as Minister to three different countries. He, too, shall sit at the cabinet table of a President, a diplomat and a statesman of influence and power.



Behind this wonderful array of leaders, but humble units mixed in the mingling mass of blue, are others yet unsung, who will leave their impress on the thought and action of the age.



**N**OW turning our eyes to the lines of gray, whom do we see marshaling the attacking host? They also belong to history.

We look long and wonderingly at the tall, comely figure of Albert Sidney Johnston, for we know that he is in the sixtieth year of his life. He seems the spirit of youth crowned with gray. The story of his career to this climactic hour, reads like some romantic legend of the long ago. Indeed, his eventful life is a link between the old and the new civilizations. He is the senior among the great and active spirits now moving in the limelight







HISTORIC OAKS, SHILOH BATTLE FIELD, RISING ABOVE POSITION OF SIEGE GUNS, THE NUCLEUS OF GEN. GRANT'S LAST



in our troubled and severed country. He is older than Abraham Lincoln, older than Jefferson Davis, older than Robert E. Lee. U. S. Grant was but a child of four years when Albert Sidney Johnston graduated at West Point. This gray commander of the gray host was a youth of twelve when the battle of Waterloo was fought, and was a student of the campaigns of the great Napoleon while that immortal was yet in the flesh. He has lived within the lifetime of every President from Washington to Lincoln save Washington alone. Looking back to the days of his young manhood, we see him a brilliant and popular figure in the exclusive society of the National Capitol at that eventful time when the social and political life of the country revolved around the wills and wishes of such giants as Webster, Clay, Calhoun, Jack-



son, Benton and Everett. Refusing a proffered appointment to the staff of Winfield Scott at the age of twenty-three, we see him forego the luxury of Washington official life, and turn his face toward the wild frontier where hardships and dangers are the soldier's certain lot. We see him in that far away Indian expedition of 1827, when Black Hawk and Red Bird were captured, and again in the Black Hawk War of 1832, moving with the most rugged and dauntless characters of that rugged and glorious time.

Looking along the years, we see him on a memorable occasion in the City of Louisville, listening with fired heart, to the great speech of Stephen F. Austin pleading the cause of Texas independence; and then we see him riding away to that distant frontier of the South-



west fresh-stained with the blood that immortalized the Alamo and the field of San Jacinto. We see him enter the Texas army as a private soldier, and become its Commander-in-Chief, then Secretary of War in that wonderful Republic which was pressed from hearts of courage by the heel of Mexican tyranny.

Another short lapse of time, and we find him in the storming line at Monterey.

Still closer down the years, we see him in command of the Second U. S. Cavalry, that famous organization which swept the Indian terror from hundreds of miles of the great Western border.

But a little later, and he is leading the expedition to threatening Utah, the Zion of the Mormons—triumphantly carrying the stars and stripes through the streets of Salt Lake City.



To view him in his next post of duty, our visions leap away to California, where he is in command of the Department of the Pacific. The war cloud above the quarreling States is dark and low. He is opposed to secession, but Texas has spoken, and he resigns and makes the long journey to Richmond, where he is given the ranking active command in the Southern Confederacy.

Now we behold him in the searching spotlight of the first great war tragedy of America. He is the star of the gray actors, and in his supporting cast are men of illustrious records.

There, by his side is Beauregard, who resigned the Superintendency of West Point to follow the fortunes of Louisiana out of the Union; who directed the bombardment of Fort Sumpter and

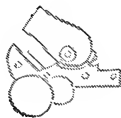


commanded at Bull Run. His body bears scars of Mexican fury brought from the field of Chapultepec.

With the foremost corps is William J. Hardee, for more than twenty years a brilliant figure in the military affairs of the country, former representative of the Government in Europe in the study of cavalry methods, Commandant at West Point and author of the United States official text book on Infantry Drill and Tactics now being used by both Union and Confederate armies.

The commander of the corps second in line is Braxton Bragg, a hero of the Seminole wars, a veteran of Monterey and Buena Vista.

Commanding the corps next in line—that man of majestic person, bearing himself as if he were a Roman Senator stepped out of the



long ago—is Leonidas Polk, the great and beloved Bishop of the Southwest.

Back yonder where the most distant line of gray rests across the Corinth road, a little more than four miles from the river, is the commander of Johnston's Reserve Corps, for years the most dazzling and conspicuous figure of the political life of the South. He was a Congressman at thirty years of age, and Vice-President of the United States at thirty-five. He was the nominee of the pro-slavery party for President against Lincoln; and he stepped from a seat in the United States Senate into the passion-swept road that led him to this battle field. He is John C. Breckinridge.

Guiding the divisions and brigades of these four grand corps now crouching to spring, are





Cheatham and Clark and Ruggles and Withers and Hindman and Russell and Stewart and Bushrod Johnson and Stephens and Gibson and Anderson and Pond and Gladden and Chalmers and John K. Jackson and Shaver and Cleburne and Wood and Trabue and Bowen and Statham; there are Forrest and John Morgan, and Bate; and, mixed in the militant multitude are many yet unknown to fame who will sit in the high places of their States through trying years to come, to direct the thought of a sorely stricken people. From this vortex of destruction will emerge fire-tried souls, to become the counsellors, judges and statesmen of the Southland.



**D**O you see that little band of blue-clad warriors stealing cautiously out from Prentiss' line to reconnoitre the suspicious front?



They are the Fingers of Destiny, feeling through the paling darkness of this death-charged dawn for the alarm that shall awaken the Union army to its impending danger. Whether led by judgment or chance, or guided by the will of the God of battles, they have gone straight to Hardee's picket line; they are now receiving that fateful volley which will sound through centuries announcing the opening of the Battle of Shiloh; and the hour is four fifty-five.

The morning is coming bright and clear; the ground is soft from many rains; the forest is fresh-washed and timidly green.

The gray host is rising from its anxious, fitful rest. Between the river and the rising lines of gray is the blue legion of Grant; and as the two armies quicken with the



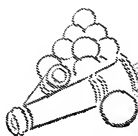


BEAUTIFUL MONUMENT OF GRANITE AND BRONZE, SHILOH  
BATTLE FIELD, TO THE MEMORY OF IOWA SOLDIERS



savage] instinct of battle, we see that Shiloh is to be the first grand combat of the continent of Liberty.

How innocently these beardless, untaught soldiers are approaching each other; and what a tragedy! The average age of all these thousands is less than twenty years; and these smoothe-faced boys, gathered from the widely scattered homes of the North and of the South, where hearts are aching and breaking for them, know but little of the arts of defense and attack. Not a trench has been dug in all the battle plain; not an earth work has been thrown up; not a rifle pit has been sunk into the ground. Without trick or shield, eighty thousand men are seeking to destroy each other; and every man is a patriot.



The battle breaks with the break of day. The gray line is sweeping forward, though resisted and torn at every step. On, and on, and on it sweeps in a whirlwind of fire and death. The hour of twelve has struck, and the Union forces have been swept from half the field. The trend of the moving conflict is Northeastward, down and diagonally toward the river.

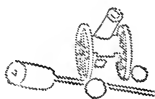
From where Clanton's Cavalry hugs the river marshes on the Confederate right to where Wharton with his Texas Rangers, guards its left at the edge of the Owl Creek bottom, the unbroken length of this sweeping, bleeding, triumphant line, is more than two miles.

But along all the jagged front of the receding line of blue, no flag of truce is fluttering; and, as it gives ground, it is exacting from the advancing foe a terrible toll of blood.



Now all the fronts are clashing—center, right and left; and in the frenzy of the scene, we glimpse again the two Commanders:

There is Grant, unshaken in the midst of his brave though melting lines. His face, like Bonaparte's, is a mask of granite; and if there is aught in his soul save unyielding courage and confidence, no man may read it through that exterior of stone. With his columns crashing around him, and with his best and bravest commanders yielding inch by inch, no spirit of panic sets its yellow sign upon the serenity of his countenance. With the savage discord of a hundred hurricanes rolling by him, does he, as did that other man of granite, see "the star of destiny?" Is that mystic voice which comes only to the fated few, whispering to him through the fiery tumult, that



this day is but an incident—that through him, Appomattox **MUST** be?

With Buell's rushing columns yet far out of touch, and with Lew Wallace's sorely needed division still strangely absent, he placidly remarks to a member of his staff: "If I do not win to-day, I will win to-morrow."

Yonder with the right wing of the gray line is Johnston, watching, directing and giving marvelous impulse to the flaming tide of victory wherever he touches it. Through the morning hours, we have seen him with Gladden and Shaver; then away to the left with Cleburne; then with Stewart's Brigade shifting to the right. We saw him pause in the camp of the Eighteenth Wisconsin to direct the movements of Chalmers' and Jackson's Brigades to the extreme

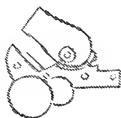




right. He is calm, unaffected and serious. In issuing his clear and decisive orders for the hurling of his human machines of death, he seems almost gentle; and, though he is now within the bright focus of a thousand years to come, he does not mar the dignity of the picture with dramatic pose or spectacular gesture. Simplicity is the becoming mantle of his majestic person.

In the early hours of the conflict we saw him come upon a deserted camp of the enemy; with a smile, he selected as his share of the "booty," a little new tin cup, remarking that he might need it; and now, as he rides along the charging lines, we see him waving to the cheering soldiers, with his shining trophy still in his uplifted hand.

Now he is placing his Reserve Corps in position for what he hopes may be a decisive stroke;



and, with his staff around him, these all-important dispositions engage him for more than an hour.

Just beyond the surging fronts, those hovering troops, with measured and steady tramp, are wheeling and swinging into positions of vantage, whence he soon will call them to the thundering vortex.

As we look with fascinated minds, upon this calm evolution of strategy in the very furnace of battle, a vagrant breeze rifts the smoke above an open field that almost touches the spot where the gray commander is placidly issuing his orders, and a sight of strange, uncanny beauty meets our eyes—a wide peach orchard in fullness of bloom, deserted by birds and bees that flew before the battle's breath, and kissed by cannon-smutted winds.



But pity not this blighted beauty, for, by their glorious death, these shivered trees shall wave immortal in the records of men, and these shattered blossoms will blow forever on the pages of history.

Now the Confederate Reserve Corps is beginning to move. To the East of that wounded field of bloom the Brigade of Bowen is entering the zone of death, and as the gray Chief rides close behind, all the members of his staff are hurrying away to different parts of the field, each with some message vital to the purpose of the hour. That uncommon, fierce-eyed man, the last to leave him, is Isham G. Harris, the Governor of Tennessee; and as he gallops away to send the Brigade of Statham straight through the stricken orchard, General Johnston



is alone. The place is one of beauty—a gentle knoll crested by a great oak reaching out its peculiarly horizontal arms in all directions, as if it would say to the world: “Mark me well, for I am about to be the only witness to a tragedy.” This calm watcher of his battle is alone in the cold eye of history—alone with the God of his destiny, and his life’s work is done.

It was his mission to bring to its highest pinnacle of hope, this new-born Nation of the South. That hope now moving on this gray and exultant tide, will never again, in all the bloody years to follow, reach the altitude of this hour; but the lone watcher will never know. At twenty-five minutes past two he proudly watches the swiftly moving troops of Statham, the blossoms of that



trembling orchard sifting down upon them like the painted snows of Fairy Land.

At two-thirty a deadly bullet finds the fountain of his life. His last vision of earth rests upon his forward-marching columns; the latest sounds that come to him are sounds of victory. He is dying; he is dead.



**T**HROUGH all its length the gray line flinches, reels and shudders from the shock; then plunges forward again under the new leadership of Beauregard. Its right and left wings, swinging slowly around, are sweeping the Union forces into a concentrated zone of battle, but the Union center has become as marble, and the frenzied Confederates, hurling themselves against it, are rebounding as if they had been shot against



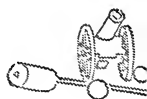
a cliff. That center is the "Hornet's Nest," through which chance or God has carved that fateful "Sunken Road," within whose banks the brave line of blue seems to have its back against some invisible wall of fate. Again and again, and then again, these columns of the South carry their banner to the very brink of that road, only to reel and recoil, and go back in shattered fragments. It is plain to the Confederate Commanders that no human units can go through that line—that iron alone can meet and pierce that front.

O, Muse of History, mark well this struggle on the soil of Tennessee, for, if you write in truth, you must tell the world that, since men have slain each other on fields of strife, no braver, firmer line was ever held against a charging foe; and that no sublimer



courage ever drove the breasts of men against an unyielding front! Mark, too, O writer of immortal records, that these, all, are Americans!

Back yonder, west of the Duncan field, just a little more than a quarter of a mile beyond that mill of death, under the direct orders of General Ruggles, all available Confederate batteries are swiftly massing. Now sixty-two guns are playing on the "Hornet's Nest" line. Great trees that have fought and whipped the storms of centuries are blasted with the quickness of a breath; the air is thick with falling limbs and flying twigs, and the troubled landscape booms with ceaseless thunders, as if all the lightnings of Heaven were convening within that trembling forest.



That line has stood the hammer of concentrated fury until five o'clock has come and passed, but now, at last, it breaks and yields the ground which it has made immortal. The two wings of the attacking Confederates swing in like the closing jaws of an iron pincers, and two thousand Union prisoners, including the indomitable Prentiss, lay down their arms.

But, bristling beyond are other lines of blue, and both sides fight on until they stick their bayonets into the evening twilight.

As the torn and bleeding units of the Union forces fall back with their ever receding and battered front which they have defended from the rising to the setting of the sun, a new line is being formed for a final resistance. As the shadows deepen, this last new line of this bloody day rests its left



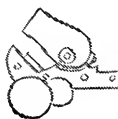


against the bank of the river at Pittsburg Landing, and stretches westward to the Savannah road.

Before this last grim line lies its battle field, littered with the wrecks of its guns, and made gruesome by the bodies of its dead and dying, mixed and crossed with the dead and dying of its foes; back of it are the river and the impassable swamps, but with it and of it is the spirit of Grant, and so it stands at bay to meet whatever may come.

Less than half a mile away, the oncoming Confederate line stretches a threatening arc of danger westward from the river to the Corinth road, and on beyond the Savannah road, overlapping the western extremity of the Union line.

Could the eyes of all the people of the great North, at this critical

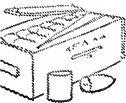


moment, look upon this scene, their hearts would beat with anxiety for the impending issue.

Such moments are condensed ages from which Fate, the master player, draws the unexpected cards that trump the dreams of Nations, and win away the fairest hopes of men.

While the broken but rallying columns of Grant are steadying their fire-wrought nerves to meet the final onset of their flushed and eager foe, there is an unexpected pause in the line of gray as, from unit to unit, an order from the commander is flying—an order that will set an eternal question upon the lips of the future—an order to retire for the night.

As the gray line is suddenly drawn away, and the two sore and sullen armies begin the long vigil of the restless night, we look



upon a carnival of agony such as can come only to a battle field—the silent faces of thousands of men dead, yet destined to live forever in the grateful affections of their people; the sufferings of the wounded, and all the attendant horrors of the surgeon's ghastly work.

Down there by that little cabin at the river's brink, the severed arms and legs of soldiers are stacked like cord-wood; and this half-green land which, but yesterday was bright with wild flowers and sweet with song, is mantled with gloom and crowned with sorrow.

And now, as if to confuse confusion, a storm is descending upon the stricken field. The lightnings hold aloft their flickering candles, revealing in fitful flashes, the groaning terror which the pitying



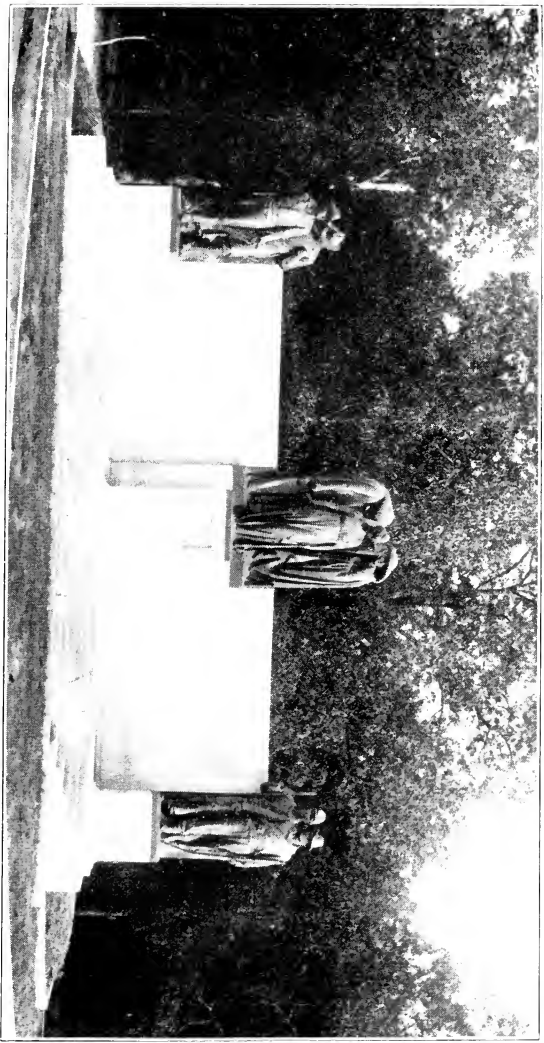
Night had sought to hide beneath its cloak of darkness. The voice of thunder rolls madly through the upper deeps, as if the war passions of the North and the South had leaped from the face of the earth, and were scolding each other through the lips of the storm.

While the weary commanders await the fortunes of the uncertain tomorrow, the army of Buell and the troops of Wallace swell the blue line with more than twenty thousand fresh soldiers.



**A**NOTHER morning dawns, and all the fronts are changed. The gray and threatening column which pressed against the river's edge in the falling darkness of yesterday, now lies far back in the center of the field, while the eager line of blue, fronted with Buell and winged with Wallace, is mov-





CONFEDERATE MONUMENT OF SEVEN WONDERFUL BRONZE STATUES, SHILOH BATTLE FIELD, TO THE MEMORY OF ALL CONFEDERATE SOLDIERS



ing to the attack. Again the conflict rages; again the "Hornet's Nest," the "Peach Orchard," and all those trampled fields and splintered woods are wrapped in flame and tuned with battle thunder, as the living fight above the dead; again this ravaged landscape is being graved with the sword and etched with flashing guns, upon the pages of history.

We see the sorely wounded line of gray pushed back step by step until it loses the field and begins its melancholy march back to Corinth whence it came—Corinth, beautiful type of the town of the old South, the South that soon must pass away. How calm in its grief is this place of beauty and of sorrow! Already holding in its stricken heart, the body of its dead chief, it now must open its gates to receive this defeated host which so recently marched through its streets with flying banners.



Looking down on those streets from our seat in the clouds, we fathom the depths of the unspeakable misery of war. On every available house the hospital flags are flying; mutilated and suffering men, drenched by the storm, are being hurried in to the waiting couches; couriers are arriving, and news of the growing disaster is spreading from group to group like a sickening contagion.

Almost in front of the Inge home, now badged with mourning, the two thousand Union prisoners are waiting, under guard; and down the steps of that home, comes a little group of men with bowed heads, bearing the body of the dead chief resting in a plain pine coffin completely covered with battle flags. It is placed on a caisson and drawn through the mass of prisoners, to a waiting train, to be carried to New Orleans.

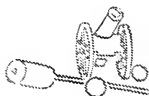




As the vanquished army trudges away from its lost field, our eyes return to the mournful desolation of Shiloh. Down yonder in the cannon-plowed fields, and in the scorched and tattered woods, thirty-six hundred Americans have died—twenty thousand Americans have given of their blood.

With unfettered visions, our eyes sweep the whole country as millions of people hang, breathless, on the result of this battle which may mean union or disunion. We glimpse the gloom of Richmond and the anxiety of Washington. We have not the heart to look in at the homes of the twenty-one States that sent troops into this struggle.

Looking away to the country of the great lakes, we see one of the world's immortals pursuing the humble trade of a newsboy and

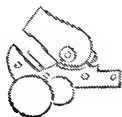


performing his first act of genius in spreading the tidings of Shiloh. He is but a boy of fifteen running on the Grand Trunk Railway between Detroit and Port Huron, Michigan; but because we know that his name will shine further down the ages than any man now living, we observe him with deepest fascination. Standing in front of the bulletin board of the Detroit Free Press and reading the startling news of the battle, exaggerated to sixty thousand killed and wounded it comes to his keen and luminous brain, that if the same excitement prevails along his route, there will be opportunity for an unprecedented sale of papers, if he can but get some inkling of the news telegraphed ahead. Going to the operator in the depot, he gives him Harper's Weekly and some other papers for three months upon his agreement to telegraph



the stations the substance of the matter on the bulletin board. Conceiving the idea that he can sell a thousand papers, he counts his money, and finds that he has only enough to buy three hundred. Venturing into the forbidding sanctum of the editor, he states his plan, and asks the two men present for credit. One refuses; the other intercedes; the deal is closed, and, with the assistance of another boy, he lugs the thousand papers to the train. Already the operators at all the stations are marking up the headlines of the tragic news; already the town of Corinth, the woods of Shiloh and the road that lies between them, belong to the world. Never again will the soft shadows of seclusion rest upon them, for the spot-light of history will cast upon them an eternal ray.

At Utica, the first stop, the newsboy sells thirty-five papers;



at Mount Clemens the crowd surges in a living mass to reach him, and the price of papers goes to ten cents; all along the way this is repeated; at Port Huron, the waiting crowd comes like an avalanche; the price of papers soars to twenty-five cents; every copy is sold, and the first serious experiment of this incomparable genius is crowned with success.

But who is he, that we should so long dwell upon his connection with the sad story of Shiloh? Even as this battle is of the life and transcendent purpose of this Republic, so is this yet unknown boy. In the infinite realm of invention, he will be king, and the ages will bring none to claim his throne. Nature will whisper to him so softly that others will not hear, and his wondrous mind will sense her finest secrets. He will



intercept the soul of light and make it the servant of mankind; he will imprison the spirit of song in a cell of wax, that one century may sing to another; he will transfix and hold upon a needle's point, the notes of birds, the laughter of children, the melody and the wisdom of orators. To the stage of the theatre he will bring the action of the world, and within the narrow limits of a little room, the streets of cities will teem with life, great rivers will cast their foaming falls, and all the oceans will roll their shifting tides. By his will and work, the generations of the future may bring into their drawing-rooms the beauty and the music and the wildness of the earth. Within the warmth of glowing firesides, adventurous explorers will scale the peaks of the frozen Alps; wild creatures will pace their native jungles, and



deserts will stretch their endless wastes, alive with moving caravans.

Light and Sound and Motion, the angels of his fame, will fly with his name through all the world.

He is Thomas A. Edison.



**A**S the curtain falls on this vast stage of human grief and glory, we may truly say that no tragedy of earth was ever played by a greater cast of characters, nor with scenes more grandly set—foot-lights of flashing guns; wings of living trees; background of flowing waters and gray-green hills; restless, shifting dome of stars and sun and storm; spot-lights of lightning; music of thunder; audience, millions of people!

And now, my reader—you who have sat with me upon a cloud of



fancy while we have played that we were spirits—you have permitted me to ignore the march of time and to transcend the limits of the senses. Under the spell of what our souls have witnessed, I have spoken to you, in the present tense, of events long gone. I have done so in order that I might unveil to you a living vision of this great tragedy, instead of telling to you a story that is old.

Together, we have seen a hundred thousand men hold each other in the embrace of death from the rising to the setting of two suns, while there passed before us, through that field of fire, the immortals of Shiloh. Over by that blossoming orchard we saw the eventful career of Albert Sidney Johnston come to its end. In the “double shadow of night and death,” we saw the chameleon



tide of victory change from gray to blue; and, in the thunder of the guns that closed the dreadful scene, we saw Grant begin his long march to Appomattox, and Sherman set out for "the sea."

Now, I invite you to descend with me from our cloud of fancy—to come back to now, and remember that fifty-seven merciful years lie between us and that harrowing drama which we have witnessed through the wonderful glasses of imagination.

Looking backward through those years we may now read the tremendous consequences of this battle; for it was here that the real frontier of the South was broken. It was here that Destiny which is but the will of God, began the execution of plans then so veiled, yet now so plain.

While the brilliant star of Albert Sidney Johnston was sinking in death, leaving his people in a mist





of tears, there arose another star out of the smoke of Shiloh—a star destined to shed its rays far down the reaches of time—the slow-moving, yet imperturbable and ever ascendent genius of Ulysses S. Grant.

It matters not that these two extraordinary men opposed each other here. Each was a great American, wielding the battle arm of his people, and fearlessly baring his own life to the storm of wrath which fate had cast upon our severed country.

I believe that the best and truest American of to-day is the man who can, with most sincerity, and with greatest freedom of mind and heart, pity the sufferings, laud the courage, and honor the memory of every soldier who fought on both sides of that war.



As we review the sorrow of it all, let us believe that the God of Battles never permits so great a tragedy to pass without its compensations and rewards to civilization, however terrible may be the price which the people of the hour are required to pay. In the glare of the leaping fires of passion which lighted this continent for four long years, the Nations of the earth saw the muscles of American power; and I believe that the conviction sank deep into the composite mind of mankind that this free Republic, God-fearing, peace-loving, slow to anger, is nevertheless, unconquerable and eternal.

The fifty-seven years that have passed over the field of Shiloh have but brightened its place on the map of the world.

Embraced in a great National Military Park, this sacred ground without change of contour, and



bearing everlasting marks of the tragedy which it staged, is holding up its glorious page of history to the thousands who come to trace the charges and counter charges of its long vanished armies.

Woven into the beauty which Nature has given to this land, is the story of the great conflict. That story which bears no word of dishonor for either side, is written on tablets of iron, shadowed by scarred and veteran trees, sung to by the sighing voice of a great river, and by the softer, sweeter voices of little springs that have paused not nor hushed their whisperings in all the years that have followed since patriots fought and died along their mossy banks.



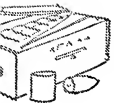
**I**N memory of all the blue, and of all the gray, our great Government has caressed this spot of



land with loving touch, and beauty has sprung from the footprints of horror.

These roads, once rutted by the wheels of wrath, now bend and curve through peaceful shadows, leading the way to the sacred places of vanished battle lines. On hill and knoll the guns of Shiloh still are standing. Their harmless muzzles, now prisoned in the spider's gentle chains, are leveled on phantom ranks of men; and gracing all the quiet scene, are the monuments of the North and of the South, the crystallized sentiments of loving peoples — the bronze and granite guards of impartial history.

What a tribute it is to our country, and to our civilization, that the living remnants of the armies that fought here so desperately, can return together in peace, and look upon this field as the joint heritage of their glory!



This could not be with any other people. It could not have been in any other time. The veteran soldiers of Wellington and the equally brave remnant of Napoleon's shattered army, could not have gone back together to the field of Waterloo, to fraternize above the dust of their fallen comrades.

But there is a perfectly human reason why this is so. The spirits of greed and murder did not march with the Shiloh armies. They fought, not for the glory of kings, nor for the conquest of lands, but for convictions as sacred as their blood. They fought only on the battle field, and committed no crimes against humanity, to stand against the day of peace and reunion.

As we greet the tottering few who still survive that storm, let us unite with them in honoring all



the soldiers who perished here. Who knows but that their spirits reunited in love and peace eternal, are sensible of our every word and thought? Who knows but that their shadowy touch, sweeping the cords of our hearts, is setting into vibration those mystic, soundless harmonies that subdue and dominate the passions of men?

But even if this be not so; if all that is left to us is measured by these heaps of dust that long have slumbered here—if all the souls that flew from out the lips of death on this sad field, have gone too far beyond the zones of wars, too far beyond the realm of hate and strife to hear our petty plaudits of their deeds, still let us consecrate the places where they fell, and bid our sorrowing memories hold their sacrifices in everlasting gratitude.



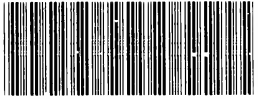








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