

A crust of bread and a corner to sleep in,
A minute to smile and an hour to weep in,
A pint of joy to a peck of trouble,
And never a laugh but the means come double;
And that is life!

Life.

A crust and a corner that love makes precious,
With the smile to warm and the tears to refresh us;
And joy seems sweeter when cares come after,
And a moan is the finest of foils for laughter;
And that is life!

THE DESERTER.

December, 1862, Rosecrans, recently assigned to the command of the army of the Army of the Cumberland, lay encamped on the Nashville turnpike almost within hearing of the church bells of Murfreesboro. Directly in front and shielded by the dense cedar thickets rested the army of the Confederate General Bragg. The rebel defense described a semicircular line between Rosecrans and Stone River in a country admirably adapted to a running fight toward Murfreesboro, the rebel base. Simultaneously the commanders of the opposing forces were planning attack. Rosecrans desired to gain possession of Murfreesboro. Bragg's plan was defensive and night after night he made weak demonstrations on the Union front, which were recognized by Rosecrans at their true value. Unless Bragg dislodged the Federal troops massing in front on his right Polk's corps must be withdrawn behind the river and Murfreesboro abandoned.

War slumbered in the air. The soldiers, fatigued by continuous campaigning, lay stretched about the camp in resting thousands, nor did the crack of the outposts' rifle nor the volleys of cavalry carbines cause so much as the blink of an eyelid nor the raising of a head in the camp. Familiarity had bred contempt for the musket shot and the roar of the cannon in the distance may have caused a curl of the lip—no more. The powder-stained hordes felt the breath of coming battle, but it gave them no concern, and they huddled snugly together in their blankets, for they feared the shivering blasts of December more than the puny bullets of the enemy.

Back in the cedars in a house whose portico raised its head above the shivering bare branches. General Rosecrans pored over his plans of campaign against Bragg. It was essential to drive the rebel general beyond the river and gain possession of Murfreesboro and the Union commander knit his brows and pondered over his contemplated plans of attack.

The door opened and a young intelligent-looking officer stepped inside. His shoulder straps showed the rank of first lieutenant. For an instant he paused at the entrance. He seemed to know his superior was worried and he hesitated to advance. The general was unmindful of his presence. For an instant longer the young officer waited, then as a determined expression appeared on his face he stepped resolutely forward.

'General,' he said.
Rosecrans looked up and a smile broke through the clouds on his face.
'Ah, lieutenant,' he said with a sigh, pushing aside his troublesome maps, 'glad to see you. Sit down. What's on your mind?'

He leaned his head on his hand and looked dreamily from the window. He was more interested in his own thoughts than in what the young officer was saying.

'Eh, what?' he exclaimed, suddenly arousing like one from a dream, 'what is that you are saying?'

The lieutenant looked him in the eye and replied: 'I was asking permission, general, to absent myself from camp for perhaps forty-eight hours.'

General Rosecrans stared at him in amazement.

'I cannot comprehend the meaning of such a request,' he said, finally. 'In less than forty-eight hours I expect to engage General Bragg. I haven't a doubt in the world he is planning a similar attack on my forces. A fierce conflict is inevitable. And yet you have the temerity on the threshold of battle to ask for leave of absence. I repeat I cannot understand it, and, moreover, I am doubly surprised that such a request should come from a trusted officer like you.'

A flush mounted to the temple of the lieutenant. He felt the sting of the general's reply.

'Pardon me, general,' he said, with just a touch of resentment. 'Your suspicious dome injustice. You have never known me to flinch from duty or to tremble in the face of the enemy.'

The general measured him closely and a worried look passed over his face.

'I have spoken of no suspicions,' he said, testily.

'But your manner, sir,' said the other. 'Pardon me, your manner was quite convincing.'

'But such a request at such a time,' said his chief. 'It is peculiar, not to say amazing. Why do you, an officer of my army,

desire leave of absence when we may be hand to hand with the enemy at any hour?'

He looked sharply at his subordinate and his question was freighted with significance. The young officer was not unmindful of it and flushed again.

'You are hard on me, general,' he said, coldly. 'But let me explain. You contemplate an attack on Murfreesboro and it's possible, nay, more than probable, destruction. Murfreesboro holds all that is near and dear to me.'

The general raised his head in interested inquiry. The lieutenant went on:

'In one of the hospitals there lies my young wife, who has just this very day given birth to our first child.'

'Why, how—' the general began.

'Here, in this paper,' cried the lieutenant excitedly. 'It is published in Murfreesboro and contains the story of the birth of a Northern child and gives its mother's name and mine. It is my wife and my child. General Rosecrans, and it is to save them that I ask leave of absence.'

The general took the paper from the excited man and the account with interest. When he laid the paper down there was a look of grave concern on his war-bronzed face.

'Lieutenant Henry,' he said sternly, 'you are deserving of the severest censure for bringing your wife to this part of the country at such a time. I am surprised that a man of your sound sense would do it.'

'I could not help it,' was the impulsive reply. 'I wanted her where she would be near me. She wanted to be here. I could not withstand her appeals and so let her come with my old faithful negro servant. Can't you see, General Rosecrans, I want to move her from Murfreesboro? It means death to her to remain. The roar of the guns, the shriek of the shells, the crash of the walls and the whole awful roar of war would kill her. I only want time to remove her to a place of safety. I will ride like hell, general, and—still if you think it is only cowardice that makes me ask you this favor, then I withdraw the request, for better her death and mine than that.'

Flushed and excited, he drew himself up proudly and turned to go, but a word from his chief arrested him. Evidently his earnest eloquence had made an impression.

'Lieutenant,' said the general, rising and placing his hand kindly on the young officer's shoulders. 'I appreciate your position and sympathize with you. Were it at any other time I would not only gladly give my consent, but send a mounted escort with you. As it is, and he paused, while the lieutenant, anticipating refusal closed his eyes. 'As it is I cannot refuse your appeal. You may go.'

For an instant their eyes met. For another instant the lieutenant seemed incapable of action, then suddenly he sprang forward, grasped his chief by the hand and exclaimed fervently: 'Thank you, general, from the bottom of my heart.'

'Waste no time,' said his chief, seriously. 'Ride for your life. Think what it means to be absent when your comrades are engaged in battle. Think of your future if you fail to return in time.'

It was a warning kindly expressed and Lieutenant Henry grasped its full significance.

Twenty miles on his journey that night through the woods and jamies that beset his path young Henry was thrilled with the thought that he had to run the outposts of two armies. What would become of him if he ran into the lynx-eyed sentries of either line? Musing thus, he was awakened by the sharp cry of:

'Halt!'

His only reply was to crouch low over the saddle and dig his spurs fiercely into the flank of his mount. The horse responded gallantly and shot obliquely into the gloom. The sharp crack of a rifle sounded close by and a bullet whistled over the young rider's head, followed by the shrill cry of the guard, which grew fainter and finally died out as Henry plunged through the cedar thickets. Long before the first faint streaks of dawn illumined the sky a song of joy arose in his heart, when his eyes caught the flickering lights of Murfreesboro. With only thoughts of his suffering wife and new born little one in his mind, he rode boldly forward and plunged head foremost into a squad of Confederate infantry. There was

no chance to return. A dozen long squirrel rifles were leveled at his head and the husky voice of the first sergeant in gray command him to advance. He rode forward with his head erect, but his heart sinking within him. On the very threshold of success he saw his mission fluttering idly to the ground.

'Well, who in—are you, anyhow?' demanded the sergeant gruffly, surveying the hated blue uniform that Henry wore.

'Lieutenant Henry of the—th Ohio,' was the proud response.

'You've got a pile of nerve, I reckon, hain't ye, fer runnin' through these lines in that cussed blue suit? What y' doin' yer, anyhow?'

'I'm here to see my wife, who is dangerously ill at the hospital,' he answered, hoping to stir the sympathy in their hearts if they had any.

A laugh greeted the reply.

'Mebby y'ar and mebbly y'ain't,' said the sergeant, slyly, 'but I want t' tell yo' that I've saw Confederits in blue clothes afore an' I hant been fooled on 'em nuther.'

Hope sprang up in Henry's breast. He was quick to act. Smilingly knowingly, he said: 'You're got sharp eyes, sergeant. Think I'm a spy, don't you?'

'Some folks call it that and some don't,' said the sergeant with a grin, 'but I'll tell yo' I hain't never seen th' Yank at'll git so danged fer away from home by hisself.'

The others nodded assent when he turned toward them and they all looked with friendly eyes on Henry. The sergeant laughed coarsely at his own shrewdness.

'Stands to reason,' he said slowly, 'that he wouldn't be durned fool enough to stumble into a gang like this if he was a Yank. Why say, we was makin' noise enough to scare Rosecrans outen his boots, waint we, boys?'

They all laughed their assent.

'Yo' air perty good,' he said, turning to Henry, 'an' yo've got nerve. Where's the enemy at?'

'Thirty miles south, Rosecrans in command,' he answered promptly, 'but he is not likely to remain there long.'

'Yer danged right, lieutenant,' said the sergeant, 'and—'

'And,' interrupted Henry sharply, 'the old man would be tickled to death if he knew I was making my report to the first outpost I happened to run across.'

He spoke impatiently, and it had its effect.

'You're right,' said the sergeant suddenly, 'but we're only doin' our duty. Go along and give th' old man a good word fer us.'

Henry gave the rein to his horse and shot away in the morning fog. Ten minutes later, he drew up in the rear of the dimly lighted hospital. The good sister gazed in mute astonishment at the uniform when he half staggered into the hallway, then led him silently into the little room. As he bent over the white cot a pair of eyes opened wide. There was wonderment in them for an instant, then they lighted up with love and welcome and with a faint cry.

'Rob!' she stretched forth her feeble hands to him, while the young soldier's tears rained down on the pillow. Shining through the film of suffering the glad eyes gazed admiringly on the stalwart figure of the soldier husband and the faded, dusty suit of blue. With a glad, happy smile the thin hands raised the coverlet, and for the time all thoughts of the grim struggle between the North and South faded from his mind as he gazed in mute wonder on the face of his sleeping first born. A light, reverent touch of his lips to the little one's forehead and a similar loving salute to the flushed and smiling mother, then the serious look returned to Henry's face as the exigencies of the hour crowded back into his mind.

Briefly, tenderly, lest he bring alarm to his suffering young wife, he told her of the necessity of immediate flight, and, brave spirit that she was, she trusted everything to him and bowed acquiescence. The nurse dismayed, protested, but at length gave way. It was the only thing to be done. As he stood watching the rapid movements of the nurse as she prepared for the trip the practical needs aroused him, and as he stopped the nurse and inquired, 'Where's Jeff?' there was a touch on his shoulder, and, turning, he looked into the grinning black face of his trusted negro servant, whose eyes were aglow with welcome and running with tears. The two men so oddly contrasted warmly grasped each other by the hand, then briefly the young officer directed Jeff to secure an ambulance, if he had to steal one, and told him what to do. Jeff hurried away and an hour later, as the town clock pealed the hour of 4, the young officer lifted his trail wife into the primitive vehicle, while the good nurse came after with the slumbering infant. The ambulance bore the big red cross on its side, which was sufficient to carry it through any lines, and Jeff sat on the front seat with the reins.

Henry kissed his wife and child a hurried good-by and then turned to say good-by to the nurse, but there was a surprise for him. She was dressed for traveling, and as he comprehended that she meant to go too he took her face in his hands and reverently touched her forehead with his lips. She seemed not displeased at the courtesy.

'To the Bascom farm, Jeff,' whispered Henry hastily. 'Twenty miles northwest. You know the road. No one will stop you. Remain there until you hear from me. It can't be long before our forces reach Murfreesboro. Good-by and God you bless all.'

Jeff pulled on the lines and the wagon rumbled away. Henry mounted his impatient steed and clattered noisily down the streets. He didn't care a pickayune now if the whole army charged down on him. The great weight was lifted from his mind, for his wife and little one was rapidly borne to the fresh country air and health. He whistled almost as blithely as a schoolboy as he made for the picket post where he had entered the city. It was



SEE THAT LINE
It's the wash,
out early, done
quickly, cleanly,
white.

Pure Soap did it
SURPRISE SOAP
with power to clean with-
out too hard rubbin'g, with-
out injury to fabrics.

SURPRISE
is the name, don't forget it.

easier to pass there than by making new probably sharper acquaintances. The increased thunder of the distant guns admonished him that he had no time to lose. Twenty minutes were gone when he reached the post and saluted the sergeant and his squad.

'All's well, boys,' he cried, cheerfully, 'I saw the old man and put in a good word for you.'

'Thank you, lieutenant, thank you,' was the hearty response, 'don't let none o' them Yanks git hold on ye or it's all day.'

'All right, boys, I guess there are not many in that gang that can trip me up,' he replied.

'All right, all right, good-by, and God bless you.'

He waved his hand in adieu and shot down the road. What a wild ride it was. Through brush and cedar and swamp and over hill, and down dale he drove his panting steed and the farther on he advanced the louder grew the roar of war's grim cry. Daylight was coming and heart beat high as he strove to reach the front. To be absent when the grand charge was made meant disgrace—perhaps death. And now to his mind came the words of his chief:

'Think what it means to be absent when your comrades are engaged in battle.'

He urged on his weary horse and uttered a prayer that he might be there on time. For what? Possibly death from a rebel bullet.

The morning of Jan. 3 found the forces engaged in deadly battle.

Breckinridge made a fierce and desperate assault, but it proved ill-judged, and he was hurled back with a fearful loss. In vain the confederate forces rallied and pressed forward again and again, only to be repulsed by the hot fire from the Union barricades and rifle pits. Rosecrans and Sheridan on the left were hurling shot and shell into the main body of the enemy, while Davis and Johnson, swinging in from the right, mowed down the half-formed rebel line under Breckinridge. The battle waged with fearful loss on both sides, and slowly but surely the rebel defense gave way and Polk was forced behind Stone river. During a lull in the battle a mounted officer rode hastily to Gen. Rosecrans and reported the desertion of a brigade commander and three other officers in the face of battle.

'What are their names?' Gen. Rosecrans demanded, with a vague fear tugging at his heart.

The officer ran over the list and concluded with: 'Lieutenant Henry of the—th Ohio.'

For an instant the chief bowed his head. 'My fault,' he muttered to himself in sorrow, 'and yet I felt in my heart he would in time.' Then a hard look swept over his face, and, turning to the officer, he said stiffly: 'We shall attend to that a little later, if we live.'

He turned his attention then to the battlefield, with its hurrying, scurrying hosts of blue and gray. Suddenly his attention became riveted to the left of the line.

Charging down the slope into the very jaws of death it seemed was one of Sheridan's regiments, evidently bent on sweeping down the rebel wall that had stood invincible for hours. The attack was planned so suddenly and put into execution with such dispatch that the rebel skirmish lines barely had time to fall back and take up a position to withstand the shock when the rushing screaming hoard was upon them. A thrill ran through the old warrior on the hill and for an instant he closed his eyes. Another instant and the crash must come. As he opened his eyes again a sheet of vivid fire shot from the rebel line, then was born to his ears the dull crash of volley after volley and he dimly saw the Union ranks thinned out by the storm of hail. The advance was checked. The Union line staggered and stopped.

Out from the shivering crouching front rode a gallant young officer, who, with his saber swinging wildly over his head, struck down half a dozen muskets leveled to work his end, then turned in his saddle and waved his men on to renew effort. It was a daring thing to do and Rosecrans marveled at the man's recklessness. The move put new life into the broken ranks. As if by magic they formed again, and with a hoarse yell a race moved rapidly on the living breastworks and swung again into a scuttling fire. Now it was hand to hand and the crash of arms was borne distinctly to the listening ears on the slope.

Rosecrans was rapt. He seemed lost in a dream. The charge was the most daring he had ever seen. He vainly tried to follow the movements of the young officer, but the rolling lines of smoke obscured his vision and he caught alternate glimpses of the blue and the gray as they struggled for the mastery. A long, low cloud of smoke came between the watchers on the hill and the fighters below just as the climax seemed to come, and impatiently they waited for a friendly wind to lift the dense curtain of haze. Then as the fog lifted they bent eagerly forward in their saddles and

joy welled into the heart of the chief as he saw the rebel lines waver and break.

Now in from the left and right pressed masses of others in blue swinging along like automatons, halting every now and then to pour a volley into the confused, straggling ranks of the men in gray. Joining together with a beautiful precision, they formed a solid wall in front of which the rebel defense gave way completely, and rout persuaded their ranks. The last line of a gallant defense shattered into clouds of smoke and when Rosecrans looked again the Union troops were throwing their caps into the air in their frenzy of joy, while the scattered remnants of the gray forces hurried down the bank of the river and disappeared from view.

As the smoke again dropped down and obscured the vision Gen. Rosecrans awoke as if from a trance and, riding hurriedly to a staff officer, who had been intently watching the battle through a powerful glass, he exclaimed:

'That was the grandest charge, sir, I have ever beheld. Who led it?'

'Lieutenant Henry of the—th Ohio,' was the answer.—Chicago Chronicle.

D-O-D-D-S

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—No Name More Widely
Imitated.

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