



SKETCHING UNDER FIRE AT ANTIETAM

A WAR CORRESPONDENT'S PERSONAL ACCOUNT OF HIS
EXPERIENCE DURING THE BATTLE

BY

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WITH PICTURES DRAWN BY THE AUTHOR IN THE MIDDST OF ACTION, FORTY-ONE
YEARS AGO



SI awoke soon after daylight on the morning of September 17, 1862, the air was already vibrating with mighty sounds of battle.

How exhilarating was that tremendous early morning uproar! The Confederate guns across the Antietam were thundering their infernal salutations, and our batteries on both sides of the stream were as viciously responding.

And how deep and abiding upon the memory was that first impression of the remarkable reverberation—Elk Ridge, three or four miles to the southward, throwing back its echoes of the artillery and producing a continuous tumult of roaring, awe-inspiring sound, never to be forgotten! With spirits aflame, I speeded at my best from Keedysville for the headquarters of the commanding general.

A thrilling scene was that presented on reaching the bivouac of Sumner's Second Corps, all aglow with enthusiasm while making ready to cross to the support of Hooker, who had, with characteristic impetuosity, hurled his corps against Stonewall Jackson's veterans in his daybreak opening of the first act of Antietam's fateful tragedy.

Hurrying on, I saw near McClellan's headquarters at Pry's farm, on a bare hill beyond it, a group of dismounted officers. I climbed to the hilltop, and the group resolved itself into Generals McClellan, Fitz-John Porter, and other officers to me unknown. Aids and couriers were coming and going with fidgety hurry, bringing reports and taking orders. There were moments of impressive silence as, with suppressed mental excitement, all eyes were fired in one direction—toward the distant point to the right.

The positions of the Confederate artillery as a whole, and even some of the guns, could be distinctly seen; but, as yet, the whereabouts of the infantry could only be inferred from the dull gray mantles of smoke spreading along the ground, or rising in thin strata from the recesses of the east wood.

I joined the group about the commanding general, who was anxiously scanning through his field glass the situation to the right, across the Antietam. Looking more to the left, the thick west wood, with its dark, broad front so clearly emphasized by the little white Dunker church, was clearly in view along its entire extent upon the Hagerstown turnpike.

General McClellan suddenly lowered his glass, and, with a few animated words and expressive gestures, called Porter's attention to something that caused an immediate ferment of buzzing excitement throughout the group and a close scrutinizing of the bit of woodland, for the time being, the focus of such absorbing interest.

I leveled my glass in the general direction and saw innumerable glints of light reflected from a long line of gun-barrels at the edge of the wood, which quickly passed to a great field of tall corn above the top of which the coruscating line began to advance, and a corresponding, though more ragged line, to recede from near its opposite end.

Soon, out rushed a broken Confederate force from the corn-field across the open ground toward the Dunker church wood, into which, after some halting and sporadic firing in vain resistance, it finally disappeared from view.

But onward through the ripened corn the Yankee line pushed its way; its position and direction beautifully indicated by the National and regimental colors gaily waving above the corn-stalks, and by the sparkling flashes from gun-barrels and bayonets.

We saw that there was trouble in preserving the alignment amid the obstructions, for there were short halts and a perceptible loss of momentum as the line neared the outer limit of the corn-field.

Who, that stood upon the hilltop there, could ever forget the soul-racking suspense, the burning anxiety, the heart thumps of those history-making moments, all watching closely the advancing wall of battle

and wondering what would be the outcome of that early dash upon the hidden enemy's stronghold in the gloom of the west wood?

Near the edge now, and soon the fearful crossing of the quarter mile of open field!

"See! the line breaks through. Isn't it bold and splendid? Will they do it?" So said a general officer at my side, now all afire with enthusiasm. The troops were beginning to ooze out from the corn-field on to the open space.

It was indeed a sight that sent the blood bounding hot through the veins, as the long line, seemingly hundreds of yards in extent, emerging in fair formation from its partial concealment, and, after a momentary pause, commenced its quick, brave advance obliquely to the right upon the wooded fastness without firing a gun.

Onward it pressed—on and on, till it appeared as though about to capture the wood without infantry opposition, though the enemy's artillery had made its close acquaintance and was shelling it with warm generosity.

Dark spots in the rear of the charging line proved how effectively those hostile guns were being served, for brave fellows were already meeting their doom from bits of shell or round shot, and possibly from the rifles of pestering sharpshooters, for, as yet, the hidden infantry of the enemy had made no sign.

Dangerously near the dead line of the wood now, and —



"blown to eternity by a bursting shell"



“ a field hospital ”

An end to suspense as the entire length of the forest broke into a fringe at its base, of what, from our point of view, looked like harmless little cotton balls, with the meek and lowly white Dunker church and its three black specks of door and windows as an appropriate centerpiece of innocent display.

But how that long, persistent line of playful smoke-puffs blew death-dealing bullets into the blue ranks, then nearly breast to breast with the Confederates who had revealed themselves in such abrupt and furious fashion, from their lurking places behind trees, limestone ledges, and from the walls and interior of the church !

They had craftily been held in leash until they could deliver their fire at close range with sure and bloody effect.

The blue charging line was checked — it fired a few volleys — it staggered — it fell back.

We could see officers rallying their men from disorder into some kind of formation ; thus reformed in part, they rushed forward a short distance and, again halting, fired awhile at will, the ground becoming thickly dotted with the fallen, as the telling fire from the wood poured relentlessly into the fast thinning ranks. Then, oh, what a sight to those of us upon the hill !

The Federal lines had frayed into a ragged reeling column, and finally, as a confused mass, the surviving men, who had so splendidly advanced in unbroken line, were in hurried, mob-like retreat to the cover of

the corn and the friendly wood from which they had but a short half-hour before issued in such confident spirit.

There were many partly successful attempts to rally into line about the colors. Down would go a flag ; up it came instantly, and again and again was this repeated. And again and again while a devoted knot about a recovered standard seemed blown to eternity by a bursting shell in its midst.

Dispiriting, saddening, mortifying to see the shattered remnants of the force that had so resolutely charged from the east wood, back again into its grateful protection.

The Confederates broke from their cover and pursued but a short distance, for they, too, went reeling back, riddled by enfilading artillery they could not see or face, and the fitful infantry firing that had again begun to greet them.

And we on the hill had more comfort, for beyond the corn-field too there had been hot fighting, and our eyes were gladdened as we saw the remains of a defeated Confederate force disappearing into the depths of their wooded stronghold.

The exciting spectacle quickened a determination to see this furious battle from closer quarters. Following in the track of Hooker's corps, which was easy to trace, I crossed the Antietam, and, climbing the hills beyond, soon reached a farm that was beginning to assume the functions of a hospital, and was at once among the unailing symptoms of the rear of battle.

Beside a fringe of timber was a farm already doing full duty as a field hospital, with a strangely pretty artistic effect of tents and tiny arbors grouped about its various buildings.

Hastily noting the distressing work of the surgeon's knife and saw, I hurried away from its rueful accompaniment of shrieks and groans.

I came upon a great open space with woodland ahead, and, on the right, the heavy rearward drift, the chaotic jumble of retreating artillery and infantry, the profusion of picturesque material—always the accompaniment of hurried retreat—and the loud though decreasing sounds of battle at the front, were undeniable evidences of disaster.

Though the sun shone bright and warm, a dark cloud of gloom now hung over this beautiful tract, and I stood for a time uncertain as to what to do or where to go, watching the flow of the ebb tide of battle bearing away its driftwood of defeat.

Then a broad belt of light flashed into the open and dispelled the disheartening forebodings. It gleamed from the bayonets of a column of fresh troops boldly advancing from the direction of the Antietam with a quick step and defiant air.

At its head rode the grim and dauntless old Sumner with his staff and a small cavalry escort. There, too, was the intrepid "Uncle John" Sedgwick, about to lead this column of hope, the hitherto unbeaten "Second Division," into battle to retrieve the awful mishap to Hooker. All were "full of ginger," undaunted by the all-pervading evidences of rout.

I started forward, and, when but a short distance from the halted Second Division

column, was hailed by a staff officer who had galloped over from the bit of wood to the north, where General Sumner was for the moment stationed.

"Where in the name of God is General Hooker? Do you know anything of his whereabouts?" There was a volume of meaning in the question and the tone of it, but I could only regret my ignorance, when he whirled and hustled away.

Just as he started, a shell exploded with terrifying report over the farm hospital I had sketched, sending its hissing fragments among the wounded and attendants, and causing such anxious commotion that I hastened back. Preparations were being made to locate it further to the rear. Two-wheeled ambulances, coming up with their groaning passengers, were ordered "out the Smoketown road," to the farm determined on for the removal.

I started for the east wood, and passed through Sedgwick's column again. It was all up, halted and faced to the west, as though about to deploy into-line of battle and move forward.

The perceptible increase in the column of "skulks" drifting to the rear only aroused the contempt of these spirited soldiers, who kicked, cuffed, and cursed at such of them as came within their reach. Four men of a famous "fighting regiment" skirted by, escorting to the hospital a comrade able to walk. Their red breeches made them unhappily conspicuous, but they were only mercilessly "roasted," as they were out of kicking range. Other weak brethren, practising dodges of more or less ingenuity, limped and crawled slowly back from the danger point.



A few prisoners

Numbers of brave stretcher-bearers and some ambulances, jostling and jerking their tortured charges over the rough ground, passed rearward from the line of the wood, or were gleaning the field of the few helplessly wounded remaining among the scattered corpses here and there to be seen amid the long grass.

Aids dashing to find help for hard-pressed commands, the steadily nearing crashes of musketry, the cheers and yells heard at times above the screech of shells and the thunderous cannonading, were disconcerting sounds that meant the recoiling of forces somewhere in action on the right.



"strolling nonchalantly rearward"

Now at the edge of the famous east wood, extending away indefinitely to the right, I was near the deadly battle front, but far enough to its left to retain a small amount of my stock of composure, with nothing more formidable to "negotiate" than bursting shells, which one learns to ignore, if compelled to be within their "sphere of influence."

Entering the wood over the leveled fence rails, I made note of the precious defensive barriers of the Confederates — the outcropping ledges of limestone — the many bodies in blue and gray, the few Union and the many remaining Confederate wounded, and the picturesque ruin of torn and mangled trees.

A noticeable lessening of the roar of conflict encouraged a further exploring of the fascinating though terrible mysteries of this battle-rended wood, and I was soon at the edge of a great devastated corn-field.

About twenty feet was the limit of my view into it in either direction. What might be beyond? A dominating devil of curiosity was spurring me to explore its hidden horrors, while the good genius, Common Sense, was acting with a restraining power to prevent a seeming act of folly.

The recess was cut short by infantry fire, not far away, that soon ripened into an overpowering olio of war noises, in which were mingled the round-toned bellying of smooth bore and the sharp barking of rifled guns — with all that was possible to the efforts of thousands of small arms.

I could only sit and listen, in an inflow of sulphurous smoke borne by the south-westerly breeze, which indicated the disturbance to be about the west wood and the Hagerstown pike.

Again came smoke balls in the air about, and there were snippings of leaves and twigs at intervals overhead.

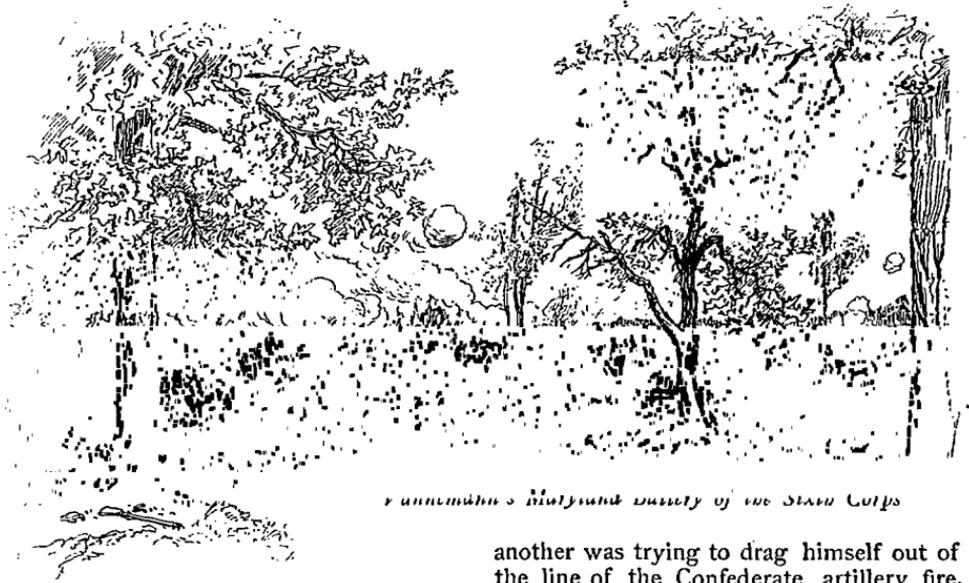
Still listening, I caught no sound of Union cheers, but at length, over all the clangor, there arose a mighty volume of rasping, barbaric screeching — the Confederate yells of triumph — and accompanying it, with the suddenness of a bursting shell, the obtrusion upon my mind of morbid thoughts.

What was this terrific outbreak? The flight of Sumner's men, whom I had just before seen and heard — alert and alive with the spirit of anticipated victory? Could they be thrown back and driven like a flock of sheep before a pack of wolves? If so, would the rout come my way?

Might I not be in an instant engulfed in one of those senseless stampedes, from which, under given circumstances, the best troops are not exempt?

And then, what?

Something must be done, and that at once, for, though I was hungry to see something of this as yet invisible grand row, I objected to being run over by the rout I feared was coming. It took but a moment, as it seemed, to spring from the salient of the wood, down along the corn-field's edge, with its visible and audible horrors, and on until I suddenly found myself directly in



Funeral of the 1st Regiment of the Staff Corps

front of and uncomfortably near a great white barn, its gable end toward me, flanked by an immense stack of straw. There, too, to the right, were a carriage house, farm buildings, and orchards, and all were little centers of explosive energy, with plenty of lively Confederates in plain view.

There were skirmishers using piles of straw for cover, firing at something in their left front and on their right.

Behind the buildings, trees, and bushes were squads partially visible, leisurely loading and firing, while others were bearing away some wounded. A mounted officer rode boldly out to the barn, made a hurried observation, and galloped furiously back.

Had I been seen? A big question to me just then. I had dropped to cover, using the little bushes and rails, until I reached a slight embankment crowned with shrubbery, from which effective "entrenchment" I could look about with some calmness at this delicious bit, for here I seemed destined to an indefinite stay, as to retreat was a greater danger than to remain, and to be shot in the back—ugh! To be captured would be at least as honorable and much more comfortable.

In the direction of the barn, I could see away out to the left, upon a bare hill, many figures in blue, some dead, many wounded—the result of a previous charge. One poor fellow waved his arms frantically;

another was trying to drag himself out of the line of the Confederate artillery fire, which was persistent, and directed at something beyond my range of vision.

At the crest of another hill, some three or four hundred yards to the rear of the barn, and left of it, relieved against the sky, was a fringe of men firing; whether friends or foes, the fitful smoke-puffs coming my way made it impossible to determine.

Further to the right, and back of the barn, billowy clouds of dense, yellowish smoke marked where Confederate batteries were industriously dealing death, and many prostrate soldiers in front of me told of the close, hot fighting hereabouts at an earlier hour.

I was nearly through with what work I was awkwardly struggling to do here, for it was a choice bit, when a great uproar, with tremendous cheering and shouting, arose to the rear.

What a startling sight was that I next beheld, which came rushing into view like the crest of a tidal wave in the Bay of Fundy!—a great blue mass of infantry rolling over the summit of a slight hill, broken with some small trees, fences, and two or three little buildings.

It was a deployment into line of battle! Exciting—thrilling, but a bit disquieting to the nerves of a man "in a hole," as I was, seemingly directly in the line of advance and between the hostile forces. I contrived to make myself somewhat

invisible at the edge of the corn-field, masking my "post of observation" as best I could, for it would not do to trust too much to the judgment or humanity of the battle and skirmish lines, when abreast of my burrow.

Oh, for more eyes! So much to see — in this wondrous fleeting show — with but one pair of hungry optics for seeing, and so little time for it all.

Here they are! The skirmishers gathered in, and the battle lines fully deployed, one now beside me, and too near for complete composure.

They are pressing steadily forward, gay with flaunting colors, glorious with resolute purpose, stimulating cheers, and encouraging shouts.

The first line swung by in stately style, slightly curved, with a convex front to the enemy.

There was another line that moved past with a twisting formation.



"He was dead at his post of duty"

And yet another line forged quickly ahead. Away beyond, with a break between, another pressed on. Officers with waving swords rode along the rear of the lines and shouted loud commands and words of encouragement. Down went one from his horse, which reared and fell wounded upon his late rider, while soldiers rushed to the rescue of their ill-fated commander.

As the third line cleared my post, the slimy trail of battle came in view behind it, for the field was speckled with the first crop of its ghastly harvest ready to be gathered.

The lines had almost grazed the corn-field in which I had burrowed, and I was not sorry when I could resume the perpendicular to make the most of this splendid episode of battle.

The last of the charging lines had gone beyond, and was sweeping majestically into the jaws of death, when the mass seemed to halt, while from the front line spouted forth a long, angry sheet of flame from innumerable gun-barrels.

Men were falling fast now, as unseen batteries were pelting the lines with an iron storm, and the Confederate bullets were finding the objects of their flight.

Away from the roar and fury of the front, it was pitiful to see men drop, at times in groups, knocked over by solid shot, like tenpins in a bowling-alley, or riddled with musket and rifle balls, or bits of shell, or case or canister.

Cheered by their mounted and line officers, the lines again advanced, and passed on without further halt or hesitation, spraying around the big barn, as a great combing wave parts around an impeding rock, and then — the battle vanished as a fading vision, while a thick cloud of smoke rolled by like a blinding fog. It was a welcome reprieve, and a relief to the extreme nervous tension, which was utilized to put into shape some rough notes I had managed to make while groveling in the dirt. The partial lifting of the sulphurous veil revealed about and beyond the farm only unrecognizable masses, obscure and confused, in restless, undefined movement.

But from where I stood there was visible a monotone of brown earth upon the left, and stretched upon it was a little world of patient misery now, in close companionship with inanimate comrades freed from pain.

A "change of base" was a military necessity. I retreated in disorder by the corn-field and farm road, doing a little lively sprinting across a hot spot, and safely reached the protection of the wood, where I reformed my morale and reinforced my breathing powers.

A small tree, with a bit of rail fence conveniently erect by it, presented an invitation



A bit of the famous east wood

which I accepted. On looking again toward the battle at the Roulet farm from the top, I received a confused impression of furiously contested combat, with bounding smoke-clouds riven by flashes of flame, and flickering hints of bright color amid sparkles of light.

Ambulances were coming and taking available stations in the wood, where they had not long to wait for business.

The fields began again to swarm with the litter and stretcher men, and with wounded soldiers who, walking with or without assistance, were wearily plodding back in search of the field hospitals.

A tall, straight private, strolling nonchalantly rearward, carried his gun on the right shoulder; his left hand was in a sling, his forehead bound with a bloody bandage. He marched with a long, steady stride, as if on dress parade, and, though he was some distance away, there was a magnetic power in his heroic ensemble sufficient to draw me down from my perch to the danger ground and into his presence. He halted, and I opened fire on him with sketch-pal and tongue, then passed on to the corn-field now famed in history.

I made my way through where yesterday had stood trim rows of stately corn-stalks, the ripened ears clinging to their sides, and plume-like tassels waving in the breeze.

Now, but for a few stalks defiantly standing; there was only a maze of broken, tangled fragments or *débris* trampled into the earth by virile foemen, whose bloody remains lay in all phases of contortion and dismemberment; a few already swollen and blackened in the rapid process of decomposition.

Some wounded, suffering where they fell, were calling for aid, or relieving their misery by agonizing screams or dismal moans. Others, suffering stoically, revealed their lurking places and their burning thirst only by cries for "Water! Water! Water!"—agony impossible for me to relieve. There were muskets, rifles, accoutrements of all kinds, and an occasional unexploded missile.

At one place was a broad swath cut through the field where the Confederates lay in disordered lines as they fell, as though from massed artillery fire.

As two stretcher men passed with a writhing form to an isolated spot in this "hell-hole," there came upon me a consciousness of how an impressible nature can be played upon by conflicting emotions under differing conditions of battle, if not actually at work in the stimulating *business* of slaughter.

The impression is still strong of the feeling of disgust engendered by the revolting

realities of the corn-field, and that chased away for the time the sense of the sublimity of battle that had just before possessed me when gazing on the awful splendor of the bold, dramatic advance of French

Back through the wood I went again, treading a maze of limbs torn from the trees by shot and shell as the tide of battle ebbed and flowed through its area, though the ground was quite free from undergrowth. Some stragglers were still drifting to the rear, and, as I was about to pass out of the wood near where I had entered it in the morning and where there was quite a stretch of the rail fence remaining, two mounted officers came dashing up—from the opposite end. They were galloping

Down came one of the avenging centaurs ferociously. Halting at the fence, he fired at the retreating skulker and brought down the game with a ball in the leg—and galloped off to wreak vengeance on several other victims, venturing into the slaughter-pen unsuspectingly. He corralled them all, but I could not see the result of his pistol practice there.

Then, turning, he took a deliberate survey of the situation, and, rushing our way like the wind, was down again upon the man he had shot, yelling at him with a terrible voice:

“What's your regiment?”

“The ——th ——. We're all cut to pieces,” was the reply of the poor wretch.



“I could look about with some calmness at this delicious bit”

about furiously among the dead and around the rocks, slashing with sabre and firing with revolver as they ran down fugitives from the field. While they were at the north end, driving back a few skulkers, another batch, singly and in pairs, came through the narrow angle from the corn-field.

I had passed out into the open, to what I had considered a safe place from which to watch the outcome of this new business for the sketching pad, and prepared for work.

One poor fellow had succeeded in crossing the fence and had started nimbly walking from the wood, with a good gait to his rearward movement.

“Cut to ——! Go back then and fight with some better regiment or you'll be *shot* to pieces.”

The skulker arose and was making a painful effort to hobble up, when I became an object of our irate cavalry friend's attention. Riding to the corner of the fence, about thirty feet from where I stood, he eyed me fiercely for a moment, and again bringing into requisition his terror-provoking tones, roared out: “Who are you? What the —— are *you* doing there?” accompanying his inquiry with an unpleasant pointing of his pistol in my direction. That I was a debatable quantity was clear to the ferocious martial mind.

My semi-military rig did not justify immediate aggressive action on his part, and that gave me a feeling of temporary security, while I regarded the eye glistening with a scornful warrior's rage.

A sketch-pad and lead pencil were not effective weapons of defense, but, on the offensive, as aids to a little dramatic effect, I found they had some value.

I held up the pad in the left hand, and, with the deadly pencil pointed at him, yelled with my nearest approach to "stentorian tones" (whatever they may be): "I am Frank Leslie's special artist, *on the spot!*"

What a long, fierce, inquiring look he gave me! Then, putting a finger to the corner of his left eye, as though to rub out an interrogation point, he turned and rode slowly and silently away, in search of prey which happily was becoming scarce.

Then, again, stillness came into the wood, through which I went, now without fear of a pistol shot or sabre slash, with the Hagerstown pike as my objective.

I was troubled with a presentiment that Sedgwick and his division had met with the fate of Hooker, and I was anxious to learn the luck of the men who had proved their mettle on the bloody fields of the Peninsula, and had been subjected to this new crucial test of their prowess.

Out in the open, to the rear of the woods, there was a drifting about of disorganized men, with shouting officers striving to get their commands together about the regimental colors, planted in the ground or being waved in the air by cheering color-bearers. I heard my name shouted out, and met, near the solid farm buildings of D. R. Miller, then a crowded hospital, a young friend, a captain in the 72d Pennsylvania Regiment, of Sedgwick's Division, who was with a knot of his men. He told me quickly the story of his regiment's fight.

With the wood at my right, I closely skirted the corn-field, and came upon a battery of small Parrott guns at work amid the wreck of corn-stalks.

Artillery in action was always a drawing card with me, and here was a fine chance to stop awhile and enjoy the stimulating attraction.

The gunners, in shirt sleeves or bare arms, were working with an almost annoying deliberation. Their performance, too, was being, as it seemed, treated rather

contemptuously by the enemy, for the replies to our "cartes de visite" were but few and at irregular intervals, a parsimony which was duly appreciated by the "small but select audience" present.

Some of our heavier batteries to the right and rear, whose roar could be heard, were being more respectfully and liberally considered, the Confederate shells screaming over our heads and doing business in remoter quarters.

But we were not altogether neglected, as I saw two of the missiles from the west wood vicinity explode, one in the corn-field; the other above it, wounding one of the battery horses.

It was Vanneman's Maryland Battery of the Sixth Corps, as I learned, to which I was indebted for this entertainment, which seemed to be enjoyed by the performers as well, though they were tormented with terrible thirsts.

It was about here that Hood's Division of the Confederates and some of Hooker's men fought so heroically in the gray of the morning, "tearing each other to pieces," and the terrible evidences of the struggle lay around me plentifully.

I was tiring of this feast of horrors and, leaving the wood, was soon at D. R. Miller's farm. On the Hagerstown pike, and on each side of it, were guns of Campbell's Regular Battery, for the possession of which an audacious onslaught had been made an hour or more before by Jackson's troops, who had rushed from the west wood and fought up to the very muzzles of the guns before they were put "to the right about" by the determined defense of Gibbon's men from Wisconsin and Indiana, and Patrick's Brigade of the First Corps, followed by a counter dash which almost annihilated the heroic charging column of the enemy.

There were curdling tales told me of this stubborn fight, where Confederate colors had been taken and prisoners captured.

Here, too, were sharp contrasts. On the west side of the pike were Miller's barn, haystacks, and mowing and threshing machines, in close communion with the open-mouthed cannon and other implements of destruction.

Could peace and war in juxtaposition be more impressively illustrated?

The wheat was gathered in, the corn destroyed, and the crop of corpses and



"be fired at the retreating skulker"

misery was being industriously harvested in all directions.

There was a great and tragic mystery still about the west wood that I was anxious to unravel, it being still a prime center of interest and the key of the battle. A decided rise of the ground in front, over which the turnpike passed, and which had afforded concealment and shelter to the advance of the Confederates in their attacks, prevented a satisfactory view down the road, but from an upper window of the Miller farm hospital I caught through intervening trees glimpses along the white stony pike, spotted as it was with forms in blue and gray, all the way to the Dunker church and beyond, some half a mile or more.

I noticed sections of rail fence still standing, edged with motionless figures, and much of odds and ends of former struggle, and there were sputtering indications of continuing battle to the westward and southward.

In front, to the left, was the smoke from the burning buildings, the locality of which I fixed upon as the next object of attention.

Could I reach the spot? I could try. Plunging into the weird, trampled corn-field again, as it was the most direct — if prac-

ticable — route, I had gone but a few steps when there loomed before me, among the corpses, a soldier in butternut aiming directly at me.

I jumped aside, but his aim did not follow.

He was dead at his post of duty as a sharp-shooter. What a heroic picture, as, crouching on one knee, he aimed, with his piece resting on a broken corn-stalk, through the entanglement, in the direction of the guns of Campbell's Battery with mute fidelity!

Hurrying on, I came to the smoldering ruins of Mummer's farm buildings, where stretcher-bearers, resting their agonized burdens and their tired selves in the fancied security of the smoke-screened spot, were awaiting the ambulances.

"Canister!" some one shouted, and, with a common impulse, all who could jumped for the protection of the stone wall of the burned barn, against which, with a sound as of heavy hailstones against window glass, deadly missiles rattled harmlessly.

"What, boys! Your helpless comrades out there in the hellstorm?" It was but a moment of nerve shock, and the wounded were heroically brought in under shelter;

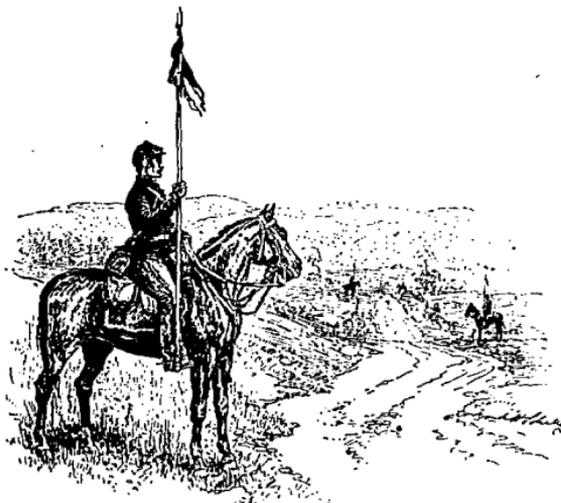
one with a fresh "plug," that left him a horribly mangled corpse upon a blood-sopped litter—his would-be rescuer, wounded in the attempt, taking his place upon the freshly bespattered canvas.

A Union battery immediately commenced a hot controversy about the matter with the opposing guns, and in twenty minutes the argument was closed in our favor.

But why prolong the story of the horrors of this fearful day? Of my meeting

with my coadjutor, Edwin Fabes, on his horse, making a dash to see something of Burnside's terrific struggle, the crushing of some Regular batteries, or the rest of it. A great raging battle-field is hell *en fête*, and one can surfeit of its burning, sulphurous attractions.

Antietam's battle ended with a lurid sunset, and with its subsiding rays faded the military lustre of Major-General George B. McClellan.



Cavalry videttes guarding the roads to the Potomac, after the battle