BY JOSEPH A. ALTSHELER.

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PART I. I found it neither a pleasant nor an easy task to force my way through the undergrowth which itourished in such thick and tangled fashion, and the smarting of my wound, slight though the latter was, for the ball had merely cut the flesh of my wrist, contributed to both my bodily and mental suffering The faint plashes of summer lightning in the hot June night gave brief and imperfect glimpses of masses of low scrubby trees, with interlacing bushes and briars, and an occasional pool of dirty and discolored water, rimmed in by the Virginia mud, sticky and yellow, into which I floundered more than once when the friendly lightning was not at hand. Then, pulling myself out again, I tore my clothes and skin on the clumps of briars that caught me, as I blindly plunged forward. Two hours of such work and, with the feeling of delight that a shipwrecked sailor must experience when he sees a rescuing sail, I struck a beaten track. True, it was not much. Merely a path, where the undergrowth had been crushed down, as if by some very heavy weight probably a train of artitlery, for I trad In the ruts cut by wheels. But it enabled me to advance with much greate: speed and less danger to my person, and would undoubtedly lead me to the

main body of the army.

A large rain drop spinshed in my

face, and then another, and spon a terthe rain beat upon me. Off to the right I heard the frequent booming of can-non. Twice shells came shricking high iver me, and I voluntarily ducked my head at the noise, for I was not yet an old enough soldier to cure myself of the habit. My wound had now ceased to pain me, but the bitterness of my reflections was sufficient torment. had come up the Peninsula with the great army, to obtain my first taste of war. Often had I. like many another Young soldier in that gallant body of men, painted reseate pictures of vie tory, promotion, rewarded patriotism and a remaited country. With a light heart I encountered the toils and dep-Fivations of the advance. I had the enthusiasm of youth, and was daunted by no obstacle. I did not fear the fever bred in the swamps of the Chickahoming, which cut down our men as it we were strinding in front of the en-emy's artillery. I did my share, and twice my share, of the work which tries a soldier more than fighting. I took an ax and helped to build roads through the swamps, and bridges over the swollen streams. Then I tugged at the Wheels of the cannon stuck in the mud. and at night I did picket duty in the dense forests, and sometimes, in the darkness, heard a confederate bullet hiss by me. But all the time we were cheered by the knowledge that we were advancing. We thought of nothing but forward, forward, and our hardships were forgotten in the reflection that at each sunset we were nearer to

The reverse side of the pleture had come quickly enough I thought, a I stumbled into the miry edge of a small brook that ran across the path. The prize was almost within our hand. had even seen, one bright morning. the spires of Richmond glittering in the sunshine-and then we were turned back. For a moment I felt a regret that I had not been taken reisoner by the enemy in the last battle, when was cut off from my regiment, instead of escaping through their lines to could, in the effort to join the retreating army. The greatness of my anticipations had made the repulse the more

the enemy's capital.

The voices of the night repeated the word, retreat, retreat, retreat. very shells that sang over my head had but one tune, and it was retreat, retreat, retreat. The plashing of the rain formed the same sound, and I began to repeat it to myself as a kind of chorus

At last I saw a light, far ahead and faint, but very cheerful in the dark ness and rain. I was sure that I had overtaken a portion of our rear guard, but, as I came nearer, I saw that it was a house standing in a small clearing and the light came from one of the windows. There were no pickets about,

them, and get something to eat and news of the army, if I could. I went up to the door and knocked lightly on with the muzzle of my rifle. I repeated the stroke two or three times before a man's voice called out and asked who I was. I replied that I was a Union soldier who had been cut off from his command, and wished to obain information that would guide him

o the army. At first he refused entrance to me, aying that the Yankees had found their own way into Virginia, and could find it out again.
I replied that I was sick and wound-

d, and appealed to the hospitality of Virginians, who boasted that they never refused aid to the suffering and infortunate. This evidently touched his pride, for

ie opened the door, held up a lantern in my face and looked closely at me. He must have been satisfied that I was not dangerous, for I know that I did not look like it, although I was by no means a pretty figure. I was wet and bedraggied, but the rain had not vashed all the yellow mud off me, and on my uniform there were still streaks of the blood that had flowed from my wounded wrist. He invited me to en ter, in a not unkindly tone, and I fol-lowed him into a room that was furnished with a fair degree of comfort. He seemed to be a Virginia farmer of some cultivation, for his language was not bad. In one corner sat a woman of about 40, evidently his wife, who held in her arms a little girl of three or four years, with beautiful, long yellow curis which at once attracted my notice and admiration. My countenance must have expressed these feelings, for both the man and woman softened toward me, and the latter volunteered to bind up my wrist, while the former stated that some of our troops had

passed only an hour before. While the woman was putting the bandage on my wrist the man brought me something to eat, though he said the provisions in the house were scanty and he had much rather give them to a Confederate than to a Federal soldier They avowed their Confederate senti ments, and gleried in them, exulted over our retreat, knew the enemy were pursuing us, and boasted that our army



I WATCHED THEIR MOVEMENTS

would be annihilated within a few days As I was receiving their hospitality, I did not care to dispute these points with them, but asked why they had remained in such an unsafe place, when a cannon ball might come crashing through their house at any time

The man replied that he did not like a bandon his home, as he had nowhere else to go, and that he did not antielpate any danger.

Again I did not care to differ with him, and I merely uttered some compliments about the pretty little girl and her beautiful yellow hair, which caused the mother's face to flush with pride.

I warned them to keep the child out f danger, as flying bullets might be numerous in that vicinity before long, and the father repeated that there was nothing to fear.

I finished eating the food that they had placed before me, thanked them. kissed the little girl, and followed once more the path of the retreating army, whose rear guard I overtook in encampnent not an hour later.

The sun shouldered his golden disk



knew that our men were not near, grass and follage turned to a which, more fearless than others in that region, had not taken itself from this battle ground and gone to Richmond, or some similar place of security. Though it was a risky business hind, I was tired and hungry, and had

LOOKED CLOSELY AT ME. no evidences of encampment, and I shine. The rain drops dried up, the Evidently it was occupied by a family green, and the despondency that I had felt during the night passed away before the glorious daylight. We lay upon the heights, and the army had turned at last. We faced the enemy once more, and there, expectant and confident, we to linger with the enemy so close be- awaited his onset, for we knew that he | tially over his half wild face. He waved would come, and we believed that we

begged the privilege of taking a place in the ranks, and there was no need his hand. for the officers to exhort the troops, We were and endeavor to excite their courage.

impatience the coming of the enemy. My regiment was stationed in the front rank. The privations and bitter feelings of the previous night were for-gotten, and I paid no notice to the discharge my gun at him. If he ever trifling wound on my arm, for like the others I was anxious that we should kill me. I wondered if he would be shot beat the enemy back, and repay him down by the artillery before our turn for some of the losses that he had in- to fire came. Twice I lost sight of him.

for closer quarters. I had become fas- firing. Secure in their position, they had all the arder of battle, and awaited with federate who was coming in my direction, and though little of the bullets that fell around me. I was watching that soldier. When the command to fire should be given, I determined to reached us. I felt sure that he would and thought that he was down, but Before waiting long, we saw Confed- | each time it was merely some smoke



SHE TURNED HER FACE TO WARD THE CONFEDERATE.

sent me forward to join our skirmishers and bring a report to him. I advanced within a few hundred yards of the enemy. I stooped down behind a large and shells tore the ranks around him ock and watched their movements. Within the edge of the woods I could see the house at which I had stopped during the previous night, and I wondered if its inmates had taken me at my word, and had gone.

While I was watching, a shell flew over my head, struck the ground near the confederate troops, and exploded. Directly came another, and it alighted among them, causing great confusion. me man was killed, as I could plainly ee, and several others were wounded. They withdrew in haste and much disorder. Some of them came back, I supposed they were trying to recover the ody of the dead man, but wondered why they should take so great a risk for so slight an object, slight, at least in war, and upon the eve of a great battle. They were a shining mark for our batteries, and again the shells came flying toward them, tearing up the earth

They retreated, but in a few minutes fore by the shells. I could not understand such obstinacy, but, as I had more serious work to do than to discover the cause, I continued my reconnoissance, and moved off to the right. The confederate troops remained stationary at the edge of the woods, and I had plenty of time for my duties. About an hour later I started back to my regiment. On the way I met another of our skirmishers, and told him about the little episode of the Confederate troops and the shells.

PART II.

"I can explain that," he replied. "A curious thing happened over there. We captured some prisoners a short while ago, and one of them told us about it A man with his wife and child lived in that house in the edge of the clearing. The man persisted in remaining until for the child alone on the battle field, the last moment, although he saw our troops massed on the hill. He did not get out until the Confederates themselves came, and even then they had to hurry him away. At that time the shells struck, and in the confusion the child disappeared. The troops, instead of coming back after the body of the dead man, came for her, but they did

not find her." I went on and delivered my report to the colonel, but I thought much, on the way, of the child. What would become of her? Doubtless she would be found after the battle, ridden over by the cavalry, or torn to pieces by a cannon

Heavier masses of the enemy now is sued from the woods, and it was evident that the battle was at hand. For some time there had been a lively firing, but this was to be the great trial of strength. The Confederates formed batteries in the woods behind their infantry, and replied to our fire. A cannon ball struck in the earth about ten feet from me. Another went over my head and killed a man in the rear rank. A minie ball broke the colonel's sword sheath. It was getting very uncomfortable. I was willing to fight, but I did not like waiting, and anxiously watched the dense columns of the enemy who were moving toward the hill.

They came on stendily and at a trot, All our batteries were turned upon them, and the men were loading and firing as fast as they could. .. hole platoons of the advancing enemy were swept away, but the others never paused nor hesitated. As I stood with my gun in my hands, my admiration for their courage was unlimited. Many of them were in their shirt sleeves, as I have often seen the Georgians and Mississipplans fight, but they came on s run over the broken ground, and seemed to fear the rain of shot and shell no more than a boy would a snowball Even in moments of greatest danger and excitement, the mind often involuntarily dwells upon triffes, and I remember smiling at the queer appear ance their heads made, bobbing up and down, as they came over the uneven

Then I fell to watching individual soldiers, for they were near enough for us to discern their features, whenever the clouds of smoke blew aside, I was particularly attracted by one who was coming straight toward me. The fierceess of his appearance indicated the soldier who loved fighting for fighting's sake. He were neither coat not waistcoat, and his long, black hair fell parhis gun above his head, and joined in lost my way, and I determined to hall would beat him back. The army was the rebel yell which I heard before in comrades were brought also to a halt.

crate troops debouche from some woods | that had concealed him, and, when it about a mile distant. We watched them | drifted aside, he was still rushing on at for a little while, and then as I had had the head of the enemy. Once he stumbome experience in scouting, the colonel | led and fell upon his knees, and I was sure that he was shot, but he had slipped on a stone or something else among the rocks and bushes, until and in a moment recovered himself and shells tore the ranks around him, but he was untouched and came straight as the flight of a hawk to ward me.

I felt sure that I would have to shoot that man, or he would have my own life, and I deliberated whether to aim at his head or his heart. At length I decided upon the head. A curl of his black hair fell down upon the left side of his forehead, and, I would shoot straight between the end of that curl and into his head. I wondered if my nerves would remain steady, and could hit so small a mark amid the great noise and confusion. I even held out one arm to see if it shook, but not a muscle quivered.

The colonel now gave the preliminary command, and I knew that the one to fire would come next. I leveled my gun, and looked for my Confederate, There he was, as before, directly opposite me. The black curl still hung over around them and covering them with his left eye and offered a fair mark They had now reached a little patch of bushes that fringed the base of the returned again to be driven back as be- slope. I sighted at the black curl, and my hand felt for

awaited the order to fire. An exclamation from the man next to me startled me and disarranged my aim. From the bushes in front of the charging Confederates uprose a figure very strange to the battle field. Full into view came the long yellow curls and frightened face of a little girl that had seen before. I dropped the muzzle of my gun in amazement as she stood there between the lines, scared and appealing. She came out of the bushes which

had concealed her, and, running midway between our lines, and those of the advancing enemy stooped, evidently too much terrified to move any fur-She was directly between me ther. and the Confederate soldier with the black curl. In a few moments he would be upon her. I felt a thrill of sympathy



HIS LONG BLACK HAIR FELL PARTIALLY OVER HIS HALF WILD FACE.

and at the same time a desire to save her. I wondered what the Confederate would do when he reached her, for I had come to the conclusion that he would not fail unless I shot him. Would he rush on over her? Would he trample her into the dirt, or merely thrust her aside?

The child may have cried out with fear, but I could not hear her, for the roar of the battle filled my ears, and I was watching the wild-looking Confederate. A light wind blew the smoke at that point aside, and I could see distinctly. She turned her face toward the Confederate, and a beam of sunlight fell upon her hair. I glanced up and down our ranks. I could see, by the look of apprehension on the faces of our men, that all had noticed her and the muzzles of many guns had fallen, as mine had.

The dark Confederate was almost up on the little one. Evidently he had not perceived her, for the arder of battle shone undiminished upon his face, and again he waved his gun over his head, a thing which soldiers never do in charge, unless they are much excited. Another step would bring him to her, and at this moment I think that for the first time he perceived the frightened

face and the yellow hair. The soldier dropped his gun by his side. The fierceness went out of his countenance, and he stopped. The whole line stopped with him, and those behind coming upon the wall of their

transformed. The men laughed and, the swamps of the Chickahominy. If He let his gun fall to the ground, when discipline allowed, shouted to be were not shot down on the way, this each other. Many of the wounded man would charge directly upon me, I in his arms. The action could be plainthought, and perhaps I would die by ly seen by both armies. Suddenly, as if by a preconcerted order, the artillery We were ordered to reserve our fire and small arms on either side ceased

The roar of the battle field was replaced by a silence that would have been complete had it not been for the groans of wounded men, and I knew that thousands of eyes were strained upon the soldier and the child.I looked at the man next to me. He seemed ob-livious of the conflict. I looked at our colonel, but he had forgotten the command to fire.

The soldier bent his head and kissed the child, and then lifted her high over his shoulder and handed her to the man behind him. Then we could see her passed rapidly from rank to rank, until in a few moments the frightened face and yellow hair had disappeared toward the wood, and she was in safe-

The soldier seized his gun, uttered the rebel yell, and came on again with line after line charging behind him, Our colonel shouted fire!" and the volley blazed from our rides. At the same moment a hundred cannon from the summit of the hill poured a torrent of lead and iron upon the charging battalions, and the batteries of the enemy replied. The earth shook as if in the threes of an earthquake. My ears were deafened by the uproar, and thick clouds of floating smoke hid the dark voldier and his companions.

DESERVES ENCOURAGEMENT.

From the Philadelphia Bulletia. Speaker Boyer deserves encouragemen in carrying out his purpose to have the floor of the house at Harrisburg this winter cleared of visitors, lobbyists and other persons who have no business there other than that of curiosity or buttonholing members for their votes. The house has too often lost all semblance of dignity in the promiscuous crowd of sight-seers and politicians who have been permitted to enjoy the privileges of the floor in the midst of a session, and the speaker is determined, so far as he has the power, to put an end to the abuse. There are few legislatures, eyen in the west, which have been so good-natured and easy-going in ter cleared of visitors, lobbyists and other been so good-natured and easy-going in these things as the legislature at Har-risburg has long been. The business of law-making for a great commonwealth is too important to be conducted amidst the rabble that heretofore has had access to the floor, and the members should in self respect strengthen the hands of the speak er in his new departure.



of the possibility of sudden death by violence or accident. There is a sentimental hor-ror attached to such a death that makes people prefer the grim prefer the grim monster in almost

Yet all the lives that are lost each year by violence and accident are but an insignificant fraction to the untold thousands that are slain by the grim destroyer, consumption. It is the most insidious and the dead-liest of all known diseases. It knows neither rank nor wealth. It attacks people in all the walks of life. It makes no distinctions. It has for centuries been considered incur-

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