This story of "The Brave Adventure"—of our fathers' battle and of the gallant young spirit that flamed again to life in it—may without impertinence be described as being as American, as valiant and as tender as "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." Mr. Rhodes has worked seven years on it, because he has loved it the best of all his stories. You too will love it well.

The Brave Adventure

By Eugene Manlove Rhodes

Illustrated by Robert McCraig

And I shall thereupon
Take rest, ere I be gone
Once more on my adventure brave and new—

"Rabbi Ben Ezra" --Browning

DAVID KERR attained his majority at fifteen. For the last time he strapped his few dog-eared textbooks, straining the whang-leather tight and fast. The master, curly-headed Tom Chadsey, was loath to see this eager scholar go; and he said as much by way of a commencement ceremony, his strong hand heavy on the boy's shoulder. And that was after all no poor degree; there was trust in that firm pressure, comradeship, welcome to manhood. David felt the quiet hand still with him as he trudged through the snow. The winter term knew him no longer; sturdily, cheerfully, he took up his profession as eldest of eight.

No light profession, to be eldest of eight! Ax, plow, scythe, oxgoad and flail—master of these weapons David grew, as henchman and right hand to the stern Scots sire of him, and to such good purpose that his Juniors, heirs to those dog-eared volumes, lacked not at all of every advantage of that rude time and place.

The time was the late thirties; the place was Tonti, in Illinois—a hamlet founded years before. The Kerr homestead was southward from Tonti, just where prairie and forests met. The broad fields lay on one side of the road; on the other were wood-lot, the pasture-land, on ground so rolling as to be called hills, and the home-lot—the rambling and low log house between two oak knolls, the garden, orchard and well, the barns, byres, herd-yards, cribs and stacks.

The house furniture was homemade and simple—tables and benches and chairs and chests of thick, tough oak; skins of bear and bob-cat and panther served for carpet, broad antlers for coat-rocks and hat-racks; and from others swung guns and powderhorns. Midway of the huge kitchen was a deep and cavernous stone fireplace; strong cranes swung over the wide hearthstone; pewter dishes gleamed from the rack beside it.

The land yielded rough abundance of food. The women-folk spun and wove blankets, homespun, linsey-woolsey, butternut-dyed jeans, linen fine and course. The song of the busy wheel swelled and sank; tuned to the bees' swift humming in summertide, it mocked them by winter fires.

A rude hamlet, Tonti, having withal a slight balance of trade in its favor—buying from the outside world medicine, salt, iron, coffee and tea, cotton and cotton-stuffs, guns, guncaps, powder, shot and ball, tools beyond the smith's skill to fashion, a few books, fewer rare yards of silk and broad-cloth. Outward bound to far markets went leather, tallow, beeswax, tobacco—what might pay for freighting by packhorse and wagon. River towns might raft saw-logs with cargoes of grain, tan-bark and hoop-poles. but not inland Tonti. Tonti's grain, transformed to fat bullocks, sheep and swine, marched to market on its own proper legs, to St. Louis, or Cincinnati—at which time the youth of Tonti, each in his turn and our Davy with the rest, made the Tontian equivalent for the *Grand Tour* or *Wanderjahr*.

Trade was largely in kind. For four green hides the tanner gave two that had lain in his vat seven years. You shall not buy such leather now, not though you cover each inch with coin for the price of it. These two hides went to the shoemaker. One came back in stout shoes made to measure; the other was for his hire. Harness and saddles were had on like terms. The surplus hides went their slow way to New Orleans or eastward, to swell the slow, slight balance of trade in Tonti's favor—without which slight, sure balance, for Tonti and for a thousand other Tontis, the West could not have been settled, and world-history had been other and meaner.

Busy men, David Senior and our Davy and our Davy's one brother Andrew. Every day had its duty, to be done then and well, storm or shine, seedtime, harvest, shearing of flocks, fencing, clearing, building. It told on Father David, who must not only work but plan, contrive, foresee, be responsible. He aged swiftly—the more in that the years brought ever unforeseen new demands, new necessities, as civilization and the new age of machinery overtook them. For he was a proud man, the elder David, not forgetful that the Kerrs had aforetime been the Kerrs of Cessford. "You and I maun even sweat for't, man Davy, but the lave shall have the chances we two missed, though we be but hewers of wood and drawers of water all our days."

So it was agreed between them; and the thing planned they did. Andrew went to Vandalia for the schooling. Margaret, between David and Andrew, went to Monticello Seminary at Godfrey—the first girls' school of collegiate grade in Saxon America. Joan was married young to Tommy West; but the other girls had each in turn their chance at schooling.

Busy womenfolk too, Mary Kerr and her six braw daughters, each, from tall Margaret to wee Elsie, cheerily ever at her task, the days and hours all too full for discontent—weaving, spinning, sewing, dyeing, soapmaking, molding of candles from tallow and beeswax, dressing of buckskin and making that same buckskin into gloves and. caps and hunting shirts, knitting of warm stockings, tippets, "clouds" and mittens.

Winter nights, when needles clicked and the wheel-song was subdued and slow, Father David read aloud from his small store of leather-backed books: Rollin's Ancient History, Plutarch's Lives, Josephus, Lives of Washington, Napoleon, Cromwell, Hannibal, the Bible, the Pilgrim's Progress, Milton, Shakespeare, Robert Burns, Aesop, Robinson Crusoe. While he read, Andrew and Davy were busy by the hearth, with spokeshave and broken glass, fashioning rakes, singletrees, scythe-snaths, oxbows, ax helves—whatever might patiently be wrought from hardwood.

There were visitors sometimes—often Tommy West from over the hill, to hear the rending. "A studious lad, that Tommy," said David the elder. "He never tires of the Plutarch." Sometimes It was Tom Chadsey, a young doctor now, settled in near-by Salem. Upon him, as a notable scholar, was thrust the honor of reading, though I am sure he had liefer been close by Margaret's ear as she plied her distaff.

SO passed the years, crowded, gladsome. Davy was now at man's growth, rugged of feature, rawboned, tall and strong—strong of both body and soul, brown and wholesome, seasoned, approved. He was still busy at his profession of eldest—not without knowledge of peril in the wilderness, or other less blameless ventures of high blood, as when, being wrought upon beyond the bounds of patience, in fair fight he put to the worse stout Felix Lewis, who aforetime had met no master—no, not with diligent seeking—in all the broad rolling lands between the Kaskaskia and Little Wabash.

An opinionated man and an incredulous, Felix Lewis; twice in the five years thereafter he sought out David, called him privately aside and imparted to him certain doubts as to whether David could do the trick again. As often, David resolved his doubts, not without difficulty.

On the morning following the third battle Felix, stiff, sore and feeling disinclined for harder labor, drove his horse to Alma smithy to be shod. There were many before him—who felt, but discreetly repressed, a lively curiosity at the puffed and battered face of him. After brief greetings Felix sat on the comer of the grindstone and gave himself to long meditation.

"I've been thinking," announced Felix, "and I believe I've found out how 'tis that Davy Kerr licks me every time we come together. He done it again yesterday, out behind his barn."

Smith Armstrong looked up from his shoeing. "Does he have a bit of iron or the like, to grip in his fist, Felix? They do say that makes a blow as bad as the brass knucks the river-men use."

Felix drew a twist of tobacco from his coat; he cut off a generous supply and stowed it away. Then he closed up his knife and replaced it in his pocket with exasperating slowness while the shop waited breathlessly.

"'Tisn't that," he drawled at last. "I've been a-thinking it all out. It's because he's a better man than I am!"

Ever after, Felix considered himself fully exonerated; wounded vanity pained him no more. Indeed, after Felix came home from the Mexican War, he and David became sure friends, even though Felix was wild and David was steady, and they had not overmuch in common.

As for David, he had earned thenceforth the privilege of declining to fight under provocation, and he availed himself of it consistently.

NOR WAS a love-season lacking fro David—brief, not untender, not forgotten of man or maid. And though the maid turned at last to a more brilliant lover, and one of a profession less life-filling than Davy's, memory did not fail her of the clean-eyed, straightforward youth of her first fancy, nor the kindly strength of him. Ritter she married; he became a man of note, a legislator and later a Congressman. But this love-season was not the determining factor in David's life, not the thing that tempered the metal of his soul to the high quality which later was to be so sternly tried. A lesser woman did that—little Barbara.

Margaret married her second cousin Benjy Kerr. "A decent body, though nobbut a lawyer," said her father. They lived at Vandalia, later at Springfield and Chicago. One by one her sisters made flitting to new homes, even wee Elsie, tall Elsie now: deep-breasted, happy mothers all. In '52 Andrew followed the lure of sudden gold to California. David had cast more thoughts than one that way, but had stayed by the farm, deeming he had certain homely duties there.

For the lessening circle had not lightened David's load. His father had been forehanded, thrifty; but when the State banks of Shawneetown had broken in 1842, the saving of years had been swept away. The older children were away at school; he told his loss to none of them save Davy. The two kept their own counsel, held to their steady will; the youngers were to have their chance. The farm was mortgaged to give them that chance.

Schooling for seven is no light thing. And sickness came, doctor-bills, bad years with always the strain of interest, of payments to reduce the mortgage. David's father grew bent and old, his mother, too, was feeble. Davy himself was something grizzled; folk called him David now. He kept his friends. Doctor Tom was the dearest; he came often to the old farm and sat with David by the silent hearth where now was no distaff-song. Felix came with his fiddle and his tales of Southern skies; Tommy West, now getting on in the world, a newspaper editor, overgiven to quoting from Plutarch, frankly owned his big, silent, unsupple brother-in-law as his better; even Harvey Ritter the Congressman, when he came to Salem, treated the homespun farmer with marked deference. For this silent man was strong and stanch and sound; there was healing in him.

CAME a day when the forest was gone, the wilderness passed away; in their stead had come a strong tide of mingled peoples, a mighty State, a new age clamorous of ax and saw, building great works, railway and city and factory—an age of inventions, telegraph, sewing-machine, mower. David Kerr looked around to find himself over-old for new devices, the flood-tides of opportunity missed. From the shore David marked that missed flood bearing away not only the great deep-water galleons, but the triumphant, swift light shallops of lesser men.

The mortgage was paid off at last, after years of toil and self-denial. But David's hands had still to work for three. Knotty and hard, those hands, half their hard-earned cunning now to little purpose, in this machine-age. And now it was that David grew conscious of a shadow in the sun—Slavery.

No larger than a man's hand was that shadow in the sun, but it grew. And David watched it grow. He thought it out through the long days afield; he brooded over it by the lonely hearthstone at night, looked deep into the late dying fire, and he saw there a dreadful vision of war.

At this time it was, in '56, that Margaret's husband, at the urging of Andrew's letters, went gold-seeking in California, to be gone two years; and Margaret brought her brood back to the old farm at Tonti for a summer's visit "at Grandma's house." So, all the long, bright summer through, David Kerr was playmate to Barbara, the baby girl. And out of this fond companionship there grew up in David's heart something which was to give him strength in the day of his great need. So perhaps it is fitting that we dwell upon it for a little.

Barbara was eighteen months old when David knew her, just beginning to walk and to talk. The talking progressed but slowly. She was too busy to give it much time, that bold explorer. What need, when she could convey the finer shades of meaning with tone and eye and eloquent hand? She wanted to talk, but the other things were more important. Accordingly she devised the plan of doing her language-lessons after her merry, splashing bath—most methodical and economical of babies! While Mam-ma dried and dressed her, she chattered her scant vocabulary over and over with breathless rapidity, sometimes in the most unfavorable attitudes, thus effecting a vast saving of time.

Her voice was a glad crow, silvery, exultant; her brief sayings ended ever on a rising, triumphant note. The vocabulary consisted almost wholly of cheery nouns, arranged on a system of her own, based upon relative importance: *Mam-ma, Da-vie, Gamma, gamma, Gack! Ped! Ayun!* The second and uncapitalized *gamma* was polite recognition of an existing husband to the first and greater Gamma; the last three ejaculations were Barbaric for *Jack! Fred! Alan*!—always delivered in lordly and commanding tones. People tried to impose upon her the word *Pa-pa*, a word musical enough in itself, but mythical, uninteresting, as lacking an attached entity: but the willful linguist firmly closed her incredulous lips and would none of it.

Then, the exultant expletive and word-of-all-work, *Here!* by her inflected in joyous paradigm: Affectionate, *He-a!* signifying *Here am I!* That was for love and trust, for

consolation in trouble, the assurance that she, Barbara, would take good care of her interlocutor. Triumphant, *He-ah!*—which went with willing and loving service. Mandatory, *Yere!*—for reproof and stem direction of those troublesome boys; when used for the others it meant *Come on; I'm ready!* Vocative, *Hey!*—for greeting or surprise, also for hide-and-seek. Explosive, with big, round eyes, *Heh!*--used exclusively and excitedly for the Barksome dog.

The regular lesson ended with the crisp negative, *No-no*, the funny waddling noun *Quack!* and the imperative verb *Dap!*—which meant *Geddap! Go faster* and was also the noun meaning *horse*. The new words—shyly whispered at first, in strict confidence—were practiced more slowly, with a watchful eye for the effect on her admiring audience.

Then she was ready for her day's work. If David was not there, she departed forthwith to seek him, calling: "He-ah, Da-ave!" She took her checked sunbonnet with her, to please Mam-ma, swinging it in hand. White and tall she was, this hardy adventurer, but soon her porcelain fairness became a soft, rosy tan; the straight yellow hair was sun-tinted too. When she found her fellow-workman, she threw up her hand, her merry blue eyes twinkling and crinkling in the sun, her red lips parted to a swift, witching smile. "Hey, Da-ave! He-ah, Da-ave!"

For it was well known that this was a pleasant, wonderful world, inhabited by none but marvelous people, beautiful and brave and good and wise and kind. But (after Mam-ma, of course) the most wonderful and clever and wise and beautiful of all was Da-vie.

"Such a wonderful style of baby!" her mother said: dainty, exquisite, loving, laughing, daring and brave and blithe and cuddlesome. David was her loving slave. She made the world new for him, till he saw it through her eyes—brought into his hard, lonely life the love and wonder and joy he had not known.

It was David who was favorite horse to her little red wooden wagon; it was David who played hide-and-seek with her; when she found him, she spread her little feet apart, bent over, hands on knees, crinkled her eyes and shouted a gleeful, "Hey, Da-ave!"

It was David, again, who could successfully wash her willful paddies, when even Mam-ma could not. "Now this paddy, Barbara ….. Now t'other paddy ..... Now the baby face….. Oh, what a sweet, clean baby!" Whereupon the sweet, clean baby would strut with conscious virtue, trilling, "Mam-ma, Gamma, gamma, Gack! Ped! Ay-yun!"—exhibiting the marvelous paddies for approval.

It was David who was never too busy to stop, when her dresses were soiled, brushing them with his clumsy band, saying: "Oh, baby! Dirty dress! Dirty! Oh, oh!"

"No, no-o?" said Barbara doubtfully, observing the moot point from the corner of her eye, shyly.

"Yes, Barbara. Dirty dress! Ugly dress!" said Davy again.

Then Barbara would turn with sober face and drooping head, finger to mouth, and go slowly to Mother, regarding the offending garment with rueful and accusing eye, rubbing it with her tiny hand. When she was freshly arrayed, Margaret would put her down, saying: "There, David—what do you think of that kind of a style of baby?" Then Barbara would run to him proudly, plucking at the clean gown, her watchful eye on David's face. "He-a! Da-ave! He-ah, Da-vie!"

Sometimes David had to scold her. "Bad girl! bad baby!" Then she would lay her soft cheek against his knee, coaxing in a meek, small cooing voice quite different from her ordinary jubilant note, "Da-vie, Da-vie, Da-vie," till David would relent, catch her up and toss her high, "Oh what a wonderful style of baby!" Then all was right again and she forgave him, laughing.

But once David called her "Bad girl!" right before company—Felix and his fiddle, Felix Lewis, veteran of Mexican war. She didn't coax then—not Barbara. She threw her spoon at him. "No! No!" Her eyes flashed indignantly; she turned to Jack with a quivering lip. "Gack!" she said in a little heartbroken voice, and hid her face in his shoulder. It was David who had to put the coaxings on Barbara this time; he had to take the little pigs to market twice around and make the full trip to Banbury Cross, before all was well again. Then Felix woke the magic of his fiddle, and Barbara held her skirt with dainty thumb and finger, swaying her lissom body in rapt delight.

She was very fond of Felix, fonder of his fiddle; and she called them impartially, "Ix,"

Such a busy baby, so many useful things to do! When the hens and the turkeys and the quack-ducks were to be fed, Barbara put her hand in Grandma's and trudged sturdily along. She helped Grandpa feed the pigs, riding high on his shoulder, holding his long gray locks for greater security; and as for the colt, Barbara had to stroke his head and sing a certain little song in a soft foreign tongue known only to the two of them or he certainly would not eat his nice dinner at all. Then the boys needed close watching and regulating, taxing her vigilance to the utmost. Also it was important that Gamma's roses should all be pulled regularly and their petals thrown high to fall about, her in crimson snow. Barbara had a song she used during the performance of this duty too, a roguish little song quite different from the colt-song both as to words and tune—all about the roses and the butterflies and Barbara.

A vain baby, frankly admiring the baby in the glass long after her identity was discovered, vain of her pretty dresses and gay hair-ribbons, plainly due to her own exceeding personal merit. Perhaps she was what is mysteriously spoken of as a "spoiled" baby; but as you are to learn, no one was ever to grieve for their spoiling of her. And because of what she was to David then and afterward, and because of what David therefore was to many other men and to his war-tried country, you will perhaps have patience to hear these things about little Barbara.

Such a brave baby! Investigating, she encountered a fierce and malignant setting hen—fearsome sight for the boldest. In the wild battle that followed, blood flowed from Barbara's tender cheek, but she was still fighting resolutely when Mam-ma came. Scared, yes—extremely surprised, but fighting valiantly all the same. Washed and comforted, she clambered down from Mam-ma's lap and marched, defiant, fiery-eyed and vindictive, straight for the scene of conflict; bent on errands of vengeance; and she was with difficulty dissuaded.

In the lane between workshop and barn, on another adventure, Barbara unexpectedly met a breachy cow that had jumped over the fence. The two confronted each other solemnly. The cow regarded the midget with grave and profound thoughtfulness. Barbara stood her ground, dauntless, feet wide apart, and waved the intruder back with haughtiest imperious gesture. "The lassie wouldna give an inch," chuckled Grandpa. "I wouldna hae ye to forget that her forbears were Kerrs of Cessford."

THE California letters for Margaret, though long, were infrequent; while David, deeply and vitally interested in those affairs which are history now but were merely politics then, subscribed to three papers, *The Tribune*, *The National Intelligencer* and *The Star of the West* and the local papers as well—also keeping up a fitful correspondence, hugely on these same matters political with Tommy West, Ritter and some other friends of his youth.

Shrewd Barbara was not long in learning that her Davie was more interested in the mail than the others; and when the Kerr mail was thrown out, as the stagecoach went by at noon, it was Barbara's self-imposed task to bring in the mail-sack. Swift and merry she came, romping straight to her David, evading the others, scolding if any tried to tease her by intercepting. Reaching him safely, she struck an altitude, her blue eyes adance in a dazzling smile, and trilled her joyous password: "He-ah, Da-ave!" And David answered "He-ah, Barbara!"

With the same gleeful challenge and countersign she brought his slippers at night, his pipe and tobacco, and for reward climbed upon the safely-saddled foot for a small gallop to Banbury Cross or held his hands to dance Jim-along-Josey till she grew rosy and breathless, or perched on David's knee to listen admiringly while he sang:

> Where the coffee grows on the white oak trees,
> And the rivers now with brandy,
> Where the boys are made of lumps of gold
> And the girls of sugar candy!
> So it's fare you well, my pretty little girl.
> For I'm bound to the Rio Grand-e-Grand-e!
> I'm bound for the Rio Grand-e!

David's voice, as his friends pointed out with unshrinking candor, was better adapted for calling hogs than for singing. But Barbara thought it an excellent voice, the songs unbelievably clever.

Later, at his mother's persistent urging, David stopped smoking, not to set a bad example to his nephews. It was a deep distress to bewildered Barbara. She brought him pipe and tobacco and held them up, coaxing him, soft-cooing: “Da-ave, Da-vie, he-ah, Da-vie!" until he put the unlighted pipe to his mouth. Then she bubbled over with merry, irresistible laughter.

So the long, bright summer passed, the brightest David had known or was to know, and it gave him that which was to make him stand high among men. The glory and glow of that summer, undimmed by any later blackness, shone ever after in David's memory and in dreams, a warm and golden flood, brightest where a busy child tossed rose-leaves in the sun.

But as the corn’s green grew golden, the brown cheeks grew waxen and pale. The swift feet lagged on their loving errands. The riotous baby was quieter, then not so well—ailing—sick—until at last she did not fare abroad, but kept in the house with Mam-ma, a brave and a patient baby, or at most went for short rides with David-horse and the red wagon. Doctor Tom Chadsey was called, and at each visit he wore a graver face.

She hated the doctor-medicine. For a while they had to hold her nose and her hands to make her take it. But after the third holding, she put on a lamblike look when she saw the glass and spoon, folded her resolute little hands and gulped it down.

"Oh, such a nice style of baby!" said Mamma. "What a brave baby to take the nice med’ to make her well.”

Barbara's eyes were joyful then. "Gack! Ped! Ay-yun! Gamma, gamma!" she called proudly, with something of the old cheerful note. And nothing would do but that the household should come trooping to see her take her medicine again. It was only water this time; she grasped the spoon in her tiny fingers and took it all alone.

It was her last accomplishment. There was never any more trouble over the nice med', although she insisted on having the complete circle for audience when she took it. Day by day she faded, growing weaker and whiter, till at last she lay all day in her little bed, patient and cheerful and brave, playing with the pretty white sheets of baby paper and the little folded envelopes that rough Felix Lewis had made and brought to her, for her very own mail, or poring over the unsolved puzzle of a wooden top.

They did not know. When she rallied a little for some of her old pretty baby ways, how happiest of all mortals were they—since Barbara was better now. Even when she lay all day languid and white and still, hardly rousing to read her mail, they hoped on. Indeed, they did more than hope. They were quite sure, every one, that baby would be all right in a day or two. There was no doubt of that. Too bad she had been sick so long! She would hardly know the colt when she got well.

ONE day when she was very quiet, David brought his pipe to her bedside, lighted it, put, his hands behind his back and puffed out his most marvelous smoke-rings. The blue eyes crinkled; the funny little nose wrinkled again; and Barbara's merry peal rang out, the old jubilant silvery laugh! "He-ah, Da-ave!" Her Dave was always such a witty Dave!

It was the last time she laughed. The next day she was very low. Barksome was brought in to visit her, and licked her hand when she patted him. Mam-ma held her at the window while the boys tolled the chickens with corn for her to see and passed the colt and cows for review. She smiled and waved her feeble hand. And that night Doctor Tom told them.

Just before daybreak David woke the boys. The brave adventure was nearly done. They came softly into the room, where the old couple stood silent at the bed-head and Mam-ma knelt beside. Barbara roused up a little, greatly pleased. She had never seen the boys in the night, before. “Ga-ck!” she said softly, and wondered as a tear splashed upon her hand. They stroked the soft hair and moved away. Her eyes turned dimly to David; she mused a little "Da-vie!" she said, wearily, and again, slowly: "Da-vie!" The thin hand moved. Then lovingly, cheerfully, bravely, "Mam-ma!" she said—and turned to that faithful breast. So David left her there, to a greater love and a deeper grief.

The dawn flecked the east with gold; a robin broke into gay and startling song, high and clear and unfaltering. And David was aware of far great mountains he had not seen, the mighty ocean he had no known—all that she would never see, never know,--of all the world’s brightness and glory of wonder and joy and beauty, laughter and light and song, all gracious dawns, soft nights, shining sunsets, merging together to anguish insupportably keen because of the little girl who had missed her chance, who had missed it all.

Prone he lay by the shop wall, blind and deaf, a little top clutched in his hand, his face on the broken sled; the Barksome dog nuzzled and whined beside him; and mad Lear's cry was the voice of all the world:

"O, never, never, never, never, never!”

THE years passed—five of them. Barbara still bloomed vivid in David's heart, but that shadow in the sun, the dreadful vision of war, grew larger and larger and held his mind increasingly. And then—

The first gun was fired at Sumter; the hour of wrath rose roaring from the abyss, the price of injustice, compromise, faltering and unfaith. The high steeples rocked to bells of doom; the North woke from long supine lethargy to flaming passion. The call went out for volunteers, seventy and five thousand; thrice that number, from city and town and mine and farm, poured out in answer. Good blood, a stubborn, hardy stock, those levies; their like as raw material had not been seen since Cromwell's time.

David heard the call to arms read in Salem Square. Crowded with the angry, silent men of Marion County was Salem Square—flags aflaunt, wild bells ringing, drumbeat, black

looks to southward. Women, too, thronged to Salem Square: women with pale faces and sad, prophetic eyes.

Ritter spoke, well and manfully; and he signed first, deed matching word. Hot Felix was swift second; Tommy West was close behind; and old Marion's best signed with them.

Not David. He had a nearer duty; and he set himself to do that next thing next, in his grim, silent way. For Mary Kerr's days were numbered; she had need of her firstborn by her side. And the elder David was a spent and broken man. He could work no more. David the younger was breadwinner for all.

Nor did David go for the next call, when three-year men replaced the three-months men—no, not even after the evil tidings of Bull Run, for be was still faithful to his first and harder duty.

To us, who know the end, it is hard to see how surely that end might have been different, difficult now to understand the fear and doubt and bewilderment of '61, the despair or exultation attending the skirmishes and minor battles of that year. Dwarfed and shadowed by the tremendous and desperate struggles that followed them, hardly is it remembered, now, which were victories, which defeats.

Philippi, Rich Mountain, Carrick's Ford, Carnifex, Beverly—who speaks these forgotten names now, save those for whom grief made these names immortal? Yet the McClellan campaign for relief of the loyalists of western Virginia threw the nation into a ferment of hope and enthusiasm, just as the fiasco at Big Bethel, the disaster of Bull Run or the cruel blunder of Ball's Bluff all plunged them into dismay and anguish and shame.

In the West it was scarcely better. In swift succession came defeats at Carthage, Wilson's Creek and Lexington, with but slight and easy successes for offset. The Southron's Homeric boast had ever been that he was the better fighting man. That he should cling tenaciously to such pleasing tradition was only natural; the surprising fact is not that this belief was shared abroad, but that, amazing as it may seem, it had ever found ready and widespread acceptance in the North. On the whole, the result of '61 seemed to confirm the Southern theory. The Federal troops fought with spirit and constancy, the Confederates won the battles.

Harder than defeat was the suspense of long inaction. For your republican form of government, as we of 1917 well know, must needs make haste slowly—bunglingly even. The people had been lavish of men, money and supplies; they were impatient for results. That a hostile confederacy existed within our borders without serious molestation was of itself a Rebel victory.

The Northerners clamored for battle at any risk of disaster; but neither McClellan nor Halleck would fight, because they were not sure to win. Again the cry rose, "On to Richmond!" shrieked by voice and by type. Insolent Stanton, speaking of the generals of division in council, called them "ten generals afraid to fight." "All quiet along the

Potomac," became a byword and a sneer. McClellan was "drillmaster" or "traitor;" the sad and patient President was an "imbecile." The result was about as bad as could well have been contrived. There was prudent delay when a noble rashness might well have been the wiser course.

Everywhere the blighting effects of politics were felt. Into every department of government, into every arm of the military organization, into places low and places high, crept a few men of miraculous inefficiency—with paralyzing effect. Discord, distrust, factions, intrigue, self-seeking, inordinate ambition, alliances, cliques, division of authority, fanaticism, unreasoning bitterness, controversy, recrimination, detraction, spite, venomous scandal, contempt, ridicule, sordid flinching of wealth—by these sinister signs you may know that the North, despite her immense superiority of population and of resources, was at this time no overmatch for the South: a people proud, high-spirited, warlike, united and uncompromising, better fitted, by reason of the aristocratic alignment of their society, to command on the one part or to obey on the other. And so the first year of the war, all things considered, left the South with at least an even chance. One great and crushing victory, recognition from England; that was their hope: And if a really great battle were won in the West, it meant Missouri, Kentucky, and Tennessee—a hundred thousand men to swell the Southern ranks.

MARY KERR died in December. Margaret and Joan and Elsie were with her at the last. David's father went to live with Joan. On New Year's Day, 1862, David Kerr said goodbye to them: his way was to war.

The Barksome dog, an old dog now, howled to see him go and would have followed him. If Joan's eyes were tearful when she kissed him, they were proud eyes too—proud for the hard years wherein this brother of hers had done his large part quietly and well. His father gripped his hand: "You've been a good son to me, Davy." The bands, the flags, the throngs, the tumult of leaping blood, were wanting now—not the steadfast purpose or the sad hearts. So Greatheart went his way.

That way was to Springfield first, where he enlisted. He was sent to Camp Butler; after nearly two months of drill he was ordered to the rendezvous at Paducah.

Meanwhile affairs were going better for the Union. In Kentucky, Thomas defeated Crittenden at Mill Spring. A local brigadier, General Grant, observed that the enemy were in force at Forts Henry and Donelson—strong positions, one impregnable; and being less able to resist the temptation than commanders of stronger self-restraint, Grant went, without orders, and took those places with an informality verging upon rudeness. Soon afterward General Curtis drove the Rebels from Missouri, followed them into Arkansas and defeated them at Pea Ridge. On almost the same date the nation's fate hung trembling in the balance for two days when the iron *Merrimac* threatened to make clear the way for cotton and to hold the rich seaboard cities at her mercy—with what result we know. Not only was the vital blockade unbroken, but in an hour England saw her sea-rule gone, her impunity vanished with her outworn navies. Her splendid frigates, against such

landsmen-built fighting-ships as those two that fought at Hampton Roads, were helpless: no more did the United States exist at Britain's forbearance.

After Donelson, Major Ritter passed through Paducah. He saw David there, and soon after, through his good offices, David was assigned to service with Ritter's regiment. Here served David's friends—including Tommy West, captain now of the Marion men; Crawley, their first captain, had fallen at Donelson. Tom Chadsey was a surgeon attached to the regiment.

David was weeks more at Paducah, awaiting transportation. Embarked at last on the steamer *Chancellor*, with eight hundred raw recruits, he was carried up the Tennessee "to the front." On March 25th he joined his regiment at Pittsburg Landing, where it had been for some time as advance guard—the Twenty-eighth Illinois, First Brigade, of Hurlbut's division. Amory Johnson was Colonel; Colonel Williams of the Third Iowa commanded the brigade; the other regiments of it were the Thirty-second Illinois and the Forty-first. Their camp was on the north hillside by Spring Creek Run, a mile back from the Tennessee.

“THE first thing we know,” said Tom Chadsey, “the Johnnies’ll slip up and give us a good lickin’, before Buell gets here. There’s enough of ‘em to do it, if they get together quick; and right now’s the best chance they’ll ever get to win this war.”

They were on the hill back of their camp David sat on a log, looking down at the white tents. Felix sprawled beside him, smoking. Chadsey walked up and down the short beat of the log’s length biting an unlighted cigar.

“Oh, I guess they wont,” said Felix lazily. "And if they do lick us a little, it wont make no difference. We’re bound to beat 'em in the long run. Too many of us.”

"You don't know what you are talking about," said Doctor Tom savagely. "They've got men enough and pluck enough. They haven't got the cannon, arms, ammunition, foundries, machine-shops and men to run them. But they've got cotton. England's got the guns and no cotton, and cotton is what she's almost got to have. Just let her think the Rebels can win, and she'll jump in and help 'em, break the blockade, recognize 'em and all that. Lend 'em the money too! So'll France. I tell you, I'm bothered. Our generals must be asleep. I suppose they'll wait till Buell joins us and we send 'em a little note that we're ready."

"Seems to me you're gettin' mighty careless about your grammar for a school-master," drawled Felix flippantly. "You used to jack me up for such slack talk as that. How's your liver?"

"It's sense, anyhow," said Doctor Tom. "You know just as well as I do what it will mean if Johnson can defeat us here. We couldn't get away; there's no line of retreat open. With the added prestige and confidence of a victory, he could fall upon Buell, or he could wait

for the new recruits that would rush in after such a triumph. In either case he could whip Buell's army, which would be cast down as much as the Rebels would be elated. A hundred thousand men will join the Confederate army from Tennessee, Kentucky and Missouri if they can win a really great battle now. And mercenaries will flock to the victors from all over the world. Europe's war-maps will show these three States won for the South—and all the Southwest. Then comes recognition from England and France. They're only too anxious. Like as not they'll pitch in and help 'em fight."

"There you go again," Felix remonstrated. "You grieve me, Surgeon. You used to talk so proper, too!"

Chadsey stopped his uneasy pacing and turned to David.

"What do *you* say, David?"

"We'll win," said David slowly. His eyes swept along the far lines of the camps beyond their own, showing through the broken timber country. "We're right, and they are wrong. We are not fighting to force them to accept Lincoln as their President, nor even to make them stay in the Union, no matter what the papers and the statesmen say. We are fighting against slavery."

Felix drew a long face at this; he was never one to be fierce and forward for the antislavery movement. "That wasn't mentioned when I signed the articles." He suggested mildly. "Me, I'm fighting for the Union."

"If it wasn't just exactly for slavery, the Southerners would fight to stay *in* the Union," said David. "Lincoln's election wasn't the cause of secession; it was the signal for it. We must win. Secession is not the wrong; it is slavery that is wrong. There is ample room here for two free nations side by side; the time has come when there is not room on earth for a slave State."

"By George, you've got it! You make me see it!" said Chadsey. "It isn't because we want to have our turn at ruling that we are so determined to win, nor for the glory of winning. We only half know it, but it's because the South is terribly and hopelessly wrong about slavery. But, don't you see, that only gives point to what I'm saying? The battle that is going to be fought somewhere around here will come mighty near to settling it--*if they win*. If we win this fight, we can lose a half-dozen afterward; but they'll get no help from Europe, once we have proved we can match 'em in the open, man for man. If we can do that, they must lose, because there's more of us. We haven't done it yet. Donelson was too one-sided. We had two men to their one. But the next fight—that'll be your first one, Davy—that's the one that'll count!"

"We'll win!" repeated David.

THE Twenty-eighth heard scattered firing from the distant front at day-break, but was undisturbed by it. Small Rebel bands had been prowling near for several days. Another skirmish—or it might be merely the pickets discharging their guns before return to camp.

They had eaten their breakfast and were making ready for inspection when there came a rattle and crash of musket-fire. The long roll beat to arms; the battle was upon them. As they fell hastily into line, gray headed Colonel Pugh of the Forty-first rode by. He reined his horse in and flung up his hand. "Fill up your canteens, boys," was his greeting. "Some of us'll take supper in hell!"

There was scant time for orders. General Grant was at Savannah, seven miles away; few even knew where he was. Commanders moved to position at their own discretion. But it may be mentioned as worthy of note that the separate commands, with singular unanimity, moved promptly to the firing-line; discretion seems hardly the word to describe such innovation.

The swift foe came on in treble battle-line; as one line was repulsed, another took its place at once. The Rebel plan of battle was to hold the Union right in check, driving it if possible, while the main attack was to crush the Federal left by superior numbers and constant flanking. For this latter duty were set apart seven brigades and ten batteries of artillery. But Stuart, on the extreme left of the Federals, was so far away that the brunt of the first assault fell upon Prentiss and Wallace. In danger of being cut off and surrounded, Stuart fell back and later succeeded in closing up at Hurlbut’s left.

The new line of the Union forces, partly chosen, partly forced upon them, was a rough semicircle resting on Snake Creak at the left—a thin line that shook in the red winds of war, a line that wavered, stiffened and held, a line that wavered, buckled, crumpled and broke, a line that rallied and formed again, stood; advanced, retreated, turned and held again.

But the story of that fight is not the story of commanders or of organizations, but of soldiers—of men. They knew what they were there for: they fought, not as a skillfully handled army, but as a man fights in his own proper quarrel. Surprised, outnumbered, outgeneraled, outflanked, without orders, with aimless orders, with conflicting orders; broken, disorganized, confused, beaten, driven back with horrible slaughter by assault as desperate as the defense was unflinching, the men of the North proved that day, once for all, that their best was as good as any best. "After Shiloh, the South never smiled again." There have been greater battles, never a braver fight. We are their sons; our love remembers them.

And David, what did he think and feel in that seething hell, this soldier of no battles? Horror, fear, hate, hope, pity, terror, shame, despair, madness, bloodlust? All these and more; combinations nameless as the shifting colors of dream.

As they hastened along the Corinth road, he remembered Chadsey's words of the day before: the hour was upon them. He glanced to the right, to left, at his neighbors—Wells

of Tonti, Wilcox of Tonti; their faces, save for a certain keen alertness of the eyes, were as placid and unemotional as they had been when they polished their guns an hour before. But they were "veterans;" they had seen service and smelled burned powder at Fort Donelson. For his own part, David was aware that his heart was pounding madly at his ribs. Behind him came deep and steady curses from a man whose shoe pinched his foot.

Wagons clattered down the road, urged by pale drivers to what speed was in horseflesh, followed a few infantrymen who had fled panic-stricken at the first fire—greeted with hoots and jeers. Some turned back with the advancing column, spreading exaggerated reports of the disaster in front—reports that General Wallace was killed, that General Prentiss was killed, that their commands were cut to pieces. One fell in beside David. He had thrown away his Enfield. "I'll git a gun back there," he puffed. "Say, that was an awful fight. They wiped us out, I tell you. Wiped us out just like you'd wipe a slate with a rag!" The fear of death gripped at his heart; as he stumbled on, he babbled weakly in David's ear: "An awful fight. . . . . My messmate shot spang in the middle of his forehead. Slep' with him only last night. Now—he's dead! Think o' that!"

AS they came closer to the scene of the surprise, they met the full tide of retreat, remnants of what had been companies and regiments, with frantic officers striving vainly to rally them. The reinforcing column spread out in the fields, to right, to left, threw out skirmishers and advanced more slowly, in line of battle. They opened up their ranks, and the broken troops passed through, reformed under shelter and followed.

The Twenty-eighth knew the ground better than most, as has been said. Availing himself of the absence of specific orders, the brigade commander used that knowledge well, seizing upon perhaps the strongest position on the battlefield—known afterward as the Peach Orchard. Here was shelter of crest and underbrush for themselves, open fields over which the enemy must advance.

Barely had they taken their position when the foe came swarming through the woods on the farther side of the field. From the Federal center and the right came the steadily increasing crescendo of cannon and small-arms; but immediately in front not a shot was fired.

"Ten-shun! Lie down!" came the order. "Reserve your fire." The enemy halted for a volley. David heard it whistling overhead. Colonel Johnson rode slowly along behind the line:

"Hold your fire, boys! Wait for them—wa-ait for 'em ..... Steady!"

The Rebels, three hundred yards away, delivered another volley, aimed low. Several of the Twenty-eighth were struck; two were killed. Farther along, some Federal regiments gave answer; the Confederates wavered there for a moment before they came on. But Colonel Johnson's voice rose imperturbably:

"Hold your fire! Steady! wa-ait for 'em, Twenty-eighth!"

David's throat was contracted; his mouth was dry; he was choking. Were they to wait forever, to be slaughtered without resistance? A battery of four guns, posted between the Twenty-eighth and the Third Iowa, under like instructions to hold their fire, was unable to endure the strain. Panic-stricken, the artillerymen turned tail and fled without firing a shot. The curse that ran along the line was almost as much for the officers who condemned them to such maddening suspense of inaction as for the “runagates." David dug his fingers into his palms; he felt the impulse to scream out that it was madness to be killed without fighting for it—to rise and fire, orders or no orders.

The Rebels, closer in, fired again. By David's side Wilcox of Tonti sprang up, clutching his throat, his eyes staring, blood gushing through his fingers. He pitched forward on his face with his arm across David; his hot blood splashed on David's cheek, clotted in his hair; David's stomach turned over at it. The Prentiss man crawled over, mumbling broken words of terror and rage, and took the dead man's rifle. The Rebels came on at a run.

"Ten-shun, Twenty-eighth! Ready! Aim low! *Fire!*"

David's deadly sickness left him as their volley crashed out murderously at point-blank.

"'Bite your cartridge! Draw—ramrods! Handle—ramrods!" thundered the captains. "Ready! Aim! *Fire!*"

The smoke cleared away. The Rebel line was gapped and torn; but it came on. The Colonel's voice rose again, fierce now, and shrill.

"Fire at will!"

DAVID bit the end from the paper cartridge, rammed the cartridge swiftly home, fired and loaded again. About him the others did the like, each with his utmost speed. David was aware of gray forms quiet and still on the green grass, of gray forms that limped or staggered or crawled back. Before him, around him, through the crackling musketry fire, rose pitiful cries of agony to wring the heart. He loaded and fired with frantic haste. The Rebel ranks were broken. Some rushed madly on; some huddled together and fired; some stood or knelt alone and shot as coolly as at target practice. Then, in an instant, like shapes in a dream, they melted away; the knots dissolved; the foe streamed back across the fields for the shelter of the woods. A great shout of triumph went up along the Union line. The Prentiss man was yelling, almost in tears. He slapped David on the shoulder. "We've licked 'em; we've licked 'em! It's their turn to run!"

Then, in the strange, unreal dream, a second steady gray line came from the wood, opened up to let their fleeing comrades through, halted, fired, reloaded, came on with dreadful swiftness. The scattering firing "at will" was with difficulty stopped.

"*Lie down! Lie down!* Reload! Hold your fire!"

Again and again the stern command was shouted. But the first Rebel volley came while too many of the Federals were still deaf to all commands, drunken with fancied victory, blind to all save the fleeing foe, or dazed at seeing his strength thus suddenly renewed. That volley cost them dear. At this point, selected by the Confederate commander for his mortal thrust, they were outnumbered throughout the day; their only chance lay in the strength of their ground, in using every available means of shelter to the utmost; to present themselves for long as a fair target to the enemy would be fatal.

Wells of Tonti was mumbling thickly, “My God, have we got to go through that again?" and David answered in a hoarse voice he did not know: "Well, we did it before; we can do it again." "That's right," said Wells, as one struck by the unexpected wisdom of the remark. “That's right! We *can* do it again."

A comrade was borne swiftly by on a stretcher; his arm had been carried away by a cannon-ball; a splinter of bone protruded through the blood-soaked hasty bandage. "Get him back to the doctor quick, if you want to save him,” said Tommy West. The despair and agony in that white face unnerved David for the moment, left him faint. He remembered this man's boyhood at Tonti, his jokes of yesterday. A nameless grave—why, that was well enough. But to be like *that*! His hand shook as he reloaded.

It did not seem possible to him, in this moment of his weakness, that flesh and blood could stand the strain of such another charge. His late word of cheer to Wells seemed now but an idle and childish boast. And with the thought of it, in his hideous unreal dream, a third gray army sprang up from the wood beyond: they must stand not one more charge, but two! Unseen batteries began hurling shot and shell into the Federal brigades. Then came the welcome command:

"Ten-shun! By companies—*fire!* Bite your cartridge! Draw—ramrods! Handle—ramrods! By companies—*fire!* . . . . Reload! .... By companies—*fire!* . . . . *Fire at will!"*

WAVE after gray wave rose shrieking, beat upon them, tore them, fell back and rose once more. Roar of thunderous cannon, crash of rifle-volleys, screaming shell, flaming woods and battle-smoke: above uproar and clamor, through all the wild battle, pierced the shrill fury of the gray charging legions, the dreaded Rebel yell—the fierce South cheering on her sons. The cleared fields were thick-strewn with Confederate dead; wounded men rose there, in their unendurable agony, heedless of the leaden hail about them, or seeking release in its fury.

David fought on. His soul had got its second wind; for the time, counting himself as one already dead, fear had left him. He was a fighting machine.

With others David took his turn at bearing the wounded to the rear, where Chadsey was at his bitter work; then David hastened back to take his place in the line. In his turn he filled and fetched a back-load of canteens. There were breathing spells when they could drink, refill their cartridge-cases and swab out their guns, draw their belts tighter,

straighten out their battered lines—perhaps speak together a little, before the next onset beat against them. Their officers talked to them too, cheered them on, praised them for their gallant work.

Felix came over to David, smiling sadly, for a brief word. "What d'ye think, David? Can we stick?"

"We'll stick," said David as briefly.

Slightly wounded men came back, bandaged and bloody, laughing a little in pardonable bravado as they took their places in the line. Tommy West acquitted himself well—none better. One notable service of his, in desperate need, was a bold theft of other-destined ammunition wagons—an unpardonable offense committed barely in time to save this vital position. And with each hour the thinned and shortened lines closed stubbornly up for their dreadful task. They held virtually the same position from eight o'clock until noon, falling back once, by General Hurlbut's orders, a scant two hundred yards, for better shelter and realignment.

So the slow day wore on. They knew nothing of how the fight went elsewhere, save as stragglers joined them with news of black disaster all along the line. Hour by hour they lost ground; hour by hour that grim semicircle was bent back to a sharper curve, fighting bitterly for every inch with a foe that seemed invincible, that no slaughter could daunt, no loss appall. Blindly the Federals fought on, now without fear as without hope, stubbornly gaining, losing—losing most.

Through lurid thick smoke, while yet another attack broke upon them, a general officer rode up to the Twenty-eighth, a stern figure on a magnificent black horse. A shell burst in his path, wrapping him in a cloud of dust; he spurred on.

"What regiment is this?" he demanded:

The Colonel was farther along the line; it was the senior captain who made answer, not unproudly:

"General, this is the Twenty-eighth Illinois—and a few friends."

The General—it was McClernand—looked long at the appalling attack, the unflinching resistance: his hand went up in salute as he replied:

"*Twenty-eighth! You'll do to buckle to!"*

With that unforgotten accolade he went his way in search of General Hurlbut.

THAT charge, the most furious of the day, was also beaten back; but the Federals, temporarily victors, were left with sadly lessened numbers and were forced to fall back

again, that they might have less ground to defend next time. Before the Twenty-eighth, just after this charge, the Confederate chieftain fell; they knew it not.

Stuart was outflanked and driven back; Hurlbut was outflanked and driven back; Prentiss was outflanked and stood, Wallace with him; and on them, from three sides, burst all the fury of war. The tale is known, how well they fought, brave of the brave,--this thing was not done in a corner,--and how they yielded at last, Wallace killed, their regiments scattered and surrounded. Six of Wallace's regiments, under Colonel Tuttle, attempted to cut their way out; perhaps a thousand men made good the attempt and joined Hurlbut.

A costly price for the South! In the fatal lull of the Prentiss surrender the breathless Federals fell back, closed up that tremendous gap, placed their batteries and drew their grim line together for the final struggle. A short line now, not two miles from wing to wing: an arch either base of which was almost to the bluffs of the Tennessee, where the high ground broke away to the lowlands.

David's regiment and brigade, with Hurlbut's other brigade, shattered but still keeping their organization, braced by fragments of Wallace's and Stuart's regiments and by stragglers from the river were now the Union left. Their last position was taken under direction of both General Hurlbut and General Grant in person. Behind were the deep waters of the river, the huddled fugitives, the ineffectual gunboats, the guns of which, till now, had been useless because they were as apt to destroy friend as foe. Now they came into play, carrying beyond the utmost Federal line.

A partial assault was repulsed. In the brief space that followed, David saw furious staff officers at the bluff's edge forcing the drivers of ammunition- and supply-wagons hurtling down the hillside road, down the hillside itself, to give room above for swift headlong cannon, remnants of scattered batteries, gathered for a last desperate stand.

Then the foe came on.

A storm of artillery fire swept the blue ranks, concentrated, deadly, unceasing. The low sun gleamed through the battle-smoke. Victorious, confident, steady, the Rebels poured over the southward crest. Their volley swept across the narrow ravine with terrible effect. There was a feeble answer. Nerves tightly strung in the awful delirium of battle had slackened with the lull and could not lightly again attain to the wild, high pitch of that heroic madness; the unceasing tide of defeat had weakened even the strongest spirit. Another volley, and another: the blue line heaved and shuddered and melted away. As far as the eye could reach, the gray host leaped forward in swift pursuit; the Federals broke and fled.

David went with them,--in his hideous dream,--stunned, shamed, broken-hearted. It was all over; the Southerners were invincible; the battle was lost; the war was lost. There would be no honored nameless grave for him. He would be a fugitive, a skulker, a coward, a prisoner, to creep, back, when the war was over, and drag out his cheerless days till Tonti turf should cover his shame. Not beside his mother, or by little Barbara—

"He-ah, Da-ave! He-ah, Da-vie!"

He heard the brave note, high and clear through that hell of sound: the baby hand was warm in his; the stainless eyes were loving, exultant, unafraid, the sunlight in her sunny hair. Proud jubilant, tender, triumphant, the old soft sign-word rose above all the tumult:

"H e-ah, Da-ave! He-ah, Da-vie!"

So David turned, and the world's hope turned with him. He bit the cartridge and rammed it home—fired, loaded and fired, loaded and fired again: the one man who stood, for one immortal moment, when all the North was broken, while behind him retreat was turning to panic, panic to utter rout. He stood and loaded and fired and loaded and fired again.

"Da-vie! Da-vie!" His head was proud and high; the swift blood tingled and leaped along his veins. At that close range a thousand marksmen might have brought him down; they would not—that gallant foe!

"Such a wonderful style of baby!" The low wind rippled in her yellow hair; her soft hand clutched at David's knee; her eyes were upon the foe, where they came on flushed, triumphant, to clinch their empire-making victory ..... Barbara waved them back; and all their splendid valor, their strength and skill and pride, crashed down to darkness and dust before that baby ghost.

For as defeat turned to rout, Felix Lewis looked back again to where, a hundred yards behind, the Kerrs of Cesssford stood, man and maid; though Felix—so dull his eyes could see but the one Kerr, his friend, the one true man now, as ever, steadfastly at his plain duty.

"God!" cried Felix. He ran back, roaring with shame and rage and grief; Tommy West was not far behind—then the Prentiss straggler who had fought by David's side all day, then a stranger, and wounded Ritter. Surgeon Chadsey caught up a dropped gun and went now to war.

Others turned and saw that lonely figure, black against the sky—heard the high call and did its bidding. Friend, kinsman, comrade, they turned, they came back—five, a score, a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand! On their left, the battery blazed into action; new guns went thundering by. Shells from the gunboats shrieked overhead. The mighty North stood at bay, fighting in the savage frenzy of despair. The gray line halted.

BUT David Kerr was on his face in dust and blood, unheeding, now his work was done. Tommy West lay dead beside him, dead Chadsey at his feet.

Felix raised David in his arms, held water to his lips, strove to stanch the swift blood. "Don't leave us now. David; don't die now! We're holding them; they're beat. Buell's men have come. We've beat 'em! David, David!"

David opened his eyes to a darkening vision that was to him the last of earth. Up the hill from the river came a steady blue column—Buell's men, at last. The van deployed swiftly on the high ground and came on at the double-quick. On the bluff the battery blazed and bellowed.

David turned his dimming eyes to the front. In knots, in clusters, in ragged line, they fought, and held, and gained. The flag reeled forward.

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