

A

# SOLDIER OF THE CUMBERLAND:

MEMOIR

OF

MEAD HOLMES, JR.,

SERGEANT OF COMPANY K, 21ST REGIMENT WISCONSIN VOLUNTEERS.

BY HIS FATHER.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY JOHN S. HART, LL.D.

*Pro Christo, pro Patria.*



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# P R E F A C E .



**I**N preparing the following narrative, the author has found it very difficult to avoid a crowded recital of facts, without plunging into the greater fault of prolix detail; but the work is not intended for the eye of criticism. Many a page has been written in tears, many a sentence is the vibration of a stricken heart; but I have aimed to execute my task with impartiality, fidelity, and accuracy. It is the simple story of a dear and only son, — my first-born, — who, in the true martyr spirit, understandingly and deliberately laid down his life for his country. His army correspondence, extracts from which have already met the public eye, exciting a deep and wide interest, is here given quite at length, and the preceding record of his childhood and progress will be found no less precious and fragrant. Here are scenes of beautiful quiet-

tude, melting pathos, inspiring heroism, and heavenly devotion. Although the young hero, with all his longings to be useful, was unassuming and retiring, — specially averse to publicity, — I can not restrain the conviction that, on this anniversary of his death, and also of Sumter's fall, a memorial of his life will be a suitable tribute of a father's love, and, with the more imposing works of Stearns, Thompson, Bacon, Taylor, and others, by the divine blessing, do something to extend that spirit of Christian patriotism which is the hope of our beloved land.

MEAD HOLMES.

MANITOWOC, WIS., April 12, 1864.

# INTRODUCTION.



**I**N compliance with the wish of a stricken and sorrowing father, most willingly do I write this present Introduction, though sure that the reader, on finishing the book, will feel, as I do, that few books ever less needed to be introduced. The story of MEAD HOLMES, Jr., the noble young Christian soldier of the Army of the Cumberland, is one that needs no extraneous help in winning its way to favor. I pity the man who can read it with dry eyes, or who rises from its perusal without a higher estimate of what Christianity can do to ennoble character, or without a deeper impression of the costliness of the sacrifice which the nation is now laying upon the altar.

The character of this young soldier, as it is developed in the ensuing pages, is peculiarly attractive. He was by nature generous and unselfish, almost to a fault. This trait showed itself in early childhood, and it continued to mark his course to the very last. The domestic affections,

also, were strong within him, beyond the experience of most men. The tie between him and his mother particularly was touchingly beautiful. It was like that between a mother and an only daughter; and it might, perhaps, have argued effeminacy on his part, but for the masculine strength and vigor which were every where bound up with it. He seems to have been naturally tender-hearted and gentle, with an instinctive love of truth, and a corresponding shrinking from every thing mean and disingenuous; and these natural impulses were fostered and strengthened by the genial influences of a Christian home, in which love and confidence reigned supreme among all the members. His parents, one an educated clergyman, the other a professional educator, did not withhold from their first-born the lights of knowledge. Every page in the following letters from their boy shows early and careful culture. His mind, indeed, was ripe beyond his years. While he had a love for every liberal pursuit, his chosen studies were those connected with the natural sciences and mechanics, and he gave some remarkable evidences of true inventive genius. Method reigned supreme in every thing he undertook, and the sturdy courage with which he faced difficulties shone only the more conspicuous for the extreme delicacy of his natural organization. It is quite in keeping with the other traits of his character, that he was passionately fond of music,

and that he had acquired no little musical skill. His temperament, withal, was bright and joyous, and he was quick to look on the sunny side of every thing. I may not omit the crowning grace in this beautiful character. Love for Jesus was the key-note that brought into harmony every other principle and affection. His Christianity, moreover, was no passive negation. It was his life. It permeated, controlled, purified, and sweetened the whole current of his thoughts, and gave to his daily walk among his fellows a beautiful and harmonious consistency. I do not mean to say that he had attained perfection. But his character as a Christian gentleman was one of rare loveliness. It is eminently worthy to be held up for study and imitation.

If ever there is pure patriotism, it is when such a youth offers himself freely to his country for the stern and distasteful service of war. By his education, his talents, and his social position, young Holmes was fairly entitled to a command, and through his friends he might easily have procured one. But he deliberately preferred entering the ranks; and the special value of this noble record of his service is, that it gives us, in vivid colors, a minute portrayal of the life of the common soldier. If any one wishes to know exactly how the common soldier, in this present war, has to live, the trials and hardships to which he is exposed,—above all, if one wishes to see what a glory the

love of country and the love of Christ may throw over even so hard and rude a lot as this,—let him read the life of this brave young Christian patriot, **MEAD HOLMES, Jr.**, Soldier of the noble Army of the Cumberland.

**JOHN S. HART.**

Office of *The Sunday-School Times*,  
Philadelphia, March, 1864.

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# A SOLDIER OF THE CUMBERLAND.

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## CHAPTER I.

### CHILDHOOD.

Birth — Affectionate disposition — Love of music — Conscientiousness — Generosity — Love of nature — At school — Not ashamed to pray — His violin — Philosophical instruments — Mechanical genius — Miniature ship — Sympathy for the poor — A teacher in the Sabbath school — Sickness — The pleasure boat.

**M**EAD HOLMES, JR., the only son of Rev. Mead Holmes and Mary D. A. Holmes, of Manitowoc, Wis., was born in Ellicottville, N. Y., October 29, 1841, and fell at Murfreesboro', Tenn., April 12, 1863, at the age of twenty-one years and five months.

His early childhood was most affectionate, unselfish, and truthful. Attachment to his mother, who did not often delegate her care and authority to nurses and servants, but was his constant companion and counselor, formed a prominent trait of his character; and his sprightly inquiry, when casually looking up

from his play, "Don't we love each other, mother?" became a sportive household phrase. Of a pleasant, loving disposition, yet too sensitive to battle even with the roughnesses of a tender child's life, he was never so happy as when, with her, he sat reading, studying, and drawing. In the latter, especially, he excelled; nor was he satisfied till every picture in his books of study was nicely painted, and he could draw a ship or sketch a landscape. He was very fond of music, and most sensitive to its pathetic tones. When but four or five years old, he could not hear the Jewish captives' moan, in the plaintive strains of "Melton," without weeping. Before he could speak plainly, he was heard singing "Do, do," in a room by himself. A friend looking in, found him playing earnestly, with a knife for a bow, and a board for a violin; "Moosic, moosic," exclaimed the little fellow, while his eyes glistened with the pleasure of his solo.

At the age of three years he was the subject of many serious thoughts, and often, when he had done wrong, he earnestly asked God's forgiveness; and the prayer of his parents was, that his heart might then be renewed. Why could not regenerating grace be imparted to the child in comparative innocence as well as to the man confirmed in depravity? His mother

was specially impressed with the importance of his immediate conversion, and there has always been ground of hope that a radical change in him then took place. From this time he seemed to feel that Jesus was his friend, to whom he could go with all his trials, and who would finally receive him to Heaven.

Great care had been taken that his young mind should not be clouded by gloomy representations of death and the future state. Hence, during a severe illness, when I remarked in his presence that I feared he would not live long, he said, "Then, father, I shall go up to be with the holy angels and the blessed Jesus." All was light beyond the grave. In these skeptical times, who does not covet a child's faith?

From early childhood he was eminently conscientious, often reporting his misdeeds, and saying, "Mamma, I ought to be punished." When left to choose his own punishment he never chose the lighter, and such self-reproach did he manifest, that it was difficult for a parent to inflict even this. Often, when feeling wrong, he would retire of his own accord, and, in his childish way, ask God to help him master his own spirit. This, no doubt, was the secret of the self-control so manifest in his future life.

He required but little sleep, and often at the midnight hour would his whisper awaken his

mother: "I can't sleep; please tell me a story." And thus he learned the Bible stories and Ten Commandments so thoroughly and accurately that, if misquoted, he instantly noticed it. Before he could read he was perfectly familiar with "Todd's Lectures to Children," and they exerted a powerful influence upon his life. He was generous to a fault. Having purchased a beautiful set of books for him, I found half of them scattered among his little friends the first day. He had no idea of keeping so many when "the others had none." Often did he weep for others' sorrows. Once, when asked what was the matter, "Oh," said he, "Willie is in trouble, and I can not help him." He was an ardent admirer of nature. The grove, the running brook, where he had a variety of miniature wheels, the delicate flower, the rocky summit, the crashing thunder-storm, were his delight, — the beautiful, the grand, the sublime. His walks and rambles were full of sport, and he was ever on the alert for curiosities. A herbarium of fair size, collections of curious stones, forsaken birds'-nests, skeletons of small animals, and preserved insects decorated his room.

In his sixth year he began to attend school, but his health would not bear the confinement, and he soon returned home to mingle study with recreation. Here his education was well



conducted, and his progress satisfactory. At the age of ten he visited New York city, New Jersey, and Massachusetts. The trip he enjoyed much, and his health was greatly improved. Soon after, he commenced attending a select school superintended by his mother, where began a new course of discipline. The youngest of fifty pupils, one-half of whom were lads, who, though gentlemanly and obedient in school hours, were inclined to be wild and noisy at other times, surprised at the small distinction they made between right and wrong, hearing now the profane word, now the vulgar jest and coarse laugh, his moral sensibilities were shocked. While the pet of some, for others he was a target. "Do you pray, Mead?" said one of nearly twice his age. "Oh, a praying little Christian! Did you pray this morning, my little saint?" "I am not ashamed to pray," said the brave boy, "and I did pray this morning."

As a clergyman's son, he was closely watched; but his modesty and kindness won upon all. The first piece he spoke was "Casabianca," — a character which he greatly admired, — but entering too deeply into the scene described, he burst into tears, and rushed to his seat. Recovering himself, he returned to the rostrum, and spoke with distinctness and the pathos of reality. One

fresh from the "burning deck" could hardly have related the facts with more stirring interest.

Fond of instrumental music, he determined to obtain a violin, and for this purpose the accumulations of his savings bank — much of them the fruit of self-denial — were at length found sufficient, and the long-coveted instrument was his. He loved its sweet tones, especially in the family and social circle.

No life is without its trials. So the shades often followed the sunlight in his path. The loss of pets — canaries, robins, rabbits, a favorite squirrel, more than all, a family horse, into whose attentive ear he had, when a small child, more than once poured some tale of sorrow — cost him tears not a few. For dumb animals he had great sympathy, and to abuse them was to forfeit his respect and confidence.

When twelve years old, his father accepted a call to settle in Wisconsin. No child was ever more delighted than young Mead with a new country. He loved the romantic scenery, beautiful rivers, extensive prairies, and deep forests, and soon the West was the home of his affections.

For two years his mother had charge of a female seminary, and he was allowed to recite with some of the classes. In natural philoso-



phy, chemistry, and all departments of natural science, he was specially interested, and often surprised his teachers by his apt explanations and beautiful experiments. Extravagantly fond of philosophical apparatus, he soon constructed instruments for his own use, — air-pumps, magnets, batteries, etc. These occupied many hours usually spent by boys in the streets. Long before this he had tried the power of steam on miniature wheels, and now he built a train of cars, with locomotive and tender attached. Every day and evening was fully occupied, study and amusement being happily blended. Traversing the streets of Milwaukee and Chicago, he examined with eager eye every piece of machinery he could find. In mechanics he seemed to master every known principle. The analysis of a melodeon, piano, or sewing-machine was only pastime. Noting carefully the use of various tools, from time to time he purchased a choice selection, which were placed and kept in perfect order. His books were selected and preserved with the same care. Indeed, order was one of the first laws of his nature. He had a “place for every thing and every thing in its place.” He often combined usefulness with recreation. In mapping and draughting he took great delight. Every piece of mechanism was first neatly drawn, then he

carefully worked to his plan. His inventive genius was always ready to meet the little demands of domestic life. If a skein of cotton was to be transferred to a spool, a small wheel and reel were soon produced. Christmas, New Year's, and other anniversaries, always brought some unthought-of token of mechanical skill from his hands.

Swimming, skating, and coasting, no lad enjoyed more than he, and from these amusements he would return with new zest to his studies and with the glow of health upon his cheek. Although scrupulous in saving every moment, he always had on hand something for diversion.

In the winter of 1855, while pursuing zealously his studies, he built and rigged a man-of-war, with guns of his own casting, manned by paper men, complete in all its appointments, the admiration of all who appreciate ingenuity and industry. Then came a veritable cannon, mounted and fit for service. Next followed a steam-engine, for which he received a diploma at the County Agricultural Fair. Not entirely pleased with this, he soon constructed a beautiful stationary engine, on a more expensive scale, a work of no little study and perplexity. It ran beautifully, making one thousand revolutions per minute. This was a present to his mother; and

though no son returns again to superintend it, its workmanship and perfection still speak of the genius and skill of its youthful maker.

While thus engaged in his studies and inventions, scientific lectures were his delight, and much of life and strength did he owe to a course on physiology. Of slender form, he determined to try various gymnastic exercises for the fuller development of the chest and increase of muscular strength; and at length he gained a form which few surpass.

For the poor and ignorant, Mead felt a deep interest. Often of a stormy evening he would fear the poor might be suffering, and could hardly rest. He would brave any storm to visit the sick. One occasion, when he was fourteen, is well remembered. A colored family, who for several weeks had been sustained by the hand of private charity, lived in the suburbs of the town. The mother was lying upon a miserable pallet in the last stages of consumption. The wind was driving the snow in furious blasts, and scarcely a person was in the streets. How was the dying woman? "Mother," said he, "this is a terrible night in that miserable shanty, — let us go to their relief. I will see you safely there." On reaching the open room, a sight met the eye which one could scarcely endure. The snow was sifting in upon the bed and face

of the dying woman. Two feet from the bed was a stove at nearly a red heat, which indeed melted the snow, but left the poor woman in a most comfortless state. "I am dying," said she; "is there hope for one so vile? Pray for me." "I will bring my father," said the sympathetic boy; and soon he returned with his father, both coming loaded with quilts, which were hung around the bed, to protect it from the storm on two sides, and from the heated stove on the other. Thus the dying woman was made comparatively comfortable, and pointed to the sinner's Friend, able to save, even at the eleventh hour. Long before the morning's dawn, the spirit had taken its flight.

Self-denial and self-sacrifice were an impulse of his nature. Toil and watching among the sick were no trial. He loved to do good. To instruct others less favored than himself was his delight; and for years his custom was to teach a circle of foreign-born lads two or three evenings a week. With a very happy tact at explanation and illustration, he readily won the attention of all around him. Nor were his teachings in these evening-lessons confined to books of science. With the intellectual he connected moral counsels. No evening passed without some moral lesson. Whatever he undertook was faithfully done. From earliest



childhood a member of the Sunday school, he was appointed librarian at the age of thirteen ; and of one hundred and fifty volumes, he lost but one in a year, that one being carried away by the family leaving town.

At this time, he commenced taking lessons on the melodeon. This became his favorite instrument, and no day passed without a song. Perhaps no investment made for children ever paid better than that instrument ; it was a fountain of rational enjoyment which he did not fail to improve. Next to the pleasures of religion are the pleasures of song.

At fifteen, he picked up a class of Norwegian and German boys, and for many a successive Sabbath he was obliged to call from house to house to secure their attendance. But at length they became deeply interested, prompt, and attentive, and teacher and pupils were devotedly attached to each other. Several of these lads bid fair to be ornaments to society. Who can tell the influence they may exert among their own people, in behalf of true religion, and the cause of free government? Mead was always deferential ; — his obedience to his parents, respect for authority, and condescension to inferiors were remarkable. He had his own judgment about matters, but did not express it obtrusively.

In his sixteenth year, a severe illness brought him to the border of the grave. For several days nearly all hopes of life were extinguished. But his patience, cheerfulness, and fear of adding to the care of his attendants, made it a pleasure to watch by his bedside, and perform for the sufferer every office of kindness. His parents did not feel fully satisfied that he had yet chosen "that good part," and were deeply anxious for his spiritual welfare, — almost forgetting to ask his recovery, if so be he might be ready for the stern summons that seemed to await him. His father was almost overwhelmed with the possibility of his dying unprepared, and prayed for him day and night. But Providence smiled; the terrible disease yielded, and health began slowly to return. Thus were his friends saved from the fearful suspense of a death-bed repentance. For, though his conduct had been irreproachable, yet morality and amiability are a poor anchor to which to trust for salvation. Many thanks to the kind friends who so tenderly watched by his bedside during this severe illness. Previously to this he had planned a long tour for pleasure and general improvement. But now his designs were frustrated. He acquiesced cheerfully, though somewhat mournfully, feeling that it is well to become inured to the pressure of disappointment in one's youth.

Surrounded by the tendernesses of home, why should he complain? He felt the need of self-control. Excessively sensitive, he must gain a manly independence. How else could he encounter the stern realities of life? Hence his constant aim was to understand the right, and discipline himself quietly and yet firmly to maintain it. He would not be greatly elated by prosperity, nor dejected by adversity.

About this time, he united with others in organizing a lodge of Good Templars, which proved a bond of union socially, and the most effective temperance movement ever made in the town.

In the spring preceding this illness, he had laid the keel of a family pleasure-boat, fourteen feet long, four feet wide, and two feet deep. This seemed quite an undertaking likely, too, to prove a temptation to neglect his studies, or gardening, to which he was now devoting his spare hours. In reply to a remonstrance from me, he said, "I shall show you, father, that not an hour will I take for this boat to the neglect of any duty." He would be true to his pledge; but had he the necessary skill and perseverance? Preparing the ribs and knees were slow business. But as they began to be shaped and placed, and the graceful form was developed, the pleasure-boat became a fixed fact. At length, in

complete trim, neatly painted and ready for service, the "Mary E. Mead" was launched at sunset, June 18, 1858, "a charming afternoon," he says, "and she sat upon the water as graceful as a swan." Would so light a craft be able to stand the winds and waves? It was not long before, by weathering a sudden squall, she demonstrated her strength and safety, as well as beauty and convenience. Many a morning and evening hour did he spend taking a sail with his friends. Speaking of one escape from foundering, he says, "We went out with a fair wind and light sea, but when about four miles out the wind freshened, and the waves began to heave. We turned for the shore. But two miles out, a huge wave (huge for our craft) came dashing up. In a moment we must be swamped. But, thanks to God, the wave broke almost within hand's reach, and we were saved! We came in on a bound, thankful to reach *terra firma*." Often in the twilight or moonlight the soft strains of "Row the boat lightly," or "Glide we o'er the bright blue sea," would come floating down the smooth river, or over the peaceful bay. It was from the little boat with its happy inmates, and none more happy than he. In the spring and summer, family picnics were not uncommon with us. On these occasions the boat was unmoored, and with





THE PLEASURE BOAT.

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baskets well filled, we would take a sail to some romantic retreat, where all joined in the amusements of the hour. Sometimes two or three families would unite in these excursions. Trolling, too, was a favorite pastime. Of this he says, "we once caught five pickerel in twenty minutes. Sometimes, of an evening, I went with the boys to fish with a spear; but, for me, this sport never paid."

Every season, at the ripening of wild fruits, he arranged one or more trips into the country. These abounded in social cheer, which he enjoyed greatly, and always returned with a light heart and improved health, ready for garden or study.

## CHAPTER II.

### YOUTH.

Mead's conversion — Profession of religion — Becomes a school-teacher — Revival in the school — Horticulture — Love of home — Delicate health — Projects of travel — Narrow escape from drowning — Interest in public affairs — Anti-slavery sentiments.

**T**HE winter succeeding his sixteenth birthday, he took a public stand for Jesus. Without regard to the smiles or frowns of those around him, the question now was one of *personal duty*. What was right? Certainly it was right to serve God, — to love and honor him who gave himself a ransom for sinners. He must, he would, obey the gospel call. So, on that memorable Sabbath morning, when his father requested any who sincerely desired the prayers of Christians, that they might be brought to that repentance which is unto life, and that faith which is unto salvation, notwithstanding his natural diffidence, unexpectedly to all, he was the first to rise. A gentleman of intelligence and position, the clerk of the county, followed, and thus began a precious revival, which, however, was limited by

the weakness and unbelief of those bearing the Christian name. The change in his outward conduct was not very perceptible. His prayers were perhaps more fervent and confiding. Previous to this, he was often troubled with skeptical thoughts, doubts as to the inspiration of the Bible, and the plan of salvation through a Redeemer. He now became fully established in the Christian faith. The Bible he could rest upon, and it was his daily companion. Perhaps few Christians peruse its pages more regularly or devoutly. No matter what the pressure of study, business, or recreation, the Bible must not be neglected. The mariner is hardly more attentive to his chart or compass. He ever found it "a light to his feet, and a lamp to his path."

His retiring disposition made it no light trial for him to speak or pray in public. Hence, his course was in strange contrast to that of some lads, who spoke fluently of their Christian experience, resolutions, and prospects. Of several it was said, that however others might falter, they would be firm. But alas! temptation came, and the piety that flourished in the sunshine withered in the shade. The circle of prayer was forsaken for the halls of dissipation, and their goodness proved like the morning cloud and the early dew, which soon pass

away. While these buds of promise, so rapidly developed, were apparently blasted, it was affecting to see God's grace magnified in causing Mead's Christian course, which was indeed at first only like the morning dawn, to grow brighter and brighter.

The following March, he publicly joined the church,—“a step,” he says, “I have never regretted.” As he had always been a consecrated child, his parents and friends hoped he might feel it his duty to prepare for the ministry. But seeing the increasing demands upon the profession, and reading “Shady Side,” he deliberately decided that with his temperament and state of health, he could accomplish more for the cause of Christ in some other sphere. Whatever he did, he wished to do thoroughly. It was better to be a good layman than a *poor* minister. He felt that the great need of the church is faithful brethren.

On his seventeenth birthday, he left home to assume the duties of a village school-teacher. This was no matter of necessity, but in accordance with the theory that the young should be educated to share responsibility, and so be prepared to accomplish life's mission. A village school of some fifty scholars, for four months, was a care from which he shrunk. To be thrown entirely upon his own resources, to be



his own counselor, to be subjected to public criticism, to be required to gain the affection and confidence of strangers, so as to have their sympathy and coöperation in his arduous work, and charity in case of youthful indiscretions, seemed a Herculean task. But well understanding that those who attempt nothing accomplish nothing, he went modestly but bravely forward, was duly examined, approved, and commenced his winter's work.

In the teaching he excelled. Around every text-book he threw a charm. But the *order* of the school was not what he desired. Regarding the secret of a good government as in the enlightened self-control of the individual, he endeavored to enforce its attainment upon the minds of his scholars. But some poorly comprehended or appreciated it, and needed the pressure of pains and penalties, which he did not consider it wise for him to adopt. He felt an extreme and perhaps unnecessary delicacy in the enforcement of discipline upon his seniors. Speaking of this, he says, "My school, always proverbially unruly, was scarcely less so now. Little idea had I of the job on my hands. With the teaching I had no trouble. But no one will ever know the hours I spent devising ways by which I could benefit my pupils. My health was poor, and grew poorer as time advanced."

The school progressed well in their studies, and the standard of intellectual and moral culture was manifestly elevated.

During the term, a most interesting revival occurred, and he did not fail to share its benefits. The power of God in the conversion of the opposers and infidels, he had never before witnessed. He had felt it in his own heart, but he now saw, with gratitude, that it had been comparatively an easy thing for him to yield to Christ. His heart was not yet wedded to the world; he had not been taken captive by its vanities; his nature was in its molding period. The anguish of a spirit which had withstood the influence of many revivals, and hardened itself under every reproof of Providence, the soul struggling against conviction until the strong man became like a child, and cried for mercy, he beheld with deepest sympathy and astonishment. One who could not be approached on the subject of religion, whose soul was full of bitterness, whose language was that of profanity and unbelief, "stands up for Jesus." The Goliath who defied the armies of the living God is slain by a pebble "from the brook in the wilderness." On the right and on the left, strong men were prostrated by the appeals of God's truth. Opening each session of his school with reading the Scriptures and prayer,



often speaking words of encouragement to the serious, his influence was happy. This winter was emphatically a season of discipline and progress. Closing with a pleasant and satisfactory examination, he returned home after four months' absence, receiving a hearty welcome.

Horticulture was a favorite study and exercise. He delighted in the improvement of a fancy location, called "Clinton Place," designed as a homestead. There you would find him early and late, though nearly a mile from home. "I want these grounds fitted up for my parents," said he. They join the cemetery, and his precious dust now rests within speaking distance. How little he anticipated that the garden he was making so attractive in his life, would yet become sacred, as in the very shadow of his tomb!

He would now have gone abroad to prosecute his education, but, conscious of disease lurking at his vitals, and finding out-door exercise indispensable, he concluded to remain at home, and resume his studies in private. Under his efficient management, the garden and other home interests flourished. "Neglect" was not in his vocabulary, nor would he employ another to do what he could as well do himself. As a youth, he preferred to wait upon himself, seldom calling in the assistance of a servant.

But his desire for knowledge was irrepressible. He counted that day lost in which some new principle was not mastered, or something substantial added to his stock of ideas.

The arrangement of this season proved so pleasant and useful, that it was extended through two years. Music was a prominent recreation. His sister's instructor on the melodeon, he was a thorough disciplinarian, delighting in the mastery of principles.

To him, there was no place like home. Home pleasures carried a charm which could not be broken by the attractions of the saloon or the card-table, or even the conviviality of the social circle. Though warm in his attachments, and fond of society, he still felt that time was very precious. "I have lost the evening," was a wail that came from the depths of his soul. Time was his capital, and, in the language of another, "he seemed straitened lest his life's mission should fail to be accomplished." His studies and labors were all conducted on time, each having its appropriate hours, and every day was closed with a careful review. Said he, "Let me finish well the duties of the day." He was several times engaged for a brief period in the store of a friend, and also in a bank; but no temptations of business might long interfere with his plans for study.

Typhoid fever, in its milder forms, returned for several successive summers ; and when not that, sudden fits of coughing which could find no relief until nature sunk exhausted, and occasional fainting spells, told plainly that nature was suffering at the very seat of life. It was hoped, however, that these precursors of early death might disappear in maturer years.

It was a favorite project with him to travel, and acquaint himself personally with the various portions of our own country, at least. One trip to Lake Superior, and explore its mines ; another to New York and Philadelphia ; another West ; and then through the sunny South. These accomplished, he would join some geological expedition, and study the regions of the Sierra Nevada, and other mountain ranges ; he would sketch their sublime scenery, gather minerals, flowers, birds, etc. But, like many a bubble with its rainbow hues, these fancies expired as he extended his hand to grasp them.

About this time he narrowly escaped death by drowning. Bathing with a friend one day, the latter was taken with cramp, some distance from him. Seeing the helpless condition of his friend, Mead swam for his rescue, but was seized convulsively by the drowning man, and so entirely disabled that both sank in thirty feet of water. By desperate effort, he succeed-

ed in extricating one arm, and at length safely reached the boom with his friend. Speaking of this, he says, "We returned well sobered, nor could we rally our mirthfulness; we had been too near death. While held down by my friend, I despaired of breaking his grasp, and my mind, — how active! In a moment, I reviewed my life. I thought of our fate, of our clothing upon the bank, of the current bearing us to the drift-wood, of my dear mother, and the anguish of her heart. The rush of thought! But we rose, though so exhausted I could scarcely breathe. A mighty effort was yet necessary to reach the boom. The land I could not strike for till I was rested." It is worthy of notice that both these young men consecrated their lives to their country, and both nobly fell at their post of duty.

In the spring of 1860 he became deeply interested in our national affairs, and raised a fine liberty-pole, with top-mast, cross-trees, and shrouds. At the height of sixty feet floated a fine banner, with the inscription, "UNION AND LIBERTY." During the presidential campaign, the first Lincoln banner flung to the breeze in Manitowoc County, was from his flag-staff. As I expressed surprise at his enthusiasm in a region where the opposite party had things their own way, he said, "I believe the triumph of

union and liberty, under God, depends upon Mr. Lincoln's election. He is the man for the crisis." Not entitled to vote, he still watched the progress of the campaign with the eagerness of an old politician. With Mr. Lincoln's success he was highly delighted, and soon raised a new flag of more imposing dimensions. As my eyes now catch its ample folds, and the staff near my window, how affecting the thought that the dear boy laid down his life in defense of the principles which so early stirred his soul.

True to his ancestry, Mead was very decided in his anti-slavery views, heartily adopting the language of Cowper: —

"I would not have a slave to till my ground,  
To carry me, to fan me while I sleep  
And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth  
That sinews bought and sold have ever earned."

He believed the justice, truth, and faithfulness of God were committed to the speedy annihilation of American slavery, and that the South would soon be studded with free pulpits, free platforms, and free schools.



## CHAPTER III.

### TRAVEL.

Plans a journey to the Eastern States — Delayed by sickness — The family prepare to accompany him — The Sabbath-keeping steamboat — The lake voyage — Visit to his grandfather — Tender care for his mother — Visits New York and Philadelphia — Returns to Ohio — Thence to Milwaukee and home — Appointed superintendent of the Sabbath school — Mode of instruction — Conscientiousness in discharge of duty — Efforts to do good — Commences study of law.

**E**ARLY in the summer of 1861 he made arrangements to visit New York, by way of the lakes; but the day set for his departure found him prostrated with the measles. He was intending to visit the haunts of his childhood; the fields over which he was wont to ramble; the streams where with hook and line he had thrown out the fatal bait; the hill down which he used to coast with his "Good-by." He expected to meet the companions of his boyhood, and recount its pleasures; a world of enjoyment seemed at hand. To be disappointed was a sore trial, but with his favorite expression, "It is all right," he quite cheerfully relinquished his plans again.



It was affecting to see his submission ; patient and cheerful as in health, thankful that his case was no worse, he left the result to Him who knows the end from the beginning. Soon, perfectly recovered, thoughts of the journey again awaken the liveliest interest. But now his sister, despite her resolution, is taken with the same disease, and then the mother, frail at best, and exhausted with anxiety and watching, also falls a victim. Thus were Mead's patience and faith severely tested.

July and August were spent in the sick-room, and many a night did the loving boy watch by the bedside of his mother, with the most filial tenderness. She was now slowly recovering ; a lake voyage will be beneficial ; we will yet follow out our original programme. A through-boat seldom calls ; only one regularly, and she on the Sabbath. Trunks are packed, and the family wait several days ; then comes the Gale'na, on Sabbath evening. She is a good boat, and it only remains to step on board ; there may not be another through-boat for a week. " Shall we go ? " said the father, hesitatingly. The noble youth replied, " No, we will not leave such an example behind us ; we can wait a little longer." A Sabbath boat was no boat for him. Monday passed ; " no boat." Tuesday, A. M., " none, and none expected." The sun is set-

ting; dark clouds are hanging in the horizon. Hark! a whistle; a boat; the *May Flower* (beautiful name, and worthy.) In half an hour all are on board and off on the trip of a thousand miles. "You see we are all right now," said he; "did not I say we could wait and trust? I have had no uneasiness about it."

The clouds which were gathering in the west soon overcast the moon, and the wind freshened. A storm is at hand; sudden squalls strike the steamer, but she moves on, and the next morning finds us safely sheltered behind the *Manitos*. Fond of the sublime in nature, he had often wished to encounter a severe storm on these inland seas. All day he sat enjoying the wild surging of the deep, rolling dark and heavily, or stood with the engineer, watching the effect of the steam on the laboring engine. "Quite a blow," says the clever engineer; "we have not had such a rocking for months." But the vessel sustained no injury until the third day, when some heavy iron bolts drew from their sockets. Suddenly the machinery stopped. A leak! A fire! What is the trouble? The small boat is lowered; there is an alarm; but soon all are rejoiced to find "it is not fire." The leak closed, the noble craft again moves on, arriving in Buffalo Saturday afternoon, in good time to reach his nearest friends before the Sabbath.

Visiting here the pond where he first launched his little boats, the garden, and many other scenes of his earliest remembrance, enjoying greatly the society of his friends, with characteristic promptness he hastened to his grandfather's, among the hills of Chautauqua. But the slender boy of nine, now the tall young man of eighteen, is not recognized. The old patriarch, himself of no mean proportions, was evidently pleased with the soldierly form before him, and when his name was given, "My grandson Mead, is it you?" he exclaimed; "the boy so frolicsome, now a man six feet in height." His visit here was most happy. His vivacity, genial deportment, his respect for his father and tender solicitude for his mother, yet an invalid, his more than brotherly regard for his only sister, his constant effort to secure her personal improvement as well as recreation, his thoughtfulness, kindness, and manliness won upon all. Observing his attachment to his mother, a young man said, "There is an example worth more than gold; alas, I have no mother upon whom to lavish the affections of my heart!" This trait of his character, prominent in childhood, was no less so in early manhood. The world might frown, and he minded it not; a look of sadness from her, and he was all alive to know and remove the cause. Manly in prin-

ciple, noble in nature, brave to resist sneers and flatteries, he was never ashamed to acknowledge his indebtedness to his mother.

In Panama, he endeared himself to all his friends, and his name is there graven upon the rocks, — chiseled with his own hand upon the ledge where the curious are wont to resort. Says a recent letter of condolence, “There stands his name, ‘Mead Holmes, Jr., Wis., 1861.’” These were pleasant days. The distant hills, the rolling fields, the winding stream, the rocky ledge, the flocks of sheep and droves of cattle, all swell the enthusiasm of his heart.

The war was now the engrossing subject. War-meetings, patriotic appeals, specially to the young men, were every where. The government was in danger; the nation struggling for life; our land, — the land of the brave and home of the free, — the refuge for the oppressed of all nations, was threatened with devastation and ruin. Treason and rebellion were making giant strides. Who would go to meet the daring foe? His soul was stirred within him. The current of thought and feeling ran deep. What was *his* duty? An only uncle was in the field; his heart prompted him to go, but remembering his studies and uncertain health, he would not commit himself, but watch the developments of Providence. About to take the cars for New



York, from the house of a friend, a clergyman of age and experience, they had a season of prayer, earnestly imploring the divine blessing, specially that God would be the guide of his youth.

His visit to New York was not one of merely reviving and forming acquaintance with friends ; it was for improvement, and he designed that not an hour should be lost. Fearing that it might not be convenient for his friends to accompany him, he obtained a map, and, from early morning till night, he traversed the city, exploring every place of note, as he laughingly said, "from the splendid mansions on Fifth Avenue to Peter Funk's lowest stall." Central Park, water-works, photographic galleries, Cooper's Art Union, reading-rooms, printing-offices, Barnum's, the Home for the Friendless, the shipping, etc., etc., were as familiar to him as to almost any city resident. With enthusiasm he listened to the New York and Brooklyn clergymen, not failing to visit Greenwood and Lee Avenue Sabbath school.

Enjoying the society of his friends more as a means of improvement than as an end, he bade them adieu, and passed on to Philadelphia, where he enjoyed a delightful week in the family of W. M. Heyl, Esq., a gentleman distinguished for his hospitality and works of Christian

usefulness. Visiting the Navy Yard, Orphan Asylum, Girard College, Academy of Natural Science, Independence Hall, etc. ; hearing Mr. Barnes and Dr. Seiss preach ; attending George H. Stuart's model Sabbath school ; forming some new and valuable acquaintances, he was highly delighted, and drank in knowledge unceasingly.

He returned to Cleveland and vicinity, where he spent several days, especially in Chester, the home of his childhood. How did his soul glow with pleasure to revisit the places associated with the warm and uncalculating friendships of early life ! Here was his father's old parish, where were spent the pleasantest years of his ministry ; here the parsonage, and the very room where, in the sleepless hours of night, long since he learned the Commandments, Bible stories, and hymns ; here the hill, down which his " Lightning Express " used to take him and his little friends so swiftly ; here the huge log in the grove, where, with Testament in hand, he used to sit and read to his mother the loving words of Jesus ; here the violet-beds, now cropped by the wary sheep, from which he often adorned his herbarium ; here the fruit-trees, which, when mere rods, he helped his father plant and water, now grown to grace the parsonage table with their delicious fruit ; here



the Sabbath school he well remembered, and many, many friends whose kind attentions, in former days, he had never forgotten. What rich memories cluster around the home of one's childhood! Let every parent make the home of his child as pleasant and attractive as possible, that its memories may be a hallowed amulet in after years.

A little season spent with friends in Milwaukee, and he returned home with his heart fired with patriotism. There was no lack of volunteers at that time. So after much persuasion he decided to wait till another call, and pursue his studies during the winter. The superintendent of the First Presbyterian Sabbath school immediately resigned in his favor, and at length he consented to accept the position. To lead one hundred and fifty young minds in the paths of virtue was no small task. Would he succeed? The class which he had gathered with so much pains and kept so long, he must yield to another. Though he entered upon the superintendency with great diffidence, he soon won the affections and confidence of the entire school,—teachers and scholars uniting in measures to increase its efficiency. Papers were needed. Soon he was able to order one hundred and fifty copies of the "Child's World." The high reputation of the school was fully sus-

tained. Composed of thirteen different nationalities, it was both a home and foreign missionary work. Scores of children and youth were not only learning the English language, becoming enlightened and Americanized, but also being instructed in the great truths of evangelical Christianity. The school was emphatically a nursery of intelligence, virtue, and piety, — a fountain of moral and Christian influence. Opening with a beautiful song, the succeeding five minutes were passed in the recital of Scripture texts, chosen at will. Thus thirty or fifty passages would be repeated voluntarily and with great zest. Deficient in singing-books, he readily constructed a substitute that would at once accommodate the entire school. Procuring a roll of paper forty feet long and three feet wide, on this, with stencil-plates of his own manufacture, he printed, letter by letter, a pleasing variety of Sabbath-school songs, such as “Shining Shore,” “Marching Along,” “Don’t you hear the Angels Coming,” “Thank God for the Bible,” etc., adding from time to time, the choicest new songs, until both sides of the roll were filled. This long sheet was fastened to rollers, set in the top and bottom of a frame seven feet long, the rollers turned by small cranks, presenting in bold relief any hymn in the entire roll. This was the work of frag-

ments of time, — minutes saved. The entire audience could see every letter as readily as if with book in hand, and much more conveniently. Its novelty arrested the attention of all, and many learned to sing who would never have learned in the usual way. The long roll is still used, though a year and a half has elapsed since his last song was printed. So far as is known, his administration was most satisfactory. He loved the school, and spared no effort to make it a center of social, moral, and religious interest ; a place of solid instruction and Christian impression. His remarks and stories, generally amusing, always instructive, carried with them a moral that touched the heart. I trust that some, at least, will look back to his administration as the time of receiving impressions, leading to their conversion.

The school often seemed the gate of heaven. It is pleasant, now that he has gone to his celestial home, to notice the sweet faith, heavenly spirit, and earnest longing for the "Shining Shore" expressed in the hymns of his selection. In these we find the very soul of youthful piety, those affinities and sympathies which brought him into delightful communion with heaven, and made him more than willing to depart. From his earliest childhood he talked much with his intimate friends of a happy state beyond

the grave. There was his home. When but six years old, suddenly awaking, said he, "Mother, what a pleasant dream I had! I thought I rose on wings from the tops of our garden trees, and called aloud, 'Come, mother, come,' and I was so happy!" Dear child! he has indeed gone before, and now, methinks I hear him call, "Mother, father, sister, come, come!" May we, and all so dear to his heart, be ready in our turn.

He loved to think of heaven. Many times he reproached himself for not speaking on the glorious theme. One instance is particularly remembered. Soon after his assuming the superintendency of the Sabbath school, a member of the Bible-class, an intimate friend of his, was drowned. A short time before this sad event, they had spent the day together, and while their conversation was elevating and patriotic, he could but ask himself, "Did I speak to him of heaven? Did I inquire about his soul?" His friend had gone to spend a short time in the country, and trying his skates too soon, the ice gave way, and he sunk to rise no more. His body was not recovered for a week; and when it was brought home, the question again forced itself upon his mind, "Was I faithful to my friend, — did I do all in my power for his conversion?" Conscious of failing in duty, he



resolved henceforth, as far as practicable, to converse personally on the subject of religion, with every teacher and pupil in his school. He would no longer regard his youth and inexperience as excusing him; he must stand or fall for himself. His piety at once assumed a noble type; he stood on higher ground, and his growth in grace was manifest. Church and prayer-meetings were attended with scrupulous fidelity. Often seeing him much exhausted, I would suggest that he remain at home. But no, the prayer-meeting, attended by only a few, must be sustained. If friends called, they were cordially invited to accompany him. It had been a great cross for him to let his voice be heard in public; now this plain duty must be done. His motto was "Onward and Upward!" As he grew stronger and firmer, his heart beat to lead others to Christ. If through diffidence, or lack of opportunity, he could not speak to a friend, his pen was ready, and his secret prayer followed the unpretending missive. To what extent he labored in this private way was known only to himself and God; our only information is from his private papers.

Being the *only young man* in the church, it required some decision of character not to be led away by those who sought pleasure rather than God. His course was, of necessity, up

stream, the current of society around him being quite in the opposite direction. Eminently social in his nature, how pleasant to have at least one young man to walk with him in the heavenly way! But he was alone. Religion was no company affair. It was a matter of personal responsibility. Unobtrusive to a fault, yet he must be about his Master's business. He seemed to hear a voice, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Scrupulously cautious not to interfere with the business of others, he still felt a lively interest in the prosperity of all around him. He delighted in honest, liberal dealing, and abhorred even the appearance of a grasping spirit. He was eminently successful as a peace-maker. In his associations he was always governed by a strict regard to intrinsic merit. Emphatically an aristocrat, his was the aristocracy of intellectual and moral worth. Indications of taste, genius, and piety at once won his esteem; but with the rude, idle, dissipated, and profane, he had no sympathy, never mingling with them except in the way of business or on some errand of mercy. With a manly spirit and true courage, he regarded not vain show. Refinement and elegance he prized; affectation and display he despised. With little reverence for *mere* station, he believed that



“Pigmies are pigmies still, though perched on Alps;  
And pyramids are pyramids in vales.”

Early in the spring of 1862, he received a proposal to enter the law office of J. D. Markham, Esq. Not strongly prepossessed in favor of a profession which would bring him in frequent contact with the litigious and repulsive rather than with the nobler characteristics of human nature, he felt no special enthusiasm in the matter; what student, at first, revels in the ponderous folios of Blackstone? Compared with his favorite studies — chemistry, astronomy and mechanics — it was somewhat tedious.

Legal notices and the details of a trial were always interesting. Here was the *application* of principles. Shocked at first with the rude and coarse associations into which those connected with the law are often and necessarily thrown, he soon became inured to his position and felt that he was in a most valuable school. Faithful in the office, he scanned character with a philosophic eye. Many who seemed to come in and go out unnoticed, he weighed in the balance. Though diligent in his law studies and in his religious duties, his mind was much upon the state of the country. In a note found among his papers, he rejoices “greatly over our recent successes,” alludes to “Fort Donelson, Roanoke Island, Newbern, Winchester,” etc.;

and says, "The Merrimac came near laying out our Norfolk fleet, but the little Monitor drove her." Our subsequent reverses as greatly afflicted him, and he felt that every true patriot should show his hand.

## CHAPTER IV.

### ENLISTMENT.

Outbreak of the great rebellion — Mead desires to enlist in the army — A father's struggles — Final consent — Joins his company — Parting address to his Sabbath school — The departure — Address to the company — Letter from Rev. Mr. Camp.

**T**HE rebellion, from being, as was supposed, a “puny infant,” was become a full-grown giant, swollen with success, and full of defiance. The entire North, from the Ohio to the Lakes, was in the fancied clutch of the traitors. The President, startled by new developments of treachery, called for “six hundred thousand more,” and “To arms!” resounded through every valley and over every hill-top. From the Atlantic to the Pacific, over the wide prairie, and through the dense forest, the clarion note was heard. The question was emphatically one of life or death; not only, Shall the government be sustained, shall the claims of liberty and humanity be vindicated? It came nearer still,—*Shall there be a North?* The proud usurper was at our doors; shall we allow him to invade our territory?

Shall we allow the recreant leaders of a slave oligarchy to run riot over our cities and villages, lay waste our beautiful homes, and destroy our dearest hopes? Shall we quietly look on and see the craven wing of treason sweep over our fair heritage, bequeathed to us by the treasure and blood and prayers of our Pilgrim and Revolutionary fathers? Who would stop to parley in such a crisis? Should not every patriot rally at once?—men from the bar, the college, the counter, the workshop, the farm? In such perils, what young man could calmly fold his hands, and turn away coldly from the call of his country, wounded and bleeding in a struggle for life? If ever it were “sweet and glorious to die for one’s country” surely it was now. Self-sacrifice were a privilege. Specially did the mission of our young men seem written in letters of fire. They should go forth to meet the foe.

Under such strong impressions of the mission of the young men of 1861, ’62, and ’63, Mead approached his father on the subject. *He was ready to go.* The danger was imminent, and many were holding back. Men of families had some show of excuse, but what could *he* say? It would break up his plans of study, — perhaps change his life’s course; but some must make this sacrifice. He now looked quite well;

tall and soldierly in his appearance, full of life and resolution. Said he, "I have long believed my place was in the army; now the call has come, the critical hour arrived; I only wait for the consent of my parents." His father was struck dumb by the noble boy's appeal. A family consultation was held; but the feelings of that day, of those days, ye fathers and mothers who have yielded up an only son, ye may know. Never before did I understand, in our finite capacity, the feelings of the Infinite Father in giving up his only Son to die for the rebellious, the sinful. O ye who have walked with us this weeping way up Moriah, and laid down your *first-born*, — your *only* son, finding no substitute accepted, — ye only can tell the anguish of my house. We had said, —

"Nearer my God, to thee,  
E'en though it be a cross  
That raiseth me."

Could we carry this cross? Could we drink of this cup, and be baptized with this baptism of blood?

Rejoicing in his persistent and earnest patriotism, yet aware that serious disease lurked at his vitals, we deferred our decision. If he went into the army, he would be a *faithful* soldier, and would soon sink into his grave. If he remained at home, in some quiet sphere, he might be

spared many years to us, to the church, and to the country. But his resolve was made after long reflection, and under a clear sense of Christian duty. *His* mind was settled. The responsibility was now with his parents.

As the clouds gathered thicker and faster in our national horizon, and the rebels waxed more and more insolent, the martial fires were consuming his spirit. His soul was moved to its very depths. A nation so guilty as ours required a heavy sacrifice. As of old, God's majesty could hardly be vindicated short of a victim from every household. And thus only could the people be brought to that repentance and humble acknowledgment of God which would prepare them for the glorious future in reserve for the nation. A mighty work was to be accomplished. The rebellion was to be crushed; four millions of bondmen freed; the government established; the nation purified and saved. Was not such an end worthy of any man's life? He could not employ his in a better cause. Thus he felt and reasoned and acted. His own feelings were intense. His parents and only sister, his home, the Sabbath school, the choir, his profession, his life probably, these must be set aside. "My mission is in the army; my work to fight and die for my bleeding country."



If longer restrained, he might feel a sense of dishonor that would prove unhappy in its influence upon him, and his convictions of duty seemed no less Christian than patriotic. At length consent was given. But there was yet one contingency; the surgeons might not accept him; "and," said he, "if fairly rejected, my duty is done." But surgeons were in haste; examinations were superficial; and his sudden faintings and fits of exhausting coughing were pronounced the result of rapid growth. Had medical examiners been competent, or faithful in their duty, thousands of the young, and brave, and patriotic who have languished out their lives in hospitals, might have been to-day lights in those homes now so darkened, and the country less depleted of its pride and hope.

He was accepted, and was jubilant. He had looked at danger and death from every standpoint; had counted well the cost. It was suggested, as some relief from the drudgery of army life, that he should apply for a commission in some other regiment. "No," said he; "'Win and wear it,' is my motto. Laurels not *earned* are not for me. *If* I merit a commission then I will accept it. I care little for promotion; these titles bring responsibilities which I am not now prepared to meet." On Saturday evening, August 23, 1862, he joined Company

K, 21st Regiment Wisconsin Volunteers, a company of strong men; many of them men of position in society; only seven young men in the company, and he among the youngest. The next day he bade farewell to his beloved Sabbath school, in a brief address, a part of which was taken down at the time: —

“Dear Children: — A few Sabbaths since, I said perhaps I should soon be called to leave you. That time has now come. My country calls, and I must go. I am ready. Yet it has cost me more than I expected to say this. I did not consider how much I loved you; that you were in all my thoughts, in all my prayers. Oh, it is hard to leave you; but some must go, and why not I? I can not flatter myself that I shall return. *I go to lay my life upon my country's altar.* I hope I may not die by long and distressing sickness in the hospital. Let me rather fall in active service on the battle-field. But this I leave with my Heavenly Father. Just as he pleases. I have confidence that all will be right, whatever may come. Perhaps severely wounded, bleeding, and fainting under a Southern sun, left behind while my comrades rush on, to the watchword, ‘Victory or death’; no friend with a drop of water to quench my thirst or cool my throbbing brow; for music, the roar of cannon and the clash of arms; then, oh

then, father, mother, sister, children of my Sabbath school, I shall think of you. How quickly would you fly to my relief! But you can not be there; and yet I shall not be alone; Jesus will be with me, and all will be well. I am ready to suffer, to die, as God may please.

“Children, I have been connected with this Sabbath school for seven years; have grown up with it, and it has been a great blessing to me. Oh, love your school; love your kind teachers who are laboring for your good. Soon the eye of but one Friend will be able to see both you and me at once. Who is that friend? That ‘One above all others,’ as we often sing, Jesus. Jesus has done more for us than any other can. Oh then love him, and seek him with all your hearts. He says, ‘I love them that love me; and they that seek me early shall find me.’ The best news I can hear from you will be that you are becoming Christians, and preparing to meet me in heaven. Oh, be ready whenever God calls you.

“I intended to print one more song for you: ‘Don’t You hear the Angels coming?’ the last I should ever print; but I have not had time. I want you should learn that song, understand it and feel it. Remember, in heaven all sing. And now farewell. Don’t forget to pray for me; and may we all meet in the ‘Happy Land’ above.”

He gave these simple parting words with great calmness, but the house was a Bochim. At length he too was overcome. "It is not soldierly to weep," said he, "but I can not stand this." He fancied himself ready to meet bristling bayonets and thundering cannons, and garments rolled in blood; but this demonstration of attachment; this scene of affection and sympathy, was too much for the young recruit. As he took his seat, I rose, and referred to Isaac upon the altar, about to be sacrificed, but God interposed. "You have given up your superintendent; he has given himself up. With all his love for you, he says he shall never return; he goes to suffer and die. We have been a wicked nation, and thousands must die to vindicate God's offended justice. He feels that he shall be one to fall. But may not God interpose, as in the case of Isaac? Let us now unite in earnest prayer that God will take care of your superintendent, and return him to us if it is best." The pastor of the church now led in prayer, and the young Christian soldier was affectionately committed to the divine care. Of one hundred and seventy-two present, none failed to unite in this petition. At the close, all gathered around and took the parting-hand; a scene of smiles and tears.

Returning home, the noble boy paced the



floor in anguish. For an hour he wept profusely. To test his integrity of purpose, I said, "Do you not regret this step? Here are more than two hundred children and youth looking to you for moral and Christian instruction." "I have finished my work here," said he; "it will be carried on by others. I do not weep because I have any doubt about my *duty*; it is the struggle of my weak nature; not my judgment. The attachments and sympathies of seven years could hardly fail to overwhelm my sensitive heart. I have no thought of turning back." Clouded and saddened as was his soul now, through the darkness broke the light of a transcendent joy.

Next day was a busy one, — preparing the soldier's wardrobe; — and as he called upon his friends, how little could we realize that was his last day at home! Next morning, by special order, the company left for Oshkosh. The steamer was at the pier; as the name of each was called, he bade adieu to friends, and stepped on board. A nobler band of volunteers could scarcely be found. A few were light-hearted, but the general expression was serious. As on each similar occasion throughout our land, the waiting multitude seemed like mourners. It were hardly right to part thus. The captain calling attention, I addressed the company: —



“Volunteers, I can not see you leave the endearments of home, kindred, and friends, and go forth to the tented and battle-field, in the service of our country, now bleeding at a thousand veins, without expressing to you the high esteem in which we hold your courage and patriotism, and offering a few words of encouragement. Gentlemen, you go forth in a *good cause* and a *great cause*; — two considerations most essential to cheer your hearts, and strengthen your hands. You go to aid in crushing the most stupendous, malicious, and ruinous rebellion in the history of the world. Without the compulsion of authority, or hope of gain, or assurance of preferment, you go to face a desperate foe, and vindicate a government the most benign under heaven. You go to save and perpetuate those institutions of justice and humanity, of civil and religious liberty, for which our Pilgrim and Revolutionary fathers fought and bled and died. In this land, we are trying the experiment of a free government; and after enjoying such vast advantages, shall we let it prove a failure, and the despotisms of the Old World glory over our fall? Forbid it, Heaven! Forbid it, Almighty God! We must save our country, — our whole country, — our country for our own sake, and for the sake of the world. It is a struggle for liberty and mankind. Where

such momentous interests are involved, even the welfare of all the nations of the earth, and of all future generations, should we not fly to arms, and pursue the rebels and traitors to the bitter end? Courage, then, gentlemen,—courage lodged in the soul, with virtue wrought. ‘Inflamed by reason, and by reason cooled.’ Such was the courage of Cromwell, of Havelock, and of Washington, who led our armies in the Revolution, and has left on record his earnest admonition never to allow these States to be severed,—ever to maintain the integrity of our national Union. Gentlemen, let the memory of our noble fathers cheer you; and ‘in the name of the Lord’ lift up your banners; ‘quit you like men’; ‘be of good courage;’ and may God ever guide and help you,—‘teach your hands to war, and your fingers to fight.’ May the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, go with you, and may your company be a model of discipline, order, courage, and efficiency. Rest not, soldiers, until the Stars and Stripes, that symbolize every thing grand and glorious in our national character, shall wave in triumph from the Lakes to the Gulf, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Make sure and thorough work. Leave not a rebel or traitor behind you. ‘Cursed is he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully,’ negligently, su-

perfidiously, or 'withholdeth his hand from blood' in a crisis like the present! Be not rash and presumptuous; but, as executioners of God's vengeance upon rebels and traitors, be faithful. 'Bear not the sword in vain.'

"Desperate diseases must be met with desperate remedies. Let there be no compromise, no sparing; and in your righteous fidelity, may God preserve you, 'cover your heads in the day of battle,' and after your sublime mission is accomplished, return you in peace to the fond embraces of the dear ones to whom you now say 'Farewell.' May you be a tower of strength in your regiment, in your brigade; may even your name be a rejoicing to the loyal, and a terror to the rebels.

"Gentlemen, be true to God, true to your country, and true to yourselves. Oh, neglect not your immortal souls. Every soldier should be at peace with his Maker. I beseech you, forget not that religion is the grand necessity. Be Christians. I would rather have a company of Christian soldiers than a regiment of infidels. We can not trust that man who regards not moral sanctions. Officers, my esteemed personal friends, be faithful to God and to your men. Men, be faithful to your officers; respect, honor, and obey them for their personal merit and responsible relation. In the hour of sore

trial, let them find you courageous, ready to meet the foe at any necessary hazard. Shall I not allude to the temptations of camp-life? Let every soldier beware of intemperance, profanity, gambling, uncleanness, and every kindred vice, infinitely more to be dreaded than the shot and shell of the enemy.

“Gentlemen, you go forth on a glorious mission, and remember that nothing relating to your comfort or success will be a matter of indifference to us. We shall watch with eager interest your every step, and if you need our help, you will find us by your side.

“Fear not for your families left behind you. They shall be fed, clothed, sheltered, and provided for as they have need; none shall suffer. Go, then, and do your whole duty, and as others follow, and multitudes rally for the national defense, may the Confederates, if they will not yield to the right, be like Agag, a sacrifice to divine justice. I hope soon to hear of victory again; as last spring, when in three months we took Kentucky, Tennessee, and Missouri, and the whole line of rebel defenses from the Atlantic to the Missouri River. If we could achieve those numerous and brilliant victories in so short a time, with our untrained and limited forces, what, by the divine blessing, may we not accomplish with a million brave and patriotic troops in the



field? Only let us, as a nation, avoid injustice and oppression in all their forms, and go forth with this mighty host in God's name, to do his work of righteous retribution, and soon our conquest will be complete, the Constitution and Union vindicated, law and order established, liberty triumphant, and the world saved from a *fearful ebb* toward universal tyranny and barbarism. By the divine blessing, such shall be the consummation of your heroic enterprise, and may we all at last meet in that better world where rebellion and treason can never disturb us. So may it be, O Lord, the Sovereign and gracious Disposer of all events, for thy holy name's sake. Amen."

The effect of this brief address seemed most happy. Tears were dried, and the language of every countenance was, "Come, let us fight Philip." As the steamer moved slowly away, the air was rent with deafening cheers, and all felt that their friends had gone forth in a sublime and glorious cause, — one in which it were better to die than surrender.

Among the noble band was one cheerful without levity, grave without gloominess, firm without obstinacy, courageous without presumption, a patriotic Christian volunteer, turning his feet from the temple of Minerva to the camp of Mars, not from original choice but from



a clear conviction of duty. The crowd began to disperse, but many lingered, and, waving their handkerchiefs, watched the vessel with her precious cargo until lost in the distance.

Our home seemed desolate. With every room he was intimately associated; his blackboard, his violin, his cannon, his flag, the walls hung around with his handiwork, pictures of his own framing or drawing, and his portfolios containing enough for a small picture gallery, — all seemed to say, “ Shall he ever return ? ”

Two days after, I received from Rev. C. W. Camp a very timely and consoling letter. I give a few extracts: “ So you have had the trial of giving your son to the service of his country. I was at the boat as she called, going South, and he was pointed out to me. Well, on the whole, I think he has done well in deciding to go, and you have done well in deciding to give him up. The government calls on its able-bodied citizens to range themselves in two classes, — those who can go to the war without great loss or damage to the interests of family, business, and general welfare, and those who can not. A man in good health, without family, or not engaged in business which it is very difficult to leave, seems clearly to belong to the first class. There should be something peculiar in his case to justify him in ranking himself


“with heads of families and men in extensive business.” Many are enlisting from this place, and of course many families are in the same trouble that you feel. I preached to such last Sunday. The text, at least, may be instructive and profitable to you, — Acts 21st chapter, 12th to 14th inclusive. ‘And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.’

“I hope you may see reason to be glad and proud and thankful for your son in the army, and that he may be spared to return, a blessing and an honor to you in your remaining years. He can be very useful in his company, and his usefulness and position of influence in future life could not have been so well secured if he had shrunk from his country’s call. It may please you to know that some, at least, of the company are proud of him.”

## CHAPTER V.

### PASSAGE TO THE SCENE OF WAR.

Journey of the regiment to Milwaukee — To Oshkosh — Alarming news — Ordered to Cincinnati — Parting from his mother — The “good-by” — Arrival at Cincinnati — Cross into Kentucky — Poisoned wells — Lack of water — Extreme thirst — Army rations — Scenery — Railroad travel — Hardships — Near Louisville.

S Mead had been quite well for several weeks, and was pronounced by the examining surgeon “sound and able-bodied,” whatever my private apprehensions to the contrary, I could but feel that his going was ordered for the best. The trip to Milwaukee was pleasant. On the passage, the young soldier was not entirely unnoticed. Said a lady, speaking of the soldiers, “I noticed one greatly in contrast with many of his comrades, — serious, yet cheerful in his manner; he was reading a book which I readily knew to be a Testament. Presently I introduced myself to him. He saw the perils before him, but was going bravely to meet them. I said to a friend, ‘If any of that company live to return, that young man will be one.’ How imperfect is the standard of human judgment! On in-

quiry I found that he was the superintendent of the First Presbyterian Sabbath school of Manitowoc." That night the company spent in the depot. A friend visiting them remarks, "Mead seemed pleased to see us; he conversed freely; a crisis was near; the enemy defiant. He only wished they were prepared to enter the field at once; they could lay down their lives in no better cause."

Here began the new scenes, not to say hardships, of soldier-life. He writes, "We took supper on the depot floor; pocket-knives were in good demand; enough to eat, but we had to go on the principle that 'fingers were made before forks.'" At 1 A. M. they took the cars for Oshkosh, ninety miles, having only narrow benches for seats, and loose at that; they were soon glad to stand or sit upon the floor, as "those who are down need fear no fall."

Arriving at Oshkosh, after an uncomfortable journey, they found no quarters prepared. The camp-ground was to be cleared, barracks erected, trenches dug, etc., — any amount of drudgery before them, in all of which Mead showed no little aptitude and patience. Under what seemed vexatious requirements, and aggravating disappointments, he bore himself with an unruffled spirit and perfect self-possession.

The first Sabbath he writes: "This morning

broke beautifully upon us. We attempted to get a pass to church, but could not. At 6 A. M. I was called to the captain's tent to make out allotment rolls. While waiting orders I read a chapter from my ever-ready Testament, and as I heard the drum beat, and the noise of the camp, I thought, 'Well, this is a little war-like.' I have stood writing all day, and am to go on parole down town, until daylight. Oh, what a Sabbath! but, dear parents, I try to keep it in my heart. My thoughts have been with God, the dear Sabbath school, the dear home I have left, and our final home in heaven."

It was understood that the 21st would complete its organization, and remain in the State for sixty days to drill. But the most alarming news arrived. Bragg was marching on Louisville and Cincinnati, Lee on Washington, and the whole North was threatened. It was an hour that tried men's souls. In the exigency, the 21st, although they knew nothing of military tactics, were immediately ordered to go to the defense of Cincinnati. The young soldier at once despatched a line, requesting that if possible his parents should visit him before his final departure.

We hastened at once to the camp. He was overjoyed to meet us. His mother received his tenderest attentions. As his noble comrades



gathered around, "My honored mother, boys," was no uncommon salutation. The two following days were very precious to mother and son. Every spare moment they spent together, — the son strengthening the mother for the hour of farewell, and girding himself for it, "as a strong man to run a race." By special arrangement he was to spend the last night with his parents at the house of Rev. I. H. Morrison, a clergyman who had greatly endeared himself to the soldiers by his kindness. "I can not go," said Mead. "The others have no friends thus to entertain them; why should I remind them of this by going out myself?" At length he consented to take a furlough till 9 A. M. the next morning. Our visit together, and with the family to whose hospitality we were invited, was full of tenderness, yet the heroic purpose of the young soldier was undisturbed. As we valued human progress, civil liberty, and even Christian civilization, we should bid him "God-speed."

The memories of that last evening are peculiarly sacred. To his mother he presented money for the purchase of a gold locket, as a parting gift. Next day all was ready. Blanket lined, overcoat, stockings, shirts, portfolios, miniature library, — which had long been kept in secret by the fond sister, in anticipation of this

hour,—the Testament and Psalms, the soldier's little all; the farewell dinner given by the ladies of Oshkosh is hastily and thankfully received; the cars will soon arrive which are to bear away the precious freight of a thousand men.

“Mother, you have assisted the boys long enough; you are weary; let us take a walk; we have a little time.” Arm in arm they pass the company street. “Mother, this is our last walk together; I shall never return; the ties that bind me to you all are strong, but I would not turn back if I could; I am in the way of duty.” His mother bursting into tears, “Hush, hush,” said he, “this is no time to weep; you should rejoice you have a son to give in our country's cause. Don't weep; I shall but take a shorter route to heaven, and you will soon follow; we shall meet on yonder blessed shore.” Calmly and cheerfully he made his parting requests, remembering earnestly and affectionately his sister, whom he loved most tenderly, and others in the family who were almost as sisters to him; his grandfather, to whom he was as a son, and other relatives and friends far away. “Now,” said he, “we have said all; only promise me, dear mother, that you will be happy, and trust me in the hands of God; whatever my lot, it will be ordered by Infinite Wisdom and love.”

The drum beat for the march ; all was hurry and bustle ; every man seized his knapsack, overcoat, and canteen. The scene was most exciting, though only a thousand men were the actors. Other thousands were spectators, and as the companies marched and countermarched and defiled toward different points on the railroad, the spectacle was imposing. Many times friends waved each other a farewell, yet soon passed with another recognition, and always did our beloved boy salute his parents with the smile of a heroic heart. Said a returned chaplain, standing by my side, "That is a splendid regiment ; but if one hundred of those noble men live to return to Wisconsin, it is all we can expect." How little he knew what a dagger he sent to my heart ! Nine out of every ten to fall. Could it be ? The thought almost overpowered me. I could scarcely stand ; but lifting my heart to God for grace, I soon recovered my self-possession.

As the delay was protracted, several times he sent word to his mother to leave the ground, as he feared her health would suffer. At length I bade him once more "farewell," and took one last view. He stood at the head of his company, strong in manhood's vigor, strong to defend his country, strong in the principles of right, strong in filial affection, strong in Chris-

tian doctrine, strong to toil and suffer and die for others; a lamb ready to be slain in his country's cause; resigned, whatever might be-tide. Not a tear bedewed his cheek; not a nerve trembled; calm and happy as though about laying off his robes for the night, every message given, his work here done, his mission to be completed on the tented and battle-field.

At 8 P. M. it was announced that the train still lingered. I hastened through the darkness, if possible to take once more the loving hand of my precious son. Inquiring for the right car, I sprang upon the platform; in a moment he stood before me in the dim light; I placed in his hand a little memento sent him by a former Sabbath scholar. A moment only, and the cars started; all on board, and in good spirits. I could only say, "Good-by," and "God bless you all!" As the train passed from sight, a prayer ascended from my heart, "God spare the lad; cover his head in the day of battle; preserve, bless, and return him to our fond embrace, if consistent with thy holy will." Thousands of other fathers throughout our country, while saying, "Go, and God bless you," have felt, deep in the soul's recesses, "Have I not buried my child?"

That was a dreary night. The storm-king was out, but the iron horse regarded not his



artillery. Every railroad was hurrying onward armed crowds to repel the threatened invasion of the North. As the regiment reached southern Indiana, they were greeted by the wildest tokens of joy; hailed as the deliverers of our country from anarchy, pillage, and death.

The next Sabbath he writes, "We could not have had a better time; cool, no dust, no accident. As we neared the Ohio, we saw pickets every few rods, and cannons mounted. Things look warlike. Rebels seven miles distant. The inhabitants greeted us with peaches, pears, apples, pies, etc. Arrived this morning in Cincinnati; had a good dinner in the market-house; the citizens welcomed us most cordially, and the ladies waved their handkerchiefs as we passed. We rested till 3 P. M., then marched over a pontoon bridge into Kentucky. You could hardly believe it possible to find such a contrast from just crossing only a river. Stores, factories, and machine-shops all closed. Now and then a lady waves her handkerchief, but there is no spirit in it; public sentiment is on the wrong side. We rested in front of a large brick building, and some of the boys thought they would try the well. A man, passing, says, 'I guess you had no invitation from that house to drink; several soldiers were poisoned from that well a few days since.'



“ At  $3\frac{1}{2}$  o'clock next morning we were called. We succeeded in finding water, — miserable stuff, and I don't doubt that the woman who owned the well would poison it if she dared. For breakfast we had raw bacon, bread, and a little coffee. We are surrounded by hills, except on the north, where we see the spires of Cincinnati. It is reported there are one hundred and thirty thousand of us in the vicinity. Sigel's old brigade from Pea Ridge is five miles from us. I don't know how the boys feel, but I dislike to get into Secessia before I know my right hand from my left, in military matters. We are now receiving our guns; as for drill, *marching* is the order, not *drilling*. You can not realize how hard it is for me to break the Sabbath; but I do nothing unless absolutely necessary. As we passed over the Ohio, a steam-organ played for us various national airs, closing with 'Dixie.' Nothing refreshes me so much as music.

“ Our colonel is proud of us, and I fear the 21st will suddenly find themselves in a position for which they have had neither time nor chance to prepare. I can already see that it is an easy thing to get into battle, but it takes a wise, cool head to lead men out safely. We are now getting belts, boxes, etc. I have been interrupted at least a dozen times while writing this. We

are to have no tents or covering except our blankets for at least ten days.

“ Affectionately,

MEAD.”

The ten days without tents were extended to more than three times ten ; but we will let him tell his own story : —

“ CAMP IN KY., Sept. 16, 1862.

“ MY DEAR PARENTS : —

“ Last Sabbath night we lay down and slept, expecting at 4 A. M. to ship on the Ohio, for some point below. Before ‘midnight the cry came,’ ‘The transport is ready.’ In the darkness we rose, and in ten minutes we were equipped, ready for the march. I said it was done to see how quickly we could be ready, and so it proved ; we turned in again. After breakfast of raw ham and hard biscuit, — nothing more, except poor water, — we went out to drill ; drilled five minutes, when orders came to march up into the country. The heat was intense. Knapsacked and buttoned, we started ; it was but two miles, and good road, but very hilly. Such a succession of hills I never saw. On the march, eight of the regiment fell out. My coat was wet through. We stacked arms, and hung our blankets on the bayonets. The

heat is awful, and not a shade in the camp limits; but this we could endure if we could get water. It is two miles to cistern water, which fell several weeks since. Within stone's throw is the stagnant Licking River, horses, dogs, etc., putrefying on its surface. It is so filthy you can not see three inches into it. Such water I drank this morning! My nature revolts from the thought. I had refrained twenty-four hours, and could stand it no longer. I must now go on guard twenty-four hours.

“September 17th. Off guard. Now for some water! In the night I took a sip from my canteen. Horrid! I could not swallow it. Three of us went two miles down the river, and found a good spring, impregnated with sulphur and iron, but we knew it was *clean*. I had abstained till I was ravenous, though the artillerymen and some of the Pea Ridge boys drank the river water with a gusto. We reached the spring; we drank, and lay down, and drank again; got more, and drank. Never did water seem so refreshing. I carried back a canteen full; spoke to the captain a moment, and returned to find it empty. Money is nothing to us; yesterday I would have given a dollar for a can of water. I fear we shall be sick, though I feel first-rate. Last night, in a camp near, two men died from eating poisoned pies. The woman

who sold the pies is in 'durance vile.' Four individuals were seized last night as spies; one a woman in disguise. On Sunday night, but for lack of rations, we should have gone to Pittsburg. I regretted we could not go. We have set up bushes to shield us from this burning sun. Our fare is better; to-day we have had some *beans*. I would like to describe the landscape, but can not now; suffice it to say, it is very hilly, and the summits are crowned with cannon; the trees are cut away and lopped, that our view may be less obstructed; our camp is bounded south and west by a trench and breastworks; soil, — solid clay, and very barren. The river, now only four feet deep, shows on its banks that at high-water it is forty feet. Buttonwoods abound, some of them four feet in diameter. Thank God, I am well; my trust is in him; I have no other source on which to rely. A regiment from Corinth has just passed — wan, haggard, black, dirty. Poor fellows! I can not describe them. One of them said he had driven swine from a mud-hole, and gladly filled his stomach and canteen with the water. We keep up good spirits, talk little of home, pray for health and water, and often say, 'Who would not sell a farm or give up the law to be a soldier?' We enlisted prepared for the worst, and are disappointed at nothing. We

should be thankful for fruit or vegetables, yet bacon and crackers are not the worst fare, if they are not musty or sour; these crackers,— you need a hammer to break them!

“It is reported that the rebels have given General Wallace till two minutes past twelve to-day to evacuate; if not, they will attack. The General says they will have to wait till forty minutes past.

“Remember me in your prayers.

“MEAD.”

“Sept. 22,

2½ miles from Louisville, Ky.

“DEAR FRIENDS AT HOME:—

“Ten minutes after closing my last hasty note, we had orders to march. We were glad, for no place could be worse for water. The officers said there was a transport for us at Cincinnati, and after waiting long hours, and seeing two or three regiments off, we were marched away to a depot. At dark the train was ready,—baggage, horse, stock, and gravel platforms, with one passenger car. We were ordered into a horse-car, grated windows at each end, and camped on the floor quite comfortable, for we were very weary. In half an hour the captain says, ‘Sling knapsacks; we are going into another car.’ ‘Bully for us!’ we thought; but lo! it was a



*gravel-car*, — a platform, with side and end-boards, and boards across for seats. This was at least better than to march. Ten of us were detailed to attend to baggage, and this proved no small care. A gravel-car was our home for thirty hours. The cinders put out our eyes and burnt our clothes, and the stiff wind endangered every loose article. ‘Take care for your hats, boys!’ five are gone, and mine one of the number. A ride like this, under a broiling sun, was bad at best; but without hat or cap it was most-uncomfortable. However, I soon got one. Last night the train stopped near a straw-stack, and, as by one consent, every man rushed for an armfull. We rested well; the noise and jolting are nothing now. Woke this morning covered with cinders and wet with dew; breakfast in a beautiful grove. We hoped to linger here and drill; but in half an hour came the order, ‘Sling knapsacks!’ and off over the river, through Louisville, and now here, on good ground, and with plenty of good water.

“A citizen just remarked, ‘There are but few Union men in this city,’ and I think it is so. Three men are just taken as spies. A few minutes since, the order came, ‘Fall in for drill!’ Just as we got our arms on, and were ready, came another, ‘Stack arms, fill canteens, and

take three days' rations!' The colonel told the general we had no tents.\* 'All right,' said he; 'if you had I should take them away'; so I suppose we are now bound for Dixie. One of the boys just remarked, facetiously, 'There is no rest to the wicked'; the '*rest*' part, at least, is true with us.

"Mary, dear, your last letter to me I carried in my vest-pocket till it had been wet through by perspiration so many times that I can not read it; so here it goes. I tell you this that you may know how we prize letters from our friends. My Testament is all right yet, though my wallet-frame is completely covered with rust. I get only a moment here and there to think, read, or write. Here, sitting on my knapsack, I have been ousted a dozen times at least; but my little book is read every day. (There, up again!) A half-hour passed in firing by rank, file, and company; no balls furnished; but I had one, and am bound to see if I hit the mark.

"Dear friends, although the scene with us is constantly changing, and we are in the midst of excitement and distraction, you are always before my mind. Remember that I do, and shall think of you with my latest breath. My dear Sunday school, — I can hardly speak of them (up again!) Tell them to prepare for

the world above ; to keep their eye on the ‘ shining shore.’ Remember me ; I know you do ; yet it seems good to say so. Pray that if I do not live through the war, I may be ready, — ready to go. I never felt more so than to-night. I despair of keeping a journal ; my letters in lieu. Do not worry about me ; all is well ; and now I must run, or lose my supper.

“ Good-by.

“ MEAD.”

“ P. S. We did not march last night, as we expected. The idea of a soldier is to be *always ready* ; he knows not what hour or moment the roll will call.”

“ CAMP EAST OF LOUISVILLE, KY.,

Sept. 27.

“ MY OWN DEAR PARENTS : —

“ I am well ; but why do I not receive letters from home ? You need not doubt that I should like to hear from you. We are greatly annoyed by marching orders, which are scarcely half obeyed before they are recalled, and something else given. We have had sixteen old tents issued for the regiment ; *one* fell to company K. They are intended for fifteen men ; it has rained hard for four hours, and there are twenty-five in it now. We are to march in a few hours. For supper last night, we had boiled beef and

crackers ; the same for breakfast ; for dinner, raw pork and crackers ; all is gone, and supper will be minus. Many are sick ; and, as we move so much, they go to the hospital to-day. We see only soldiers. The city was expecting an attack, and many of the citizens moved over the river. But oh, the troops that come in ! Such jaded men ! Some have marched all the way from Alabama. At home they were old acquaintances ; here we could not recognize them. The pleasure of a bath I am sure they have not known these weary months ; and such a tale ! They have never seen a fight, yet one company of ninety-seven has now *thirty-six* able for duty ; another of eighty-six has now *forty, all told*. They have been to Island No. 10, Corinth, and Alabama. Some regiments have not marched a dozen miles in fifteen months, while others are worn down with marching twelve or fifteen hundred miles ; you see there is not much equality on our chess-board. We have lain out each night, and often, on waking, I have found my hair dripping with the dew ; but I am yet well. If I have my health I am satisfied. The dust has been so thick that, when marching, we could not see a rod. Last Sabbath we had service ; a good talk, practical to the last. We expected a fight, and were ordered into the trenches. I lay down and slept

an hour, read a chapter, and ate a cracker for breakfast. We were soon relieved from our position. I hope we may get settled for a few days somewhere; then I will write something besides these every-day occurrences.

“Adieu.

“MEAD.”



## CHAPTER VI.

### THE FIRST BATTLE.

The patriot soldier — Severe marching — Scanty food — Excessive fatigue — Battle of Perryville — Fearful scenes — Cold — Salt River — Comments on officers — Birthday — Illness — Army luxuries — Trust in God.

**I** HAVE thus allowed our young soldier to speak for himself, giving a brief insight into the perplexities and suspense of army-life at that time of alarm. I am just asked, “How could you consent to Mead’s joining the army?” I answer, “How could I deny his appeal, so patriotic and Christian?” He felt it his duty to go, as much as Paul did to go up to Jerusalem. Had the heavens opened, and a voice spoken to him by name, I could have felt no better satisfied that it was of the Lord. What his purpose was, we could not see beyond the present hour. It was enough to know that Mead did not act from restlessness or love of adventure or thoughts of gain or pledges of promotion, but from the purest motives of Christian patriotism. If he could give up the endearments of home and friends, and

face the hardships, privations, and dangers of a soldier's life, casting himself into the "imminent deadly breach," in the very crisis of our national struggle; if he had the devotion and faith to go forward, trusting in God that, living or dying, all would be well, how could we resist? It would have been little less than treason and rebellion against God and our country. If any pecuniary sacrifice would have answered the call, satisfied his sense of right and duty, and accomplished his mission, I could have submitted to it cheerfully; "But," said he, "it is *men*, true men, the country needs." He had no doubt of his duty, however our hearts might recoil; God called him and us to the terrible baptism of tears and blood; there was no escape.

But we will again let him give, in his own way, the record of the weary march which now commenced: —

"BLOOMFIELD,

"13 miles southeast of Louisville, Ky., Oct. 5.

"DEAR PARENTS: —

"You may know how busy I am when I say, our seventh move only began our march. Leaving our tents, which we had had one night only, and knapsacks and overcoats, the first day out we made eighteen miles, and camped with the

division. The day was hot, and a great number fell out; when the "Stack arms!" was given, only *twelve* of our company came up. I was all right. The reason of so many falling out is the scarcity of water; several thousands being ahead, they use it up. The next day things went better. We are now in the camp where the rebels were last night. You see, Bragg's army is just ahead; but we halt to-day, and that gives him a chance. Then we will go on; keeping just so far off. That is the way they did coming from Alabama. What use there is in this I can not see. We ought to chase them faster; but no, let them escape. We shall never conquer except by force. By the time we reach Cumberland Gap we shall probably hear that Louisville or Cincinnati is threatened, and then come hurrying back. . . . A soldier's life is no worse than I expected; I counted the cost; but this management tries one's soul. We came to *put down the rebellion*, not to wear ourselves out by marching in the rear of the enemy.

"We get along first-rate, though in a novel way. Cooking utensils the most simple, — a mess-pan, coffee-pot, and tin plate; occasionally we get a sweet potato or a chicken. The water is so thick and stagnant you can not see an inch into it. We drink from mud-holes

where the swine are wallowing. A deep sediment remains in the bottom of the cup. We have been so short of food that I was offered a dollar for a cracker. I do not complain, but try to take things as they come, thankful they are no worse. If I ever return, I shall try to merit all your kind wishes. Mary, let mother see she has a kind daughter, though her son should never more be home to cheer her. Live constantly in the presence of God. He is ever with me. I was never so happy in my life, because my trust is all in him.

“In readiness to march any moment, we have roll-call every hour. In the march thus far, we have seen but one school-house and two churches. The country is very rolling, sparsely settled, often vacated, and fences burned.

“Tell my dear Sabbath school I hope they will not forget my last request. As for reading, we have no papers, and not a moment to spare. I shall carry this in my cartridge-box till I have a chance to send to Louisville.

“Yours, ever truly,

“MEAD.”

“ON THE BATTLE-FIELD, Oct. 9, 1862.

“DEAR FRIENDS: —

“Two days more heavy marching, almost without water, and with very short rations, brought

us within seven miles of the fight. Yesterday morning we marched on. Such roads, — so hilly and stony, and so tired we could hardly wag! At the edge of the field we halted for orders. Water, water, water! was the cry. Thoroughly exhausted, and famishing for food, as well as water, had we been well drilled we were in no state to do ourselves or our cause justice in the battle now raging. I lay down, resolving to rest a little if possible. Some were detailed for water, but soon returned with empty canteens. ‘It must be reserved for the wounded.’ The lieutenant rose and said, ‘We must have some; *who will go?*’ I thought a moment, then with mess-pans and canteens three of us started after him. On and on we went, for two miles; the road became terrific; we must hurry, for our regiment may be getting in. At length we found water, and hurried back. Such hills I never saw. I felt no excitement, *but so tired*. From the top of a hill we saw the fight at this moment. These few words no one can realize except they behold the reality. We hurried on, and shortly met the poor wounded ones coming out. I gave each a few drops, and hastened on to find my own regiment. On a steep, high hill I saw troops, and thought I heard ‘21st Wisconsin.’ I scrambled up the hill; I was right. Our poor boys had been in. They lay



in a cornfield, and the rebels came on within twenty feet, when orders were given to 'Fire and charge.' But no order was heard. They saw the rebels were on them, and fired as well as they could. The bullets flew in showers. The battle raged during the afternoon, but the field was so hilly we could not know the result. At sunset the flashes sent a glare over the scene. Soon we were ordered to go to the regiment. What was my surprise to find only twenty out of at least sixty of our company who went in. The rebels held the ground where our dead and wounded lay. We lay down again on a hill at the foot of which the rebels were, and dropped asleep. Soon we were moved, and again we went silently, and drew off a battery, and lay down. The captain said, 'Who will volunteer to carry off the dead?' Four or five of us started, laying off our arms, and carrying a handkerchief tied to a stick, for flag of truce.

"We found our poor major dead and stripped. Oh, I loved him! What a loss to us! Others were dead, and many wounded; I helped carry off four, and then gave out from exhaustion. This is a strange word for me, but no other expresses it. The moon shone full upon the scene; it is utterly useless to describe the sight, — men and horses dead and wounded,

wagon-wheels, arms, caissons scattered, and the moans and shrieks of the wounded. Oh, may you never see such a sight! I helped carry off one poor fellow with his mouth and lower jaw shot off—stop, stop! I can't say more. We slept till sunrise; I expected to see it rise for the last time, for I supposed at daylight we should pitch in till death or victory were ours; but no; the rebels had fled. We moved on two or three miles, and rest yet. Thank God, we have water! Of our squad only two remain well; Company C, on our left, has no officers left. This morning the loss averaged thirty-five,—quite a reduction. Our colonel has an arm broken, and a wound in the neck. Many were the hairbreadth escapes. The poor horses have had nothing all day except a little water.

“Thirty-three of our regiment were trenched; no coffin or mark, except a rail or stone. Our major, noble man! was among the number,—no sheet nor shroud, not even a coat, for he was stripped. If I had the dearest friend killed in battle, I could only bury him.

“You can not realize our situation. The people flee because their houses are used for hospitals.

“D., wounded in the arm, would have bled to death if the boys had not attended him. B., shot

through the left breast, may live ; the ball was taken from his back. M.'s pocket-book was found in a dead rebel's pocket. It seems hard to throw men all in together and heap earth upon them, but it is far better than to have them lie moldering in the sun. Oh ! to see the dead rebels in the woods ! From one point I counted thirty-one, in a fence corner twenty-four ; every where the eye rests on one, and this is not on the *field proper*. In our short march we passed at least two hundred, and of horses I made no count. It is a fearful sight ; and to think of all these soldiers having friends who would give any thing for their bloated, decaying bodies, now torn by swine and crows, — oh, it is sad ! ”

“ October 13th.

“ Moving on : at night we made tents of rails and straw ; it rained, and to-day we are stiff, and have colds. We passed a cornfield of eighty acres almost covered with pens made of rails and covered with straw. These are filled with dead rebels. It is said where so many die and there is no time to bury them, they are piled up in this manner and burned. Unless something is done, the country is uninhabitable. It is surprising how quick the dead become black ; many lie with open eyes. One had died leaning against a tree, and as we passed

stared at us with that wild, ghastly look that you could scarcely summon courage to meet. Some had their heads scooped out, leaving the skull a mere shell. Such sights may you never behold! The poor mules have had nothing to eat all day, and are howling as only mules can. Our circumstances are trying, but I am contented. Mary, be a good Christian girl, learn all you can, love your parents and your home.

“Our wounded are doing well. Those in the battle of Shiloh say this was more severe, though it lasted only four hours.

“The rebels are backing up; we expect to go in soon; are in line of battle as usual. The country here is completely ruined for the present. The weather is very unpleasant. Remember all we have is one blanket, and cartridge-box for pillow. Our mess-pans were lost in the battle, so now it is every man for himself; like the ‘Swamp Fox’ we grind our coffee with our bayonets, and make it in our pint cups; our meat we toast on a stick. ‘Who would not be a soldier?’

“One company, in the 10th Regiment, after the battle, numbered only six, — the regiment two hundred and fifty! Such is war; may we soon see the flag of peace, liberty, and union wave over our once happy land.

“Good-by.

“MEAD.”

In the order of Providence our young soldier was fitted for his mission in the army by twenty years training in a Christian home; his moral and social nature well disciplined, his habits of self-control, industry, and perseverance, of temperance, virtue, and uprightness, of reflection and observation well established, and his mind well enlightened in the affairs of the nation. Thus was he prepared to meet the call of his country, and endure hardness as a good soldier.

“SEVEN MILES FROM LEBANON, KY.,

Oct. 23, 1862.

“MY DEAR PARENTS AND FRIENDS AT HOME: —

“When I wrote last we were just past Crab Orchard, chasing Bragg, when suddenly we halted and lay four days; meanwhile our regiment rested from our heavy march as train guard. From early morning till 11 P. M. we went only twenty-two miles, but it was terrible. Such roads I never saw till now. We lay under marching orders, and dared not leave the camp far. Frost at night, no tents, no overcoats, some without even a blanket, having thrown them away in the fight. It is entirely useless for me to describe camp-life as we have it; no one can realize it without the experience. We have had no change of clothing for a month, and are often obliged to go for days



without bathing our faces. There is one towel in the company, and no soap!

“One day we turned off the road four miles to get water, which for a division requires no small stream. We climbed the worst, steepest, and stoniest hills over which a road was ever laid. Away down, down, you could see the tops of the trees! finally we halted on the rolling fork of Salt River; good water and plenty of it. We went from stars in the morning till long after their appearance at night. Next morning started early, and followed the bed of the river seventeen miles, sometimes crossing half-a-dozen times in a mile. The bed is stone and gravel. Oh, our poor feet! but mine stood it well. At length we struck the road six miles from Lebanon. How pleasant the prospect of camping near a village, and fixing up a little! Schemes, that only a soldier can conceive of, flitted through our minds; but, doomed to disappointment, we learned we must move four or five miles beyond for water; that all mail communication with Louisville was cut off; that the railroad bridges were burned, and seventy of our wagons destroyed by the infamous Morgan. It was now dark; many fell out, but I determined to go on, or fall in my tracks. The ‘four or five miles’ lengthened to seven; then half a mile further we camped. The road was

stony, and in the darkness we often stumbled; we were exhausted, having marched more than thirty miles over such roads. Now for rails to lay down for a bed; be assured, we did not trouble our heads with the thoughts of straw; that is a luxury we are quite unused to. From the river-bed, ninety feet below, we got water, cracked our coffee, and soon you might have seen a row of pint cups boiling as merrily as if in the best charcoal range ever patented. Our sugar was out; but I had a cracker and some meat which was soon cooked; never did a supper taste better; but the thoughts of home, my own sweet home, were never more vivid or intense. A good bed would have been acceptable I assure you, but on the march, soldiers seldom have even tents. We have had them only two nights since we bid you adieu. This morning the water in my canteen was frozen. After a slim breakfast, I went to the river and took a good bath; what a luxury! the first for a month. This is the last of the dry season; it has not rained half an inch in three or four months. Often we could not see the company ahead (only ten feet), and our faces so begrimed with dust that we could not recognize each other. Old troops say they seldom, if ever, have had so heavy a march as that of yesterday. I do not grumble at all; but to

chase Bragg one hundred and eight miles, then halt till he escapes, wheel to the right and run here, is simply chasing the wind. What we shall do here, none of us can tell; but we hope to get our knapsacks and tents, and drill some.

“How I should like some vegetables! Cheese is seventy-five cents a pound, *guessed off* at that, other things in proportion.

The rebel officers are generals, and *Union* is their watchword, hence their success. Buell never intended to catch Bragg. The day of the fight, a heavy reënforcement lay ready to help us! Their colonels and captains actually *wept* to be allowed to help us; but — my blood boils when I think of it — Buell said, ‘D—n them! they have got in, let them get out as well as they can;’ and a deal more that I don’t care to write. Oh, dear parents, if it were not for my dear little Testament, your letters, and my sole trust in God, I should be sick.

“Tell the Sabbath school to love peace and hate war; it is an awful thing, even in a righteous cause. We passed, last week, near the old battle-field; the dead had been thrown into dry gullies and runs, and covered with a few inches of earth. The buriers thought their work completed, when they came upon two hundred more piled up in the bushes.

Scores of the buried will be exhumed when the rains come. Five thousand will not cover the loss of the rebels in killed; the wounded were without number.

“Our coats are getting loose from some cause; taking in a belt an inch or two is no uncommon occurrence. Remember, friends, army-life is not all like ours; perhaps no other division has had such a baptism of toil, exposure, and fruitless self-denial.

“I am ashamed of this letter, but I can do no better now; this dirty sheet is my last of rebel paper. Thank those who have written me; they know what a soldier likes, — *long letters*.

“For the present, adieu.

“MEAD, JR.”

“MITCHELLVILLE STATION, FORTY-FOUR )  
MILES NORTH OF NASHVILLE,  
Nov. 14, 1862.

DEAR FRIENDS AT HOME: —

“The day after I wrote you, it was very cold. We were anxiously awaiting our knapsacks and tents, but at dark the wagons returned empty. The wind was piercing; there was no escape from the storm; face the music we must. The snow flew thick and fast, and we lodged as I hope we may not often be obliged to again.

We built a large fire next morning, but could not keep warm. Just at night the tents came, to the joy of us all; a letter from home too; Oh, how cheering!

“On the twenty-ninth, my birthday, we pulled up stakes and left, just as the sun began to tinge the horizon: a heavy frost bit our fingers, but we jogged on. Never was a day more beautiful, — Indian summer in all its glory. I thought of home, of each of you, of all our little picnics and birthday festivals in the groves. Memory was busy; for some days I had been far from well, and now for the first time fell out. None know the feelings of one who is obliged to stop from mere disability. I called at a house, — the first since leaving Louisville; the lady prepared me a nice meal, but I could eat nothing. The family were very kind, and a young lady played for me on the piano; this brought fresh thoughts of home. By frequent stopping and resting, I finally got to camp, — twenty four-miles. Next day we marched fifteen miles; I was sick, but my comrades were very kind, carrying gun, side-arms, etc., for me. Say not soldiers forget the sympathies of life by contact with hardships; they will do any thing for a friend in distress. For three days I ate nothing, and was very weak, but by the assistance of officers and men, I



reached camp every night, though I could go but a few rods without resting. You may think I felt sad ; but no, my heart went up constantly to God, and although seriously suffering, I was perfectly happy.

“ This is a miserable country, very sparsely settled, no lumber, shingles split, and the most forlorn-looking barns. Harper’s ‘ Virginia Illustrated,’ by Porte Crayon, is a perfect picture of things here. I have seen only three or four school-houses since we left ; the people are ‘ know-nothings ’ in one sense at least ; such ignorance I could not believe ; but their appearance and houses tell the tale.

“ We know nothing of winter quarters ; our motto is *onward!* Death, now, on rebels and traitors !

“ We are rid of Buell. Gen. Rosecrans has made a good impression ; we trust he will prove judicious, and faithful to the Union cause. Our head surgeon died the other night not much regretted ; we hope Dr. R—— takes his place ; he is gentlemanly and kind : the soldiers prize kindness ; it might be a great power in the army.

“ I hope our friends at home will cheer up, — look on the sunny side. We are not so bad off as we might be. As an illustration of the kindness we sometimes receive, yesterday some of

our boys were unloading cars; the crackers and box weigh from forty-eight to sixty-two pounds; the baggage-master seeing them tugging to shoulder a box, said, 'Here, boys, you are not fit for duty, you ought to be in the hospital, — hold on; let these other fellows try it.'

"We can stand it till the fourth of July, though I fear for many, — yet they say I am 'tougher than an owl.' I am surprised at my own endurance, though I did fall out in that hard, fruitless march. . . . .

"The day before we came here, we pitched our tents on a lovely prairie, the first we had seen since leaving Indiana. Having orders to remain five or six days, we got rails half a mile distant, and some got straw a mile and a half; washed and prepared for a good time generally. The last seven miles of our march was so dusty we could not see six feet, — in fact, we would get confused in the dust, and have to wait for a breeze to get regulated again. You can imagine our joy to camp in so pleasant a place, near a fine spring, and withal with the prospect of a few days *rest*.

The Twenty-fourth had preceded us and arrived at Nashville, but the rebel army, as usual, had stripped the country so completely that their forage wagons must return here forty-four miles for sustenance. A brigade must guard

the teams from guerrillas and rebel cavalry, and the troops at Nashville are on one-fourth rations. In the evening, the sky was illuminated on all sides by burning houses and barns; all are Secesh here, and some of the troops in our brigade have been over this same road twice before, when they were not allowed to touch a rail even, or any thing else, and were required to guard each house; to guard the houses of rebels is a service most galling to the spirit of a true soldier; so now comes the retribution.

“We had plenty of clean straw; you may smile at this, and possibly turn away in disgust, but it was in pleasing contrast to rails, and we slept as only soldiers can. At 3 A. M. came the reveille with marching orders! I did not swear; it would do no good; but I am glad you were not in the camp of the 21st Wisconsin Volunteers. Just before day we left and came here. Our camp now is in a nest of scrub-oaks and bushes; we had a job clearing it, but it is better than it might be. Water must be brought two miles in kettles on a pole. *Water is worth something here.* Barrels are not now in the market. We got a lot of rails, but soon orders came to return them. Ours were *somehow, broken just then*, so who would carry back broken rails! but some had to go.

“Coffee is seventy-five cents per pound ; as I can not drink it, I exchange with the natives for dried fruit, apples, cider, pies, etc. ; but, they are no cooks ; the crust is flour and water, Indian bread the same. I have just got the first loaf of soft bread ; my teeth are good yet, though some of the boys declare theirs are worn off an eighth of an inch. Just before we stopped, we noticed a garden. The potatoes had been gathered, but soldiers know that some remain ; so the moment we camped, as the axes had not arrived, we made a bee-line for said garden, and succeeded in getting a hatful, some more some less ; these we carried two miles and washed, and had them for our breakfast ; the first we have had in two months. Yesterday we drew full rations, which fact is a *rarity of itself*, and you may think now we shall live. And so we would if we had our sisters or mothers to cook for us. But the rice got terribly burnt, and on tasting the molasses that was so burnt, we let it alone. The beans for dinner were boiled to a mush, so that the soup would go round, and not the semblance of a bean could you find. I will not tell you what pretty-looking sights we are ; surely you will admire my theme.

“Dear parents, do not worry for me ; the contrast of home and soldier-life as we have it, is

indeed great, and we feel it; yet strangely indeed, I enjoy myself well, my trust is above; and just as firm as though I could see all the way up, I rely implicitly on God, and believe all is well. As you see, a soldier's life is to be always ready; no matter what preparations he may make, or how anxious to stay, he is liable to be called any moment. You see the moral of this.

“A quiet home, a shady grove, and an unfailing spring of water, there to *live and rest*, is just now my beau ideal of earthly good. Oh, dear friends, you don't know the meaning of the word *rest*. All your acquaintances here are able to crawl around, and are bound to do their duty. The government must be established, the Union preserved. God speed the right!

“Yours ever,

“MEAD HOLMES.”



## CHAPTER VII.

### MARCH TO NASHVILLE.

Indebtedness to the soldier — Thanksgiving at home — “The happiest man in camp” — Captain Walker’s testimony — Sickness among the troops — Thanksgiving in camp — How to make a pudding — Ignorance of the people — Scenes on leaving camp — Arrives at Nashville.

**T**HE preceding chapter gives us a little insight into the every-day perplexities, toils, and sufferings, of our nation’s brave defenders. How great our indebtedness to the common soldier! He is our most disinterested benefactor.

Let me see the soldier, the man who, uninfluenced by regard to gain or honor, perils life itself and all that is dear in life, for his country’s sake.

The wife of Tigranes, king of Armenia, was among the captives on a certain day, when Cyrus, the conqueror of Asia, was to review his troops. Great was the pomp and pageantry of the occasion; and while the eager multitude were pressing forward to see the mighty potentate, Tigranes presented himself before him

and offered a thousand talents for the redemption of his wife. Being afterwards asked what she thought of Cyrus, "I did not see him," said she. "Upon what, then, were your eyes fixed?" "On him who offered a thousand talents for my redemption," was her grateful reply. Let my eyes be fixed on the common soldier, who offers not gold but his *life* for the defense of my rights and liberties, for the rescue of the government, for the salvation of the Republic.

It is related of two young men, that, engaging in the propagation of a certain creed, they pledged themselves to God and to each other, by each opening a vein and signing the agreement in his own blood. This indicated great sincerity and devotion, but how much more those who enter the field of strife with the fullest conviction that there they must die. They not only open a vein, but give to the last drop of life's crimson treasure.

MITCHELLVILLE STATION, TENN.

Nov. 18, 1863.

"DEAR FRIENDS : —

"Outside, it is storming right lustily, and even in our tent the rain gives us a damp birth. Oh, the mud! The soil is clay, and of the 'stickiest' quality, so you can imagine

our fix. The water we drink is dipped up any where, so in the bottom of the kettle there will be perhaps an inch of mud. I prefer to bring some, though it is two miles. We are still guarding this point and it keeps our well men on duty constantly. I enclose a list of all our company and their whereabouts, so that friends may know where we are.

“ We have just read of the troubles about the draft ; a *little determination* with the rioters, and not so much bustle, would make short work of such outbreaks.

“ I should like to be with you Thanksgiving Day, but it's well ; somebody must suffer privations in this period of our country's peril. Thank Mrs. A. for her invitation to dine with her ; tell her how happy I should be to join my dear parents and friends at her well-spread table. I shall think of you all, and fancy myself with you. The year has brought many changes. Since that last festal day, poor Fred has gone to return not again, I, too, am away in this hostile State ; a year since, we were both at home, with prospect of life and home pursuits. We may not see the reason of all these changes, but there is a reason, and a good one too. Tell her how fully I trust in my dear Saviour, and how much joy I feel in his continual presence, and how refreshing it is to have a little season of reading and communion with my Testament,

which really is a light to my feet, and a lamp to my path. . . . .

“I am happy,—yes, the happiest man in camp; I never fret, no not the least; what’s the use? The boys on picket have a rough time; as it rains almost constantly, they are of course wet through,—no rubber blanket, nor are they allowed fires at night. Last night it rained and blew as usual, and the ground being soft, the tent-pins pulled out and over went our ‘cotton house.’ I was asleep, when suddenly the rain came dashing in my face and woke me. In ten minutes we were all right again and lay down. Dear me! the rain comes in badly and our wood is green oak; the smoke which can scarcely escape is terrible to our eyes. You must know, I have got to be quite handy with my needle.

“L——, I thank you for a few lines; prepare for usefulness in this world and for the better world beyond. Mary dear, I am glad you are so engaged in your studies. I send you another picture to draw,—make the shades deep like the original. Those pieces of music which I ordered from New York, if they do not come within the range of the melodeon, keep for the piano.

“The sun shines out for the first time in four days; out with the blankets and towels to dry. Love to all.”

“MEAD.”

In a short letter of Dec. 1st, from Capt. Walker, he says, "I can not speak too highly of Mead, the whole army can not produce a more faithful soldier." How he manages to get on, the shifts and turns of a private soldier's life, appear from the following letter of Dec. 3d: —

"DEAR PARENTS: —

"We are still in camp, ready for a fight any moment. We are called out each morning at four o'clock, and stand in line of battle till daylight. I have not been well for some time, and the officers have kindly favored me. Many, whose names are on the surgeon's books as 'well,' are only able to walk about. We raised a fine flag-staff a little time since; but I am sorry to say the flag has been only once at top-mast, so many are dying. Eleven of our company have died in seven days. The typhoid fever is making sorry work with the boys. We bury them in the scrub-oaks, close by the camp, — a rough box for a coffin, a piece of cracker-box for a head-stone, and red chalk for the artist's chisel. I am better; what I needed was rest and sufficient and decent food. We have been a long time on half rations, and the bacon so *lively* we could not eat it. Now we are better supplied. There is a *leak in the ship* some where.



“Shall I give you a little of our interior life? What else can I write about? We receive no papers, of course know nothing of the outside world. Do send us papers, papers; we are starving for something to read.

“Our camp is now neatly cleaned and ditched. Thanksgiving Day dawned; we thought of home. No rations of any account were on hand; but we drew before noon crackers and bacon, of which I am sick enough. But I got a loaf of good wheat bread,—which I agreed for ten days since,—some potatoes, eggs, cheese, and butter; so I had quite a feast. I also made a pudding; but I am quite ashamed to tell you to what straits we are reduced in our culinary department. We mixed crackers, dried apples cooked, rice, meal, eggs and cloves, with water. Now to bake it? An oyster-can is pail, kettle, and general cooking utensil. Two more cans were found and melted apart, then of the two made *one* cylinder, enclosing the said pail of pudding, then a plate over all, and cover the whole with hot ashes. Did ever servant-girl do better? We were immediately called out for inspection, after which I procured a pass, and went one and a half miles out, for some things I had agreed for when on picket; returned just before dark, and found my pudding done to a turn. It was better than any plum-

pudding at home. Enough of this. I am sure you will regret that the dawn of our manhood is spent thus. It is indeed no pleasure to us; but the necessity is upon us; do this, or worse.

“I wish you would write ‘war news,’ — lots of it, — for we know nothing at all of the present condition of the country. It is said, ‘Where ignorance is bliss, ’tis folly to be wise;’ but there is no bliss about it; we wish to know the worst, and then try to meet it.

“W. has just come from the hospital; he looks so much better than we, that we suspect he has had the best of the dinner. No money passes here except Tennessee.

“Just off guard for the last twenty-four hours. While treading my beat, I thought of home; memory was never more busy; but, with health and Providence on my side, I can stand it till the fourth of July. Do not think me unhappy. I am the happiest fellow in the regiment; and if I knew I must stay three years, I should not grumble. The telegraph wires were cut each side of us last night. The artillery was ready at a moment’s warning, — horses harnessed, and all; but we fear little from the rebels. We do not forget the proverb, ‘The time of peace is the time to prepare for war.’ It is not safe to be off our guard.

“The people here are ignorant in the extreme; log-houses, with no windows, a dirt floor, and stick chimney (brick would be *enterprising*), the chinking out between the logs, and the whole wearing the air of desolation and misery; yet in just such a house a man and his family have lived sixteen years, — and they are contented! Land ten dollars per acre. Few can tell how far it is to the next town. On inquiring how far it was to Bowling Green, a man replied, ‘Sixteen miles, and a right smart chance of hills, I reckon.’ They raise cotton, spin it, weave it, and wear it out, without going off the plantation. Butternut is the color worn by the men and boys. On offering a three-cent stamp to a market-man, with wonder, he asked, ‘What is that?’ Explaining the use of it, said he, ‘Ho! I don’t want it; we don’t write any letters.’ The secret of this ignorance is visible, — no school-houses. The glory of the North — our system of public schools — is not found here; ignorance and slavery curse this region. Agriculture is in a rude state, its implements of the roughest kind; no enterprise, no genius; ‘Live where your father lived, think what he thought, and die where he died.’ We seldom see a wagon, and the few we do see are like a boat, — high at each end.

We have just drawn rations, including a

*barrel of flour.* As we are under marching orders, the best we can do with this is to exchange it for 175 loaves of bread, one-third the size of a common brick, as we can not bake on the march. Last night the rain poured down in torrents; our tents were so dry they were very little protection. The boys are well. There, my pudding is cooking too fast — where is Bridget? I tell you, we have to *watch* as well as pray, — watch rations as well as rebels; but by proper forethought we get along tip-top; so be of good cheer, as I say once more

“ Good-by.

“ MEAD HOLMES, JR.”

Mead's habits of observation were fully retained in the army, and whatever he saw of the beautiful, whether in nature or art, he enjoyed exceedingly.

“ 5 MILES SOUTH OF NASHVILLE,

Dec. 11, 1862.

“ MY DEAR PARENTS : —

“ Just a month ago we camped at Mitchellville. Between picket, provost, and regiment guard, we were very busy. ' Sunday morning, at sunrise, we left for this point. Leaving camp at such an hour is rather exciting, — indeed pleasant. The night was cold and clear, the moon threw her silver light over hill and

dale. I enjoyed it well, for you know I am an enthusiastic admirer of nature. How grand the heavens appear to the midnight sentinel! and as I lie in my tent I can see that large star in the square of Pegasus. It is a simple thought, yet a pleasant one, that the same stars shine on home that look down so cheerily on us. Our post was on the brow of a barren hill, and we were well chilled before morning. Leaving camp is very exciting,—the roll of drums, commands of officers, whips of teamsters, and shouts of the men as they run to and fro, packing knapsacks, haversacks, and stowing tents into the baggage-wagons, the complete desolation that follows—boxes, barrels, straw, etc., falling victims to the flames. The morning was clear and cold. How much these cold, clear nights invigorate my system! I drink in all the pure air I can.

“I regret that our marches almost invariably commence on the Sabbath.

“We camped at four P. M. at Tyree Springs, eighteen miles, a watering-place owned by one man. A large, three-story house, with verandas on the first and second stories: I paced it, 183 paces,—large trees, beautiful garden, fountain, etc.; in fact, every thing which wealth and taste could desire. Now all is disorder; decay is written on every thing. Our lot



chanced to fall in the garden, and as there were two inches of snow and a warm sun, we were soon in the mud. We grumbled some at our 'sleeping accommodations,' but the longest nights have an end. Reveille at four A. M., breakfast as you can catch it, and off before daylight. This eating is the great nuisance of a soldier's life. On the march, at every halt, out with haversack and down with a cracker, as fast as you can, just begin to cut a slice of bacon, — '*Fall in! Fall in!*' comes; so off you go till the next halt. If we could live without eating, I should be glad; as it is, it is often, of necessity, a prominent thought. On this march, the change in the scenery was pleasing. From a heavy clay, the soil became light and black; fine farms, beautiful mansions, gardens and shade-trees, assured us we were nearing the great emporium of Tennessee. We camped on the north side of the Cumberland, in full view of the city, its railroad bridge and State House, which you know is the finest building of the kind in the South. We were to stay here "some weeks," but we remembered past lessons, and were careful what improvements we made in a hurry.

"*At seven P. M.*, orders came to draw rations, and move at four and one-half A. M. I was detailed to draw rations. Went to the quar-

termaster's; they were to be hauled first, so out with the teams; they returned at eleven P. M.; up again, drew and distributed to the squads for three days, lay down again, reveille at two and one-half A. M. picked up all, and was in the street fifteen minutes before the time. Marched over the pontoon bridge, through Nashville. The streets were very narrow, but seemed well kept. The buildings are high; some, seven stories, and well finished; yet, as a whole, I did not like the appearance of the city. The moon was our only light; pickets, pickets every where. We halted at the breastworks, just south of the city, and at sunrise camped here, in a fine grove of maples, black walnuts, etc., good sod, and water near. The trees lose their foliage, as at home; no evergreens except in gardens. I saw some of the finest specimens of copping.

“All are secesh here. Near our picket headquarters is a specimen. The husband is in the *rebel* army, the wife claims protection, and the general gives an order for Union soldiers to protect her mansion! that is, *fight with one hand*, and *pet them with the other*. That's the way to do things. Our great mail came to-day; news from home; papers *only ten* days old, yet news to us.

“Mary, I send you some seeds of a beautiful

shrub, and a twig of mistletoe, which sheds its leaves, except here and there a clump. The dark green contrasts beautifully with the gray branches. You speak of a box; it would indeed have been very acceptable, but I hope we should not have evaporated over the "goodies." Soldiers, real soldiers, learn to take things as they come, good or bad, and make no great ado. You speak of 'getting things;' this is easier said than done. Officers have all the advantage, of course, but our fare is not the worst.

"I would like to have been at the concert. We try to sing here, but it's 'no go.' I am glad R. has a monument. For one I loved, I could not rear too costly a pillar, to stand long after I should slumber in the dust. Mary, send me a drawing of it. But the monument set is not all; I would rather see a neatly-kept grave, with a planed board at the head, than a splendid marble shaft, with a cart-load of rubbish around it.

"You wish us not to feel that we are 'machines.' We are nearly so; doing nothing unless obliged to, and yet constantly on duty. Captain Walker is very popular with us; his kind heart wins him laurels, and his bravery no one doubts. As to 'sitting down and having a chat,' we are so busy we attach no meaning to

the words. We shall move on soon, and expect warm work.

“Dear parents, keep up good courage. You would not wish us to return till the war is honorably closed, and the Union saved, with liberty proclaimed; then, if *living*, we shall return as the bird to her nest, to enjoy the benign protection of the government we have saved, and the sweets of rest, as we never could have done but for the hardships of soldier-life.

“At Mitchellville we left many of our comrades sleeping in the dust. May angels guard their mouldering ashes! Future generations shall erect a monument to their memory more lasting than marble or brass. It is sad to die away from friends and home, but, ‘*Dulce et decorum est pro patriâ mori.*’ He nobly falls who falls for the salvation of others.

“Affectionately,

“MEAD, JR.”

## CHAPTER VIII.

### BATTLE OF STONE RIVER.

Letter to the "Manitowoc Tribune"—The camp—Use of tobacco—Alarm—Slavery—Attacked by the rebels—Victory—Composure in danger—Christian courage—Second letter to the "Tribune."

**T**HE following letter explains itself:—

"CAMP NEAR NASHVILLE,  
Dec. 25, 1862.

"TO THE MANITOWOC TRIBUNE:—

"After repeated solicitations from various sources, — officers of the regiment and others, including a kind note from your sanctum, — I have concluded to address you occasionally, that friends may know our whereabouts and prospects. Indeed, I have been most unwittingly caught already I perceive, several of my private letters having strangely fallen into the hands of your typos.

"The leisure moments of an able-bodied soldier in the 21st Wisconsin Volunteers are few. I shall have little time to ornament my hasty notes by beautiful allusions or jots of poetry, but will endeavor to give you an unvarnished



statement of facts and incidents connected with the 21st. I will not recapitulate our marches, or stop to tell whether we fled like cowards or fought like heroes at Perryville. Our heavy loss is sufficient record that we were no skulkers.

‘Yet those that fly may fight again,  
Which he can never do that’s slain ;  
Hence timely running’s no mean part  
Of conduct in the martial art  
By which some, glorious feats achieve,  
As citizens by ‘breaking’ thrive.’

“Our field-officers soon fell, killed or wounded, but the regiment fought bravely. I will only add, in justice to Col. Sweet, that he left his ambulance, in which he had been carried three days, and led us in the fight, sober and brave ; he did not leave until twice wounded.

“We are now in a beautiful wooded slope ; fronting southward is our parade ground, forty acres, bounded on the south by a small creek, which affords plenty of good water for man and beast. This is in delicious contrast to some parts of Kentucky, where we drank water covered with slime so thick that a strong wind would not ruffle its surface, and water too, full of ‘wrigglers,’ went down the same channel.

“By the way, I am glad I never used tobacco. It is a serious inconvenience to the soldier. You would be amused to see the shifts to which

the boys are driven. They chew it several times, then dry it for the pipe; some go to head-quarters and pick up the cigar butts, precious as pearls to them. This I consider equal to our draughts from the Licking River. Oh, the tyranny of appetite!

“An attack has been and is constantly expected. Orders are frequent to sleep dressed, side-arms on, and guns by our side. On the 15th we were eating dinner, when the long roll beat,—‘Up, each man, follow, double-quick!’ We seized our guns, and were out in a trice; we halted about three minutes for the artillery to pass at full speed, then hurried on for the Gap, a pass about four miles off, between heavy hills, through which the pike passes. One said in pleasantry he wished some one was back in camp to attend to his ‘unleavened pancakes;’ another thought his ‘soup would burn;’ another determined the rebels should not come through the Gap and reach camp because ‘his knapsack and overcoat were there.’ The 24th Illinois went ahead as scouts and skirmishers, climbing the hills on each side, so that the enemy’s infantry must go through the pass,—artillery could go no other way. The 79th Pennsylvania, one of the best drilled regiments in the service, filed to the left, the 1st Wisconsin to the right, each supported by bat-

teries, the 21st in the center. We stood guns loaded, primed ready; each one would have fallen before allowing a rebel to pass. Captains took the names of their men, and some gave their post-office address and words for home. A determined look and feeling pervaded the whole. We knew the rebels were near; a movement ahead indicated *something*; all were on the alert. What was our chagrin to see the columns countermarching and returning! *No fight!* that knocked the excitement into 'pi;' 'arms-at-will, route, step, march!' as though nothing had happened. We found all right at camp. Battalion drill from from ten to twelve, brigade drill from two P. M. till sunset. . . . The artillery are out, and we form in line-of-battle batteries on the right and left, or in the rear, then we rush forward and relieve a regiment in front as they fall back, sometimes 'Charge bayonets! double-quick!' then with a yell and double-quick we charge upon the imaginary foe, the artillery loading and firing; suddenly the Colonel orders 'Cease firing, — remove those batteries to the rear!' — then the whole is reënacted, or we form in a square to resist a cavalry attack.

“But for slavery, Middle Tennessee would be densely populated. This 'peculiar institution' curses whatever it touches. It is truly wonder-

ful to see the difference between free and slave territory. . . . .

“I believe the slaves in Kentucky and Tennessee, as a whole, enjoy themselves well; they are generally equal to the whites around them, as far as I can see. . . . The peculiarity of their state is, that they labor without wages, and are liable to be separated by sale from their wives and children. My opinion is, the Tennesseians are rebels from head to foot; and Nashville is a rebel city, only as martial law controls it. . . . .

“It is Christmas; the grass is green, the birds are flitting from bough to bough, the squirrels are chirping, and so it is a ‘*merry* Christmas’ even in our camp. We march tomorrow A. M. Bragg’s army is near, and we go to meet them with ‘war’s stern strength upon our souls’ and the God of battles on our side. More anon.

“M. H., JR.”

It is generally supposed that warm affections and lively sympathies are hardly compatible with a high degree of soldierly valor, but Mead was no less distinguished for the latter than the former. Says an officer, “Young Holmes fully appreciated danger, but never shrank from it; in no instance did he decline a service because

of its perils ; under fire, he was perfectly cool and self-possessed, a pattern of manliness and courage." This is confirmed by the two following letters : —

MURFREESBORO', TENN.,

Jan. 7, 1863.

“MY DEAR PARENTS : —

“It is impossible for me to describe the thrilling scenes through which we have passed. Long before this reaches you, you will have heard of our six days' fight, — from Monday morning till Saturday, ten P. M. I can not write much, am in no mood for pen or pencil, but if I could talk two days with you, you could imagine this field of carnage and death. We left Nashville on the 26th. It rained hard all day, — lay on the wet ground, but fortunately our wagon came up, so *that* night we had tents. The 27th found us still in the rain, and on cross roads, the mud to the hubs ; but we formed in line of battle and finally camped without tents, blankets, or overcoats, wet to the skin and rations just gone. The next day we foraged an ox, so we had fresh beef alone without salt. Marching ten miles through a cedar swamp, whenever we halted, and the command, ‘Attention, — fall in!’ was given, the boys called out, ‘Crackers, crackers!’ Camped at midnight, and received rations, which were enjoyed as



only hungry men could (they were borrowed). The 30th, cannonading all day, but the expected attack did not come. We moved at dark and camped at midnight; saw a pile of cotton, 80,000 pounds, burning; set on fire by the rebels. Slept on three rails. Next morning, heavy rain. At ten o'clock we were ordered to 'fall in' instantaneously; we ran down the road three-fourths of a mile. Wheeler's cavalry had attacked our brigade train in dead earnest; we fired and killed eighty-three, while we lost none killed, and only seven wounded. Their short-range carbines could not reach us, but they burned twenty-five of our wagons, ours just escaping. Several convalescents, following the wagons, were taken prisoners. At dark we marched and countermarched, and I *suspected* that the 28th Brigade was surrounded. This proved to be the case.

“The next morning, the 31st, we marched at nine A. M., and soon met large numbers fleeing at full speed, some on artillery and some on wagon horses, saying they were surprised, and terribly cut up, and that the rebels would be on us in fifteen minutes. Perfectly self-possessed, we fell back in the best of order, — yes, the very best. *We must die*, but would sell our lives as dearly as possible, make thorough work to the last; we came to fight, but by an-

other feat of generalship our noble commander, Col. Starkweather, managed to elude the enemy, and we regained the point where we left the main army. That night we lay on the battle-field; it was very cold, and 'no fires to-night.' From Thursday until Sunday we supported a battery. Much of the time we lay in the mud, the rain often pouring upon us, the most awful (I call it sublime) artillery thundering about us, balls and shells passing within a few feet, and sometimes inches. A shell just passed E.'s hip, and would have taken off his head but for its being down, — the lowest places are sometimes the safest, as you see. Our rations were out, but a young horse was shot within *ten* feet of me, and we ate the noble fellow, the colonel, adjutant, and men, partaking, nor was it bad for a hungry soldier. The general results of the battle you have heard. McCook is now chasing the enemy; capturing a battery, he made the rebels limber it up and drive it into town themselves. Two hundred of their wagons he burned, in retaliation.

“I have not had my coat off in twelve days, and my stockings, so constantly wet, have literally *rotted* in my shoes. I did not suppose it possible for men to live wet and cold and hungry so long, but, thank God, we are alive and well. Only eighteen of Company K were in

line of battle, so we are 'simmered' down somewhat. I hope soon to have a good bathe; it will be a luxury.

"My trust is above; when the shells flew so thick and fast, *my heart beat as steadily and firmly, and I felt no more alarm than if I were at our own home table.* I am bound to do my duty; whatever comes all will be well.

"I am thankful our company, regiment, and brigade have shown that they were not mere hirelings, ready to flee on the approach of the enemy; may we be faithful to the last. Gen. Rosecrans seems to be the right man in the right place, a true patriot and brave warrior. We have had no mail in a long time; we want good news from home; these home-ties are the soldier's life.

Yours affectionately,

"MEAD."

Some military bravado has said, "The worse the man, the better the soldier," but we see the opposite: the better the man, the better the soldier. The true Christian soldier, the man of faith and prayer, inspired with religious enthusiasm, sustained by moral sanctions, feeling that he is immortal till his work is done, is a power on the battle-field that knows no faltering. He is in the way of duty, ready to live or

die. In a storm at sea, said the Roman emperor, "Fear not; you carry Cæsar." In the storm of battle the Emperor of the universe says to the Christian soldier, "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee." The element of power in our army is the religious element; religious considerations and motives are essential to confidence, stability, and success; let us have more religion in the army, and we shall have more *genuine* patriotism and courage. It was religion that made Cromwell and his Ironsides invincible; it was religion that carried Washington sublimely through the storms of the Revolution, and it is religion that must carry us through our present struggle with treason and rebellion; here is our only hope.

The following extract is introduced to show that with all his "courage" his heart did not grow insensible to the ills of soldier-life, or presumptuous of the future.

"MURFREESBORO', TENN.,

Jan. 10, 1863.

"DEAR PARENTS: —

"I don't feel very well or happy this morning. Perhaps the weather or ill-health affects my spirits. It rained all night and rains still; our camp is in a garden, and so muddy! How

I should like to sit down and chat with you at home all day! I have read in my Testament and looked at your pictures for the first time in two weeks; not a moment till now could I *trust* to look at them. They are all safe; it seems home-like to see the old faces, but they are mute; the countenances change not, no matter what the times are. A verse cheers me. Psalm xxxvii. 7: 'Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him,' etc. I must wait patiently for a *home* in one place or the other. After being preserved through a six days' fight and a severe skirmish, I ought to trust fully in him. Yes, I do; yet I somehow fear this morning that there is a *lack*—lack in my Christian experience, a flaw in my Christian hope. I want a constant assurance of my acceptance with God; when this fails I am weak."

The letter then resumes his usual tone of hope and cheerfulness, and the following, to the Manitowoc Tribune, shows his wonted self-possession and heroic bearing:—

"MURFREESBORO', TENN.,

Jan. 13. •

"DEAR TRIBUNE:—

"We left Camp Andy Johnson, December 26th, with our armor buckled on and 'outraged justice circling bayonets and swords.'



Our marches were short, but rendered exceedingly uncomfortable by frequent rains, and mud often to the hubs. I need not tell you of sleeping on the wet ground, of rations failing, of marching, countermarching, skirmishing, and cannonading, — these were only common incidents in every day's history.

“About ten A. M., the morning of the 30th, came the command, ‘Fall in, double-quick!’ We obeyed, and ran down the pike. Confusion and consternation met us here; wagons crosswise in the road, mules dead, whole teams of six and eight fallen, and kicking as only mules can, drivers and men hallooing at the top of their voices, — all presented a scene ‘decidedly mixed.’ It was very apparent something was up. Wheeler's Cavalry had taken refuge in a strip of woods; we formed alongside of a fence, and fired twenty-five or thirty rounds, killing eighty-three, — of their wounded, I can get no return. Several of the regiments lost their company wagons; this is *no small inconvenience*, — tents, knapsacks, company books, blankets, overcoats, etc., *gone*. A train — a wagon train — here must be *heavily guarded*; guerillas are lurking at every corner, ready to dart upon the first unguarded point.

“The morning of the 31st found us at our post in battle line; at four A. M. it was chilly,

and some could not see why we had to fall in so early. At ten A. M. we moved, and soon met stragglers on foot, on mules, and on artillery horses, all in great excitement, saying they were surprised at dawn; some were taking breakfast, and the horses off to water; all unprepared for an attack. The great battle of Stone River had now begun. We moved on carefully, and at noon struck the pike. Here we met vast numbers of stragglers; and, let me say, this class disgraces our army; they should be marched to the front and taught there not to run. The road was lined with them, each telling some terrible tale, thus checking the ardor of those about entering the fight. A shell now and then flew over, or struck in the soft earth near us. We camped at dark in a cedar swamp; it was about as frosty a night as we had laid out in. Some improvised a kind of furnace of stones, which shielded the light and yet retained the heat. Before daylight we moved to a more secluded place; at seven A. M., heavy cannonading. We moved again and again. Our line of battle was shaped like a horseshoe, the ground mostly wooded except on the pike. About eleven A. M. a rebel brigade advanced on our extreme right; they moved up within fifteen yards, when our battery and men, concealed behind an old fence,

fired one volley, killing and wounding two-thirds of the entire brigade, and capturing many of the remainder. At dark we went on picket; no fire; we suffered much. For the first time we were standing picket *in the face of an enemy*, looking into the dark front, and listening at every leaf-rustle, holding our breath almost, and ready at a second's warning to give the alarm. All passed quietly till day, then a brush among the skirmishers, and we lay down behind the artillery. We soon withdrew with orders, 'Get some breakfast quick, boys.' Our coffee was just on the boil, and the bacon ready to turn, when 'Bang, bang, bang!' spoke the rebel batteries. 'Fall in quick!' good-by to breakfast, dishes, and all. A shell struck a large rock in front of us, shivering it to atoms. We moved up a little slope where Loomis's Battery, 'with bowels full of wrath,' belched forth its iron hail. The order 'Fall down!' was given, and the way shot and shell played around us was a caution. It required some nerve to keep quiet. Many shots just passed our heads. The battery we were supporting lost eight men killed, twelve wounded, and thirteen horses; they stood about eight rods in front of us, and to the left.

"At 3 P. M. a very heavy artillery and musketry-fight occurred on the left, near the

river. At first, the rebels got the advantage; but soon the tide turned, and our brave boys repelled them handsomely, driving them pell-mell. It was a hard fight, and the slaughter was dreadful. The rebels lay piled up, three or four deep, where the canister and grape had played upon them. While we lay there, two horsemen came dashing down the road bearing a rebel flag between them, and in a moment a man came like lightning among our brigade, standing in his stirrups, swinging his hat, and shouting, 'Courage, boys, we are whipping them, they are running.' It was General Rosecrans, the planner of the whole engagement. Such cheers as rent the air! The whole line took up the shout—'Victory! victory! victory!' resounded far and wide. The fight closed there about sunset; but immediately cannonading commenced where we lay; 'twas brisk for a short time.

"But the enemy, finding that, no matter where he changed front, our batteries instantly answered, probably thought he had experimented enough, and so quit. The weather was bad, the soil clay, the mud just over shoes, unless you picked your steps, which a soldier can not do; lying down was no pleasant job. We spent a miserable night,—rain and cold, wet to the skin; officers and men alike.



“The next day was about the same. At dark, a sharp musket-fight took place on the left center; the rain fell freely and a strong wind blew; Oh, I pitied the wounded that night, for it was more difficult to find them, and then their sufferings, — exposed to this merciless storm! The artillery flashes presented a terrific and yet imposing scene for us to view, as we sat in the mud and water (the sublime and ridiculous mixed, you see), bullets flying over us, and we expecting momentarily to be called in.

“The next morning dawned beautiful, yes, splendid. The rebels had left, under cover of the night, and Murfreesboro’, three miles distant, was clear. We spent the day in the trenches, burying the dead, picking up guns, etc; yet we could not refrain from giving God thanks for preserving us so wonderfully through a battle so severe and protracted. Once when we rose, *six balls and shells lay ten or twelve feet behind us*, and it is surprising that under just that particular fire more than half of us were asleep; indeed, so exhausted were we that the moment we lay down we would drop to sleep.

“We are all well, and yet not well. ‘Sunny Side,’ or ‘Good News from Home,’ would be refreshing. We need all the cheering influences our friends far away can throw around us.



“When we came here a heavy system of foraging commenced, and, ‘Meat, meat!’ was the cry. Having no salt (by the way, salt is fifty cents per pint, wafer ginger-snaps, four for five cents, a shadow of a pie, twenty-five, a real one fifty, cheese, thirty to fifty per pound), in fact, little at first but coffee, we ate and ate, and rose to eat again. Now we have good rations, but the effect of the flesh, unsalted, still subjects our boys to great inconvenience. Several are to be court-martialed for absence during the late conflict.

“The 21st Regiment has had a ‘jay-hawking time’ ever since we lodged in the depots at Milwaukee, and went jolting on loose benches up to Oshkosh, yet we have never regretted enlisting; to-day we rejoice that we may suffer in the cause of our bleeding country. I think we shall soon be old soldiers, having, in five months from civil life, *marched* over five hundred miles, been in several battles and skirmishes, and lay in mud and rain, without blankets or overcoats, for ten successive nights, and all without apparent injury. But from these severe exposures many will yet find the hospital and the soldier’s grave. Our powers of endurance are developing; most of us toughen with our necessities, and our pains are lessened by the hope of cure.

“M. H. Jr.”

## CHAPTER IX.

### WINTER CAMPAIGN.

Confidence in God — A chaplain's position in the army described — On promotions — A novel bed — Army cooking — Intervention by England and France — Effects of shot — Foraging expedition — Patriotic sentiments — Sabbath in camp — More foraging — Compliment to officers.

“MURFREESBORO', TENN., Feb. 1, 1863.

**D**EAR PARENTS: —

“We had heard of a great mail of six tons at Nashville for this Division, but as I never go into raptures in anticipation, what was my joy on returning from the fortifications to find several letters and papers from you.

“You rightly judge that the battle of Perryville was but a skirmish in comparison to that of Stone River, and I can appreciate your deep concern for me. But, dear parents, when I asked, ‘May I enlist and fight for my country?’ and after a time you answered ‘Yes,’ did you not give me into the hands of Him who does not allow even ‘a sparrow to fall without his notice’? The matter was then settled in

my breast. If I am called from the army to appear before him, all is well. It would be a trial to you ; but have you not already settled that matter ? Dear ones, do not worry for me. Why do you so *cling* to me ? I shall be taken care of. If I should fall, what could you do for my worthless dust ? As I gazed on many who were sleeping their last sleep, I thought what could be done for them ? Better, far relieve those writhing under torturing pain.

“ You speak of the life and death of Miss W——. Thank God there are some good, sincere Christians, loving good things and turning, from evil, with faith as an anchor sure and steadfast. But do they have trials, rasping and crushing to their natures ? Don't every thing slide along smoothly, no rough winds to unmoor their fastenings ? I tell you, our apparent goodness, I fear, is too often the result of pleasant circumstances, — having things to our liking. It is easy to move with the current ; but ‘ no cross, no crown.’ Miss W—— bore the cross ; does she not wear the *crown* ?

“ You speak of taking a chaplaincy. Well, the field is large and ripe, and the efficient laborers are few. A good chaplain is a great acquisition to a regiment ; but some officers and men will esteem his efforts very lightly ; indeed, the chaplain is often spoken of as a nuisance.

If he does his duty, 'Oh, he is prying into the boys' affairs.' If he is not active and watchful 'He is a lazy good-for-nothing; if we had his salary to buy bread with, it would do more good.' It is really a fine position, if you will take things as they come, — now lying on your oars when you expected to pull strongest, and now roving through the breakers when you expected to be quiet. You will not be your own man by any means, but subject to orders. Every thing is done by orders. You will have to move on often without knowing 'why,' only 'forward.' You can have your own tent, and horse and servant; so the office is not without its relief. Father, do as seems best: God will lead; do you follow. You are as much under the divine care in the army as at home. It will be a trial to *you* dear mother and sister, yet you will be protected as ever before.

"About my being lieutenant, I have endeavored to prepare myself for any position to which I might be called; but I can never stoop to 'figuring.' If you could see behind the curtain, you would wonder what else some do, but figure for 'a son' or 'nephew' or 'cousin' or 'friend,' that he may be a 'lieutenant or clerk' or 'something;' or, at least, that they may be '*remembered*' when the first opportunity offers, if it be no more than 'clerk' to

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THE SOLDIER'S BED.

somebody's 'assistant acting adjutant-general. As I said long ago, 'Win and wear it;' if I do not win by merit, I expect to live and die high private in the 21st Regiment. Promotion is a brilliant bubble in the sunshine: but the hero of to-day may be the football of to-morrow. Yet I confess to great pleasure in being a good military man. It is no mean attainment. Our officers are very kind, and do all they can for our benefit.

"I inclose a cross made of shell from Stone River; have it trimmed with gold and wear it, mother; if you wish, *now*; but if I never return *then always*.

"Last night I had a novel bed. My watch was off at 8 P. M. and on at 12 midnight. It rained a little, but nothing to hurt; so, with no fire, and with gun at my side, I lay down on a cannon-wheel, with *the hub* for my pillow. I got fixed tip-top, and slept on and on, till the corporal sung out 'Fall in, 3d relief!' I awoke rested. A wheel looks indeed like a poor bed, but that time it was good. . . .

"I love my Testament more and more, and read nearly every day. Remember me to my dear Sabbath school. I can only pray for them.

"Your affectionate son,

"MEAD, JR"

As we read of Mead's novel bed, we can but think of an ancient worthy at Bethel, with a pillow of "stones," yet his sleep was refreshing, and his dreams gloriously prophetic.

"MURFREESBORO', TENN., Feb. 5, 1863.

"DEAR PARENTS : —

"We are still here; have suffered a considerable from the cold, — five degrees below freezing, and much snow and sleet. It is hard for the horses and mules; with gathered feet, 'tail close hauled,' head low down, they cast such a look of woe upon the passer-by as I do not wish to see. Lying in the mud, six or ten inches deep, soon kills them, — poor creatures!

O—— has just made coffee of the drippings of his blanket. It sometimes takes our blankets five days to dry, the weather is so damp. We have built a Dutch oven, — made an arch over a barrel, then burnt it out; it works well; we have a little flour occasionally, and some soda, — yet what would you do with flour, water, and soda, no eggs or butter?

"We are living pretty snug now; nine men, twelve knapsacks, haversacks, etc., a home-made furnace, wood, blankets, overcoats, three cracker-boxes, lots of bacon (for this is the commissary tent of the company), guns, and all the other accouterments, in a tent ten by

fourteen feet; I can just stand erect in the middle, so you see how *handy* we have things.

“We hear various reports of ‘peace,’ of ‘moving on,’ etc., but we believe almost nothing.

“Thank you for the handkerchiefs, rose-bud, music, etc., you sent. The rose is in my Testament; the handkerchiefs are whiter than they will be again; the music and words will be learned on picket.\*

“I am glad I did not accept the Colonel’s offer at L——, but my eyes are satisfied; my health is not so good; I might do differently now, — yet if near a battle, I could not keep away. I have no fear, — ‘Down with the rebels and up with the flag’ of the Union on every hill-top! It is sad indeed to see a comrade fall, yet in the heat of battle it becomes like scratching your little finger, or seeing one with the nose-bleed.

“You speak of ‘soldier’s aid;’ all the aid I have seen is ‘lint and bandages.’ The ‘aid’ may reach others not so far away; it has not

\* The rose-bud is still in his Testament, broken indeed, but there is a fragrance sweeter and more precious than the attar of roses. The many psalms marked in pencil indicate his reliance upon the Infinite, — the Faithful and True; the dear child grasped the idea of faith, and from being taught is henceforth the teacher.

His soldier’s hymn-book, too, in which he had placed a Wisconsin “coat of arms,” and several flags, shows what were the precious songs to which his spirit was attuned.

yet reached us. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. If we could by any means have a vegetable diet, the hospitals would soon be comparatively empty. It would be far better commissary wisdom to keep us well than to let us get sick, and expend so much in trying to cure us.

“At Perryville, a man had both legs shot away, and was carried to the hospital swearing he ‘wouldn’t die.’ The surgeon said he would die, and left his wounds four days undressed, but he lived!

“We hear England is about sending help for the South. I do not believe it. But if she does put in her paw, the American Eagle will send the British Lion home limping for the next half century. I hope God will sink her fleet to the bottom of the ocean, in the deepest place. If she really pitches in, I am in for another three years. Let us stand for liberty and right, against the South, England, France, and all. I am glad there is a retribution. ‘Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished.’ These ambitious rebel leaders shall yet find justice meted out to them.

“Mary, skate all you can; exercise in the open air; how I would like the cold, bracing air of Wisconsin again! but I expect to live and die in Dixie. Mother, I should like to see



you and father here, yet I could not make you even comfortable; you could hardly endure our mode of life for a day. The weather to-day is beautiful, — pleasant to sit in our tent and read or *mend*.

“I still hope to go to Yale; but hope is as far as I can see at present. Mary, you are your brother’s star; never let it be eclipsed. L—— study hard; God helps those that help themselves.

“The ninety-first and ninety-fourth Psalms I read very often. Oh, how good and cheering!

“Thank Mr. T—— for dear A.’s picture.

‘One sweet flower has drooped and faded,  
One sweet infant voice is hushed.’

“They have my deepest sympathy in their affliction.

“To-morrow we go on picket, — picket, fortifying, and guarding forage trains, keep us busy.

“My letters are put together like a random carpet; I never review them; so excuse.

“Good-by.

“MEAD, JR.”

“MURFREESBORO’, TENN., Feb. 13, 1863.

“MY DEAR PARENTS: —

“How glad I was to receive yours of the 29th January! I have very little to write, yet much.

On the 5th, we went out fifteen miles: started at daylight and returned at midnight. The mud was terrible,—eight horses to a cannon. At night it turned cold, wind and snow; the mud bore us after nine P. M., but the cold and fatigue were dreadful. Oh, the poor mules! No wonder the way is blocked up with their dead bodies.

“Going out, we passed the ‘left wing’ of the battle-field. The woods were riddled. In one quarter of the compass I counted thirty-two *cannon*-shots in the trees. On one tree, often, two or five shots have taken effect. On one I counted eleven musket-shots. Oh, to see the effect of balls that may be thrown three miles! An oak ten inches through is nipped off like a reed and the way they *tear*,—I can not describe. Five men and seven horses killed, the cannon dismounted, and caissons knocked over—all the effect of one shell!

“Where we foraged, a woman said, ‘The 1st Wisconsin has only ten left, so our boys say;’ This is the way truth is told in Secessia. She really supposed the 1st was annihilated. We took two hundred loads of corn and fodder.

“By the way, I forgot to tell you that in the fight the ‘Chicago Board of Trade Battery’ did the best execution of any. I watched its swift repeated shots as they tore along the rebel

lines; I can not liken the slaughter to any thing I know of. Nor did I tell you our artillery horses went eighty-one hours without food or drink! I was sorry for them, but our own stomachs had a little of the same experience. A load of corn was distributed to us, two ears to the man. Some attempted to parch it; but before I had mine *shelled* we had to fall in again, as another battery had opened on us. That night we lay in the mud and ate our raw corn; — it was good to hungry men, and thankfully received.

“It is spring to-day! We do not feel much energy. This is an unhealthy location; many are dying. I am all right yet, but my turn will come. We buried I—— H—— to-day. Dear parents, be prepared for any thing. Two days ago he was with us, and well; but I am ready, yes, more than ever before. Sometimes I think, but for your feelings, I should prefer to die. When I look at the state of things here, how we are living, how all is ‘grab’ and ‘office’ and ‘promotion,’ I am heart-sick. But enough of this. I have just written to Rev. Mr. Morrison; you know his kindness to us when last we saw each other.

“I fear too much reliance has been placed in the nine new monitors. Let us rather trust in the justice of our cause and the virtue of our

people. But where is our virtue? Division at the North sickens us. What does Seymour mean? We expect treason *here*. Many know no better. But at the North, let traitors find themselves on quicksand. Trust them like the fox, — nip the Upas in the bud.

‘ A sprout of evil, ere it has struck root,  
With thumb and finger one up pulls ;  
To start it when grown up and full of fruit  
Requires a mighty yoke of bulls.’

“ We have left home and friends, and ventured all for the Government and the Constitution, for liberty and right ; we have only done our duty ; but I envy not the future of those who prolong our conflict by sympathy with the enemy. Let such find their level within Southern lines ; there is their place.

“ I am the only one left who used to occupy the head of the company. But God will take care of me here as well as any where. I wonder how Manitowoc looks to-day ? It would be a trial to leave my Company, except to return home once more.

“ Our officers do all they can for us. They have hardships as well as we. During the late battle, Rosecrans, Rosseau, and the other generals, were without tents, and were in the heat of the conflict. These men are no shirks from responsibility or danger.

“With all our hardihood we have not lost our sympathies. One night B—— went for water, and saw ‘a light in a window,’ the first since leaving Mitchellville, and only one there. It quite overcame him, reminding him so forcibly of home, —

‘Home, sweet home!’

“Yours, affectionately,

“MEAD.”

MURFREESBORO’, TENN.,

Feb. 17, 1863.

“MY DEAR MOTHER: —

“How I should love to see you just now! I am going to talk a little, yet remember I am tired, wet a foot and a half above my knees, muddy all over; just returned from a foraging expedition.

“Sunday, we cleaned up for inspection at 10 A. M. (how I dislike cleaning the gun; it rusts so easily, I have to spend two or three hours to clean it), then turned into the tent, read a few chapters and psalms, sung (or tried to sing), thought of home, my dear Sabbath school, the choir, the church services, for which my soul longed; the melodeon, not forgetting those pleasant hours of song in the family. Turning to my own situation, I was almost sick. I went out at sunset and sat behind a



tree and read the ninety-first Psalm, it never seemed so good. Then I sang, —

‘Upward I lift mine eyes,  
From God is all my aid,’ etc.

The third stanza, —

‘No burning heats by day  
Nor blasts of evening air,’ etc.

“Oh, dear mother, what should I do were it not for these promises? To-day, I received a lot of tracts, for which I am *very* thankful; if I had had them sooner I should have done better. Amid our privations and hardships we need something to strengthen our hearts. How I long for Christian conversation and the circle of prayer, but ’tis well. One Friend is ever near, on him I lean.

“Don’t fear writing too long; I am much obliged for so much war news. We hear our boys, who were captured, were run through to Richmond, — fifty hours without provisions.

“*Feb. 19th.* — Just off picket again. You see we get no rest. It rained hard all day yesterday, and at night we had to change our post, so the shelter we had constructed was of no use. I lay beside a log, on some bushes, covered with my rubber blanket. I thanked the Lord for life and health, but not for their continuance on my account. Dear mother, I

have no complaints to make, yet such toils and lack of rest tend to make life a burden. Twice foraging, within eleven days, we were *hard* at work *twenty hours*, from four A. M. till twelve P. M. wading through mud from three to eighteen inches deep, but I need not tell you. This morning I was ordered to headquarters, 14th Army Corps, as clerk of court martial. This will be a change at least.

“How I would like to spend an evening with our family and friends! As to Christian associates, I have none, — I and my thoughts and my God are all. I am my own secret-keeper. My comrades are very kind, and I love them, but I am learning daily to rest, not on comrades, not on officers, not on myself even, but on God. You seem too anxious for me; can you not trust? It is indeed sickly, and many are dying; but when you said ‘Yes, my son,’ you laid me ‘*on the altar.*’ The knife of noisome pestilence is uplifted; the air is loaded with putrefaction, — dead horses, and such loads of camp filth. I say the knife is uplifted, dearest mother; it is in His hand, — a Father’s hand; be prepared, yet trust him.

“Our order is, ‘No swearing in tent No. 2,’ yet it is sometimes broken.

“How I should enjoy those concerts. I am glad M—— performed her part so well. Dear

sister, how I want a visit with her! I should be glad, Oh, so glad, to see father!

I must tell you I am first corporal. I send you drafts of our fortifications. The cars are whistling on this side of the river for the first time since the battle.

“I send you a present for your birthday, and Mary a package of patriotic songs. Thank her for the music she sent me; we prize every thing from home. I know you will not forget me in your prayers. I shall never forget my mother’s faithfulness.

“Your affectionate son,  
“MEAD.”

“MURFREESBORO’, TENN.,  
March 1, 1863.

“DEAR PARENTS: —

“I long to sit down quietly and write you, but this is quite impracticable. A few lines, then off on some duty. Yesterday was Sunday, but the quiet hours were few. We had to ‘fall in’ seven times, — inspection of persons, knapsacks, tents, then general brigade inspection with artillery, flag presentation to the noble 79th Pennsylvania, speeches, etc. The flag was the gift of friends in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, sent by two representatives. Soldiers and sailors are thought to be a ‘hard set,’

yet none have hearts so quickly touched as they. The address from those men, and a speech from "Old Starkey" brought tears to many eyes unused to weep. It was a 'general' cry, such as the oppressed mind sometimes needs for its own relief. The entire brigade was out; a grand sight to you at home, but here, though a fine day, not a spectator could be seen. We love to hear 'Old Starkey's' thunder-voice; it stirs our souls. There is of course a tendency to low spirits, and it seems good to have some one speak to us. . . . .

"I am never sick of soldiering, but *foraging* is awful. The rule is, to start early and return; no stoppages; the mules get no food between times, and many fall dead. I am always glad to see a dead mule. His work is done, and his life of misery and torture is ended.

"Let me tell you a little of our last expedition. We were ordered to fall in at four A. M. 'Every man carry knapsacks!' Horrors! must we? No, never again; no, we will leave them in the ditch. We went eleven miles on the Shelbyville Pike, then turned off through such roads as are made by five hundred six-mule teams, going and returning over a clay soil, with rain for three days, and still continuing. No pen can describe it. The wagons dropped off here and there to load, and at 4

P. M. we started for camp ahead of the train. We arrived on the pike a little after dark; steady rain. The pike is cut, in general, into five paths; if you can keep steady, careful, ready for mishaps, you *may* get along *two miles an hour*. Soon, the darkness was so great we could not see the track at all, nor our file leader, except occasionally, we caught a glimpse of his head against the murky sky. Down some one would go, up to the knee in a rut full of water and mud. We arrived in camp at midnight, coats dry (thanks to the rubber blankets for that!) pants soaked, shoes full of mud and water; the mud extending up indefinitely. Here in town, we waded through thin mud a foot deep; so you can imagine how we looked, not to speak of how we felt. Wearied out, we threw off our wet clothes, fell into our blankets and lay there till 9 A. M., put on our wet clothes, and had pork and coffee for breakfast. I never saw men so stiff. I begin to pride myself on my powers of physical endurance, inasmuch as I was not sick. This carrying knapsacks foraging, — who ever heard of such a ridiculous thing? It is reported, the Colonel said it was no use putting us into the first division, — they have to fight first, — for his men were being killed off fast enough already. Where we stopped we took all the corn, the



man and woman expostulating in vain. I milked a cow, and had a good cup of crackers and milk, but there is a notable difference between hard bread and butter crackers.

“ We have just bought a Sibley stove, — four dollars, government price two and a half. You would ‘like to *drop* into our tent,’ it would be the only way when we are all in.

“ We hear our brigade are to be mounted as cavalry; all right; infantry one year, cavalry one year, then, ‘stove up,’ we will try artillery a twelve month, crush the rebellion, then *home!* What bubbles! Thank God if I am a year in the service; but we are well toughened; I have stood much, may stand more, then like Ponsonby, having survived a dozen wounds at Waterloo, be killed by a chicken-bone or carpet-tack.

“ The scenery here is beautiful. I am glad I am a soldier of the Cumberland, — all glory to the Western army! yet glory is nothing; an idle hour’s brief talk, a flower that blooms to-day and dies to-morrow.

“ Mary, I send you the remnant of my plume; it has traveled up and down, through rain and sunshine, in cold and heat, from Oshkosh here; if it could speak, it would amuse you many an hour with its stirring tales. Mother, a letter from you to the boys, full of

patriotic fire, and at the same time appreciating what its *execution* costs us, would be acceptable.

“Our captain is faithful and true, a genial noble soul, not afraid of losing his dignity and so obliged to throw on airs; he can be emphatic without an oath, and cheerful without the sparkling cup, — a model officer.

“Thank Mr. L—— for papers; those who think to make the American soldier more brave by keeping him in ignorance have mistaken his character. We are citizens and men, and shall fight the better, the better we understand the justice of our cause.

“We should be glad to have marching orders to-night; a soldier dislikes to stay long in one place; we are ready for action.

“How I should like a tune on the melodeon!

“Yours cheerfully,

“M. HOLMES, JR.”

# CHAPTER X.

## CAMP-LIFE.

Letter to the Sabbath school — Chief of court martial — Keepsakes sent to friends — A scouting party — Preparation for death — Lights on the battle-field — Character developed in the army — Desires to have his father a chaplain.

**O**FTEN did Mead in his letters allude to his beloved Sabbath school, but never found time to write except once, and then he addressed the younger members only. This letter is introduced here to show the ease and simplicity of his style in talking to children.

“MURFREESBORO’, TENN., March 6, 1863.

“DEAR CHILDREN OF MY SABBATH SCHOOL: —

“It has been a long time since we met last, but I have not forgotten you. I have tried many times to say a few words to you on paper, but have had no time.

“My Father in heaven has kept me safely all this time, though many that were near me are cold in death. I love to think that the same loving eye which sees you now in Sabbath

school is beaming on me here in my little cloth house. It is spring here ; the birds have been singing for more than a month ; the grass is green, and the buds on the trees are starting, indeed, yesterday I saw a number of flowers blooming near our camp. Our camp is in what was once a beautiful garden, but you would hardly call it a garden now. The pretty fence was burnt up long ago, to cook our meat and coffee with ; the nice barn has gone the same way ; the fruit-trees, too, are gone, for the horses gnawed off the bark, then we cut them down for wood.

“Children, war is a very bad thing. You know there was a great battle here some time ago : there was a splendid house, with a beautiful garden and front-yard and shade-trees. Oh, it looked like such a *pleasant home*, just such as you would like ; but it was in the way of the cannon-shot, so all the fine trees, the fence and the house must be torn down. There was a large orchard too, that had to go ; down in one corner of the garden were three or four graves, where the fond mother used to sit and weep because her dear little children lay there cold in death. She had a marble monument there ; but a cannon-ball struck it, and shivered it to pieces. Afterward, when I passed over the ground, and saw every thing destroyed, I said

to myself, 'How glad I am this war is not in Wisconsin, my pleasant home.' Now if the people here had done right, been 'honest, kind, and good,' as you sing in the Sabbath school, all these beautiful homes would have been saved; there would have been no blood shed, and every thing would look as home-like as ever. But you see the Wicked One kept saying to them, they could do better on their own hook; they could take care of themselves alone better than with the people of the North; so they got up this war. There are a great many things I should like to tell you, but I shall tell you only two or three now. After this battle, of course, there were a great many dead soldiers lying scattered here and there. In some places you could walk quite a distance without stepping on the ground, there were so many. Sometimes, soldiers are wounded, and can not be carried off the field very soon, so they die there alone. One poor fellow had his leg shot off; he had crawled to a tree and sat leaning against it, with his Bible in his hand, opened at the Psalms; he was dead, — his life's blood had stained the sod; and while the cannons roared and the muskets cracked around him, his spirit went up to God who gave it. I saw another young man lying near; he, too, was dead. In his teeth was part of the cartridge that he had bitten off, and in



his hand the rest of it; he never knew what hurt him. He was in the full discharge of a soldier's duty, loading his gun — when the angel of death called him, you see, how suddenly! Children, may we all be doing *our* duty when we are called.

“You have a fine new library: I am very glad. Take good care of it now; don't let the books get wet or soiled; such a library will then last you a long time. Don't forget to read the Bible every day, and *learn* it too; it is a very precious book.

“But I must close; dear children, God has heard your prayer, and has kept me so far. Pray for me; I do for you each day. If we meet no more here, let us meet in heaven, on the ‘shining shore.’

“Your affectionate friend and superintendent,

“MEAD HOLMES, JR.”

“MURFREESBORO', TENN., Feb. 7, 1863.

“DEAR PARENTS: —

“I am still clerking at the court-martial, and like it better.

“Yesterday I received a very kind letter from Rev. Mr. Morrison. He says, ‘Your father thinks a great deal of you.’ Now, father, I am afraid you think there is no one like ‘my son.’

You know how we have smiled at the eulogies parents are often heaping upon their children, when *we* could not discover any extra excellence in them. Don't be betrayed yourself into the same fault; I am not half so good as you think me to be.

“In the ‘Tribune’ I see my description of the battle-ground is reversed. Just understand the right hand of the map is the left of the line of battle, and it will be substantially correct.

“I am sorry for ——; yet one should know. If a child always has his own way, and knows nothing of labor or care, he will bring sorrow to a parent's heart. I thank you, dear parents, that you always kept me busy. ‘Never had any thing to do at home!’ — I remember his using that expression, — so he sought pleasure or occupation elsewhere.

“Mother, you speak of separation: cheer up; why, you are at home; *I* am the one to feel *that*. I enlisted for three years, if the war continues, and my health does not fail, and I hardly expect to see home till then. Some of the boys are on tiptoe about a furlough; but M. H., Jr., wants no furlough so long as he has his health.

“The 1st and 21st Wisconsin have flag-poles, but I am sorry to say the flag rarely floats at mast-head; five have died within three days, and my turn may be next; but I *leave* that, you know.

“It sickens me to hear how the Copperheads operate; but their glory is like the fallen leaf. We expect a fight soon; there is brushing on the front every day, and we take many prisoners. The hard-tack is piled thirty feet high, and the size of a house, to last as we move on.

“Our boys at Vicksburg have a hard time, but will succeed at last; the eagle shall soar in triumph over the venomous serpent.

“In town I met Col. S——; he had just arrived, and shook hands cordially; congratulated his ‘old 21st’ on dress-parade; but he will go to Gallatin. The lieutenant-colonel is very popular, and will doubtless continue in command.

“Mary, I thank you and others for kind letters. Some time since, I sent you a ring, drilled out with a bayonet. I have no tools except the ‘Yankee boy’s penknife.’ Mother, I promised you something of my own manufacture for a birthday present; it is now finished,—cross, star, and escutcheon. The star, I made with a burnt file a foot long and soft as iron; the hole, I drilled with a darning-needle. Have a gold clevis made for it to turn in. The escutcheon has thirteen holes for gold rivets to be headed down on each side for stars: a clevis to be attached to the top,—the cross to be suspended in the same manner. I doubt, dear mother,

whether I ever have any thing more to send you. I somehow feel that they are the last of my handiwork you will ever receive ; but this is only a notion.

“ I inclose also a draft of a battery, — six guns, six caissons, one forge, and one battery wagon, — with explanations. I have written to my dear Sabbath school : it is a poor letter ; but they must not expect much from me till I have more leisure. We are just off on a scout or something else, so, dear parents and sister,

“ Good-by.

“ MEAD, JR.”

*March* 14, he writes, —

“ Home again, as we say ; shall I ever get time to write again expressly for the ‘ Tribune ’ ? Foraging, scouting, skirmishing, and an endless routine of reviews, inspections, etc., keep us busy, and our leisure hours are ‘ few and far between.’ On Monday, the 9th, two divisions of us, with three days’ rations and several batteries, left for something, we knew not what, but it proved to be a six days’ scout. The first day we camped at noon, then went on picket ; a heavy rain soaked the boys thoroughly. Next day moved only seven miles ; the mud was terrible. We made tents of rails and oiled blankets ; beds of cedar-boughs ; it is past now :

but of mud, rain, and smoke, let no one discourse to us. At two o'clock, one morning, we were ordered out, and marched till daylight through cedar swamps, and over rocks altogether indescribable ; then formed in line of battle and lay down. Skirmishers and cavalry went ahead. It was cold and frosty, — we suffered, — but it was soon warmer. Seeing no enemy, we breakfasted at a late hour and prepared to return, when our cavalry came tearing in on the run : one horse shot in the neck. We faced about, and waited orders. It seems our cavalry designed to lead the enemy upon us ; but discovering our smoke, they were not so easily caught. The rebels are all mounted, and they know the country to a turn ; you may chase them as thistle-seeds before the wind, and with the same prospect of success. These accursed guerillas and bushwhackers lurk every where, and gobble up a man in a trice. The 9th Brigade mail was captured last night, not two miles from us.

“ On coming in, how glad I was to find yours of March 3d ! But first I must tell you how relieved I was to get off mine of the 7th. It contained your present, dear mother, that I have been trying so long to make, for somehow it has seemed to me it was the last I should ever send you ; and the other morning as we ‘ faced



about' expecting a fight, I said, 'Oh, I am so glad that letter has gone!' I hope it will reach you safely. In reply to yours, dear parents and friends, I am afraid you think too much of me; don't deceive yourselves; but I thank God I am so happy, and that I can and do trust him so confidently; and that I enjoy communing with him as I do. 'Are there any in your company that profess Christ?' Why, dear me, no; in my tent even, no one seems to think of God as a Being of holiness and justice, or of Jesus as a Saviour. But, though I am alone, with God's help I can stand it. Your letters are so good and cheering, you almost make me hope against hope; but my highest hope is *beyond*. My dear and only sister, 'I long to be there,'—how exactly my thoughts! Oh, may I find entrance! No words or tune could suit me better. The one you copied for me, 'Whither, pilgrims, are you going?' I learned one day on picket. It is beautiful; thank you for the others, also. 'Never forget the dear ones,'—shall I? No, never. Mary, you have copied them beautifully.

"Mother, when the war is settled, if I live, you must visit this battle-field. The effects of the cannon-shot, the dismantled fortifications, fields sown with iron, the graves of our soldiers on every mound,—these will be sad but fasci-

nating sights. If a dead flower is kept to remind of scenes which make each leaf sacred, so every step on these battle-fields will be marked 'sacred to the memory' of some household whose name is here wrought into our country's history.

"If England and France are bound to fight us, let them come; we are ready, for our cause is just, and though it moves slowly, it is surely gaining.

"My health is now good; no one knows what he can endure, till he is tried.

"My bed is boards laid upon the ground, one blanket on them, and one over me,—so it is like sleeping on the carpet with a brick for a pillow.

"Mary, I am glad you were complimented as a 'correct timist,'—you deserve it; but do not feel flattered by it; be modest and humble.

"Our camp is improving; though returning from a scout, we scented it three miles out. The water, though clear, becomes putrid in our canteens in a few hours.

"I have just visited the soldiers' grave-yard. It is full. Representatives from Massachusetts and Mississippi, from Minnesota and Georgia.

"Plowing and sowing are going on to some extent. We shall move soon; a few miles will bring us to the rebels.

“When we were out the last time, word came that there were seven appointments for the 21st; to-day, as we came off inspection, some one said, ‘We have a new sergeant in the middle tent.’ I now remembered the appointments, but it did not occur to me that I had any interest in them; this, however, proves to be the case. I am sergeant. But these little things, although I appreciate them, do not affect me in the least. I have not worn corporal stripes yet. I have repeatedly acted as sergeant and orderly, so the duties are not new to me. The army is a great school in which to learn human nature. Such ebullitions of wrath I never heard in civil life. Here, all restraint is off, and the violent passions have full sweep. But these developments of depravity are a constant warning and lesson to me. Oh, what a blessing is a contented mind and control over one’s temper! I believe I have not let one word of anger or ill-temper escape my lips so far, but thank God, he is ever present with me.

“*Sunday.* Again I have had a few minutes with my *Friend*. I went out a little distance from camp, opened my precious Bible where it would, and my eyes fell on the twenty-third Psalm. ‘The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want,’—just what I wanted to hear,—‘yea, though I walk through the valley and

shadow of death, I will fear no evil,' etc. I had to stop and lift my heart in prayer and praise for such comforting words. Oh, I can not be grateful enough for all the mercies I receive; all I can do is to say, 'Thank God.'

"On reflection, I should like to have father a chaplain; he would take an interest in the *men*, and they need so much a friend to encourage them. Many would refrain from profanity and other vices, had they some one to allure them into other paths; yet he would get some curses. The officers, too, need a balance-wheel; but all will be made plain to him.

"The band in the 15th Regulars is playing beautifully; sending out such splendid strains! It seems cheering indeed, for I have not heard any music except the drum, fife, and bugle since I heard the piano in Kentucky. Oh! the day seems long for once. How I should love to see you for one day! but, hush; a soldier may not speak so. Remember me to all my friends.

"We have orders to move at a moment's warning, — three days' rations.

"My last words are those of Ellsworth.


"Affectionately and truly,

"MEAD, JR."

## CHAPTER XI.

### CAMP-LIFE CONTINUED.

A soldier's influence upon his comrades — Indignation at Northern traitors — Punishment of a deserter — Morals of the army — Army of the Cumberland — Attack by Morgan's cavalry — Guerilla warfare — Letters and papers from home — "Dog-tents" — A cavalry funeral — Last letter — Hospital burying-ground — Crackers.

 SOLDIER'S influence, though quiet and unpretending, may be deep and wide, reaching officers as well as men. Says Captain Walker, "Many times, as new regulations were proposed, I would find myself instinctively inquiring, What will Mead think of this? Such confidence had I in his judgment and faithfulness that I always liked to secure his approval of any measure I thought desirable for the company. In many things he showed clear thought, close reasoning, and exact judgment." His views of the war and his fidelity to the country appear incidentally, and yet forcibly, in the following of March 20th.

"DEAR PARENTS: —

"I sent you a long letter only a day or two since, but must write again, or at least begin.



I have tried to give a clear idea of our camp-ground, fortifications, tents, and batteries,—drawing them with some care. I have told you of the country, its climate and productions; its inhabitants, their manners and customs; of soldier-life, in camp, on the march, and in battle; but you need to see before you can realize them. Traveling is difficult and dangerous, yet if you can come, father, you need not fear that your visit will be unappreciated.

“ Court-martial was called again to-day at 9 A. M., myself included, and all dismissed till further orders. You know more about the movements of the army than we can. Few papers have reached us until recently. Many of secesh sentiments have been circulated, and done mischief. What do our enemies at the North mean? Sooner than tempt a soldier to desert, or to lay an additional weight on his already overburdened shoulders, *if they were men* they would fly to his aid. I can not tell you our indignation at your divisions. Traitors at the South we expect to meet in a hand-to-hand fight, but at the North they deserve not even this honor,—

‘ Their country’s curse, their children’s shame.’

“ Mother, you say you ‘ still love the South,’ that, ‘ though greatly erring, they are still brethren.’ Don’t say this, if you love us. The

blood of too many sons and brothers and fathers, from too many Northern hearth-stones, cries against it. If I may live to help bring home a free country, thank God, it would be enough.

“‘S—— M—— died in Italy.’ How much I would prefer to bleach on the battle-field, slain in my country’s cause, than to die in Naples, away from my native land, in this hour of her peril, when my strength, money, and influence were so much needed.

“One of the sentences of the court-martial was executed the other day. The fellow was branded in each cheek with a red-hot stamp; D (deserter) and C (coward), — head shaved close, buttons cut off, cashiered, and drummed across the river.

“As to ‘the morals of the army.’ *This* army is under extraordinary discipline. There is not so much vice as there might be; we do not have *time* to do much more than swear, break the Sabbath, and, when on relieved guard, play cards. (I speak for the army, remember, as a whole.) Colonel Hobart has returned. He seemed very cordial. On dress-parade, he made us an excellent speech; he said, ‘I have been to Wisconsin, but soon felt that I must return. This camp is my home. Wisconsin is all right; go on with the war; no mother has lost a son

but feels proud that he died in so good a cause. If we fight a lifetime, we shall leave a country free for our children. The 21st stands well at home; you see your flag; it is the symbol of what we are fighting for. To my knowledge you have never forsaken it, and I know you never will. Officers, the *men* never run *first*; in your hands lies chiefly the reputation of the regiment; stand firm, and your men will be firm. Boys, I thank you for the good words you have sent home, and I will try to be worthy of them. You received several compliments on review, the other day; be careful to maintain your character. Keep up your courage. The cause is good, and will succeed.'

"The air and water in the country are delightful; peach and cherry trees just out of bloom.

"The soldiers of the Potomac are 'the flower of the army,' but the Army of the Cumberland has *yielded fruit*, and we are ready to the teeth, to yield a more abundant harvest for our country, or fall in our tracks. The service in the East is necessarily different from the South and West, both for infantry and cavalry. In foraging and scouting, merely, we have traveled one hundred and thirty miles just here. I do not see how the exchanged prisoners can hold up their heads at home, when the regiments are on the front in the face of the enemy. Where is their sym-

pathy for their comrades, or love for their country? Let a soldier be a soldier, willing to share the last hardship and dangers with his comrades on the front.

“Grandpa, I am glad you are hearty for the war, and willing father should be chaplain.

“L——, it is Sunday in the back-yard and in camp too; but writing letters is the smallest kind of Sabbath-breaking a soldier can do. How delightful our Sabbaths used to be! The best of all the week. How I miss my Sabbath school! Of joys departed how pleasant, and painful too, the remembrance.

“Just off review; it was a splendid sight. Old Rosy came round and complimented us. ‘That’s the way to come out,’ said he; ‘are you ready for a fight?’ To a sergeant who had no canteen, said he, ‘Sergeant, where is your canteen?’ ‘I have none.’ ‘Well,’ said the General, ‘you should have two, one for yourself and one for your men.’ Orders have this moment come to pack knapsacks, three days’ rations, and be ready to fall in at a moment’s notice, — a fight I guess, — so adieu.

“M. H., JR.

“MURFREESBORO’, TENN.,  
March 22, 1863.

“DEAR PARENTS: —

“My last was cut short by an order to move at a moment’s warning, knapsacks, three days’ rations, etc. In five minutes we were on the march. The Second Brigade, on a scout, were attacked that morning by Morgan’s Cavalry, fourteen miles from here. The brigade retreated behind some natural breastworks of rocks, and blazed away; the cavalry surrounded them, and it was a case of life or death, but no one flinched. Three orderlies, sent for reinforcements, were successively captured, so we in camp were not informed till a late hour, and then had to hurry up accordingly. Owing to the advantageous position of the brigade, only twelve men were killed, and thirty-four wounded, while the cavalry loss in killed, wounded, and missing, is reported, by a prisoner taken, at three hundred and fifty. The brigade had been hunting and chasing Morgan for three months, and each man would be shot rather than run; so that twelve hundred men fought as only determined men can, and as the ground enabled them to conceal themselves, they did great execution. We arrived at nine P. M., and lay down, ready for any thing, but no enemy appeared.



“A house near was used for a hospital. It would do you good to see how joyously the wounded were greeted by their comrades. Oh, dear parents, a soldier never falters at mangled flesh and brains, but he has a heart as *true as a die!* I mean a soldier in the true sense of the term; there are exceptions. A rebel lieutenant, whom we took, says Morgan’s men fight through fear of their officers; if left to themselves they would fight no more. Going and returning, we had to ford the river several times, over knee-deep. Water always seems refreshing to me; we have had no time to wash or bathe these three weeks.

“Our trains were attacked on the Shelbyville pike yesterday, and the teams came in on the run. I must say, I do not know which way to look, only ‘upward;’ rebels on every side; they come even to our pickets,—just where I stood the last time. The guerrillas have made havoc again with the railroad, and we feared Col. Hobart was taken. How thankful I was just now to see him all right! It is Sabbath, but, sad to say, the days are all alike to us; very little Sabbath here. A gentleman came with Col. Hobart from the North; quite a curiosity! white shirt, linen bosom neatly ironed, genteel citizen’s dress,—the first I have seen for a long time.

“I have just been reading the papers you sent so thoughtfully. You can scarcely imagine our joy on receiving news from home, specially such cheerful letters as you always write. We want nothing desponding; soldiers find enough of that at best; friends should write hopeful, patriotic, whole-souled. Such letters make the soldier feel that he has something to live for, to fight for, and to die for. For inspiration a letter from home is to me next to a chapter in my Testament.” . . .

The remainder of this letter is mislaid. Under date of March 29, he writes, —

“All last week I was busy, early and late, at the court-martial. We try from one to three cases each day, except occasionally a long one of three, four, and even seven days’ continuance. Friday P. M. I had for myself, so I prepared for inspection. Yesterday I wrote, rather coarse, thirty pages of evidence, foolscap; more than I will do again. . . .

“Tell R—— in all things to look to God for guidance. . . .

“As to furloughs, it is useless to think of them. I do not wish one, so long as I am well and the war is not finished. When my term is out, I’ll take a furlough; not till then; time does not seem long. Sister, you have some trials, so we all have; were it not so, life might

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THE "DOG TENT."

be too sweet and earth too attractive. The longest and coldest nights on picket have an end; life is a picket-service, with all its lights and shades.

“To-morrow we get ‘dog-tents,’ composed of two pieces of common cotton cloth, buttons on two edges, and holes on two, so you carry one piece and I the other; at night we button our tent together, drive down a couple of stakes, place a stick across the top, and this cloth over all, pinned down at the corners; now, on your hands and knees creep in, and see how you like your kennel. Near us, a regiment was supplied, and at night what a barking there was! you would have thought all the dogs in the country were having a debate on ‘canine rights.’ I suppose it’s right, of course, but I hate the plan. Remember, any thing more than the dome of heaven above a soldier is just so much extra.

“We expect a fight soon. My motto is a vigorous prosecution of the war, and I am one to help all I can; I would like to help now and be the sooner done. There is not much danger of our going just now to Chattanooga; the rebels are stirring for Kentucky, you see. I hope the Mississippi will soon be opened. We have just received six twenty-four pound cannon, two sixty-eight pound mortars, and a pile of hard-tack that towers up like the Newhall.



“Mother, I suspect you will lose that locket [a beautiful one, his parting gift to her] or the original, to keep you from worshiping idols, remember; and the jeweler will doubtless break that escutcheon, putting in the stars. The cross, star, and escutcheon I sent you were from the *battle-ground of Stone River*, and *that* is what they commemorate, not *me*; I am simply the maker. . . .

“Cousin C—— is dead; another mound at the altar of country. How many hundreds of graves are within a circuit of fifteen miles from here; every knoll, almost, has a row of them on it; strolling through the woods, and every where, you find them.

“Yesterday, a splendid cavalry funeral passed; first, twelve men, arms reversed, with a white band on the arm; second, a four-horse ambulance with the corpse; third, the horse of the deceased, saddle, carbine, saber, overcoat, blanket, boots with the spurs fastened into the stirrups. Two men led the horse by the bit, which had two large, white tassels attached; then the regiment on foot with sabers reversed, followed by the field-officers on foot. The whole was led by a silver band of sixteen instruments. What glowing and melting music as, with slow tread and muffled drums, they passed! It seemed as if Nature herself hushed to hear its cadence.

“I am really getting to like the army; the cause is good; and though we have had a severe initiation, I have never in the least regretted enlisting. The boys are coming up from the hospitals beautiful and fat, but I shall stick to the regiment as long as I can stand in my tracks. My rule is, make the best of every thing, keep my own counsel, mind my own business, and look on the sunny side. I am at home in the Twenty-First, at home in the Third Brigade, at home in the First Division, at home in the Army of the Cumberland.

“There is an endless round of reviews, inspections, etc., which indicate action. We can not go far without a brush. By the time father comes we will have our nice kennels, so we can ‘take up our bed,’ house, larder, and all, ‘and walk.’ We shall be glad to see him, and will do our best to make his visit pleasant. It seems hardly possible that we shall meet in this distant and hostile land. He will find the army in strange contrast to the peaceful scenes of home, but he can get used to it, and I think will enjoy it as a field of usefulness. Breakfast now. Good-by.

“MEAD.”

This letter, showing the coolest reflection and observation, a clear understanding of the diffi-

culties and perils around him, and yet a heart contented and hopeful, was the last he ever sent home. In his portfolio was found the following, unfinished; it was written the day before his death.

“MURFREESBORO’, April 11, 1863.

“MY DEAR PARENTS, —

“Doubtless, you wonder why I did not write you last week, but I could neither *find* time nor *make* it; Napoleon might “make *circumstances*,” but *I* could not, with all my manœuvres, save an *hour* till to-day. . . . The army looks the best I have ever seen it, and we all feel well; we have great confidence in our cause and in our generals. Our cavalry are really doing well; they take from forty to one hundred and fifty prisoners a day; most of them complain of no food, etc., etc.; they look badly enough, I assure you.

“Last Sabbath night I strolled over about a gun-shot to a hospital burying-ground; the ‘diggers’ have been engaged three weeks, and have buried two hundred and fifty-three bodies, including seven rebels. This seems a great number; but the army is large, and many of these were either wounded or contracted the immediate cause of their death during the terrible hardships and exposures of those weary

battle-days of Stone River. This number does not include any dying *in* the regiment.

“The rebel prisoners say they have four ounces spoiled bacon, and seven ounces hard-bread or corn-meal per day.

“We had news that Charleston was taken; the boys began to be jubilant, but I told them to wait a little longer, it was only another hoax; and so it proves. There are almost insurmountable obstacles in our way to that city. One gun on land is equal to three on sea. Those forts can have such full play upon our fleet, that I fear for them.

“I hardly dare tell you how we feel toward the copperheads; a rebel in arms is ‘a mon for a’ that;’ a traitor at home is archangel fallen; nothing is too bad for a traitor at home. The boys are spoiling to get at them.

“This has been the busiest week at court-martial yet. The boys are drilling, and I should be with them, but the judge says, ‘You can catch up; I’ll make a judge-advocate of you yet.’ It confines me too much, but I hope we will get through in a few weeks. It is far better for me than a common law office, for it is constant practise.

“We have just been improving our quarters a little; raised our tent three feet, and our bunks fifteen inches, so we have our pantry under the bed; tip-top, this, for the soldier!

“On the 8th, I sent a quarter of a cracker home by mail ; it is all I could send for Mary’s birthday supper ; be careful not to break the hammer when you chip it up. But, honestly, they are good. I don’t know what we should do without them, for the country is so thoroughly stripped, that even the straw for bedding for the officers’ horses is brought from Nashville. We should have a hard time on meat and coffee. Once, in Kentucky, I was offered a dollar greenback for a cracker, but I would not have taken five. What was money ? we could not eat it. ‘Nothing but pearls,’ said a starving man in the desert, when he eagerly opened a bag found in the sand ; ‘I can not eat them.’ \*

“We have now abundant rations, and some variety ; meat, hard-bread, and coffee for breakfast ; hard-bread, meat, and coffee for dinner ; coffee, meat, and hard-bread for supper. Such food requires a good appetite and a noble set of digestive apparatus. . . .

“The 1st Brigade of our division (regulars) have brass and silver bands ; it does my soul good to hear them play. ‘Kingdom’s Coming,’ and ‘Old John Brown,’ are not forgot-

\* He divided the cracker with a starving soldier, so says a comrade.



ten, nor, sister, the one you sent me, 'The Battle-cry of Freedom.' . . . .

"Two captains belonging to the court-martial were ordered to report at Nashville; one of them, Capt. Rossman, of the Ohio 2d, I esteemed very highly as a friend. None of the officers at the court-martial put on airs, and I like them for it.

"There is no immediate prospect of moving; only yesterday A. M. a train was captured near Savergne, and sixty men taken, besides \$182,000, sent home by the soldiers who were paid the last week. Prices are fabulous: eggs seventy-five cents, etc. Last Sabbath the chaplain gave us a discourse. I attended a prayer-meeting Thursday evening; it seemed refreshing; I took part. The boys are in usual health. I guess I am going to have the mumps, my neck feels like it."

## CHAPTER XII.

### DEATH.

The unfinished letter — Sympathy between Mead and his mother — The author's visit to the army — The departure — The mother's prayer — The journey — Announcement of his son's death — Parental grief — Testimony of comrades — Circumstances of his death.

**T**HE preceding letter was laid aside to be completed at some convenient hour. Mead subsequently wrote a letter for a comrade, filled with good counsel for his friends, expressing fears lest Northern traitors should prove a more dangerous foe than Southern rebels, and closing with his usual vivacity and cheer. But in his letter of the 29th, was there not a foreshadowing of events at hand? "Mother, I suspect you will lose that locket or the original," and why? "To keep you from worshiping idols."

Between the dear boy and his mother there was the liveliest sympathy and most unalloyed and unwavering attachment, from the time she first clasped his little hands, and taught him to say, "Our Father." My duties as a missionary requiring my absence from home most of

the time for the last five years, my opportunities with him were *comparatively* limited, and his mother became preëminently his counselor and companion. Indeed, like the mother of Edward Payson, she always admitted her son to the "most intimate, unreserved, and confiding intercourse, which was yet so wisely conducted as to strengthen rather than diminish his filial reverence. She patiently heard and cheerfully replied to the almost endless inquiries which his early thirst for knowledge led him to propose." Such was the foundation of that regard, rising almost to adoration, which Mead felt to the last for his mother.

As I was absent so much, she conducted most of the correspondence with him, and thus the same warm affection was continued. Her influence over him was so happy that I seldom had occasion to speak of him except in the way of thankfulness and commendation, — although not without many imperfections, faults, yet he was the crown of my joy.

For some weeks I had been considering the duty of taking a chaplaincy in the army, and all the preliminaries were arranged to visit the 2d Wisconsin Cavalry, at Helena, Arkansas. On my way I would visit my son, now at Murfreesboro', taking for his company a supply of various good things from home, and a quantity of sanitary

stores from the Ladies' Soldiers' Aid Society. The little mementoes, packages, etc., accumulated rapidly, and soon all were packed, ready for the boat. Knowing something of "the chances of war," my own affairs were arranged much as if I were never to return. In the entire preparation, a melancholy pleasure, a thoughtfulness and seriousness unusual, sat brooding in my heart; I was ready.

The night was dark, the lake rough, and the morning boat had not yet arrived. "Why so hindered?" said I. "You will go in the best time," replied the mother of my precious soldier-boy, and in her heart she added, "to bring home the remains of my loving son—" but, checking the thought, she finished the sentence by saying, "yes, the best time for all concerned." A whistle is heard,—it is the boat; shall I venture? Yes, go; God is thy protector; the winds and the waves are in his hands. Go; you will be needed. Bear to the exhausted 21st and other regiments the many comforts and mementoes prepared by anxious loving hands; take to the young sergeant the many tokens of regard from others as well as from his own loved home. A word of discouragement would have delayed me, so rough a night; but I must go. Bidding adieu to dear ones on the pier, I stepped aboard, amid the darkness and

the storm, and with a strange presentiment of affecting scenes at hand; but, committing my way to God, I soon lay down and sweetly slept.

The mother and the daughter returned home, — the former to her room to pray for husband and son, both now to be far away and exposed to a thousand perils. In that prayer, she begged that I might be prospered in my journey, and, under an impulse strange as true, that I might reach Murfreesboro' in time to bring home the precious remains of her soldier-boy. Alarmed at this impromptu petition, she instantly recalled it, and prayed that the visit of father and son might prove one of great spiritual advantage! At Milwaukee, Chicago, and Louisville, various army officers and sanitary commissioners were to be seen, occasioning such delay, that Saturday found me in Louisville. I could go on to Nashville myself, but not my stores, and if left, in the crowd and confusion, they might fail to reach their destination. I staid, and after visiting three Sabbath schools, preached to the Union refugees of East Tennessee. But ah! how little did I realize the scenes transpiring at this hour in the camp of the 21st Wisconsin Volunteers.

The railroad, just recovered from guerrillas, was again threatened, and traveling was very unsafe. Every train must be heavily guarded.



Obstacles multiplied, — my way seemed at times perfectly hedged up; but “thrice armed is he who has his quarrel just.” My supplies were for those who had laid their lives upon the altar of our bleeding country. With letters of commendation from Gen. Pope, Judge Skinner, and others, illustrious in the walks of philanthropy and patriotism, I pressed my suit, and no heart failed to respond. When my errand was understood, there was no lack of courtesy and sympathy; many vied with each other in their kindness and benedictions. At best, the journey was an anxious one. Such was the danger from guerrillas that at one time the train was seven hours making thirty miles, and for a few minutes we supposed ourselves prisoners. Every car was instantly locked, and while we sat quietly, yet anxiously awaiting our fate, robbery at least, as if in answer to prayer we suddenly found ourselves surrounded by Union troops, who had arrived in time to save us from the intended raid. Oh, what a deliverance! If ever my heart went up in gratitude to God, it was then.

Within a few miles of Murfreesboro', a soldier of the 21st came on board, and introducing himself, said, “Your son is well, and will probably meet you at the station;” said he, “I remember you well and your patriotic words addressed to us on the pier.”

What new emotions of hope and expectation were now awakened! Joy filled my heart. Preserved myself through so many dangers, my son preserved through the battles of Perryville, Jefferson, Stone River, and several severe skirmishes, might I not now grasp the cup of happiness which, till this moment, I had only anticipated as possible? Surely I shall see him once more, and will clasp him to my bosom. I would fall upon his neck and weep, not tears of sorrow, but of joy, as we reviewed the sparing mercy of the Lord. When he bade me farewell, went to toil and suffer and die for his bleeding country, laying himself upon her altar, did I not bury him? But he still lives, and I shall see him.

A moment more, and the station is reached. Eagerly I press forward to catch the eye of my first-born, and hear his loving voice, "Welcome, father, welcome! welcome to my soldier-home!" But no familiar eye or voice greets me; all is strange. I do not care to see colonels or generals now; where is the young sergeant? I look around, — there, — a hand beckons; it is the chaplain. Soon I grasp that friendly hand, but, "Chaplain, where is my son?"

"Not here."

"Can I not see him?"

"You believe your heavenly Father does all

things well, and knows what is best for you and yours?"

"Yes."

"Well, He has taken your son to Himself; — he is dead, and his body is encased, waiting your arrival."

The bewilderment of that moment I need not speak of; "the heart knoweth its own bitterness." Others have walked with me this "valley of the shadow of death;" they know its darkness. The sad intelligence was delicately and tenderly communicated, but I almost fainted, and staggered under it; such a crushing of a father's heart! And then that mother! — frail, and already deeply afflicted, how could she endure the loss of one so loving and beloved? Under this complicated distress, my soul was borne down; but I carried not my cross alone. Strength was given me from above. Surely, "the Lord knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust." I was not a lone mourner: officers and men, noble associates of the dear one gone, joined in the heart's wail; for they fully appreciated his worth. Said one, "He was so kind, — ever ready for a friendly turn." Said another, "He cared little for promotion; he was only ambitious to be a tip-top soldier." Another, "He was master

of a soldier's duties, and prepared for any place up to colonel." Said an officer, "His religion was so unobtrusive, and yet apparent, that it won upon my heart." Such remarks, from various sources, indicated the general feeling.

The distribution of stores, which I had anticipated with so much pleasure, was now a sad task. As I laid aside package after package, addressed to my son with the name of the loving donors, what a sensation of disappointment came over me! But he has gone to the richer stores above, and these tributes of affectionate remembrance were distributed among his friends.

I immediately arranged to return with the body of my precious child. A raid was reported on the railroad, a tunnel blown up, travel suspended; but I would start, trusting in God to prosper my way. With an escort to the cars, and the warmest benedictions of all around me, I started homeward, trembling, yet hoping. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." Fortunately, the report about the railroad proved false; but oh, my loneliness! Nor is it less to-day, though this be the anniversary of my bereavement. One year to-day was that patriotic, Christian son promoted far above generals, brigadiers, or commanders-in-chief, where he is fed by the Lamb,

in the midst of the throne, and led to fountains of living water; where he bathes in seas of heavenly rest, reposes in the affections of his Saviour's bosom, the companion forever of those who, coming up "out of much tribulation, have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." A year in heaven! Oh what strides has he made in knowledge and heavenly love, in every moral excellence, in the highest forms of usefulness! And yet to-day I weep to think I shall see his face no more; what a loss to myself, my family, the church, the nation, and the world!

It is said a consistent Christian character can hardly be maintained in the army. "Here was one proof against all the temptations of a soldier's life, delighting in the Scriptures and devotional exercises, ready for every good word and work." Says an unknown writer, "He was endowed with more than ordinary talents, and commanded the confidence and esteem of officers and privates by the moral heroism he displayed in maintaining, amid the temptations of camp-life, an exalted Christian character."

In his career, although so short, were exemplified whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. All our reminiscences of his character are sweet and ennobling. It must have required great grace



to endure such privations, hardships, and sufferings, but he never faltered. In the darkest hour, said he, "our cause is just and will succeed;" by faith he saw the flag of our Union wave in triumph over our entire land, as the land of the brave and home of the free. The poet has truly said, —

" We live in deeds, not years, — in thoughts, not breaths;  
                                   He most lives  
 Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best."

Thus a child may die a hundred years old. Yet my heart says What a loss! what a loss! and I am only one of thousands; other sons have fallen, as dear, as patriotic, as Christian as mine; we are a nation of mourners. From every hillside and valley, from every forest, prairie, and glen, rises the wail of bereavement, "Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted because they are not."

And oh, what means this awful sacrifice? Are our sins so great that every family must bring its offering to the expiation? Must the innocent suffer that the criminal may escape? Must these youthful martyrs follow so closely in the footsteps of Him who died to redeem a world condemned?

Oh, the mysteries of infinite wisdom and love! — inscrutable sovereignty! He had fallen; but

if fall he must, what more could we ask for the young hero? Surrounded by the army of the Cumberland, — his favorite department of the national forces, — the camp extending as far as eye could reach; the white tents on hill and plain beautifully interspersed with trees; batteries here and there in splendid order; cannons in position; guns glistening in every direction; the stars and stripes waving; sentinels and guards moving with slow and measured pace; quiet reigns, only broken by the occasional beat of the drum, or blast of the bugle. It is Sabbath afternoon, and how impressive the scene! Perhaps never before had there been such perfect system and quiet throughout the camp, especially with the 21st; said the young warrior, that morning, “Now I should like to see my father here;” all is right; he is ready for a joyful meeting, but his time had come to go up “higher.” That memorable hour, as I was pointing the Tennessee refugees away to the Lamb of God, and to the home above for all who here patiently endure the cross; as I was quoting to them those beautiful words of the *Peri*, —

“Go wing thy flight from star to star,  
From world to luminous world, as far  
As the universe spreads its flaming wall;  
Take all the pleasures of all the spheres,  
And multiply each through endless years,  
One minute of Heaven is worth them all!”

and as his doting grandfather, nearly a thousand miles away, was preaching on that beautiful text, "And the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes,"—just at that hour, perhaps at that moment, the young hero fell.

Not in deadly strife, not amid garments rolled in blood, not by the cruel hands of a rebel, not by violence, but, having just completed one act of kindness for a fellow-soldier, and now performing another, singing "Sunny Side," and stepping to the camp-fire, ere the song had died upon his lips, "*he was not, for God took him.*"

Surgeons were in attendance almost instantly, but life had departed. A post-mortem examination revealed, what his parents had ever feared, an organic disease of the heart, which had now occasioned a rupture of a blood-vessel.

Every farewell message had long since been given, and mementoes sent to loving friends, with the premonition, "I somehow feel that these are the last things I shall ever send you." In the childish dream of an angel bidding him follow him to heaven, he calls, "Come, mother; father, come!" but now he obeys the order, not delaying even to speak a name he so much

loved. Truly he had gone "the shorter route," as he said in his farewell walk. What a transition! One moment joyfully performing duty here, the next in the immediate, approving, and blissful presence of Him in whom he often said was all his trust. Death was to him but a valley, a *shadow*; a valley quickly passed, a shadow lost in eternal light. A short time before he had taken his soldier's Testament, and opening it where it would, his eye fell upon the 23d Psalm, so grateful to the Christian soldier: "The Lord is my Shepherd," etc. "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." Speaking of this, he says, "just what I wanted; I could scarcely refrain from shouting praises to God;" "thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." How little did he think that his own experience would so soon verify these precious promises! Glorious exit; fitting translation for one that so walked with God. One moment expecting to join in the worship of God with the little band of fourteen who had the previous Sabbath united in a regimental church, the next joining the church of the first-born above, uniting with the thousands of youthful Christian warriors who had already laid off their garments, well-worn upon the battle-field, and taken those made clean and white in the blood

of the Lamb. Dear child! in a recent letter he quoted that beautiful hymn, "I long to be there," exclaiming, "My feelings exactly; oh, may I find entrance!"

"I have read of a world of beauty,  
Where there is no gloomy night;  
Where love is the mainspring of duty,  
And God the fountain of light,  
And I long to be there, I long to be there.

"I have read of its flowing rivers  
That burst from beneath the throne,  
And the beautiful trees that ever  
Are found on its banks alone,  
And I long to be there, I long to be there.

"I have read of the myriad choir,  
Of the angels harping there;  
Of their love that burns like fire,  
And the shining robes they wear,  
And I long to be there, I long to be there.

"Oh, I long to rise to that world of light,  
And to breathe of its balmy air,  
And to walk with the Lamb in white,  
And shout with the angels there,  
And I long to be there, oh, I long to be there!"

His work was cut short in righteousness. Right and duty were his watchwords; onward, onward to meet the foe, whether rebels in arms or the sins of his own heart; but God, accepting the will, said, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord;" it is enough, "Come up higher."



## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE FUNERAL.

Christian lives a precious seed — The author's journey home — Arrival of the intelligence — Notice in the "Manitowoc Tribune" — The funeral — Resolve of the "Loyal Union League" — Letter from Col. Sweet, of the 21st Wisconsin Volunteers — Testimonial of the officers of the regiment — The funeral sermon.

**E**XCEPT a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Such precious lives are a precious seed; so pure, so promising, so heavenly, it can not be lost. In the language adopted in reference to Geo. H. Stuart's son, so full of promise and usefulness, "This much we can clearly see, — that nothing was more fitted to leave his character and example impressed on our remembrance for ever, than his early death. There might have been envy had he lived, there is none now; there might have been some obscuration of his youthful Christian graces, this can not be now; it seems as if the Lord had struck the flower from its stem ere any of the colors had lost their brightest hue, or any leaf its fragrance."

All the circumstances of his death tended to intensify the interest and impression. Perhaps in no hour before or since could he have fallen with so great effect. And is not the acceptance of such costly offerings and sacrifices in this war an encouragement to hope that pardon, peace, and a rich blessing are in store for our bleeding country? Our Pilgrim and Revolutionary fathers aimed to found a Christian nation, and God manifestly approved their enterprise. With them religion was the "one thing,"—fearing God, loving righteousness, and hating wickedness. When Washington was inaugurated the churches were opened, church-bells rung, and prayer offered before and after the ceremony,—God was devoutly acknowledged; but we have greatly degenerated. The institutions of religion have been largely ignored, and flagrant sins sanctioned in the high places of the nation. We have fearfully deserted the God of our fathers, and he is now mercifully bringing us to repentance. When we have put away our iniquities, and it is no longer necessary to chastise us, will he not make us glad according to the days wherein we have been afflicted, "and the years wherein we have seen evil"?

My journey to Wisconsin was sad, but not without its consolations. Most tenderly did I

watch over my precious charge. While many a soldier's coffin was hastily and roughly moved, that of the young sergeant was attended with almost reverential care. This was soothing to my sensitive and lonely heart. A little inscription upon the coffin seemed to have its influence: —

“A dear and only son, fallen in the service of his country. Please move tenderly.”

I reached Milwaukee Sabbath morning, and if among my own relatives could hardly have found a greater appreciation of my sorrow and loss. The young sergeant was known to many, and all honored his memory. The first clergyman I met was the Rev. I. W. Healy, whose heart I found so deeply attuned to Christian sympathy that I requested him to accompany me home and preach the funeral sermon, — an arrangement that proved very comforting and most happy:

At Manitowoc, we found the people in mourning. The dear boy! how they loved him, and the cause in which he had fallen! The mournful message, strange to say, first reached home by a soldier's letter, miscarried and remailed, — the envelope superscribed by Mead's own hand! The evening previous, several letters from the company had been received, in all of which he was spoken of as in good health and

spirits ; hence the community was shocked at the sudden news, nor less the family at home.

The mother had endeavored, ever since her dear boy had been absent, to prepare herself for the blow which he had often told her would come. Thankful, if he must die so early, that her impromptu prayer had been answered, and I permitted to return with the precious dust of her only son, and that his character as a soldier and as a Christian had not a stain upon it, she strove to rejoice in the mitigations of her bereavement, rather than magnify its aggravations. Yet words are powerless to speak the rending of a mother's heart at such an hour. There is a spirit-language, deep in the soul, read only by stricken ones, which speaks of sorrow unfathomed by others, and of mourning which grows deeper as years roll on. The only sister — how great her loss ! — was consoled by the sure hope that her dear brother had passed beyond all suffering and danger to the "Promised Land" of which they had a thousand times sung so rapturously. The aged grandfather, overcome as never before, felt that God had taken the dear child from the evil to come ; our loss was his infinite gain, and we should not repine. In the triumph of Christian faith he exclaimed, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away : blessed be the name of the Lord."

On my arrival, I found in the "Manitowoc Tribune" of the previous day the following editorial: —

"Our community was startled yesterday with the intelligence of the sudden death of Sergeant Mead Holmes, Jr.

"The sad intelligence fell with crushing weight upon those who knew his moral worth and manly principle; and every where in the vicinity his loss is deeply deplored.

"Ardent, generous, and truthful; at the age when adolescence is verging into manhood's prime, with Christian principle firmly ingrafted upon the elements of a noble soul, he was just the kind of a man to realize the requirements of the great cause of human liberty, and the struggle for a constitutional government; and though surrounded by the comforts of a home, and friends who almost idolized him,—the only son of loving parents,—he left a good situation and enlisted with the 21st Wisconsin Volunteers, sharing their hardships and doing his duty in a manner which secured the respect of his comrades and the confidence of his officers, even in that glorious regiment where *all* have done so well.

"The best evidence of the patriotism of this brave-hearted and noble-minded boy is the fact that he has for years been suffering from occa-



sional attacks of organic disease, yet when he heard the call of the President, he stepped into the ranks to the music of 'Six hundred thousand more;' not in the spirit of bravado which so many exhibit under such circumstances, but quietly and manfully, under the stern pressure of a consciousness of duty to his country, and fidelity to his God.

"He braved the dangers of the battle-fields of Perryville, Jeffersonville, and Murfreesboro', and met the perils which always surround the soldier in an enemy's country, with cool courage and Christian fortitude. He was twice promoted for general good conduct, receiving a sergeant's warrant but a few days before his death. Educated, energetic, industrious, with high-toned principles and irreproachable habits, his death is a loss to the community, but more so to the service which needs the support of just such men.

"A short time since, by special arrangement, he became connected with the 'Tribune' as one of its regular correspondents, . . . and from his letter in the last week's issue we quote the following sublime passage:—

"'S. M—— died in Italy. How much I would prefer to bleach on the battle-field, slain in my country's cause, than to die in Naples, away from my native land, in this hour of her

peril, when my strength, money, and influence are so much needed.'

"Noble sentiment! worthy to be recorded among the dying expressions of patriots and philanthropists. He fell dead at the camp-fire, while thinking over the loving words which he desired to commit to paper for the perusal of the loved ones at home. But his death upon the battle-field could not have been more glorious, for his life was a sacrifice to his sense of duty.

"Mr. Holmes was the superintendent of the Sabbath school of the First Presbyterian Church, and while acting in that capacity, was faithful and earnest in his efforts to build up a model school; and the institution is one which will be an enduring monument of his perseverance, and unselfish devotion to the cause of right. We need not ask our citizens to show every respect to the remains of the brave young citizen-soldier, for all are eager to show their sympathy with the mourning friends."

Again we quote from the editor's notice of the funeral.

"The remains of Sergeant Holmes arrived here by the 'Comet,' Tuesday morning, and received every attention and respect that our citizens could bestow. The corpse lay in state at the house until Thursday P. M., when it was

interred with the honors due to the gallant brave. The largest concourse ever gathered together in our village assembled at the Tabernacle and listened to an oration delivered by Rev. J. W. Healy, of Milwaukee, admitted by all to be a most brilliant and sublime effort.

“He pronounced a fitting eulogy upon the character of the deceased, spoke of the lessons which are being taught by the present war, and mingled patriotic counsel with the impressive teachings of Holy Writ. Portions of the address were of the most affecting character, and at times there was hardly a dry eye in that crowded assembly. Men, who had faced the dangers of the battle-field, wept like children, and the heaving bosoms of others too well attested the masterly power of the speaker.

“The church was trimmed with the national flag, draped with black, and the coffin was covered with the same, surmounted with cap, sword, and a bouquet of fresh flowers. The following beautiful words, peculiarly appropriate to the occasion, were among those sung by the choir, and produced a thrilling effect: —

Oh, wrap the flag around me, boys,  
To die were far more sweet  
With Freedom's starry emblem, boys,  
To be my winding-sheet.

In life I loved to see it wave,  
 And follow where it led;  
 And now my eyes grow dim, my hands  
 Would clasp its last bright shred.

CHORUS. — Then wrap the flag around me, boys,  
 To die were far more sweet,  
 With Freedom's starry emblem, boys,  
 To be my winding-sheet.

' Oh, I had thought to greet you, boys,  
 On many a well-won field,  
 When to our starry banner, boys,  
 The traitorous foe should yield;  
 But now, alas, I am denied  
 My dearest earthly prayer, —  
 You'll follow, and you'll meet the foe,  
 But I shall not be there.

CHORUS. — Yet wrap the flag, &c.

' But though my body moulder, boys,  
 My spirit will be free,  
 And every comrade's honor, boys,  
 Will still be dear to me.  
 There in the thick and bloody fight,  
 Ne'er let your ardor lag,  
 For I'll be there, still hovering near  
 Above the dear old flag,' &c.

“ A long line of carriages followed the hearse, which was escorted by a large number of the former comrades of the deceased. At the cemetery the body was deposited in the tomb, each officer and soldier dropping a handful of earth upon the coffin of their comrade; a hymn was sung, the benediction pronounced, and the ceremonies ended.

“Flags were kept at half-mast during the day in different parts of the village, and on all the vessels in the harbor, in honor of the brave boy who, like the gallant young Waldo, was ready to sacrifice all, even life itself, for the good of our common country.

“Well may it be said of such, that History will embalm their ashes, and keep them in her brightest urn.”

In a paper adopted by the Loyal Union League, we find the following:—

“*Resolved*, That this Council has learned with deep regret of the death of Mead Holmes, Jr., and that in his death the community has lost an estimable member, and the service a faithful and devoted soldier, a brave defender of our glorious Union, and one who bid fair to rank among its brightest ornaments.”

Says B. S. Sweet, colonel of the regiment, in a letter of condolence, “During the busy and toilsome five weeks which were allowed me with the regiment, from the time of going into camp at Oshkosh, through the sieges of Cincinnati and Louisville, and the march to Perryville, there was no more cheerful, brave-hearted, and true soldier in my regiment than he. When offered a place where he might have had more ease, leisure, and consideration than could be given him in the ranks of his company, he re-



plied, that, 'believing his duty was with it, he preferred to remain there.'

"To you and Mrs. H—— flow my heart's warmest, deepest sympathies. This war has come home to you with terrible distinctness and power. The cynosure round which the dearest earthly hopes of your heart revolved has passed from its place in your domestic sky.

"Believe me, sir, I realize much more clearly now how keenly this stroke falls upon you than in other days it would have been possible for me to do, and I can not forbear to send you some token of the appreciation I feel for the loss we have all sustained in his death, but which falls heaviest upon your sorrowful household.

"It is not given me to speak words of consolation in such cases; that is a holier office, reserved for more fitting tongues than mine. But allow me to join with you in a sincere sorrow that one who gave fine promise of a true manhood, and great usefulness in life, should have thus been accepted as a sacrifice upon the altar of the country he loved so well, in the glorious spring-time of youth.

"Please accept for yourself and Mrs. H—— the assurance of my most earnest sympathy for your mourning hearts.

"Very truly yours,

"B. J. SWEET."

The following brief estimate of his life, was received from the officers of the 21st Regiment: —

“The undersigned, officers of the 21st Regiment Wisconsin Volunteers, desire to express to the friends of the late Sergeant Mead Holmes, Jr., of Co. K, in said regiment, their high appreciation of his courage and fidelity as a soldier, his gentlemanly courtesy as a companion, and of his spotless character as a Christian.”

H. C. HOBART, *Lt.-Col. Commanding.*

W. H. FITCH, *Major.*

JAMES T. REEVE, *Surgeon.*

And seventeen others.

A letter from James T. Reeve, surgeon of the Twenty-First, and from S. Marks, medical director of the division, says, “Sergeant Holmes, in all his life among us, sustained a character as a soldier, an associate, and a Christian, which is above reproach and worthy of imitation by us all.”

But fresh testimony from the army was fully introduced into the funeral sermon, from which we are permitted to take the following extracts: —

“At an early age, young Holmes entered the Sunday school, and remained a member until he enlisted in the service of his country. As a

scholar, teacher, and superintendent, he was habitual in his attendance, and devoutly reverent of the sacred Scriptures. Trained as he was in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and early inured to a love of virtue, his life at home and abroad was one of singular purity and uprightness. The communities in which he dwelt, and the young with whom he mingled, will remember him as a noble-minded, open-hearted youth, never stooping to any thing mean or unmanly, but ever true to his convictions, and inflexible in manly purpose. Nor was his moral uprightness attributable to the restraints of home, although he loved home with an undying affection, and was ever inspired by a controlling, filial fear; but the principles of virtue, planted by parental precept and example, took deep root in a congenial soil and bore perennial fruit. Though outwardly irreproachable, yet he ever felt the need of an indwelling Christ, but never until the winter of 1858 was his 'life hid with Christ in God.' During the succeeding spring he became a member of the First Presbyterian Church of this place, and died in its communion. At home, in the intercourse of social life, amid the temptations of the camp and upon the field of battle, he lived an earnest and consecrated Christian.

“Naturally unselfish, seeking the good of oth-

ers rather than his own, and possessed of a sanguine temperament, so soon as the sound of war was heard, he longed to serve his country in suppressing the rebellion ; and when patriotic ardor was firing the young men of the Northwest to lay themselves upon their country's altar, he caught the inspiration, and at once begged his parents to let him go to the field of deadly conflict. From early youth he had suffered from a chronic affection of the heart, which at times became threatening, and at last terminated his life. Being thus predisposed, and needing the quiet and care of home, they dissuaded him from his sanguine desire. But, heroic and persistent in his purpose, where duty marked the way, he was not to be thwarted in his cherished undertaking. He pressed his wish again and again, and confident that his convictions were of Divine shaping, and hoping that he might be returned to their embrace, his parents reluctantly yielded. He was engaged in the battles of Perryville, Jeffersonville, and Murfreesboro', in all of which he conducted himself with signal bravery. You who have read his correspondence from week to week, are familiar with the wearisome marches, exposures, and privations of Buel's army, and need not be reminded of the hardships of young Holmes. And yet, during all these months of endurance, not a

murmur escaped his lips. Says he, 'I believe I never fret, no, not the least. Oh, what a blessing is a contented mind and control over one's temper; I believe I have not let one word of anger or ill-temper escape my lips so far; thank God, he is ever present with me.'

"One quality of character, industry, signally manifest at home, distinguished him also in the army. Aside from his duties as a soldier, and his personal and Christian duties, which he never neglected, he spent much time in reading, drawing, and mechanics. Combined with this, consider the vast amount of private and public correspondence which emanated from his pen, for himself and others, and who can doubt his rare diligence in business? Speaking of this trait of character, in its relation to virtue, he makes the sage remark, 'If a child never knows what work or care is, and always has his own wants gratified, he will bring sorrow to the parent's heart. Parents, I thank you for keeping me busy, and training me to be at something.'

"Young Holmes was not only industrious, but he was 'fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.' His life-work had its end without himself. He delighted in making others happy; his highest aim and supreme delight seemed to be in doing good. Preëminently conscientious and inflexible in his adherence to right, the voice of God



to him was more imperative than the constraints of hell or the allurements of heaven. This element of character has a marked illustration in his patriotism. While too many, alas, become soldiers to avoid a draft, to secure wages and bounty, or as a means of military or civil promotions, he entered the service from pure love of country, and he counted it his highest joy and greatest honor to imperil his life for the life of the Republic.

“The religious element, the crowning virtue of every true character, was the controlling element in the character contemplated. After his will was brought into harmony with the will of God by conversion, his constant inquiry seemed to be, ‘Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?’ In his studies, in his daily avocations, in social intercourse, in the sanctuary and Sunday school, in becoming a soldier, and in the hour of thick battle, his heart was fixed to promote the Redeemer’s kingdom and glory. Nor was his religion ostentatious or showy, but the rather a life pervading his entire being, giving tone and character to all his acts. Preëminently modest, he esteemed others better than himself. He never courted aggrandizement, and though often honored in private life, and twice promoted in the army, yet he wore his honors lightly, and ever felt, as he said after his last promotion as

sergeant, 'It is all the same to me.' 'He that humbleth himself, shall be exalted,' and how true in the character before us! Although his religious character was like a deep undercurrent, flowing unobserved, yet every now and then it strikes out upon the surface in his commingling with the world, and not unfrequently finds expression in his private correspondence. Such passages as the following abound: 'Oh, dear friends, if it were not for my dear little Testament and my sole trust in God, I should be sick.' 'I trust in my dear Saviour, and how much joy I feel in his constant presence!' 'How refreshing to have a little season of reading and communion with his holy Word, which is indeed "a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."' 'It is a dark hour for our cause, and I can only look up to God.' 'I am happy, yes, the happiest man in camp.'

"April 5th, just one week before his death, he aided in forming a 'Soldiers' Christian Association,' and affixed his own signature to the following pledge: 'We whose names are hereunto annexed, conscious of impurity of heart and wicked disloyalty to the government of a righteous God, and laying down the weapons of our rebellion, do thankfully accept the terms of peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and for mutual improvement, encourage-

ment, and edification, do cheerfully associate ourselves together as soldiers of our divine Master, invoking the cleansing influences of the Holy Spirit upon our hearts, to enable us to put on the whole armor of God, and, as good soldiers, to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, until, through Christ, our great Commander, we shall be made victorious over the world, the flesh, and the devil. Our daily motto shall be, —

‘ Just as I am, without one plea,  
But that thy blood was shed for me,  
And that thou bidst me come to thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come!’

“ At Murfreesboro’, Tenn., April 12, at about half-past one P. M., Mead Holmes, Jr., was not, for God took him. Of his last hours, and the circumstances of his death, Rev. Mr. Clinton, chaplain of the regiment, wrote to his mother: ‘ His death was as unlooked for to us as it can be to you, and perhaps more; for he had appeared so healthy that we could not suspect the destroyer as being near and aiming a certain blow. Last Sabbath morning, when distributing some reading matter among the men, I came to Mead’s tent; he met me with his usual smile and kind greetings, and seemed well and cheerful. He was present on the usual inspection in the forenoon, and appeared well and sol-

dierly. Just before the hour of our service, two P. M., he left his tent, walked to the company fire, near which he fell, and expired almost instantly. Up to that moment, I am sure he was anticipating our service with great pleasure; but our heavenly Father called him to more sacred associations. Our service which immediately followed this mournful event, was unusually solemn and affecting. The subject was Phil. i. 21: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." I had previously determined to preach from the first part of this text, directing the attention to the higher motives of life, but this sudden affliction, just at this moment, led me to speak upon the gains of all such. I felt that I had lost one of my helpers in my work in the army, but still I must seize upon the hope that his death may not be lost upon us.

"As a soldier, he was obedient, prompt, and faithful; as a Christian, he was humble, modest, and, so far as I know, ready to every good word and work. He identified himself with all our religious movements, and seemed delighted in whatever was adapted to promote religion among our men. He was with us in our prayer-meetings, and his voice was heard in prayer and praise. He fell with his armor on, and we feel that he has gone to his rest. We deeply feel the loss, and you have our warmest sympa-



thies in your heavy affliction. We know "the troubles of your hearts are enlarged," and yet there is cheering comfort in the promise, "all things shall work together for good to them that love God." Your only son has fallen, a soldier of his country and the cross; true to the responsibilities of his calling. We shall miss him here, and can to some extent appreciate the feelings of those who have missed him at home. That this solemn call may be sanctified to us all, and that we may be also ready, is the earnest prayer of my heart.'

"Says the captain of his company, Charles H. Walker, in a letter to a friend, 'I need not speak to any one who knew him of his many good qualities; they are well appreciated by all who knew him. I can assure you he was no less distinguished here than at home for manliness of character, truth and frankness in every action; a cheerful, faithful, and conscientious discharge of every duty required of him; and, what must now be most gratifying, for a consistent religious daily life, which was proof against the thousand temptations that always beset the soldier. These characteristics were known and remarked upon, not only in his own company, but by the field-officers, and throughout the regiment. His good conduct and soldierly attainments had secured his promotion



to the position of a sergeant, and bade fair to have secured still greater advancement had he been spared.'

"Similar commendatory testimony might be quoted in great abundance, endorsing the just tribute of the marshal of this occasion, Gen. Smith, in the 'Tribune.'

"If that life be long which answers life's great end, truly the life of young Holmes, in which so much usefulness, worth, and glory were compressed, was long indeed, though he died at the early age of twenty-one. Forcibly does Capt. Walker conclude his letter of condolence: 'Although twoscore and ten years have been suddenly cut off from the long life of honor and usefulness which his friends hoped and predicted for him, yet we have the right to believe that he has anticipated, by twoscore and ten years, a life of infinitely greater honor and blessedness.

'Tis God that lifts our comforts high,  
Or sinks them in the grave;  
He gives, and (blessed be his name)  
He takes but what he gave.  
Peace, all our troubled passions, then;  
Let each rebellious sigh  
Be silent at his sovereign will,  
And every murmur die.'

"My dear brother and sister, what consolation is breathed in these brief reminiscences of your only son! Time has permitted but a brief

analysis and hasty sketch ; but your memory and his well-known life will complete the character. It were a high privilege to be the parent of such a gift, and it is a sad duty to part with such a gift. But this deeply-afflictive event, that lacerates your heart, was no accident, and so you believe. Though a sad and dark dispensation, yet it was a part of that great plan of Him who ‘worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.’ No fortuity has culminated in this hour of grief ; but the death of your son came to pass in accordance with the deliberate prearrangement of the Infinite design, and was the sequence of causes as uniform and harmonious as the return of the seasons, the fruition of autumn, or the revolutions of the spheres. He whose remains now lie before us, died in the service of his country at an unexpected moment, and at a distance from the amenities of home, because the time and the manner and the circumstances appointed had arrived. His days were determined ; ‘the number of his months was with God. He had appointed his bounds that he could not pass.’ ‘The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away.’ This reflection is a stronghold of faith and rest for the Christian, and enables him to say with the Master, ‘The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it ?’

“You have occasion for gratitude at this hour for the mitigating circumstances of this afflictive event. The Father ‘tempers the wind to the shorn lamb;’ and how many peculiar mercies and memories cluster around this calamity to dissipate its darkness and subvert its crushing force! How precious the thought, and how rich the legacy to the living, is the reflection, that the departed left behind him a stainless character; that his influence was only for good, and that his memory was purely blessed. In childhood, you gave Mead into the hands of a covenant-keeping God; you bore him many years, day after day, in the arms of Christian trust to the mercy-seat; by precept and example, you endeavored to train him up in Christian nurture; you witnessed his personal consecration of himself to the divine Redeemer at this altar. God demanded as an early sacrifice the choicest lamb of the flock, and his life was taken, not in mortal combat, where the deadly fight would preclude the kindly offices of friendship; not by lingering disease in the hospital, painful in the extreme, although blest with skillful medical aid and the kindest ministries of loving affection, but he died, just as all of us would die if consciously prepared. When you think of his life, in all its relations and influences, and his death, with all its awaiting glo-

ries, can you wish him back again? Though a light in your earthly dwelling, yet he shines with a diviner radiance in that many-mansioned house, eternal in the heavens. Our loved ones on earth are flowers, transplanted to bloom eternal in the celestial gardens. The fairest of the fair are those who walk upon the golden pavements and beside the crystal river. The sweetest voices are attuned to the harmonies of bliss, and stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion, amid the hundred and forty and four thousand harpers, harping with their harps.

“I know, my dear brother and sister, that this providence has cast a somber cloud over your cheerful home; but let the consolations you have so often proffered to others, reflow into your hearts. Let the brightness of the divine Sun, that has shone from your Christian counsel, irradiate your own hearts, and shine through this cloud with ineffable radiance, cheering your souls in this hour of sadness, illumining your future pathway, and guiding your feet to yon shining shore, and to that company of redeemed ones, whom, with your sainted son, you shall rejoin with bonds immortal. Let such be your spirit in this hour, that the gospel of consolation shall be commended to others, and thus shall God be glorified in you. So drink this bitter cup, and yours shall be the



rich experience, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes.' 'Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.'

"What has been said to these parents might also be said to this aged grandfather, for Mead was to you as though a son. Your domestic relation to him, and long since bereft of one you held so dear, rendered your grandson doubly dear. By this event another support is taken away, and a new bond links you to the skies.

"I rejoice that the gospel you have so long and faithfully preached affords you, its ambassador, such supporting power. Those silver locks are prophetic, and the hour draweth nigh when your age shall bloom in immortal youth. Be faithful until death my brother, and Jesus shall give thee a crown of life, — a life eternal in his presence, and a heavenly reunion with the cherished dead, where they die no more.

"And what words of richer consolation can I proffer to you, Mary, than those which Jesus gave to that weeping Mary who mourned her brother's death? 'Thy brother shall rise again.' Yes, Mead shall receive a baptism of immortality as '*thy brother*;' and if you have like Mary, chosen that better part which can never be taken away, you can never be separated



from him you so tenderly loved. You will miss his presence in the hallowed scenes of home, at the daily repast and family altar, in the walks of social life, and every where. You will mourn his absence as never before, because you have ever looked for the hour of his future return, and this expectant earthly meeting has brought joy in anticipation, and partially atoned for his absence. But that fond hope is now blasted. Your brother will no more cross your threshold, and make cheerful the fireside by the sweetness and vivacity of overflowing affection. That vacant chair will never more greet its occupant, nor will your little circle receive again its absent earthly member. ‘He shall not return to you, but you may go to him.’ Be faithful as he was faithful, and you may once more press to your bosom that spirit brother, who has laid aside his terrene wardrobe to be clothed upon with an immortal vestment. That encoffined body is not your brother, — ’tis but his wardrobe locked, — Mead is not there.

‘He lives ! through all the past, he lives !  
Nor to the last, of seeing him  
Will we despair.  
In dreams, I see him now,  
And on his radiant brow  
I see written,  
“ Sister, thou shalt meet me here.” ’

“Those other members of the family, like sisters, who to-day in lonely sadness mingle the tears of heartfelt sympathy, I commend to God and to the words of his grace. Every where you go, in that home of his, you shall see evidences of his industry, and every recollection of by-gone days shall remind you of manly Christian virtues. Follow that absent one as he followed Christ, and your life shall be full of usefulness, your death the gateway of endless rest, and your eternity a fruition of heavenly joy.

“I see many in this weeping assembly to whom Mead was dear as a friend, as a Sabbath-school superintendent, and as one of kindred age. My young friends, I have already mentioned some of those traits of character by which he was endeared to you. You will love to remember his youthful vivacity, his manly bearing, and his devoted Christian affection. You felt the influence of his example in the prompt discharge of duty, heroic purpose, ingenuous simplicity, and adherence to principle. You always expected to see him at the sanctuary, the Sabbath school, and the place of prayer. What precious memories such a useful life affords! what a fragrant influence it leaves behind! and what joy, as we bear him to yon sepulcher of the tomb!

“ But Mead has gone ! how like a dream that sudden change from this youthful circle to a distant field of battle ; and from joyous life and apparent health to that cold form which lies before us ! In the spring-time of life, and with the opening spring, a blasting wind swept over, and blighted his all of earth. In an unexpected moment the dark-browed angel came, and he fell powerless at his touch. Within a few brief moments, blooming health and life were changed to pale and icy death. And so you, my young friends, may be marked for sudden death. No note of warning may indicate the fatal hour. Neither health nor any other earthly condition is a guaranty of life, and are you prepared ? Should friends be called to follow your remains to the narrow house, whither we all hasten, is your life such that your death and memory would be precious ? Is your life so hid with Christ in God that weeping friends could yield your body to the embrace of earth in hope of a life eternal ? As you follow to the grave the form of this cherished friend, will you not resolve to live the life of the righteous, that your last end may be like his ?

‘ To friends and neighbors, yea, to all,  
This is indeed a solemn call ;  
’Mongst old and young, and great and small,  
Death spreadeth devastation.’

“And it were right that this event should awaken public sympathy and secure public recognition. Aside from the character of our friend, he freely sacrificed his life to perpetuate government, and thereby protect us in our persons and property. In this regard, this is no new experience to you ; for, as a people, you have lost many noble sons. As a nation, we are now feeling as never before the evils of this relentless war. Sad havoc is being made with noblest lives. The purple wine-press is being trodden by faithful ones. Victory must be bought with a price, and heroic martyrs are cheerfully giving their lives as a ransom. Some of the best blood has been spilled, and some of the noblest lives sacrificed. Let us not be slow to remember these valiant men, for history will embalm them for future ages. While this home is made desolate, thousands of other homes and hearts send up their bitter wailing. And while, to-day, we mourn over our brave dead, let us remember the myriad homes of other fallen and stricken ones, who have for us bedewed the battle-fields of our country with their hearts’ crimson treasure. We will cherish the dead, and bear the living to the mercy-seat, and ask the Lord of hosts to ‘cover their heads, in the hour of thick battle.’

“Once more would we tender our heartfelt sympathy to this bereaved circle. We pity you to-day, and rejoice with you in the gift of so noble and consecrated a son. Our hearts swell with emotion, and the tears of sorrow flow, as we behold for the last time on earth that manly brow, calm, and beautiful in death. We mourn indeed, but not without hope, for we trust that the spirit of the departed, Mead’s real self, has received the baptism of immortality.

‘As, bowed by sudden storms, the rose  
Sinks on the garden’s breast,  
Down to the grave our brother goes,  
In silence there to rest.

‘No more with us his tuneful voice  
The hymn of praise shall swell;  
No more his cheerful heart rejoice  
When peals the Sabbath bell.

‘Yet if, in yonder cloudless sphere,  
Amid a sinless throng,  
He utters in his Saviour’s ear  
The everlasting song, —

‘No more we’ll mourn the absent friend,  
But lift the earnest prayer,  
And daily every effort bend  
To rise and join him there.’ ”

For several weeks we continued to receive letters of sweet condolence, sent as angels of mercy, to soothe our breaking hearts.

Under date of June 9, 1863, Rev. S. Cowles writes : —



“I learned of the death of your darling son when I was in New Haven, and I embrace the first opportunity to express my sympathy. Evidently, God designed a short life for him, and laid the cause of it in his physical constitution ; he had for him a better place than earth, and a more useful sphere of action. . . . .

“I have referred to Mead’s prospects of usefulness and preparation for death in order to comfort you, and yet I know these very things make your loss the greater, and the grief over his departure the more exquisite and refined. The very virtues which prepare our children for heaven are those which make their loss to us the greater. There is one thing about Mead that I remember with great pleasure, now that he is gone. Two years since, when at my house in Olean, and about to take the cars for New York, he came into my study and said, ‘ Uncle, I am a young man who believes in prayer and Providence ; I should like to have you pray with me before I leave.’ The remark and the circumstance struck me peculiarly. I had had many young men at my house within thirty years, but I have never had one, either before or since, ask me to pray with him before he left. I laid aside my pen ; we kneeled and prayed : a fit parting till we meet again in heaven. The grace of God alone can support you under your irreparable loss.”

June 2, 1863, Rev. Chas. Burgess writes :—

“I am glad you have so many circumstances to lessen the anguish of so terrible a blow. Your son has been taken away without the usual distresses that accompany dissolution. He has done already in his short life much more than most accomplish in a long term of years, and we can not doubt has been promoted by the Great Captain to a good estate in the realms of everlasting peace. The country is indebted to you as it is not to me; you have given a son for its redemption. May God comfort you, and give you double joy in your only remaining child.”

In a letter of condolence, Wm. M. Heyl, of Philadelphia, writes :—

“It was with feelings of painful interest I read an account of Mead’s death and burial. I had fondly hoped, as from time to time I read his published letters and followed him in his patriotic devotion to his country’s cause, that Providence might shield and preserve him amid the perils with which he was surrounded. But though indeed spared from the flying bullet, yet his life was demanded as a sacrifice upon his country’s altar; for I suppose the fatigue and trials to which he had been exposed aggravated the disease that so suddenly called him from time into eternity. Most sincerely do I

sympathize with you, my brother, in this your bereavement, and in this sympathy my whole family unite. True, Mead had spent but a few days with us, but he had, nevertheless, won our esteem, and his visit was often spoken of, and its incidents dwelt upon with pleasure."

Says Henry Baker, Esq., of Adrian:—

"You need hardly be told that I sorrow with you most sincerely. And yet, as I read in the 'Tribune Extra' of his usefulness and good influence at home, of his superintendence of the Sabbath school, the energy and devotion that had left their mark on the place where he lived, then read of his noble and patriotic desire to serve his country by any means and with any sacrifice, and then that he died by the camp-fire, relieved *kindly* of all the distress of wounds and sickness and wearing pain, I could but feel you had very much for which to be thankful. Oh, infinitely better your dead son than many, many a living one, even with no extraordinary sin or vice to make him a sorrow and a curse! For here is a life to some purpose, though short; a sacrifice whose holiness half blots out the pain; a memory that is sweet and precious, and shall ever be. And so let these thoughts comfort your aching hearts, and make you grateful to the kind Father who has so graciously mingled so much of the sweet with the bitter."

Numerous letters of like character have been received, expressing the highest appreciation of the young sergeant, and the warmest sympathy in our bereavement.

To the writers, myself and family would return our thanks; human sympathy is sweet, though it brings not back our dear child; the Lord reward their kindness, — deal graciously with them in every hour of trial.

A few words by way of reflection and appeal.

Surely no crisis of affairs, or prospects of usefulness, can shield us from the shafts of the King of Terrors.

The famous Epaminondas, hearing that a brave soldier had died while the battle was raging, exclaimed, “Ye gods! how can a man find time to die at an hour like this!” We may be amazed and confounded, but the best of the best are often taken away in what seems to us the most critical hour of need. How sad! how untimely! we exclaim; but must we not believe that all these bereavements and calamities will be overruled for the advancement of the righteous cause they seem to impair?

And will not the patriot Christian soldier receive a rich reward in the future world? Multitudes of this character have fallen; the past three years have been rich in their offerings at



heaven's gate ; but we can think of them only as preëminently blessed. Becoming soldiers from the convictions of Christian duty, loving the cause of righteousness and liberty, cherishing the true martyr-spirit, will they not be acknowledged, and rewarded accordingly, by Him who laid down his life for the world, but was raised with power, and is to be our final Judge ? Numbered with those who for the truth "loved not their lives unto death," they have gone to join the noble army of martyrs who stand before the throne of God, with palms of victory in their hands, there to live and reign for ever !

Such is the glorious transition, such the sublime consummation, in the case of every Christian patriot fallen in our holy cause.

In closing this memorial of my dear and only son, may I not express the fond hope that the mantle of his lovely childhood may rest upon many of the children of this land ; that the guileless sweetness of those years may attract many into that path so full of happiness, because so unselfish, and so full of love to God and man ; that the youth in our Sabbath schools may imitate the high-toned principles and usefulness here found in those years generally regarded as only *preparatory*, not *executive* ; that our young men may add to their noble



philanthropy and patriotism the still higher attainment of a pious heart? Mead's piety shone like a fixed star, with steady luster, all unconscious to himself; he never placed it on exhibition. It was not the dashing rain, but the quiet dew, that, unnoticed, refreshes the withered plant; it was not the sweeping wind, but the gentle breeze that fans the weary, and imparts new vigor. Such piety, so lovely, so attractive, so heavenly, would I commend to the young men of this land.

Let me say to his Sabbath school, follow your young superintendent as he followed Christ. Remember his example and instructions, and may his earnest prayers be answered in the conversion of all he so tenderly loved.

Soldiers of the Twenty-First Wisconsin Volunteers, your young comrade shared your privations and exposures in camp, on the weary march, and on the battle-field; you witnessed his self-control, his cheerfulness, his love to country, his devotion to friends, his courage in the face of danger; in him you trusted safely; from him you expected only what is manly, noble, and brave; his soul anchored upon the Infinite, felt not the surgings of passion, and his presence was always an encouragement to virtue and restraint upon vice; — such was his character, and influence when, in an unexpected

moment, he fell in your midst. He loved you and fully appreciated your hardships, and he often spoke in glowing terms of your kindness to him; for this let me thank you; and thanks to that brother serjeant who so thoughtfully preserved a lock of his hair for his mother, and to those who so considerately and tenderly guarded and cared for his remains. Men of Company K, you have done all in your power to mitigate to me and mine this great sorrow. The Lord reward you; and let me exhort you to follow the noble, brave, and Christian example of your young serjeant, and, like him, be ready to meet the great Commander-in-Chief, whenever your summons comes.

Officers, he sympathized deeply in your responsibilities and trials; whatever he feared of some others, he felt that the officers of the Twenty-First were loyal and faithful. He delighted to honor your names, and often referred to your kindness toward him in ill-health. For this, and your appreciation of his merits, as shown in his repeated promotion and in your letters of condolence, I thank you from my heart of hearts. Thanks to the chaplain for his timely thoughtfulness and sympathy, and to the surgeons for their prompt attention in that fatal hour. You did all that human skill could do to save my child, of whom you speak so

honorably as a soldier, associate, and Christian. You will not forget him, nor, I trust, that holy religion which gave "beauty, breadth, and power" to his character.

Thanks to those who, though strangers, bore the remains of the young hero so tenderly from place to place on my lonely homeward way.

Thanks to Gen. Smith, the marshal of the day, and the good citizens of Manitowoc, for the honor so spontaneously bestowed upon the dust of one who had so quietly grown up in their midst. He had, indeed, bequeathed to the community an example of singular uprightness, of earnest benevolence, of hearty philanthropy, of exalted patriotism, of inflexible integrity, of unfeigned piety; but such a demonstration of respect his retiring nature would have shrunk from receiving; yet it was *just* such as he would have delighted to confer upon one worthy. Thanks to those who have seemed to vie with the family-circle in keeping the young hero's grave fresh and fragrant through summer's heat and winter's cold; in the pure, white snow, so like the robes of the saints, how beautiful those wreaths of evergreen and amaranth; arranged by loving hands, may angels watch their dust when

"They softly lie, and sweetly sleep  
Low in the ground."

But I must turn again to those far away in the face of the enemy.

Soldiers of the Cumberland, as you march on, conquering and to conquer, death, or rebels and traitors, I beseech you forget not your own obligations to the government of God. If rebels and traitors against a human government are so guilty, and deserve such terrible punishment, what can you answer for disloyalty to the divine government? At once, then, make your peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; become true soldiers of the cross, and thus will you be better prepared to fight, and, if need be, to die in your country's cause.

Soldiers of the great Union army, bound to maintain the Constitution and the laws, — justice, liberty, and right, — bound to disenthral the nation from the ravages of slavery, treason, and rebellion, with their kindred abominations, I beseech you, acknowledge God in all your ways. Your strength is not in your formidable numbers or splendid prowess, but in the living God; in his name then, lift up your banners, and falter not until your sublime mission is accomplished. Be courageous; quit you like men.

My countrymen, over the grave of my dear and only son, my first-born, in whom I have buried my brightest earthly hopes, over the precious dust of one so noble and patriotic, heroic



and Christian, and who lamented so deeply the divisions of the North, let me exhort you to *unity* in the cause of our bleeding country. By your love of right and hatred of wrong ; by every emotion of philanthropy and patriotic impulse ; by the sepulchers of our Revolutionary fathers, who withstood and conquered the foes of justice ; by the fresh graves and bleaching bones of our fathers, brothers, and sons, whose blood, now flowing like water, cries for vengeance ; by the hopes of the masses in all nations and of unborn generations ; by the authority and in the name of the great God, all loveliness and love, I charge you, I entreat you to stand up as one man for the government, for the Union in all its integrity, for liberty and mankind, for the right, which must prevail though the heavens fall.

Let the people arise in their majesty and maintain the honor of the old flag. Let every one be ready to meet the crisis, to go where duty calls. Let the women of this land, in their proper sphere, make their influence felt more and more in support of that government which has given new dignity and power to their sex. Providing freely for the sick and wounded and dying, in camp and hospital and on the battle-field, let that mother also say to her son as his country calls, "Go, and do your whole duty."



Let that wife say to her husband, "Go, bear your part in your bleeding country's agony." Let that sister say to her brother, "Go, and die, rather than be a traitor or a coward." Now is the time for action. I have lost my idol and my family name in that only son, yet had I more, I would lay them all on the altar of my country's deliverance. My country! I love her with a pure and holy affection; for her my tears shall fall, for her my prayers ascend. My country, our country, must be preserved, — our country, for the sake and salvation of the world!

"My country, 'tis of thee,  
Sweet land of liberty,  
Of thee I sing.  
I love thy rocks and rills,  
Thy woods and templed hills;  
My heart with rapture thrills,  
Like that above.

"Our fathers' God, to thee,  
Author of liberty,  
To thee we sing.  
Long may our land be bright  
With Freedom's holy light;  
Protect us by thy might,  
Great God our King."