

BY JAMES P. SHAW.

WAPAKONETA, a quiet little country town in the interior of Ohio, was one of the first to respond to the call of President Lincoln, in 1861, for seventy-five thousand volunteers to defend the Union, which was threatened by armed bodies of men in the South. The firing on Fort Sumter had greatly excited the people throughout the North, who, up to that time, could not believe their brethren of the Southern states really intended to carry their hatred of the old Union to such an extreme; but the attack upon the fortress of the United States left no doubt in their minds as to the intention of those who had defied the authority of the government and trampled its laws under foot.

A few days after the call of the president for volunteers, an unusual spectacle was presented on the streets of Wapakoneta. A recruiting officer, with a squad of soldiers, left the cars and marched up the principal street. Preceding them, were the never-to-be-forgotten fife and drum, playing "Yankee Doodle," the music attracting most of the inhabitants to the street, to witness this unusual martial display in the streets of their own town.

The officer, dressed in his neatly-fitting uniform, with sword hanging by his side, the bright muskets and mountings on the accouterments of the soldiers, glistening in the morning sun, were a sight never before witnessed in that little village. Although the coming of the soldiers was a surprise to most of the people, still they were expected by a few of the leading citizens, among whom was Colonel Harrington. That gentleman met the officer at the train, and conducted him and his men to the court house, where temporary quarters had been provided for them.

Men, women and children, eager to see the soldiers, gathered at the court house. Old men, who had seen service under Generals Scott and Taylor, in Mexico, and who were looked up to by the young people, were plied with questions as to what it all meant.

"That," said they, "is a recruiting officer, who is beating up for volunteers."

They encouraged the young men to enroll themselves in the defense of the stars and stripes, which had been insulted and trampled in the dust by armed traitors.

Old Josh Gundy, who had been a soldier in the war of 1812, and also in the war with Mexico, participating in the capture of the capital of that country, had around him a number of young men, who were eager listeners to the old soldier, as he told again the oft-repeated stories of his battles. Josh was very old now—almost eighty—yet he declared his intention to be the first to sign the roll from Wapakoneta, in defense of the dear old flag.

"I am going to offer myself to the captain as soon as he comes out, and set you young men an example of patriotism," said he.

The crowd, which had been largely increased, now began to get noisy, and loud calls were made for Colonel Harrington. After repeated calls, the colonel, accompanied by the officer, made his appearance, and when silence was obtained, introduced to the excited people Lieutenant Barber, "who," said he, "is here for the purpose of enlisting men for the army."

"My friends," he continued, "our country is in danger. The stars and stripes, that beautiful emblem of liberty we love so well, has been trailed in the dust, and the laws of our country set at naught. Large bodies of armed men, traitors to their country, are gathering in the South, for the purpose of overthrowing the government of the United States. Can we, as loyal citizens, permit them to destroy this republic, without raising a hand to prevent it?"

"No! No!" responded the people, with one accord.

"Let us, then, shoulder our muskets and rally 'round the starry banner, which has floated triumphantly over so many battle fields, and not lay down our arms until every traitor has been driven from the land."

At the close of the colonel's speech, there went up such a shout from the loyal people, that told plainly the officer would have no difficulty in procuring men to defend the old flag. Lieutenant Barber then stepped forward, and, in a few words, informed them that his coming to their beautiful little town was to give the young men an opportunity to enroll themselves in the service of the government.

"The president," said he, "has called upon the country for men to put down a rebellion, which has been raised in the South, by disloyal people, who are