

inquired after him. He always felt better after reading one of those letters; they increased the ray of hope he had permitted himself to indulge in, and made him long to write to Amy, telling her that with each day's absence, his love for her increased. Once, while in one of these moods, he got out his writing material and actually commenced a letter to her, but remembering his promise to her father, he tore the half-written letter into fragments and scattered them to the winds. After that time, he did not attempt to write, preferring to wait for some encouraging word from Amy. Would that word ever come?

Tom did not remain a private soldier long. Being a patriot, he was, therefore, a good soldier. No word of complaint was uttered by him at the many hardships he was called upon to undergo, always ready for any hazardous undertaking requiring more than ordinary courage to perform. Such exemplary conduct on the part of a soldier, was sure to attract the attention of his superior officers, and to meet with a proper reward. He had already been made a non-commissioned officer, to fill the place of one who had lost his life in battle. One day in December, just before the battle of Stone river, he was summoned to headquarters, and on arriving at the captain's tent, that officer handed him a large envelope, bearing the official stamp of the secretary of war.

"That," said the captain, handing him the envelope, "Mr. Norwood, is a commission as captain, in recognition of your faithful service and patriotism to your country. Captain Norwood, in congratulating you upon your promotion to a rank equal with my own, permit me to say that I do so with the greatest of pleasure, feeling that there could not have been a more worthy recipient."

To say that Tom was surprised, would but faintly describe his feelings—he was dumbfounded. He had not the slightest knowledge that his friends were interesting themselves in his behalf, and in his reply to the officer, he truthfully said—

"Sir, I do not understand this; there must be some mistake. The commission, which you tell me this envelope contains, must be for some one else."

"There is no mistake at all, captain. The commission, as you will see, is for Thomas Norwood, of Company C, Ohio Volunteers, and as you are the only man in the company by that name, there can be no mistake. The colonel requested me to say to you, captain, that you would be assigned to a command in a few days, and until that time, allow me to offer you the hospitality of my own quarters."

When Tom was convinced that this good fortune was, indeed, his own, he said—

"I am not aware that I deserve such recognition from the government. I am sure there are many

others who are more entitled to this honor than myself."

His comrades did not think as he did, and when they heard of his promotion, they gathered at the captain's quarters to offer him their sincere congratulations. In reply to their many kind expressions, he said—

"While I recognize my unworthiness, I shall at all times endeavor to do my duty in whatever position I may be assigned."

As Tom had always been a good private soldier, he was sure to make an efficient officer. Two days after his commission was handed him, he was given the command of a company in his own regiment. Two weeks from that time, he was called upon to lead his company into battle. He went into this engagement with new hopes and feelings—hopes that he might gain on the field, honor and distinction, and thus command the respect of those above him in rank. These thoughts were not for himself alone, but for one far dearer, to whom he longed to communicate the news of his good fortune. He became impatient, now, for the expected battle to take place, that he might lead his men to victory, and to let those who had shown confidence in him see that he would at least try not to disappoint them.

Early in the morning of December 30th, 1862, before the sun had begun its circuit, or darkness had fully given way to day, and while many of the soldiers were wrapped in their blankets, dreaming, perhaps, of the wives and little ones far away in the northern homes, the sanguinary battle of Murfreesboro began.

The rebels made a furious attack upon the Union pickets, driving them back into the camp of the main body of troops. So sudden and unexpected was this assault, that before the Union general could form his troops into line of battle to repel them, they were in his camp, shooting down the men as they came from their tents.

For a time, a general panic among the Union troops was imminent, but the danger was averted in time to save the army from utter rout. The commanding officer soon realized the situation, and with the aid of his subordinates, succeeded in rallying the almost demoralized troops, and hurled them against the exulting rebels with such force as to send them flying back into the wood, whence they with so much impetuosity had charged a few moments before.

The battle raged furiously all day. Brave men went down in death, under the murderous fire which the enemy poured into our ranks; others had limbs torn from their bodies, by hissing canon balls, as they came crashing through the timber; and others, with blood streaming from bullet wounds, were car-