

BY JAMES P. SHAW.

## III.

THE fourteenth army corps, to which our hero belonged, had been assigned to the center of the line in the approaching battle. It had marched from the extreme right to its new position, reaching it at midnight on the 18th of September. The men were overcome with long marches, and as soon as the column halted, lay down in their places and were soon sound asleep. Captain Norwood spent a couple of hours, ere he lay down, in writing letters and making needful preparations for the coming conflict. To his mother he wrote a long letter, telling her of the expected battle. In closing, he said: "Tell Amy that should I fall to-morrow, my last thoughts will be of her." He was low spirited on this night, having a foreboding that he would not survive the battle. It was this that prompted him to send the only message to Amy during the two years and a half he had been in the army. When he had finished he rolled himself in his blankets and lay down to rest, feeling that he needed all the strength he could command to sustain him in the coming struggle.

The sun arose in all its grandeur on the memorable 19th of September, 1863, dispelling the dense fog which had hung over the valley during the night, and revealing a smile on the face of beauteous nature as she looked up to heaven to meet his bright rays. Beautiful birds, with bright plumage, flitted from tree to tree, chirruping their morning songs of praise to the great God who had given them this lovely valley for a home. But, oh! how soon was this enchanted spot to be changed into a place of death, and its little brooks of clear, cold water to be crimsoned with the life blood of thousands of human beings, and the tall, majestic pines, now rearing their proud and lofty branches heavenward, to be stripped of their foliage, and their trunks riven by the terrible cannon ball!

Early that morning the Union forces were aroused from their sleep by a sudden attack upon their picket line. Scarcely had the echoes of the first shot died away when Captain Norwood was upon his feet calling upon the men to "fall in."

Said he, when they were in line, "We are about to engage the enemy once more, and I shall expect every man to do his duty. Keep your ranks well closed up and let every shot tell."

As he finished speaking, one of the men said: "Captain, in behalf of myself and comrades, let me say that where our commander leads we will follow."

The firing along the picket line was scattering at first, and at times ceased altogether; then came a volley, as if an entire regiment had discharged its pieces. This, with the occasional boom of artillery, told plainly to old soldiers that a determined attack was being made on the pickets. The men were ordered to leave their knapsacks and everything else that would encumber them. There was now heard a steady roll of musketry, which was rapidly drawing nearer to where the Union army stood in line of battle, awaiting the assault. Shells soon came flying through the tree tops, bursting in mid air and hurling a deadly rain of iron and lead upon the motionless ranks.

Immediately in the rear of Captain Norwood's position was General Thomas, commander of the gallant fourteenth army corps, surrounded by his staff, anxiously listening to the heavy firing, which now became general along the line. Nearer and nearer came the awful noise, as the battle raged furiously in front, to the right and to the left. Aides rode at full speed from different parts of the field, riding down men in their mad haste to report to the general some change in the line. The very air was laden with flying missiles, hissing and tearing through the timber, many finding lodgment in the body of some unfortunate soldier or horse. The latter, when mortally hurt, with eyes distended, would rear upon his hind feet and plunge madly forward, falling to the ground dead, not infrequently carrying his rider with him, who would suffer a broken arm or leg. With a dull, sickening thud, the musket balls struck their victims, who sank to the ground with the cry of "Oh!" or "My God, I'm shot!"

The first line had engaged the rebels but a short time when it gave way in utter confusion, followed closely by the enemy, who poured volley after volley into its disordered ranks. On came "Yank" and "Reb," the former endeavoring to escape the fury of the latter, and on reaching the main line the panic-stricken regiments passed over it to the rear. As the last Union soldiers leaped over the prostrate line, the latter rose and sent a deadly volley of musketry into