

Albany Register.

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FRIDAY APRIL 20, 1877.

FATES IN LIFE.

There were just one hundred and three of us as we marched out of the little inland village that morning, drums beating, flags flying, and men shouting and women weeping a farewell.

A month later, when the roll was called on the heights of Georgetown, there were only an even hundred in Company G.

And a month later still the roll was called on the morning of Manassas. Foot-sore, hungry, excited, and anxious, the men answered "aye" and "aye," and there were ninety-seven responses.

Down across the meadow, up along the edge of the wood, and there we rested and waited until the fight opened—waited half an hour longer than that, and then came the order to move.

Down went a company to the edge of the forest, spread out like a fan, and the skirmishers were hidden by smoke. The rattle of musketry increased; they had found targets for their bullets.

Crash! crash! roar! The line wavered, fell back, sprang forward with a cheer, and we were all there—all but those dead or wounded.

The roll was called at Arlington Heights, and seventy-four men responded—seventy-four from ninety-seven—twenty-three of the rank and file of Company G left dead along the little creek which meanders past banks of willows, over beds of gravel, and around gray old trees which have felt the blasts of half a century.

Winter came, and war was chained for awhile. When the south wind blew the frost away, and war shook off its lashings, there were but seventy men to answer roll-call.

Not a soldier in Company G had been wounded; not one of those who fell back to the river's bank could show a scratch from bullet or bayonet.

After Fredericksburg more recruits came down to us. We received them kindly, but we kept on counting eighteen, just as if Company G would be wiped out when the last old veteran went.

Then came Gettysburg. The eighteen old veterans were there, and the company numbered sixty-eight with the new men. Other divisions were held in reserve, or escaped the hottest of the fight, but ours was to beat back the fiercest charge of the bloody war—the charge against Round Top.

I was first sergeant then, and when we fell back I was in command. Along the fence, where death had struck them down, lay captain, both lieutenants, and thirteen of the rank and file—sixteen out of sixty-eight. The fifty-two retreated behind the line of battle, joining our regiment, and again and again before nightfall we gave Jackson's veterans shot for shot. It was to be, and when night fell the brave fifty-two were living and unharmed.

After Manassas they filled us up to eighty-five, but somehow we went on counting fifty-two, and felt as if the strangers were intruders. My commission as captain came one day, and the two lieutenants were men who had bravely won their shoulder-straps.

At Sharpsburg we numbered forty-nine—forty-nine old veterans I mean. The other three had been killed on picket. As we deployed to the left of the pike, and filed across the fields, I wondered if the new men would do us credit. We were eighty strong as a company, and over thirty of the men had never been under fire.

He had a fence, a long ditch, and a line of willows, and he did not yield until we crushed him by weight of numbers. As he retired we followed, men falling dead every moment. Unknown to us a weak three thousand were piercing Lee's line.

He saw his danger, and a battery wheeled into the gap, opened on us, and the left and center of our brigade swung back under the fearful rain of grape-shot and shell. The right caught the order to retreat, and to go forward.

The smoke and the flame hid us for a moment, and then we reached the guns, leaped over them, crawled under them, shot, stabbed, shouted and hurrahed. The whole battery was ours! We seized the guns to drag them off, when a heavy line of battle came down through the gap, closed it up, and men fought hand-to-hand over the cannon, over the caissons, over the great heaps of dead on the grass.

"Pretty hot in there, Captain!" shouted a brigadier as the torn and mangled remnant halted to reform. "Pretty hot!" My God! it was the work of fiends and devils! Forty-nine of the bronzed old fighters in Company G had dashed at the cannon; only twenty-four came back! Twenty-five were lying dead under the guns, heaped up so that they blocked the way of wheels.

The recruits were there to answer "aye" at the next roll-call. No one thought ill of them; men cannot turn to devils at once. We still had a strong company—stronger than some, but we went on counting twenty-four—counting only those who would stand until touched by the flame of death.

The end was not yet, the end was coming. There were no new recruits for my company, but one died a hero in a moment; daylight changed to darkness, and when I opened my eyes again the surgeon stood over me, and my left arm gone.

There was no one to call the roll. The stark, stiff form of the lieutenant had been given to earth, and the seven men who represented Company G looked to themselves. Fate had a choice who should be taken and who left, and death passed me by.

Field serjeant ain't no hope uv purifyin the government, and he will go back to defendin these. I would hev saved the country, but ez the country didn't want to be saved it may be tattered.

Longfellow received \$3,000 for his "Hanging of the Crane," while the highest price paid in this country for hanging a man is twenty-five dollars.

The Maine Legislature is inconsistent. It makes pool-selling a misdemeanor, and also punishes those who get up church lotteries, grab-bags, etc.

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