STEPHEN CRANE

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FL 9745

A SELECTION FROM "THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE," THE POETRY, AND THE STORY, "THE VETERAN"

READ BY JARED REED (OF THE PHOENIX ACTING CO.)

SELECTED, RECORDED, AND WITH A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION BY SAMUEL CHARTERS

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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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STEPHEN CRANE

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READ BY Jared Reed OF THE PHOENIX ACTING COMPANY

selected, recorded, and with a critical introduction by SAMUEL CHARTERS

STEPHEN CRANE'S "THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE"

Samuel B. Charters

Often children seem to spend much of their young summers in furious imitations of the adult game of war. For weapons they have plastic toy rifles or little metal pistols that shoot noisy caps, their helmets are made of cardboard or paper mache, their clothes are an assortment of garments from old soldier or cowboy costumes, with perhaps a belt or a webbing strap from a cast off military uniform. They will spend hours in loud planning in the shade of a tree or on a front porch; then straggle off behind the house or toward an empty lot, pretending to march in military formation. There will be children of all ages, even the girls, crouching behind parked cars "shooting" at each other with their toy weapons. Even the youngest child has already learned that adult society is seriously concerned with war, or with violent conflict between men. Not only are they shown "entertainment" that presents war to to them, but they see fathers or uncles, sometimes even older brothers, in uniform, they hear long descriptions of military service; sometimes they're even given souvenirs, like captured medals or weapons. Their education in history emphasises the glorious nature of war; if they are American children, the heroic struggles at Bunker Hill, Valley Forge, and Gettysburg; if they are European children perhaps Agincourt or Verdun. It is as though Stephen Crane's ironic comment,

". . . Point for them the virtue of
slaughter,
Make plain to them the excellence of
killing
And a field where a thousand corpses
lie."

had been taken as an admonition. The children, in their impatience to enter the adult world, learn the lessons quickly. Across the summer afternoon will come the childish shouts of "I got you", and another child will rise in a slow, ugly pantomime of death.

Nearly every child is left with what might be called a "dream of heroism" as a result of this early experience. Usually it is a variation on the cheap war entertainment that is presented to them, and its theme is one of the pain and sacrifice and heroic glory. The romantic statues in public parks, the ceremonies at "Memorial" or "Armistice" days emphasize that not even death is too great a sacrifice, and the figures in the stories and motion pictures presented to children rise to heights of heroic action despite almost overwhelming danger and fear. Much of what they are shown is unpleasant, but it would perhaps be difficult for children to understand the necessity and justification for war without these years of painful education on the part of adult society.

I have often felt that Stephen Crane's novella "THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE: An Episode of the American Civil War" is most completely understood as an expression of this dream of heroism. The dream lingers from childhood to adolescence; then usually becomes blurred by other ideals and attitudes, but there are some men who carry it with them into maturity. Of all the men who have written about the experience of war only Stephen Crane seems to have brought to his writing the sense of this heroic dream, and it is perhaps this quality in the work which has given THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE its place in literature. When Crane wrote it he was still in his early twenties, and he was living through one of the great periods of American sentimentality over the heroism of war. It was the 1890's, and the Civil War had become part of the American past. Its moments of glory, real and imagined, were already part of the education of every schoolboy, and there were thousands of veterans mingling the memory of the war with their nostalgia for their youth. The early death of Crane's father, then that of his mother when he was nineteen, seems to have left him in many ways still immature, and he was sensitive, emotional young man. During the summer of 1893 he read through "Battles and Leaders Of The Civil War", lingered over Winslow Homer's Civil War drawings; then in a sudden creative outburst wrote his novella in ten days. Despite his youth he was already an experienced writer, he somehow cast his story into a form completely suited to his talent, and the result was a masterpiece.

There has been a great deal of critical writing about Crane, but I have often felt that much of it somehow missed the point of Crane's achievement. The usual judgement, to be found in a number of introductions to the book, is that Crane continues to be read because he was one of the first "modern" writers, because his style has the sharp clarity of a newspaper account, because he was the first to picture the common man in the great struggle of war. There is a partial truth in all of these statements, but it seems to me that they fail to explain the continuing interest in THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE. Literary considerations are of no concern to the general reader. Crane was only one of a number of younger men writing in the new journalistic feature style, and his writing has many of the characteristics of this newspaper style; particularly the clarity of description and the emphasis on the "common man" - since it was, after all the common man who read the newspapers. This clarity and the concern with the individual has been, from Crane's time to the present, a distinctive feature of the best journalistic writing. It is certainly true, as has been stated many times, that American fiction at this time was largely dominated by the sentimental novel, but this is not too important a consideration as far as Crane is concerned. His reading included most of the European writers of the period, including the realists like Zola, and he was particularly excited by Tolstoy. A passage like this from WAR AND PEACE -

". . . The whole air was reeking with smoke. The soldier's faces were smudged with powder. Some were plugging with their ramrods, others putting powder on the touch pans and getting charges out of their pouches, others were firing their guns. But it was impossible to see at whom they were firing from the smoke, which the wind did not lift." -

might just as well have been taken from THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE.

Crane's novella has seemed to me to take its place in literature as the most intense statement of the attitude toward war. The title itself, referring to the battle wound, is an expression of the dream of heroism. Crane's story of a young farm boy who runs on the first day of battle, wanders in confusion until nightfall, rejoins his regiment and fights like a "wildcat," has much the outline of the adolescent heroic day dream. The book, in fact, has little to it but the expression of this dream, heightened with a reporter's brilliant sense of detail. The youth, Henry Fleming, emerges from the blur of the men around him only by the closeness with which Crane follows his actions. The little that is told of his background is a commonplace mention of a young boy burning to enlist, but discouraged by his mother. Henry

himself is described as lying in his tent after hearing a rumor that the regiment was about to move, dreaming about heroism.

". . . He had of course dreamed of battles all his life - of vague and bloody conflicts that had thrilled him with their sweep and fire. In visions he had seen himself in many struggles. . ."

The drama of Crane's story, in fact, is built around the emotional struggle of the youth to fulfill the conventional attitudes of heroism in the face of noisy, terrifying reality. Once Crane has flung him into "the reek of battle" he becomes simply a figure that Crane is describing, as though it were Crane himself acting out his dream of heroism. So little depth is given to the characterization that it is difficult to explain, in any terms which would apply particularly to Henry Fleming, why he acted as he did under fire. Someone discussing the text is usually thrown back on a line like "A boy in battle for the first time will feel all the emotions of young Henry Fleming," but Crane himself makes it clear that most of the regiment stood fast the first day and fought with dogged courage the second despite a despairing awareness that the battle was lost. He gives us no reason for Henry's flight; nothing that would set him apart from the men around him. He simply describes the events as a journalist, without going intensively into motivation or development of his central figure. The work, in fact, made its first appearance as a newspaper serial. Like most good journalists he is able to bring the lesser figures to life with a few words, but, also like them, his central figure must have some importance beyond his own presentation. It is as an expression of the adolescent dream of military heroism that Henry Fleming takes on his importance.

It is always difficult to consider the rest of Crane's work without the uneasy feeling that it has been given a great deal of attention because of its relationship to Crane's masterpiece. A number of critics, among them Ludwig Lewisohn, have even suggested that an earlier novella, MAGGIE: A GIRL OF THE STREETS, written when Crane was twenty-one, is a more important work. All of Crane's first reportorial pieces on the life of the slums and the Bowery have considerable vividness, but it is in them, I feel, that his limitations of attitude are most obvious. He seemed to regard nearly all of life as a physical clash between men or between men and some brute physical force, such as the sea in THE OPEN BOAT. The heroine of MAGGIE becomes little more than a pathetic figure caught in the clash of masculine strength, and it is difficult to remember, at times, that the story is about Maggie, and not about her brother, Jimmie. Crane seems to have had almost no understanding of women or of any kind of more gentle emotion. His attempts at love stories, like the well known "The Bride Comes To Yellow Sky", quickly revert to a theme of violence and a clash between men. It is this lack of emotional sensitivity which limits much of the early work. His alum figures are oppressed by a brutality that is almost incomprehensible, and, as in THE RED BADGE, other figures than Crane's central figure seem to escape the oppression with emotional attitudes that are beyond him to express. Lewisohn, in discussing Crane, wrote,

". . . the writing, despite brilliant flecks, is hard and cold. An ultimate lifelessness, a paralysis of some function of the soul is troublingly evident in all he wrote."[1]

There is a marked limitation to much that Crane wrote. Even a journalistic success like "The Open Boat", beginning with its dramatic feature-story sentence "None of them knew the color of the sky",, fails somehow to completely engage the emotions. Crane hurls his thinly outlined figures into situations against which they must struggle so blindly that it is not without some impatience that even stories as brilliantly told as "The Open Boat" are read closely to their conclusion. In many of the early slum stories the view of character is so limited and the end of the story so obvious that it is only the "brilliant fleck" in the writing that sustain the interest.

With the publication of the RED BADGE OF COURAGE Crane became an internationally known figure, and found himself regarded as a "dashing" young writer, much like Richard Harding Davis, already a popular idol when Crane began writing. There was considerable interest in the kind of journalistic war pieces that Davis and Rudyard Kipling were writing, and Crane signed a contract to write for the Bacheller Syndicate as a correspondent. In 1896 he was sent to the American west, where he gathered material that led to stories like "The Blue Hotel" and "The Bride Comes To Yellow Sky." In December, 1896, he was involved in the disastrous filibustering expedition to Cuba that he described in "The Open Boat", and then found himself at last in war. He was sent to cover first the war between Turkey and Greece; then after an interlude in England, to Cuba and the Spanish-American War. He was still in his twenties, a tall, nervous man with a drooping mustache. The experience of war seems to have deeply disturbed him. Richard Harding Davis was with Crane in an advance position in Cuba, and they found themselves under fire. Crane became so excited that he stood up and began walking back and forth, exposing himself to the whizzing bullets, and Davis finally had to physically pull him back into the trench. Although he was now experiencing war for himself his writing never again achieved the emotional intensity of THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE. The later writing was often conventional, and the emotional intensity of THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE. The later writing often conventional, and the emotions often colored with the sentimentality of the journalistic feature piece. He seemed to withdraw into an attitude even more limited than that of his first writing years. The stories in the strangely titled WOUNDS IN THE RAIN, sketches of his Cuban experiences published after his death from tuberculosis in 1899, are often repellent in their obsession with physical suffering. He was in poor health for three or four years before his death, emotionally disturbed, and he was angered by attacks on his personal life by the American press. It is this growing despair that lies heavily on the later writing. Perhaps one of his most moving later pieces was a return to the hero of THE RED BADGE, Henry Fleming, in the short story "The Veteran." It is in many ways a fulfillment of the heroic dream that seemed never to leave Crane's writing.

As in THE RED BADGE, where Crane's attitudes found not only a form but an expression suited to his writing style, his poetry often has a startling intensity. The style of the poems probably was suggested to him by a reading of Emily Dickinson's poems that he heard at his first dinner with William Dean Howells, but the bitterness is Crane's own, and the poems have a distinctive, harsh diction. At first reading the attitudes of the poem "War Is Kind" would seem to be a contradiction of those of THE RED BADGE - with lines like:

"Mother whose heart hung humble as a
button
On the bright splendid shroud of your
son,
Do not weep.
War Is kind.

but the novella actually takes no attitude toward the war it so painfully describes, and it is perhaps in these poems that he expressed himself most openly. Often their attitudes seem to be little more than youthful jeering at the ineffectuality of human knowledge and belief, as in many of the short poems from his first collection THE BLACK RIDERS, published in 1895.

I saw a man pursuing the horizon;
Round and round they sped.
I was disturbed at this;
I accosted the man.
"It is futile," I said,
"You can never - "

"You lie," he cried,
And ran on.

The images of the poems are often confused, however, and their effect is weakened by his inability to bring them to a fucus. Some of the most moving poems are the least successful from the artistic point of view. They are the poems which he wrote about his relationship with Cora Taylor, an older woman who was, when Crane met her, the proprietess of a brothel in Jacksonville, Florida, and who later became his wife. The pain in these poems is real and intense, and their rare moments of peace are as close as Crane came to an expression of his own emotions.

Any work of art that has become a part of the cultural background has achieved its importance because of its expression of some experience which is common to many individuals. Crane's lesser work, although it has an originality of expression and clarity of vision, is limited by the narrow area of experience in which he chose to set his stories. THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE is more than this, and as a result it remains the work of Crane's which still reaches the widest audience. Its intense reality becomes part of a larger reality, reality of the dream of heroism.

A NOTE ON THE PERFORMER

Jared Reed is one of the talented group of younger actors who have given off-Broadway theatre in New York much of its excitement and vitality. Now a member of the Phoenix Acting Company he has appeared in productions as diverse as the road company of "Paint Your Wagon" and in the Phoenix company's very successful production of "Hamlet" in the 1960 season. His television appearances have included

1. Ludwig Lewisohn, The Story of American Literature, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1932. Page 320.

dramatizations from the works of Stephen Crane, among them "The Red Badge of Courage" and "The Open Boat". He spent many years in the southern mountains and has toured as a folk singer, performing the songs of his own Scottish-American folk tradition. This understanding of the older American rural life, with his Marine combat experience in the second World War, has given his performance of "The Red Badge", and of Stephen Crane's poetry and short story, a memorable depth and insight.

SIDE ONE - from THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE

Band 1. Henry Fleming
Band 2. The First Day of Battle
Band 3. A Night Interlude

SIDE TWO - from THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE concluded.

Band 1. The Morning Attack

A SELECTION FROM THE POETRY

Band 2. From "War Is Kind", Nos. 1 and 24.
From "The Black Riders", Nos. 15, 64, and 65.

THE SHORT STORY "THE VETERAN"

Band 3. The Veteran

SIDE I, Band 1.

THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE

The cold passed reluctantly from the earth, and the retiring fogs revealed an army stretched out on the hills, resting. As the landscape changed from brown to green, the army awakened, and began to tremble with eagerness at the noise of rumors. It cast its eyes upon the roads, which were growing from long troughs of liquid mud to proper thoroughfares. A river, amber-tinted in the shadow of its banks, purled at the army's feet; and at night, when the stream had become of a sorrowful blackness, one could see across it the red, eye-like gleam of hostile camp fires set in the low brows of distant hills.

Once a certain tall soldier developed virtues and went resolutely to wash a shirt. He came flying back from a brook waving his garment banner-like. He was swelled with a tale he had heard from a reliable friend, who had heard it from a truthful cavalry-man, who had heard it from his trustworthy brother, one of the orderlies at division headquarters. He adopted the important air of a herald in red and gold.

"We're goin' t' move t'-morrah -- sure," he said pompously to a group in the company street. "We're goin' 'way up the river, cut across, an' come around in behint 'em."

To his attentive audience he drew a loud and elaborate plan of a very brilliant campaign. When he had finished, the blue-clothed men scattered into small arguing groups between the rows of squat brown huts. A Negro teamster who had been dancing upon a cracker box with the hilarious encouragement of twoscore soldiers was deserted. He sat mournfully down. Smoke drifted lazily from a multitude of quaint chimneys.

"It's a lie! that's all it is -- a thunderin' lie!" said another private loudly. His smooth face was flushed, and his hands were thrust sulkily into his trousers' pockets.

He took the matter as an affront to him. "I don't believe the derned old army's ever going to move. We're set. I've got ready to move eight times in the last two weeks, and we ain't moved yet."

The tall soldier felt called upon to defend the truth of a rumor he himself had introduced. He and the loud one came near to fighting over it.

A corporal began to swear before the assemblage. He had just put a costly board floor in his house, he said. During the early spring he had refrained from adding extensively to the comfort of his environment because he had felt that the army might start on the march at any moment. Of late, however, he had been impressed that they were in a sort of eternal camp.

Many of the men engaged in a spirited debate. One outlined in a peculiarly lucid manner all the plans of the commanding general. He was opposed by men who advocated that there were other plans of campaign. They clamored at each other, numbers making futile bids for the popular attention. Meanwhile, the soldier who had fetched the rumor bustled about with much importance. He was continually assailed by questions.

"What's up, Jim?"

"Th' army's goin' t' move."

"Ah, what yeh talkin' about? How yeh know it is?"

"Well, yeh kin b'lieve me or not, jest as yeh like. I don't care a hang."

There was much food for thought in the manner in which he replied. He came near to convincing them by disdaining to produce proofs. They grew much excited over it.

There was a youthful private who listened with eager ears to the words of the tall soldier and to the varied comments of his comrades. After receiving a full of discussions concerning marches and attacks, he went to his hut and crawled through an intricate hole that served it as a door. He wished to be alone with some new thoughts that had lately come to him.

He lay down on a wide bunk that stretched across the end of the room. In the other end, cracker boxes were made to serve as furniture. They were grouped about the fireplace. A picture from an illustrated weekly was upon the log walls, and three rifles were paralleled on pegs. Equipments hung on handy projections, and some tin dishes lay upon a small pile of firewood. A folded tent was serving as a roof. The sunlight, without, beating upon it, made it glow a light yellow shade. A small window shot an oblique square of whiter light upon the cluttered floor. The smoke from the fire at times neglected the clay chimney and wreathed into the room, and this flimsy chimney of clay and sticks made endless threats to set ablaze the whole establishment.

The youth was in a little trance of astonishment. So they were at last going to fight. On the marrow, perhaps, there would be a battle, and he would be in it. For a time he was obliged to labor to make himself believe. He could not accept with assurance an omen that he was about to mingle in one of those great affairs of the earth . . .

He had burned several times to enlist. Tales of great movements shook the land. They might not be distinctly Homeric, but there seemed to be much glory in them. He had read of marches, sieges, conflicts, and he had longed to see it all. His busy mind had drawn for him large pictures extravagant in color, lurid with breathless deeds.

But his mother had discouraged him. She had affected to look with some contempt upon the quality of his war ardor and patriotism. She could calmly seat herself, and with no apparent difficulty give him many hundreds of reasons why he was of vastly more importance on the farm than on the field of battle. She had had certain ways of expression that told him that her statements on the subject came from a deep conviction. Moreover, on her side, was his belief that he ethical motive in the argument was impregnable.

At last, however, he had made firm rebellion against this yellow light thrown upon the color of his ambitions. The newspapers, the gossip of the village, his own picturings, had aroused him to an uncheckable degree. They were in truth fighting finely down there. Almost every day the newspapers printed accounts of a decisive victory.

One night, as he lay in bed, the winds had carried to him the clangoring of the church bell as some enthusiast jerked the rope frantically to tell the twisted news of a great battle. This voice of the people rejoicing in the night had made him shiver in a prolonged ecstasy of excitement. Later, he had gone down to his mother's room and had spoken thus: "Ma, I'm going to enlist."

"Henry, don't you be a fool," his mother had replied. She had then covered her face with the quilt. There was an end to the matter for that night.

Nevertheless, the next morning he had gone to a town that was near his mother's farm and had enlisted in a company that was forming there. When he had returned home his mother was milking the brindle cow. Four others stood waiting. "Ma, I've enlisted," he had said to her diffidently. There was a short silence. "The Lord's will be done, Henry," she had finally replied, and had then continued to milk the brindle cow. . .

Band 2.

The brigade was halted in the fringe of a grove. The men crouched among the trees and pointed their restless guns out at the fields. They tried to look beyond the smoke.

Out of this haze they could see running men. Some shouted information and gestured as they hurried.

The men of the new regiment watched and listened eagerly, while their tongues ran on in gossip of the battle. They mouthed rumors that had flown like birds out of the unknown . . .

The din in front swelled to a tremen-

dous chorus. The youth and his fellows were frozen to silence. They could see a flag that tossed in the smoke angrily. Near it were the blurred and agitated forms of troops. There came a turbulent stream of men across the fields. A battery changing positions at a frantic gallop scattered the stragglers right and left.

A shell screaming like a storm banshee went over the huddled heads of the reserves. It landed in the grove, and exploding redly flung the brown earth. There was a little shower of pine needles.

Bullets began to whistle among the branches and nip at the trees. Twigs and leaves came sailing down. It was as if a thousand axes, wee and invisible, were being wielded. Many of the men were constantly dodging and ducking their heads.

The lieutenant of the youth's company was shot in the hand. He began to swear so wondrously, that a nervous laugh went along the regimental line. The officer's profanity sounded conventional. It relieved the tightened senses of the new men. It was as if he had hit his fingers with a tack hammer at home.

He held the wounded member carefully away from his side so that the blood would not drip upon his trousers.

The captain of the company, tucking his sword under his arm, produced a handkerchief and began to bind with it the lieutenant's wound. And they disputed as to how the binding should be done.

The battle flag in the distance jerked about madly. It seemed to be struggling to free itself from an agony. The billowing smoke was filled with horizontal flashes.

Men running swiftly emerged from it. They grew in numbers until it was seen that the whole command was fleeing. The flag suddenly sank down as if dying. Its motion as it fell was a gesture of despair.

Wild yells came from behind the walls of smoke. A sketch in gray and red dissolved into a moblike body of men who galloped like wild horses.

The veteran regiments on the right and left of the 304th immediately began to jeer. With the passionate song of the bullets and the banshee shrieks of shells were mingled loud catcalls and bits of facetious advice concerning places of safety. . .

The battle reflection that shone for an instant in the faces on the mad current made the youth feel that forceful hands from heaven would not have been able to have held him in place if he could have got intelligent control of his legs.

There was an appalling imprint upon these faces. The struggle in the smoke had pictured an exaggeration of itself on the bleached cheeks and in the eyes wild with one desire.

The sight of this stampede exerted a floodlike force that seemed able to drag sticks and stones and men from the ground. They of the reserves had to hold on. They grew pale and firm, and red and quaking.

The youth achieved one little thought in the midst of this chaos. The composite monster which had caused the other troops to flee had not then appeared. He resolved to get a view of it, and then, he thought he might very likely run better than the best of them.

There were moments of waiting. The youth thought of the village street at home before the arrival of the circus parade on a day in the spring. He remembered how he had stood, a small, thrillful boy, prepared to follow the dingy lady upon the white horse, or the band in its faded chariot. He saw the yellow road, the lines of expectant people, and the sober houses. He particularly remembered an old fellow who used to sit upon a cracker box in front of the store and feign to despise such exhibitions. A thousand details of color and form surged in his mind. The old fellow upon the cracker box appeared in middle prominence.

Some one cried, "Here they come!"

There was rustling and muttering among the men. They displayed a feverish desire to have every possible cartridge ready to their hands. The boxes were pulled around into various positions, and adjusted with great care. It was as if seven hundred new bonnets were being tried on.

The tall soldier, having prepared his rifle, produced a red handkerchief of some kind. He was engaged in knitting it about his throat with exquisite attention to its position, when the cry was repeated up and down the line in a muffled roar of sound.

"Here they come! Here they come!" Gun locks clicked.

Across the smoke-infested fields came a brown swarm of running men who were giving shrill yells. They came on, stopping and swinging their rifles at all angles. A flag, tilted forward, sped near the front.

As he caught sight of them the youth was momentarily startled by a thought that perhaps his gun was not loaded. He stood trying to rally his faltering intellect so that he might recollect the moment when he had loaded, but he could not . . .

The man at the youth's elbow was mumbling, as if to himself: "Oh, we're in for it now! oh, we're in for it now!"

The captain of the company had been pacing excitedly to and fro in the rear. He coaxed in schoolmistress fashion, as to a congregation of boys with primers. His talk was endless repetition. "Reserve your fire, boys -- don't shoot till I tell you -- save your fire -- wait till they get close up -- don't be damned fools -- "

Perspiration streamed down the youth's face, which was soiled like that of a weeping urchin. He frequently, with a nervous movement, wiped his eyes with his coat sleeve. His mouth was still a little way open.

He got one glance at the foe-swarming field in front of him, and instantly ceased to debate the question of his piece being loaded. Before he was ready to begin -- before he had announced to himself that he was about to fight -- he threw the obedient, well-balanced rifle into position and fired a first wild shot. Directly he was working at his weapon like an automatic affair . . .

There was a singular absence of heroic poses. The men bending and surging in their haste and rage were in every impossible attitude. The steel ramrods clanked and clanged with incessant din as the men pounded them furiously into the hot rifle barrels. The flaps of the cartridge boxes were all unfastened, and bobbed idiotically with each movement. The rifles, once loaded, were jerked to the shoulder and fired without apparent aim into the smoke or at one of the blurred and shifting forms which upon the field before the regiment had been growing larger and larger like puppets under a magician's hands.

The officers, at their intervals, rearward, neglected to stand in picturesque attitudes. They were bobbing to and fro roaring directions and encouragements. The dimensions of their howls were extraordinary. They expended their lungs with prodigal wills. And often they nearly stood upon their heads in their anxiety to observe the enemy on the other side of the tumbling smoke.

The lieutenant of the youth's company had encountered a soldier who had fled screaming at the first volley of his comrades. Behind the lines these two were acting a little osolated scene. The man was blubbering and staring with sheeplike eyes at the lieutenant, who had seized him by the collar and was pommeling him. He drove him back into the ranks with many blows. The soldier went mechanically, dully, with his animal-like eyes upon the officer. Perhaps there was to him a divinity expressed in the voice of the other -- stern, hard, with no reflection of fear in it. He tried to reload his gun, but his shaking hands prevented. The lieutenant was obliged to assist him. . .

At last an exultant yell went along the quivering line. The firing dwindled from an uproar to a last vindictive popping. As the smoke slowly eddied away, the youth saw that the charge had been repulsed. The enemy were scattered into reluctant groups. He saw a man climb to the top of the fence, straddle the rail, and fire a parting shot. The waves had receded, leaving bits of dark debris upon the ground.

Some of the men in the regiment began to whoop frenziedly. Many were silent. Apparently they were trying to contemplate themselves. After the fever had left his veins, the youth thought that at last he was going to suffocate. He became aware of the foul atmosphere in which he had been struggling. He was grimy and dripping like a laborer in a foundry. He grasped his canteen and took a long swallow of the warmed water.

A sentence with variations went up and down the line. "Well, we've halt 'em back. We've helt 'em back; darned if we haven't." The men said it blissfully, leering at each other with dirty smiles. . .

The youth awakened slowly. He came gradually back to a position from which he could regard himself. For moments he had been scrutinizing his person in a dazed way as if he had never seen himself. Then he picked up his cap from the ground. He wriggled in his jacket to make a more comfortable fit, and kneeling relaced his shoe. He thoughtfully mopped his reeking features.

So it was all over at last! The

supreme trial had been passed. The red, formidable difficulties of war had been vanquished. He went into an ecstasy of self-satisfaction. He had the most delightful sensation of his life. Standing as if apart from himself, he viewed that last scene. He perceived that the man who had fought thus was magnificant. . .

There were some handshakings and deep speeches with men whose features were familiar, but with whom the youth now felt the bonds of tied hearts. He helped a cursing comrade to bind up a wound of the shin.

But, of a sudden, cries of amazement broke out along the ranks of the new regiment. "Here they come again! Here they come ag'in!" The man who had sprawled upon the ground started up and said, "Gosh!"

The youth turned quick eyes upon the field. He discerned forms begin to swell in masses out of a distant wood. He again saw the tilted flag speeding forward.

The shells, which had ceased to trouble the regiment for a time, came swirling again, and exploded in the grass or among the leaves of the trees. They looked to be strange war flowers bursting into fierce bloom. . .

The youth stared. Surely, he thought, this impossible thing was not about to happen. He waited as if he expected the enemy to suddenly stop, apologize, and retire bowing. It was all a mistake.

But the firing began somewhere on the regimental line and ripped along in both directions. The level sheets of flame developed great clouds of smoke that tumbled and tossed in the mild wind near the ground for a moment, and then rolled through the ranks as through a gate. The clouds were tinged an earth-like yellow in the sunrays and in the shadow were a sorry blue. The flag was sometimes eaten and lost in this mass of vapor, but more often it projected, sun-touched, resplendent.

Into the youth's eyes there came a look that one can see in the orbs of a jaded horse. His neck was quivering with nervous weakness and the muscles of his arms felt numb and bloodless. His hands, too, seemed large and awkward as if he was wearing invisible mittens. And there was a great uncertainty about his knee joints. . .

A man near him who up to this time had been working feverishly at his rifle suddenly stopped and ran with howls. A lad whose face had borne an expression of exalted courage, the majesty of he who dares give his life, was, at an instant, smitten abject. He blanched like one who has come to the edge of a cliff at midnight and is suddenly made aware. There was a revelation. He, too, threw down his gun and fled. There was no shame in his face. He ran like a rabbit.

Others began to scamper through the smoke. The youth turned his head, shaken from trance by this movement as if the regiment was leaving him behind. He saw the few fleeting forms.

He yelled then with fright and swung about. For a moment, in the great clamor, he was like a proverbial chicken. He lost the direction of safety. Destruction threatened him from all points. Directly he began to speed toward the rear in great leaps. His rifle and cap were gone. His unbuttoned coat bulged in the wind. The flap of his cartridge box bobbed wildly, and his canteen, by its slender cord, swung out behind. On his face was all the horror of those things he had imagined . . .

Band 3.

RED BADGE

The youth went slowly toward the fire . . . As he reeled, he bethought him of the welcome his comrades would give him. He had a conviction that he would soon feel in his sore heart the barbed missiles of ridicule. He had no strength to invent a tale; he would be a soft target.

He made vague plans to go off into the deeper darkness and hide, but they were all destroyed by the voices of exhaustion and pain from his body. His ailments, clamoring, forced him to seek the place of food and rest, at whatever cost.

He swung unsteadily toward the fire. He could see the forms of men throwing black shadows in the red light, and as he went nearer it became known to him in some way that the ground was strewn with sleeping men.

Of a sudden he confronted a black and monstrous figure. A rifle barrel caught glinting beams. "Halt! Halt!" He was dismayed for a moment, but he presently thought he recognized the nervous voice. As he stood tottering before the rifle barrel, he called out: "Why, hello, Wilson, you - you here?"

The rifle was lowered to a position of caution and the loud soldier came slowly forward. He peered into the youth's face. "That you, Henry?"

"Yes it's - it's me."

"Well, well, ol' boy," said the other, "by ginger, I'm glad t' see yeh! I give yeh up fer a goner. I thought yeh was dead sure enough". There was husky emotion in his voice.

The youth found that now he could barely stand upon his feet. There was a sudden sinking of his forces. He thought he must hasten to produce his tale to protect him from the missiles already at the lips of his redoubtable comrades. So, staggering before the loud soldier he began: "Yes, yes. I've - I've had an awful time. I've been all over. Way over on the right. Ter'ble fightin' over there. I had an awful time. I got separated from the regiment. Over on the right I got shot. In the head. I never seen sech fightin'. Awful time. I don't see how I could 'a got separated from th' reg'ment. I got shot, too."

His friend had stepped quickly forward. "What? Got shot? Why didn't you say so first? Poor ol' boy, we must - hol' on a minnit; what am I doin'. I'll call Simpson."

Another figure at that moment loomed in the gloom. They could see that it was the corporal. "Who yeh talkin' to, Wilson?" he demanded. His voice was anger-toned. "Who yeh talkin' to? Yeh the derndest sentinel - why - hello, Henry, you here? Why I thought you was dead four hours ago! Great Jerusalem, they keep turnin' up every ten minutes or so! We thought we'd lost forty-two men by straight count, but if they keep on a-comin' this way, we'll git the comp'ny all back by mornin' yit. Where was yeh?"

"Over on th' right. I got separated -" began the youth with considerable glibness.

But his friend had interrupted hastily. "Yes, an' he got shot in th' head an' he's in a fix, an' we must see t' him right away." He rested his rifle in the hollow of his left arm and his right around the youth's shoulder.

"Gee, it must hurt like thunder!" he said.

The youth leaned heavily upon his friend. "Yes, it hurts - hurts a good deal," he replied. There was a faltering in his voice.

"Oh," said the corporal. He linked his arm in the youth's and drew him forward. "Come on, Henry. I'll take keer'a yeh."

As they went on together the loud private called out after them: "Put 'im t' sleep in my blanket, Simpson. An' - hol' on a minnit. - Here's my canteen. It's full 'a coffee. Look at his head by th' fire an' see how it looks. Maybe it's pretty bad 'un. When I git relieved in a couple 'a minnits, I'll be over an' see t' him." . . .

On the other side of the fire the youth observed an officer asleep, seated bolt upright, with his back against a tree. There was something perilous in his position. Badgered by dreams, perhaps, he swayed with little and bounces and starts, like an old, toddy-stricken grandfather in a chimney corner. Dust and stains were upon his face. His lower jaw hung down as if lacking strength to assume its normal position. He was the picture of an exhausted soldier after a feast of war.

He had evidently gone to sleep with his sword in his arms. These two had slumbered in an embrace, but the weapon had been allowed in time to fall unheeded to the ground. The brass mounted hilt lay in contact with some parts of the fire.

Within the gleam of rose and orange light from the burning sticks were other soldiers, snoring and heaving, or lying deathlike in slumber. A few pairs of legs were stuck forth, rigid and straight. The shoes displayed the mud or dust of marches and bits of rounded trousers, protruding from the blankets, showed rents and tears from hurried pitchings through the dense brambles.

The fire crackled musically. From it swelled light smoke. Overhead the foliage moved softly. The leaves, with their faces turned toward the blaze, were colored shifting hues of silver, often edged with red. Far off to the right, through a window in the forest could be seen a handful of stars lying, like glittering pebbles, on the black level of night . . .

END OF SIDE 1

SIDE II, Band 1.

When the youth awoke it seemed to him that he had been asleep for a thousand years, and he felt sure that he opened his eyes upon an unexpected world. Gray mists were slowly shifting before the first efforts of the sun rays. An

impending splendor could be seen in the eastern sky. An icy dew had chilled his face, and immediately upon arousing he curled further down into his blanket. He stared for a while at the leaves overhead, moving in a heraldic wind of the day.

The distance was splintering and blaring with the noise of fighting. There was in the sound an expression of a deadly persistency, as if it had not begun and was not to cease . . . A sputtering of musketry was always to be heard. Later, the cannon entered the dispute. In the fog-filled air their voices made a thudding sound. The reverberations were continued. This part of the world led a strange battleful existence.

The youth's regiment was marched to relieve a command that had lain long in some damp trenches. The men took positions behind a curving line of rifle pits that had been turned up, like a long furrow, along a line of woods. Before them was a level stretch, peopled with short deformed stumps. From the woods beyond came the dull popping of the skirmishers and pickets, firing in the fog. From the right came the noise of a terrific fracas.

The men cuddled behind the small embankment and sat in easy attitudes awaiting their turn. Many had their backs to the firing. The youth's friend lay down, buried his face in his arms, and almost instantly, it seemed, he was in a deep sleep.

The youth leaned his breast against the brown dirt and peered over at the woods and up and down the line. Curtains of trees interfered with his ways of vision. He could see the low line of trenches but for a short distance. A few idle flags were perched on the dirt hills. Behind them were rows of dark bodies with a few heads sticking curiously over the top

Always the noise of the skirmishers came from the woods on the front and left, and the din on the right had grown to frightful proportions. The guns were roaring without an instant's pause for breath. It seemed that the cannon had come from all parts and were engaged in a stupendous wrangle. It became impossible to make a sentence heard . . .

Before the gray mists had been totally obliterated by the sun rays, the regiment was marching in a spread column that was retiring carefully through the woods. The disordered, hurrying lines of the enemy could sometimes be seen down through the groves and little fields. They were yelling, shrill and exultant.

At this sight the youth forgot many personal matters and became greatly enraged. He exploded in loud sentences. "B'jiminey, we're generalled by a lot 'a lunkheads."

"More than one feller has said that t'-day," observed man.

His friend, recently aroused, was still very drowsy. He looked behind him until his mind took in the meaning of the movement. Then he sighed. "Oh, well, I s'pose we got licked," he remarked sadly. . .

There was low-toned talk among the troops. The officers were impatient and snappy, their countenances clouded with the tales of misfortune. The troops, sifting through the forest, were sullen. In the youth's company once a man's laugh rang out. A dozen soldiers turned their faces quickly toward him and frowned with vague displeasure.

In a clear space the troops were at last halted. Regiments and brigades, broken and detached through their encounters with thickets, grew together again and lines were faced toward the pursuing bark of the enemy's infantry.

The noise, following like the yellings of eager, metallic hounds, increased to a loud and joyous burst, and then, as the sun went serenely up the sky throwing illuminating rays into the gloomy thickets, it broke forth into prolonged pealings. The woods began to crackle as if afire.

"Whoop-a-dadee," said a man, "here we are! Everybody fightin'. Blood an' destruction."

"I was willin' t' bet they'd attack as soon as th' sun got fairly up," savagely asserted the lieutenant who commanded the youth's company. He jerked without mercy at his little moustache. He strode to and fro with dark dignity in the rear of his men, who were lying down behind whatever protection they had collected.

In the regiment there was a peculiar kind of hesitation denoted in the attitudes of the men. They were worn, exhausted, having slept but little and labored much. They rolled their eyes toward the advancing battle as they stood awaiting the shock. Some shrank and flinched. They stood as men tied to stakes. . .

The winds of battle had swept all about the regiment, until the one rifle, instantly followed by others, flashed in its front. A moment later the regiment roared forth its sudden and valiant retort. A dense wall of smoke settled slowly down. It was furiously slit and slashed by the knifelike fire from the rifles.

The blue smoke-swallowed line curled and writhed like a snake stepped upon. It swung its ends to and fro in an agony of fear and rage.

The youth was not conscious that he was erect upon his feet. He did not know the direction of the ground. Indeed, once he even lost the habit of balance and fell heavily. He was up again immediately. One thought went through the chaos of his brain at the time. He wondered if he had fallen because he had been shot. But the auspicion flew away at once. He did not think more of it.

The flames bit him, and the hot smoke broiled his skin. His rifle barrel grew so hot that ordinarily he could not have borne it upon his palms; but he kept on stuffing cartridges into it, and pounding them with his clanking, bending ram-rod. If he aimed at some charging form through the smoke, he pulled his trigger with a fierce grunt, as if he were dealing a blow of the fist with all his strength.

When the enemy seemed falling back before him and his fellows, he went instantly forward, like a dog who, seeing his foes lagging, turns and insists upon being pursued. And when he was compelled to retire again, he did it slowly, sullenly, taking steps of wrathful despair.

Once he, in his intense hate, was almost alone and was firing when all those near him had ceased. He was so engrossed in his occupation that he was not aware of a lull.

He was recalled by a hoarse laugh and a sentence that came to his ears in a voice of contempt and amazement. "Yeh infernal fool, don't yeh know enough t' quit when there ain't anything t' shoot at? Good Gawd!"

He turned then and, pausing with his rifle thrown half into position, looked at the blue line of his comrades. During this moment of leisure they seemed all to be engaged in staring with astonishment at him. They had become spectators. Turning to the front again he saw, under the lifted smoke, a deserted ground.

He looked bewildered for a moment. Then there appeared upon the glazed vacancy of his eyes a diamond point of intelligence. "Oh," he said, comprehending.

The lieutenant was crowing. He seemed drunk with fighting. He called out to the youth: "By heavens, if I had ten thousand wild cats like you, I could tear th' stomach outa this war in less'n a week!" He puffed out his chest with large dignity as he said it.

The friend came staggering to him. There was some fright and dismay in his voice. "Are yeh all right, Fleming? Do yeh feel all right? There ain't nothin' th' matter with yeh - Henry, is there?"

"No," said the youth with difficulty. His throat seemed full of knobs and blurrs. . .

The roarings that had stretched in a long line of sound across the face of the forest began to grow intermittent and weaker. The stentorian speeches of the artillery continued in some distant encounter, but the crashes of the musketry had almost ceased. The youth and his friend of a sudden looked up, feeling a deadened form of distress at the waning of these noises, which had become a part of life. They could see changes going on among the troops. They were marching this way and that way. A battery wheeled leisurely. On the crest of a small hill was the thick gleam of many departing muskets.

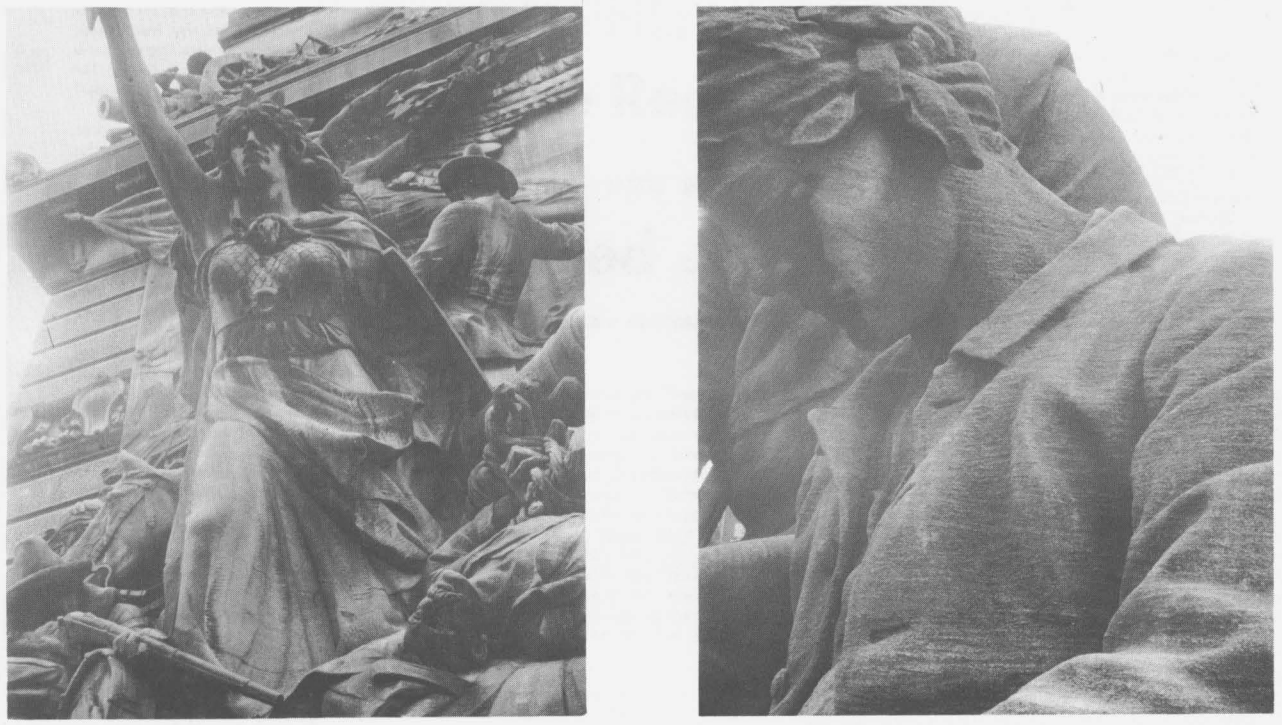
The youth rose. "Well, what now, I wonder?" he said. By his tone he seemed to be preparing to resent some new monstrosity in the way of dins and smashes. He shaded his eyes with his grimy hand and gazed over the field.

His friend also arose and stared. "I bet we're goin' t' git along out of this an' back over th' river," said he.

"Well, I swan!" said the youth.

They waited, watching. Within a little while the regiment received orders to retrace its way. The men got up grunting from the grass, regretting the soft repose. They jerked their stiffened legs, and stretched their arms over their heads. One man swore as he rubbed his eyes. They all groaned, "O Lord!" They had as many objections to this change as they would have had to a proposal for a new battle.

The regiment marched until it had joined its fellows. The reformed brigade, in column, aimed through a wood at the road. Directly they



The "Heroic Dream" - The Indianapolis War Memorial
Photo by Samuel Charters

were in a mass of dust-covered troops, and were trudging along in a way parallel to the enemy's lines as these had been defied by the previous turmoil.

At this point of its march the division curved away from the field and went winding off in the direction of the river. When the significance of this movement had impressed itself upon the youth he turned his head and looked over his shoulder toward the trampled and debris-strewed ground. He breathed a breath of new satisfaction. He finally mudged his friend. "Well, it's all over," he said to him.

His friend gazed backward. "B'Gawd, it is," he assented. They mused. . .

So it came to pass that as he trudged from the place of blood and wrath his soul changed. He came from hot plowshares to prospects of clover, tranquilly, and it was as if hot plowshares were not. Scars faded as flowers.

It rained. The procession of weary soldiers became a bedraggled train, despondent and muttering, marching with churning effort in a trough of liquid brown mud under a low, wretched sky. Yet the youth smiled, for he saw that the world was a world for him, though many discovered it to be made of oaths and walking sticks. He had rid himself of the red sickness of battle. The sultry nightmare was in the past. He had been an animal blistered and sweating in the heat and pain of war. He turned now with a lover's thirst to images of tranquil skies, fresh meadows, cool brooks -- an existence of soft and eternal peace,

Over the river a golden ray of sun came through the hosts of leaden rain clouds.

Band 2: From "WAR IS KIND"

Do not weep, maiden, for war is kind.
Because your lover threw wild hands toward the sky
And the affrighted steed ran on alone,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

Hoarse, booming drums of the regiment,
Little souls who thirst for fight,
These men were born to drill and die.
The unexplained glory flies above them,
Great is the battle-god, great, and his kingdom—
A field where a thousand corpses lie.

Do not weep, babe, for war is kind.
Because your father tumbled in the yellow trenches,
Raged at his breast, gulped and died,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

Swift blazing flag of the regiment,
Eagle with crest of red and gold,
These men were born to drill and die.
Point for them the virtue of slaughter,
Make plain to them the excellence of killing
And a field where a thousand corpses lie.

Mother whose heart hung humble as a button
On the bright splendid shroud of your son,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

From "THE BLACK RIDERS"

"Tell Brave deeds of war."
Then they recounted tales -
"There were stern stands
And bitter runs for glory."

Ah, I think there were braver deeds.

Once, I knew a fine song
- It is true, believe me -
It was all of birds,
And I held them in a basket;
When I opened the wicket,
Heavens! they all flew away.
I cried, "Come back, little
thoughts!"
But they only laughed.
They flew on
Until they were as sand
Thrown between me and the sky.

If I should cast off this tattered
coat,
And go free into the mighty sky;
If I should find nothing there
But a vast blue,
Echoless, ignorant -
What then?

WAR IS KIND

Ay, workman, make me a dream,
A dream for my love.
Cunningly weave sunlight,
Breezes and flowers.
Let it be of the cloth of meadows.
And - good workman -
And let there be a man walking
thereon.

THE VETERAN

Out of the low window could be seen three hickory trees placed irregularly in a meadow that was resplendent in springtime green. Farther away, the old, dismal belfry of the village church loomed over the pines. A horse meditating in the shade of one of the hickories lazily swished his tail. The warm sunshine made an oblong of vivid yellow on the floor of the grocery.

"Could you see the whites of their eyes?" said the man who was seated on a soap-box.

"Nothing of the kind," replied old Henry warmly. "Just a lot of flitting figures, and I let go at where they 'peared to be the thickest. Bang!"

"Mr. Fleming," said the grocer—his deferential voice expressed somehow the old man's exact social weight—"Mr. Fleming, you never was frightened much in them battles, was you?"

The veteran looked down and grinned. Observing his manner, the entire group tittered. "Well, I guess I was," he answered finally. "Pretty well scared, sometimes. Why, in my first battle I thought the sky was falling down. I thought the world was coming to an end. You bet I was scared."

Every one laughed. Perhaps it seemed strange and rather wonderful to them that a man should admit the thing, and in the tone of their laughter there was probably more admiration than if old Fleming had declared that he had always been a lion. Moreover, they knew that he had ranked as an orderly sergeant, and so their opinion of his heroism was fixed. None, to be sure, knew how an orderly sergeant ranked, but then it was understood to be somewhere just shy of a major-general's stars. So when old Henry admitted that he had been frightened, there was a laugh.

"The trouble was," said the old man, "I thought they were all shooting at me. Yes, sir, I thought every man in the other army was aiming at me in particular, and only me. And it seemed so darned unreasonable, you know. I wanted to explain to 'em what an almighty good fellow I was, because I thought then they might quit all trying to hit me. But I couldn't explain, and they kept on being unreasonable—blim!—blam!—bang! So I run!"

Two little triangles of wrinkles appeared at the corners of his eyes. Evidently he appreciated some comedy in this recital. Down near his feet, however, little Jim, his grandson, was visibly horror-stricken. His hands were clasped nervously, and his eyes were wide with astonishment at this terrible scandal, his most magnificent grandfather telling such a thing.

"That was at Chancellorsville. Of course, afterward I got kind of used to it. A man does. Lots of men, though, seem to feel all right from the start. I did, as soon as I 'got on to it,' as they say now; but at first I was pretty flustered. Now, there was young Jim Conklin, old Si Conklin's son—that used to keep the tannery—you none of you recollect him—well, he went into it from the start just as if he was born to it. But with me it was different. I had to get used to it."

When little Jim walked with his grandfather he was in the habit of skipping along on the stone pavement in front of the three stores and the hotel of the town and betting that he could avoid the cracks. But upon this day he walked soberly, with his hand gripping two of his grandfather's fingers. Sometimes he kicked abstractedly at dandelions that curved over the walk. Any one could see that he was much troubled.

"There's Sickles's colt over in the medder, Jimmie," said the old man. "Don't you wish you owned one like him?"

"Um," said the boy, with a strange lack of interest. He continued his reflections. Then finally he ventured: "Grandpa—now—was that true what you was telling those men?"

"What?" asked the grandfather. "What was I telling them?"

"Oh, about your running."

"Why, yes, that was true enough, Jimmie. It was my first fight, and there was an awful lot of noise, you know."

Jimmie seemed dazed that this idol, of its own will, should so totter. His stout boyish idealism was injured.

Presently the grandfather said: "Sickles's colt is going for a drink. Don't you wish you owned Sickles's colt, Jimmie?"

The boy merely answered: "He ain't as nice as our'n." He lapsed then into another moody silence.

One of the hired men, a Swede, desired to drive to the county-seat for purposes of his own. The old man loaned a horse and an unwashed buggy. It appeared later that one of the purposes of the Swede was to get drunk.

After quelling some boisterous frolic of the farm-hands and boys in the garret, the old man had that night gone peacefully to sleep, when he was aroused by clamoring at the kitchen door. He grabbed his trousers, and they waved out behind as he dashed forward. He could hear the voice of the Swede, screaming and blubbering. He pushed the wooden button, and, as the door flew open, the Swede, a maniac, stumbled inward, chattering, weeping, still screaming. "De barn fire! Fire! Fire! De barn fire! Fire! Fire! Fire!"

There was a swift and indescribable change in the old man. His face ceased instantly to be a face; it became a mask, a gray thing, with horror written about the mouth and eyes. He hoarsely shouted at the foot of the little rickety stairs, and immediately, it seemed, there came down an avalanche of men. No one knew that during this time the old lady had been standing in her night-clothes at the bed-room door, yelling: "What's th' matter? What's th' matter? What's th' matter?"

When they dashed toward the barn it presented to their eyes its usual appearance, solemn, rather mystic in the black night. The Swede's lantern was overturned at a point some yards in front of the barn doors. It contained a wild little conflagration of its own, and even in their excitement some of those who ran felt a gentle secondary vibration of the thrifty part of their minds at sight of this overturned lantern. Under ordinary circumstances it would have been a calamity.

But the cattle in the barn were trampling, trampling, trampling, and above this noise could be heard a humming like the song of innumerable bees. The old man hurled aside the great doors, and a yellow flame leaped out at one corner and sped and wavered frantically up the old gray wall. It was glad, terrible, this single flame, like the wild banner of deadly and triumphant foes.

The motley crowd from the garret had come with all the pails of the farm. They flung themselves upon the well. It was a leisurely old machine, long dwelling in indolence. It was in the habit of giving out water with a sort of reluctance. The men stormed at it, cursed it; but it continued to allow the buckets to be filled only after the wheezy windlass had howled many protests at the mad-handed men.

With his opened knife in his hand old Fleming himself had gone headlong into the barn, where the stifling smoke swirled with the air-currents, and where could be heard in its fulness the terrible chorus of the flames, laden with tones of hate and death, a hymn of wonderful ferocity.

He flung a blanket over an old mare's head, cut the halter close to the manger, led the mare to the door, and fairly kicked her out to safety. He returned with the same blanket, and rescued one of the workhorses. He took five horses out, and then came out himself, with his clothes bravely on fire. He had no whiskers, and very little hair on his head. They soused five pailfuls of water on him. His eldest son made a clean miss with the sixth pailful, because the old man had turned and was running down the decline and around to the basement of the barn, where were the stanchions of the cows. Some one noticed at the time that he ran very lamely, as if one of the frenzied horses had smashed his hip.

The cows, with their heads held in the heavy stanchions, had thrown themselves, strangled themselves, tangled themselves: done everything which the ingenuity of their exuberant fear could suggest to them.

Here, as at the well, the same thing happened to every man save one. Their hands went mad. They became incapable of everything save the power to rush into dangerous situations.

The old man released the cow nearest the door, and she, blind drunk with terror, crashed into the Swede. The Swede had been running to and fro babbling. He carried an empty milk-pail, to which he clung with an unconscious, fierce enthusiasm. He shrieked like one lost as he went under the cow's hoofs, and the milk-pail, rolling across the floor, made a flash of silver in the gloom.

Old Fleming took a fork, beat off the cow, and dragged the paralyzed Swede to the open air. When they had rescued all the cows save one, which had so fastened herself that she could not be moved an inch, they returned to the front of the barn and stood sadly, breathing like men who had reached the final point of human effort.

Many people had come running. Someone had even gone to the church, and now, from the distance, rang the tocsin note of the old bell. There was a long flare of crimson on the sky, which made remote people speculate as to the whereabouts of the fire.

The long flames sang their drumming chorus in voices of the heaviest bass. The wind whirled clouds of smoke and cinders into the faces of the spectators. The form of the old barn was outlined in black amid these masses of orange-hued flames.

And then came this Swede again, crying as one who is the weapon of the sinister fates. "De colts! De colts! You have forgot de colts!"

Old Fleming staggered. It was true; they had forgotten the two colts in the box-stalls at the back of the barn. "Boys," he said, "I must try to get 'em out." They clamored about him then, afraid for him, afraid of what they should see. Then they talked wildly each to each. "Why, it's sure death!" "He would never get out!" "Why, it's suicide for a man to go in there!" Old Fleming stared absent-mindedly at the open doors. "The poor little things," he said. He rushed into the barn.

When the roof fell in, a great funnel of smoke swarmed toward the sky, as if the old man's mighty spirit, released from its body—a little bottle—had swelled like the genie of fable. The smoke was tinted rose-hue from the flames, and perhaps the unutterable midnights of the universe will have no power to daunt the color of this soul.

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