I

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.① It cast its eyes upon the roads, which were growing from long troughs of liquid mud to proper thoroughfares.② A river, ambertinted 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, eyelike gleam of hostile campfires set in the low brows of distant hills.③

Once a certain tall soldier developed virtues④ and went resolutely to wash a shirt. He came flying back from a brook waving his garment bannerlike. He was swelled with a tale⑤ he had heard from a reliable friend, who had heard it from a truthful cavalryman, 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."⑥

To his attentive audience he drew a loud and elaborate plan of a very brilliant campaign. When he had finished, the blue-clothed men⑦ scattered into small arguing groups between the rows of squat brown huts. A negro teamster⑧ 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.⑨

① As the ... rumors：当大地由褐色转为葱绿，部队也随之醒来，并开始为战事的传闻感到急切不安起来　② which ... thoroughfares：从一条条泥水横流的长沟渠变成了真正的大道　③ the red ... hills：河对岸，可以看见远处山丘斜坡的上端有敌军的营火，红红的火光如眼睛般闪耀着　④ developed virtues：发扬美德　⑤ He ... tale：听来的消息让他按捺不住激动的心情　⑥ We're ... behint 'em：我们要顺着河的上游转移，穿插过去，迂回到他们的背后　⑦ the blue-clothed men：身穿蓝军装的士兵们，指北方军而言，又称联盟军，是美国南北战争中北部各州组成的军队。南方军的军装为灰颜色　⑧ teamster：部队里的马夫　⑨ Smoke ... quaint chimneys：炊烟从许多奇形怪状的烟囱里袅袅升起

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"It's a lie! that's all it is — a thunderin' lie!"① 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 derned② 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 gelt 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.③ 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 er not, jest as yeh like. I don't care a hang."④

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 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 fill of discussions concerning marches and attacks, he went to his hut and crawled through an intricate hole that served it as a door.⑤ 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 hunt on handy projections,⑥ 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

① It's ... thunderin' lie! 那是瞎说 纯粹是——胡说八道！ ② derned: damned 的委婉语 ③ They clamored ... popular attention: 他们激烈地争论着，各派都力图赢得大伙的注意，但全是白费力气 ④ I don't care a hang：我根本就不在乎 ⑤ an intricate ... door: 权当作门的构造复杂的洞口 ⑥ Equipments ... projections 物件挂在顺手的凸起物上

light upon the cluttered floor. ①

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 morrow, 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, 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. He had imagined peoples secure in the shadow of his eagle-eyed prowess. ② But awake he had regarded battles as crimson blotches on the pages of the past. He had put them as things of the bygone with his thought-images of heavy crowns and high castles. ③ There was a portion of the world's history which he had regarded as the time of wars, but it, he thought, had been long gone over the horizon and had disappeared forever.

From his home his youthful eyes had looked upon the war in his own country with distrust. It must be some sort of a play affair. He had long despaired of witnessing a Greeklike struggle. ④ Such would be no more, he had said. Men were better, or more timid. Secular and religious education had effaced the throat-grappling instinct, or else firm finance held in check the passions. ⑤

He had burned several times to enlist. Tales of great movements shook the land. They might not be distinctly Homeric, ⑥ 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 her ethical motive in the argument was impregnable. ⑦

① A small ... floor：一扇小窗在乱糟糟堆满杂物的地板上投下一片四四方方的、更为明亮的光线　② He had ... prowess：他想象在他机警而勇敢的保护下，人民得到了安全的保障　③ his ... castles：他头脑中的沉甸甸的王冠和高耸的城堡的影像　④ a Greeklike struggle：十分激烈的斗争　⑤ Secular ... passions：世俗或宗教的教育抹煞了人类好战的本能，或者是强有力的经济束缚遏制了这些欲望　⑥ Homeric：荷马史诗般壮观。Homer：古希腊诗人，是史诗《伊利亚特》和《奥德赛》的作者　⑦ Moreover ... impregnable：而且，从他母亲那方面来说，他认为母亲基于伦理的观点是无可非议的

At last, however, he had made firm rebellion against this yellow light① 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. ② 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. ③ When he had returned home his mother was milking the brindle cow. ④ 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.

When he had stood in the doorway with his soldier's clothes on his back, and with the light of excitement and expectancy in his eyes almost defeating the glow of regret for the home bonds, he had seen two tears leaving their trails on his mother's scarred cheeks. ⑤

Still, she had disappointed him by saying nothing whatever about returning with his shield or on it. ⑥ He had privately primed himself for a beautiful scene. He had prepared certain sentences which he thought could be used with touching effect. But her words destroyed his plans. She had doggedly peeled potatoes and addressed him as follows: "You watch out, Henry, an' take good care of yerself in this here fighting business — you watch out, an' take good care of yerself. Don't go a-thinkin' you can lick the hull rebel army at the start, because yeh can't. Yer jest one little feller amongst a hull lot of others, and yeh've got to keep quiet an' do what they tell yeh. I know how you are, Henry.

"I've knet yeh eight pair of socks, Henry, and I've put in all yer best shirts, because I want my boy to be jest as warm and comf'able as anybody in the army. Whenever they get holes in 'em, I want yeh to send 'em right-away back to me, so's I kin dern 'em. ⑦

① this yellow light：怯懦的色调　② the twisted ... battle：关于一场大战的不确切的消息　③ a company that was forming there：虽然北方联盟在 1863 年通过了征兵法，但它主要依靠义务兵役，服役期 3 年，当地公民参军，组成连队，加入州的民兵团，投入战斗　④ the brindle cow 灰褐色、有斑纹的牛　⑤ he had ... cheeks：他看见两行眼泪从他母亲那张饱经风霜的脸上流下来　⑥ returning ... on it：若不凯旋归来，便当马革裹尸。出自一位斯巴达母亲对上战场的儿子的告诫。语出希腊传记作家普卢塔克的《道德论集》　⑦ dern'em：即 darn them，织补破了洞的袜子

"An' allus be careful an' choose yer comp'ny.① There's lots of bad men in the army, Henry. The army makes 'em wild, and they like nothing better than the job of leading off a young feller like you,② as ain't never been away from home much and has allus had a mother, an' a-learning③ 'em to drink and swear. Keep clear of them folks, Henry. I don't want yeh to ever do anything, Henry, that yeh would be 'shamed to let me know about. Jest think as if I was a-watchin' yeh. If yeh keep that in yer mind allus, I guess yeh'll come out about right.

"Yeh must allus remember yer father, too, child, an' remember he never drunk a drop of licker in his life, and seldom swore a cross oath.

"I don't know what else to tell yeh, Henry, excepting that yeh must never do no shirking, child, on my account. If so be a time comes when yeh have to be kilt or do a mean thing, why, Henry, don't think of anything 'cept what's right, because there's many a woman has to bear up 'ginst sech things these times, and the Lord 'll take keer of us all.

"Don't forgit about the socks and the shirts, child; and I've put a cup of blackberry jam with yer bundle, because I know yeh like it above all things. Good-by, Henry. Watch out, and be a good boy."

He had, of course, been impatient under the ordeal of this speech. It had not been quite what he expected, and he had borne it with an air of irritation. He departed feeling vague relief.

Still, when he had looked back from the gate, he had seen his mother kneeling among the potato parings. Her brown face, upraised, was stained with tears, and her spare form④ was quivering. He bowed his head and went on, feeling suddenly ashamed of his purposes.

From his home he had gone to the seminary to bid adieu to⑤ many schoolmates. They had thronged about him with wonder and admiration. He had felt the gulf now between them and had swelled with calm pride. He and some of his fellows who had donned blue were quite overwhelmed with privileges for all of one afternoon, and it had been a very delicious thing. They had strutted.

A certain light-haired girl had made vivacious fun at his martial spirit, but there was another and darker girl whom he had gazed at steadfastly, and he thought she grew demure and sad at sight of his blue and brass.⑥ As he had walked down the path between the rows of oaks, he had turned his head and detected her at a window watching his departure. As he perceived her, she had immediately begun to stare up through the high tree branches at the sky. He had seen a good deal of flurry and haste in her movement as she changed her attitude.⑦ He often thought of it.

① An' ... comp'ny：交朋友一定要谨慎；allus：always　② ... leading ... you把你这样的年轻人引入歧途　③ learning：此处意为 teaching　④ her spare form：她消瘦的身子　⑤ bid adieu to...：向……道别　⑥ his blue and brass：他身上的蓝色戎装，提★　⑦ He had ... attitude：他看到她变换身体姿态时动作显得极为慌张、仓促

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On the way to Washington① his spirit had soared. The regiment was fed and caressed at station after station until the youth had believed that he must be a hero. There was a lavish expenditure of bread and cold meats, coffee, and pickles and cheese. As he basked in the smiles of the girls and was patted and complimented by the old men, he had felt growing within him the strength to do mighty deeds of arms.

After complicated journeyings with many pauses, there had come months of monotonous life in a camp. He had had the belief that real war was a series of death struggles with small time in between for sleep and meals; but since his regiment had come to the field the army had done little but sit still and try to keep warm.

He was brought then gradually back to his old ideas. Greeklike struggles would be no more. Men were better, or more timid. Secular and religious education had effaced the throat-grappling instinct, or else firm finance held in check the passions.

He had grown to regard himself merely as a part of a vast blue demonstration. ② His province③ was to look out, as far as he could, for his personal comfort. For recreation he could twiddle his thumbs and speculate on the thoughts which must agitate the minds of the generals. Also, he was drilled and drilled and reviewed, and drilled and drilled and reviewed.

The only foes he had seen were some pickets along the river bank. They were a sun-tanned, philosophical lot, who sometimes shot reflectively at the blue pickets. ④ When reproached for this afterward, they usually expressed sorrow, and swore by their gods that the guns had exploded without their permission. The youth, on guard duty one night, conversed across the stream with one of them. He was a slightly ragged man, who spat skillfully between his shoes and possessed a great fund of bland and infantile assurance. The youth liked him personally.

"Yank,"⑤ the other had informed him, "yer a right dum good feller."⑥ This sentiment, floating to him upon the still air, had made him temporarily regret war.

Various veterans had told him tales. Some talked of gray, bewhiskered hordes who were advancing with relentless curses and chewing tobacco with unspeakable valor;⑦ tremendous bodies of fierce soldiery who were sweeping along like the Huns. ⑧ Others spoke of tattered and eternally hungry men who fired despondent powders. "They'll charge through hell's fire an' brimstone t'

① On ... Washington：凡是赴弗吉尼亚参战的部队，一般都先到华盛顿　② a vast blue demonstration: 庞大的蓝色阵容展示　③ province:本份、职责　④ They were ... pickets：他们晒得黝黑，注定是处世达观的，有时若有所思地朝穿蓝军服的哨兵开枪　⑤ Yank：即 Billy Yank，北方联军士兵的绰号　⑥ yer a ... feller：你是个再好不过的伙计；dum：damn，俚语，意为"极""非常"　⑦ Some talked ... valor：有的谈论起大群身穿灰军服、留着络腮胡子的敌人正在挺进中，这些人一边大无畏地嚼着烟叶，一边狠狠咒骂着　⑧ the Huns：第四、五世纪蹂躏欧洲的匈奴人，以残忍野蛮闻名

git a holt on a haversack, an' sech stomachs ain't a-lastin' long,"① he was told. From the stories, the youth imagined the red, live bones sticking out through slits in the faded uniforms.

Still, he could not put a whole faith in veterans' tales, for recruits were their prey. They talked much of smoke, fire, and blood, but he could not tell how much might be lies. They persistently yelled "Fresh fish!"② at him, and were in no wise to be trusted.

However, he perceived now that it did not greatly matter what kind of soldiers he was going to fight, so long as they fought, which fact no one disputed. There was a more serious problem. He lay in his bunk pondering upon it. He tried to mathematically prove to himself that he would not run from a battle.③

Previously he had never felt obliged to wrestle too seriously with this question. In his life he had taken certain things for granted, never challenging his belief in ultimate success, and bothering little about means and roads. But here he was confronted with a thing of moment. It had suddenly appeared to him that perhaps in a battle he might run. He was forced to admit that as far as war was concerned he knew nothing of himself.

A sufficient time before he would have allowed the problem to kick its heels④ at the outer portals of his mind, but now he felt compelled to give serious attention to it.

A little panic-fear grew in his mind. As his imagination went forward to a fight, he saw hideous possibilities. He contemplated the lurking menaces of the future, and failed in an effort to see himself standing stoutly in the midst of them. He recalled his visions of broken-bladed glory, but in the shadow of the impending tumult he suspected them to be impossible pictures.

He sprang from the bunk and began to pace nervously to and fro. "Good Lord, what's th' matter with me?" he said aloud.

He felt that in this crisis his laws of life were useless. Whatever he had learned of himself was here of no avail. He was an unknown quantity. He saw that he would again be obliged to experiment as he had in early youth. He must accumulate information of himself, and meanwhile he resolved to remain close upon his guard lest those qualities of which he knew nothing should everlastingly disgrace him. "Good Lord!" he repeated in dismay.

After a time the tall soldier slid dexterously through the hole. The loud private followed. They were wrangling.

"That's all right," said the tall soldier as he entered. He waved his hand expressively. "You can believe me or not, jest as you like. All you got to do is to sit down and wait as quiet as you can. Then pretty soon you'll find out I

① They'll ... long：为抢得一只干粮袋，他们会闯过地狱的硫磺烈焰冲杀过来，他们的肚子总是填不饱。git a holt on：get a hold on,一把抢过　② Fresh fish 新兵。fish 意为 chap或 fellow,带贬义　③ He tried ... battle 他力图精确地向自己证实,他绝不当逃兵　④ A sufficient ... allowed ... heels：将问题暂搁在脑后

was right."

His comrade grunted stubbornly. For a moment he seemed to be searching for a formidable reply. Finally he said: "Well, you don't know everything in the world, do you?"

"Didn't say I knew everything in the world," retorted the other sharply. He began to stow various articles snugly into his knapsack.

The youth, pausing in his nervous walk, looked down at the busy figure. "Going to be a battle, sure, is there, Jim?" he asked.

"Of course there is," replied the tall soldier. "Of course there is. You jest wait 'til to-morrow, and you'll see one of the biggest battles ever was. You jest wait."

"Thunder[①]! der!" said the youth.

"Oh, you'll see fighting this time, my boy, what'll be regular out-and-out fighting," added the tall soldier, with the air of a man who is about to exhibit a battle for the benefit of his friends.

"Huh!" said the loud one from a corner.

"Well," remarked the youth, "like as not this story'll turn out jest like them others did.[②]"

"Not much it won't," replied the tall soldier, exasperated. "Not much it won't. Didn't the cavalry all start this morning?" He glared about him. No one denied his statement. "The cavalry started this morning," he continued. "They say there ain't hardly any cavalry left in camp. They're going to Richmond[③], or some place, while we fight all the Johnnies.[④] It's some dodge like that. The regiment's got orders, too. A feller what seen 'em go to headquarters told me a little while ago. And they're raising blazes all over camp — anybody can see that."

"Shucks![⑤]" said the loud one.

The youth remained silent for a time. At last he spoke to the tall soldier. "Jim!"

"What?"

"How do you think the reg'ment 'll do?"

"Oh, they'll fight all right, I guess, after they once get into it," said the other with cold judgment. He made a fine use of the third person.[⑥]"There's been heaps of fun poked at 'em because they're new, of course, and all that; but they'll fight all right, I guess."

"Think any of the boys 'll run?" persisted the youth.

"Oh, there may be a few of 'em run, but there's them kind in every regiment, 'specially when they first goes under fire,[⑦]" said the other in a tolerant

① thunder: 诅咒语，但较温和委婉。这里表示惊讶，意思为"真的！" ② like as ... did: 这消息也许跟其他消息一样最后都是误传 ③ Richmond 里士满，弗吉尼亚州的首府，内战期间为南方联邦的首府。 ④ the Johnnies: 即 Johnny Rebs，南方联邦士兵的绰号 ⑤ Shucks 胡扯 ⑥ He ... person 他把第三人称用得很妙，带讽刺意味 ⑦ when ... fire: 当他们初次面对战火

way. "Of course it might happen that the hull kit-and-boodle① might start and run, if some big fighting came first-off, and then again they might stay and fight like fun. ② But you can't bet on nothing. Of course they ain't never been under fire yet, and it ain't likely they'll lick the hull rebel army all-to-oncet the first time; but I think they'll fight better than some, if worse than others. That's the way I figger. They call the reg'ment 'Fresh fish' and everything; but the boys come of good stock,③ and most of 'em 'll fight like sin④ after they oncet git shootin'," he added, with a mighty emphasis on the last four words.

"Oh, you think you know —" began the loud soldier with scorn.

The other turned savagely upon him. They had a rapid altercation, in which they fastened upon each other various strange epithets.

The youth at last interrupted them. "Did you ever think you might run yourself, Jim?" he asked. On concluding the sentence he laughed as if he had meant to aim a joke. The loud soldier also giggled.

The tall private waved his hand. "Well," said he profoundly, "I've thought it might get too hot for Jim Conklin in some of them scrimmages, and if a whole lot of boys started and run, why, I s'pose I'd start and run. And if I once started to run, I'd run like the devil,⑤ and no mistake. But if everybody was a-standing and a-fighting, why, I'd stand and fight. Be jiminey,⑥ I would. I'll bet on it."

"Huh!" said the loud one.

The youth of this tale felt gratitude for these words of his comrade. He had feared that all of the untried men possessed a great and correct confidence. He now was in a measure reassured.

① the hull kit-and-boodle：一大帮子人。常见说法是 the whole kit-and-caboodle ② fight like fun：全力以赴地作战 ③ come of good stock：都是好人家的孩子。固定短语" come of (a/an) .. stock"意即"出身于……世系"(或家族) ④ fight like sin：勇猛作战 ⑤ run like the devil：拼命地跑 ⑥ Be jiminey 表示惊讶、肃然起敬等强烈感情的习语，从拉丁语的 Jesu Domine 变化而来

II

THE next morning the youth discovered that his tall comrade had been the fast-flying messenger of a mistake. ① There was much scoffing at the latter by those who had yesterday been firm adherents of his views, and there was even a little sneering by men who had never believed the rumor. The tall one fought with a man from Chatfield Corners and beat him severely.

The youth felt, however, that his problem was in no wise lifted from him. There was, on the contrary, an irritating prolongation. The tale had created in him a great concern for himself. Now, with the newborn question in his mind, he was compelled to sink back into his old place as part of a blue demonstration.

For days he made ceaseless calculations, but they were all wondrously unsatisfactory. He found that he could establish nothing. He finally concluded that the only way to prove himself was to go into the blaze, and then figuratively to watch his legs to discover their merits and faults. ②He reluctantly admitted that he could not sit still and with a mental slate and pencil derive an answer. To gain it, he must have blaze, blood, and danger, even as a chemist requires this, that, and the other. So he fretted for an opportunity.

Meanwhile he continually tried to measure himself by his comrades. The tall soldier, for one, gave him some assurance. This man's serene unconcern③ dealt him a measure of confidence, for he had known him since childhood, and from his intimate knowledge he did not see how he could be capable of anything that was beyond him, the youth. Still, he thought that his comrade might be mistaken about himself. Or, on the other hand, he might be a man heretofore doomed to peace and obscurity, but, in reality, made to shine in war.

The youth would have liked to have discovered another who suspected himself. A sympathetic comparison of mental notes④ would have been a joy to him.

① the fast-flying messenger of a mistake：传递错误消息的飞毛腿报信人　② the only ... faults：他最终断定证实自己的惟一方法是投身于战火之中，打个比方来说，就是观察自己的两条腿，看看它们有什么优点或短处　③ serene unconcern：安然无忧　④ A sympathetic ... notes：同声相应的心理特征

He occasionally tried to fathom a comrade with seductive sentences. He looked about to find men in the proper mood. All attempts failed to bring forth any statement which looked in any way like a confession to those doubts which he privately acknowledged in himself. He was afraid to make an open declaration of his concern, because he dreaded to place some unscrupulous confidant upon the high plane of the unconfessed① from which elevation he could be derided.

In regard to his companions his mind wavered between two opinions, according to his mood. Sometimes he inclined to believing them all heroes. In fact, he usually admitted in secret the superior development of the higher qualities② in others. He could conceive of men going very insignificantly about the world bearing a load of courage unseen, and although he had known many of his comrades through boyhood, he began to fear that his judgment of them had been blind. Then, in other moments, he flouted these theories, and assured himself that his fellows were all privately wondering and quaking.

His emotions made him feel strange in the presence of men who talked excitedly of a prospective battle as of a drama they were about to witness, with nothing but eagerness and curiosity apparent in their faces. It was often that he suspected them to be liars.

He did not pass such thoughts without severe condemnation of himself. He dinned reproaches at times. He was convicted by himself of many shameful crimes against the gods of traditions.③

In his great anxiety his heart was continually clamoring at what he considered the intolerable slowness of the generals. They seemed content to perch tranquilly on the river bank, and leave him bowed down by the weight of a great problem. He wanted it settled forthwith.④ He could not long bear such a load, he said. Sometimes his anger at the commanders reached an acute stage, and he grumbled about the camp like a veteran.

One morning, however, he found himself in the ranks of his prepared regiment. The men were whispering speculations and recounting the old rumors. In the gloom before the break of the day their uniforms glowed a deep purple hue. From across the river the red eyes were still peering. In the eastern sky there was a yellow patch like a rug laid for the feet of the coming sun; and against it, black and patternlike, loomed the gigantic figure of the colonel on a gigantic horse.⑤

From off in the darkness came the trampling of feet. The youth could occasionally see dark shadows that moved like monsters. The regiment stood at rest for what seemed a long time. The youth grew impatient. It was unendura-

① the high ... unconfessed ：不表露内心隐秘者所具有的优势地位　② the superior ... qualities：优良素质的更好的发挥　③ He was ... traditions：他判定自己犯下了很多亵渎神圣传统的可耻罪过　④ forthwith 立即，毫不拖延地　⑤ In the ... horse：东方的天空有一片黄色的云霞，像是为给朝阳踏足而铺的一块小地毯；背对着云霞的方向，赫然屹立着上校骑着高头大马的伟岸身影，仿佛黑色塑像一般

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ble the way these affairs were managed. He wondered how long they were to be kept waiting.

As he looked all about him and pondered upon the mystic gloom, he began to believe that at any moment the ominous distance might be aflare,① and the rolling crashes of an engagement come to his ears. Staring once at the red eyes across the river, he conceived them to be growing larger, as the orbs of a row of dragons advancing. ② He turned toward the colonel and saw him lift his gigantic arm and calmly stroke his mustache.

At last he heard from along the road at the foot of the hill the clatter of a horse's galloping hoofs. It must be the coming of orders. He bent forward, scarce breathing. The exciting clickety-click, as it grew louder and louder, seemed to be beating upon his soul. Presently a horseman with jangling equipment drew rein③ before the colonel of the regiment. The two held a short, sharp-worded conversation. The men in the foremost ranks craned their necks.

As the horseman wheeled his animal and galloped away he turned to shout over his shoulder, "Don't forget that box of cigars!" The colonel mumbled in reply. The youth wondered what a box of cigars had to do with war.

A moment later the regiment went swinging off into the darkness. It was now like one of those moving monsters wending with many feet. ④ The air was heavy, and cold with dew. A mass of wet grass, marched upon, rustled like silk.

There was an occasional flash and glimmer of steel from the backs of all these huge crawling reptiles. From the road came creakings and grumblings as some surly guns were dragged away.

The men stumbled along still muttering speculations. There was a subdued debate. Once a man fell down, and as he reached for his rifle a comrade, unseeing, trod upon his hand. He of the injured fingers swore bitterly and aloud. A low, tittering laugh went among his fellows.

Presently they passed into a roadway and marched forward with easy strides. A dark regiment moved before them, and from behind also came the tinkle of equipments on the bodies of marching men.

The rushing yellow of the developing day went on behind their backs. When the sunrays at last struck full and mellowingly upon the earth,⑤ the youth saw that the landscape was streaked with two long, thin, black columns which disappeared on the brow of a hill in front and rearward vanished in a wood. They were like two serpents crawling from the cavern of the night.

The river was not in view. The tall soldier burst into praises of what he thought to be his powers of perception. ⑥

Some of the tall one's companions cried with emphasis that they, too,

① at any moment ... aflare ：战火随时都会在这杀气腾腾的地方点燃起来 ② as the orbs ... advancing：像一溜儿龙的眼珠似的咄咄逼人 ③ drew rein：收缰勒马 ④ It was ... feet：现在队伍活像只多脚怪兽在爬动 ⑤ When the ... earth：当阳光最终柔和地洒满大地 ⑥ his powers of perception：他的洞察力

had evolved the same thing, and they congratulated themselves upon it. But there were others who said that the tall one's plan was not the true one at all. They persisted with other theories. There was a vigorous discussion.

The youth took no part in them. As he walked along in careless line he was engaged with his own eternal debate. ① He could not hinder himself from dwelling upon it. He was despondent and sullen, and threw shifting glances about him. He looked ahead, often expecting to hear from the advance the rattle of firing.

But the long serpents crawled slowly from hill to hill without bluster of smoke. A dun-colored cloud of dust floated away to the right. The sky overhead was of a fairy blue.

The youth studied the faces of his companions, ever on the watch to detect kindred emotions. He suffered disappointment. Some ardor of the air which was causing the veteran commands to move with glee — almost with song — had infected the new regiment. The men began to speak of victory as of a thing they knew. Also, the tall soldier received his vindication. They were certainly going to come around in behind the enemy. They expressed commiseration for that part of the army which had been left upon the river bank, felicitating themselves upon being a part of a blasting host. ②

The youth, considering himself as separated from the others, was saddened by the blithe and merry speeches that went from rank to rank. The company wags③ all made their best endeavors. The regiment tramped to the tune of laughter.

The blatant soldier often convulsed whole files④ by his biting sarcasms aimed at the tall one.

And it was not long before all the men seemed to forget their mission. Whole brigades grinned in unison, and regiments laughed.

A rather fat soldier attempted to pilfer a horse from a dooryard. He planned to load his knapsack upon it. He was escaping with his prize when a young girl rushed from the house and grabbed the animal's mane. There followed a wrangle. The young girl, with pink cheeks and shining eyes, stood like a dauntless statue.

The observant regiment, standing at rest in the roadway, whooped at once, and entered whole-souled upon the side of the maiden. ⑤ The men became so engrossed in this affair that they entirely ceased to remember their own large war. They jeered the piratical private, and called attention to various defects in his personal appearance; and they were wildly enthusiastic in support of the young girl.

To her, from some distance, came bold advice. "Hit him with a stick."

① his own eternal debate：他自己那萦绕于心头，无法定夺的问题　② felicitating ... host：为自己成为出击大军中的一部分而庆幸不已　③ The company wags：连队中爱开玩笑的人　④ convulsed whole files：令全团士兵捧腹大笑　⑤ and entered ... maiden：完全站到了姑娘这边

There were crows and catcalls showered upon him when he retreated without the horse. The regiment rejoiced at his downfall. Loud and vociferous congratulations were showered upon the maiden, who stood panting and regarding the troops with defiance.

At nightfall the column broke into regimental pieces, and the fragments went into the fields to camp. Tents sprang up like strange plants. Camp fires, like red, peculiar blossoms, dotted the night. ①

The youth kept from intercourse with his companions as much as circumstances would allow him. In the evening he wandered a few paces into the gloom. From this little distance the many fires, with the black forms of men passing to and fro before the crimson rays, made weird and satanic effects. ②

He lay down in the grass. The blades pressed tenderly against his cheek. The moon had been lighted and was hung in a treetop. The liquid stillness of the night enveloping him made him feel vast pity for himself. There was a caress in the soft winds; and the whole mood of the darkness, he thought, was one of sympathy for himself in his distress.

He wished, without reserve, that he was at home again making the endless rounds from the house to the barn, from the barn to the fields, from the fields to the barn, from the barn to the house. He remembered he had often cursed the brindle cow and her mates, and had sometimes flung milking stools. But, from his present point of view, there was a halo of happiness③ about each of their heads, and he would have sacrificed all the brass buttons④ on the continent to have been enabled to return to them. He told himself that he was not formed for a soldier. And he mused seriously upon the radical differences between himself and those men who were dodging implike around the fires.

As he mused thus he heard the rustle of grass, and, upon turning his head, discovered the loud soldier. He called out, "Oh, Wilson!"

The latter approached and looked down.

"Why, hello, Henry; is it you? What you doing here?"

"Oh, thinking," said the youth.

The other sat down and carefully lighted his pipe. "You're getting blue, my boy. You're looking thundering peeked. What the dickens is wrong with you?"⑤

"Oh, nothing," said the youth.

The loud soldier launched then into the subject of the anticipated fight. "Oh, we've got 'em now!" As he spoke his boyish face was wreathed in a

① Tents ... night：帐篷支了起来，宛如奇怪的植物。燃起的营火，仿佛奇特的红色花朵点缀着黑夜　② From ... effects：隔着几步之遥望过去，一堆堆的营火，还有深红色的火堆旁来回穿梭的黑影，产生了一种怪异而可怖的效果　③ a halo of happiness：幸福的光环　④ the brass buttons：军装上的黄铜钮扣，此处指代军装　⑤ You're getting ... with you：你的心情不好，伙计。你看上去憔悴得很，到底怎么回事？文中 peeked 可能系 peaked 之误

gleeful smile, and his voice had an exultant ring. "We've got 'em now. At last, by the eternal thunders, we'll lick 'em good!①"

"If the truth was known," he added, more soberly, "THEY'VE licked US about every clip② up to now; but this time — this time — we'll lick 'em good!"

"I thought you was objecting to this march a little while ago," said the youth coldly.

"Oh, it wasn't that," explained the other. "I don't mind marching, if there's going to be fighting at the end of it. What I hate is this getting moved here and moved there, with no good coming of it, as far as I can see, excepting sore feet and damned short rations. ③"

"Well, Jim Conklin says we'll get a plenty of fighting this time."

"He's right for once, I guess, though I can't see how it come. This time we're in for a big battle,④ and we've got the best end of it, certain sure. Gee rod!⑤ how we will thump 'em!"

He arose and began to pace to and fro excitedly. The thrill of his enthusiasm made him walk with an elastic step. He was sprightly, vigorous, fiery in his belief in success. ⑥ He looked into the future with clear, proud eye, and he swore with the air of an old soldier.

The youth watched him for a moment in silence. When he finally spoke his voice was as bitter as dregs. "Oh, you're going to do great things, I s' pose!"

The loud soldier blew a thoughtful cloud of smoke from his pipe. "Oh, I don't know," he remarked with dignity; "I don't know. I s'pose I'll do as well as the rest. I'm going to try like thunder." He evidently complimented himself upon the modesty of this statement.

"How do you know you won't run when the time comes?" asked the youth.

"Run?" said the loud one; "run? — of course not!" He laughed.

"Well," continued the youth, "lots of gooda-'nough men have thought they was going to do great things before the fight, but when the time come they skedaddled."

"Oh, that's all true, I s'pose," replied the other; "but I'm not going to skedaddle. The man that bets on my running will lose his money, that's all." He nodded confidently.

"Oh, shucks!" said the youth. "You ain't the bravest man in the world, are you?"

"No, I ain't," exclaimed the loud soldier indignantly; "and I didn't say I was the bravest man in the world, neither. I said I was going to do my share

① good: 狠狠地,用作副词　② clip 出击,快速攻击　③ short rations 口粮供给不足　④ This time ... battle：这次我们肯定会有一场大战　⑤ Gee rod 污秽语，意为"他妈的"　⑥ He was sprightly ... success ：他对胜利充满了热烈、坚定而激昂的信心

of fighting — that's what I said. And I am, too. Who are you, anyhow. You talk as if you thought you was Napoleon Bonaparte.①" He glared at the youth for a moment, and then strode away.

The youth called in a savage voice after his comrade: "Well, you needn't git mad about it!" But the other continued on his way and made no reply.

He felt alone in space when his injured comrade had disappeared. His failure to discover any mite of resemblance in their view points② made him more miserable than before. No one seemed to be wrestling with such a terrific personal problem. He was a mental outcast.③

He went slowly to his tent and stretched himself on a blanket by the side of the snoring tall soldier. In the darkness he saw visions of a thousand-tongued fear that would babble at his back and cause him to flee, while others were going coolly about their country's business. He admitted that he would not be able to cope with this monster. He felt that every nerve in his body would be an ear to hear the voices, while other men would remain stolid and deaf.

And as he sweated with the pain of these thoughts, he could hear low, serene sentences. "I'll bid five." "Make it six." "Seven." "Seven goes."④

He stared at the red, shivering reflection of a fire on the white wall of his tent until, exhausted and ill from the monotony of his suffering, he fell asleep.

① Napoleon Bonaparte 拿破仑·波拿巴(1769—1821),法国军事领袖及皇帝(1804—1815) ② any mite ... points:观点上的任何一点相似之处 ③ a mental outcast:一个思想上被放逐的人 ④ "I'll ... goes":主人公听到的梦话,在军队里士兵常为某人是否会逃跑而打赌

III

WHEN another night came, the columns changed to purple streaks, filed across two pontoon bridges. A glaring fire wine-tinted the waters of the river. ① Its rays, shining upon the moving masses of troops, brought forth here and there sudden gleams of silver or gold. Upon the other shore a dark and mysterious range of hills was curved against the sky. The insect voices of the night sang solemnly.

After this crossing the youth assured himself that at any moment they might be suddenly and fearfully assaulted from the caves of the lowering woods. He kept his eyes watchfully upon the darkness.

But his regiment went unmolested to a camping place, and its soldiers slept the brave sleep of wearied men. In the morning they were routed out with early energy, and hustled along a narrow road that led deep into the forest.

It was during this rapid march that the regiment lost many of the marks of a new command. ②

The men had begun to count the miles upon their fingers, ③ and they grew tired. "Sore feet an' damned short rations, that's all," said the loud soldier. There was perspiration and grumblings. After a time they began to shed their knapsacks. Some tossed them unconcernedly down; others hid them carefully, asserting their plans to return for them at some convenient time. Men extricated themselves from thick shirts. Presently few carried anything but their necessary clothing, blankets, haversacks, canteens, and arms and ammunition. "You can now eat and shoot," said the tall soldier to the youth. "That's all you want to do."

There was sudden change from the ponderous infantry of theory to the light and speedy infantry of practice. ④ The regiment, relieved of a burden, received a new impetus. But there was much loss of valuable knapsacks, and,

① When ... river: 当暮色再次降临，行军队伍变成了紫色的带子，从两座浮桥上鱼贯而过。灿烂的夕阳将河水染成了深紫色　② It was ... command ：这个团是在急行军中褪去了很多新组编部队的痕迹　③ count ... fingers：扳起指头数他们走了多少英里的路　④ There was ... practice: 这个团突然从一支沉重的、行动缓慢的概念上的部队变成了轻装、行动快捷的实际意义上的部队

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