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of worms had preceded them and had destroyed both comb and honey.

CHRISTMAS ON THE RAPPAHANNOCK.

BY REV. JOHN R. PAXTON, D.D.

"Gentlemen, the chair of the Professor of Mathematics is vacant in this college; permit me to introduce to you Captain Fraser." Rah! rah! rah! and away we went and enlisted—to go to Richmond. It took us three years to get there. No wonder; there were so many Longstreets to make our way through; so many Hills to climb; so many Stonewalls to batter down; so many Picketts to clear out of the way. It was as hard a road to travel as the steep and stony one to heaven.

No preaching, sir! Can't you forget the shop? Don't you know that you have squeezed yourself into that faded jacket, and are squirming, with a flushed face and short breaths, behind that sword belt, which had caused a rebellion in *medias res*?

I started for Richmond in July, 1862, a lad eighteen years old, a junior in college, and chafing to be at it,—to double quick it after John Brown's soul, which, since it did not require a knapsack or three days' rations or a canteen or a halt during the night for sleep, was always marching on. On the night before Christmas, 1862, I was a dejected young patriot, wishing I hadn't done it, shivering in the open weather a mile back of the Rappahannock, on the reserve picket and exposed to a wet snowstorm. There was not a stick of wood within five miles of us; all cut down, down, even the roots of trees, and burned up. We lay down on our rubber blankets, pulled our woolen blankets over us, spooned it as close as we could get to steal warmth from our comrades and tried not to cry.

Next morning the snow lay heavy and deep, and the men, when I wakened and looked about me, reminded me of a church graveyard in winter. "Fall in for picket duty. There,

come, Moore, McMeaus, Paxton, Perrine, Pollock, fall in." We fell in, of course. No breakfast; chilled to the marrow; snow a foot deep. We tightened our belts on our empty stomachs, seized our rifles and marched to the river to take our six hours on duty.

It was Christmas Day, 1862. "And so this is war," my old me said to himself while he paced in the snow his two hours on the river's brink. "And I am out here to shoot that lean, lank, coughing, cadaverous-looking butternut fellow over the river. So this is war; this is being a soldier; this is the genuine article; this is H. Greeley's 'On to Richmond.' Well, I wish he were here in my place, running to keep warm, pounding his arms and breast to make the chilled blood circulate. So this is war, tramping up and down this river my fifty yards with wet feet, empty stomach, swollen nose."

Alas, when lying under the trees in the college campus last June, war meant to me martial music, gorgeous brigadiers in blue and gold, tall young men in line, shining in brass. War meant to me tumultuous memories of Bunker Hill, Cæsar's Tenth Legion, the charge of the Six Hundred,—anything but this. Pshaw, I wish I were home. Let me see. Home? God's country. A tear? Yes, it is a tear. What are they doing at home? This is Christmas Day. Home? Well, stockings on the wall, candy, turkey, fun, merry Christmas, and the face of the girl I left behind. Another tear? Yes, I couldn't help it. I was only eighteen, and there was such a contrast between Christmas, 1862, on the Rappahannock and other Christmases. Yes, there was a girl, too,—such sweet eyes, such long lashes, such a low tender voice.

"Come, move quicker. Who goes there?" Shift the rifle from one aching shoulder to the other.

"Hello, Johnny, what are you up to?" The river was narrow, but deep and swift. It was a wet cold, not a freezing cold. There was no ice, too swift for that.

"Hello, Johnny, what you coughing so for?"

"Yank, with no overcoat, shoes full of holes, nothing to eat but parched corn and tobacco, and with this derved Yankee snow a foot deep, there's nothin' left, nothin' but to get up a

cough by way of protestin' against this infernal ill treatment of the body. We uns, Yank, all have a cough over here, and there's no sayin' which will run us to hole first, the cough or your bullets."

The snow still fell, the keen wind, raw and fierce, cut to the bone. It was God's worst weather, in God's forlornest, bleakest spot of ground, that Christmas Day of '62 on the Rappahannock, a half-mile below the town of Fredericksburg. But come, pick up your prostrate pluck, you shivering private. Surely there is enough dampness around without your adding to it your tears.

"Let's laugh, boys."

"Hello, Johnny."

"Hello, yourself, Yank."

"Merry Christmas, Johnny."

"Same to you, Yank."

"Say, Johnny, got anything to trade?"

"Parched corn and tobacco,—the size of our Christmas, Yank."

"All right; you shall have some of our coffee and sugar and pork. Boys, find the boats."

Such boats! I see the children sailing them on the small lakes in our Central Park. Some Yankee, desperately hungry for tobacco, invented them for trading with the Johnnies. They were hid away under the banks of the river for successive relays of pickets.

We got out the boats. An old handkerchief answered for a sail. We loaded them with coffee, sugar, pork, and set the sail and watched them slowly creep to the other shore. And the Johnnies? To see them crowd the bank and push and scramble to be first to seize the boats, going into the water and stretching out their long arms. Then, when they pulled the boats ashore, and stood in a group over the cargo, and to hear their exclamations, "Hurrah for hog." "Say, that's not roasted rye, but genuine coffee. Smell it, you'uns." "And sugar, too!"

Then they divided the consignment. They laughed and shouted, "Reckon you'uns been good to we'uns this Christmas

Day, Yanks." Then they put parched corn, tobacco, ripe persimmons, into the boats and sent them back to us. And we chewed the parched corn, smoked real Virginia leaf, ate persimmons, which if they weren't very filling at least contracted our stomachs to the size of our Christmas dinner. And so the day passed. We shouted, "Merry Christmas, Johnny." They shouted, "Same to you, Yank." And we forgot the biting wind, the chilling cold; we forgot those men over there were our enemies, whom it might be our duty to shoot before evening.

We had bridged the river, spanned the bloody chasm. We were brothers, not foes, waving salutations of good-will in the name of the Babe of Bethlehem, on Christmas Day in '62. At the very front of the opposing armies, the Christ Child struck a truce for us, broke down the wall of partition, became our peace. We exchanged gifts. We shouted greetings back and forth. We kept Christmas and our hearts were lighter for it, and our shivering bodies were not quite so cold.

—*Christmas Number, Harper's Weekly, 1886.*

WHO GOT COLONEL ROBERTS' SWORD?

When Colonel Roberts left for the front his fellow citizens of the town of Beaver presented him with a beautiful sword, scabbard and belt. On the scabbard was the inscription: "Presented to Captain R. P. Roberts by the citizens of Beaver." When the Colonel fell loving hands carried him gently and laid him behind one of the huge rocks abounding on that part of the field. But the brave men of Zook's Brigade and the other brigades of Hancock's Corps could not hold the line here and their dead and wounded were left on the field. When Colonel Roberts' body was recovered some time later it had been robbed of everything, including his sword.

On the afternoon of May 6, 1864, the second day in the Wilderness, Carroll's Brigade of Hancock's Second Corps were driven out of their works by a fierce onslaught of the enemy. Stone's Brigade of Wadsworth's Division of the