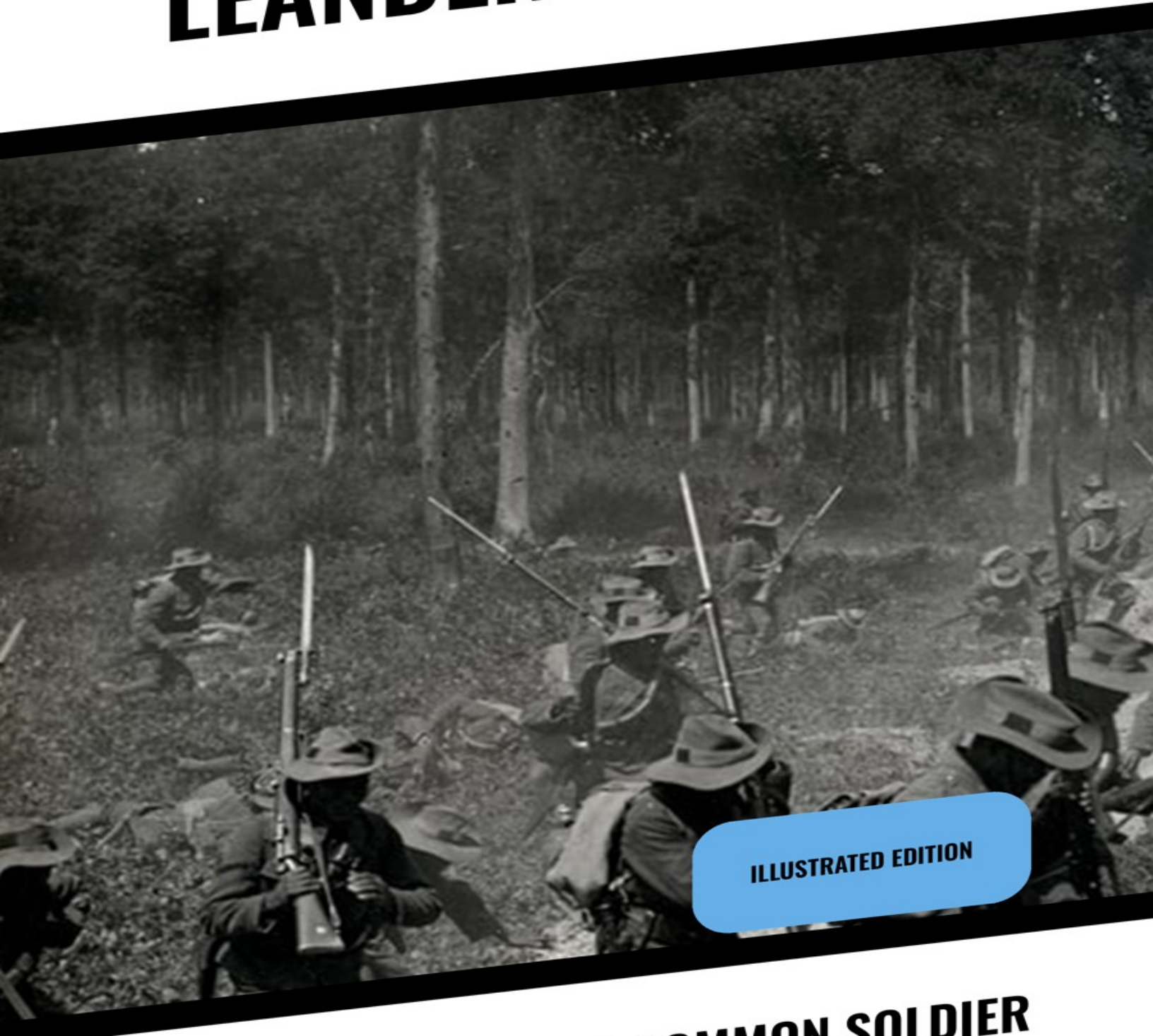
Sharp Ink

LEANDER STILLWELL



ILLUSTRATED EDITION

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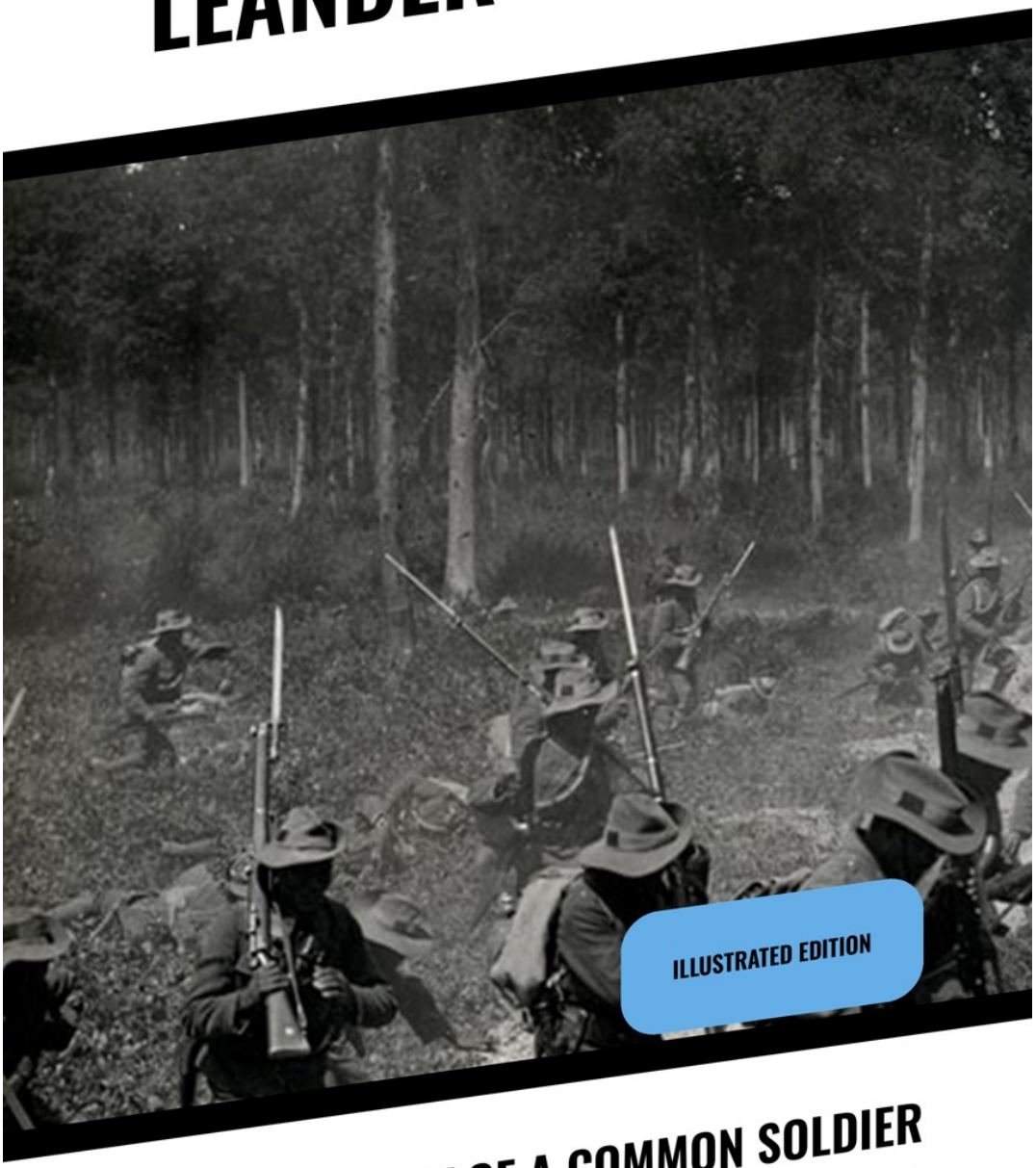

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THE STORY OF A COMMON SOLDIER OF ARMY LIFE IN THE CIVIL WAR

Leander Stillwell

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Illustrated Edition

Sharp Ink Publishing
2022
Contact: info@sharpinkbooks.com

ISBN 978-80-282-1651-1

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Judge Leander Stillwell
December, 1909.

DEDICATED TO MY YOUNGEST SON,
JEREMIAH E. STILLWELL.

Dear Jerry:

You have earnestly asked me to write something in the nature of an extended account of my career as a soldier in the Union army during the Civil War. It will be a rather strenuous undertaking for a man of my age. I shall be seventy-three years old in about three months, and the truth is, I am now becoming somewhat indolent, and averse to labor of any kind, either mental or physical. But I have concluded to comply with your request, and undertake the work. Whether I shall complete it, or not, I cannot now positively say, but I will do the best I can. And I will also say, for whatever you may think it worth, that YOU are the only person, now living, whose request could induce me to undertake the sketch that you desire.

L. STILLWELL.

Erie, Kansas,
July 3, 1916.

PREFACE.

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When I began writing these reminiscences it did not occur to me that anything in the nature of a preface was necessary. It was thought that the dedication to my son Jerry contained sufficient explanation. But I have now finished writing these recollections, and in view of all that they set forth, I believe that a few brief prefatory remarks may now be appropriate. In the first place it will be said that when I began the work it was only to gratify my son, and without any thought or expectation that it would ever be published. I don't know yet that such will be done, but it may happen. The thought occurred to me after I had written some part of it, and it is possible that about at that point some change began to take place in the style, and phraseology, and which perhaps may be observed. So much for that. Next I will say that all statements of fact herein made, based upon my own knowledge, can be relied on as absolutely true. My mother most carefully preserved the letters I wrote home from the army to her and to my father. She died on February 6, 1894, and thereafter my father (who survived her only about three years) gave back to me these old letters. In writing to my parents I wrote, as a rule, a letter every week when the opportunity was afforded, and now in this undertaking with these letters before me it was easy to follow the regiment every mile of its way from Camp Carrollton in January, 1862, to Camp Butler, in September, 1865. Furthermore, on June 1, 1863, at Memphis, Tennessee, as we passed through there on our way to join Grant's army at Vicksburg, I bought a little blank book about four inches long, three inches wide,

and half an inch thick. From that time until we were mustered out, I kept a sort of very brief diary in this little book, and have it yet. The old letters and this book have been invaluable to me in writing my recollections, and having been written at or near the time of the happening of the events they mention, can be relied on as accurate and truthful.

Though I attained the rank of a commissioned officer while in the service, yet that did not occur until near the end of my time, and after the war was over. So it is submitted that the title given these sketches, "The Story of a Common Soldier," is warranted by the facts.

If this manuscript should ever be published, it will go to the world without any apology or commendation from me whatever. It is, though, only fair to say that I make no pretensions to being a "literary" man. This is simply the story of a common soldier who served in the army during the great war, and who faithfully tried to do his duty.

L. STILLWELL.
December 30, 1916.

CHAPTER I.

THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR. LIFE AT CAMP CARROLLTON, JANUARY AND FEBRUARY, 1862.

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I was born September 16, 1843, on a farm, in Otter Creek precinct, Jersey County, Illinois. I was living with my parents, in the little old log house where I was born, when the Civil war began. The Confederates fired on Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, and thus commenced the war. On April 15, 1861, President Lincoln issued a call for 75,000 men, to aid in putting down the existing rebellion. Illinois promptly furnished her quota, and in addition, thousands of men were turned away, for the reason that the complement of the State was complete, and there was no room for them. The soldiers under this call were mustered in for three months' service only, for the government then seemed to be of the opinion that the troubles would be over by the end of that time. But on May 3, 1861, Mr. Lincoln issued another call for volunteers, the number specified being a little over 42,000, and their term of service was fixed at three years, unless sooner discharged. The same call provided for a substantial increase in the regular army and navy. I did not enlist under either of these calls. As above stated, the belief then was almost universal throughout the North that the "war" would amount to nothing much but a summer frolic, and would be over by the 4th of July. We had the utmost confidence that Richmond would be taken by that time, and that Jeff Davis and his cabinet would be prisoners, or fugitives. But the

battle of Bull Run, fought on July 21, 1861, gave the loyal people of the Nation a terrible awakening. The result of this battle was a crushing disappointment and a bitter mortification to all the friends of the Union. They realized then that a long and bloody struggle was before them. But Bull Run was probably all for the best. Had it been a Union victory, and the Rebellion then been crushed, negro slavery would have been retained, and the "irrepressible conflict" would have been fought out likely in your time, with doubtless tenfold the loss of life and limb that ensued in the war of the sixties.

The day after the battle of Bull Run Congress passed a law authorizing Mr. Lincoln to call for five hundred thousand three-years volunteers. It was under this law, supplemented by authority from the Secretary of War, that the regiment was organized in which I subsequently enlisted. I was then only a boy, but somehow I felt that the war was going to be a long one, and that it was the duty of every young fellow of the requisite physical ability to "go for a soldier," and help save the Nation. I had some talk with my father on the subject. He was a strong Union man, and in sympathy with my feelings, but I could see that naturally he dreaded the idea of his boy going to the war, with the result that maybe he would be killed, or come home a cripple for life. But I gave him to understand that when they began organizing a regiment in our vicinity, and which would contain a fair proportion of my neighbor boys and acquaintances, I intended then to volunteer. It was simply intolerable to think that I could stay at home, among the girls, and be pointed at by the soldier boys as a stay-at-home coward.

The work of organizing and recruiting for a regiment in our corner of the State began early in the autumn of 1861. The various counties in that immediate locality were

overwhelmingly Democratic in politics, and many of the people were strong "Southern sympathizers," as they were then called, and who later developed into virulent Copperheads and Knights of the Golden Circle. Probably 90 per cent of the inhabitants of Greene, Jersey, Scott, Morgan, and adjoining counties came from the Southern States, or were the direct descendants of people from that part of the country. Kentuckians, Tennesseeans, and North and South Carolinians were especially numerous. But it is only fair and the truth to say that many of the most prominent and dangerous of this Copperhead element were men from remote Eastern States. What caused these persons to pursue this shameful course I do not know. President Lincoln was personally well aware of these political conditions in our locality, as his old home, at Springfield, the State Capital, was not far away, and he doubtless knew every man of reasonable prominence in our entire Congressional District. He wanted soldiers, regardless of politics, but it was necessary, in that locality, to hold out some special inducements to his constituents of the Democratic faith. So, for that reason, (with others,) as was well understood at the time, Gen. Jacob Fry of Greene County, a Kentuckian by birth and a life-long Democrat, was selected as the one to recruit and organize, and to be the colonel of the regiment to be raised from the counties above named and their vicinity. Aside from the political consideration, this selection of Gen. Fry was regarded at the time as a very good and appropriate one. He was an old-timer, having been a resident of Greene county from his boyhood, had been sheriff of the county, and had held other responsible offices. And, what was considered still more important, he had served with credit and distinction in the "Black Hawk War" in 1831-2, where he held the rank of Colonel. Soon after the

close of this Indian disturbance, he was made Brigadier-General, and subsequently Major-General, of the Illinois militia. He was a grand old man, of temperate habits, strict integrity, and unflinching bravery. But he was sixty-two years old, and that proved to be a handicap that eventually resulted in his resignation, as will appear later.

The Fair Grounds, about half a mile east of Carrollton, the county seat of Greene County, were designated as the "Camp of Instruction" for Col. Fry's regiment. Recruiting for it began about the last of September, but it proceeded very slowly. Several of the boys from my neighborhood had previously enlisted in other regiments, and it looked as if the "wiry edge" of volunteering had somewhat worn off. Co. F of the 14th Illinois Infantry had been raised almost entirely in Jersey county, and several of my old schoolmates were in that company. And there were little squads that had joined other regiments. The 22nd and the 27th Illinois Infantry and the 9th Missouri Infantry, (afterwards designated as the 59th Illinois Infantry,) each had some men and boys from our part of the county.

Up in the northwest corner of Jersey County and close to the Greene county line lived an old farmer by the name of John H. Reddish. He, too, had served in the Black Hawk War, and under the command of Col. Fry. The highest position he attained in that scrap, as shown by the records, was that of corporal, but, regardless of his rank, it is entirely safe to say that he was a fighter. As soon as it was announced that Col. Fry was raising a regiment, and was to be its colonel, Uncle John Reddish forthwith took the field to recruit a company for this organization. The fact that he had been a Black Hawk war soldier gave him immense prestige, and settled in his favor the question of his military qualifications without further evidence. The truth is that at that time almost any

man of good repute and fair intelligence, who had seen service in this Black Hawk racket, or the Mexican war, was regarded as fit and desirable for a commissioned officer, or, at the least, pretty high up in the non-commissioned line. But, as it afterwards turned out, that was an erroneous notion. There were exceptions, of course, but in any event, as regards the Black Hawk episode, service during it was of no practical benefit whatever to a man who became thereby an officer in the Civil war. Capt. Reddish was kind hearted, and as brave an old fellow as a reckless and indiscriminating bull dog, but, aside from his personal courage, he had no military qualities whatever, and failed to acquire any during his entire service. He never could learn the drill, except the most simple company movements. He was also very illiterate, and could barely write his name. And his commands on drill were generally laughable. For instance, in giving the command of right or left wheel, he would supplement it by saying, "Swing around, boys, just like a gate." Such directions would mortify us exceedingly, and caused the men of the other companies to laugh at and twit us about our Captain. He would have made a first-class duty sergeant, and that was as high a rank as he was capable of properly filling. But he was a good old man, and furiously patriotic. He loved a fighter and abominated a coward, and, on the whole, his men couldn't help but like him. Capt. Reddish selected for his first, or orderly sergeant, as the position was generally designated, Enoch W. Wallace, of my neighborhood. Enoch, as we usually called him, was an old acquaintance and intimate friend of my parents, and I too had known him from the time I was quite a little boy. Take him all in all, he was just one of the best men I ever knew. He had seen service as a Mexican war soldier, but owing to his youth, being only about sixteen when that war began, I

think he did not get in till towards the last, and hence his service was short. But he learned something about company drill. When I heard that Wallace was to be the first sergeant of Capt. Reddish's company, I made up my mind, right then, that I would enlist in that company, and told my father I was going to do so. He listened in silence, with his eyes fixed on the ground. Finally he said, "Well, Leander, if you think it's your duty to go, I shall make no objection. But you're the only boy I now have at home big enough to work, so I wish you'd put it off until we get the wheat sowed, and the corn gathered. Then, if you're still of the same mind, it'll be all right." I felt satisfied that the regiment would not leave for the front until after we had done that work, so I at once consented to my father's request.

L. O. Stillwell

(Father of Leander Stillwell.)

An incident happened about this time that greatly stimulated my desire to get into the army. Harvey Edsall, a neighbor boy some four or five years my senior, had enlisted that summer in the 22nd Illinois Infantry. Harvey, with his regiment, was in the battle of Belmont on November 7, 1861, and in the action received a rather severe gun shot wound in the calf of one of his legs. As soon as he was able to stand the travel, he was sent home on furlough, and I met him soon after his arrival at his father's house, where the people had gathered to listen to "the preaching of the word" by Elder Harrison Rowden. (We had

no regular church building in our immediate neighborhood then, and religious services were held at private houses.) Harvey was rapidly recovering, but his wounded leg was still swathed in bandages, and he walked on crutches. I well remember how we boys stood around and looked at him with wide-eyed admiration. And he had to tell us the story of the fight, and all about the circumstances connected with the shot he got in his leg, until he probably was sick and tired of the subject. But, for my part, I thought Harvey's story was just grand, and it somehow impressed me with the idea that the only life worth living was that of a soldier in time of war. The idea of staying at home and turning over senseless clods on the farm with the cannon thundering so close at hand that the old men said that when the wind was from the south they sometimes smelled the powder!—was simply intolerable.

Remember all the time, as you read these recollections of an old man, that I am trying to give you merely some conception of the thoughts, feelings, hopes, and ambitions of one who, at the time of which I am now speaking, was only an eighteen year old boy.

In the meantime, I went on helping my father do the fall work on the farm. In due time the wheat was sowed, the corn gathered, and a huge stack of firewood for winter cut and brought in, and piled near the dwelling-house. By this time the holiday season was approaching, which I wanted to spend at home, thinking, maybe, it might be the last. And the regiment was doing nothing but recruit, and drill at Camp Carrollton, and, as I looked at it, there was no special need to hurry. But Christmas and New Year's Day soon came, and went, and one evening I told my parents I intended to go to Carrollton the next day, and "maybe" would come back a soldier. Early next morning, which was

Monday, January 6, 1862, I saddled and bridled Bill, the little black mule, and struck out. Carrollton was about twenty miles from our home, almost due north, and the road ran mainly through big woods, with an occasional farm on either side of the road. It is likely those woods are all gone now. I reached the camp about the middle of the afternoon, went to the quarters of Reddish's company, found Enoch Wallace, and told him I had come to enlist. He took me to Capt. Reddish, gave me a short introduction to him, and told him my business. The old Captain gave me a hearty greeting, and was so plain, kind and natural in his manner and talk, that I took a liking to him at once. He told me that the first step necessary was to be examined by the regimental surgeon as to my physical fitness, so we at once went to the surgeon's tent. I had previously heard all sorts of stories as to the thoroughness of this examination, that sometimes the prospective recruits had to strip, stark naked, and jump about, in order to show that their limbs were perfect. But I was agreeably disappointed in that regard. The surgeon, at that time, was a fat, jolly old doctor by the name of Leonidas Clemmons. I was about scared to death when the Captain presented me to him, and requested him to examine me. I reckon the good old doctor saw I was frightened, and he began laughing heartily and saying some kind things about my general appearance. He requested me to stand up straight, then gave me two or three little sort of "love taps" on the chest, turned me round, ran his hands over my shoulders, back, and limbs, laughing and talking all the time, then whirled me to the front, and rendered judgment on me as follows: "Ah, Capt. Reddish! I only wish you had a hundred such fine boys as this one! He's all right, and good for the service." I drew a long breath, and felt much relieved. Then we went to the adjutant's tent, there I

signed something, and was duly sworn in. Then to the quartermaster's tent, where I drew my clothing. I got behind a big bale of stuff, took off my citizen's apparel and put on my soldier clothes then and there,—and didn't I feel proud! The clothing outfit consisted of a pair of light-blue pantaloons, similar colored overcoat with a cape to it, dark blue jacket, heavy shoes and woolen socks, an ugly, abominable cocky little cap patterned after the then French army style, gray woolen shirt, and other ordinary under-clothing. Was also given a knapsack, but I think I didn't get a haversack and canteen until later. Right here I will say that the regimental records give the date of my enlistment as the 7th of January, which is wrong. The date was the 6th. It was a day I did not forget, and never shall. How the authorities happened to get the date wrong I do not know, but it is a matter of only one day, and never was of any importance.

It was the custom then in the regiment to give each recruit when he enlisted a two-days furlough, but I deferred asking for mine until the next morning. I spent that afternoon in the camp, and the night at the quarters of my company. As already stated, the camp was on the county Fair Grounds. They contained forty acres, and were thickly studded with big native trees, mainly white and black oak and shag-bark hickory. The grounds were surrounded by an inclosure seven or eight feet high, consisting of thick, native timber planks with the lower ends driven in the ground, and the upper parts firmly nailed to cross-wise stringers. There was only one opening, which was at the main gate about the center of the north side of the grounds. A line of guards was maintained at the gate and all round the inside of the inclosure, with the beat close to the fence, for the purpose of keeping the men in camp. No enlisted man could go out

except on a pass signed by his captain, and approved by the colonel. The drilling of the men was conducted principally inside the grounds, but on skirmish drill we went outside, in order to have room enough. The quarters or barracks of the men were, for each company, a rather long, low structure, crudely built of native lumber and covered with clapboards and a top dressing of straw, containing two rows of bunks, one above and one below. These shacks looked like a Kansas stable of early days,—but they were abodes of comfort and luxury compared to what we frequently had later.

Next morning, after an early breakfast, I pulled out for home, with my two-days furlough in my pocket. I was accompanied by John Jobson, one of Reddish's company, and who had enlisted about a month previous. He had obtained a short furlough for some purpose or other, and had hired a horse on which to make the trip. Prior to his enlistment he had been working as a farm hand for Sam Dougherty, one of our nearest neighbors, and I had become well acquainted with him. He was about twenty-five years old, of English birth, a fine, sensible young fellow, and made a good soldier. I well remember our high spirits on this journey home. We were young, glowing with health and overflowing with liveliness and animation. There was a heavy snow on the ground, but the sky was clear, and the air was keen and bracing. Occasionally, when we would strike a stretch of level road, we would loose all the buttons of our overcoats save the top one, put the gad to our steeds, and waving our caps, with our long coat tails streaming in the wind, would yell like Comanches, and "let on" that we were making a cavalry charge. I have no doubt that we believed we presented a most terror-striking appearance.

Happy is man that to him the future is a sealed book. In the summer of 1863, while we were stationed near Vicksburg, Jobson was taken seriously ill, and was put on a transport to be taken to a general hospital at Mound City, Illinois. He died en route, on the boat, and was hastily buried in a sand bar at the mouth of White River. The changing currents of the mighty Mississippi have long since swallowed up that sand bar, and with it all that may have been left of the mortal remains of poor Jobson.

I reached home sometime in the afternoon, relieved Bill of his equipments, put him in the stable, and fed him. No one was stirring about outside, and I walked into the house unannounced. My mother was seated in an old rocking-chair, engaged in sewing. She looked up, saw me in the uniform of a soldier, and she knew what that meant. Her work dropped in her lap, she covered her face with her hands, and the tears gushed through her fingers and she trembled in her chair with the intensity of her emotions. There was no sobbing, or other vocal manifestation of feeling, but her silence made her grief seem all the more impressive. I was distressed, and didn't know what to say, so I said nothing, and walked out into the kitchen, thence back to the barn. There I met father, who had come in from some out-door work. He looked at me gravely, but with an impassive countenance, and merely remarked, "Well, I reckon you've done right."

Next morning everybody seemed more cheerful, and I had much to say at breakfast about things at Camp Carrollton.

On the expiration of my furlough I promptly reported at the camp and entered on my duties as a soldier. The absorbing duty was the drill, and that was persistent, and consumed the most of the time. I knew nothing about it

when I enlisted, and had never seen any except on the previous Monday afternoon. The system we then had was Hardee's Infantry Tactics. It was simple, and easily learned. The main things required were promptness, care, and close attention. All day long, somewhere in the camp, could be heard the voice of some officer, calling, "Left! left! left, right, left!" to his squad or company, to guide them in the cadence of the step. We were drilled at Carrollton in the "school of the soldier," "school of the company," and skirmish drill, with dress parade at sunset. We had no muskets, and did not receive them until we went to Benton Barracks, at St. Louis. I do not remember of our having any battalion drill at Camp Carrollton. The big trees in the fair grounds were probably too thick and numerous to permit that. Our fare consisted of light bread, coffee, fresh meat at some meals, and salt meat at others, Yankee beans, rice, onions, and Irish and sweet potatoes, with stewed dried apples occasionally for supper. The salt meat, as a rule, was pickled pork and fat side meat, which latter "table comfort" the boys called "sow-belly." We got well acquainted with that before the war was over. On the grub question I will say now that the great "stand-bys" of the Union soldiers during the war, at least those of the western armies, were coffee, sow-belly, Yankee beans, and hardtack. It took us, of course, some time to learn how to cook things properly, especially the beans, but after we had learned how, we never went back on the above named old friends. But the death of many a poor boy, especially during our first two or three months in the field, is chargeable to the bad cooking of his food.

At Carrollton the jolliest time of the day was from the close of dress parade until taps sounded "Lights out." There was then a good deal of what you might call "prairie

dogging," that is, the boys would run around and visit at the quarters of other companies. And Oh, how they would sing! All sorts of patriotic songs were in vogue then, and what was lacking in tone we made up in volume. The battle of Mill Springs, in Kentucky, was fought on January 19, 1862, resulting in a Union victory. A Confederate general, Felix K. Zollicoffer, was killed in the action. He had been a member of Congress from Tennessee, and was a man of prominence in the South. A song soon appeared in commemoration of this battle. It was called "The Happy Land of Canaan," and I now remember only one stanza, which is as follows:

"Old Zolly's gone,
And Secesh will have to mourn,
For they thought he would do to depend on;
But he made his last stand
On the rolling Cumberland,
And was sent to the happy land of Canaan."

There was a ringing, rolling chorus to each verse, of course, and which was not at all germane to the text, and, moreover, as the newspapers sometimes say, is "not adapted for publication,"—so it will be omitted. Well, I can now shut my eyes and lean back in my chair and let my memory revert to that far away time, and it just seems to me that I can see and hear Nelse Hegans, of Co. C, singing that song at night in our quarters at old Camp Carrollton. He was a big, strong six-footer, about twenty-one years of age, with a deep bass voice that sounded when singing like the roll of distant thunder. And he was an all-around good fellow. Poor Nelse! He was mortally wounded by a musket ball in the neck early in the morning of the first day at Shiloh, and died a few days thereafter.

The health of the boys while at Camp Carrollton was fine. There were a few cases of measles, but as I remember, none were fatal. Once I caught a bad cold, but I treated it myself with a backwoods remedy and never thought of going to the surgeon about it. I took some of the bark of a hickory tree that stood near our quarters, and made about a quart of strong hickory-bark tea. I drank it hot, and all at once, just before turning in for the night. It was green in color, and intensely bitter, but it cured the cold.

A few weeks after my enlistment, I was appointed to the position of corporal. There are, or were in my time, eight corporals in an infantry company, each designated by a number, in numerical order. I was fifth. I owed this appointment to the friendship and influence of Enoch Wallace, and this was only one of the countless acts of kindness that he rendered me during my term of service. I just cannot tell you how proud I was over this modest military office. I am telling you the truth when I say that I felt more pride and pleasure in being a "Corporal of Co. D" than I ever did later in the possession of any other office, either military or civil. The boys framed up a story on me, to the effect that soon after my appointment I was seen in the rear of the company quarters, stooping over an empty barrel, with my head projected into it as far as possible, and exclaiming in a deep, guttural tone, "CORPORAL STILLWELL!" "CORPORAL STILLWELL!" This was being done, so the boys said, in order that I might personally enjoy the sound. In order to be strictly accurate, I will state that, although the appointment was made while we were at Carrollton, my official warrant was not issued until our arrival at Benton Barracks.

The only thing recalled now that was sort of disagreeable at Camp Carrollton was the utter absence of privacy. Even

when off duty, one couldn't get away by himself, and sit down in peace and quiet anywhere. And as for slipping off into some corner and trying to read, alone, a book or paper, the thing was impossible. To use a modern expression, there was always "something doing." Many a time after supper, on very cold nights, when the boys would all be in the barracks, singing or cutting up, I would sneak out and walk around under the big trees, with the snow crackling under my feet, for no other purpose whatever than just to be alone a while. But that condition of things changed for the better after we got down South, and were no longer cooped up in a forty acre lot.

General Grant gained his great victory at Fort Donelson on February 16, 1862, and the news reached us a few days later. The boys talked about it with feelings of mingled exultation,—and mortification. Exultation, of course, over the "glorious victory," but mortification in regard to its effects and consequences on our future military career. We all thought, from the officers down, that now the war would end, that we would see no actual service, and never fire a shot. That we would be discharged, and go home just little "trundle-bed soldiers," and have to sit around and hear other sure-enough warriors tell the stories of actual war and fighting. If we only had known, we were borrowing unnecessary trouble,—as we found out later.

CHAPTER II.

BENTON BARRACKS. ST. LOUIS, MARCH, 1862.

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Sometime during the last of February, the welcome news was given out from regimental headquarters that we were soon to leave Camp Carrollton. Our first objective point was to be St. Louis, Mo., and what next nobody knew. Definite orders for the movement were issued later, and it then occurred to us that possibly all our recent apprehensions about not seeing any fighting were somewhat premature.

Right here I will say that in the brief sketch of the regiment published in the reports of the Adjutant-General of the State of Illinois, the date of our leaving Carrollton is given as February 21, which is wrong. That date is either a mistake of the person who wrote that part of the sketch, or a typographical error. I have in my possession, and now lying before me, a letter I wrote to my father from Benton Barracks, of date March 2, 1862, in which the date of our arrival at St. Louis is given as February 28th. And I well know that we were only two days on the trip. And besides the date given in my letter, I distinctly remember several unwritten facts and circumstances that satisfy me beyond any doubt, that the day we left Carrollton was February 27, 1862. Early in the morning of that day, the regiment filed out at the big gate, and marched south on the dirt road. Good-bye to old Camp Carrollton! Many of the boys never saw it again, and I never have seen it since but once, which was in the summer of 1894. I was back then in Jersey

county, on a sort of a visit, and was taken with a desire to run up to Carrollton and look at the old camp. There was then a railroad constructed during the last years of the war, (or about that time), running south from the town, and less than an hour's ride from Jerseyville, where I was stopping, so I got on a morning train, and, like Jonah when moved to go to Tarshish, "paid the fare and went." I found the old camp still being used as a county fair ground, and the same big trees, or the most of them, were there yet, and looked about as they did thirty-two years before. Of course, every vestige of our old barracks was gone. I stood around and looked at things awhile,—and thought—then left, and have never been there again.

(Mother of Leander Stillwell.)

The regiment arrived at Jerseyville about sunset. The word had gone out, all through the country, that Fry's regiment was leaving for the front, and the country people had come to town, from miles around, in their farm wagons, to have one last look, and bid us good-bye. The regiment, in column by companies, company distance, marched up the main street running south, and on reaching the center of the little town, we wheeled into line, dressed on the colors, and stood at attention. The sidewalks were thronged with the country people all intently scanning the lines, each little family group anxiously looking for their boy, brother,

husband or father, as the case may have been. (But right here it will be said that the overwhelming majority of the enlisted men of the regiment, and the most of the line officers, were unmarried.) I was satisfied that my parents were somewhere among the crowd of spectators, for I had specially written them as to when we would pass through Jerseyville. I was in the front rank, and kept my face rigidly fixed to the front, but glanced as best I could up and down the sidewalk, trying to locate father and mother. Suddenly I saw them, as they struggled to the edge of the walk, not more than ten feet from me. I had been somewhat dreading the meeting, and the parting that was to come. I remembered the emotion of my mother when she first saw me in my uniform, and I feared that now she might break down altogether. But there she stood, her eyes fixed on me intently, with a proud and happy smile on her face! You see, we were a magnificent-looking body of young fellows, somewhere between 800 and 900 strong. Our uniforms were clean and comparatively new, and our faces were ruddy and glowing with health. Besides the regimental colors, each company, at that time, carried a small flag, which were all fluttering in the breeze, and our regimental band was playing patriotic tunes at its best. I reckon it was a somewhat inspiring sight to country people like those who, with possibly very few exceptions, had never seen anything like that before. Anyhow, my mother was evidently content and glad to see me there, under the shadow of the flag, and going forth to fight for the old Union, instead of then being sneaking around at home, like some great hulking boys in our neighborhood who were of Copperhead sympathies and parentage.

Arrangements had been made to quarter the regiment that night in different public buildings in the town, and the

companies were soon marched to their respective places. Co. D had been assigned to the Baptist church, and there my parents and I met, and had our final interview. They were nine miles from home, in the old farm wagon, the roads (in the main) were through dense woods, and across ridges and hollows, the short winter day was drawing to a close and night approaching, so our farewell talk was necessarily brief. Our parting was simple and unaffected, without any display of emotion by anybody. But mother's eyes looked unusually bright, and she didn't linger after she had said, "Good-bye Leander." As for my father,—he was an old North Carolinian, born and reared among the Cherokee Indians at the base of the Great Smoky Mountains, and with him, and all other men of his type, any yielding to "womanish" feelings was looked on as almost disgraceful. His farewell words were few, and concise, and spoken in his ordinary tone and manner, he then turned on his heel, and was gone.

Mother left with me a baked chicken, the same being a big, fat hen full of stuffing, rich in sage and onions; also some mince pie, old time doughnuts, and cucumber pickles. I shared it all with Bill Banfield (my chum), and we had plenty for supper and breakfast the next day, with the drum-sticks and some other outlying portions of the chicken for dinner.

Early the next morning we pulled out for Alton, on the Mississippi River. But we did not have to march much that day. The country people around and near Jerseyville turned out in force with their farm wagons, and insisted on hauling us to Alton, and their invitations were accepted with pleasure. A few miles north of Alton we passed what was in those days (and may be yet) a popular and celebrated school for girls, called the "Monticello Female Seminary."