

From the Cleveland Herald.

### Night on the Battle-Field of Stone's River.—The Old Year Out—The New Year's Ride.

Carefully driver, carefully. Let the hard iron of the wheels roll slowly over the pounded stone of the pike. The young soldier still lives. His breath is short, but we may yet reach the hospital ere he dies. Guide steadily past the shattered wagons—round the heaps of dead horses—through the long rows of corpses; watch that no foot of horse jars against the fallen dead—the heroes of the last day of 1862—resting now, where they fell, or where friends have laid them. Here they lie in rows of miles, sleeping out the old year. On the last day of sixty-two they stood for their country and for Freedom. At its midnight hour they sleep, no more to awake to war's ringing bugle call. Gone with the old year, till the trump of God shall call them.

Well might thoughts of the old year and of eternity crowd upon the mind of the soldier whose duty to the wounded living brought him across that vast field of the ghastly dead—this night so clear and frosty—the last of December.

The story, as he told it—he, a private, true to duty as the hero General of that day—let me tell it.

That awful night! Words will not paint it, yet may give some faint idea of what sad experience a day of carnage brings. The moon shone out—traveling towards midnight in all the splendor of her majesty through a clear sky. The stars look in the beauty of their brightness from the heavens, as if to mock man and the dark, blood-stained earth.

At 9 o'clock of the evening of Dec. 31st, an ambulance left one of the hospitals of Rosecrans' army, moving in the direction of Nashville. Two soldiers lay upon the mattresses of the carriages. The life blood of one, following the passage of a minnie ball through the breast, was oozing out from the right lung, staining the blankets beneath. The other, suffering from a crushing shot through the left leg below the thigh, lay beside his fellow, scarcely conscious. Along with the carriage walked a private soldier—going to care for his wounded companions.

Three miles along the stony pike, literally strewed with the dead, lay their route. Here an artillery wagon had been swept by a bursting shell—its gun dismounted, its wheels shattered, the horses and men fallen together, lay mixed as they had gone down. The neck of a horse lay across the body of his rider, and the hub of a heavy wheel, broken from the axle lay crushing upon the breast of the gunner. Still tangled in the wreck inched to the wagons, lay the hind parts of a horse, his breast and fore legs swept away, while the lifeless body of an artilleryman, reared with an arm over the dismounted gun.

Slowly passed the ambulance by the destruction at this spot, the hard breath of the man inside telling of suffering. Yonder a cavalry man had fallen, his drawn saber reflecting in the moonlight against the dark earth where he lay; and beside him his comrade and his horse, all keeping the same silent watch of death. Here a headless body gave no face to the moonlight, and near by was all that remained of one—the entire breast being swept away.

Just out of the rut of the wheels, lay rows of dead men, friend and foe together, hastily thrown aside in the haste of the day, to save them from the crash of rolling wheels and tramp of flying horses rushing over the field of battle.

The sharp frost of a clear night spread its white drapery over the clothes of the dead—on the locks of many a veteran brave gathered its icy breath, offering alike to all a common shroud; while the moonbeams, robbed of their palences, gave a ghastly stare to the faces of those sleepers of the last day of eighteen sixty-two, save where these beams fell on the faces of the fallen rebel foe—to go out in gloom; for invariably the faces of the rebels had turned black, the effect of gun-powdered whiskey, given to inspire them to rush with the fury of demons in the mad charge to death.

All along the road for more than two miles were these scenes of horror met by the weary soldier. Still on rolled the ambulance—past broken wagons—by strewn baggage and waste stores—less musters and dismounted artillery, to the great general hospital of the fourth division.

Here, at midnight, lay the wounded and dying, covering an acre of ground around the great building, of which every room was filled, every out-house crowded, every floor wet with blood. Close by lay a man with an arm gone—next to him one with a leg smashed—there a part of a face was shot away—another had his scalp torn open from ear to ear by a ball glancing over the skull—and on, one had his back carried away by a shot, leaving a cut in which you might lay your arm—ono shot in the cheek, the ball passing into the mouth through the throat and down the neck, lodging between the shoulders. Yet all these hundreds living, many waiting the dressing of their wounds with patience.

Our two soldier boys were taken from the ambulance into the building, and with hundreds of others closed no eyes to sleep that last December night.

How widely different came the New Year to those of our friends in the far North, who sat by the bright fireside in merry circle, counting the moments, and, with the last ring of the old clock, as the dying year went back to eternity, shouting the "Wish you a happy New Year." Ah, remember! 'tis for the grand old country, for the glorious Union that gave these bright homes—these happy firesides—that our brave boys fight and die.

The morning sun of Jan. 1st, 1863, rose upon a day as clear as ever dawned. Far beyond this Division Hospital where our soldier boys lay, broke again the roar of battle. Surgeons came that morning, and looked upon the one wounded in the breast, and turned away, whispering to the private that "He will die."

Another soldier boy, having his foot shot away, had captured a horse that he found

hitched on the field the day before, and coming into the stable with the remaining foot and back, and, with the guidance of one of Col. Hazen's Orderlies, had found the hospital.

At 9 o'clock that morning this soldier and the one wounded through the breast were put into a strong army wagon upon a bed of corn leaves and a mattress, and, with the private and a "bill of a driver," started over the pike for Nashville. On rolled the heavy wagon, jarring and jolting with a hundred more, passing ammunition caissons, among dashing horses, by dead mules and flying wagons, out on to a bridge. Here the crowd halted, as only one team could pass at a time. Just as they reached the bridge the enemy, sweeping round our right, had brought a battery to bear upon the bridge. The shell came whizzing through the air over the bridge. Panic seized the teamsters, and, crowding upon the bridge, a pell-mell retreat commenced, our driver pushing across and putting his horses upon

the run, the enemy sweeping down in the rear with a fearful yell. Now came the ammunition caissons, drawn by six horses, each thundering over the road in swift retreat—army wagons full of wounded—flying on sometimes six abreast, crowding upon the pike.

Fearfully whirled our driver on, as if careless of the dying men in his charge, and only seeking safety in flight. Full three miles the race continued, when on came dashing a battalion of the rebel Wheeler's cavalry. The race opened again with fearful speed. Past our driver hurled the ammunition caissons—any moment they might lock wheels, and crash his wagon to atoms. Yet on past the ruins of wagons already down, and blocking the way; amidst the flying fugitives, on came the rebel cavalry, yelling and firing upon the teamsters and the wounded. Our private tore the red lining from his overcoat, and hoisted it as a flag, hoping they would respect it, as they were capturing the third wagon in rear. The breast-wounded soldier lay gasping, and, ordering the other soldier, who held his footless leg in one hand, to keep it from pounding upon the wagon bed, and a revolver in the other, to shoot the driver, if he did not stop, that they might surrender, before they were murdered by the now near foe. But on, on, heedless alike of threats and enemy, dashed the driver—now coming against a wagon, completely blocking the road, yet wheeling with the fury of a madman, and cracking the whip upon the horses, rode into a close cut in a cedar thicket, and, whirling among the trees, emerged again upon the pike, to find the 4th Michigan Cavalry formed in company, awaiting the coming rebels—who, dashing around a bend in the road, met the sharp fire of the 4th's revolving rifles. Half a dozen rebels fell from their saddles. The Michigan Cavalry charged with a shout, and the rebels fled.—Nine miles over that stony road had the race continued. The determined driver had brought his team through, and escaped with the suffering load.

A long road to the city hospitals yet before them—the roar of booming guns far in the rear echoing along the hills, telling that comrades still struggled for victory—the sun descending would soon set, and shut his glories from that New Year's day—and night close in upon the exhausted and dying men too weak now to whisper. Yet on they rode. The excitement of the race for life was now past, and the last miles of weary travel were dragging far into the evening hours. So exhausted that life was despaired of—at 9 o'clock that evening they were taken from the wagon at the Planters' Hotel in Nashville, and placed upon good cots, receiving close attention at the hands of skillful surgeons.

Kind readers: What think you of that New Year's ride? You remember the Herald's correspondent, "E. A. F.," asking in one of his last letters, "Jack Leland, will you come down and play Dixie and Yankee Doodle at our dance with the rebels New Year's?" He was the wounded soldier of whom they whispered, "He will die." He had danced with the rebels on the last day of the old year, to the quick time of a Minnie ball cutting through the right lung and breast, and with his faithful servant Wilder lying by his side, shot through the legs, was borne back in the night to the Division hospital. The dash, on New Year's day, made by Wheeler's Cavalry upon our ammunition train on the pike from Murfreesboro, the capturing and burning of 300 wagons about which you have all read, was the occasion of the fearful race for life, on that New

Charles Stanseil  
41st Ohio