

course were no better off than ourselves, and as winter approached, a great many of them were obliged to cut up their knapsacks into leggings to defend their limbs from the wet and mud of the trenches. What awful nights those were which we spent on duty at the front! We did not care about the enemy; an occasional sortie from the garrison was welcomed as a relief from the dreary monotony of our watch. The excitement revived us, and the danger was as exhilarating as wine. A brush with the enemy at the point of the bayonet, was a trifle, but to stand under arms for hours at a time, up to the knees in mud, this was a trial to test the powers of the strongest. After a night spent in this manner we frequently marched to the rear, to find that there was nothing for us to eat. Foraging was out of the question. The troops in the rear managed occasionally to pick up a day's rations in this way, but there was no such luck for our fellows. Salt junk, or salt horse, as the sailors call it, was beginning to tell upon us, and our mess at least was suffering from that indescribable longing for fresh meat, which must be felt to be understood. The regiment which was quartered near us was French, and the men possessed a brute of a dog, which somehow or other managed to keep a little flesh on his bones, we longed to shoot and dine off the rascal, which was constantly prowling about our tent, but honor forbade us to attempt such an outrage. "Gaston" was known to be a great thief, and we strongly suspected that he made free with our scanty rations; but we could never catch him in the act, until, one memorable night, the rogue, forgetting his usual caution, slipped into our tent, and snatched a piece of pork before our very eyes. O'Flannigan of ours had been cleaning his revolver, and as the brute rushed past with the meat, he struck him a tremendous blow on the head with the butt end of the weapon. Poor "Gaston" rolled over, with a cry which was a cross between a howl and a shriek, dropped the meat, turned up the whites of his eyes and gave up the ghost. We were not long in disposing of the body, and I must confess that roast dog is an excellent dish. I wonder our lively neighbors who have added horse-flesh to the dietary of man do not think of the canine race. I might perhaps at the present time prefer a mutton cutlet to a broiled puppy, but when we were starving on salt junk and sea bread, anything in the way of a fresh bite was a luxury. We had to pay for "Gaston" though through the nose. His comrades in the regiment soon cleared up the mystery of his disappearance, and O'Flannigan and I had to exchange shots with a couple of fire eaters, who felt bound in honor to burn powder over the affair.

But this little incident keeps me from the pith of my story. I have to tell how Masonry saved my life, and I hasten at once to the denouement; our lines had been steadily pushed forward towards the Russian batteries, and we were almost every day expecting a sortie, when, one evening, as I was looking over the earthen parapet in the direction of the battery, which had been playing upon us all day, I thought I saw a dark and moving mass advancing upon our left. I hinted my suspicions to Major L—, and we both watched carefully. Presently we saw the glitter of steel. "That was the sword of an officer said L—, 'the fool has been using the flat of it upon the back of a laggard. I am satisfied now that a large force is advancing upon us.'" A few minutes sufficed to make our few preparations to receive the enemy, and we awaited the attack in sullen silence. The moment the head of the attacking column was plainly visible, we commenced playing upon it with grape and canister. The Russians rushed forward with a loud shout, and we replied with a volley of musketry. The enemy was truly in great force, and had soon reached the parapet of our works, when a desperate attack on our part, with the bayonet, drove him back in great confusion. We rushed out of the trenches, and a hand-to-hand conflict took place in the darkness the like of which I have never seen since and hope I shall never see again. The Russians were ably supported by reinforcements from the rear, and we were assisted by a brigade of French infantry which came up as soon as the firing was heard. We had driven the enemy to the counterscarp of his own works, when he rallied and made a desperate charge under which our men reeled and retreated for a moment. In the struggle I received a bayonet wound in the side and fell. A fresh column of Russians had come out to relieve their comrades, and these fellows covered the retreat in a most masterly style. I expected every moment to receive the *coup de grace*, for the retreating Russians cruelly bayoneted our wounded as they lay helpless on the ground. A brute of a fellow had, indeed, brought his bayonet to the charge, with the intention of finishing one, when with a sudden inspiration, I sprang to my feet, seized the hand of an officer who stood near. Fortunately he was a Mason, and recognized me as such, while with his sabre, he thrust back the deadly point that was levelled at my breast. My brotherly foe immediately gave an order for my removal, and I was carried into the shelter of the battery by the very men who, but for my happy thought, would have given me a happy despatch to the other world. My wound was instantly attended to, and the next morning I received a visit from my preserver, who brought with him a surgeon, who soon made me as comfortable as the circumstances would admit. The story of my mirac-