

highway useless muskets, torn accoutrements, knapsacks, caps and articles of clothing were scattered, with here and there the larger wrecks of broken-down waggons, roughly thrown aside into the ditch to make way for the living current. For two hours the greater part of an Army Corps had passed and repassed that way, but, coming or going, always with faces turned eagerly towards an open slope on the right which ran parallel to the lane. And yet nothing was to be seen there. For two hours a grey and bluish cloud, rent and shaken with explosion after explosion, but always closing and thickening after each discharge, was all that had met their eyes. Nevertheless, into this ominous cloud solid moving masses of men in grey or blue had that morning melted away, or emerged from it only as scattered fragments that crept, crawled, ran or clung together in groups, to be followed and overtaken in the rolling vapour.

But for the last half-hour the desolated track had stretched empty and deserted. While there was no cessation of the rattling, crackling, and detonations on the fateful slope beyond, it had still been silent. Once or twice it had been crossed by timid, hurrying wings, and frightened and hesitating little feet, or later by skulkers and stragglers from the main column who were tempted to enter it from the hedges and bushes where they