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2242

seemed to be all around the house. In a dazed way John noticed that the smoke was pouring down the stairway. A loaded carbine lay on the floor. He picked it up, raised the hammer, and ran out into the yard. A grey soldier, the butt of his gun lifted for a flail-like blow, hurled himself at him. John waited until the muzzle of the carbine almost touched the grey jacket before he pulled the trigger. He saw the scorched cloth around the little hole before the man went down before him.

Grey figures seemed to leap at him from every side. He backed against a clothes post and commenced snapping the hammer until he realised that the gun was empty. Then he seized the weapon by the muzzle and swung it club-fashion before him. Behind him he could hear and smell the flames licking at the upper story of the house. He wondered if his mother had got out.

There was a sudden thunder of hoofs on all sides of the house. Blue-clad Yankee cavalry on grey horses, their sabres glittering in the sunlight, seemed to have sprung from the earth. The swarms of Confederates reeled and staggered under the shock. The young major had brought up his reserve company at the psychological moment. The grey infantry were caught at the instant when they could not form to face the horsemen.

Dimly John realised that the awful pressure on his eardrums was lessening, that the rush of battle was sweeping away from him. He could not understand; he only knew that there were no more grey figures in front of him. He turned around and stared at the blazing house. An instant he paused for a sidelong glance at the huddled figure by the water-pail, then he rushed through the doorway. There were a dozen still forms stretched on the awful slipperiness of the kitchen floor amid the litter of torn mattresses, broken glass, and empty cartridges. He rushed into the other room. The body of his wife lay on the couch where he had left it. His mother was not in sight.

"Mother!" he called. "Mother!"
The door on the front porch stood ajar. He stumbled out—and found his mother. He hardly glanced at the pathetic figure, but walked on out into the yard. A flower-bed, set in the midst of an old wagon-tire, bloomed red and glaring. He sat down beside it and looked back at the burning house. Across the road the artillerymen were frantically limbering up their pieces to get back to the ground they had left and take what the cavalry had laid open to them. John did not look up as the guns thundered back down the cluttered lane. The minutes dragged by, but he did not raise his head. Once he looked up when the roof fell in with a spluttering crash of burning timbers.

"Now that's gone," he muttered.
He dropped his head again and sat perfectly motionless until he felt a cold muzzle thrust against his hand. He looked down to see the collie nosing at his hand. He put both arms around the dog's neck, and something inside his breast seemed to burst. The hot tears leaped to his eyes, and he shook with deep, racking sobs.

"Oh, Shep," he sobbed, "Shep. . . ."
An uncertain time later a hand fell on his shoulder. He looked up at the face of the major. It was grimy with sweat and dirt, and there was a bloody rag around his head, but he beamed with elation. "We licked 'em," he said enthusiastically, "licked 'em right with that cavalry. They won't be coming this way again. Your farm—"

Suddenly he saw the man's face, and the smoking ruins of the house and barns. His face sobered. He reached down and patted the dog, passed his hand awkwardly over the broad, bowed shoulder of the man, and walked silently down the lane to help care for the wounded.

Single Tax for Lethbridge

One of the most radical changes which has been made for a long time in connection with the city government has just been made at Lethbridge, Alta. The council unanimously adopted the report of City Assessor Meech, advocating that the single tax method of taxation be put in force in Lethbridge, to go into effect for the coming year. The idea of single tax has been growing rapidly in the city for the past year and found many staunch supporters. The report of Mr. Meech to the council about six weeks ago, however, brought matters to a head and his report was eagerly discussed by many ratepayers.



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Dr. J. E. Cannaday, 1545, Park Square, Sedalia, Mo.

Could you do a better act than to send this notice to some poor sufferer of ECZEMA?

References: Third Nat. Bank, Sedalia, Mo.

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