

the Federal army, and that unless he could very soon procure a substitute, or pay about a thousand dollars—this was I think the amount—he would be sent away and have to serve in the army during the war with the South. Nearly three years previous to this my brother Thomas had settled in Rochester and got married there. He was clerk or assistant in a drug store and had but lately lost his wife and his only child. We had of course greatly sympathized with him in his affliction, but when this fresh and unexpected news came it caused the most painful anxiety to us all. What was to be done? There was but little time to lose. It was entirely out of my father's power to send the required amount. Our little farm, if hurriedly sold, would scarcely bring more than fifteen or sixteen hundred dollars, and to sell it, or mortgage it—which might be worse—would in all probability soon leave us homeless. My father was greatly troubled; tears streamed down my mother's cheeks, and we all felt in the most unhappy condition. John alone appeared to think the matter of little consequence; in fact he tried to make us believe that he was pleased with the news. He took delight in military exercises and had joined the village volunteer company, and as this was to be a drill night, he was preparing to go out with his rifle, when the unwelcome letter was handed to him. He read it again and then I noticed that for a few moments his lips were compressed. Then he read it aloud to us, affecting indifference as to its purport, and when he saw our startled faces and the sudden grief it brought my mother, he seized her hands and in a laughing manner told her it was just the kind of message he wanted.

"Goodness gracious" he cried stepping out before us in a comical attitude, "what does it all amount to?—nothing. 'This kind of thing happens every day now and is in fact only what we might have expected. We are no worse off than many others. Either Tom or I must go or the money must be paid, that's all there's of it; and to be plain," said he, striking his open palm with his fist, "I wouldn't pay half or even quarter of the money to get clear of the matter. You know that Tom is not as rugged as I am, he is six or seven years older than I, and

he has had lots of trouble already while I have had none. They will, I think, prefer me. I want to see something of the world instead of being kept here forever in this backward place. Besides you all must believe that this war is nearly over. The Southern they say are making their last splurge: to be sure they have kept up the contest a little longer than was expected; but you'll find it will be over soon and perhaps if I don't hurry up, I'll be altogether too late: so Christmas and all as it is I shall be off in the morning."

How particularly animated my good natured, generous and loving brother looked as he thus addressed us! There he stood, a noble fellow in full health and vigor, manly and handsome in appearance. His military red coat with blue facings, his belts and straps and bright brass buckles, his well cared for rifle close by, and his sword bayonet by his side—everything so trim—all gave him the smart soldierly bearing of a "regular." I was proud of him at the moment: any good woman might have looked at him with pleasure, and to another pair of eyes which just now made their appearance he was particularly attractive. Anna Strong entered the room just as he had finished speaking. Her smile was first directed to him, and then her cheerful look seemed to bring brightness into the apartment. She had just come to remain and spend Christmas with us. She hesitated a little when she noticed our serious faces: even John's face became grave for an instant when he saw her enter; but I ran forward to bid her welcome. My mother left us for a few moments to hide her emotion, and then John, following me, tried to anticipate any unpleasant explanation of ours by telling Anna about the letter he had received, and apparently with the greatest unconcern making the circumstance of little or no importance.

Anna Strong was considered one of the most clear-headed and intelligent girls in the neighborhood. She and John and I had been schoolfellows. He and she had been, as it is called, "keeping company" for some time, and this resulted in the most tender attachment for each other. Anna as well as my brother seemed to be everybody's favorite;