

"It's you, Little Tim, is it; I ain't doing nothing. What is it you want with me?"

Unless I took charge of him, watching him like a hawk, he was sure to get into some difficulty. He was arrested a number of times, usually after a fight in which the guards came off worse than he did, and handcuffed, taken before the Major. If I could I would plead for him and get him off. But more than once he was put in the guard house and fed on bread and water. Other times he was made to do police duty, all kinds of dirty jobs. This he would do with such obedience and at the same time such an innocent shame-facedness that the Major laughingly admitted to me one day that it made him feel as though he had added insult to injury in punishing him. When time was up and he was free, another drunk would follow in the due course of time.

I have often heard our Captain plead with him to keep straight, to stop drinking, encouraging him by telling him that when sober there wasn't a better soldier in the regiment, which was a fact. He would listen quietly and in the end make many promises, all of which he meant for the moment to keep. They would last until he caught the sight or smell of whiskey. It seemed to me often even the thought of a good swag was enough to make him forget his promise and everything else.

We had a long spell of campaigning, marching and counter-marching, crossing and re-crossing the Rappahannock and the Rapidan, during which we not only had many brushes with the enemy, but also fought the battles of Fair Oaks, Gaines Mill, Savage Station, Malvern Hill and Antietam. In all of these Big Tim displayed his great strength and endurance and distinguished himself for his courage and bravery. He could be depended upon for any emergency. He would carry out orders to the letter. He was bold, without fear and indefatigable. When our regiment came out of that awful field of carnage at Fredericksburg with the loss of many men and a number of officers and non-coms, promotions were soon the order of the day. Our captain sent the name of Timothy Flynn to the Colonel as sergeant. He had well earned the chevrons with which he was rewarded. I was made a corporal.

He was as proud of his chevrons as a boy with a new plaything. When alone in our tent he would often pat them lovingly, calling them his darlings. In due time he celebrated his promotion by getting drunk. I was fortunate enough to come upon him before he was deep in his cups and I never let him out of my sight until I had him sober. The captain, knowing my influence over him, had privately said to me that among other reasons why he had recommended his promotion was the hope that the chevrons would be the means of keeping him sober. After this drunk I gave him a very serious curtain lecture, warning him what the result would be if he continued his spree and begging him to keep sober.

He made the most abject promises, which had their effect for some little time. He wasn't the kind, however, that could be restrained or could restrain himself. The time came when he kicked over the traces, when I was least expecting it, and went off on a fearful spree. He was in a devilish humor that day. He made a great noise, quarreled with a number of the boys, tried to strike several, did bump several heads together until they ached, dared the guard to arrest him, telling them he was an officer and if they laid their hands on him he would break open their heads. Drunk, he had become more important in his own eyes and hence was more disagreeable. He was reported to and sent for by the Colonel. That officer spoke to him kindly, cautioning him never to repeat his offense, warning him if he did so he would be compelled to discharge him.

The next drunk came after a longer interval. I was expecting it and dreading the result. He outwitted me so that it was another public spree worse than the last. The Colonel was as good as his word. Sending for him, he informed him that the chevrons must be stripped from his sleeves and that he must be reduced to the ranks. The poor fellow wanted to argue the matter, saying, "Indeed, Colonel, I haven't done anything to deserve this. Haven't I always been a good soldier? Haven't I always done my part in every fight?" "Yes, you have," the Colonel answered. "You have always been one of the best of soldiers in every action, and have done more than your part when there was anything to be done, but that isn't the question."

"Can't you overlook the matter, Colonel, just a little for I've been doing my very best." The Colonel shook his head, saying: "It can't be done. It can't be done. If you were moderate it would be different. But you are never satisfied until you are drunk. It is demoralizing to the men. We are sorry for you and very sorry that it must be done, but you will have to be reduced to the ranks."

"I'm awfully sorry, Colonel," he concluded, "I don't suppose I could stop drinking, been doing it ever since I can remember; guess I can't get along without what I oughtn't to have." I will never forget the day he was reduced to the ranks in the sight of the whole regiment. I thought the thing would never be through. It hurt me as much or more than it did him. I feared it would go worse with him afterwards. When they ripped

the chevrons from his sleeves he watched them without comment. When it was completed, he held out his hands, saying, "If I can't keep them, I can have them, can't I, Colonel?"

His bull won them for him and his darlings were turned over to him. After he was reduced to the ranks there was no change in him for the worse or better. He was the same old fellow as far as I could see. He was the same wonderful soldier when a fight was on, and whenever he could get it, a drinker of good, bad and indifferent whiskey.

The greatest change I noted was in the feeling of the rank and file toward him. In their eyes he had lost a certain standing. He was disgraced by being reduced to the ranks. When being addressed him there was lacking that certain element of respect. When the least tipsy they quietly eyed him as much as he could stand. I could catch now and then ends of their speeches in which he was more frequently referred to now as that Big Irish Devil—drunkard—reprobate—disgrace—and other like epithets. He heard them too.

Timothy Flynn had come from the Emerald Isle a year before the breaking out of the war. He hadn't a relative on this side of the water. He always had a soft spot in his heart for women. He never saw a pretty face without having a pleasant word for the owner. I learned, however, soon after we met, in a burst of mutual confidence between us, that there was really only one girl in the world for him, a certain Mary Ruhl, to whom he had wholly given that big heart of his before enlistment. He simply devoured the letters that came from her.

I have since learned that shortly after he was reduced to the ranks, though not a syllable of his disgrace reached her ears, his sweetheart was taken sick. She never wrote him of her illness. She grew weaker and weaker, while her letters continued as cheerful as ever. At length, when too weak to write, a letter came from a friend, telling him of her sickness and telling him that she had confessed that "she would give the world for a sight of his dear old face." The friend added that that would do Polly more good than all the medicine she was taking. Handing me the letter, he said, "I must go to her."

He had been on several sprees after being reduced to the ranks, and the letter had come on the heels of one. It came also at a time when there was inaction in the army, when many other men of the regiment had been receiving furloughs, some on account of sickness, others to go home to their families or attend to some pressing business. He believed, however, that he would have no trouble in getting a leave of absence.

At the time he made request of our Captain for a furlough, that officer had been exasperated over a large number of similar requests and was in a bad humor. I had gone with him to speak a word for him. Instead of trying to find the motive for the only request of the kind he had ever made, as the Captain would have done at any other time, he brusquely cut him short, saying, "I can't recommend giving you a furlough. Furloughs are for men of families, for sick men, men who deserve them, but not for such as you."

He looked his Captain full in the eyes for a moment, as though he could not believe his ears. Then he stepped aside without a word, as though he had been struck. I started to say something for him. He grabbed me roughly by the arm, hissing in my ear, "Not a word." As we turned away I heard the Lieutenant say to the Captain, "I wonder what that Big Devil wanted a furlough for. He would be so drunk during his whole leave that he wouldn't know at the end that he had had a vacation."

I whispered to him, "Let me tell them," but he fiercely answered me, "No." He had been too sensitive to give as his excuse the fact that he wanted to see his sweetheart, the only soul in the wide world he loved, and after the refusal he was too proud to have done so.

I knew he was worried as he had never been before. The very thought of his sweetheart being sick had overwhelmed him. When he was refused a furlough I saw a determination glow in his eyes that told me that he would go to her if he had to be shot for it.

That night, without ever telling me a word of his intentions, he laid aside his uniform, put on old suit of clothes and deserted. I was asleep when he went, and when I awoke in the morning to find him missing he was already many miles on his way. I felt it would be no easy task to capture him, and I feared for the one that might make the attempt. Our Colonel, concluding that he might turn up at the place of his enlistment, sent word to Philadelphia to be on the watch for him. He did not know, however, that his sweetheart had moved away up in New York State and that he was making his way speedily in that direction. No one knew of the existence of the sweetheart but myself, and I would rather have had my tongue torn out by the roots than have dropped one word that would have given him any trouble.

He reached his sweetheart, his Polly, coming in time to take her into his arms, to feel her poor thin arms about his neck, to speak the great love that dwelt in his big heart. One day he was telling her of the letter that had come from her friend and how he had hastened to her as soon as he received

it, something in the telling caused her to ask him with alarm, "But Tim, dear, you didn't come to see me without a furlough?"

He quieted her in that innocent way he had of answering difficult questions by saying, "Sure, my Polly, do you think I would do such a thing! They would shoot me."

Another time she playfully called him her sergeant and asked him what he had done with his chevrons. It was then he gave them to her with the remark, "Here they are, I have brought them back for you. They will look better on your sleeves than they ever did on mine."

He pinned them on her sleeves. There was little time for him to consider his desertion or the consequences that might follow it. His sweetheart was dangerously ill. His sole concern was for her, to give her the loving care she had hungered for. He nursed her like a babe, tenderly as any woman could have done. Strong as he was he could not push back the inevitable. It came closer day by day. In less than three weeks from his coming his Polly passed away, happy in his arms. Poor Tim, broken hearted, buried her with his chevrons—his dead honor—on her sleeves.

Then for the first time, in a dazed, distracted condition, he seriously considered the fact that he was a deserter. But this did not give him much concern for he did not care what would become of himself. He realized, however, that the only place in the world for him now was his regiment. He made his way quickly to the front and found our regiment on the night of June 30th, '63, a few miles below Taneytown, Maryland. No one knew he was in camp that night but myself. He found me, and lying along-side of me haltingly and between choking sobs, told me as much as he could.

Next day the news arrived of the first day's fight, then in progress at Gettysburg, and at once a forced march to that direction was ordered. It was late in the afternoon as our Colonel rode up along the line that he first noticed Big Tim's presence. It was at a time when the ranks had been thinned a little by tired, exhausted men dropping in the dust of the hot road and crawling into some poor shade by the wayside, and others straggling into the woods here and there skirting the road to rest. Big, tireless Tim, had trudged along in the dusty road with the hot, blazing sun overhead, and when I trudged alongside of me, and when I was slightly overcome by the heat, he had put an arm about me, and taking my gun, carried it, as well as his own, in his other hand. When the Colonel recognized him, he reined his horse and called, "Hello, Big Tim, when did you come?" "Last night," he answered with a salute toward his cap, with his burdened arm.

"Where have you been?" was the next question. "Away on the leave of absence I gave myself," he replied. The Colonel slowly said, "You have been a deserter, in fact, a deserter. We have been hunting for you everywhere. I will have to order you placed under arrest. Not now," as he made a motion of submission, "You can consider yourself paroled until you are wanted. Then we will have to dispose of your case. I can trust you, can't I?"

With much dignity and another attempted salute, he answered, "I'm a soldier, at your service." I had been solicitous about him since his return, for I knew what the fate of a deserter was. Yet I told myself when all the facts were known, and I resolved all the facts would be known if I had to tell them myself that if all others could not forgive, Father Abraham would.

Ten o'clock that night found us at the end of our march, and during the night the stragglers, who had dropped out in that awful march, came into line, formed and placed near the base of the Round Tops, Little and Big.

July 2nd opened clear, cloudless and hot. There was work for everyone to do. Preparations went on for the great battle we knew would soon be fought. The men were stirred as I had never seen them before. We were on our own northern soil, and were prepared to struggle to the death. Not a word was said that day about the desertion.

About the middle of the afternoon the barking of the artillery began on our front. An hour later the battle was on. General Sickles had advanced the Third Corps, and was holding his line in the shape of a semi-circle from Devil's Den, through the woods and Wheatfield up to the Peach Orchard, and angling there extended along the Emmitsburg road. The Confederate artillery had played with terrible effect upon that line. When the firing ceased brigade after brigade of Longstreet's Division pressed forward until the entire line of Sickles was engaged in a most desperate fight.

The battle raged at the Peach Orchard. The line at Devil's Den was outflanked and in jeopardy. The centre at the Wheatfield was furiously assailed and weakened. The second division of the Third Corps along the Emmitsburg road was given the order to throw back the left of the line and change front from west to south. The order was carried out in splendid style, and the line pressed forward into the fight. This advance was soon checked.

It was then near 5 o'clock, reinforcements were ordered from the Fifth and Second Corps. The Irish Brigade belonged to the First Division of the

Second Corps. We were hurried forward to the support of the weakened centre in the Wheatfield. The first brigade reached it ahead of us, and rushed into the fight. We followed immediately, and at the head of our brigade rode our gallant commander at that time, Colonel Patrick Kelly.

It was when the Irish Brigade reached the edge of the Wheatfield, that was fast becoming the slaughtering pen of that awful fight, that a halt was called and our line was formed. We were halted within sight of the enemy; halted within range of his guns; halted with roar of battle on all sides of us; halted while biting, stinging bullets sang above our heads, ploughed the ground in front of us, or flattened themselves with a ping against rocks; halted while the color guard in front of us bore aloft our green banner alongside the Stars and Stripes; halted while Father Corby, our loved Chaplain Priest, mounted a rock and spoke to us, saying, "Boys, I am going to give absolute to all of you who truly repent you of your sins. In the hour of battle remember your great Captain, Christ, and do your duty. Remember the trust the nation has placed in you and be faithful, even unto death. Fight as the valiant and brave men and soldiers ye are, and if it is the will of God be prepared to die for the cause for which you fight."

Stretching his right arm, the men fell on their knees in as perfect alignment as though upon dress parade. Big Tim and I, not ten paces from the rock upon which the priest stood, heard him with his great voice solemnly pronounce, "May Our Lord Jesus Christ absolve you, and I by His authority absolve you from every tie, excommunication and interdiction, in so much as I am able and you are in need of; therefore I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

The amen of the priest was drowned in the order of Colonel Kelly as he thundered "Forward." We sprang to our feet, and with yells as we went, charged over the Wheatfield, driving the enemy before us, driving them from behind rocks, which sheltered them, driving them back through the wheat, with tufts of it here and there not yet crushed to earth, driving them back through dead and wounded men fell out of the ranks at every step, driving them back into the woods beyond, driving them as the Irish Brigade had done in every fight, driving them until our line crushed into their line, and they were ordered to throw down their arms and go to the rear as prisoners.

In a short time Colonel Kelly discovered that all support was gone on either flank. To save the brigade we were compelled to fall back across the Wheatfield. We were caught in this movement by a furious fire from the enemy. We fell back, firing, and fiercely fighting every inch of the way.

It was when the fight was closest that Big Tim stubbornly stood in the front rank fighting like a demon, crushing everything in front of him; it was then I saw him reel. He was hit in the leg. I was beside him. He steadied himself for a moment, then stumbling over the body of a fallen comrade, he fell.

A wounded soldier sometimes cries, sometimes grips his teeth together to endure in silence, and sometimes swears. In a moment I learned what he would do. Raising himself across the dead body beside him and leveling his gun at the enemy, crack! crack! went his rifle while he swore. A moment later he had re-loaded and struggled to his feet. With another oath he moved forward a few paces. Crack! crack! again went his rifle. A second later one of his hands went up in the air. He had been wounded in the body. Then he went down headlong.

I came up to him almost instantly. He lay quite still. I called to him. He did not answer me. It was all I could do then, as our line began to fall back slowly.

Other troops coming up fought over and over the Wheatfield desperately. Every advance or retreat left rows of dead and wounded in the long wheat. Later the line at the Peach Orchard was forced back under a furious assault and passed over the Wheatfield. Nightfall found the day saved and our army still in possession of the Round Tops.

That night I was placed on picket duty. It was a bright moonlight night. Just as the relief came on duty I saw a great form crawling over the ground towards our line. I called "Halt."

"Thank God, it's you, Little Tim," came the answer. There was no mistaking the owner of that voice. It was Big Tim, whose wonderful strength had enabled him, when he recovered consciousness, and under the cover of night, to crawl with a shattered leg and an awful wound in his body to our lines.

I went forward to help him. He had reached our lines, but he had overtaxed his strength. He swooned in my arms. As I sat holding his head, I felt his pulse; it beat wildly. He was flushed with fever born of his wounds and the heat. I poured liquor into his mouth. Even in the condition he was in it was not refused. He swallowed it. After a while he stirred. I thought he struggled to speak. I put my head close to him. In broken whispers of a rising delirium came the words, "Oa, I'm a big Irish devil—a drunkard—a reprobate—a disgrace to the regiment—a deserter—yes, a deserter—I'm a sinner—a sinner."

Again he lost consciousness. Getting help we carried him to the hospital. Though I anxiously waited a long while by his side, he had not come out of the stupor when I left him.

The third day's fight followed. Next day came the retreat of the Confederates. We lingered that day to bury our dead and those of the enemy and to lock after the wounded. It was Sunday afternoon, July 5, before we were ready to move southward.

Sunday morning, having leave, I went to the town. Many of the wounded had been carried there and lay in all kinds of improvised hospitals and were being cared for by our hospital corps and the people of the town. I searched through them all for Big Tim, and was about giving up my errand, when I found him in one of the churches of Gettysburg, appropriately used as a hospital. I was told he had not yet recovered consciousness, hovering all the while between life and death. I found the surgeon in charge. He told me nothing could be done for him. There was no hope. I sat by him a long while, dumb, wretched, that the light must be given up without some effort being made to save him. While I lingered by his side, he stirred and struggled to open his eyes. I leaned forward over him, crying, "I have found you, you dear old fellow. It's me, Little Tim, don't you know me?" His eyes opened and rested on me. He smiled. His eyes closed. A few minutes later his lips moved. There was no sound. I put my ear to his lips, from which slowly struggled the words, "Absolved—from—all—my sins—in the name—of—"

His lips ceased to move. The surgeon, coming up, looked at him and touched him. Then I heard him say, "It's all over with the big fellow."

THE POPE WON HIS ENEMY.

"Our Pope," said a well known Catholic, "reads character at a glance and is rarely deceived. One evening, when Nuncio at Brussels, he was entering his carriage to go to dinner at the house of Count de Baillet, when, just as his foot was on the carriage step, a workman, wretchedly dressed, rushed forward, insulted him, and attacked him personally. His servants, ready in his defense, seized the aggressor and proceeded to make things hot for him; but the Pope—then simple Mgr. Pecci—stopped them, and, calmly and kindly addressing the man, said: 'My friend, I bear you no malice for what you have done; are you in need?' Come to see me some other time," and let a 5 franc piece slip into his hand. Needless to say the workman, after much encouragement, went to see him, and went so often that the Nuncio eventually took him into his service as a domestic, and even now Leo XIII. retains a benevolent recollection of him, and recounts that he never had a servant more respectful and more to be trusted."

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