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NUMBER TWO-THE NAMELESS CONFEDERATE PRIVATE WHO LOST HIS LIFE GIVING WATER TO WOUNDED FEDERALS

The hero of the second incident was a Confederate soldier, a private in one of the companies of Gen. J. B. Kershaw's brigade. I do not know his name, and his story, so far as it could be related by my informant, was a brief one. Perhaps Gen. Kershaw or some one of his older comrades will supply his name and a better account of his daring deed.

The facts as told to me were that during the battle of Fredericksburg, and after the Federals had been repulsed, with frightful loss, in one of their attacks on Marye's Heights, a private of his command appeared before Gen. Kershaw with a number of canteens in his hand, or slung from his shoulders, and asked permission to go over the breastworks for the purpose of carrying them to the wounded Federals, whose piteous cries for "water, water," could be plainly heard amid all the horrid din of the battle. The ground where they lay, in front of the works, was still swept by the incessant fire of the opposing forces, and Gen. Kershaw naturally declined to allow the man to expose himself to such seemingly certain destruction. It was not safe, indeed, to present the slightest target over the top of the breastworks to the deadly hail that was poured upon them. The brave fellow replied simply that he "could not bear to hear the cries of the wounded men," and would take the risk if allowed to do so. Permission was granted with some reluctance, and in another moment the soldier was over the works and busily engaged in his hazardous task of ministering to the suffering and frantic Federals around him. The firing was steadily sustained on both sides while he was thus engaged, and scarcely a minute elapsed before a ball from the front nearly tore off one arm and left it dangle loosely at his side. Nothing daunted by his own severe wound the noble fellow kept steadily on his errand of mercy, and moved about among his prostrate fellow-creatures distributing the water they so much craved as he went.

The singular spectacle seemed at last to have attracted attention in the Federal ranks, and several officers could be seen intently watching him through their field glasses, as though to satisfy themselves that they were not mistaken as to his purpose. Recognizing the work he was performing and the danger he was in, they suddenly stopped the firing in his direction, which had indeed increased upon his first appearance. The Confederates followed their example, and in a few moments more a number of his comrades had joined the brave man in his self-imposed task. When it was accomplished all returned to their own lines and the battle was renewed.

The sequel is a sad one. The same courageous and kind spirit prompted the brave fellow to attempt a like effort in the battle of the Wilderness a little later, and he was shot down in his tracks and instantly killed, almost at the outset of his attempt, with the canteens yet in his hands. I am informed that an effort will be made to have a pension bestowed, by the United States government, upon his helpless widow and orphans, and it is not anticipated that much objection will be made. Surely none should be made.

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