

There was one soldier, however, in a Western army, who in a retreat proved an exception to the rule and showed himself still master of the faculty of resentment. An irreverent general officer, who was famous for designating his men on all critical occasions by a title which was anything but a pet name, called out to this soldier who was breaking for the rear:

"Halt there, turn round, and get back to the front, you ——."

"Look-ee here, Gin'ral," said the man, cocking his gun and taking aim at the officer's head, "when a man calls me a name sich es that, it 's his last departin' word."

"Oh, put up your gun," said the general. "I did n't mean anything. I forgot your other name."

Reasoning dictated by fear is seldom logical. When a man becomes panic-stricken he recognizes but one principle for his guidance, that self-preservation is the first law of nature, and is ready to repeat the cry, "I would give all my fame for a pot of ale and safety." The instincts of fear do not always guide him to a safe place. In his confusion he often rushes into more danger, and becomes a ludicrous object to watch. In one of our prominent battles, a soldier belonging to a command which was supporting a battery was lying down with the rest of his regiment to obtain some cover afforded by a bit of rolling ground. The fire soon became so hot that his nerves could no longer stand the strain upon them, and he sprang to his feet and started for the rear. He soon found himself in a level field that was being plowed by the shot and shell which ricocheted over the rolling ground in front, and saw that he had got out of the frying-pan into the fire.

"What are you doing there?" cried an officer.

"Well," said the man, "I 'm looking for the rear of this army, but it don't seem to have any."

The question most frequently asked of soldiers is, "How does a man feel in battle?" There is a belief, among some who have never indulged in the pastime of setting themselves up as targets to be shot at, that there is a delicious sort of exhilaration experienced in battle, which arouses a romantic enthusiasm, surfeits the mind with delightful sensations, makes one yearn for a life-time of fighting, and feel that peace is a pusillanimous sort of thing at best. Others suppose, on the contrary, that one's knees rattle like a Spanish *bailarina's* castanets, and that one's mind dwells on little else than the most approved means of running away.

A happy mean between these two extremes would doubtless define the condition

of the average man when he finds that as a soldier he is compelled to devote himself to stopping bullets as well as directing them. He stands his ground and faces the dangers into which his profession leads him, under a sense of duty and a regard for his self-respect, but often feels that the sooner the firing ceases the better it would accord with his notion of the general fitness of things, and that if the enemy is going to fall back the present moment would be as good a time as any at which to begin such a highly judicious and commendable movement. Braving danger, of course, has its compensations. "The blood more stirs to rouse a lion than to start a hare." In the excitement of a charge, or in the enthusiasm of approaching victory, there is a sense of pleasure which no one should attempt to under-rate. It is the gratification which is always born of success, and, coming to one at the supreme moment of a favorable crisis in battle, rewards the soldier for many severe trials and perilous risks.

The physical effect produced upon different men in the presence of danger forms an interesting study, but in many cases the outward signs as indicated by the actions of the individual in no wise measure the degree of his courage or his fear. The practice, for instance, of dodging shots, "jackknifing" under fire, proceeds from a nervousness which is often purely physical, and has but little more significance as a test of courage than winking when something is thrown in one's face. The act is entirely involuntary. A general officer who was killed at the second battle of Bull Run was one of the most gallant soldiers that ever drew a blade. Everybody had predicted his early death from the constant and unnecessary exposure to which he subjected himself. When under fire, the agile dodging he performed was a whole gymnastic exercise in itself. His head would dart from side to side and occasionally bob down to his horse's neck with all the vigor of a signal-flag in waving a message. These actions were entirely beyond his control, and were no indications whatever of fear. Dodging to some extent under a heavy infantry fire is very common. I can recall only two persons who throughout a rattling musketry fire always sat in their saddles without moving a muscle or even winking an eye; one was a bugler in the regular cavalry, and the other was General Grant.

Two general officers in the field, conspicuous for their fearlessness, possessed such nervous temperaments physically that, under the strain to which they were subjected in the face of a destructive fire, they invariably became affected with nausea, and, as our English friends say of seasick people, they frequently became