

himself more frequently of his vast preponderance of numbers, and thus by attrition accomplish what he never could accomplish by strategy. In Lee's hands, with anything approaching the proportions of an army under his command, Grant was but a pigmy, and well he knew it. Attrition, therefore, was henceforth to be the policy of the Federal commander, and in this he showed his wisdom, but it was an unmilitary one, and cannot reflect creditably upon his reputation as a great military chieftain. Grant, therefore, began to pinch Lee harder wherever it was possible. He captured Fort Harrison, a work of much importance, and one which Lee in vain attempted to recapture.

Slowly, but surely, the Confederate Army was dwindling away. Hundreds of desertions were occurring every day, and the inevitable was not far off. Men were starving, and were naked in the trenches. The sufferings of the poor fellows were beyond endurance. Their families were appealing to them for relief ; their wives and children were at home reduced to gaunt spectres, and these appeals caused many a brave man, who had faced the enemy upon a hundred bloody battle-fields, to leave his comrades and wend his way to his desolate home. Their excuse was that all was over, and now they had a sacred duty to perform in protecting their loved ones. To some this seemed akin to desertion, but there certainly was some justification for the act.

These numerous desertions entailed additional duties upon the Second Maryland. It had been reduced to little more than two hundred men, but these two hundred men were expected to do the duty of a regiment. So far but one desertion had occurred from its ranks, and that was the only one that ever did occur. They were, therefore, kept almost constantly upon picket duty, for the Marylanders could be trusted where others could not be.

Thus the weary, dismal winter passed slowly away. There had been during that time some welcome visitors to the camp of the Second Maryland, and among them Colonel George P. Kane, of Baltimore. He was shocked at the condition of the men, and he was moreover surprised at their cheerfulness under such trying circumstances. When he left the boys he promised them each a new uniform and a change of underclothing. He kept his promise, and on the 4th of March, 1865, they arrived. Many a " God bless you, Colonel Kane," went up from those poor boys as they threw aside the miserable rags in which they were clad and donned their comfortable suits.

But to go back a few weeks : February 5, 1865, was a memorable day in the annals of the Second Maryland. About 10 o'clock of that day the brigade, now under command of Colonel William McComb, was moved to the right near Hatcher's Run, where it joined heavy bodies of troops. At 3 o'clock P. M. the whole force crossed their breastworks, and passing over a broad open space between the two picket lines, and obliquely to the right, entered a swampy woods,