

The reports were the richer because the boy enjoyed a privileged position both with officers and men, and this in spite of the fact that he joined the news battery of the army at a moment when the exasperation of the authorities with the whole newspaper fraternity was at its height - and not without good reason. / From the beginning of the war there had been trouble - the army's business was to conceal its movements, the correspondents considered it their business to reveal them. More than once attempted surprise movements had been laid out in all their details in Northern newspapers which had reached the Confederates in ample time for frustration. Little wonder that the Secretaries of War and Navy suspected the fraternity and often dealt harshly and unjustly with its members.

Officers, particularly those in positions of great responsibility, shared this dislike of correspondents, and more particularly because of their activity in trying to boost or pull down ~~this or that man~~. Sometimes ~~it was~~ a grudge - wounded vanity was back of ^{activities} ~~that~~ the reporter's ~~his favoritism~~. He had not been asked to mess with the general - he had been refused a favor - he had been reprimanded. Again, it was a quite natural desire to flatter the vanity of the local constituency ~~they~~ served by telling how much superior some man who hailed from their neighborhood was to the head of his corps - or the head of the army itself! Grant at one time was so hurt and disgusted by hostile and irresponsible newspaper comment that he considered leaving the army. As for Sherman, he

was kept in a state of violent and profane indignation. The newspaper reporters were fools, he said, venal, their only object to pick up news. They were forever praising the idle and worthless who catered to them and crying down the hard working and meritorious who hauled them up for their indiscretions and disobedience of orders.

This feeling against the newspaper correspondent was at its height when Grant's campaign of 1864 was undertaken. Secretary Stanton as well as Grant and Meade had agreed that there must be no leakages this time. It was Secretary Stanton's redoubling of orders, his decree that no more civilians should be allowed to go to the Army of the Potomac that had induced young Henry Wing to run away, to show that he could get in, Stanton or no Stanton.

But from the beginning of the campaign there were leakages that more than justified the activities of the War Department. The Army of the Potomac received Richmond papers more regularly than it did those from the North, and again and again General Grant found that orders he supposed to be absolutely secret were published by the Confederate press. There was a traitor in the camp. Indeed, a traitor was discovered at the end of the one of the first days of the Wilderness battle. Grant with his staff and certain officers had sought a place outside their tent where there would be no possibility of their discussion being overheard, when suddenly General Rawlins, who had the eyes of a hawk, discovered

an eavesdropper behind a stump. The man turned out to be a newspaper correspondent, and he was summarily dealt with. Indeed, from this time on no correspondent who violated confidence or was guilty of indiscretion was left unpunished.

It is believed
It was generally believed in the Army of the Potomac that at the end of the first Wilderness day Meade had suggested falling back of the Rapidan.--Henry Wing believed it to his death, so did many a soldier in the line, but officially it was denied. When, in spite of official denial, a correspondent sent the story to his newspaper where it was published, he was publicly paraded through the ranks wearing a placard "Libeler of the Press." With such drastic punishments in operation, even so young and impetuous a person as Henry Wing was inclined to be cautious. As a matter of fact Henry had a very real sense of responsibility. He had been a soldier, and the idea that by too quick speaking he could give the enemy information which would cause the mutilation or death of his old comrades was always his first thought in his reporting.

Headquarters sensed this. Moreover headquarters knew his story, knew where he got his limp. They, like the men in line, had a feeling for him that they had for possibly no correspondent in the Army of the Potomac. He carried his wounds - all that they faced he had faced; and, though crippled, had taken the service he was fit for and continued to run dangers as they did. Indeed, Henry was oblivious of danger. News to him was where action was;

therefore he must be on the spot whatever the risk. His quick eye and ear saw and heard official gestures and orders never intended for the newspaper men, and he acted on them. His daily adventuring into dangerous places and his escapes were the ~~sur-~~amazement of his colleagues. Wing's luck they called it. It was not luck but unusual hardihood and quick wit. The result was that he held, as I have said, a favored position. Headquarters might be as cold as a fish externally but it had a code of eyelash signals, of finger gestures with which it could tip off its favorites. Jess had come to Henry solely because he was a favorite, without knowing it, of a scout captain, with a face as non-committal as a tombstone. This man in the course of his adventures had brought to the camp a Confederate prisoner accidentally captured and with him a handsome chestnut gelding. The captain remembered the merry, limping correspondent whose exploits had more than once turned out valuable to headquarters, even if they were of a nature that could not be reported to his newspaper. Etiquette forbade the officer addressing a civilian, but there was the code, and by an almost imperceptible crook of his little finger, he advised Henry Wing to saunter after him. Henry did so and was led to the horse which he told the President was the finest in the army. "If you need him, take him," was the captain's low communication, "and there is a man in there who will tell you all about him." The man was the prisoner.

Henry found that he was much more interested in Jess' fate than in his own. His love and pride in the horse were sincere and unbounded. To be sure he went into the hands of someone who appreciated him, would understand him and care for him was apparently his one desire. As for himself, he was a man, he could speak and curse - but Jess - Jess must be looked after. He soon realized that his horse could not have fallen into better hands than those of Henry Wing.

~~Henry's adventures often took him into dangerous places. He had a horse named Jess who was a real fighter and was not afraid of danger. Henry's horse was a real fighter and was not afraid of danger. Henry's horse was a real fighter and was not afraid of danger. Henry's horse was a real fighter and was not afraid of danger.~~

All of the findings, the impressions, the emotions of the dashing life he now began to pour into Abraham Lincoln's ears on the frequent visits to Washington.

A feature of all Henry Wing's talks was his stories of those pathetic derelicts of war, young and old, feeble and crippled, that the passing army leaves and which must go down to destruction unless a strong hand is stretched out to save them. Henry Wing could no more pass one of these derelicts by than he could refuse to join a dangerous raid. There were many tales afloat at headquarters of his rescues. There was one about which his colleagues long teased him - his baby.