Terry's Texas Rangers

by Leonidas B. Giles, 1841-?

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Introduction

It is but natural that man should desire to leave some record of his achievements for the information of succeeding generations. This desire was manifested in the infancy of the race, and is shown in monuments and chiseled stone, and in writings on skins and reeds.

Here in the South, when the great war of the ’60s had terminated and the various actors in the great drama had time to look about them, the desire was universal that the record made by Southern manhood should be perpetuated. The regiment of Texas cavalry known as the „Terry Rangers“ shared that feeling; and when the survivors began to meet in annual reunion this desire became manifest. Two propositions appealed to them: one for a history which should tell of their campaigns, their marches, battles, hardships, sufferings; one for a monument which should contain the name of every man who served in the regiment. For reasons which I need not discuss here the plan for the history failed. All funds raised for either purpose were combined into one and placed in control of the monument committee. The equestrian statue which now stands in the grounds of the State Capitol in Austin is the result.

The desire for a narrative still survived, however, discoverable in many personal sketches of events, some taking the form of memoirs, written by various members of the command. I have long contemplated such a work but have felt the lack of ability. It is now perhaps too late to attempt anything like a complete history of the regiment, as the necessary data can hardly be procured. Yet, when my former

comrade, D. S. Combs, appealed to me to write something that would supply his children and grandchildren with some knowledge, however imperfect, of the part borne by the Rangers in the great war, I unhesitatingly promised to try it and do the best I could. I wish with all my heart I could make my story as complete as it ought to be, for I firmly believe that a well written narrative of the regiment's wonderful career would be the most entertaining book in the literature of war.

As a first step toward the accomplishment of the task I had undertaken, I wrote to Comrade Combs asking him for such data as he might have or such as his personal recollections might supply; also as to the scope and form of the work as he wished it to appear. His answer is so kind and trusting that I here insert it and, as the lawyers say, make it a part of the record. His letter, written from his home in San Antonio, is dated January 5th:

"My Dear Lee:

"Yours of the 26th of December came duly to hand, and I should have replied sooner but I have been strictly on the go for the last ten days, and I have neglected many things that should have had attention.

"Now, Lee, I wish to state with all the sincerity of my heart, that all I want is plain statements of facts; and while I give you a brief outline of my movements, from the day I was sworn into the service of the Confederate States to the close of the war, I simply do this that you may know where D.S. Combs was, and it is a matter of indifference to me whether my name is mentioned a single time in your story of the doings of the regiment, and, more especially, of the part old Company D played in that drama.

"I was very fearful that the war would be over before I saw a live Yankee. So Charley McGehee and I went fifty miles from home to join a company, and joined Ferrell's company between Bastrop and La Grange. According to my recollection this was in the latter part of August, '61.

"From that day to the day I left the regiment, I was not away from Company D more than ten or twelve days, and then on account of sickness; once at Shelbyville for five or six days; at another time near Nolensville for about the same length of time.

"My initiation was at Woodsonville, and the last of the chapter was at Mossy Creek, Dandridge, and the brick house where N. J. Allen was killed and the artillery duel where Captain Littlefield was wounded. This, I think, was early in January, '64. Here I drew a furlough, and in company with Ike Jones, Bill Fisher and Jeff Burleson, I struck out for home. On my arrival at home my parents and sisters insisted that I ask for assignment to duty on this side of the Mississippi. I had lost one brother by sickness at Searcy, Arkansas, one had been killed at the battle of Chickamauga, one badly wounded at Port Hudson, and another desperately wounded at Mansfield, Louisiana.

"Accordingly, I applied to General E. Kirby Smith for such assignment, and he gave me orders to report to General Magruder at Galveston for assignment to duty in any cavalry command I might select. I chose Colonel J. S. Ford's command on the Rio Grande. I was attached to Captain Carrington's company in Major Cater's battalion, and was with that command in the last

fight of the war. This was between Brownsville and the mouth of the Rio Grande, and was about two weeks after General Smith had surrendered the Trans-Mississippi department, but the word had not reached us. I am glad to say that in this last fight of the war the Confederate arms were victorious. A few days after this we got word that the war was over. So we folded our tents and quietly and sadly turned our faces homeward. As a company or battalion we never surrendered. We simply laid down our arms and tried to forget the past and all its disappointments.

"Now to go back and come over the story as it actually occurred, I will simply say that I was never wounded during the war, but particularly unfortunate with my mounts. I had three noble animals killed under me, two at Murfreesboro, one at College Hill, opposite Knoxville, also one wounded at Mt. Washington, near Louisville, Kentucky.

"I was with you at Farmington and at Nolensville, where Ferg Kyle led his line of dismounted men, deployed as skirmishers, up against a solid line of blue, a regiment of infantry, who poured a galling fire into our ranks and caused us to reel and stagger like a drunken man.

"I was with you at Woodsonville, Shiloh, Murfreesboro, Bardstown, Perryville and Chickamauga. Also at Murfreesboro when Forrest with his little band swooped down on the two camps and took them in out of the damp.

"Again, Lee, I will say that I wish you to handle the story in your own way, and I will be perfectly satisfied. What we want is the doings of the *company* and *regiment*. I care not for individual mention. If you and I are satisfied I care not whether others are or not.

"I wish to emphasize this statement. I appreciate more than you know your willingness to undertake this for me, and will gladly remunerate you as far as it is in my power to do for the time you put in on the work.

"Mrs. Combs and I wish to thank you and your daughter for the kind hospitality to us during the reunion, and hope you may both find it convenient to visit us in the near future. Wishing you both a pleasant and prosperous New Year, I am,

"Always yours,

"D. S. Combs."

If I had regretted my promise or had wavered in the slightest from my intention, this letter would have renewed in me the purpose to do my best. Yet I do not see why anyone who writes as well as Comrade Combs should desire another to write for him. I would not, with intention, do injustice to anyone; I know I can not do justice to many deserving the highest praise; but I must say that the regiment had no better soldier than D. S. Combs.

Since this work was well under way Comrade A.B. Briscoe of Company K has kindly placed at my service a large lot of MS. of his personal memoirs. I have used this in several instances, of which due credit is given in the proper places.

Austin, May, 1911.

Chapter I

Assembly and Organization of the Regiment.

When in 1861 it became evident that war between the sections was inevitable and imminent, B. F. Terry, a sugar planter of Fort Bend county, and Thomas S. Lubbock, of Houston, determined to be in the fight from the start, hurried to Virginia, at their own expense, where they participated in the first battle of Manassas, rendering distinguished services as scouts before the action and in pursuit of the routed enemy afterward. Later the War Department gave them authority to recruit a regiment of Texans for mounted service in Virginia. Returning to Texas they at once issued a call for volunteers.

The conditions were exacting. Each man must furnish his own arms and equipment—a gun of some sort, Colt's repeating pistol, a saddle, bridle and blanket. Notwithstanding these requirements, the response was so prompt that in less than thirty days the ten companies were on their way to the rendezvous at Houston. Some of the companies had the full complement of one hundred men, rank and file, and in a few more days all would have been full. Probably two or more regiments could have been raised at that time if the call had been made.

The personnel was of the very highest. Sons of leading families, many of them college graduates, professional men, merchants, stockmen, and farmers, served in the ranks as privates, all young, in their teens and early twenties. Rank was scarcely considered. The supreme desire was to get into the war in a crack cavalry regiment.

Since I write without data and from memory only, I must necessarily deal more particularly with the company of which I was a member, known as Company D in the regimental organization. It was recruited largely from Bastrop, with contingents from Hays, Travis and Burleson counties. This organization, full at the beginning, always one of the largest for duty, sustained the greatest loss in killed of all the companies of the regiment. The first officers elected were:

Captain, Stephen C. Ferrell.
First Lieutenant, Charles L. Morgan.
Second Lieutenant, Jesse W. Burdett.
Second Lieutenant, William R. Doak.

The assembly for the company was to be in the town of Bastrop, and notice was given that on a certain morning the march would begin. The men from the adjoining counties reached Bastrop the night before.

It was a bright, sunny August morning. The people, en masse, turned out to bid us good-by. Men, women, children, with tears in their eyes, said, "God bless you!" when they clasped our hands as we stood in line. This painful ordeal over, we mounted and rode away on what we believed was a few months' adventure.

Alleyton, sixty miles away, then the terminus of the railroad, was reached without any very exciting adventures. We sent our horses back home and took the train for Houston. The trains were then run to Harrisburg, but we were dumped off in the prairie at Pierce Junction to await a train from Columbia. The hours

passed, and the night. We slept little on account of the mosquitoes, which were more numerous and voracious than any I ever met elsewhere. Next morning, as there was still no train, we walked into Houston, a distance of nine miles, pushing by hand the freight car with our saddles and baggage. Here we went into camp in an old warehouse and met some of the other companies.

From McLennan and adjoining counties Captain Thos. Harrison led a company which became Company A. Captain John A. Wharton had a full company raised chiefly in Brazoria and Matagorda counties. It became Company B in the organization and continued the largest in enlistment. Companies C, commanded by Mark Evans; E, by L. N. Rayburn; and I, led by J. G. Jones, were recruited in Gonzales and surrounding counties. Many of these were stockmen and expert horsemen. Company F was from Fayette and commanded by Louis M. Strobel. Company G was from Bexar and Goliad counties. Its first captain was W. Y. Houston. Company H was from Fort Bend county chiefly, and commanded by John T. Holt. Company K, Captain John G. Walker, was from Harris and Montgomery counties, and was full. The word "chiefly" ought to be used in telling where the companies were recruited, for all of them had men from several counties. Here, too, on the 9th of September we were "mustered in," swearing to serve "so long as this war shall last."

From Houston to Beaumont, over a newly constructed railroad, it took nearly all day to make eighty miles. From Beaumont, by steamboat, down the Neches and up the Sabine to Niblett's Bluff; thence a hundred miles on foot, through water much of the way; thence forty miles in carts. It is easy to remember this cart ride. The wheels were six or seven feet high. Motive power, oxen, two pairs to each cart. Engineers, little bow-legged Creoles, each armed with a long, sharp-pointed pole. The vehicles had no springs. As there were no seats, the six or eight passengers in each conveyance had to stand on their feet. At New Iberia, on Bayou Teche, we were transferred to boats, and went down between the beautiful banks of that stream to Brashear, now Morgan City. From there we went through an almost continuous sugar farm to New Orleans. The trip from Houston to New Orleans took over a week. It is now made in less than twelve hours, in a palace car.

In New Orleans we learned that our destination was not Virginia, but Bowling Green, Kentucky, where General A. Sidney Johnston was trying to assemble an army for the defense of that frontier. This was pleasing to us, as General Johnston was a Texan, and personally known to many of us.

The box cars in which we left New Orleans had been used for shipping cattle, and were not overly clean. Our seats were rough planks without backs. In this luxurious fashion we rode for twenty hours until we reached Nashville. There we encamped in the fair grounds. Ladies in great numbers visited us, and for their entertainment our most expert horsemen gave the first really-truly "wild-west" entertainment ever seen east of the Mississippi.

At Nashville our first death occurred, Thomas Hart, whose loss saddened us greatly. He was a promising young man, not personally well known to me.

We had expected to receive our horses here and go on horseback to Bowling Green, but one night Colonel Terry received orders to bring on his regiment "at once." At 1 o'clock in the morning we marched to the station and waited till 2 p. m. for our train. That same afternoon we reached Bowling Green. Our horses were

driven through from Nashville by a detail sent back after them. We now received tents, camp utensils and wagons. Here, too, the companies were formally organized into a regiment by the election of the following field officers:

Colonel, B. F. Terry.
Lieutenant Colonel, Thomas S. Lubbock.
Major, Thomas Harrison.
The following staff officers were appointed:
Adjutant, M. H. Royston.
Quartermaster, B. H. Botts.
Commissary, Robert D. Simmons.
Chaplain, R. F. Bunting.
Surgeon, Dr. John M. Weston.
Assistant Surgeon, Dr. Robert E. Hill.
Sergeant Major, W. B. Sayers.

Terry was a native of Kentucky, about 40 years old, of great force of character, firm and self-reliant. His appearance was commanding, and in all ways he was fitted for high rank.

Lubbock was some years older than Terry. He was a native of South Carolina. He was small of stature, pleasant and affable, and made a favorable impression on us. At that time he was in poor health, soon had to go to Nashville for treatment, and we never saw him more.

Harrison was a native of Mississippi. He was a lawyer by profession. A small, nervous, irascible man, who proved to be a fine soldier, became a brigadier general of cavalry, and distinguished himself on many fields.

Winter was now at hand, and the climate was trying on young men raised, as we had been, in the far South. Many fell ill of measles, mumps, pneumonia, and other diseases peculiar to raw levees. Scores went to the hospital, and not a few under the sod. Still the spirits of all, from the youngest private to the resolute colonel, were of the highest, and all were anxious to meet the foe. Such as were able drilled daily, mounted guard, and performed other duties incident to camp life in time of war.

Chapter II

Woodsonville.

Terry, anxious to be doing something, was ordered to lead the regiment to the front on picket and scouting duty. On the 17th of December, Brigadier General Hindman led an expedition to Greene river. When he reached that stream he found the north bank in possession of the enemy's outposts. He deployed some infantry skirmishers, who engaged the enemy at long range but with little effect. Called himself from the immediate front, he left Colonel Terry in charge with instructions to decoy the enemy up the hill and away from support to a point where our infantry and artillery could be used to better advantage.

The enemy allowed themselves to be decoyed, and came across in large numbers. Terry, however, was not the man to invite visitors and then leave someone else to entertain them. Sending Ferrell with about seventy-five men against their left, he led the rest against their right. We charged, yelling, each man riding as fast as his horse could go. Terry fell, dying almost instantly.

Ferrell led his force into an open field against a body of the enemy, who rallied behind a straw stack and such fences as they could find, pouring a galling fire into us. On our part it was a furious but disorderly charge of comparatively undrilled men into one of the best drilled regiments of the Federal army. This was the Thirty-second Indiana Infantry. The officers and men were Germans, who had probably learned their tactics in the old country. They were ignorant of the English language. They were brave fellows, and stood like veterans till shot down.

In view of the great disparity of the forces engaged and the losses sustained, this was one of the most remarkable of all the conflicts of this very remarkable war. One of the very few actions where mounted men engaged infantry on their own ground. It also shows of what stuff the Southern volunteer was made. In support of these statements I invite attention to the official reports. The first is by Colonel Willich. Omitting some unimportant details, it is as follows:

> "But now ensued the most earnest and bloody part of the struggle. With lightning speed, under infernal yelling, great numbers of Texas Rangers rushed upon our whole force. They advanced to fifteen or twenty yards of our lines, some of them even between them, and opened fire with rifles and revolvers. Our skirmishers took the thing very coolly, and permitted them to approach very close, when they opened a destructive fire on them. They were repulsed with severe loss, but only after Lieutenant Sachs, who left his covered position with one platoon, was surrounded by about fifty Rangers, several of them demanding of him three times to give up his sword, and let his men lay down their arms. He firmly refused, and defended himself till he fell, with three of his men, before the attack was repulsed.
>
> "Lieutenant Colonel Von Trebra now led on another advance of the center and left flank, when he drew down upon his forces a second attack of the Rangers in large numbers, charging into the very ranks, some dashing through to the rear, which might have proved disastrous.
>
> "In the fight participated three field officers, one staff and sixteen officers of the line, twenty-three sergeants and 375 men. Our loss is one officer and ten men dead, twenty-two wounded and five missing. According to reports of our surgeons several of the wounded are beyond hope of recovery."

I have omitted from the foregoing interesting and more or less instructive details of the parts played by Lieutenant Colonel Von Trebra, Major Snachenberg, Captain Wilchbilling, Adjutant Schmidt, Lieutenant Mank and other heroes whose names are hard to spell and harder to pronounce. Valiant men all, and all doubtless recommended for promotion. As will be seen hereafter, to fight with the Rangers was to be in line of advancement in this world or the next.

I now give General Hindman's report from the Confederate side:

"The firing ceased for about half an hour, and I went in person to select a suitable place for camp, leaving Colonel Terry in command, with instructions to decoy the enemy up the hill, where I could use my infantry and artillery with effect, and be out of the range of the enemy's batteries.

"Before returning to the column the fire from the skirmishers recommenced. The enemy appeared in force on my right and center. Colonel Terry, at the head of seventy-five Rangers, charged about 300 of the enemy, routed and drove them back, but fell mortally wounded. A body of the enemy about the same size attacked the Rangers under Captain Ferrell on the right of the turnpike, and were repulsed with heavy loss.[2-1]

"My loss in this affair was as follows: Killed, Colonel Terry and three men of his regiment; dangerously wounded, Lieutenant Morris and three men of the Texas Rangers; slightly wounded, Captain Walker and three men of the Texas Rangers and two men of the First Arkansas battalion."

From General Hindman's report it will be seen that the Rangers had 150 men in the fight, seventy-five with Terry, seventy-five with Ferrell; there being, in fact, two charges. Our loss was twelve altogether. Colonel Willich reported that he had, officers and men, 418 engaged. He had eleven killed, twenty-two wounded and reported five missing, a total of thirty-eight; his missing being prisoners in our hands. Thus 150 men charged 418, inflicting a loss of thirty-eight, sustaining a loss of twelve. Of this number Company D lost five: W. W. Beal and Frank Loftin killed, L. L. Giles mortally wounded, L. B. Giles and John R. Henry slightly wounded.

If a complete record could be obtained I believe a similar disparity of losses would appear in nearly all the engagements in which we bore a part. The splendid horsemanship of our men, and their skill with firearms, made them easily superior to any foe they went against. In this fight our loss was irreparable in the death of our gallant leader. Had he lived he would, without doubt, have reached the highest rank and would have achieved a fame second to none. We had other brave leaders, but none like the matchless Terry.

In the election of officers which followed the death of Terry, Lieutenant Colonel Lubbock was advanced to the command of the regiment, and Captain John G. Walker became lieutenant colonel. Lubbock, who was at that time in bad health, died a few days later. Captain John A. Wharton was chosen to fill his place.

Wharton was a man of ability, of a distinguished family, liberally educated, a lawyer and a captivating public speaker. Enterprising and ambitious, he never forgot during a wakeful moment that the soldier who survived the war would be a voter. He distinguished himself on many fields and became, successively, brigadier general and major general.

About this time Lieutenant Morgan of Company D resigned and Fergus Kyle was elected first lieutenant. Kyle was subsequently promoted to captain, and made a very efficient officer, distinguishing himself on many fields.

The regiment now resumed its duty of guarding the front. The weather was cold, varied with rain, sleet and snow. The men suffered greatly. Some suffering, as to the weather, I escaped, having received a slight wound. I was sent to the hospital at Nashville, Tennessee, where I stayed two days, going from there to the home of

a relative, where I spent nearly seven weeks. In the care of my kindred I had all the comforts and some of the luxuries of life. I reported for duty just before the retreat from Bowling Green.

The burial squad informed me that my poor horse, who received some of the lead intended for his master, and yet had no personal interest in the row, had five bullet wounds. He fell under me near the straw stacks. I rode off the field behind John B. Rector, who halted in a shower of bullets and kindly assisted me to mount.

Chapter III

Retreat.

The word is not reassuring to seasoned soldiers. To new troops it is very depressing. Johnston's line was broken on the right at Fishing Creek, and was threatened on the left at Donelson. Bowling Green was, therefore, untenable, and now we must fall back behind the Cumberland.

The Rangers must cover the retreat. It was snowing the morning we left, and the enemy were throwing shells into the place. Our march to Nashville was without incident. We crossed the Cumberland in the night and camped just outside the city. We now learned that Donelson had fallen, and the retreat must be continued. We were ordered down toward Donelson to guard in that direction, and to afford succor to such as had escaped the surrender and might be making their way south.

Returning, we found the army at Murfreesboro, but it moved on by Shelbyville, Huntsville and Decatur to Corinth, Mississippi, the Rangers guarding the rear. The weather was bad and the progress slow, but the enemy did not press us. We crossed the Tennessee river on the railroad bridge, which had been floored for the purpose. When we went into camp rations of bacon and flour were issued to us. Our wagons and camp equipment being somewhere else, we were confronted with the problem of preparing this flour for the immediate consumption of the chronically hungry soldier. If necessity is the mother of invention, hunger is a most capable handmaid of the good dame. An oilcloth is spread on the ground, and on this the flour is kneaded, but how to bake it was the question. Some rolled the dough around a stake or ramrod, which they stuck in the ground by the fire, but the stuff would slip down. Some of us tried a flat rail, and that answered very well. First heating the rail thoroughly, we stuck our biscuits on it, set them before the fire, and watched them brown, our appetites growing keener all the while. The treatment of the bacon was easy. We broiled it on a stick held before the fire or above the coals, and that is the best way it was ever cooked.

At Corinth we had a few days' rest. Absentees came in, and the *morale* improved.

Buell did not follow our line of march, but moved by the more direct route through Franklin, Columbus and Pulaski, intending to unite with Grant at Pittsburg Landing.

Chapter IV

Shiloh.

Johnston planned to attack Grant before the arrival of Buell, and had brought together the largest army ever before assembled in the Confederacy. He had the force under General Hardee from Bowling Green, the remnant of Zollicoffer's army, Bragg from Pensacola with a fine corps of well drilled and well equipped troops, and Polk from Columbus with a light force, altogether nearly 40,000 men. They were to attack an army of veterans flushed with the victory at Donelson.

Johnston ordered the army to move on the morning of April 3, but some of the troops did not get away until that afternoon. It was said that this delay was due to the inexperience of both staff and men. Johnston had intended to attack on the 5th, but the army, delayed by the bad roads, did not arrive in time. Thus we lost twenty-four fateful hours—twenty-four hours of as precious time as was ever lost in war.

Our regiment reached the front on the 4th and was ordered to guard the left wing of the army. In detachments we guarded every road, trail and opening around the whole left front and flank, with strict orders that none of us be allowed to sleep at all. Soon after nightfall it began to rain. It poured down in torrents, and the night was pitch dark. Whether in the saddle, on post or in camp, we could hardly have slept in that downpour. It was a long, dreary night, but morning, a bright spring morning, came at last.

The regiment assembled once more, very wet and uncomfortable. Our arms, too, were wet and, fearing they would fail us in action, we implored Colonel Wharton to let us fire them off. With no thought of possible consequences he consented. Pointing to a wooded hillside, he said:

"Go off there and shoot."

We discharged all the firearms we had. It sounded like a brisk skirmish. The colonel was immediately summoned to headquarters. Camp rumor said that his interview with his superiors was rather stormy, that he was severely reprimanded. It is a fact that on his return he made us a speech, telling us that by yielding to our importunities he had committed a serious blunder which had subjected him to unfavorable criticism by persons in the higher military circles. He seemed to be much perturbed mentally. He asked us to wipe out the stain by our gallant behavior in the coming engagement; asked us to ride further into the enemy's ranks than any other regiment. I think most of us audibly promised to do what he asked; and we kept the promise as far as circumstances would permit, as will be seen.

The whole army had arrived by Saturday afternoon. Early Sunday morning, April 6th, the forward movement began. The enemy were either in bed or preparing breakfast, and were taken by surprise. I know the surprise has been denied by so eminent a person as General Grant, but as he was sleeping at Savannah, nine miles away, he is hardly a competent witness. Thousands of us saw camp kettles and coffeepots on the fires, beds just as the occupants had left them, blankets spread and clothing strewn about.

It is not my purpose to describe the battle of Shiloh. I wish merely to speak of some principal incidents. It was a continuous advance of the Confederates nearly all of the day, Sunday. The roar of big guns and the rattle of musketry was unceasing.

The Rangers were kept in column just in the rear of the left wing, and had no part in the conflict till late in the day, when our eagerness to take part in the fight was gratified by an order to clear our extreme left, and assail the enemy, who was then retiring through thick woods.

We had to cross a muddy branch. At first two abreast could get over, but it soon became so bad that only one at a time could cross, and then it was a good long jump for a horse. Not half of the regiment was over when the leading files rushed up the hill through a small open field. Turning to the right they came to a high rail fence behind which was a line of blue. From this line came a most destructive fire which emptied many saddles. John Crane of Company D was killed. Clint Terry, a new arrival, brother of our former colonel, fell mortally wounded.

We were too few to make any impression, although some of our men dismounted and began throwing down the fence. A few even crossed into the wood. The firing was so hot that we beat a hasty retreat in spite of the appeals of Colonel Wharton and other officers, who did all they could to stop our flight. We didn't stop until we were out of range, when we re-formed at once. Thus our second encounter with the enemy met with a repulse. I may say, however, that this charge, if it be proper to call it a charge, was not without good results to our cause. Several years since I received a letter from Colonel Chisholm, who was then on the staff of General Beauregard. He wrote that it was he who led the regiment in that advance; that the object of it was to detain the enemy until other troops could be brought up; that for this purpose the movement was measurably successful.

That afternoon we learned with sorrow of the death of General Johnston. This we then regarded as a great calamity, and time has not changed our opinion.

We were not engaged again that day. We spent the night on the battlefield, amid the dead of the enemy, subsisting ourselves and our horses from the abundant supplies on every hand. Though it rained another downpour, and though we had no shelter, we slept as only tired soldiers can.

Reinforced by Buell's 40,000, the enemy assumed the offensive next day. The Confederates only resisted, as best they could, to get off their wounded, their trains and artillery, over muddy roads. The Rangers were dismounted to aid in resisting the forward movement, losing several men. John H. Washington of Company D was shot through the hips and left on the field for dead; but under the care of Federal surgeons he recovered, and is living today.

Tuesday, the 8th, two companies of the Rangers, under Major Harrison, with part of Forrest's men, all under the command of Forrest, made a brilliant charge on a mounted force of the enemy, believed to be a large escort of a general officer, and ran them back to the main force of infantry.

The pursuit now ceased and, without further molestation, we returned to Corinth. Here we remained two or three weeks, and received some recruits, the first since leaving Texas. Company D got six, T. A. W. Hill, William and A. J. Kyle, George T. McGehee, T. M. Rector and S. M. Watkins. They were quite an addition to our force. All were fine soldiers and continued to the end. There was much sickness, caused by bad water. Everybody was anxious for more active service.

The regiment was now ordered into Tennessee. Crossing the river at Lamb's Ferry, we captured a detachment of the enemy, guarding a railroad bridge, after a hot fight, in which we lost several men. Captain Harris of Company I was killed; also William DeWoody of Company D. There is one incident of this affair which I shall never forget. Among our prisoners was a captain of an Ohio regiment. He had six bullet wounds in his body. He sat up in the boat as we crossed the river, and walked unassisted up the hill on the other side.

Chapter V

Forrest at Murfreesboro.

We were now ordered to Chattanooga. Here we were placed in a brigade under the command of Colonel N. B. Forrest. At this time but little was known of this great soldier. He had not then become famous, and there were not wanting officers of high rank who predicted disaster as the result of his operations. Without the advantages of education, he possessed strong common sense, unfaltering courage, energy that never flagged, and unbounded confidence in himself. Under his leadership our metal was not to grow rusty for lack of employment.

Setting out from Chattanooga on the 8th of July, we crossed the Tennessee river and the Cumberland mountains into middle Tennessee. On the 11th we reached McMinnville and remained until the afternoon of the 12th. Here Forrest made his regimental commanders acquainted with his plans. His objective was Murfreesboro, over forty miles away, garrisoned by a force of the enemy estimated at 2000 men, under the command of Brigadier General Crittenden.

Late in the afternoon we started for an all night ride. At Woodbury we halted and fed our horses, resuming the march at midnight. We reached the vicinity of Murfreesboro at daylight on the 13th.

Now occurred one of those unfortunate blunders which often mar the best laid plans; probably made by Forrest himself. Colonel Wharton with the Rangers was to attack a camp of the enemy on the Liberty pike north of town. Forrest, who had been riding at the head of the column, turned aside to allow us to pass. When six companies had gone by he fell in with his staff and escort. Thus it happened that nearly half of the regiment followed Forrest into the town and out to the westward.

The courthouse was garrisoned by a company of the Ninth Michigan Infantry, who poured a hot fire into our ranks from the windows. Forrest and the Rangers rode on, but the sound of firing had aroused the good ladies from their beds; looking out they saw the dear defenders of their cause. Without taking time for very elaborate toilets, they rushed into the streets just as the Georgians came up. Pointing to the courthouse, they begged them to attack the hated foe. With a "Hurrah for the women!" these perfectly green troops dismounted, broke down the doors, and captured the garrison, but with severe loss.

When Forrest discovered that he had with him only a handful of Rangers, he turned back to look after the rest of his command. Captain Ferrell, now the ranking officer, led us through the suburbs of the town towards the right, or north where he thought to find the regiment. While we were passing through a field of standing corn, the artillery of the enemy opened on us at short range. The first shot struck William Skull of Company G, taking off both legs and passing through his horse, killing both instantly.

We found the main part of the regiment about half a mile east of the town, on the road by which we had come. They had made a spirited attack on the enemy, but were too weak to get any favorable results, and had retired, Wharton being wounded. As soon as the regiment was united Wharton sent the adjutant, M. H. Royston, and ten men to report to Forrest for orders. I was of this party. We found Forrest in the town. He spoke with some show of irritation:

"Tell him to bring his men up here."

During all this time he had been attacking the enemy with the forces at hand, but there was little result of a decisive nature.

Some of his chief officers had advised him to be content with what he had already accomplished and withdraw; but he was not of the withdrawing kind. Preparing for a final assault, when the Rangers came up, he delayed the attack long enough to send a demand for surrender to the camp of the Michigan regiment. This was promptly agreed to. He now sent a like demand to the Third Minnesota. Colonel Lester of that regiment asked for an hour's time and an opportunity to consult with Colonel Duffield. This officer was seriously wounded. Forrest allowed half an hour and the privilege of the interview. As Lester was going to the room of Colonel Duffield opportunity was given him to see our strength. When the half hour was up he surrendered his entire force.

The troops surrendered consisted of fifteen companies of infantry, six of the Ninth Michigan and nine of the Third Minnesota; seven companies of cavalry, four of the Fourth Kentucky and three of the Seventh Pennsylvania; and two sections (four guns) of Hewett's battery: in all 1765 men.

The brigade commander, General Crittenden, was found hiding in a room at a tavern.

The spoil was immense; a large number of wagons, with military stores and equipment of all sorts.

The merits of this enterprise are very great, but it must be admitted that had the enemy all been together, under a resolute commander, they could have beaten us. They had nearly 1800 men of all arms, infantry, cavalry and artillery—a miniature army—while Forrest had a little over 1300 men, some of them absolutely green troops.

In regard to this affair, General Buell, commanding the department, published a very caustic order, of which a short extract is here given:

"Take it in all its features, few more disgraceful examples of neglect of duty and lack of good conduct can be found in the history of wars. It fully merits the extreme penalty which the law provides for such conduct. The force was more than sufficient to repel the attack effectually."

Chapter VI

Many Marches and Skirmishes— The Kentucky Campaign.

We rested at McMinnville three or four days, and then started a hard ride with little rest for Lebanon, a distance of fifty miles, intending to surprise and capture a force of 500 cavalry stationed there. On the morning of the 20th we dashed into the place, but the enemy had been warned and had left in a hurry for Nashville.

We remained one day and night in this beautiful little city, recipients of the unbounded hospitality of its splendid people. They fed us on poultry, roast pig, ham, cakes and pies like "mother used to make," and filled our haversacks for the march.

From Lebanon our route was by "The Hermitage," so long the home of Andrew Jackson. Here a short halt was made, and many of the men visited the house and grounds. Mounting, we moved on to Stone river, seven miles from Nashville, where a small picket force was captured. Thence we crossed over to the Murfreesboro turnpike, only four miles from the city, and destroyed four railroad bridges, capturing the guards—in all about 120 men. We then turned off in the direction of Lebanon, and camped for the night after riding for a few miles; here we paroled our prisoners. Passing around Murfreesboro we marched to McMinnville, where we rested till the 10th of August.

We then advanced to the line of railroad, captured the pickets and burned a few bridges. The enemy had now begun to erect stockades for their guards at the bridges. There was one not yet finished, and Forrest tried to capture it but failed. Captain Houston of Company G was killed in this attack.

Moving in the direction of Altamont we camped in a cove near the mountain. The enemy advanced in force on all the roads. We had to take the dry bed of a creek which ran parallel to one of the roads on which the enemy was advancing. We traveled in this creek a mile or two, and then emerged into the open. A battery of the enemy, on the McMinnville road, not more than 600 yards away, opened fire upon us. The very best of troops, who will charge anything, are often thrown into a panic by an attack from an unexpected quarter. We broke into a run and were soon out of range, though in considerable disorder.

Marching leisurely to Sparta, we joined forces with Bragg's army, then on the move into Kentucky. Forrest was ordered to guard the left flank and harass the rear of the enemy in his retreat to Nashville. We came up to their rear guard at

Woodbury, and chased them clear up to Murfreesboro, but could only run them through the place.

Bragg soon moved by Glasgow and on to Mumfordsville, getting in ahead of Buell and on his line of march. He had a strong position, but for some unaccountable reason turned off and let the Federal army pass on to Louisville. Forrest kept on the left and in close touch with the enemy till the army turned aside, when we went on to the vicinity of Louisville. Forrest was now relieved and ordered to Tennessee, and Colonel John A. Wharton was placed in command of the brigade. We kept close up to Louisville, in observation of the enemy's movements. Had a small but spirited skirmish at Mt. Washington, as related in the introduction.

Early in October Buell began to move with some vigor. An enterprising brigade of cavalry got between us and our main army. They took position at Bardstown and thus we were "cut off." When intelligence of this move reached Wharton he called in his outposts, threw his command into column, Rangers in front, Company D leading. At a gallop we started for the seat of trouble. The enemy had chosen a strong position at the mouth of the lane in which we were traveling, and had their courage been equal to their enterprise they could have given us a warm entertainment. When we came in sight of them our bugle sounded the charge and we went at them as fast as our horses could carry us. They broke almost at once, firing only a few shots. It was now a chase for miles. We caught over 200 of them, and strewed the woods with their dead and wounded. General George H. Thomas, of the Federal army, says they lost about "twenty killed and wounded, and a great many missing"; these "missing" were our prisoners. Our loss was small—I can not recall the casualties. It was one of the softest snaps in the way of a fight that we had during the war.

Some amusing incidents nearly always occur, but the laughter rarely takes place till all danger is past. After the long chase we, as well as the enemy, were very much scattered. John B. Rector seeing a lone Federal, rushed up and demanded his surrender. "Surrender yourself," replied the man, leveling his pistol. Now Rector had discharged every chamber of his pistol and promptly complied. Just then Bill Davis dashed up. He was a large, fierce looking man, on a powerful horse not less than sixteen and a half hands high. He broke out, "John, why the ___ don't you disarm that ___ Yankee?" "I am a prisoner myself, Bill." Quick as a flash Davis was at the fellow's side and bringing his pistol against his head broke out, "Give up them pistols, you ___ blue-bellied ___." The shooting irons were promptly handed over and the prisoner escorted to the rear.

In the language of the great American game it was pure "bluff" all around for all the firearms were empty, but Bill Davis was always loaded to the muzzle with quick firing profanity which he could discharge in rattling volleys on the slightest provocation. I am glad to say, however, that he no longer goes loaded thus, for he has been a strict churchman for several years.

General Bragg published a general order highly laudatory of the Rangers for this affair, but I have found no record of it. It was read to the regiment and complimented us in high terms.

Bragg's army was widely dispersed, gathering supplies in that fertile section. Buell was pressing him, and to get time for concentration, and to get his train out

of the way, we made a stand at Perryville, where, on the 8th of October, was fought one of the fiercest combats of the war. Fourteen thousand Confederates kept at bay for nearly two days the immense army of the enemy, but with heavy loss to both sides. Wharton's brigade held the extreme right and did a full share of the fighting. Among our killed was Major Mark Evans of the Rangers. Captain Ferrell of Company D succeeded him, and Lieutenant Kyle of Company D became captain.

I was in the battle of Perryville, not with the regiment, but in a small detachment on the left while the Rangers were on the right. Hence I avail myself of the description of "Perryville" given by A. B. Briscoe, who kindly placed his *Personal Memoirs* at my service.

> "The enemy was on the west side of the creek and our army on the east. The valley between was open field and the tops of the hills covered in places with timber. It was an ideal battlefield; there were no breastworks, but the hills on both sides were crowned with artillery. Polk was in command of the Confederate forces and expected the enemy to attack and waited for them until about 2 p. m. In the meantime the artillery was making the very earth tremble with a duel of nearly 100 guns. We lay in a little valley a few hundred yards to the rear, partially sheltered from this storm of shells. At 2 p. m. we were moved in column through the lines of infantry and the smoking batteries to the front. The open valley was before us with a deep creek spanned by a wooden bridge. Down we charged in column of fours across the bridge. After crossing, each squadron formed left front into line, which made us present five lines, one behind the other, and in this order we charged up the hill, into the woods and among the Yankees. This whole movement was made in a sweeping gallop and as if on parade. How different from the way we were handled at Shiloh! The Yankees were brushed back from the hill and woods and when the bugle sounded the recall and we returned, our own infantry and artillery had crossed the creek and were taking position on the hills from which we had driven the enemy. But again we had lost our commander, the gallant Lieutenant Colonel Mark Evans, who fell mortally wounded at the head of the regiment."

I have copied this literally, but I am of the opinion that Evans was only major.

Bragg had secured the needed time. He now started for Cumberland Gap, leaving the cavalry to protect his rear and retard, as best they could, the onward march of the enemy. Colonel Joseph Wheeler was made chief of cavalry and had command of all in the rear. The country was timbered, broken, not very fertile, affording little in the way of food for man or beast. We had to form line and skirmish several times a day. The service was very trying. For more than a week there was no order to unsaddle.

At last Buell gave up the pursuit and started to Nashville. We went on through Cumberland Gap to Knoxville, where we had a snowstorm. From Knoxville, by Kingston and over the mountains, we went to Sparta, Murfreesboro and Nolensville. At Nolensville we had a position on the left of the army. Here some promotions were announced. Colonel Wharton became a brigadier general, his

commission dating from the Bardstown fight, the 4th of October. Harrison became colonel, Ferrell, lieutenant colonel, and Gustave Cook, major. Ferrell was soon compelled to resign on account of bad health. Cook then became lieutenant colonel and S. Pat Christian, major. In Company D, Dechard became first lieutenant and W. R. Black, second lieutenant.

We remained at Nolensville nearly two months, picketing and scouting. We passed our second Christmas, a serious and sober set, thinking of the homes and loved ones far away, and wondering if we should ever see them again.

Chapter VII

Murfreesboro.

The enemy did not allow us much time for repining. Promptly on the 26th they moved out in force. We were sent forward to develop their strength. The regiment, under the command of Captain Kyle, was drawn up in a field and dismounted. Our leader conducted us over a high rail fence into an open wood of cedar trees. We went along listening to his encouraging words until we reached the top of a slight rise. Just over the crest was a solid line of infantry lying down. Kyle at once ordered a retreat. At least that's what he meant, though the words he actually used are not in the manual. He said:

"Get out of here, men! There's a whole brigade!"

We understood him and so did the Yankees, who sprang to their feet and delivered a volley, doing little damage. The high fence had not seemed a serious obstacle as we went in, but when I got back to it on the return, with bullets striking it like hail on a roof, it looked very formidable. I sprang up on it and just fell off on the other side. When I got up the command was moving off rapidly. I had started to the rear as soon as the others, but they outran me, and I didn't "throw" the race either. I turned to the left, down the line of fence, climbed another, and was now reasonably safe but nearly exhausted. I had still to go half a mile before I reached the command. My saddle felt mighty good and restful.

It was now plain that it was a general advance of the enemy, and Bragg prepared for the battle of Murfreesboro, whither we now marched promptly. In the line Wharton's brigade occupied the left. When the ball opened in earnest he led this command around the right of the enemy's line, and within 600 yards of Rosecrans' headquarters attacked and captured a wagon train going to the rear. We could not hold it long; but we captured a four-gun battery and held on to that; moved down toward Nashville and ran into the train again.

In these operations Company D lost two killed, Sam Friedberger and Wayne Hamilton. Kenner Rector was wounded. John W. Hill and P. J. Watkins were made prisoners. Hill's horse was killed as we were retiring before superior numbers. He was away three or four months, and greatly missed, for he was a good one.

After a strenuous day of it, with a good many prisoners and the four guns, we returned to the army and were sent to the right, taking position on the right of

Breckenridge's line. We saw that gallant officer and his splendid division move forward through an open field with the precision of parade, under a furious cannonading from the Federal batteries strongly posted in a cedar wood. The shells plowed great gaps through their ranks. When the colors fell other hands seized them and bore them onward. When they reached the position of the enemy they wavered and began to give way, in order at first, but as they retreated under a distressing fire of artillery and musketry, they broke into a run. We stood there and could not help them, although every man of us would have gone to their aid with a whoop.

This charge deserves to rank with Malvern Hill, Franklin, and other useless sacrifices of life. Like the charge of the light brigade, "it was magnificent, but it was not war."

This was Bragg's final effort, and he withdrew from the contest. The only tactics he seems to have learned was to wait till the enemy came up to his lines and fortified himself; then attack and lose more men than the enemy, then sneak away. He had heard somewhere that "he who fights and runs away may live to fight another day."

Bragg stopped at Shelbyville. Rosecrans was content to stay at Murfreesboro, begging his government for more cavalry; nor did he feel safe in advancing till he had a large addition to his mounted force.

We took position on the left of the army, picketing and scouting the front, with occasional skirmishes and reconnoissances.

Chapter VIII

The Donelson Trip and Retreat to Chattanooga:

Just who conceived this wild-goose chase, I am not informed. For suffering, hardships, and barrenness of results, it is only exceeded by Napoleon's Russian campaign. On the 25th of January, General Wheeler, in command of the brigades of Wharton and Forrest, took up the line of march for Dover, or Fort Donelson. I do not know how to describe the weather, except in the language of the grammar on the comparison of adjectives: cold, colder, coldest. We crossed one little stream fifteen or twenty times in one day. The water froze on the legs of our horses until they were encased in ice above the knees; their tails were solid chunks of ice, while we had to walk to keep warm. Men and horses suffered intensely.

When we reached the vicinity of Dover, Forrest reported to Wheeler that he had but a scant supply of ammunition; and investigation disclosed the fact that Wharton's brigade was little better off in this regard. Forrest did not hesitate to advise withdrawal of our forces without attempt at action, but Wheeler determined to proceed.

Forrest attacked from the north and east, carried the enemy's outer works, and drove them into the redoubts, but with great loss of life. His ammunition was now exhausted, and he was compelled to fall back. Wharton attacked from the

Donelson side, and captured one brass field gun, but he, too, was compelled to retire because his ammunition was running low. The Rangers had been sent out on the Fort Henry road before these operations were begun and so had no part in the assault.

Jordan, in his *Life of Forrest*, says:

"The Confederate losses were heavy. Forrest had one-fourth of his force, or 200 of his officers and men killed, wounded and captured, and Wharton's casualties did not fall short of sixty killed and wounded."

Now the retreat began. All the command, except the Rangers, practically out of ammunition. The weather did not moderate. The second or third night a report reached Wheeler that a heavy column of the enemy, cavalry and infantry, under General Jeff C. Davis, had left Nashville to head him off. About midnight we were ordered to saddle up. It was so cold that if we touched a gun-barrel or bridle bit our hands stuck to the metal, and we had to put those bits into the mouths of our poor horses.

We reached Duck river about daylight, and found it bank full, the surface covered with floating ice. After some search a ford was found and we crossed to the south side. As Davis' command did not show up, we went into camp and warmed ourselves a little. After a rest of a day or two we moved leisurely back to our old position.

I do not know what could have been accomplished by this expedition beyond the capture of a small garrison. Certainly the suffering and the losses of men and horses were very great. For a long time when the men wanted to reach the superlative of suffering they spoke of the Donelson trip.

In April we moved over to the right and camped a few days at Sparta. The regiment captured a mail train between Murfreesboro and Nashville, getting about a dozen officers. The men rifled the mail sacks and amused themselves reading the letters of the Yankees. They obtained also a considerable amount of greenbacks; also a silver-mounted pistol, said to belong to General Rosecrans. My horse was lame and so I missed this expedition—and my share of the greenbacks.

Toward the last of June the Federal army, having received reinforcements, including heavy additions to its cavalry force, began another forward movement. The Rangers were dismounted to skirmish with the advance. During this action a heavy rainstorm came up; we thought this would suspend the affair, but when the rain ceased we found the Yankees had advanced their lines considerably. Regarding this as a violation of the rules of the game, we mounted and rode off.

Their cavalry now showed unusual spirit and audacity, pressing us pretty close. On the 4th of July, at the site of the present University of the South, the Rangers had to charge and drive them back. The retreat was continued across the mountains and the Tennessee river to Chattanooga.

The Rangers took position at Rome, Georgia. There we had a few weeks' needed rest and recruited our jaded horses. Roasting ears were in season, fruit was beginning to ripen, and so we feasted on good things. The runabouts—"pie rooters" we called them—made the best of their opportunities. Bill Arp said they found every road in the county, and then some.

Dr. Bunting, our chaplain, started a series of meetings, and many embraced the opportunity to pledge themselves to the better life. The boys, from their scant pay,

contributed money to buy a horse for General John A. Wharton. The presentation speech was made by John B. Rector, Wharton replying. Both speakers pledged the last drop of their blood, etc. Same old story, but a trifle stale by this time.

Chapter IX

Chickamauga.

Rosecrans maneuvered Bragg out of Chattanooga. He now seemed to have a contempt for his adversary, and divided his army into three columns in an effort to bring ours to bay. One crossed the mountains and took position at Alpine, forty miles south of the center, evidently to gain the rear of the Confederates.

We were sent to look after this column. Lieutenant Baylor of the Rangers reported to Wharton that a heavy force of infantry was at Alpine. Wharton reported this to Bragg with a note vouching for Baylor's reliability. Bragg broke out:

"Lieutenant Baylor lies: there is no infantry south of us!"

In a day or two, however, he became convinced that the report was true, and made some feeble effort to attack them in detail. Nothing came of it except that Rosecrans, who now discovered that his enemy was not retreating so precipitately, took the alarm and began to concentrate his widely separated columns. The force at Alpine had to cross the mountains. It took them two days to get to the center, now menaced by the Confederates. Imagine Stonewall Jackson in Bragg's place!

Of the larger events of the battle of Chickamauga I shall treat very briefly. It has been truthfully called the soldiers' battle. Whatsoever of strategy or generalship there had been had miscarried and the two armies stood face to face for a trial of strength: a test of manhood. The numbers were about equal, not far from 70,000 on a side. The Federals had the advantage of position, which they had fortified. The Confederates had to attack. Never was fiercer attack and defense. Never was shown greater courage.

The enemy were driven from their works, but with frightful loss to the Confederates. Their killed numbered 2389. The wounded 13,412; while the Federals' loss in killed was 1656, wounded, 9769. It was such dearly bought and fruitless victories as this which finally defeated the South.

The Terry Rangers were on the extreme left of the line and were ordered to drive the enemy from their front. This order was executed in handsome style. The enemy proved to be our old antagonists, the Third Ohio Cavalry. After the charge a message was brought to Lieutenant Dechard, of the Rangers, that a wounded Federal officer wished to see him. He rode to the spot and dismounted. When he saw the wounded man, he said:

"Why, it's my old friend, Major Cupp. I am sorry to see you thus."

"Lieutenant Colonel Cupp," replied the other, "but I've had my last promotion. You people have got me this time."

More than a year before, these officers, each a lieutenant in command of an escort for a flag of truce, had met. They met again, a few weeks later, under the

same circumstances, but Cupp was now a captain. After the fight in Bardstown Dechard was in command of the guard for the prisoners, and recognized his former acquaintance. “Captain Cupp, I am glad to see you,” said he.

“Major Cupp,” corrected the prisoner, “but I can not say that I am glad to see you under the circumstances.”

As the cartel was still in force, he was soon exchanged, and as we have seen when he fell, Dechard was near. These facts were related to me by Dechard himself, and he was known to be perfectly reliable. These incidents confirm the old adage, “Truth is stranger than fiction.”

The dying officer desired Dechard to take his watch and other belongings and send them to his relatives in Ohio, which was done a few days later by flag of truce.

Wheeler and Forrest followed the discomfited Federals up to Chattanooga. Here it was remembered that two detachments under Lieutenants Friend and Batchelor had been left on picket in gaps of the mountain away to the left of the battlefield, and I was ordered to go to them at once and direct them to join the command, which would be found on the Athens road.

There was about an hour of daylight, and I hoped to pass the ground of the terrible struggle before night, knowing that there was nothing for me or my horse until I did so. In this I was disappointed. Darkness came on shortly after I reached the scene of that awful carnage. Many of the Federal dead and wounded still lay where they had fallen. The air was freighted with a horrible odor, the battlefield’s commentary on war. The wounded hearing my horse’s footfalls, began calling me to give some assistance. Dismounting I picked my way to the first one. He desired to be turned over. Another wanted his canteen. The poor fellow had struggled while there was strength, and now unable to move further, was out of reach of his canteen. These were relieved and others not specially remembered here. It seemed that hundreds were calling. I was ever a coward in the presence of suffering, besides duty required that I should proceed on my journey. So I asked:

“Are you aware that your own surgeons with their details and ambulances are here uncontrolled on the field?”

“Oh, yes,” was the answer, “they come around every day and leave us water, a little food and medicine, but it is awful to lie here this way.”

I mounted and rode off, feeling sad at the fate of these men dying unattended hundreds of miles from home and loved ones, but I steeled my heart by the thought that if they had stayed at home with their loved ones they would not be thus dying.

I was now lost. It was dark and my horse could not follow any road, for roads were everywhere. Artillery wheels make many roads on a battlefield. After a while I saw a light and went to it. It was the camp fire of the details for the care of the wounded. These men sat around. The ambulances and mules were near. There was a little house, too. On the porch I saw some officers in uniform. Surgeons they were. I inquired for some resident. A slender girl came to the door and in reply to my request directed me to Lee and Gordon’s mill.

The moon was now rising. I was on that part of the field from which the dead and wounded had been removed, but there was wreck and ruin everywhere.

Maimed and groaning horses, and no one to waste a load of ammunition to end their suffering; broken gun carriages, the debris of a battlefield.

I crossed and watered my horse in the stream at the mill. As I rode up the hill I met two of my own company, who had been at the wagon camp cooking for the company. When they learned how far it was to the command and the horrors of the battlefield, they readily agreed to camp, for it was now late. So I had supper, for my comrades had sacks of bread and bacon, but my poor horse had nothing. We lay down and slept under the shining moon, although but a few miles away hundreds of human beings lay dying.

On the morrow I proceeded on my journey. When I reached the first detachment under Lieutenant Friend and delivered my message, he kindly sent one of his men on to tell Batchelor: gave me some forage for my horse, and all gathered around anxious for news of the battle. Here they had been in sound of the mighty struggle, the boom of the great guns, even the rattle of small arms, while their comrades were in dire peril, but denied the privilege of sharing in their danger or triumph. They had heard that the enemy had been driven from the field, but had heard nothing from their own command. They were hungry for news from the Rangers. What part they took, and who were killed or wounded? For they knew if the Rangers had been engaged somebody was hurt.

These occurrences took place nearly forty-eight years ago, and yet their memory is clear in my mind, and when I think of my lonely ride in Chickamauga's gloomy woods, of the dead and dying, the wreck and ruin of that awful night, I am convinced that there is no more expressive definition of war than General Sherman has given.

When Batchelor's squad came up we started to overtake the command, joining it on the following day, as well as I remember. It was then well on its way to the Federal rear in middle Tennessee.

Chapter X

Wheeler's Great Raid.

Our march was up the Holston river to find an unguarded ford, but the pickets were everywhere. We halted in a field at night, and Company D, armed with picks and spades, was directed to go to the river bank and there make a way for the artillery. A guide from the vicinity showed us a way across, by a ford unknown to the Yankees. We captured a few pickets.

Wheeler now divided his forces, himself leading a column into Sequatchie valley, where he captured and burned 2000 wagons. He then overtook the remainder of the command as we descended the mountains. Our route was by McMinnville and Murfreesboro, and the way was sufficiently familiar to us, since we had traveled it so often under Forrest the year before.

When we reached the vicinity of Murfreesboro, Captain Kyle with his squadron, consisting of Companies D and F, was ordered to ride around the place, reach the

railroad leading to Nashville, and try to capture a train. We came to the railroad a little before daylight, but there were no trains running; the enemy had learned that the "rebels" were in the country. Captain Kyle heard of a lot of wagons down toward Nashville and decided to take them in. This he did without resistance. The teams had been engaged in hauling wood to the garrison at Nashville, and the wagons were drawn by oxen, the only instance of this kind that we saw during the war. The oxen being fat, and also too slow of foot to go with us in any other form, were converted into beef.

We crossed over to Shelbyville pike, the scene of some of our operations in the spring. Learning that a small force of cavalry held Shelbyville, General Wharton ordered the Rangers to attempt their capture. We saddled up early, and rode briskly, reaching there about daylight, but the enemy had left. There were several stores in this place, established by some enterprising Yankees, and stocked with clothing and dry goods. Rather than have their doors broken down, the owners opened them. Winter was coming on, we were a long way from home and nearly naked, and here was our chance for winter supplies. Some of the boys got a black "Prince Albert" coat. This was presented to the chaplain, who wore it a long time.

The line of march led by Farmington. Here the enemy had taken a strong position in a cedar thicket. Over the ground were scattered large boulders. The enemy, armed with Spencer rifles, were lying behind these stones. The Rangers were ordered to charge this position. We got up pretty close; in fact, into the edge of the thicket; but they poured such a destructive fire into us that it did not take us long to discover that we had more than we could handle. We took some prisoners. We also got some of these rifles, the first of the kind I had ever seen; they would shoot seven times without reloading. The casualties are not remembered, except that Major Christian and Lieutenant Blackburn were wounded. Love, of Company C, was killed.

That night at headquarters they were discussing the incidents of the day. Wharton said the Rangers had done all that any soldiers could do; that it was impossible for mounted troops to drive brave men, armed as were the enemy, from such a position. General Wheeler said they had done all that he expected; had held the enemy engaged while our artillery and wagons ran by through a field, thus saving the command from a bad situation. Then Colonel Harrison spoke:

"It was no fight at all! I'm ashamed of them! If they can not do better than that I'll disown them!"

A staff officer put in:

"I always thought that regiment somewhat overrated anyhow."

This aroused "old Tom," who got up, shook his finger in the fellow's face and broke out furiously:

"Who the ___ are you? There is not a man in that regiment who can not kick you all over this yard, sir!"

As he strode off to his horse, he was heard to say:

"By ___ I'll curse them all I want to; but I'll be ___ if anybody else shall do it in my presence!"

Moving on to the Tennessee river, we crossed that stream at one of the fords along the Mussel Shoals. From there, in a more leisurely manner, we went back to the army, still besieging the Federals at Chattanooga.

Chapter XI

East Tennessee Campaign.

Bragg felt so sure that Rosecrans would be starved into surrender that he dispatched Longstreet to Knoxville to take in the garrison stationed there. Our division, commanded by General Martin, was sent along with him. Longstreet laid siege to the place. We were transferred from one side of the river to the other, fording the freezing water at night. We had a little skirmish on College hill; details not remembered, except that Lieutenant Black was wounded.

It was reported that the "loyal" people up the river were in the habit of loading small boats with provisions, setting them adrift to float down the river for the use of the garrison in Knoxville, the boats being caught by a boom across the stream. Someone conceived the brilliant idea that if trees were cut down and rolled into the river above, they would float down and break the boom. Our regiment, placed temporarily under the command of somebody's staff officer anxious to distinguish himself, was detailed for this service. A worse selection could hardly have been made for the performance of such work. Probably not one man in twenty was possessed with any skill with the ax. Young men raised on the prairies, professional men, boys from the stores, sons of planters, who had slaves to do their chopping, composed this force of axmen. Night, a very dark night at that, was the time selected for the exploit. A light drizzle was falling. Imagine anybody trying to cut down trees under such circumstances! The staff colonel in command stopped at a house where there was a blazing fire, dismounted, and took a comfortable seat. The regiment went up on the hillside and hacked away for hours. I believe some trees were actually felled, chopped into convenient lengths, and rolled into the stream and appeared to sink in the water. All suffered from the cold. It was such foolish services as this that tended to demoralize the Confederate soldier and sap a man's courage and patriotism as nothing else will. There is something inspiring in a charge, albeit there is danger, too, with comrades falling all around; but spirited troops would choose a charge every time rather than such imbecile business as that midnight tree-cutting exploit.

When the Confederate army was driven from Missionary Ridge, Longstreet was compelled to raise the siege of Knoxville. He retired to the eastward, taking position on the East Tennessee and Virginia railroad, near Morristown, if I remember correctly, the cavalry guarding his front.

The cold was intense. The people, in sympathy with the enemy, furnished them with excellent guides to any exposed position of ours. Hence we had to be exceedingly vigilant. Imagine going on picket at 2 a.m. with temperature at zero or below; but the army must sleep, and the cavalry must guard the outposts. We had also numerous skirmishes, but I can not remember the details of them.

A letter written by me to my parents dated January 4, 1864, enumerates six fights during November and December in which the regiment lost twenty-seven

killed and wounded; one on the road to Cumberland Gap. This was early in November. We chased some cavalry several miles, taking a dozen or more prisoners and wounding a few without a single casualty on our side, unless someone's ears were frost bitten, for it was a very cold morning and a biting wind raged.

We had three or four skirmishes near Mossy creek. In one of these, on December 26, 1863, Captain G. W. Littlefield was badly wounded by a large fragment of a shell which lacerated his left hip for a space five or six inches by twelve or thirteen. It looked like a mortal hurt. A strong constitution pulled him through, yet he was compelled to retire from the service, and even now (1911) suffers from the wound.

On the 29th of December we were ordered to drive a force of the enemy who were dismounted and lying behind a large brick residence and the outbuildings. We had to break down the garden fence, which we did by forcing our horses against it. We drove them all right, took a few prisoners, but sustained serious losses ourselves. In Company D, N.J. Allen was killed outright. Richard Berger was shot through the face, losing the sight of one eye, and William Nicholson had a slight scalp wound. There was another on the 24th, near the same place, and one near Dandridge, but I am unable to recall the incidents, although the letter referred to says that I participated in all of them. In all we sustained serious loss, and so far as I can see without any appreciable effect on the campaign; but as Forrest said, "War means fight, and fight means kill." Besides our blood was up and life held cheaply.

One little engagement, all one-sided, and as far as we were concerned, was more amusing than serious. Our brigade under Colonel Harrison, and an Alabama brigade commanded by General John T. Morgan, so long a Senator from Alabama after the war, were out on separate roads which, however, came together some distance in the rear of our position. The Alabama brigade, attacked by the enemy, gave way. We were called back, and when we reached the junction of the roads the enemy was passing in hot pursuit. In columns of fours we took them in flank, killed a few, took several prisoners and scattered the remainder, for they were so completely surprised that they made no resistance. They were Brownlow's brigade of East Tennessee Cavalry and rather shabby soldiers. We had no casualties.

The service was very arduous; besides the picketing alluded to above, foraging became very laborious. The country along the streams is quite fertile and produced abundantly of food for man and beast, but cavalry troops consume rapidly, and the valleys were soon exhausted. So we had to go away out into the mountains for supplies. Often wagons could not go the roads and we had to bring supplies on our horses over mountain trails for ten or fifteen miles. These expeditions were not without danger, for these rude mountaineers were good shots, and lying in the woods, did not see their bread and meat taken with kind feelings. They sometimes fired on these foraging parties, but at long range from mountain crag or other secure position, and I believe injured no one.

As I am not relating these things in chronological order, this will be a good place to set down the facts concerning the night alarm on the banks of Pigeon river. We were in camp for several days on the banks of this stream which, though small to

be called a river, was yet rather deep at that place; though it could be forded, as will be seen.

Across from our encampment, some two or three hundred yards from the banks, was a stately mansion, the home of a wealthy and refined family. I think the people's name was Smith, but I am not sure. The name will do anyhow. The head of the family, a general or colonel, was away from home, with the army no doubt. The family at the house consisted of the mother and three or four daughters, all charming ladies. They had secured a house guard to protect them from insult. Joe Rogers, being a little indisposed, was duly installed as guard. This meant good times for Joe; a bed to sleep in, three meals a day with plate, knife and fork, a stable for his black horse Nig, of which, by the way, he was very fond.

It was not long before the society men of the regiment acquired the habit of slipping out after evening roll call to enjoy a game of cards at General Smith's. One night several of them, a lieutenant, a clerk of the quartermaster's department, and one or two others, crossed the river in a small skiff and were soon pleasantly engaged in the fascinating game of euchre with the young ladies. Suddenly there was a cry of "Halt! Halt!" and pistol shots rang out on the night air. Out went the lights, and the visitors rushed for doors and windows, knocking over chairs, tables, and even the young women. They rushed to the river, plunged in and across, and made for their companies. The first alarm was plainly heard in the camp. Sharp orders to "saddle up" were given and repeated from company to company, and the brigade was soon in line. Colonel Harrison sent Tom Gill and a small party to ascertain the cause of the row. Tom passed General Smith's, where all was dark, and went on to the picket stand. Pickets reported all quiet; no enemy had passed their post. Tom returned to the house, where he met Joe Rogers. It appeared that Joe had not run with the others at the first alarm. He had gone out the back way to look after Nig and his equipment. While getting these he heard voices, accompanied with laughter, and the voices seemed somewhat familiar. Peeping around the house he soon ascertained that the alarm had been caused by three or four Rangers. He reported the cause of the disturbance to Gill and his scouting party, and Gill reported it to Colonel Harrison.

"The old man" was furious at first, for a false alarm in war is a serious matter and a grave offense. However, after some reflection, he concluded to drop the matter, as he thought the incident would have a wholesome effect on the guilty parties. The men did not so easily let it drop. Frequently at night for some months afterwards someone would call out:

"Who waded Pigeon?"

From some other part of the camp the answer would come:

"Murray! Brownson!"

The story got into the comic papers and caused some amusement and some mortification to the victims of the joke. John Haynie, one of the best soldiers in the regiment, was the leader of the alarmist jokers. If I ever learned the names of the others I have forgotten them.

We had now been in the service for considerably over two years, and there had been no general system of furloughs. Our regiment might have fifteen if they would re-enlist, but as we had already enlisted for the war we could hardly perform this condition. However, it was demanded that we make declaration of our intention to

continue in the service. Some of us considered this a reflection on our honor, and decided to do without the coveted furloughs. Then some of the boys got together, made a speech or two, passed a preamble and resolutions, declaring we would never—no never—quit as long as an armed foe trod our sacred soil. This was considered satisfactory at headquarters, and the furloughs were ordered. Lots were drawn for the three assigned to Company D. These fell to D.S. Combs, I.V. Jones and J.F. McGuire, who left at once to visit their homes.

At that time the enemy was at the mouth of the Rio Grande. They evidently intended to invade the country far enough to break up a most profitable trade between the States west of the Mississippi and the outside world by way of Mexico. This traffic was carried on by means of wagons, hundreds of which went in a constant stream to the Rio Grande, loaded with cotton, and brought back supplies of all kinds. The people feared the enemy would penetrate the interior, as the State had been stripped of its defenders. Every persuasion was used to prevail on these men to remain on this side, and they finally agreed to stay. The lieutenant general commanding the department readily agreed to the arrangement, and thus Company D lost three good soldiers. We could not blame them, for, given the opportunity, every one of us perhaps would have done the same thing.

It was during this winter that one of the saddest events of all our career happened; the hanging of E.S. Dodd by the enemy. He was a member of Company D. He was of a good family and well educated. For many years he kept a diary, setting down at night the happenings of the day. He was taken prisoner with this diary in his pocket. On that evidence alone he was condemned and executed as a spy.

Spring was now approaching. Those masters of the art of war—Grant and Sherman—were preparing to strike the final blows at the tottering Confederacy. Longstreet went to Virginia. Our cavalry went to Georgia to our old commander, General Joseph Wheeler. Our way was up the French Broad river, through western North Carolina and South Carolina, marching leisurely where there were abundant supplies. We reached Georgia as Sherman was preparing to move. On the 9th day of May, just north of Dalton, we were ordered to charge a force of the enemy, which proved to be our old acquaintance, La Grange's brigade of Indiana cavalry. We went at them in our usual style, at top speed, every fellow yelling as loud as he could. They broke and retreated precipitately. We took more than sixty prisoners, including the brigade commander, Colonel La Grange. His horse was wounded and fell, pinning his rider to the earth just at a large farm gate. John Haynie, quick as a flash, was at his side, securing the prisoner, evidently an officer. Addressing his captor, the prisoner said:

"You have a prize indeed. I am Colonel La Grange. I did not know that you boys had got down here from East Tennessee. I knew you as soon as I saw you coming."

With the help of some of the prisoners he was released from his fallen horse, mounted on another, and escorted by his captor to Colonel Harrison. This incident came under my own observation. For the interview which followed his presentation to Harrison I am indebted to that officer himself, who related it to me several years after the war. La Grange said:

"I was in command of the brigade, and was anxious for the commission of brigadier general. Had some influential friends who were helping me. My division

commander told me to go out, run in the rebel pickets, skirmish a little and send in a report, which he would forward with strong recommendations for my promotion. I came out, ran into the Texas Rangers, and am a prisoner."

"Only the fortune of war, my young friend," said Harrison. "Only the fortune of war."

Our loss was quite heavy. Among the killed were Charles T. Pelham of Company D, an educated young man, of good family and fine promise, a civil engineer by profession; D.F. Lily, a young lawyer, who fell almost in sight of his mother's home, and W.H. Bigelow, a native of Canada; both of these last were of Company G, and both educated gentlemen.

Chapter XII

Sherman's Wagon Train and the Affairs with McCook and Stoneman.

The enemy, over one hundred thousand strong, under one of the ablest commanders in the Federal army, advanced on all the roads, overlapping the Confederates, who took position after position, to be turned by the superior numbers of their adversaries.

At Resaca there was quite a spirited engagement with a part of the advance. At Cassville we took position and offered battle, but retired before the flanking movement of the enemy. Near this place Wheeler turned their left and captured a train of wagons within a few miles of Sherman's army. The Rangers were not in this capture, but when the enemy sent a force of cavalry to retake his train, we met it in the most unique engagement of the war. Sherman's great army with its hundreds of cannon, thousands of wagons and other vehicles had passed along, pulverizing the roads and fields into fine dust, which covered everything, in many places several inches deep. A single horseman riding along raised a cloud, a company or regiment, such a dense fog as to obscure everything. We were in line on one side of a slight rise in the land. The cavalry of the enemy above mentioned were approaching on the other side of the hill. We were ordered forward, and at the top of this hill we met each other, enveloped in clouds of dust. We raised the usual yell, although in doing so we took in large quantities of Georgia real estate. We emptied our pistols into the dust, and the enemy broke. We did not pursue them very far; for we knew we were near their main army, and feared we might run into a brigade or two of infantry, as we could not see anything twenty feet away. Previous encounters had given us a contempt for their cavalry and we did not hesitate to charge a whole brigade if need be; but we had a wholesome respect for large bodies of infantry. We took a few prisoners, but did not know, owing to the dust, what other casualties were inflicted on them. We had seven wounded, including George Burke of Company D, who was shot in the shoulder.

Wheeler was determined to save his train, so he tried to march all night, but a violent electrical storm came up, rain fell in torrents, and our progress was very

slow, for the drivers of the teams could not see the road, except by the glare of the lightning. After this had gone on for several hours, making scarcely so many miles, the command camped in column—I believe without orders.

Wheeler dearly loved their wagon trains. I believe it is safe to say that from the first to the last he captured as many wagons as he commanded men. Thousands were burned, but other thousands were secured for the use of our army. The Northern contractors probably enjoyed this as much as Wheeler; no doubt they would have been glad to replace all the wagons, for a reasonable consideration.

The retreat of the army continued to the very gates of Atlanta. Here the Rangers made another charge, in which Jesse Billingsly of Company D was killed.

During the last week of July the enemy undertook to play our game, and simultaneously made two raids on our communications. One column under General McCook, with 3500 cavalry, turned our left. They crossed the Chattahoochie near Campbelltown, passed through Fayetteville, where they burned between fifty and one hundred wagons, and struck the Macon railroad near Jonesboro, twenty or twenty-five miles below Atlanta. As soon as intelligence of this movement reached Wheeler he started for the raiders. We rode all night, coming up with them about daylight. They made very feeble resistance and we ran over them. It was now a chase of twenty miles to the Chattahoochie again. As this stream was not fordable, they made a stand to gain time for crossing the river, which they were attempting by means of boats. Our column was strung out for several miles, Harrison's brigade in front. We were dismounted and pushed into the thick woods. It was afternoon of the first day of August, and about as hot as such days ever get. The enemy made some resistance, but we drove them steadily some four or five hundred yards, when we heard firing in our rear where we had left our horses. So we had to face about and fight our way back. We got mixed up with Ross' brigade, which had been dismounted as soon as it came up. After some three hours of this work, the enemy surrendered; that is, all who had not crossed the river.

Wheeler reported 950 prisoners, 1200 horses and two pieces of artillery as the fruits of this engagement. There were many of their killed and wounded lying in the bushes. I have no information as to the number. Our regiment lost two killed and ten wounded, including one from Company D. This was V. Catron, who was shot in the leg.

The other column of the enemy, led by General Stoneman, turned our right flank and struck our communications lower down, near Macon. His force was reported to be 3000. General Iverson of the Confederate cavalry attacked them and took 600 prisoners, including Stoneman himself, with two pieces of artillery. The remainder of their force in small detachments made their way back as best they could. Iverson did not have force enough to pursue them.

General Shoupe of General Hood's staff recorded in his diary, that the "First of August deserved to be marked with a white stone." These operations cost the enemy nearly half of the two raiding parties, and fully justified General Hood in saying that our cavalry were equal to twice their number of the enemy.

Chapter XIII

Wheeler‘s Second Raid into Tennessee.

Wheeler was now ordered to operate on the long line of the enemy’s communications. Finding the posts and bridges south of Chattanooga too strongly fortified to offer any promise of successful attack, Wheeler determined to go over into middle Tennessee again. He went up along the Holston above Knoxville, and then had to cross under a severe fire of the enemy’s pickets. For this undertaking there was a call for volunteers. It looked as if the whole of the Rangers were volunteering, and Wheeler had to stop them. The fording was deep, but the enemy were easily driven from their position. A small force, not of the Rangers, was sent down toward Knoxville. They met the enemy and were roughly handled; about half of them were taken prisoners, and the exultant enemy came on at a furious rate. Our regiment was formed in an open field. Colonel Harrison took position in front. We went forward in a walk at first, and then in a trot. The men were impatient. Officers kept saying:

“Steady, men! Keep back there!”

Then we heard the popping of pistols, and all eyes were turned on Harrison. The routed Confederates came into view. Next the enemy in close pursuit. The men could now hardly be restrained. Finally Harrison shouted:

“Well, go then! ___ you, go!”

The tap of the drum on the race track never sent jockeys and racers to the front more impetuously than the Rangers went at the sound of these words. The enemy’s force was small, and they faced about at once. Their horses were nearly exhausted, and we soon overtook them, capturing nearly the whole party, which did not exceed two companies.

Our march was now across the Cumberland mountains, by McMinnville, the familiar route we had traveled two years before under Forrest, and one year before under Wheeler. Just before reaching Murfreesboro we turned to the left and began to destroy the railroad leading to Chattanooga, over which Sherman’s supplies had to be carried. We piled fence rails on the track and set them on fire. The heat caused the rails to expand and bend into all shapes, rendering them useless until straightened out; of course the ties were burned also. In this way we destroyed some fifty miles of the road; but the enemy had unlimited resources, and kept trains loaded with railroad material at Nashville and Louisville; these were rushed to the scene of our operations. With large forces working day and night they soon got the tracks in order.

We now moved forward to the Mussel Shoals, where we were to cross the Tennessee river. In a little skirmish on the north side W. H. Caldwell of Company D was wounded in the hip. He was disabled for the remainder of the war by this hurt; never entirely recovered, in fact, walking with a limp for the rest of his life.

After crossing the river the men of the Third Arkansas, who had shown courage and devotion on many fields, became greatly demoralized. Finding themselves nearer home than they had been for years, many of them deserted. One morning it

was reported that twelve of these men had gone. A detail of twenty Rangers under Lieutenant Joiner, the whole under Captain Bass of the Third Arkansas, was sent after the deserters. I was one of this detail. Riding forty or fifty miles a day, we overtook four of them about twenty miles from the great Mississippi and made them prisoners. On the return my horse was badly injured by falling through a broken plank in an old bridge, and I was left afoot. Joiner gave me orders to remain until my horse recovered, or until I could procure another, and then join some other command until I could get company over Sand mountain, as that region was infested with bushwhackers and murderers. It was some weeks before I could get a mount, for horses were very scarce, but this is not a narrative of my operations.

Chapter XIV

The „Rome Races“.

I am indebted to Comrade A.B. Briscoe for a description of this incident.

> “General Harrison, our old colonel, was in command of the forces composed of ours and Ashby’s brigade of mounted infantry and a battery of four guns. For some reason, but contrary to all former usages, our regiment was dismounted and placed near the battery, and Ashby’s infantry kept mounted to protect the flanks and led horses. The fight had barely commenced when it was realized from the immense bodies of infantry in our front that it was a bad one. The battery was ordered to the rear, but just as they were limbered the Yankee cavalry poured in on our flanks and completely enveloped us. I did not give an order to run nor did I hear an order of any kind, but I soon found myself dodging through and among the Yankee cavalry, who were shouting to us to surrender. We reached our horses, which were not over 150 yards in the rear, mounted, and after a very hasty formation charged out through the enemy, and although we made repeated rallies they ran us back about five miles. Why the Yankees did not capture more of our men is a mystery, as outside of the battery we lost very few prisoners. To give an appropriate name to this battle we called it “Rome Races,” for such it was.”

In this race the colors furled around the staff and in the oilcloth were lost—not captured—as the subjoined letter shows:

> “Dallas, Texas, May 18, 1898.
> “Terry’s Texas Rangers Association, Austin, Texas.
> “Gentlemen: I have been in Texas since 1890, and have frequently endeavored to find some members of Terry’s Texas Rangers, and finally, by accident, met with your comrade, H. W. Graber, and reported to him the

finding of your flag the day after our engagement with your forces near Rome, Georgia. It happened in this way: I was directed by the general commanding to take two companies and move through the woods on the right of our line to a certain point where a country road intersected the main river road then occupied by our brigade. Just before coming into the main road I picked up a package or roll of something, threw it over my saddle, and on my return to the main command examined the same and found it to be the Terry's Rangers' flag in its case. It seemed to have slipped off the staff and been lost in that way. At the suggestion of your comrade—Graber—I have made a request on the authorities of the State of Indiana, who have had charge of it ever since, soon after its capture, and herewith enclose you a letter from Chas. E. Wilson, military secretary at Indianapolis, which seems to indicate there is no authority with the executive department of the State to return the flag, as it is in absolute control of the State Legislature, which is a matter of exceeding regret to me, as I should like to have returned the flag to you in time for your next reunion at Austin. I am furthermore able to assure you that this flag was never displayed in the streets of Nashville, as has been reported, but remained in possession of our regiment until soon after it was found. We returned direct to Louisville, from which point it was sent by express direct to the State of Indiana.

"In view of the existing unsettled condition of the country, I would suggest we let the matter rest until our country is again pacified and returned to its normal condition, when I will take pleasure in making a further effort to return this flag, which was not captured, but found, and I consider, therefore, property should be returned to its owner.

"With kind regards and best wishes, hoping to have the pleasure of a personal meeting with your association, I am, with great respect,

"Yours very truly,

"J. J. Wiler,

"Maj. Com. 17th Indiana Volunteer Infantry."

This flag was returned to the survivors at Dallas in October, 1898. Its loss was very mortifying to the Rangers, as it had been presented shortly before by the ladies of middle Tennessee.

In justice to the knightly "Count" Jones, I must say that no one could have taken the colors from him without taking his life.

In this action fell Wm. Nicholson of Company D and Lieutenant Batchelor of Company C, and perhaps others, but I have no record of them.

Chapter XV

The Last Campaign.

Wheeler's cavalry was now almost the only obstacle to Sherman's great march to the sea. They harassed his columns front, flanks and rear, picking up many prisoners; but three or four thousand cavalry could make little resistance to the onward sweep of 60,000 veterans under one of the greatest captains of modern times. Conflicts were of almost daily occurrence. The Rangers were engaged at Buckhead Church and Waynesboro, Georgia. Again at Aiken, South Carolina. At Averysboro and Fayetteville, North Carolina, where, after a night's march, they surprised Kilpatrick's cavalry camp, but failed to bag that redoubtable leader. In all of these conflicts the losses were heavy. Old Company D lost in killed, John Gage, P.R. Kennedy, Dave Nunn, Sam Screws and Jim Wynne. Their list of wounded, too, was large. P.R. Kyle and Geo. T. McGehee, good ones both, were badly hurt at Aiken; McArthur, Brannum and P.J. Watkins also. The other companies sustained heavy losses. Lieutenant Heiskell of Company K was killed. I wish I could name them all.

In all of these actions, the remnant of nearly 1200 enlistments charged with that dauntless courage which had characterized them at Woodsonville, at Bardstown, at Dalton and many other brilliant fields of arms. Their old colonel, now a brigadier general, Thomas Harrison; their colonel, the knightly Cook, and the staid and ever reliable Major Jarmon, were all stretched on beds, racked with the pains of severe wounds. The command now devolved on Captain Matthews, who but a little over a year before had been elected lieutenant, promoted to the rank of captain by the bullets of the enemy which brought down his superiors, was now, at Bentonville, to lead the old regiment in the last charge, which will always rank as one of the most brilliant feats of arms in the history of wars. As I was not present I will let Lieutenant Briscoe tell of it, for he tells it well.

THE LAST CHARGE.

"We did but little fighting the first day, as the enemy changed positions very rapidly. But the second we were engaged in some severe skirmishes all the forenoon, in one of which Major Jarmon, our only remaining field officer, was severely wounded, when we were withdrawn a few hundred yards to rest and give place for the infantry.

"We had been in this position resting and eating our rations probably over an hour, when we heard the boom of artillery directly in our rear. Every man pricked up his ears, for we knew that it meant something serious. Captain Doc Matthews of Company K (my company) was in command of the regiment, which numbered about 100 men. We were standing talking of the probable cause of the artillery fire in our rear when General Wheeler galloped up and asked for the commander of the Rangers. He seemed a little excited. His order was, 'Captain, mount your men, go as fast as you can and charge whatever you find at the bridge.' These were almost his exact words. In less time than it takes to tell it, we were mounted and racing to the rear. Within about half a mile of the bridge we passed a small brigade of infantry 'double quicking' in the same direction. We saluted each other with a cheer as we passed, for all felt that it was a critical time in the battle. As we came upon some rising ground we had a good view of the enemy across an open field about 500 yards

distant. Here we halted an instant to close up the column, and for Captain Matthews to salute General Hardee and staff, who wished to know what troops we were.

"Captain Matthews told him and of our orders from General Wheeler. He took a look across the field at the dense blue line and said, 'Then execute your orders.' It looked like the old regiment was this time surely going to its grave. Everything was so plain and clear you could see the men handling their guns and hear their shouts of command. Without a moment's hesitation Captain Matthews gave the order, 'Charge right in front,' and with that wonderful rebel yell we charged across the 500 yards of open field upon and among the mass of Yankees. We rode them down and emptied our pistols at close range. When the force of the charge was expended we fell back with about 200 prisoners."

Like our other brilliant charges, it was the very audacity that brought success.

In this charge fell, mortally wounded, Wm. J. Hardee, Jr., son of Lieutenant General Hardee. Nearly a year before he, with several other boys, had run away from school to join the Rangers, but on account of their extreme youth Colonel Harrison sent them back to school. The boy would not remain in school, so General Hardee kept him with him for several months, but he fretted to join the Rangers. Finally the father consented. The boy was enlisted in Company D and fell in this, his first action.

I reached the command shortly before the surrender. The regiment in numbers was little more than a good company. Battle and disease had claimed and received their toll; but this little remnant seemed as full of courage and spirit as when first they left their State.

The dream was over. General Lee, "yielding to overwhelming numbers and resources," had laid down his arms. General Johnston, again in command of the Army of Tennessee, agreed with Sherman to disband his army. Sadly the Rangers dispersed, taking the roads to their distant homes.

General Wheeler issued the following order, which for intense feeling and felicity of expression is a gem:

"Headquarters Cavalry Corps,
"April 28, 1865.

"Gallant Comrades: You have fought your fight. Your task is done. During a four years' struggle for liberty you have exhibited courage, fortitude and devotion. You are the victors of more than 200 sternly contested fields. You have participated in more than a thousand conflicts of arms. You are heroes! Veterans! Patriots! The bones of your comrades mark battlefields upon the soil of Kentucky, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi. You have done all that human exertion could accomplish. In bidding you adieu, I desire to tender my thanks for your gallantry in battle, your fortitude under suffering and your devotion at all times to the holy cause you have done so much to maintain. I desire also to express my gratitude for the kind feelings you have seen fit to extend toward myself, and to invoke upon you the blessing of our Heavenly Father, to whom we must always look

in the hour of distress. Brethren, in the cause of freedom, comrades in arms, I bid you farewell.

"Joseph Wheeler,
"Major General.

"Official:
"Wm. E. Waites,
"Assistant Adjutant General."

Chapter XVI

Conclusion.

I am well aware of the imperfections of this work. I can only say that I have tried to tell an unvarnished tale, to do no one injustice, nothing extenuate nor set down aught in malice. Beyond a few old letters which have escaped the ravages of mice, and such official reports as I could find, I have been compelled to rely on memory—frail and unreliable at best, more so after the lapse of half a century. I beg to remind those who may find fault that it is much easier to find fault than to do good work. No two persons see events exactly alike. This is illustrated in our courts every day.

From the standpoint of the martinet our organization could hardly be called a regiment. A distinguished lieutenant general is reported as saying that it was not a regiment at all but "a d___d armed mob." If there was ever any serious attempt to discipline it the effort was soon abandoned. Volunteers we began, volunteers we remained to the end. If any wished to evade duty, they found a way, and the punishment for evasion was light. To our credit it may be said that few ever avoided a fight. There were few real cowards among us, and they were simply objects of pity. If a man did not wish to go into a fight he held his horse until it was over.

One reason of our almost uniform success was the superiority of our arms. It will be remembered that at the beginning the possession of a good pistol was a requisite for enlistment. If a man died or was killed his comrades kept his pistol. When a prisoner of the enemy's cavalry was taken this part of his outfit was added to the general stock, so that after a few months most, if not all, had two weapons of this kind, and some even tried to carry three or four. No other regiment of the army was so supplied.

Again, it was a noteworthy fact that the men were all good horsemen, accustomed to the use and management of horses from childhood. When three or four hundred of such men, charging as fast as their horses would go, yelling like Comanches, each delivering twelve shots with great rapidity and reasonable accuracy, burst into the ranks of an enemy, the enemy generally gave way. It did not take us long to find this out; also the enemy were not slow to "catch on."

If it be said that other commands lost more men in battle, the explanation is simple and easy. The purpose of fighting is to destroy the enemy in battle; all drill,

organization and hard marches are to this end—to kill and wound as many of the enemy as possible. If this is granted, the Rangers invite comparison with the best in any army. It is safe to claim that the regiment killed, wounded and captured a number of the enemy at least several times our highest enlistment of nearly 1200. If it be said that my claim for superiority is biased by prejudice in favor of my own regiment, I will give estimates of others.

In a letter to me acknowledging an invitation to one of our reunions, General Wheeler said:

"They were unceasingly vigilant, matchlessly brave and daring."

General Thomas Jordan, an educated soldier, a writer of ability, chief of staff to General Beauregard, was selected by Forrest and his principal officers to write a history of the campaigns of that great soldier. In a note on page 160 of his book, General Jordan says:

"This regiment was raised and commanded by the lamented Colonel Terry, whose brief military career, beginning as a volunteer scout at the first Manassas, was full of distinction. He was killed at Woodsonville, Kentucky. The privates included a large number of the wealthiest and best educated young men of Texas, who, with many others specially trained in the business of stock raising on the vast prairies of that State, had acquired a marvelous skill in horsemanship. The career of this regiment has been one of the most brilliant in the annals of war."

Dr. John A. Weyeth, who also wrote a life of Forrest, says, "No braver men ever lived than the Texas Rangers."

General Hood (*Advance and Retreat*, page 202) writes of the cavalry:

"I had, moreover, become convinced that our cavalry were able to successfully compete with double their numbers. The Confederacy possessed, in my opinion, no body of cavalry superior to that which I found guarding the flanks of the Army of Tennessee when I assumed its direction."

I now quote Federal authority. Writing of the comparative merits of the soldiers of the two armies, in a paper on the Kentucky campaign, General Buell, while denying the superiority of the Southern soldiers over the Northern, admits it was true of the cavalry. He says:

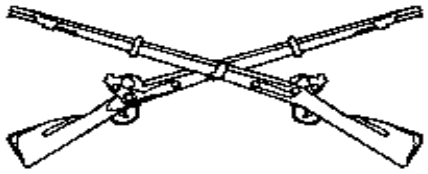
"Another sectional distinction produced a more marked effect in the beginning of the war. The habits of the Southern people facilitated the formation of cavalry corps which were comparatively efficient even without instruction; and accordingly we see Stuart, John Morgan and Forrest riding with impunity around the union armies, destroying or harassing their communications. Late in the war that agency was reversed. The South was exhausted of horses, while the Northern cavalry increased in numbers and efficiency, and acquired the audacity which had characterized the Southern."

Read that again. It comes very near saying that the South was overcome because the supply of horses failed. The writer is an educated soldier and student of war.

L'Envoi.

My task is done. My story is told. I have derived pleasure as well as pain and grief from the recital; pleasure in going back over the dreary waste of years to the morning of life, and dwelling in memory amid the scenes of my early manhood; pain that I can not do justice to all who, at the call of country, periled their young lives for home and the right; grief for the heroic dead, who sleep in unmarked graves wherever duty lead to danger and death. Their matchless courage and devotion earned undying fame.

"*Their praise is hymned by loftier harps than mine;*
Yet, one I would select from that proud throng":
Because he was my bedfellow, and I loved him as a brother;
faithful in the discharge of every duty, clean, brave, and true
—William Nicholson.



(2-1) Attack was really made by Ferrell on the enemy, advancing under command of Von Trebra, as Colonel Willich reports.—G.