

met at Montgomery shortly afterward and Forrest, being promised a separate command, withdrew his resignation. He had now a painful duty to perform. He had to part with his old command—his faithful followers, companions in danger and partners in his fame. They petitioned Bragg to be transferred to his command, but the petition was refused, and Forrest set out for his new field of action, accompanied only by McDonald's battalion and Morton's battery.

The men to whose leadership he was called were in a land held by the foe, and were neither organized nor armed. He was to go and gather them by the magic power of his name, and bring them safely through a host of enemies into the Confederate lines.

It was expecting much of him, but the result justified every expectation. With 500 armed men (December 4, 1863,) he entered West Tennessee. For three weeks he marched up and down that beautiful country, gathering cattle, and teams, and recruits, in spite of the efforts of 20,000 Federals who, in detachments, were trying to surround or cut him off.

December 27th, he returned, bringing 3,000 unarmed recruits, forty wagons, and many cattle, after daily skirmishes and five distinct engagements with the enemy. Says a Federal writer: "Forrest, with less than 4,000 men, moved right through the sixteenth army corps."

[Written for the BIVOUAC.]

MANEY'S BRIGADE AFTER THE BATTLE OF MISSIONARY RIDGE.



SOON after dark, at Chickamauga Station, we were summoned by the orderlies of the various companies to fall in, and assist in loading stores into several trains of cars, which had been brought to this point for that purpose. Our muskets were stacked in line near the railroad track, a detail set to guard them, and wagons and cars loaded with almost everything contained in the depot.

The occasion proved a godsend to the regiment of which I was a member, and the men improved "the shining hours" by supplying themselves with an extra quantity of rations. The night was cold, the ground frozen, and, before daylight, the wagon-trains had commenced to move. Being in the "reserve" we were reserved to the last to leave, and daylight found the last of the wagons leaving the station. Two small brigades (Maney's Tennessee and Gist's South

Carolina) were left to follow the wagon-trains, on one road, which led sharply to the left of the Western & Atlantic railroad, and which, to the writer, appeared to follow a parallel line with the East Tennessee & Virginia railroad.

The main body of the army, together with the greater portion of the wagon-trains, had taken a more south-easterly direction, and Cleburne's division was, beyond all question, between us and the railroad (the Western & Atlantic). Members of this division have described their retreat as being an almost uninterrupted skirmish throughout this whole day. The position which Maney's brigade occupied, corresponded to the extreme right of the Confederate lines. The rising sun melted the ice, and made the passage of the wagon-trains more difficult. Our progress was painfully slow. It was a broken march of one or two hundred yards and then a halt of five or ten minutes, to enable some wagon to get out of the mud.

Toward midday the scouts of the enemy appeared on the hills back of us, and it was evident that our whereabouts were known. The First and Twenty-seventh Tennessee Infantry, in the rear, looked behind them more than in front. Two small brigades seemed but little reliance on which to place the saving of our wagon-train.

We had the privilege of having a fight anyhow, and it came from a direction in which we least expected it. Just about sunset, while the men were sitting down on the side of the road, and wistfully looking back for any appearance of the enemy, we were startled by a sudden summons to "fall in." The order was given to "double-quick," and simultaneously therewith the sharp rattle of musketry in our front told that the enemy were attempting to wedge themselves between us and the rest of the army—a regiment of cavalry had, apparently, been on our left flank all day, and, most probably, had been driven in by a column of the enemy, which had made a detour to our left for the purpose of cutting us off. We passed the last wagon as its driver excitedly whipped up his horses in crossing a little creek, which every member of the regiment knows as Cat creek. The head of the two brigades had formed in line in the woods ahead of us. The First Tennessee was rapidly thrown into an open field, facing a little to the west of north, and parallel with the creek. A sharp declivity on its banks gave us some security from a sudden charge. A small body of cavalry formed to our left, but south of the road, perhaps one hundred and fifty yards to our rear, and fronting almost due west. Almost the entire attack seemed leveled at the First Tennessee regiment. The skirmish was hotly contested. General Maney was severely

wounded. The writer in trying to stop a bullet, found that he could not succeed. The position was exposed—no particle of shelter, a plain, open field, with the enemy under cover of the woods. In the meantime, the order was given to fall back into the woods behind. This was done in reasonably good order. The moon, which had now risen, displayed the glistening bayonets of a still unbroken front. Every wagon was for the present in safety, and the only capture the enemy had made from us was the gun of the writer, and those of several others who had been wounded or killed. Ah, my old gun! I well knew where I got it. It was on another moonlight night, of the 20th of September, 1863, the second day's battle of Chickamauga. It lay inside the Federal works, near their extreme left. It was bright, and perfectly new from the factory. "Bridesburg" was stamped on the lock-plate. It was like a foreign country to me, but I knew it was a suburb of Philadelphia. Though twenty years younger than I now am, I was still too old a soldier to give up a trusted friend, without knowing more of the merits of my new one. So I strung both muskets over my shoulder, and, at the first opportunity, in the firelight of the night, proceeded to examine my new friend. The lock was perfect—bright as a new-coined silver dollar. I drew the rammer, and running it down the barrel, found that it stopped within a foot of the muzzle. I got a ball-screw and drew out ball after ball, with great labor, and found that its previous owner, doubtless a gallant Federal soldier, had simply been snapping caps at us. The job was hopeless. I gave it up, and taking off the barrel of my old musket, made at Springfield, Massachusetts, soon had as fine a weapon as any Confederate possessed. The parts were interchangeable—our arms were rifle muskets. Just as its brightness attracted me then—it now formed (November 26th), 1883, the last object of my solicitude—I "own a kindly debt of old remembrance" for it. Some Federal, perhaps more worthy, may have the same feeling for parts of the same gun. A kind of love for your engine grows with its use.

"A good workman comes to like"—shall I say love—"the machine which seems to share his labor." It is thus I feel toward the "Bridesburg" musket. I was not a loser, but simply the gainer by its two months' use. Long before this I had another gun, which I recollect with a feeling of grim satisfaction. While useful in sending bullets at the battle of Murfreesboro, it did me the service to stop one. The ball passed between the two lower bands, taking off half the stock between them, springing the rammer as it passed between it and the barrel. At many a regimental and brigade inspection, I

“fessed out,” as the West Point boys say, on that gun. “What’s the matter with that gun, sir,” would say the inspector. “Shot in battle, sir,” would be the answer, and it saved me, for many months, a deal of rubbing and scrubbing. Oledowski, or whatever his name was, the Prussian Inspector of Hardee’s corps, passed that gun a dozen times. It was still a serviceable weapon, but Captain Kelly, of the Rock City Guards, just before the battle of Chickamauga, got tired of my usual excuse, and a summary order was issued to turn it over to the quartermaster and get a good one. The privates were at times on a par with their officers, in shrewd devices to escape duty, and their humor at times smacked of Irish flavor. Thus said an inspector to J. W. Branch, of the same company, who kept a clean gun, but which needed oiling—“Why do you not grease that gun?” “I can’t afford it, sir; I can’t grease my throat.” Under the highest system of tariff taxation, grease in the Confederacy would have been admitted free.

I have endeavored in the foregoing to depict the experiences of a private soldier, in connection with the operations of his regiment and brigade, in a notable battle. I am well aware that from the ranks, the field of observation is extremely limited. It extends only to the front and a few companies or regiments, to the right or left. Generally, he finds enough to do in front.

It only remains for me to say, that on the morning of November 27th, two days after the conflict at Missionary Ridge, it was reserved for Cleburne’s division, at Ringgold Gap, to administer a sharp and brilliant repulse to many times its number, and with this inspiring result, the elastic temperament of the Confederates regained its normal condition and the campaign which ended with 1863, may be said to have virtually closed.

PRIVATE ROCK CITY GUARDS.

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