Recitals and Reminiscences

Stories Eminently Worth Telling of Experiences and Adventures in the Great National Struggle.

THE END OF THE WAR.

A Raid Into Alabama in the Summer of 1865—The Last Blood Shed in the War.

Editor National Tribune: While enjoying a much-needed rest at Sweetwater, Tenn., Aug. 18, 1865, with daily anticipation of an order to have our final muster rolls ready, my dreams were ruthlessly thrust aside by this order from Col. R. W. Ratlice:

"First Lieut. A. H. Thomson, commanding Co. D, 12th Ohio Cav., will report for escort duty to Brevet Maj.-Gen. Gillem, at Chattanooga, Tenn. The Quartermaster's Department will furnish transportation."

In a few hours I was quartered at Chattanooga, but not for long. Next morning I received this order from Maj.-Gen. Gillem:

"Lieut. Thomson, commanding Co. D, 12th Ohio Cav., will report with 25 men, armed, equipped, with five days' rations, to Capt. Garfield, C. S. Vols., in this city at 7 a. m., Aug. 20, for the purpose of collecting beef cattle belonging to the U. S. Government."

HE FIRED AS HE GALLOPED AWAY.

Inclosed with the above were two orders, as follows:

"Maj.-Gen. Thomas directs that you order a detail of one reliable commissioned officer and 25 men, mounted and properly supplied for a scout, to report to Capt. C. S. Garfield, C. S., to go with him in search of U. S. cattle in the State of Georgia to try to recover them," and "the State of Alabama is included in your order to search for cattle belonging to the United States."

Gen. Thomas's first dispatch stated that Capt. Garfield was to accompany the detail, but he did not. Capt. Garfield was a cousin of the late President Garfield. When I reported to Capt. Garfield he informed me that Gatewood, a guerrilla, had stolen some Government horses and cattle from the corrals. When the matter was reported to Gen. Thomas he sent two civilians to recover the property, but they had been arrested and placed under a $5,000 bond, and allowed to go on their own recognizance, with a promise if they returned they might expect "a long rope and a short shrift."

The first day's ride brought us to Summerville, Ga., about 45 miles, where by written instructions I met Mr. Leab Grinsmith, who had been in the service of Gen. Sherman as a scout. Grinsmith knew the country well and about where the stolen property was located. The second day, accompanied by Grinsmith, we headed towards Cherokee County, Ala. About 3 p. m. an unusually large man rode up and asked: "Are you in command of this detachment?" On being answered in the affirmative he produced a note over the signature of Col. Ramsey, stating that Maj.-Gen. Thomas would accept it as a favor if Mr. Hamilton would aid our detail of cavalry to recover Government cattle. Mr. Hamilton was a true blue Union man, altho his brother was just the reverse and was acting as Sheriff of Cherokee County. Mr. Hamilton, knowing where most of the stock was, started out with a Corporal and four men.

Met "Squirrel" Hunters.

We went into camp about 5 p. m. Half an hour later Hamilton galloped into camp, stating that "a lot of —— rebels have captured your men, and not a shot was fired except at me, and that by my own brother." Hamilton and the boys had overtaken a couple of mounted men, who carried rifles, having been, as they stated, hunting squirrels. All had jogged along together, and soon overtook three more squirrel hunters, who also joined the cavalcade. Naturally the subject of guns was brought up in conversation.

The squirrel hunters were much interested in the Spencer carbines our boys carried, and soon had every one, examining them. Then, quick as a flash, the guns were turned on our boys, who had also to give up their sabers and Colt's revolvers. Hamilton made a dash for liberty and got away.

In a little while the Sheriff rode in with the outfit, demanding: "Who is in command here, and by whose authority do you invade my territory?" On raising my right hand with a revolver in it, 20 carbines were leveled on the gang. We disarmed, then dismounted them. I informed them that they would be my guests for the night; that this was no social function, but I would insist on their remaining the night in camp. As each soldier had been provided with a pair of handcuffs, and wishing to save my men, and as plenty of good, stiff saplings were growing there, we just made every man place his arms around a sapling, then sprung the handcuffs where they would be effective. They demurred, of course, but they had their choice of standing or lying down. At early daybreak I foolishly turned them loose.

After breakfast I detailed a noncommissioned officer and five men, until the squad was divided up, leaving four men and Grinsmith, who went with me. Each squad had directions where to go. Having the farthest to go, our squad left earlier than the others. We had ridden but a few miles when at a bend of the road we met four men mounted and armed. They wheeled around to get away, but we had three of them at our mercy, and they surrendered. The fourth fired as he galloped away. Two revolvers spoke, and the poor fellow fell out of his saddle. I rode up to him, but he was beyond my help. One of the prisoners acknowledged that men from all over the country were to rendezvous near where we had camped. Consequently we doubled on our tracks, after destroying the prisoners' guns.

Realizing that my boys were of more importance than branded animals, we galloped back towards our old camping ground. But the mischief had been done ere we reached them. I felt heartsick for a moment, and mad the next. There lay Edward J. Latson dead, three men wounded and a dead horse or two.

All Our Boys Captured.

One of the wounded men said that all of the rest of our boys had been captured, and that there were about 200 of the rebs. The tracks of the horses all showed they had gone towards Summerville. The boys gave me to understand they would follow where I led, so we headed for Summerville, determined to cut our way through. We had gone probably a mile, when we ran into four of the enemy with five of my men prisoners. One who assumed leadership rode up to me and pointed a Spencer within about four inches of my heart, while another struck my left hand a blow with the butt end of a Spencer. Picking up my reins, which had dropped, I motioned to Grinsmith, who carried a short, double-barreled shotgun, and as quick as a flash Grinsmith struck the man on the back of the neck with his gun, who fell to the ground. Jumping up, he made for the brush, but two of the boys' revolvers got him. The other three surrendered. This gave me nine men besides Grinsmith and myself. We had ridden about half a mile farther when we ran into nine or ten men, with one of my men, J. C. McClintock, a prisoner. There was a little shooting done, but none of our side were hurt. The other side got safely away. About half a mile farther we saw to the right of the road, and on much higher ground, 20 or 25 men, mounted and in line, facing us. I told my men to get their revolvers ready and to hold them behind them and to make no move until I did. Singling out the one whom I presumed was the leader, I rode straight to him, and, sticking my revolver between his eyes, ordered him to surrender. Each of my men had done likewise, and they surrendered without a shot—all 20 of them. There were now 12 of us and 27 prisoners.

We at once headed towards Chattanooga on a slow trot. We passed thru Summerville, Ga., at dark, and there our friend, the gallant Grinsmith, left us. Riding about two miles past Summerville, we halted on the road near a farm house, where we found provender for our horses, and the men had about enough rations left to give us all a tantalizing taste. I had left three men in our rear about 200 yards as guards. When bridling up we heard shooting there. I took one man and went to the rear, sending a Sergeant on with the men and prisoners, with instructions to keep up a trot and to shoot any prisoner who tried to escape. On reaching the picket post I found that the boys were holding back a number of men. We got glimpses of from 45 to 60 men, who evidently had respect for the Spencer.

Followed by Rebels.

We at once took up our line of march, and whenever a favorable opportunity presented itself we paid our respects to our pursuing friends, then scampered after our men. This was kept up until we reached Lafayette, Ga., about 30 miles from Chattanooga, where were stationed two companies of infantry. This relieved us, and we went into camp to rest ourselves and horses. The infantry gave us breakfast, which we relished, having really had nothing to eat for 24 hours.

We reached Chattanooga about 10:30 a. m. with our prisoners. We rode to Gen. Gillem's headquarters. The General, after listening to my account, got very angry, and wanted to know why I had not killed them all. The next morning I started with the 2d Mo. Cav. (Merrill's Horse), with two pretty strong companies of cavalry and one ambulance, and went back to Gaylesville, Ala., to break up the rebel gang, but the men had separated and gone to their homes. We rescued the men who had been captured, also the three wounded men who had been taken to a farm house to recover.—A. H. Thomson, Lieutenant-Colonel, Co. D, 12th Ohio Cav.

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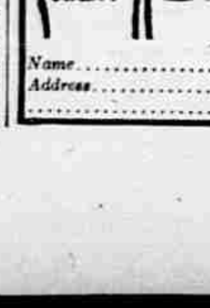

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Ream's Station Again.

Editor National Tribune: Thru the courtesy of the President and Secretary of the Veteran Association of the 5th N. H., held at The Weirs, N. H., Aug. 24, I am in possession of resolutions adopted at that meeting relative to a "controversy marked by incidents, which we cannot but regret, between Lieut.-Gen. Nelson A. Miles and surviving members of his old and gallant regiment, the 61st N. Y., and Lieut. James E. Larkin, of the 5th N. H."

As I have no way to communicate with either of the officers of the Association, I ask you to kindly give the following reply to those resolutions a place in The National Tribune:

First. There is nothing in the resolutions to which Gen. Miles and every member of the 61st N. Y. will not heartily subscribe; that is, the superb heroism of Dauchy's Battery; the great gallantry and dauntless spirit of Comrade Larkin in leading a small band of stampeded men "back along the abandoned breastworks nearly to the position of Dauchy's guns" and there remaining under safe and close cover while their comrades of the First Brigade were fighting a quarter of a mile in front and holding the enemy back and protecting the guns and the retreating troops from further danger, together with the heroic services of the 81st Pa. We gladly concede all this.

Second. The resolutions do not touch the "controversy at any point, and have no bearing whatever upon the points at issue. They are, therefore, by so much misleading, evasive, incompetent and irrelevant.

Third. The points at issue are Maj. Larkin's deliberate charges, made in insulting language, that Gen. Miles wilfully and knowingly misrepresented in his official report of the battle, and that the 61st N. Y. did not participate in and was in no way connected with the "countercharge" which swept the enemy back from the works beyond the location of Dauchy's Battery. These charges of Maj. Larkin contradict every officer of sufficient rank to make a report of the battle, from Gen. Hancock down to his brigade and battery commanders, and to authentic history. It goes further, and by inference charges Gen. Miles with "doctoring" the reports of Hancock, Walker, Dauchy and of Historians Swinton, Humphrey, De Trobriand, Bedeau and others.—R. R. Riddell, Secretary, 61st N. Y. Association, Albany, N. Y.

The Fighting at Franklin.

Editor National Tribune: In your last issue I read a letter from ex-Senator Gordon to Capt. W. M. Shafter. At the fight at Franklin Shafter was Major of the 19th Mich., and Col. Coburn commanded the brigade which Gordon claims to have captured. I think both are dead. Van Dorn's attack on Franklin was only a feint, while Gen. Forrest and Van Dorn were surrounding the Second Brigade at Thompson's Station, where 300 men were killed. Gordon claims to have captured Maj. Shafter and Brig.-Gen. Coburn. Four companies were left there to guard the railroad from Nashville to Franklin. Gordon's boast about capturing officers seems thin. From 8,000 to 10,000 Confederates captured about 1,000 Yankees, with a loss of 300. Twenty days later the same force, flanking Franklin, took in the four companies and a few stragglers left at and near Brentwood to guard the railroad. The brigade consisted of the 33d and 85th Ind., 22d Wis. and 19th Mich. This same brigade broke Hood's lines in his first fight at Atlanta on July 20, and was in the fight at Bentonville, N. C., on the left of the Fourteenth Corps when Johnston thought to whip Sherman by taking one corps at a time. About the time they turned the left flank of the Fourteenth Corps the Twentieth Corps turned their right flank. When they undertook to break thru the center they found two lines of works and most of the artillery in the Fourteenth and Twentieth Corps packed in front of them. The Fourteenth Corps had been on the left flank, but when Johnston got ready to fight it was in the left center, with the Twentieth Corps coming in to protect their flank. It was folly on the part of the South to continue the war after the fight at Gettysburg only for the sake of dying in the last ditch.—J. C. Whitaker, 19th Mich., Kansas City, Mo.

How Osceola Was Trapped.

Editor National Tribune: I believe that I am the only man living that ever saw Osceola, Chief of the Seminole Indians. If there are others I would like to hear from them. Osceola was captured during the Winter of 1837 near Indian River by Gen. Jessup while under the protection of a flag of truce. Osceola had agreed to meet Jessup at that place for a conference. It was stipulated Osceola was to be accompanied by 50 warriors, while Jessup was to have the same number of troops. They met according to agreement, but instead of respecting the flag of truce the General had other troops stationed nearby, who closed in upon them and took Osceola and his whole party prisoners and marched them to St. Augustine, where they were confined in the old Spanish fort, now called Fort Marion. At that time I was serving in Co. E, 2d U. S. Art., then stationed at Fort Harlem, on Black Creek, a tributary of the St. Johns River, some 15 or 18 miles above Jacksonville. I was one of a detail of eight men ordered from our company to proceed to St. Augustine by steamer and take on board Osceola and a few others and proceed with them to Fort Moultrie, Charleston, S. C. Osceola only lived one month in captivity; it broke his heart to think that he trusted his life and liberty to the honor of a white man and was betrayed. His remains lie upon the ramparts of Fort Moultrie, marked by a stone, with the simple inscription, "Osceola." I served from May 3, 1861, to Sept. 5, 1865. Three years of that time in the Army of the Potomac and 18 months in the Navy; the most of the time on the Wabash. Since the close of the civil war I served three years in the life-saving service. The most remarkable part of my 13 years of service, in which I participated in all of the great battles of the Army of the Potomac up to the time that Gen. Grant took command, I never was wounded or lost a day's duty from sickness or any cause whatever. I was born in the town of Marshfield, April 17, 1817, and celebrated my 93d birthday April last.—Henry Tolman, Green Harbor, Mass.

The 9th W. Va.

Editor National Tribune: In your issue of May 19, in complying with the request of J. D. Sayer, of Red House Shoals, W. Va., to give a short history of the 9th W. Va.; you say: "The 9th W. Va. was organized in the State-at-large from Nov. 28, 1861, to April 31, 1862, and consolidated with the 5th W. Va. Nov. 9, 1864, to form the 1st W. Va. veteran regiment. It was commanded by Col. Leonard Skinner, who was discharged Sept. 19, 1862, succeeded by Col. Isaac H. Duval, promoted to Brigadier-General Sept. 24, 1864. At the time of consolidation Lieut.-Col. Wm. C. Starr was in command. It belonged to Duval's Division, Eighth Corps, and lost 99 killed and 108 from disease, etc."

I had the honor to be a very humble member of the 9th W. Va. and an admirer of its officers. The only member of the field and staff of the 9th now living so far as I know is Maj. B. M. Skinner, of Pomeroy, O., now nearly 90 years of age, but vigorous and sturdy withal. Both Maj. Skinner and Lieut.-Col. Starr were detailed for staff duty, the former to the staff of Gen. George Crook, the latter to that of Gen. Hunter. When, about July 1, 1864, Duval was assigned to the command of a brigade, Maj. Skinner was relieved from staff duty, returned and took command of his regiment, and continued in command until about the time of the battle of Cedar Creek, sharing its triumphs and reverses with credit to the regiment and honor to himself; and as Lieut.-Col. Starr was not in command at the date of its consolidation with the veterans of the 5th (which event took place shortly after the battle of Cedar Creek), nor was he ever in command of the regiment after he was detailed for staff duty, being mustered out while absent from the regiment, I may add that no officer ever connected with the 9th W. Va. bore himself more gallantly than Maj. Skinner. Officers and men loved him, and it seems to me that this correction is due him, and, as one who knew him very well while in the service and much better since, I have taken the liberty to write you.—John C. Bishop, M. D., Co. C, 9th W. Va., Columbus, O.

At Spanish Fort.

John H. Lagle, Co. D, 19th Iowa, has been reading The National Tribune for years, and is amused at the stories of the capture of Spanish Fort, and would like to give his version of it. He served in the Thirteenth Corps as Corporal in Co. D, 19th Iowa. Gen. Granger commanded the division. The 94th Ill., 20th Wis. and 26th Ind. were in the brigade. They were ordered to the bay at Fort Morgan, and marched thru to Spanish Fort. The skirmishers of the 19th Iowa drove the rebel lines of pickets and skirmishers back until about 3 p. m. Comrade Lagle was shot in the leg, and was taken to the Division Hospital and afterward to the U. S. Barracks Hospital, New Orleans, La., and was discharged in June, 1865. He says there was no use nor room for all those different corps. The Thirteenth Corps did it.

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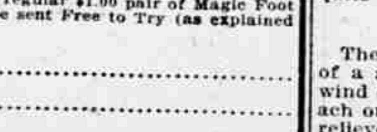

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A Striking Incident of the March to the Sea.

W. H. Anderson, First Lieutenant, Co. H, 80th Ohio, Highlands, N. C., says that he was one of the rear guard that day, and, in connection with other duties, it devolved upon them to arrest and bring along any of our soldiers who might be found straggling or loitering about premises by the wayside. As he approached a neat log house, he overheard pleading in the voice of a woman in this wise: "Now, don't take that clock; it's an old family heirloom and can be of no use to you." As he halted against the corner of the house, near where the door opened on to a low porch, a soldier was coming out with a small octagonal mahogany-cased clock in his hands. The lady of the house was following and begging him not to take the clock. The butt of his right ear presented a favorable target for his big fist, and he sent the fellow a-tumbling off the porch and the clock a-rolling across the yard. At this juncture there came upon him Gen. John E. Smith, ready to give him a broadside swipe with his drawn sword, at the same time demanding why he had struck the soldier. As he saluted him, he told the General what had happened. "Make him put that clock back where he got it," commanded the General. "Put him under arrest; march him along with you today, and to-night send him up to me." He is glad to say that the fellow was a stranger to him.

Doings of the 33d Wis.

W. M. Thornton, Co. D, 33d Wis., Glenhaven, Wis., says that the 33d Wis. left Camp Utly, Racine, Wis., Nov. 12, 1862, and in two weeks from that time was in the field under Gen. Grant in his expedition to Yocona, Miss. It took a prominent part in the battle of Coldwater, Miss., April 19, 1863, and in the siege of Vicksburg from May 20 to its surrender, and the battle of Jackson, Miss., July 12, 1863. The regiment was with Gen. Sherman in his Meridian expedition; in the Red River expedition under the brave old warrior, Gen. A. J. Smith, and met the enemy at Fort De Russy, Pleasant Hill Landing, Courtierville, Bayou Boeuff, Marksville and Yellow Bayou, La., besides several skirmishes during the expedition. Again under Gen. Smith at Tupelo, Miss., and in October following, was led by the gallant Gen. Mower thru the swamps and bluffs of Arkansas and Missouri in pursuit of the rebel Gen. Price. The regiment was at Nashville, Tenn., confronting the rebels under Gen. Hood on Dec. 15 and 16, 1864, where it captured 600 prisoners; continued the pursuit to Eastport, Miss.; made a raid to Corinth, Miss., and on Jan. 6, 1865, started for Mobile, via Cairo, New Orleans, Lake Ponchartrain and Dauphine Island. Took an active part in the siege of Spanish Fort, Ala., and in the reduction of Mobile. Marched from Spanish Fort to Montgomery and Tuskegee, Ala., and for home from the latter place July 19, via Selma, Ala.; Meridian and Vicksburg, Miss., and arrived at the Capital of the old Badger State Aug. 14, 1865, having traveled while in the service 9,000 miles, 2,400 of which were marched.

In a Hot Place.

William R. Ringwald, St. Paul, Minn., 24th Mich., says that in the Spring of 1864 they were camped at Culpeper, Va., and were reviewed by President Lincoln and Secretary Stanton. The President rode a white horse. When they presented arms President Lincoln took off his hat and waved it at them, and they gave him three cheers and a tiger. Gen. Warren was in command of them until they reached the North Anna River, where they crossed over on the pontoon bridge at the old mill. At the fight there Comrade Ringwald was struck in the head with one of the minie balls and dropped. They were in a wheatfield, but the grain was only a foot high. Soon after he dropped the boys retreated and the rebel line rushed to where he fell. One big rebel stopped and tried to make him get up. Comrade Ringwald was in a hot place with the shells bursting all around him. The Union forces then made another charge and drove them off. He lay on the field from 3 o'clock until 9 in the evening.

A Fighting Family.

George Parks, Co. H, 58th Ind., Seattle, Wash., was born in Kosciusco County, Ind., on Dec. 13, 1849, and was mustered into the service as a drummer Sept. 20, 1862. At the battle of Stone River, in December, 1862, he earned a musket and was discharged as a private July 25, 1865, having served nearly three years, and was not yet 16 years old. His father, Edward R. Parks, was Surgeon of the 30th Ind., and his brother, Marshall H. Parks, was Adjutant of the 12th Ind. and for some time was Aid-de-Camp to Gen. Woods, of the Fifteenth Corps, and his brother, Lawrence Parks, was wounded five times at the battle of Peach Tree Creek and died that night. Every male member of his family served during the war. He has been in the Puget Sound country for over a quarter of a century.

Doesn't Like Jealousies.

A. J. Stules, Co. H, 103d Ill., Lewistown, Ill., says that he is greatly interested in the sketches of the boys, but deplores the little jealousies exhibited. Many wish it understood that "my" company or regiment did the great and hazardous things. The real facts are that those who really did things were detailed to that duty because of their convenience and the urgency of the case, but if some other regiment had been ordered instead, might not they have done equally well or better? Comrade Stules belonged to Co. H, 103d Ill., Second Brigade, Fourth Division, Fifteenth Corps, afterward the First Division, Fifteenth Corps, and was in the Atlanta campaign. We went with Sherman to the sea and up thru the Carolinas, and likes good-natured anecdotes and reminiscences without harsh contentions.

Corp'l James Pike's Death.

Harmon Cook, Co. C, 46th Iowa, Laidlaw, Ore., says that he has just finished reading The National Tribune of July 28, and there learned what became of James Pike, the noted scout. A few years after the war he was a book canvasser in Iowa, and he canvassed for a book written by Corp'l Pike. It was a good book and sold well and gave satisfaction. He has forgotten the title, but now, for the first time, he knows of Pike's death. In all the articles in The National Tribune, none did him more good. He often wonders why he does not see an account of a battle fought at Richmond, Ky., in which the 12th Ind., only a few days from home, lost the flower of the regiment in the death of many of the young soldiers. He had an uncle, Harmon B. Cox, only 12 days from home, instantly killed.

Widows' Pensions.

Mrs. E. Wood, Chelan, Wash., raises her voice in favor of those wives who stayed at home and supported the families while their husbands went to war. They should have an age pension the same as the veterans, for they suffered quite as much.

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$2,000.00. WE WILL LEND YOU $2,000 under certain reasonable conditions, and agree that you may pay the loan from the dividends on an investment which we will suggest. CONTINENTAL COMMERCIAL CO., St. Louis, Mo.

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ADDRESS WANTED—Of any one who knew Peter Delorme, Co. C., 96th N. Y. Vol., during the war, 1861 to 1865. Please send to John Fagan, 22 Clifton St., Rochester, N. Y.

WANTED—The address of William E. Duke, formerly of Clarksburg, W. Va. Address The National Tribune, Washington, D. C.

WANTED—Company G, 93d N. Y. Vols., Attention! The undersigned desires the name and address of officers or privates of this company in order to assist a comrade to obtain his pension. Kindly send information to Dr. C. P. Caldwell, 4429 Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill.

WANTED—The addresses of comrades who knew during the civil war, Charles H. Abbott, of Boston, Mass. His company and regiment is needed. Address A. J. Paul, No. 155 So. Front St., New Berne, N. C.

WANTED—To hear from Erastus T. Cleaveland, James Clapper, William Capp, Albert Lewis or any of their friends. They all worked at the special diet kitchen at the Cumberland Field Hospital, Nashville, Tenn., the Winter of '64 and '65. Address James A. Price, Hicksville, Ohio.

WANTED—The addresses of Miss H. D. Dehaven and Miss H. J. Shaw, of Allegheny City, Pa., and kept a Christian Commission store at Cumberland Field Hospital at Nashville, Tenn., in 1864 and 1865. Should any of their friends see this, please write me. Address James A. Price, Hicksville, Ohio.

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