RECOLLECTIONS OF A CHRISTMAS DURING "THE WAR"

(1862—1863)

By W. T. CHARLES

1959

FOREWORD

I went to St. James in September, 1856, and left there in July, 1858, remaining through two annual sessions. Here I spent the very happiest period of my boyhood days. At the age of nearly 51 years I look back with even greater love and affection for the place and everyone connected with it, and a yearning to revisit it; believing I would have been a different and a better man had I graduated there or even remained until the "War" began in 1861.

After leaving dear old St. James College, Fountain Rock, Washington County, Maryland, in July, 1858, I remained at home eighteen months, going to school, and in December, 1859, went to South Carolina College, at Columbia, to stand my examination and be ready to enter my class of the first of January, 1860. I remained here until April, 1861, and although my life was very different here from what it had been at St. James, still my recollections and associations are of the most pleasant and, the only regret that I now have is that I did not study harder. But then I was there during one of the most exciting periods in American History. Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States in November, 1860, and in December, South Carolina seceded from the Union. A splendid company of cadets was organized immediately, composed entirely of students and their services offered to the Governor in January, 1861; which was accepted in April, and on the eleventh day of that month we attended our last recitation and lecture. On the twelfth (the first day of the bombardment of Fort Sumter) we left on a special train for Charleston and arrived there amid booming of cannon. We were quartered that night in the Hibernian Hall, and early next morning on a swift, low-decked steamer during the hottest of the fight we ran the gauntlet to Fort Moultrie on Sullivan's Island. Here we remained for several hours, hugging the rear walls of the Fort, for being infantry and the battle being carried on entirely by artillery, we were idle spectators until an order came for us to move to the extreme end of the island where it was thought the enemy was about to effect a landing. We were double-quick marched to that point, and soon marched back again, being at Fort Moultrie when Major Anderson handed down his colors from the flag-staff of Fort Sumter. The next day he marched out with his garrison and the Confederates took possession. We remained on Sullivan's Island for more than a month, and quartered (a part of the time) in the Moultrie House Hotel, and then in cottages which were originally summer resorts for pleasure seekers on the sea-shore.

We were a splendid company (about 130 muskets), superbly uniformed and, as a general thing, the very "flower of the land." We

spent a most delightful time on the island and in May returned to Columbia, where the company was disbanded; some returning to college to complete the session, but by far the greater part entering the Army, joining commands from their respective homes. I was among the last named and remained in the Army almost the whole of the war. I have met a good many of my college mates since I left Columbia. Of my adventures in the Army after I left Columbia I hope sometime to write an account.

W. T. CHARLES

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By W. T. CHARLES

Published by his Granddaughter

Florence Burch Charles Hall

and

Dedicated to the Memory of her Father

Francis Robert Charles

who kept the faith of our fathers
that generations to come may
be so inspired.

1959

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RECOLLECTIONS OF A CHRISTMAS DURING "THE WAR"

(1862 – 1863)

By W. T. CHARLES, Written Thirty-Five Years After

Looking back upon the events of "the war" after the lapse of thirty-five years, which was our entire army life, it seems to me very much like a retrospect of school-boy days. What we thought hardships then seem now the most pleasant reminiscences of life, and even the severest trials then, now seem invested with a tinge of romance. My experience, I suppose, was the same as had come to hundreds of other old soldiers in both armies, particularly to men of about my age. I was just twenty when the events to which I am about to allude occurred. In fact my twentieth birthday happened at that time, and had something to do with bringing on the social features of this record.

After Bragg's famous Kentucky Campaign and his hurried retreat from Camp Dick Robinson, by way of Wildcat Mountain upon the very same defile where the lamented Zollcoffer marched with his command just previous to his death at Fishing Creek. His brave men were almost panic stricken by the Federal troops who, concealed on the heights above him hurled immense stones or boulders down upon his shoulders. They could do nothing to defend themselves; on one side a precipice, on the other an apparently bottomless abyss with only a narrow road on which to pass. We marched by this route and through Cumberland Gap back into Tennessee again, and late in November or early December we found ourselves in Knoxville, Tennessee.

We left the latter place in the beginning of that severe and memorable winter, and once more marched through the beautiful Sequatchie Valley, which we had first seen in all the glory of summer. We went over the Cumberland Mountains, past Sewanee, the seat of the "University of the South", then in its infancy, and arrived about the middle of December, 1862, at the little Tennessee village of Triunne, about 18 miles from Franklin.

The main body of the army had been there for a few days but had fallen back to College Grove, which was at the base of two roads; one fork (western) led through Triunne to Franklin, and the right (eastern) fork led to Murfreesboro. There, two weeks later, was fought one of the bloodiest battles of the War. One section of Semple's Battery (Goldthwaite's two guns, to which I belonged) were left at Triunne as a sort of advanced guard. Wharton's Cavalry was

the only troop between us and the Yankee occupying Franklin; their pickets were facing Wharton's, each watching the other, and only a few miles from us. As is always the case when only a few troops are in a place, we had a much better time than when the whole body of the Army was together. We had a much better chance to forage and the opportunity of making the acquaintance of the people, and better still, to have a chance to be invited to their homes. Two or three of us were enjoying this delightful and very unusual privilege on the night of December twenty-third at the house of an old gentleman by the name of Beasley, who, with his daughter, Mrs. Mayfield, a young widow of about my own age, lived in the very heart of the village. I happened to remark that the next day would be my birthday. Miss Crossthwaite, a young lady present, who lived next door, felt sorry, I suppose, to think of a young fellow at Christmas time and on his birthday, far from home and friends, having to live out in the cold on top of a bleak hill, invited myself and friends to take breakfast with her the next morning at her father's house. Of course we went, and for this little piece of attention, my dear mother remembered Miss Crossthwaite as long as she lived.

While at breakfast Mr. Beasley remarked that if we could, by any possibility, get the whiskey, we could have a Christmas "Egg Nog" at his house the next night. We were not slow in acting upon this suggestion, and as soon as we returned to camp, my friend Bob Hails and myself called our two colored servants, Mingo and Jim, and gave them instructions. Mr. Beasley had told us where a certain "still" was which he did not think had even been visited by the soldiers of either army. Foraging was a privilege that we could not then enjoy except through our servants, and as the next day was Christmas, and we wanted a good dinner as well as the egg nog, we instructed Mingo and Jim not to come back without certain other things, particularly a big Tennessee turkey gobbler! They left mounted on horseback, each with three or four large Yankee canteens on their shoulders and a plentiful supply of Confederate money from the mess fund to make doubly sure that the whisky could be obtained.

Bob Hails provided Mingo with some gold from a little stock he had carried ever since he first entered the service, which was kept for special emergencies such as falling a wounded prisoner into the hands of the enemy. I want to mention here that this was one of the many instances of devotion and loyalty of the Southern "darky" to his young master; Mingo knew perfectly well why Bob's father had thought of giving him this parcel of gold at parting, and he [illegible]ciated the good it might do. Although he brought back [illegible] he had been sent for, under conditions that I will present[illegible] he also brought back the gold untouched at a time when [illegible] would never have been doubted had he said that he had [illegible] not only were the citizens, particularly farmers in that part

nessee, loath to taking Confederate money at that time, but he went, I may say, between the lines where the farmers had access daily, to the town of Franklin, where greenbacks were freely circulated. If it had been known that they had gold in their pockets they never would have been sold anything for Confederate money.

Mingo and Jim got back to camp with a magnificent turkey and a pair of ducks, plenty of whisky, and they were both drunk as lords. We were too well satisfied with the supplies to raise a row with them, especially as it had grown very cold as night fell. The prospect of a good dinner the next day was such that we did not propose to mar it by getting mad over as simple a thing as two drunken darkies. Mingo sobered up sufficiently to cook the turkey elegantly for Christmas dinner, which he did by suspending it on a string in front of a hot fire, three sides surrounded by large flat stones, set on end, and the fourth side facing the turkey. Mingo basted the turkey with a little mop on the end of a stick to prevent burning. I don't think I ever tasted a better turkey, and I am sure no party ever enjoyed one more. However, I must hasten on, especially as the events that I most particularly wish to commit to paper happened not so much on Christmas night as on several days and nights following.

The "egg nog" of Christmas night was a grand success, with nothing whatever to mar our enjoyment, so much so that as we had plenty of whisky and eggs for another evening's pleasure, it was agreed that we would all meet at Mr. Beasley's house the next night and repeat the fun.

The night in question was a typical one for sitting around a roaring log fire, with a pleasant party in a snug old fashioned farm house in Middle Tennessee. However, it was by no means a night on which one would like to lie out on a picket line or bivouac on the roadside by an unlimbered "Napoleon" twelve-pounder.

The day has been lowering; the cold gusts of wind from the Northwest seemed to go to our very bones, and made us hug the fire. We experienced the sensation every soldier has felt who has ever been in camp in winter; that of burning up on one side and freezing the other. The afternoon was not gray but "slate-colored", as Dickens put it, and as night fell it began to sleet. I can vividly recall at this moment, nearly thirty-five years after the night to which I refer, how we braved the cold in anticipation of the good cheer awaiting us. Our feelings were of gladness that we could so enjoy the warmth and comfort in store for us. We had in our imaginations drawn the picture of that special comfort, for we had been there before. Somehow, I love to linger in retrospective reverie, just here at this stage of my reminiscence. The combined pleasures and terrors of this particular night will live in my memory as long as life itself, or my own senses, shall last. I ought to be particular then as to dates, as some

of the incidents I am about to relate are historic; finally leading [illegible] to the terrible Battle of Murfreesboro.

This was the night of December twenty-sixth, 1862. It may possibly have been the twenty-seventh, for events passed rapidly. Looking back at it now, I recall that the Grand Battle opened on the morning of December thirty-first at Murfreesboro, and wound up late in the afternoon of January second, with the terrible and fatal charge of Breckenridge. During those few days between the thirty-first and the second, there was an enormous lull in events. Much was crowded into those days, most of which time we were drenched to the skin and thoroughly miserable. At that time it had often been difficult for me to account for each day and night from the evening of December twenty-sixth to the morning of the thirty-first. I think I remarked a good way back that I ought to hasten on. I forget as my memory takes in again those vivid scenes, that they may not be interesting to the probable readers. Therefore, I will return to the evening I was about to speak of when I made that long digression. I have said that as night fell it began to sleet. We had entered the gate and slipped and slid on the ice covered steps of Mr. Beasley's house, and saw through the window a scene which can never be fully appreciated except by persons who had just left such miserable surroundings as we had left. At camp it was too wet to successfully keep up a fire, and we had not yet learned to put up the log and mud chimneys to our tents which the severity of the winter weather forced us to [illegible] few weeks later at Tullahoma. The balance of our men who were not in the social swim kept to their meager blankets on half wet beds of straw. We would have been in the same situation had it not been for old man Beasley.

We saw through that window a room so brilliantly lighted by the roaring log fire of hickory and cedar, Mrs. Mayfield, Miss Crossthwaite, and Mr. Beasley. Mrs. Mayfield wore a long apron preparatory to beating eggs, while in the corner of the room was a table with the eggs piled up in a big dish like shot in an ordnance yard, together with all the paraphernalia and accessories of egg nog making. Old man Beasley, by the way, who always reminded me of our old friend Dr. Peurifoy, of Mt. Meigs, was so extremely pleasant and jolly, suggested the idea that the inclemency of the evening had induced him to sample the canteens or jugs in advance. The theory that history repeats itself was reenacted on a small scale as one of the preludes to the Battle of Waterloo, which was immortalized by no less a poet than Byron himself, and familiar to every English speaking school boy and girl in the world. True, the scene was not laid amid such [illegible] cent surroundings as the Duchess of Richmond's place, nor [illegible] gathered any great amount of beauty and chivalry. However [illegible] around that hospitable Tennessee fireside, as sleet beat gently [illegible] the window panes, and sipped our egg nog in silence. Hoyt, [illegible] had remarked:

"Ah, this is certainly grand," when someone held up his hand, bespeaking silence with such genuine earnestness that not a sound was heard near us but the gentle beating of the sleet upon the panes. As "What was that?" we looked hurriedly towards each other, for the sound was strangely familiar, especially to artilleryists, and that was what all of us were. There it was again. There was no mistaking that "boom". It was a cannon, and as one of our members hastily threw open the front door, there was wafted to us from the opposite hill up the pike, where our command was camped, the stirring bugle call of "Boots and Saddles", while the drums of the Sixteenth Alabama Infantry beat the "long roll". We started on a run, but Lord what a night. Darkness was blacker since we entered the house not more than an hour ago, that it seemed as if we might catch hold of it like some immense ball, as the sleet stung our faces like sharp needles.

How we managed to get to camp through that darkness I can not tell. We first tried to keep in the middle of the turnpike, but the rattle of sabres and the tramping of horses feet on the almost frozen ground while the cavalry came rushing along in the darkness soon warned us that we would be run over if we did not get quickly out of the way. There was a pretense of a sidewalk through the little straggling village which consisted of a path about a yard wide, six or eight feet higher than the turnpike, and separated from the latter by ditches which had become gullies. I have noticed just such diabolical arrangements in other country villages. Now, by some blessed diversifications of nature, a soldier can laugh at anything, or rather he can laugh at whatever strikes him as ludicious under the most trying circumstances. As strange and as incongruous as it may seem, Benson, Hails, Frazer and myself laughed at a ridiculous scene between Hoyt and some cavalrymen until we could scarcely run. In our attempt to get out of the way of a charging horseman by trying to reach the sidewalk, Hoyt fell into one of the deepest of the gullies.

"Hey, there! Halt ,stop! You infernal butternut [illegible]!" exclaimed Hoyt from the bottom of the ditch, for he feared that the cavalryman might have literally ridden down upon him.

"Why the devil don't you fellows stay where you belong, instead of scooting back to the rear as soon as a gun is fired. Say, why didn't you stay there long enough for us to get into position?"

"What outfit do you belong to?", the cavalryman asked. He reigned in his horse suddenly, rather surprised, I imagine, at being thus addressed by a supposed sentinel under the ground. "What outfit I say?"

"To the artillery," Hoyt said rather proudly, "to the battery on the hill yonder."

"Well," said the cavalryman, as he touched up his horse to resume his ride into the darkness, "the guns you say are on the hill yonder,

and you are down in a hole; so you are at least in the position in which you are generally found whether the rest of the battery are or not."

"Go to the devil," Hoyt cried, and fired a parting shot as he scrambled up out of the ditch. All this happened much quicker than it takes to tell, and meantime some comrades of "Hoyt's man," having heard the excited conversation, reigned in their horses when we came upon them, for I don't think they could see us. We certainly could not see them, but then we had just come from a brightly lighted room, while they had been out in the darkness for hours. They reigned in their horses long enough to tell us that they (Wharton's Cavalry) had been skirmishing with the Yankees since early morning, and while most of the fighting had been confined to cavalry on each side, still the enemy had a battery of Mountain howitzers that had opened on them several times during the day. We had not heard them, nor had we heard the rifle and carbine firing. They said as they rode off, in reply probably to Hoyt's taunt about their scooting back to the rear:

"If you fellows go through with as much in the next twenty-four hours as we have in the last, you will be glad enough to be relieved."

"Since night came on," said another man, taking up the thread of conversation as the first one moved on in his direction and we started on ours, "under cover of darkness they have thrown out a column of infantry, I think. "Anyway those guns you heard a while ago were not Mountain Howitzers."

"But there is plenty of cavalry in front to take care of you," said a third man who passed us, "so don't be uneasy."

This conversation, remember, was strung out along the road over the half-mile or three-quarters between Mr. Beasley's house and our camp. From this we inferred that the enemy was probably advancing in force and had been kept up as a cavalry skirmish as long as possible. Now, although there was plenty of cavalry still in front, the last horseman had informed us that General Wharton was preparing to turn them over to us. If we had taken as long to get to camp as I have been in telling it, we would probably have been put under arrest. However, in a very few minutes after meeting the last mentioned cavalryman, we were back again near the house of our friends, on the outskirts of the little village, with our guns unlimbered. Here we stood or laid by our guns more than half the night, while the cavalry skirmished in our front. As I think of those cavalrymen who fought all that night, it impels me to say that each branch of the service, the cavalry, the infantry, and the artillery, were always ready to guy one another about "getting out of the way of a fight" having no real service to perform, still I was sure with all my heart that each fully appreciated the other and had the confidence, each

of the other. Certainly they all knew by that date that nobody was having an easy time of it. A little after midnight the moon came up; it was drizzling rain and sleet; the moon was about half full, and much better than the inky darkness.

At the first sign of day we had the satisfaction of seeing our friends, the Crossthwaites, and Mr. Beasley and Mrs. Mayfield; leaving, along with all the non-combatants of the village who had been warned by the commanding officer to go to a place of safety. I have never seen or heard from them since that gray and gloomy December morning, when they departed in a two-horse wagon with Mr. Beasley seated high up on a pile of mattresses and household furnishings. I am sure from the satisfied, almost jolly manner in which he seemed to be conducting himself, that he had not forgotten to take the jug along with him.

We did not have time to follow our friends' progress, although we were within a stone's throw of their house. We could only feel thankful that they had gone. A puff of white smoke from the crest of the hill where last night was our camp, and a shell from a Parrot gun came shrieking over our heads so low that had it gone a little more to the right it might have gone through the second story of the Crossthwaite house.

Look what a dark looking mass was that just back of us just where the white puff of smoke was seen a moment ago. Was it infantry? There was no mistaking that, but our cavalry was in the way and we could not fire. However, that little affair had been better planned than we had imagined: for while we were thinking that the little band of infantry would deploy as skirmishes, before we could get a shot at them the last of our cavalry suddenly and quickly passed to the rear. We were quite certain that they were not aware of their nearness to two guns of Semple's Battery — the biggest in the Tennessee Army.

We had barely time to note the entire absence of any Yankee cavalry in our front when the order was given to fire. They were expecting artillery, but not such guns at that, and we took advantage of their surprise and poured it into them. The surprise was only temporary, for those were veterans on our front, and Western men at that. There was also a full battery of artillery on that hill, and how much infantry behind it we did not know. The artillery duel was too hot just then to enable us to think about other things; for they had discovered that we had only two pieces. They were Napoleon guns; twelve pounders, and we knew and appreciated the confidence that all the infantry in Bragg's Army had in us. There were only two Napoleon batteries of six guns each in our entire army; Comanche's Robinson's and our own. No matter how heavy the artillery firing was from Bragg's one hundred or more pieces, there was always a will "Rebel Yell" down the entire line whenever either of these batteries

opened fire. This was a notorious fact. The "Yanks" had "felt us," and what would the next move on their part mean?

"Double charge with cannister," ordered Lieutenant Goldthwaite and the command was in connection with the expectant earnestness of the Sixteenth Alabama Infantry, who until then had no occasion to do anything but lie down. We knew all too plainly that they were going to charge our guns. Lieutenant Goldthwaite was as white as a sheet but he was cool and not a bit scared. It was his way; he appreciated his responsibility and the lives of the men under his command, most of whom he had known from boyhood. Some, like myself, were his old schoolmates. He was not mistaken, but for a moment we thought he had lost the power of speech as we waited for the order that was slow in coming. He only wanted them to approach a little nearer, for he knew the terrible effect of those guns at a certain range when double charged with cannister.

"Ah! those Yanks must be Regulars. They break into a double quick, but they move like they were on dress parade." Lieutenant Goldthwaite gave the command to fire at last, and just when it should have come. The infantry in the hollow, between the two hills, made it perfect for the Yankee battery to fire over their heads, which they did, and thus prevented the Sixteenth from following up any advantages we otherwise might have gained. Amid the smoke and din came the order, "Limber to the rear", and we fell back and left the Sixteenth in front for the first time.

On the next elevation we got into position again; just as before one gun on either side of the road. The Sixteenth had waited for us to get into position and had hardly had time to get behind us when "Boom!", there it came again from the Yankee battery. But this time from the very hill which we had left. It was now evident to both Lieutenant Goldthwaite and to the Major commanding the battalion of the Sixteenth Infantry, that we were outnumbered at least four to one. They concluded, in the absence of reinforcements or other orders, to fight them at every hilltop, and thus retard their advance as much as possible. We looked back on the little village, which in such a short time we had learned to love. I witnessed a sight that made me feel sad whenever I have thought of it for a long time since.

Nearly every house in the village had been knocked almost into kindling wood. None any more so than the two houses of our friends, particularly the Beasley home, and they were much less able to stand the loss. Up to this time we knew that they had been [illegible] by Yankee shot and shell, which was some slight consolation [illegible] later I am sure that our own guns had helped to complete the [illegible]

We had no time to think of it then. The Yanks seemed to know [illegible] condition and were crowding us for all they were worth.

"Why the devil," said the irrepressible Hoyt, "don't they send us some help from down at College Grove?" It will be remembered that the main body of the army, after they had remained a few days at Triunne, had been moved back to College Grove, at the base of the two roads.

"Don't you know," continued Hoyt, "that they are bound to hear these guns at that short a distance? Or do you reckon 'Old Brag' hasn't yet woke up from his Christmas drunk?"

"Look!" he exclaimed, as in his capacity of number five he started back to the limber chest for a cartridge;

"There goes the last of those 'butter-milk' rangers back to the rear." True enough. The last squad of cavalry, which had been waiting down the pike suddenly moved off in the direction of College Grove. A solitary horseman came dashing towards us, and we soon discerned that he was a courier from some general's headquarters; probably Bragg's. He delivered his dispatch and was off in a minute. Bragg was not asleep this time. Even if he did lose his head (figuratively speaking) a few days later, as he was generally believed to have done, he was certainly with his command that day. We were ordered to do just what we were doing, fall back to College Grove as slowly as possible. In a big battle, a general engagement, the average private soldier has very little idea of what is really going on, in fact, no more than his horse does. Even brigadier generals have only a vague conception of the plans and tactics which the commanding general has imparted only to his trusted corps commanders. However, in a little affair such as I now speak of, the Lieutenant in charge of two guns found a sort of sense of relief in imparting his information to his two aides, via his sergeants. Therefore, Goldthwaite told the two non-commissioned officers, and Sergeant Ball, of our piece, gradually informed us of what was going on. If you were an old soldier you have probably guessed already that the commanding general had every reason to believe that the demonstration on the part of the enemy, was only a feint, so far as the pike was concerned; and that he was really massing his troops in front of Murfreesboro on the other prong of the "V".

All this time the weather continued utterly miserable, and we had not seen the sun for a single minute. The cold rain drizzled most of the time. We had been up all night, and it was now about nine o'clock in the morning, and still we had had no breakfast. We were almost in front of the residence, rather mansion, of Mr. Perkins, a rich and well known breeder of blooded horses and generally fine stock.

At that moment our acting commissary sergeant, with the three or four servants belonging to our command, took advantage of the first slackening of the rain, and the lull in the cannonading, to come up with our rations. From this time on, until we came within cheering

distance of the Army at College Grove, the attacks of the enemy came at longer and longer intervals and at longer range. I think we were about a mile and a half from the main body when we exchanged our last shot with them.

Circumstances force me to refer to a certain incident which I would have mentioned in the first of this reminiscence, but for fear of making it too long. However, I don't think this paper would be complete without it. In fact, to the average reader I suppose it will be the most interesting part of it. That is supposing my friends will be partial enough to consider any of it interesting.

Mr. Perkins was a man known throughout Tennessee, and beyond, as a breeder of thoroughbreds; not only horses, but cattle and sheep. Indeed, I believe he was more noted for his magnificent Alderneys and Gotswold sheep than for horses. Furthermore, he was rich and stood high socially. His residence, which was situated on a gentle eminence at least a quarter of a mile back from the pike, was just such a house as what used to be known in Montgomery, Alabama, as the Charles T. Pollard residence at Jefferson and Lawrence Streets. Also, there was the old Major Cowles mansion, afterwards used as offices by the Alabama Midland Railway Plant System.

Mr. Perkins' home was certainly a magnificent country residence for those days, and the appointments and arrangements within were equally as handsome and in keeping with the exterior. Apparently Mr. Perkins kept open house, at least at Christmas time, in the old Southern ante bellum style. His two young daughters had had three or four young ladies spending Christmas with them, and that particular year there was the unusual attraction of the presence of the Army of Tennessee. Mr. Perkins' beautiful home was about a mile and a half or two miles back from the little village of Triunne.

The greater part of the Army was at College Grove, while all of our battery and all of the Sixteenth Alabama Infantry were at Triunne. Captain Semple, though very strict in many respects, always allowed us to take our musical instruments along, even if something more important had to be left behind; and so large was the necessary equipment for our six-gun battery of twelve pounder Napoleons, working eight horses to each gun and six to each caisson, that I don't think any of his superior officers knew that he had a private two horse wagon for his mess all through the hardest campaigns. Thus, when we crossed the Tennessee River, at Chattanooga, in the summer of 1862, and started on the famous Kentucky Campaign, that "Martinet" Bragg issued an order to throw away all superfluous baggage. We were only allowed a change of under clothing and a [illegible] private soldier. Two or three violins and Joe Goode's banjo, not to mention so small an instrument as Armstrong's flute, went unchallenged throughout the trip in Semple's headquarters wagon.

A few days before Christmas my old friend, Joe Goode, of our battery came to me and proposed that we serenade the Perkins.

"For," he said, "I understand Mr. Perkins is a most hospitable gentleman, and a jolly good fellow besides, and we will be sure to get some of that Christmas Cheer". This was a perfectly proper remark coming from a soldier.

Under the circumstances when Goode proposed the serenade, all we had to do was wait for night. I suggested to Joe that we call on the Adjutant of the Sixteenth Alabama, invite him to join us, and thus get the brass band of the regiment to come along.

"In this way," I said, "so far as playing out on the lawn is concerned, we can give them a grand serenade.". No sooner said than done, and that night about ten o'clock, with the Sixteenth Band to play outside, and our stringed orchestra to play inside (that is, if we were invited inside), together with the Adjutant and two or three friends who did not play on anything except the "viands" (that Mr. Perkins afterwards dispensed of so hospitably). We stood on the lawn not far from the front entrance.

It is not my intention to relate here the incidents and recollections of that night, or enter the house, even in imagination. Many things happened that were pleasant, amusing, and even ridiculous, and they alone would form a chapter of reminiscences.

Suffice it to say that the band opened with a grand overture that routed the Gotswolds out of the "sheep cots" which lined the broad lawn on either side. Mr. Perkins came out and invited us in; and our stringed band had an opportunity of playing inside. We were served such refreshments as I never tasted at any time or place before or since. Thus it will be understood why some of us at least were more than willing to make a stand in front of Mr. Perkins' residence on that eventful morning, when we saw that the members of his family had not yet left for a place within our lines. Before we fell back from in front of his place we had the satisfaction of seeing Mr. Perkins drive out of his gate in something like a Germantown or covered wagonette, behind two high stepping nicktailed bays. The ladies were with him and had been preceded by two or three wagons. They waved their handkerchiefs as they turned down the pike and though our faces were black with powder stains, I think we were rather proud of their attentions.

That little incident cheered us up for a while, but the drizzle soon came on to dampen our ardor, and nothing very unusual occurred until we caught up with the main body of the Army. I do not think Mr. Perkins' mansion was damaged. It certainly was not bombarded by the shot or shell of either side, for it was too far back from the road, and the pike was too straight at that point for any such thing

to have happened accidentally. Therefore, if it was injured at all it was done wantonly. I have no reason to think that such was the case.

About three o'clock in the afternoon a prolonged cheer reached our ears, to which we tried to respond heartily, and soon our little squad that had been so contented at Triunne for three weeks, lost its identity in the body of the Army. Here we experienced such a feeling of disappointment as to almost make the best of us give up. When we joined the Army at College Grove, had dried ourselves by the fire, and had had something to eat, we expected to be able to at least lie down on some dry straw in a tent, and sleep for twenty-four hours. We hoped that no matter what was to be done, we, at least, would be off duty for that length of time.

Delusive hope! Already some of the brigade was in motion, and within an hour from the time that we halted at College Grove, we were off again; this time up the other fork of the "V" in the direction of Murfreesboro.

Now I wish to record one fact; for who can say that long after I am dead and gone, and when these pages are yellow from age, that the inexorable hand of fate may cast this manuscript into the hands of some of my descendents yet unborn — perhaps some grandchild. Therefore this night and day were among the most terrible and trying times I ever have experienced, and of all the heart-rending, depressing days and nights I have ever passed through, or expect to pass through, this, with the exception of one single night a few days later, was the most dreadful. I think it must have been the twenty-ninth of December, 1862. I am a little doubtful as to exact dates up to the thirty-first. I have not the slightest doubt as to that day, for if I had, history would corroborate me.

We left College Grove in the rain. Every hour it rained harder, and by nightfall it was pouring down. The road was full of water; everybody was drenched; generals, colonels, privates, even the horses that pulled the guns had a listless, despairing look as the rain streamed off their flanks. Still we plodded on without a word. It was cold, it is true, but not nearly so cold as it was a few nights later.

It was just as darkness was coming on, and we knew that we must soon bivouac somewhere. Our gun halted in front of the gates of a typical well-to-do Tennessee farmer's house. Every old soldier knows how it is when an army begins to make occasional short halts, particularly when about to go into camp for the night. One part of the army may be on top of a hill, while another part, a mile or two behind, may be down in a valley. One corps may be in a dense woods, while others in the rear may be in open fields.

Thus it happened, at the time I speak of, that our particular gun was immediately in front of this farmer's gate, and not more than ten steps from his door. In all my life I never saw a more inviting

picture than the one presented to our view through the windows of that farm house as we stood in the road in the drenching rain. A roaring fire of hickory and dry cedar blazed on the hearth. On one side sat a ruddy faced old Tennessee farmer, the picture of health. Opposite him sat his wife, while to complete the semi-circle his daughters sat between them and in front of the fire. They had tired of watching the wet soldiers march past, though they felt for them and pitied them, but they had gone inside to their comfortable fire.

"Charles", said my friend, Dan Frazer, as he walked up close to me, "let's go in there as soon as the battery moves on and see if they will let us stay all night. The company is bound to go into camp of some sort in a few minutes. There won't be any roll call on such a night as this, and as neither of us are riders and have no horse to attend to, we will never be missed."

"Give me your hand on that," I replied, "I am your man."

Remember, now, whoever you may be who chances to read these lines, that for twenty-four hours we had been in this rain, marching all day, with no sleep the night before, except such snatches as we could get lying down by the side of our guns in the rain. I have never done such a thing before, or since, and the temptation was very great. When the last of our guns passed the gate we walked boldly in, knowing that if the farmer would receive us we would have nothing to fear but the rear guard whose duty it was to look out for stragglers. Much of the Army was still behind us, and we had ample time to relate our tale of woe before they came up. We told the old people of our experiences of that day and the night before; how tired and wet we were, and asked them to let us spend the night there. It happened that the couple had had a son who had been killed or taken prisoner in one of the earlier battles of the same Western Army. It was probably Shiloh. Anyhow, their sympathies were entirely with us. Therefore, we were soon members of the comfortable family circle. They said they had heard our guns on the other "pike" all through the long dreadful night and did not know what it meant; or what to do. We felt so much at home before the rear guard came along that we told them of the risk we ran in being found in there, and they told us to run upstairs whenever it was necessary. There was a railing, which was really a wall about six feet high to those steps, and when the rear guard came in (for they could not resist the temptation of "warming" a while by such a fire), we ran up to the top of the stairs and took a seat until they had left.

I vividly recall the fact that the old man had killed some hogs a few days before, and we had spare ribs and sausages for supper that night. After this repast, and a few pipes smoked around that hospitable fireside, we were escorted upstairs to retire in an old-

fashioned Tennessee featherbed. Imagine it, if you can: If you have never passed through just such an experience as a night in the cold and rain, followed by the next night in a featherbed in which you have almost sank out of sight. If you have never been in our situation then you have no idea of the sensation produced.

The last thing we said to the old farmer as he left us was to impress upon him the necessity of awakening us at the first sign of day; and the last thought we had as we drifted off into a dreamless slumber was of the thousands of poor fellows lying out in it, from generals to privates. But I expect we two privates were the only ones in a featherbed that an emperor might have envied.

When we awoke in the morning the sun, though obscured by the clouds, was away up in the sky; in short, it was about nine o'clock, and we had slept for twelve hours! One hasty glance out the window showed not a soldier in sight, though we knew many of them must have camped quite near the house. Hurriedly we donned our clothes and rushed downstairs, where the family had long since finished their breakfast.

"Oh, my friends," I said, "Why did you not wake us up, as you promised?" We were sleeping so soundly, he told us, and he knew that we were tired, and he did not have the heart to disturb us.

"You were very kind," we said, "but we are in for it now."

Our breakfast was at the fire, but the fact that we did not even take time to put it into our haversacks is proof positive that we were in a desperate hurry. We started down the road, or rather up the road double quick, in a vain hope of overtaking the Army before it should make another halt. However, anyone who has ever tried it knows how difficult it is to overtake an Army, or any other party who has about three hours start, even traveling or marching at an ordinary speed.

After an hour or two of this forced marching we came up with two Irish infantry soldiers who were frying some sausage meat on a flat stone or piece of iron. They were separated from the road by a low stone wall, not more than two or three feet high.

"Hello," we called, "Have you got enough for two more?"

"Oh, yes," they said, "we can always divide with a soldier."

They had some hard tack (Army crackers) and some sausage meat I think they had gotten from our friends of the night before. We felt much better after we ate, and we all four started off together, but never overtook the army, and never saw our battery again until about three o'clock P.M. in line of battle with the rest of the Army. Thank heaven not a shot had yet been fired.

When we arrived on the outskirts of the little town of Murfreesboro, and just as we had crossed the railroad tracks, all four of us were arrested by the provost guard and taken before the provost marshal. Our two Irish friends seemed a little uneasy on the way to the marshal's office as to what would be done with us.

"Hold on," I said. "Let me be spokesman when we get there. The truth is the straightest way out of this matter." I said this because I naturally felt a desire to help our companions of the last few hours, and as I did not know where they had been or how long they had been there, and as I supposed the marshal would think we had all been together, I did not know what sort of a compromising tangle they might get us into if questioned. I promised to pull us all through if they would leave it to me, and they seemed much relieved.

Therefore, when we were marched into a room, which I presume had been "Police Headquarters" originally, had given our names, company, brigade, division and corps, we were ordered to give an account of ourselves ,and state why we were not with our command at that important time. I proceeded, in as few words as possible, to impress upon the marshal the trying ordeal through which a handful of us had passed for the twenty-four hours just preceding our night at the farm house; how worn out and drenched with rain, we could not resist the temptation of stopping at the farm house. We thought that the Army would camp in sight of us, and we trusted the old man to awaken us at dawn. I wound up by saying that we could not bear to think of the battle opening without our being with our command, and only asked the privilege of being sent there as speedily as possible. It only remained for us to remind him that we belonged to Semple's battery, of Hardee's corps, to which, fortunately, the marshal himself was attached. So the guard was ordered to show us the direction in which to go to find our own company.

We did not get off so easily, for when we reported there our tale of woe wasn't worth a cent, because there were others including Lieutenant Goldthwaite himself, who had been through the same ordeal. We were informed that we would be placed on extra guard duty every other night for a week; that was to say, two hours on and four off, and that we would not be excused from duty the day following as the fight was anticipated. We could entertain ourselves during the hours of daylight by taking charge of the sore-back and disabled horses of which there were always several. We were to lead them whenever we should move.

However, that was one order that was never carried out beyond the first night. We had no idea of what a terrible battle fate had in store for us. It is said now by historians to have been one of the hardest fought of the whole war, in which the percentage of death

was as great, if not greater, than any other. As to standing guard, I was so deaf from acting number "4" at our gun (the man who pulls the lanyard, or in other words, fires the cannon), that I would have been useless as a sentinel, even if any save those on the picket lines or skirmish lines had been needed. The time came soon enough to look after the sore-backs and disabled horses, as there were plenty to care for.

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon when we joined the boys again and heard them tell how on the night before, they had to place two fence rails side by side and put their oil cloths or blankets folded double to keep their backs out of the water. Just think that Dan Frazer and I were out of sight in our featherbed only a few hundred yards away. Think of the comparison; think of what comfort and what suffering can be so near together and yet so far apart. Go even further and compare it to everyday life, and try to realize how very near and yet how very far regal luxury may be from the most abject poverty and suffering. One thing army life had done for me; it had enabled me to know how one could suffer from hunger and cold, and it made me more thankful and appreciative. I never get into a comfortable bed on a bitter cold night but that I have a feeling of unfeigned thankfulness for what I have and one of sincere compassion for those who "have not".

There is one incident that I recall very vividly, on the morning of December thirtieth, or was it the thirty-first? Anyway, it was the morning of the first day's fight.

Henry Watterson, since noted all over the United States of America as editor of the Louisville Courier-Journal, was then publishing a little paper called "The Rebel".

It was a saucy, daring little sheet, and followed the Army in the field. At that time it was being published at Murfreesboro, and on the very day of battle, before the sun was up, the newsboys were crying it along the line. Of course this was before the "ball" had opened.

One little squib I remembered was this: "They say the Yankees have greenbacks — let our brave boys find out today." Least some unkind critic should interpret this as an invitation or hint to rob dead Yankees, I will say here that the play of words simply meant that we should literally see their backs by routing them.

I have wondered how Watterson, after being as devoted to the cause as he appeared to be, could say in the Century (or some other prominent magazine) that we never defeated the Federals, especially when they had more men than we had, was more than I could comprehend. It was a well known fact that frequently we defeated two to our one, and to be perfectly just and fair, I expect there was occasion

when they defeated us with the odds in their favor. However, Colonel Watterson said that we were so exactly and evenly matched that the side that had the smaller army were invariably whipped, which places generalship at a discount. That would be equivalent to saying that we were always whipped. Statistics show beyond a doubt that there was scarcely ever a time when the Federal Army did not at least double ours in number of men, not to mention superior guns and other equipment.

It is not my intention to even attempt any description of the terrible, stubbornly fought Battle of Murfreesboro, called by the Federals, and since known in history as the "Battle of Stone River." It was fought in mid-winter from the morning of the thirty-first of December, 1862, until the night of either January third or fourth, 1863. We halted at Estelle Springs after Bragg's unnecessary and ignominous retreat. The battle really ended with Breckenridge's terrible and unfortunate charge late in the afternoon of January second. The weather was simply awful, for either it was freezing or pouring down rain, or cold and raining, or, at the best, lowering and gloomy. I do not recall seeing the sun during any of the time mentioned.

There were two or three incidents of a personal nature, however, that I will put on record here, as it seems that I am bound to do.

Our battery was divided, either because it was too big to be handled successfully as one company, or because our Napoleon guns were too invaluable to be used entirely in any one division. Whatever the reason was, the fact remains that Comanche Robinson, who commanded the only other twelve pounder Napoleon battery, and ours (Semple's), were never even operated in the same wing of the Army. We knew each other literally by hearsay, and when either battery heard the guns of the other off in a distant part of the field, we felt a kind of sympathetic thrill tingle in our veins, and knew it meant business. In big artillery duels, when all the guns of the corps, or even more, would be massed in one place, probably fifty or more pieces in one continuous line, we had often hoped that Robinson's battery and ours might be side by side, but it never happened. We would probably hear Comanche, but that was all.

On two former occasions, Lieutenant Goldthwaite's section of two guns were detached from the other four, as we had been throughout our pleasant sojourn at Triunne. On the afternoon of January second our being accidentally in that same shape relieved us of taking part in Breckenridge's terrible charge. I say accidentally, because in the first day's fight on December thirty-first, Lieutenant Fitzpatrick, with the first, or right section, had been detached, while the Captain with the other four guns, and the Lieutenants, were together. I think if Semple had had any idea of the terrible ordeal through which he was doomed to pass on that eventful afternoon, he would have wanted

Goldthwaite with him. In that change one of our guns (Sergeant Frank Randolph's) was lost, captured; and after that we were made a four gun battery. That was not to degrade us, but because it was really too big to be handled successfully as one company; and sadder still, because the gun was not the only thing lost. We had lost men, good men, and especially Lieutenant Joe Pollard, as gallant a young officer as ever drew a sabre. We had only men enough to man a four gun battery, and our complement of officers was just right. From that time to the end they fought together. But back to the incidents of which I speak.

It was quite early on the morning of December thirty-first and the infantry firing had become really serious, when Semple was ordered, with four guns (ours among them), to take position in a kind of Earth Works about a quarter of a mile to the front. It semed to us that it was immediately in line with the infantry, though the the fire of the enemy did not appear to be in that direction. As soon as our guns were in position we were served all around with a good stiff drink of Tennessee whisky. Charley Holt, who did not want his just then, placed his tin cup containing the drink on top of the earth-works and took his seat in the corner of the fort. He said that he would leave the cup there until he wanted it. He said that he would need it a good deal more a little later on. I will never forget the consternation depicted on Holt's face a few minutes later when a solid shot from one of the enemy's guns struck the cup. That was the first shot that had been fired in our direction since we had taken our positions by our guns. That cup was right above Holt's head, and the only evidence we had as to what had become of it was the fragments of dust and earth which fell on Holt. It disappeared so suddenly that the whisky did not appear even to be spilled, nor was the cup ever seen again.

Holt was too dazed to say or do anything for a while but stare in a sort of helpless, though ludicrous condition, while our sergeant, Ball, remarked that that fellow was a gunner from "away-back." There was no time now to think of Holt's whisky. A moment later a genuine "Rebel Yell" arose on our left; the enemy's artillery thundered with redoubled fury for a few minutes, while the rattle of musketry was like the oft told canebrake on fire. Then, like the wolf on the fold, a solid division of infantry (Cheatham's) swept down upon the Yankees, carrying everything before them. It was a grand and beautiful sight, but they went diagonally across our front, and we were afraid to fire; otherwise, as was remarked at the time, we could have "moved them up" as they fell back rather orderly. Suffice it then to say that we were at once ordered to move forward, which we did across an open cornfield; and at the risk of being a greater "bore" than ever. Soon we discovered that we were placed in our new positions to stay at all hazards, and we were told that we were to hold the fort no matter what happened.

Our new position, which was some distance to the front and still further to the right, consisted of a kind of earth works which may have been a Federal redout that our troops had taken from the enemy earlier in the morning. However, the ditch was on the inside as we approached it, resembling rifle pits. At the same time the ditch was just right for artillery occupying it on the other side, for it would have been the outside to a Yankee battery. One thing was certain, the sappers and miners had been there. I believe they were there when we movd up, as small pits or holes were sunk in the ground about twenty-five or thirty feet back from the earth work. One pit was immediately behind each gun. The limber chests which contained the ammunition were taken off and let down into these holes and all the riders and horses, including the complete caissons, were sent back at least a half mile or more to the rear. They were to take shelter behind a regular precipice of rock thirty feet high, about one fourth mile long and with a wall as steep as the side of a house.

We were there to stay, and the gallant Kentuckians were on their feet to bear their part of the contest, which never came. Every time they dared so near the order was the same, "Double charge with canister." The Kentuckians were on their feet advisedly for all ordeals through which a soldier is called to pass. There is nothing so trying as to stand up and be shot at without the privilege of taking a part in it. They did stand up, twenty-five or thirty feet to our rear too, until ordered to lie down; as they were being picked off by hidden sharpshooters. For a long time we did not know where these sharpshooters were until our officers asked the Colonel of the Kentuckians to let his men stay in the inside ditch. These sharpshooters had succeeded in concealing themselves securely in the tops of the leafless trees, but they were discovered by someone who accidentally noticed a white puff of smoke from the top of a tree simultaneously with the falling over of an infantryman. The infantryman had stood too high to watch the effect of our shot upon a slightly demoralized Federal battery which was trying to take position upon the opposite hill.

Every old soldier knows that sharpshooters in both armies were often daring and would creep up while a battery was engaged in concentrating their fire in another direction. They would conceal themselves in some place of vantage and pick off the most conspicuous looking men, officers, or possibly a general, if they were seen. For special occasions men would be selected who were noted for nerve as well as for marksmanship. When we felt sure that a sharpshooter was in a certain tree, we trained a gun on the tree and exploded a shell on the second shot right in the middle of the branches. Whatever become of that sharpshooter we never knew. He may have come down at the first shot, or he may have been blown to pieces, but a sharpshooter takes those chances. It is certain that this particular one troubled us no longer.

There are two other incidents which I must record, as they occurred on the first day's fight of December thirty-first, 1862.

The first one, relating to myself personally, I might consider a compliment, though honestly I have never viewed it that way. I think I was selected because I was a lightweight, and because I was considered a good horseman and a fast rider.

The limber chests were sunken in the ground below the level of the earth, so that number six, the fuse cutter in charge of the ammunition, sat behind the chest, but facing the front, which was completely safe. After quite a lively artillery duel in the early afternoon we ran short of certain kinds of ammunition. Lieutenant Goldthwaite beckoned to me. "Will," he said, "I want you to take my horse and go for two caissons as quickly as possible. I know it is risky, but when you mount, ride for it. Make a quick dash. You can ride Indian fashion anyhow."

I confess I did not fancy it much, though I felt somewhat complimented. To get on a horse, when everyone else who could was hugging the ground, and ride across an open cornfield was not a pleasant reflection. It was a probable target for sharpshooters, not to mention reflection. I was a probable target for sharpshooters, not to mention thousands of stray bullets and bursting shells.

The horse, "Gelim" was standing in the ditch at the lower end of the battey, tied to a stake and trembling in object terror. He showed every sign of pleasure at my approach, and when I led him out of the ditch he seemed delighted at having a companion so near. When I mounted a shell exploded high in the air over our heads. He squatted so low that it was with difficulty that he regained his natural upright position. He seemed to be trying to hug the earth as he had seen the men doing, and when the bullets would strike the dry standing cornstalks he seemed to be completely demoralized. It was a demoralizing situation for me, too.

I confess, it would not have been so trying had there been several of us along, but to be alone it was much worse. We had just spotted one sharpshooter up a tree, and I did not know but that I was a target for one or more of them. The horse squatted every minute, and when a bomb would explode he would almost get down on the ground. Soon I dismounted and led him, being careful to keep his body between myself and the Yankee bullets. In short, I tacked across the field, like a ship at sea, using the horse as a traveling breastwork. He was so afraid that I would leave him that it was with great difficulty that I kept him from stepping on my feet.

At length I reached the caissons where our boys, as well as some from other batteries, were actually lying around laughing and talking. I think I have intimated before that all things were pleasant or unpleasant by comparison, and I have referred to the boys in their wet

and gloomy tents, while a few of us sat around old man Beasley's fireside and sipped egg nog. I have also said that the most delightful and inviting picture I ever saw was through the window of the farm house, as we stood in the cold and rain the night before we reached Murfreesboro. But if things are agreeable or pleasant by comparison, then that place and scene was the most delightful in my recollection. They were secure behind the ledge of rock, and the noise of battle seemed far away. The colored servants who belonged to the battery were quietly cooking as if with a wagon train, and even my man Jim, the biggest coward I think I have ever seen, seemed contented.

I delivered my orders to Lieutenant Pollard, who by virtue of his position as commandant of caissons, was in charge. Poor fellow. Just two days later he was killed in the terrible "Charge of Breckenridge". He died after a double operation, having a leg and arm amputated.

Two caissons, each in charge of a corporal, started at once; the orders being that as soon as they reached the top of the hill to drive under whip and spur until they reached the fort. When they left I could not resist the temptation to stop there for a moment to draw a long breath and pull myself together. For a minute the thought came into my mind that I had not been told to go back; that it was getting late in the afternoon, and I never would be missed up there; furthermore, I was fast becoming so deaf from firing 12 pounders that I could scarcely hear. But thank heaven the thought was only for a minute. I mounted my horse and rode to the top of the bluff, and then realized that I had made a mistake in not going on with the caissons, for to have dashed across the field would have been exciting, and therefore, not so trying. Perhaps there would have been some sort of eclat in apparently galloping up in charge of a relief corps. As it was, I tracked back as I had come and met the caisson party about halfway tearing back to the fort. I was fortunate enough to get back to the line just a few minutes before the enemy made their last attempt to dislodge us from our positions. A terrific bombardment commenced which lasted until darkness put an end to it, and none too soon. They had shot the top off the breastworks until it scarcely protected us. If the caissons had not arrived when they did we might have run out of ammunition completely. We would have to perform the humiliating task of surrendering the guns, as we had no horses with which to haul them away.

The other little incident connected with this day's fight had nothing whatever to do with the battle proper, but referred to that night.

It had been gloomy and cloudy all day; not one ray of sunshine, and as night came on it grew colder every minute. Of course, we could have no fire, neither could the Yankees. A fire would reveal our lines and our position, giving sharpshooters a chance to pick us off, or even to be charged or surrounded and captured by a larger body. We gathered dry cornstalks and lined the bottom of the ditch

with them for our beds. It was just wide enough after that for two of us to lie down side by side. Of course, there was not room enough in the ditch for all of us, including the Kentucky regiment. Bob Hails and I put one of our blankets on the ground to lie on, and covered with the other. In the dead of night I was aroused by a big, fat man, lying down between and on top of us. It was simply impossible for three to pack in there side by side.

"Get off us," I said. "Get off," said Bob, "or I'll stick a knife in you." The fat man had no idea of moving, that is, during the hours of darkness. Strange is it may seem, he kept us so warm that we let him remain. Until this day I have no idea who he was.

That night was a cold one, and a miserable one, but the most terrible night in my memory was yet to come.

The first sign of day we were aroused, and had expected that the only reveille we would hear would be the bursting of a bomb over our heads as soon as the Yankees could see our lines. But when we sprang to our feet not a Yankee was to be seen in our front as far as the eye could see. That night was fearfully cold, though we had slept comfortably. I saw several blankets under which the men had slept which were actually frozen so stiff that they stood out like dry cowhides. They had to be mashed to be folded or rolled up. This, as I have said, was not the coldest night, but at the time I thought none could be colder.

It had been an awful battle on Stone River on this the last day of the memorable year 1862. It was much more terrible in some parts of the field than in our front. There were instances where whole divisions of infantry from each side had met in the most stubborn and terrible hand to hand encounters ever witnessed. The death rate was simply appalling. The rattle of musketry was made more dreadful by the incessant boom boom of artillery which had grown into one sullen roar, terrible beyond description. Those near and not engaged in the fight felt, as one of our batterymen expressed it: "It was as if your soul was going out of your body through your mouth, and it would be a relief for the enemy to charge you or open fire on you, so that you might not hear it." A war correspondent who said on viewing the ground a little later that the sight had made him sick. He remarked at the time to the corps commander with whom he was standing:

"My God! General, is there no way to stop this butchery?"

True, several batteries had been taken and retaken amidst the terrible carnage on both sides, while our battery, which had been placed to protect the right wing of the Army, should it be "flanked", was in the same spot as on the previous morning. Whether it was because our Napoleons were so terribly effective at long range, or if they had been handled in a superior manner, or if it was just luck, I don't pretend to say.

On that New Year's day there was scarcely a gun fired. I don't remember even hearing a rifle shot, though the two armies lay fronting each other. If it was so far, a drawn battle, or if it had been so terrible that both commanders were dazed, and willing each for the other to resume, or if an armistice had been agreed upon in order to bury the dead, I do not know. If for the latter reason, it was very imperfectly done, for many a poor Federal soldier who fell upon ground now held by our troops, was never buried, unless it was done several days later; and then it is doubtful if they could be found. We could not bury them; it was as much as we could do to bury our own, and I hope that none of our men suffered the fate that I knew befell many a poor fellow on the other side. Still, I have been told by visitors to Murfreesboro since the war, and by others passing through there by railroad, that the quiet city of the dead on the hillsides spoke more forcibly than words of the terrible "carnival of blood" once enacted there. It verified the statement of a noted and impartial historian and statistician that the percentage killed at Stone River was probably greater than in any other battle of the war.

Early on that particular morning we were ordered to move. We went back to our first position of the day before, and then to a turnpike beyond where we were joined by the other two guns of our battery and were glad to be together again. This was certainly an important road; a broad, magnificent turnpike which led to Lebanon, or straight to Triunne. We went on that road to the left (West) for about a mile and halted for some little time by the side of a dense cedar thicket to our right and North of the pike. Here I saw a sight that I have never seen before, and which I hope I never see again.

The cedar thicket was about fifty yards from the road. There was no fence on either side, but a few oaks scattered between the road and the cedars served as a natural barrier. In summer they would have been a beautiful little grove. It was a raw, cold, gloomy day under any circumstances, but rendered a hundred fold more so by the dreadful battle of the day before, by which there was scarcely a "Mess" in the whole army that did not mourn a comrade. Maybe a son or father, or more often a brother. Up and down the roadside as far as the eye could see, and in the cedar thicket lay the dead bodies of the Yankees, so close together that one could have walked for at least a half a mile without putting his foot on the ground, but could have stepped from body to body.

Some few had survived the cold of the previous night and were still alive, while to add to the horror of the situation, hogs had already attacked some of the bodies. Among the many Confederate infantry regiments engaged that day before in this part of the field was the Thirty-Fourth Alabama. It was commanded by my friend and the uncle of my wife, Colonel J. C. B. Mitchell. The cedars where the hottest of the battle began were so dense that the Colonel, as well as

many other field officers, had dismounted and left their horses in care of an orderly. In the excitement of the charge Colonel Mitchell had gone away ahead of his men, and when the order was given to fall back for fear of being cut off or flanked, he was almost exhausted, as he was a large stout man. Viewing the situation, Charles McDade, of his command, (Young Charles, he was called then), offered the Colonel a back ride, and insisted on his taking it.

"You'll be taken prisoner, Colonel, if you don't get away from here in a hurry," said McDade; and it is authoritatively stated that the Colonel did get back with his command mounted on the back of the young giant, McDade.

A most touching little incident occurred while we had halted by the cedar thicket which I have never been able to relate without tears coming unbidden to my eyes. Lying on the roadside, not more than ten steps from the pike, with his head propped up by his knapsack, his blue overcoat buttoned up close to his neck, and on his head a nobby smoking cap (knit perhaps by his sweetheart in the far away North), was a young man of nineteen or twenty upon whose features death had placed its imprint. A more refined face I have never seen, as he lay there dying, far away from home in a strange land, with not a comrade, not even a generous foe, to soothe him in his last moments. He laid there with his big brown eyes looking straight at us half pleading with an expression, though not defiant by any means, still with a resolution to die like a man. I have said there was not a generous foe to soothe him, but there was one close at hand. Perhaps the counterpart of the one he may have prayed for in the quiet solemn watches of the long night before, one who with all his faults may one day say: "Lord when saw I thee sick, or naked, or hungry, or in prison and ministered unto thee?" And the welcome answer, all have been thrilled at hearing, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Big hearted Bob Lide, surgeon of our battery, and my friend, had ridden up on his gray pony, and when he had reached the spot where I sat on my horse, stopped to have a chat with me. But the moment he saw that young soldier he was off his horse, and in an instant was kneeling by his side. His experienced professional eye took in the situation at a glance, while his big heart overflowed with the gentle sympathy of a woman. Thrusting one arm behind his neck, he raised the boy up a little so as to support him on his knee.

"Don't be afraid of me or of my gray coat," he said in the kindest tone. "I am a surgeon and it is my business to relieve you if I can." "Furthermore," he continued, "I am a man and a brother in such cases as these and Blue and Gray are all one to me." Though the young man was perfectly in his senses, no one knew better than Bob Lide that the boy was dying. "Here, take a little of this," Bob said

as he placed a canteen of whisky to the boy's lips. "Now, is there anything I can do for you; anything you would like to say to me?" He saw that the young soldier was fast passing away, as Dickens put it, "the roll of the muffled drums was in his ears."

"If you could tell them at home that you saw me," the young man began, "that you were with me, that you, — if you, — if — " Bob laid him gently down, straightened his limbs with one hand, thrust into his breast, the other by his side; he pulled the overcoat around the boy and then with his own face turned away from us, as if to conceal his emotions, he mounted his horse and without a word rode down the pike. What more could he do? There were five hundred dead men in sight, and yet, strange is it may seem, though perfectly natural, the young soldier dying a stranger in a strange land, had affected him more than all the rest of them.

We were soon ordered to move on again, and that afternoon found ourselves back to the right again, our horses picketed to the wheels of the guns, and the men sat around quietly talking for the first time in nearly forty-eight hours. The calm before the dreadful story of shot and shell.

I have said that I do not remember a single shot being fired on this New Year's day, neither do I remember hearing one on the next day until two o'clock in the afternoon. However, on the night of January 1st, 1863, a council of war was being held at Bragg's headquarters tent. This event has not only passed into history as a meeting of great importance, but has been the subject of much controversy between generals of both sides in magazine articles ever since.

Exactly what occurred will never be known. If Bragg was alone to blame for what happened the following afternoon, or if he was over-persuaded by his generals, and thus attached the blame to others, or if no one was to blame because it was fate, is also something which will probably never be positively known. Of one thing we were certain: it was decided that the Yankees should be charged in their position the following afternoon, and it was also decided, by his own request, that General Breckenridge should make the charge with his division alone, and other commands to contribute men enough to fill his ranks, depleted from losses the day before. Among others so assigned to duty with him were four guns of our battery. As usual, when two of our guns were to be detached from the whole, Goldthwaite's was selected. And thus it happened that the section to which I belonged was not in that fatal charge; an incident to which I probably owe my life.

At two o'clock in the afternoon of January 2nd, 1863, everything was in readiness. The troops moved to the appointed rendezvous with alacrity; for although they did not know the daring attempt they were about to make, they had learned of the utter demoralization of

McCook's Corps in the first day's fight. They found out that the only reason the entire Yankee Army had not been routed after the fearful slaughter in the dense cedar thicket was that in their retreat they had gotten into the deep railroad cut with an embankment six to eight feet deep. Behind that splendid breastworks, they had been "rallied". It was impossible to dislodge them with the force then at our command. That could account for the quiet inaction of the enemy for nearly two days, and now that they were in the aggressive, they thought they had them whipped and felt flushed with victory already.

At four o'clock the signal gun was fired. Instantly the men pressed forward, artillery moving along with infantry. The first line of Yankee troops stood firm a while, then gave away and fell back in apparent confusion. On, on, pressed the unsuspecting Confederates, ready for the rout which they looked for every minute. Suddenly, without one note of warning, and with the precision of clock work, ten thousand regulars arose as if from the depths of the earth, and with fifty pieces of artillery in ambush to assist them, poured a murderous fire into the Confederate ranks. Such cannonading I never heard before. The rest of the army, all of us who were not engaged, though many thousands of us might have been there to assist our comrades, listened in awe. We knew from the incessant booming of cannon, so rapid as to resemble the roaring of some dreadful beasts, and the rattle of musketry that sounded like one continuous blast, that a terrible battle was going on. Inasmuch as no more troops were rushed to their assistance, no reinforcements were asked for, we could only think that our own troops were carrying everything before them.

Men fought like devils incarnate. Hand to hand conflicts were common. Infantry and artillery mixed and mingled together. Men were knocked down with artillery hand pikes. On our side heroes were made and un-made in one brief half hour. They could not understand that they were whipped; caught like rats in a trap.

After having seen what had taken place that day we were certain that the suspicions we had before hand were confirmed. Another thing, if the most reliable information gathered years afterwards was to be trusted, we were also certain that while the conference before mentioned was taking place in General Bragg's tent, a daring and dangerous spy for Yankee gold in the service of General Bragg was operating well for our enemy. The spy, under cover of the intense darkness of the night, and falling rain, was standing behind Bragg's tent within a few feet of his back. It was between nine and ten o'clock in the evening. By midnight he had crossed Stone River, which was swollen from turbulent rains, to General Rosencrans' headquarters with all the information necessary that Bragg was afraid to entrust to any, save his most confidential lieutenants. That accounts for the fearful slaughter of the following afternoon.

Ah, if the charge had only been made at daylight, or sunrise, before the enemy's engineers and sappers and miners had had time to prepare rifle pits for infantry, and ambuscades for artillery. The proof of the damnable spy's assertions, made years afterwards that he was behind Bragg's tent the night previous to this unforgotten charge is here; the Yankees knew the very ground over which Breckenrdige proposed to charge, and had their troops, infantry and artillery concealed exactly where they wanted them; in rifle pits and ambuscades which they had prepared since daylight, and they knew the very hour in which to expect us. Our signal gun was their's.

I recall a coincidence often mentioned in the battery shortly after this charge. There were with the four guns engaged in it, forty-four privates. Of course, with officers and non-commissioned officers, there were twelve more; but of cannoneers and riders actually engaged, there were forty-four. They were in the fight forty-four minutes, and came out twenty-two short. In other words, they lost a man every two minutes. Their loss was exactly one half of the privates engaged, or about two fifths of the whole number. They had exactly as many privates engaged as there were minutes consumed in the engagement. All were either killed or so badly wounded as to fall into the hands of the enemy, with two notable exceptions; one of whom was Lieutenant Joe Pollard, wounded in the left leg and arm. He died that night. The other was Private Riley, literally shot into by a solid shot from a six pounder rifle gun. Those two poor fellows were brought off the field in the ambulance — one was dead, and the other mortally wounded. Others not nearly so badly wounded went to Yankee prisons from which they did not return for at least a year. In attempting to bury poor Riley, while —

> "No useless coffin enclosed his breast,
> Nor in sheet nor in shroud we wound him."

Covering him in a simple Confederate gray overcoat, the men stood around the quickly made grave; their faces were all powder stained, save where a tear trickled down, and left a whiter furrow. Scenes like this were more touching than when men were falling thick and fast as autumn leaves around you.

> "Go watch the foremost rank in danger's dark career,
> Be sure the hand most daring there has wiped away a tear."

While the men were standing around the grave in the gloom of the fast approaching winter night, the little group was spied by a Yankee battery on a neighboring elevation. The battery began at once to pour shot and shell into their midst, thus barely giving them time to complete their sorrowful task.

I can never forget the depression that took possession of our hearts that night. It was nearly dusk when the troops retired from the field. The top of the battery ambulance in which were poor Lieutenant Pollard and Riley, was actually shot off in the attempt of Surgeon Bob Lide to bring them from the scene of action. Rain began to pour steadily soon after we got into bivouac, and the quietness that followed so soon after the terrific cannonading and musketry was particularly depressing. About nine or ten o'clock that night we heard that Joe Pollard was dead.

For years I was under the impression that we began our retreat from Murfreesboro the night of January 2nd, but in conversation a few days since with my old friend and companion in arms, Tom Raoul, I find that it was instead on Friday night, around seven or eight o'clock that we went into bivouac. All day Saturday we remained in that unsettled mood, not knowing what to expect, and between nine and ten o'clock on that memorable Saturday night, in a drenching rain, we began our historic retreat from Murfreesboro.

At that juncture occurred one of the most remarkable events I expect that was ever recorded in the military annals of our country. It was a remarkable coincidence which we could not begin to fathom when we ascertained the truth of it a short time afterwards. It was in short, a mystery which was only fully explained years later in the confessions of the ubiquitous and infernal spy previously referred to. The facts, as presented at that time, were simply as follows: Bragg, as stated, began to retreat from one side of Stone River at about ten o'clock Saturday night. An hour earlier, say nine o'clock, Rosencranz was in full retreat from the other. Under cover of an intensely dark and rainy night, and with a partly frozen river between them, Rosencranz thought, to get away without Bragg knowing it in time to harrass him. There they were, two great armies scooting away in opposite directions, each retreating from the other. Had it not been too dark to see, we would have witnessed a spectacle equal to the opera Boufe. But as we were wont to say at the time, "mark the difference in the two generals". Rosencranz, though in retreat an hour before Bragg started, found out that Bragg was retreating, and turned and pursued him; and followed him far enough to convince Bragg that he was whipped. However, as a matter of fact, Rosencranz worsted even as it was, up to the time of Breckenridge's charge, was as badly defeated as a general could be without being actually routed and pursued from the field. But probably I should say it was unfortunate in as much as Rosencranz knew all about it in advance.

How did Rosencranz, on a dark and stormy night, in full retreat a full hour before Bragg, discover Bragg's movements? The spy said that under instructions from Rosencranz, he crossed Stone River partly frozen over, into Bragg's lines, to ascertain if Bragg was preparing to follow Rosencranz. He remained there long enough to assure himself

that Bragg was preparing not to follow Rosencranz, but under cover of the darkness, and the storm, to evacuate Murfreesboro himself. The spy hastily recrossed the river, getting out of the lines with difficulty, overtook Rosencranz, who marched back as he had stated. The fact in the case bears out this statement.

And now I come to the night which I have referred to as the most terrible night I ever passed through. The following night may have been colder, for the thermometer may have registered several degrees lower. It was one of those still nights, no wind nor rain, and the whole earth was frozen hard. We were still, too, in bivouac without tents, but we had had the privilege of lying down or sitting by the fire, as we preferred. On that Saturday night, no man who was there and lived to get through it, will ever forget it. We left Murfreesboro at about nine-thirty in a pouring rain. I was riding next to the lead in our gun, where I had been riding since the first day's fight. The wagon train, of course, had gone on in front, and the turnpike from incessant rain and the excessive travel of marching and counter marching of the army, with artillery as well as wagons, was cut up until it was worse than no road at all.

There was much suffering that night among the infantry, and in as much as it was possible for human nature to forget their own troubles in such a trying time, we, of the artillery, forgot ours. The riders were mounted, though it was colder riding, and the cannoneers were allowed at very bad places in the road, to mount the limber chests and caissons, though it was all the horses could do to pull them. The poor infantry, many without shoes; many with their shoes worn out, had their feet cut badly by uneven stones. Many gave out and dropped down by the wayside to die, probably to freeze to death.

All night long we marched through the rain. "Tramp, tramp, tramp the boys are marching," may sound very stirring and soul inspiring when sung on the stage, but under such circumstances it was soul depressing and soul harrowing. The pomp and pride and circumstances of war was all knocked out of it.

I mentioned once before, I think, that a soldier could laugh and be gay sometimes under almost any conditions. It is a sort of safety valve for them, and I was in exceptionally good spirits. This is how it came about.

Just about daylight on that gloomy Sunday morning, when we had halted for a few moments for some purpose, Enoch, the body servant of Lieutenant Fitzpatrick, came up to me as I sat listlessly on my horse. He slyly touched the canteen by his side in a significant manner, and said in low tone of voice: "Mr. Charles, don't you want a drink of Tennessee whisky?" "Great Scott," I cried, brightening up in a second, "How much?", for I knew he had it for sale. He produced a capbox, one of those tin boxes intended to contain two hundred fifty waterproof caps,

and which would hold about a good sized wine glass full of whisky, and replied: "A dollar a drink." I just had one five dollar bill in my pocket . I handed him that, and ignoring his cap box, said, "Give me the canteen." He did so, and I turned it up to my mouth and drank, I expect, nearly a whole tumbler full. I have often said to him since the war, as I have given him a dime in better money, to treat himself with: "Enoch, I believe you saved my life on that Sunday morning on the retreat from Murfreesboro to Estelle Springs."

Shortly after this, I expect about sunrise, for it was cloudy and lowering, and we couldn't see the sun, we halted again, this time to eat what little rations we had. Our battery happened to be in front of a farmhouse, and our gun immediately before the gate. The farmer, a comparatively young man, came out to look at us, and after talking awhile, leaning his chin over his gate, said: "I will fill anyone's sack with apples for a quarter." Now, I had a bed-tick, as they were called then, which my mother had made for me when I entered the service and which I had carried with me all through the campaigns. It had a flap, buttons and holes at the top, so that the straw or hay it contained could be emptied out when not in use, and the tick easily carried under the saddle. I had an extra blanket under my saddle, thus Ben Taylor, a cousin of mine who rode the wheel horses of our gun, had my tick under his saddle. Ben had also had a pull at Enoch's canteen and concluded that he would do something funny. He said to the man, as he dismounted from his horse, "Did you say you would fill any sack for a quarter?" "Yes," replied the man, that's what I said." "All right," exclaimed Ben as he took the tick from beneath his saddle, and unfolded it in the road. "Then fill this one." As he spread it out on the ground about 7 feet long and about 5 feet wide, the boys all began to laugh and the Tennessean had the dry grins; but only for a minute, he recovered himself and took the tick and started back to his house. "Fill it full," cried Ben after the farmer, "that's the contract, you know." The boys laughed again, and so did the Tennessean this time, moreso than anyone else, and in a way I did not fancy, even then. The man went to the front door, tossed the tick into the house, and quietly took his seat on his piazza.

"Cousin Ben," I said, "that fellow may think it a good joke, but just at present it is a very serious one with me. He is not going to bring that tick back, and he knows as everyone else in this part of Tennessee does, how stringent Bragg's orders are in regard to entering any man's house or yard without the owner's permission. I would not take anything for that tick, not only on account of its usefulness, but because it was the last thing my mother made for me before I left home. "Hey, old man!" shouted Ben, "See here, we are not going to stay here all day; bring out the apples." The man only laughed.

"Look here," said Ben, "if you don't intend to stick to your bargain about the apples, you can at least bring the bag back." The man

laughed again. "Don't steal the bag," shouted Ben, "When you know you have the advantage of me and I can't come in there and snatch you over those bannisters," he continued, now thoroughly mad. The boys now all began to laugh at Ben, in which the Tennessean joined. "See here, my friend," I called out in as conciliatory a tone as I could command, "that tick does not belong to the man who handed it to you; it's mine, and I need it badly. So just pitch it over the fence, will you?"

"I haven't any contract with anybody but that big man with the sandy whiskers," said the Tennessee farmer. That was too much. for Ben, who was really fine looking when shaved up, was rather vain of his personal appearance. "Yes," shouted he, "if you will only come out here in the road, this big man with the sandy whiskers will give you the worst whipping that ever an infernal mossback carried home." "Mossback" was a term applied to "stay at home" men during the war; and it implied that they had lain out in the woods to avoid conscription. Just then we were ordered to move forward. Ben shook his fist at the fellow and called him an infernal thief; but the last we saw of him he was standing on the top step of his house, his thumb on the end of his nose, while he wiggled his fingers after the manner of the street small boy, the world over. Of course, that was the end of my bed tick.

All day Sunday we marched along. The rain had ceased, but we never saw the sun, and the weather was growing colder every minute. Towards nightfall we reached Estelle Springs, then no sort of a place at all, though of later years I have seen it advertised as a summer resort. It was so cold lying on the frozen ground, that the only way we could sleep, tired as we were, was to build a big fire and after the ground had become warm, move the fire and make our pallet on the spot. Our servants, Bob Hails' and my own, did not lie down at all, but nodded around the fire. Therefore, when the ground would become so cold as to wake us up again, we could once more move the fire to its original place and make our beds on the freshly warmed spot. This performance we kept up during the night.

Hails Taylor, my friend and cousin who had been wounded in the final charge at Murfreesboro, and, by the way, was another who got off the field that I omitted to mention, had come with us in the ambulance. Hails was more seriously wounded than he imagined, or else he took cold in his wounded leg that night. He was shot in the thigh with what was then called a buck and ball cartridge, and two buck shot were still in his leg. He had received a surgeon's order to go home, and was consequently, much elated. He would exhibit his wound and say: "Boys, what would you give for those two little buck-shot? I am going home in the morning." Poor fellow! Little did he know what was in store for him. When he did get home he was placed in bed and did not get up for weeks and weeks. I very much doubt

if he ever has been the man he would have been but for those two little buck shot.

A day or two later we moved up to the little village of Tullahoma, where for the first time, though it was nearly the middle of January, the Army went into winter quarters.

And now, having prolonged these reminiscences to a much greater extent than was ever intended, I must reluctantly bring them to a close. I say reluctantly, because having recorded so much that was unpleasant, not to say terrible, when I started to relate only the pleasant recollections of a Christmas during the War — a Christmas which in a few days will have been past thirty-five years, and so many of the hearts that throbbed so gaily then have ceased to beat; many of the looks that had shone so brightly then have ceased to glow; the hands we grasped have grown cold; the eyes we sought have hid their lustre in the grave. Much sadness comes back with such reflections as these. I reluctantly lay down my pen at this point, though I recall so vividly the many pleasant days by comparisons, the almost cozy nights spent in those same winter quarters at Tullahoma. We built log and dirt chimneys to our tents and rested quietly the long winter nights after our terrible experience of a bitter winter campaign.

Now, before the scenes fade entirely away in the dim vistas of the long ago; before memory itself shall fail to recall them as it almost does now; before another and probably still another of the dear comrades, who could now assist me in living over again the events of those stirring times shall have gone to his "long home", or I, myself, shall have "crossed over the river to the other side, to rest beneath the shade of the trees", it would be pleasant to relate, after military maneuvers had temporarily quieted down and the Yankees rested in their winter quarters, while we rested in ours, how friends came on to see us, especially our lady friends. For a time Army headquarters became one of the gayest places in the country.

One pleasant day, while the snow lay deep upon the ground, the infantry brigades in General Cheatham's Division, as if they had not already seen enough of war, built a snow fort and allowed the weaker brigades, those who had suffered most at Murfreesboro, to occupy it while the stronger ones tried to dislodge them in the biggest snow battle ever seen. The bands played, and every command came out with its bullet torn regimental colors. Under the excitement of the hour and the presence of the ladies, the officers could not resist the temptation to join in as they would see their respective commands waiver for want of leaders; and laying dignity aside, first captains, then majors, and finally colonels themselves, rushed to the command of their respective regiments to lead them on in the charge until it become as exciting even to the spectators as a real battle.

Later on springtime came, and the Army moved a little forward, a portion of it to the solid little town of Shelbyville, where Army headquarters was established for a while, and the balance of it to the little town of Wartrace, where the railroad to the former place branched off from the main line of the Nashville and Chattanooga Railway. Our battery was encamped in a beautiful beechgrove, between the two lines of tracks. How peaceful and beautiful the Tennessee fields and woods in that lovely springtime; and again the scene was brightened by the presence of ladies, and among them our friends. For the first time in many months we had a chance to hunt up friends in other divisions and corps of the Army. There was a band encamped on the side of a small mountain, and every afternoon, just as the sun was sinking in the West, this band would play "Lorena", then new, and always beautiful.

Meeting my old friend, Colonel Pelot, of Mount Meigs, then band master in the 3rd or 4th Florida Infantry, and whom I had not seen for more than a year, I said, "Colonel, what fine band is that over on the mountain side, that plays 'Lorena' so beautifully?" "Mine, sir," said the Colonel, who spoke so exactly like the "Old Colonel" of former days, so emphatic, so enthusiastic about everything, that I burst out laughing. I told him that I was going over to camp and write to my sweetheart that his band played "Lorena" so sweetly that it made me think of her, and I would ask her to learn it. After that, morning and evening, the Colonel would open with "Lorena", and sometimes on moonlight nights, at time for tattoo, the band would softly begin with "Lorena". I used to think that the roll of the drums was particularly grand in the second part, when those minor chords would come in; minor chords that the Colonel and myself loved so well.

There is one more incident I must record before I really close, what my little niece, Fanny Taber, calls my Memories. It occurred at Tullahoma, just before the Army left that place for Shelbyville and Wartrace, in the early spring of 1863.

The presence of ladies at Tullahoma had made Army headquarters one of the gayest of places. It was probably about the first of March, when the cavalry in our front reported that the Yankees were advancing on Bragg's position, and one night some pickets who had been driven in, brought the startling information that the Yanks were only a few miles to the northwest of us. A wagon train of ours was out foraging for corn and hay, and on its way back to Tullahoma had come unpleasantly near a squad of Yankee cavalry almost due west of us. All that afterwards proved to be a false alarm; but as that was not known at the time, it was getting very serious with the little town full of ladies and children, and transportation on the railroad was not as perfect as it might have been. There was a possibility of the trains being intercepted below us by a band of cavalry raiders, bent on

topping the railroad and cutting off our communications with Chattanooga. Indeed, Bragg thought that to be their object.

Our wagons had been going to Lincoln County, Tennessee, southwest of Tullahoma for corn. It was a land of plenty inasmuch as neither army had previously drawn on it. It was also probable that the Yankees had sought the same field, and being far from their base of operations, and near the enemy's lines, it was necessary for their wagon trains to go well guarded.

That was not evident at the time, and on that particular morning there was wild excitement in Tullahoma.

"Non-combatants to the rear!" was Bragg's first order, and the "Chattanooga Special" for ladies and children and citizens generally, was scheduled to leave Tullahoma about four o'clock in the afternoon. All day long the gaily caparisoned staff officers dashed about the streets on their horses, or they were at young ladies' houses who were known to be sojourning temporarily, all adding excitement to the scene. At the appointed time I went on the train to say goodbye to Mrs. Eliza Burch, an aunt by marriage of Florence Burch, who was afterwards to be my wife, and Miss Mary Mitchell, afterwards to be Mrs. F. H. Cobb. The train was full. Every seat was taken, and the aisles were crowded with soldiers about to part with friends and dear ones. There was a soldier saying farewell to his wife, a scene too sacred for ordinary eyes, while here and there were unmistakable signs of a young fellow parting with his sweetheart. The scene, though exciting, was touching in the extreme.

Mrs. Burch, always graceful and elegant, who knew how to say the right thing at the right time, and with effect, too, had extended her hand to me to say goodbye. Just then the engine bell sounded. "All aboard for Chattanooga!" shouted the conductor. "All off who are not going." There was a start for the doors. Mrs. Burch, partly rising so that she might lean towards me, said in a voice low, but distinctly enough to be heard by all those near, and full of feeling: "Let me kiss you for your mother." It was the most dramatic scene I ever witnessed. It seemed to affect everyone who heard it. And as if it was an excuse to give vent to "pent-up" feelings, all eyes were filled with tears. I can never forget it; and the impression it made on me is shown, I think, in the long account I have given of the incident.

Once before I remarked that I would reluctantly lay down my pen. How reluctantly is amply proven in the number of pages I have written since I made that statement. Without presuming for a moment to compare myself to Dickens, this is one thing I can say, in the language of that immortal author, to whoever may have the patience to pursue these pages, and that is that "No one can possibly enjoy them more in the reading than I have in the writing of them."

Having fallen back, figuratively, from Wartrace to Tullahoma, I must advance to that point again where I really parted from the "Army of Tennessee", before I take leave of these pages.

As I said before, there was nothing to mar the peace of those quiet beautiful spring days at Wartrace, except one night when there was a false alarm, and we are hurried in the dead of night to Bell-buckle, only like the King of France, to march back again.

One memorable day, early in June, I received an official looking document through the mail which proved to be a notice informing me that I had been appointed Adjutant of the 7th Regiment, Alabama Cavalry. I immediately applied for a discharge from the "Army of Tennessee" on the grounds of promotion. My battery officers approved and forwarded it, kindly stating that I was worthy of the promotion, and after what seemed to me a very long time, it came back approved from General Bragg, with orders for me to report to General Clanton, at Montgomery, Alabama. The delight I experienced can only be appreciated by a soldier who had not been home for more than a year. And one bright morning about the middle of June; so bright that the locomotive looked like burnished silver in the morning sun, I said farewell to the companions of so many summer days and winter nights, and a few minutes later I was off for home.

The following October, on a lovely autumnal evening, I was married.

The End.