

investigation was had and the animals restored if such action was deemed right. In this way many horses and mules were returned to their former owners, but by far the greatest number were so secreted and changed in appearance, that no matter how sharp were the eyes of those in search of them, they were not discovered. It was most laughable to see the chagrin of old men as they hunted from regiment to regiment for their property. The men would misdirect them, and when the poor old men reached the place designated and asked if their mules had been seen, they were told, "John Morgan's got your mule." Then a mischievous soldier would call out, "Old man, here's your mule," and when the citizen had hurried to the spot he was answered as before. John Morgan was a noted free-rider on the side of the South, but he got a great deal of a name that he was not fairly entitled to. Not only were citizens thus made sport of, but if an officer or orderly chanced to be disliked or unpopular, and in many cases whether or no, he would be hallooed to as he galloped along, and advised to "grab a root," or to "hold on to the saddle." The officer or orderly would become mortified, and oftentimes act as if he was really in danger of falling off his horse. Then the men would laugh. Rank rarely secured exemption, but the mischievous soldiers would give their advice under cover of a tent or from amongst a crowd when it was addressed to a more exalted person. Also about this time I severed my active connection as a private of the company, and against the remonstrances of my Captain, I was detailed as a "Bugler," and attached to regimental headquarters.

CHAPTER IV.

CONTAINS AN ACCOUNT OF THE ADVANCE ON THE ENEMY BETWEEN NASHVILLE AND MURPREESBORO', AND INCLUDES THE BATTLE OF STONE RIVER AS FAR AS I PARTICIPATED IN IT—THE NARRATIVE BEGINNING ON CHRISTMAS DAY, 1862, AND ENDING ON THE 31ST DAY OF DECEMBER, 1862, WHEN I FOUND MYSELF A PRISONER OF WAR IN THE HANDS OF THE SOUTHERN FORCES.

I. ON Christmas morning we had received our orders, and were ready. We had all written to our friends in the North, many for the last time; we had exchanged our fine "Sibley" tents for the new "shelter tents"; the money (two dollars per man) that the General Government allowed as an enlistment premium, and which had been retained by our company patron and by him expended, had come back to us in the shape of an excellent rubber blanket apiece. On the morning of the great Christian festival we broke camp and made an advance of about a mile, where we established a strong outpost and went no further.

It was said that General Rosecrans was not ready. He was "a good Churchman," and did not believe in fighting on Sunday nor in undertaking a movement on a holy day. This was the talk amongst the soldiers, and I only give it as such. Next day, however (the 26th), we were on the march in earnest and full of fight. We were much lighter bagged than we had previously been, and we met the enemy before we were an hour from camp. Our division (Sheridan's) went through Nolansville with a rush. I had just time to notice that Nolansville consisted of about half a dozen miserable shanties. The most pretending seemed as if it might have been a school-house, but the small sign over the door, with the legend, "TIPPLING HOUSE," upon it, dispelled all such illusions. The road thence led up a long and steep hill, and as it got on toward the top it was wooded on either side. In the woods, and half a mile in advance of us, an Ohio regiment had a lively fight during the afternoon, and succeeded in driving the enemy, besides capturing two English rifled cannon, a few horses, and several prisoners. The enthusiasm of the army was well nigh unbounded at this success so near the outset, and although we were formed into line of battle not far to the rear, we were envious of the regiment that had had the honor of being in front of us. That night we laid on our arms in an open field on the left of the road, and near the foot of the rising ground, but protected in a measure by some heavy woods near us. The light, drizzling rain that had been falling all the afternoon, had increased to a torrent, but the excitement engen-

dered by our proximity to the enemy served well to keep up our spirits. Besides this, our new arrangements for camping were admirable. Two men slept together. One rubber sheet on the ground, and a woollen blanket on that, then another woollen blanket on top with the shelter tent and rubber on the outside. In this manner the two men between were effectually protected. On the next day and the next we skirmished with the enemy continually, and our regiment came in for a good share of the hard work. Our company being on one of the extremes of the line, it was usually deployed when skirmishing duty was demanded, and so I had plenty of opportunity for using my bugle. The road we were on had a macadamized bed, and would have been a good one to travel upon had it not been for the excessively wet weather; as it was, the surface, in level places, was nearly ankle deep in liquid limestone. On Saturday night it was reported that the enemy had changed front and formed his new lines in another direction, between Stone river and the town of Murfreesboro'. It had been raining all day, and the night promised to be only murkier and gloomier than the wearisome day had been, and when we ascended the hill on the right of the road, the men felt in any but elevated spirits. Just as we had received orders to stack arms in the place selected for our bivouac, the sky cleared just above the western horizon, and for about the space of half-a-minute the sun appeared in indescribably great glory—then vanished. This was instantly taken as a good omen, and the drooping spirits of the soldiers rose at once, and the army gave a tremendous shout that rent the air;

the noise of that cry from the tens of thousands of throats far exceeded the uproar of the great battle fought a few days after, and, as the shouting was re-echoed from the clouds, as it were, the incident was awe inspiring. It was a scene worthy of the hand of a master painter, when the men in tired disorder turned, some with their arms yet in their hands, and others in the act of disengaging themselves from the usual impediments, the whole scene illuminated with the peculiarly beautiful halo of that sunset, and the crimson light shining upon the animated faces of the men. This lasted, however, for only such a little while, and we sank upon the wet grass to rest our weary limbs, and to eat what was left of our three days' rations. The next morning (Sunday) was clear and cold, and we heard with dismay that the enemy's cavalry under General Wheeler had intercepted and cut off our supply trains from Nashville. It was again given out that General Rosecrans would not follow the new direction on Sunday, and we were to have rest. But rest without rations was not so good a thing as with them. Early in the morning an order was received by which each company commander was directed to send six men on a foraging expedition for his company. There was no doubt about this—it was the first legalized, "gobbling" that I had seen. In a wondrously short time after the order was received it was executed, and more than executed, with spirit and alacrity. Instead of detailing six men out of each company to go out and procure provisions, most of the companies left just that number behind and no more, the rest going out as "foragers." Foraging is the name, I pre-

sume, when legalized, and "gobbling" when not. That is a plainer and more concise definition of the latter term than I gave in the previous chapter, and I think myself justified in recording it here and abandoning my former explanation. Of this particular expedition I can only describe the part taken by the squad I happened to be with. We went, six or seven of us, through the woods, over hills, across "bottoms," through fields, and over rivulets for a mile or more to our right and front, without meeting with any prospects of success. Then the incorrigible Tommy Corrigan, who was of our party and some distance in advance, by a loud exclamation told us that he was not far from a prize, and we saw at a distance of half or three quarters of a mile to the right and still to the front, a large, substantial mansion and numerous out-buildings. We hastened our steps, and after clearing unnumbered ditches and fences, we entered a long lane in which we formed into line, with Tommy Corrigan on the right as undisputed commander. We soon reached the place, and, as an "institution," found it to be greater than many of the "towns" we had passed through, although the latter generally boasted high-sounding names. The mansion itself was a large two-story building of wood, and had the inevitable hall running through the centre of it, and an immense chimney built upon the outside on each end. The second story was almost an exact copy of the first. A sort of porch ran up to the roof, and the door leading into it from the second story was exactly like the front door below, even to the knocker. There were numerous outhouses, granaries, meat-houses,

stables, root-houses, and henneries on one side of the main structure, and on the other a village of negro huts lying low and irregular, like so many smashed tiles. Before we got to the lawn entrance we met a negro man who was nearly scared to death. Corrigan, pointing his gun (which was empty) at the man, ordered him to approach us, and he came toward our position fairly dancing with fear. From him we had a terrible tale. His master was a rebel of the deepest dye. Only the night before he had captured a "Union soldier," and had conveyed him to Murfreesboro', where the poor fellow was to be shot for being a "spy." The master was "cruel to his slaves" as well. He had shot or hung several of the negroes who had attempted to run away. We now held a council of war, and having informed ourselves of the nature of the surroundings, as to the number of inmates, the locality of the provision stores, etc., we advanced toward the house. When we entered the lawn gate we saw a fat, jolly looking old planter standing in the doorway of the house. He was perhaps sixty years of age, and appeared as if during the whole of that period he had lived upon the best that the land afforded. But he had a gun in his hand, and, as Tommy Corrigan drew his musket to his shoulder, he gave the command, "Drop that piece," and the "piece" was dropped as if it had been red hot. Then we advanced and seized the old gentleman. He was very belligerent—in fact, full of opposition—but we soon disarmed and set a guard over him, some distance away from the house. On ransacking the place we found the planter's wife and two daughters. They

boastfully told us that the husbands of both of them were in the Southern army, and would revenge any injury we might do. We tried in vain to make them understand our situation—that we were only after forage, and intended no harm to them personally. We could do nothing else than order them out, and place them under guard with the husband and father. On a closer inspection we discovered that the uncleaned dishes in the kitchen amounted to more than would ordinarily accrue from a meal of four persons, and this led to an examination of the old man. He insultingly boasted of his capturing the "Union spy," and threatened that before long the "Confeds" who had breakfasted with him that morning would return, and—well, if they had come then and accomplished what he threatened, I never would have had this opportunity of writing. If the old man told the truth in his violence, he was the most brutal enemy I had yet met. He confessed to almost every offence a "War-Rebel" could be charged with. A long opinion was delivered by an eloquent member of the Twenty-first Michigan who was of our party, and the result was the old man was given permission to take ten minutes and secure what he wanted out of the house. This he refused to accept; neither would the women secure anything. They were then bound, the negroes were ordered to the rear, and the plethoric meat-house was plundered. When we returned the provost guard took charge of our prisoners. Of the negroes we made beasts of burden, and they carried our plunder of corned hams, bacon, sausage, meat, potatoes, apples, etc. After a

few days, and when I was a prisoner in the hands of the enemy, I heard that the man whom the planter had captured and sent into the town had been executed as a spy, or as a deserter, or something like that; but I was afterward consoled by the information that the old man got his deserts as a "War-Rebel" when he had been in Nashville a little while. For hours on that afternoon and evening we were engaged in frying our meat and cooking the rest of our confiscated rations.

2. Early on Monday morning, the 29th day of December, 1862, we received orders to prepare to march. There was not much work to do in the way of preparation; all our surplus meat had been cooked and packed away, and before sunrise the regiment had been told off by companies, knapsacks were packed, bayonets unfixed, and everything in readiness to start on our tramp. Now took place the preliminaries of a change of front. Our regiment filed into the road, and marched and countermarched in the most admirable confusion, now forming in a field on the right hand in order to permit some other regiment to pass us, or to allow some flying battery of artillery to take its proper position, and again advancing and retreating with no ascertainable object. Finally, after manœuvring for two or three hours in this manner, we were properly placed, and upon gaining a point about a mile or a mile and a half to the rear of our camping ground of the night before, we struck off from the road, on the northeasterly side of it, and plunged immediately into the midst of a dense growth of stunted cedars. There was no road, and as we went along like

a band of stragglers, all our guidance was for each one to follow his leader. We were frequently compelled to stop, and in the wildest of places, owing to the inability of the troops in front to move with expedition. There was not the least sign of civilization to be seen in any direction—nothing within our view but the closely growing cedars. In many places the trees seemed to be growing upon the bare stones, and we saw many narrow but deep crevices in the rocks—so deep that the rumbling of pebbles thrown into them was heard as they rattled down the sides for many seconds. About noon we had the first of several "scares," but all our fears were without sufficient cause, for no enemy could possibly be in a position to hurt us while we were so enclosed. We were now in the depths of a vast cedar forest. The men employed themselves during the halts in gathering and eating juniper berries from off the trees. Many jokes passed around on account of the berries—"These are used to make gin," etc. The atmosphere of the woods in some places was so impregnated with the aroma of the cedar as almost to make it unbearable. Late in the afternoon we met a detachment of our troops in charge of some prisoners who had been captured a short time before. The captives being anything but submissive or docile, we were assured that they had not been captured by their own connivance; they were no willing stragglers; and from that we argued that we were not far removed from an active enemy. I noticed that the rank and file at once assumed solemn countenances. All hilarity ceased, and the ranks were kept closer, as was always the case when we were convinced

of our proximity to danger, and from that time the march was conducted in a more regular manner. Toward nightfall the order was given to halt, call a roll, and note to be made of absentees. This was obeyed, and then we moved on with close column, and soon after emerged from the funereal woods, crossed a few fields, and at last got upon a good macadamized road. This proved to be the Murfreesboro' pike-road, and we all felt as if a heavy burden had been removed from our bodies as we filed almost gayly on to the solid roadway.

Here we formed again. There was work to be attended to immediately. We had not proceeded far when the shots we had previously heard were supplemented by the sight of the men who had fired them. Just in our front was a strong skirmish line, formed of the Second regiment of Missouri Infantry, and it was engaging a like line of the enemy situated at no great distance beyond. We were quickly formed into line, under cover of a rail fence on the right of the road. Our regiment remained in this position for about half an hour, during which the rapid firing continued; then we again formed into column left in front, and proceeded along very cautiously. We had received strict orders prohibiting the least noise, and about half-past seven o'clock we silently filed into a cornfield on the left of the road, and as we halted we were told to stack arms, sentries were placed, and we were allowed to lie down and rest. This was the most uncomfortable place we ever bivouacked in, not only because the known proximity of the enemy irritated us and kept the men

restless, but the field had but recently been freshly ploughed, and the rain that had fallen just before had made of the soil a nasty, pasty mud above ankle deep. During the night we were frequently called up to arms by the ominous "long roll" or the shrill blast of the "assembly." About ten o'clock P. M. the Colonel ordered an inspection and report of arms and ammunition, and the stock of death-dealing munitions having been ascertained to be uncommonly low, the company commanders received a severe reprimand.

3. There was not much sleep all that night. We could see the glare of the enemy's camp fires not far to our front, and we frequently heard the rustling noise as of large bodies of troops moving from one place to another. The incessant whistling of locomotives and the continual rumbling of cars denoted that we were not far from the town of Murfreesboro', and that unusual activity prevailed there. Some miles to our left, so an aide-de-camp who had been lost informed us, our troops had had a severe engagement with the enemy, but the Michigan Regiment of Engineers and Mechanics had succeeded in destroying a railroad bridge at a place called Tri-une. Long before daylight on Tuesday morning we perceived that immediately in front of us there was a line of earthworks that had been evacuated by the enemy the day before, and apparently in some considerable haste, because the Southerners had left behind them a number of articles, such as cedar-wood canteens, miniature lager-beer kegs, wooden spoons, and empty meal-bags. About daylight a final alignment was made, and the regiment was

formed in double column by division on the colors. Then the Colonel made a speech to the soldiers. Said he: "You are once again near the enemy, and more honored than you were upon the previous occasion, because you now have the immediate front. Already," said he, "you can hear the preparations for the battle; all night you have been within plain view of the enemy's camp fires, and it only remains for you to advance this morning with exhibitions of your valor, so that by an early success we shall begin the work of a day that will end in a crowning victory." Many of those who were not remarkably well up in military history were informed for the first time that a certain Irish regiment, bearing our number (88), of the English army had achieved immortal renown upon the field of Waterloo. In magnificent and soul-stirring periods we were urged one and all to "emulate the glorious example of that gallant corps," and then, in the same strain, he imitated the ancient generals in the way we are told they used to fire the hearts of their soldiers and animate them to deeds of valor, by depreciating the quality of the enemy. We were told that "the Rebel horde in front of us" was "composed of a lot of half-starved, ill-clad, semi-barbarous rag-amuffins," the "white trash" of the South, whom even the negro despised, in order to defeat whom it was only necessary for us to show ourselves; continuing, he said, that "while we are the soldiers of the Union, fighting for the very existence of that Union, founded by Washington and cemented by the blood of our ancestors, the patriots of the Revolution, your enemies are endeavoring to undo all your fathers did, and found

an em... crisis of human slavery." In this manner... charangued the men for nearly half an hour, when our lesson in oratory was brought to an abrupt conclusion by an aide-de-camp from somewhere, who communicated marching orders. On receiving an intimation from the Colonel I sounded a blast that brought the regiment "left into line," and in less than five minutes more we were on the road. It was ominous now to see the manner of proceeding. As we had usually marched, the band, with its rub-a-dub-dub, was in the front; then followed the Colonel, solemn and alone; then came the staff, and each company commander was at the head of his men; but now the order was reversed: the band was in the rear; then came the Colonel and his staff; the company commanders were at the tail end of their respective company columns, and the regiment being "left in front," and Company "B" being the left company, and Tommy Corrigan being the smallest man in it, he had the honor of being the actual leader. We advanced slowly, expecting we knew not what, until we reached our picket line of the night before, when we relieved the men of it and halted for orders. At this halt Dr. Coatesworth, our regimental surgeon, began his preparations for work; he directed each of the drummers and fifers to place a piece of yellow rag around his left arm, and was proceeding to have me do the same when I appealed to the Colonel, who was near by, and asked him if Company "B" was not going to skirmish; if it was, the men might need a bugler, and at any rate I did not wish to be a non-combatant. The Colonel laughed grimly, and

replied that it was quite likely Company "B" would soon be skirmishing, and perhaps doing something else more serious still, and he gave me the desired permission to go forward to the head of the regiment, and there report to the Captain. To the Captain I told how it was that I became ordered to report to him, and on learning the circumstances I was received enthusiastically by the men.

4. After advancing for some three or four hundred yards we came upon a squad of the enemy's cavalry, and a running fight ensued, we killing one and wounding three others, without suffering any casualty on our side. The enemy fled as the regiment filed off from the road and turned into line on the double quick. Then we advanced again, and when we reached a point where the road took a turn to the left we made another formation in some grand cedar woods on our right. Here Companies "A" and "B" were ordered to deploy as skirmishers, with Companies "F" and "G" as a reserve for them. When all was ready, and by the Captain's orders, I sounded the "Deploy as skirmishers," "On the centre deploy," and "Forward," and away we went through the woods. The musket balls from the enemy came thick and fast among us, but as we were protected by the large trees, we suffered very little if any at all. Our men fired at the enemy near the end of the woods, and then each man dashed forward to the cover of the most convenient tree, where he reloaded and prepared for another dash. Next I was directed to sound a "Rally by fours," which being done in tolerable shape, an order to go forward was given, and when I had

again sounded a "Halt" and "Deploy," we had cleared the woods and were in full view of a beautiful cultivated space, shut in on all sides but one by the dense cedar forest. The open side was toward the southeast, and was formed of a sort of "bottom" or morass. The woods on all other sides but the one we were on were filled with the enemy, and from the farther end on our left was a battery that had got our range, and was rapidly sending shells and solid shot into an inconveniently close proximity to our line. The fire from the enemy's small arms did no harm because it went too high. The open space alluded to was the theatre of all I saw of the real battle, which had now commenced in earnest. It was a single cotton plantation, and comprised several fields of various shapes and sizes. Toward the centre of the opening was situated the planter's house, surrounded by the usual complement of outhouses and negro quarters, and on one side, to the left of us, there was a large barn-like structure, and that was a cotton-gin and press. We continued to fire as rapidly as we could, and always aimed in a general way in the direction of the battery and where we saw the smoke of the enemy's small arms, but I could not see whether our shots did any execution. About noon we were informed that in order to perfect our line of battle, it was necessary to carry the open space and clear the woods on either hand, and thereupon the Second and Fifteenth Missouri regiments on our right darted out of the woods. They were exposed to a very heavy fire, but they did not flinch nor make a halt until they had gained the woods beyond. The infantry were closely followed by

a battery of four pieces. We watched with eager interest as we saw the gallant Germans course across the cotton fields and over fences, and enter the woods beyond. This was our time, and we were ordered to advance on the double quick into the opening and take up a position in front of the mansion. At the sound of the bugle Companies "A" and "B" went from cover and swept across the fields under another heavy fire, but the men succeeded in gaining the house, the lawn, and the adjacent out-buildings. A battery now took up a position on our former line on the edge of the woods, and engaged the enemy over our heads. Meanwhile the Missouri regiments and the battery which they supported fought the battery and the infantry of the enemy in their front. It was now too late in the day for a regular battle to be brought on, but the active skirmishing and artillery fighting increased until nearly the whole of our corps front was engaged. The soldiers of both armies were in plain view of each other, and the rattle of musketry and the roar of cannon were heard from afar on either hand. We had now within our view the higher buildings of the town, and we thought that on the morrow, perhaps even that same night, we would gain the prize. Again an advance was ordered, and the men ran gallantly over another field or two and laid themselves down close by a fence, the new line thus formed bringing them more to a face with the enemy. The Missouri regiments too made another dash, and gained a still more favorable position for shelling the woods. The battery which they supported speedily followed and took the

new position—all save one gun that was placed *hors du combat* by a well directed shot of the enemy. This was about half-past three o'clock in the afternoon.

While in the last mentioned position and beyond the house the fire from the enemy was terrific. The earth near by was torn by the shot, and shells exploded very near to us. Musketry balls literally fell like hail, and as they struck the ground they sputtered and sizzed like great hailstones. Here, about five o'clock in the afternoon, and just as the fire of the enemy had decreased to almost random shots, Abram Weaver, my bosom friend, was killed. He received a bullet right in the heart, and as he fell he died without a groan. In the charge to obtain this position Captain Smith, of Company "A," fell, wounded, but how, I have forgotten. I was with the Captain of my company when Abe Weaver fell, and we stood about ten paces to the rear. The men were warned to lie flat on the ground, and all except Volney, Abe's brother, obeyed. Volney was frantic with grief. I shall never forget the terrible look upon his face. I was directed by the Captain to take him to the rear, and he came with me easily enough, but as he went along he nervously clutched his musket, and swore to be revenged for his brother's death. We passed safely through a shower of bullets on our way, and when we reached the dwelling house I conducted Weaver to a comfortable place, and as he had become quite sick, the doctors prescribed for him. As I was about to return to the front, Generals Sheridan, Sill, and two or three others, accompanied by a numerous staff, came up, and as they peeped around the corners of the house at the