

HOW SOLDIERS WERE MADE;

OR

THE WAR AS I SAW IT

UNDER

• BUELL, ROSECRANS, THOMAS, GRANT AND  
SHERMAN.

BY

B. F. SCRIBNER,

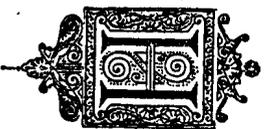
LATE COLONEL THIRTY-EIGHTH INDIANA VETERAN VOLUNTEERS, AND BREVET BRIG-  
ADIER-GENERAL, COMMANDING BRIGADE, FIRST DIVISION, FOURTEENTH  
ARMY CORPS, ARMY OF THE CUMBERLAND.

NEW ALBANY, IND.

1887.

## CHAPTER III.

## ANOTHER BATTLE.



HAVING spent a few days at Crab Orchard, the army moved toward Nashville. Near Bowling Green we met our new commander, Gen. Rosecrans, who addressed us with much warmth and good-will. He made a favorable impression upon the men by his open and genial manner, contrasting agreeably with the taciturn exclusiveness of Gen. Buell, whom but a very few of the men had ever seen. My command was stationed for a time at Edgefield Junction, and was ordered to make a reconnoissance to Springfield, Tenn., and adjacent country. It was reported that large quantities of stores had been collected there for Bragg's army. I sent the Second Ohio and Thirty-eighth Indiana regiments on this duty, and they brought in and forwarded to the proper authorities at Nashville two thousand barrels of flour, four thousand

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pounds of bacon and twenty-five barrels of whisky. From the scarcity of salt in the Confederacy, or from ignorance of packing, or climatic causes, the meat taken from the enemy was unfit to issue to our men, however acceptable it may have been to the poorly-fed Confederates. The dainty appetites of our boys could not be persuaded to accept it. Gen. Robert McFeely, now the efficient commissary-general of the United States, said to me that the bacon turned in by me from Springfield was the only good meat that fell into our hands at that time.

A pleasing incident occurred at this time. The patriotic citizens of New Albany, hearing of the dilapidated condition of the flag of the Thirty-eighth, made them a new one and sent it to them by a committee consisting of Col. E. A. Maginness, my successor in command of the Seventh Regiment of the Indiana Legion, Mr. J. C. Culbertson and Mr. H. N. Devol. After the ceremony and speeches, a suitable banquet was enjoyed, and thus closed an episode prized in the memory of all.

Having reached Nashville, we again found quarters at Camp Andy Johnson, and employed

our time in preparation for another campaign. Some changes were made in the designations of the commands by Gen. Rosecrans. The Ninth Brigade was now the First Brigade, First Division, Fourteenth Army Corps, the brigade commanded by me, the division by Gen. Rousseau, and the corps by Gen. Geo. H. Thomas. Gen. A. McD. McCook commanded the right, Gen. Thomas L. Crittenden the left, and Gen. Thomas the center, and on Christmas day the movement on Bragg was commenced. On the 27th we reached Nolleville in the rain. The bad roads and advance troops of the enemy impeded our progress toward the location assumed by Bragg. On the 30th, our skirmishers had developed the position from which Bragg did not intend to retire without a fight, and our line was formed accordingly. On the morning of the 31st, Rousseau in reserve, was massed on the right of the Nashville and Murfreesboro pike in an open field, with our right near a cedar thicket. I will here quote from my official report of this battle, as perhaps the best way to describe it, to-wit:

"HEADQUARTERS FIRST BRIGADE, FIRST DIV., CENTRE  
MURFREESBORO, TENN., JANUARY 9, 1863.

"CAPT. M. C. TAYLOR, A. A. A. G.:

"Sir, — I have the honor to submit the following report of the part borne by my command in the engagement before Murfreesboro on the 31st of December and the three succeeding days.

"At daylight we left our bivouac and moved about a mile to the front and formed the second line of your division, two regiments extending into the cedar thicket on the right, and the left extending to the Nashville and Murfreesboro pike. My line was disposed in the following order from right to left, viz.: Tenth Wisconsin, Col. A. R. Chapin; Ninety-fourth Ohio, Col. J. W. Frizel; Thirty-eighth Indiana, Lieut.-Col. D. F. Griffin; Thirty-third Ohio, Capt. E. J. Ellis; Second Ohio, Lieut.-Col. Jno. Kell. Having just finished loading arms, I received your order to proceed in double-quick time to the assistance of the right wing, and to follow the Seventeenth Brigade on the Pioneer road into the woods. When the Seventeenth Brigade halted in the woods, I was ordered by Gen.

Thomas to move to the right, and soon after formed my line of battle near the Wilkinson pike, on the left of Gen. Sheridan, when we were opened upon the enemy's batteries. When near this position, the Thirty-third and Second Ohio regiments were, by your order, detached and moved back near to the position we first occupied, to support our batteries stationed there, and nobly did they defend them, for soon afterward the enemy fiercely charged them and were handsomely repulsed, the Second Ohio capturing the colors of the Thirtieth Arkansas, a victory dearly bought by the loss of the gallant Lieut.-Col. Kell.

"From near the Wilkinson pike I was ordered to move back in great haste to our position on the Nashville pike, to support the batteries, which I at once proceeded to do. My right had just emerged from the woods, when the enemy, who had just been repulsed in their effort to take the batteries before mentioned, were seen retiring in disorder in a northwesterly direction through a narrow neck of woods. They were opened upon by the Ninety-fourth Ohio and two companies of the Thirty-eighth Indiana. I then threw forward

my skirmishers and advanced my command about six hundred yards into the woods, where my lines became masked by General Negley's division, which was falling back under a heavy fire from the enemy, who appeared to be advancing from a point south of the direction of the retreating column. I opened my line to permit General Negley to pass, which they did, for they had expended their ammunition. Here the Ninety-fourth Ohio was ordered to the pike, leaving me but two regiments, the Thirty-eighth Indiana and Tenth Wisconsin to form on the right. I soon found myself nearly surrounded, a heavy column turning my left. The Tenth Wisconsin was ordered to change front, forming a right angle with the Thirty-eighth Indiana. This position was scarcely taken when the enemy came down upon us with great fury. They appeared to be massed in several lines and their head seemed to be in terraces not twenty-five yards before us. For twenty minutes these two regiments maintained their ground, completely checking the advance of the enemy's column. Here the Thirty-eighth lost their brave captain, J. E. Fouts, besides nearly one-third of their

number in killed and wounded. Lieut.-Col. Griffin and Maj. J. B. Glover both had their horses shot under them and their clothing perforated with bullets. The Tenth Wisconsin nobly vied with their comrades on the right, and I am convinced that both regiments would have suffered extermination rather than yield their ground without orders. But at length the order came and we fell back and formed on the pike, and fronting the cedar thicket, but the enemy did not venture to follow us farther than the edge of the woods.

"Having re-formed my brigade, I advanced my right to the woods from which we had just emerged, deployed, as skirmishers, the Ninety-fourth Ohio through the neck of timber, with my left resting on the Nashville pike. Here we remained the remainder of the day under the fire of sharpshooters, and ever and anon the shot and shell from the enemy's batteries on our left fell among us. A ball from the former struck Gen. Frizel on the shoulder, so wounding him that he was borne from the field on which he had so nobly performed his duty.

"At four o'clock on the morning of Janu-

ary 1st, you ordered me to take my command back to a point on the pike, near the place we bivouacked before the battle commenced, in order that they might build fires and warn themselves and get something to eat. Upon receiving your caution to protect myself from an attack on the left, and from your allusion to a ford in that direction I ordered Lieut. Alex Martin, inspector, and Lieut. M. Allen, topographical engineer, of my staff, to reconnoiter the place. Upon their reporting the possibility of the crossing, they were ordered to conduct the Second Ohio, under Maj. Anson G. McCook, to the position. Soon after firing was heard in this direction, and a stampede occurred among the wagons and hospitals, and I sent the Tenth Wisconsin to support the Second Ohio, placing them behind the embankment of the railroad. This disposition had just been made, when your order came to hurry to the front again with my command. Having complied with the order, and after some maneuvering, we were placed in position, the Thirty-third Ohio extending across the neck of woods into which

my right threw out skirmishers the evening before. A battery on the right and left commanded the fields on either side of the woods; on the right of the Thirty-third was placed the Ninety-fourth Ohio and Thirty-eighth Indiana in the edge of the undergrowth on the crest of the slope from the fields west of the Nashville pike, and on the right of the Thirty-eighth was another battery. The Tenth Wisconsin was held in reserve in order to reinforce any part of the line that was menaced. This important and well chosen position was maintained without material change during the subsequent days of the battle. Our skirmishers were kept out during the time and were employed in discovering and dislodging sharpshooters, who during the hours of daylight continuously annoyed us. I can not too highly praise Capt. Ellis, commanding the Thirty-third Ohio, for the vigilance of himself and men in their exposed position in the woods. At times the enemy, from the woods below, would essay to advance, when every man would be at his post, and often our batteries would join in their repulse. While here, Capt. Ellis had his

horse shot from under him. A breastwork of logs and rocks, had been constructed, and a few rifle pits were dug to protect the line.

"On the evening of the 2d, when the enemy so vigorously attacked our left, the moving of their columns could be seen from my position, which fact was promptly reported, and I caused my skirmishers to advance and took precautions against an attack. The attempt was made just before dark. The enemy formed in the edge of the woods in our front, when Capt. Cox's Tenth Indiana Battery, on the right of the Thirty-third Ohio, opened fire upon them and drove them back.

"I deem it improper to close this report without commending in high terms the manner in which my command bore the hardships of this terrible conflict. They suffered from rain, cold, fatigue and hunger without a murmur. These attributes, when added to their bravery, make soldiers of whom their country may be proud.

"I also deem it proper to praise the courage and efficiency of my staff, Lieut. Fitzwilliam, acting assistant adjutant-general and aid-de-camp; Geo. H. Hollister, acting assistant com-

missary of subsistence, missing after displaying great gallantry in his intermission of orders, Lieut. M. Allen, topographical engineer; and Lieut. Alex. Martin, who was wounded above the knee at my side by a shell, all of whom endeared themselves to me by their prompt and diligent performance of their appropriate duties.

"I would also, in an especial manner, mention one of my orderlies, Josiah F. Mitchell, Company B, Thirty-third Ohio Volunteers, who displayed marked courage and intelligence.

"I went into the fight with 1,646 men, minus two companies of the Thirty-third Ohio, commanded by Maj. Ely, of the Tenth Wisconsin, who were detached to guard a train. My loss is thirty-two killed, 180 wounded and forty-five missing." I have felt free to thus embody the above report at this place, because in a supplemental report of the battle of Stone river, by Gen. Thomas, my report was approved and largely quoted from by him, and the same was also endorsed and forwarded by Gen. Rosecrans. See reports of the battle of Stone river from the Secretary of War to the United States Senate, March 13, 1863.

But no merely official report of an engagement can adequately represent the conflict which rages within the breasts of those taking part in it. When a great battle has been fought and perchance won, its announcement is received as an accomplished fact; the anxieties and uncertainties pertaining to the actors in it are overlooked in the general rejoicing, and triumph is regarded as a matter of course. But while the conflict is yet undecided, no one can predict the result; that history is being made, that great consequences hang upon the issue may at times be comprehended, but no one knows the end. Life or death, victory or defeat are wavering in the balance; every moment is pregnant with contingencies which may make or mar the wisest plans and fondest hopes.

Every incentive that can influence the actions of man is often required to make him overcome that instinct of nature which prompts him to avoid danger, and to incite and fortify him for the performance of duty. Patriotism, sense of honor, personal and family pride, ambition, fear of disgrace and consequent mortification of friends and loved ones, all may be needed to

exalt him to great actions on great occasions. At times constant watchfulness is necessary to enable him to retain control of himself; he may even resort to trivial expedients to steady his nerves; he may count the buttons on a soldier's coat or observe and criticise the condition of his equipment while shot and shell are raining and bursting about him, in order to force and prove to himself that he is calm and self-possessed. "To command others, command yourself," has been wisely said. A marked difference in the duties of the soldier and the officer exists in this. The soldier is occupied with his loading and firing, in estimating his distance and arranging the sights of his gun accordingly, while the officer, surrounded perhaps by the same distracting terrors, must think, must plan, must watch the movements of the enemy and determine whether they are endeavoring to outflank him, or about to move up another battery to bear upon him. These must all be mentally considered under apprehensions of the same deafening roar and bloodshed. I do not believe that men are equally brave at all times. This three-o'clock-in-the-morning courage may exist, but most men, I

think, would prefer even a few buttons to count previous to going out before breakfast to be shot at, and there are many instances of troops who have been stampeded, overcome and completely routed, who have afterward behaved like heroes! But the most pitiable object that human nature sometimes exhibits, is the man who, utterly bereft of every instinct of manhood, defeated, dispirited and lost to all sense of shame, has hopelessly given up. He may be pleaded with, threatened or kicked, but like a whipped cur, he will make no defense, and would not lift a finger to save the day, or even to save his own miserable life. I saw some objects like this during the Mexican War, but once in a lifetime will suffice for me. An occasional constitutional coward is met with, who will faint and vomit when scared. Two cases of this kind are the extent of my observation. Courage is not an exceptional quality. In this country it is a national attribute. Americans, as a race, are brave and warlike.

The plans of Rosecrans and Bragg at Stone river seem to have been identical, each general intending to assail the other's right, and had each side been more successful, the anomaly of

two armies exchanging lines and cutting each other off from their base of supply might have occurred; but Bragg, with his characteristic dash, took the initiative, and Rosecrans, therefore, was put upon the defensive and had to postpone the execution of his plan. Bragg had massed his forces and came down on McCook like a whirlwind, forcing him to yield position after position until his right had been driven back and became perpendicular with his first position. Thomas, commanding the center, was able, by hard fighting and great loss, to substantially maintain his position. Crittenden, commanding the left wing, was not seriously engaged on the first day, except as he may have sent assistance to the right and center.

As I passed out of the cedars into the open field, after I had given the order from Gen. Rousseau to fall back, I observed Gen. Thomas on the pike to the left of the point at which I had directed my men to re-form. It at once flashed upon my mind what would be Gen. Thomas' impression of the manner my men were told to cross the open field, as if fleeing in disorder to escape the assaults of the enemy,

so I dashed up to him and explained that we had been in the cedars, where we were able to hold our own; we were not being driven out, but were acting in obedience to the order of Gen. Rousseau, who directed me to fall back to the pike, and as we looked upon what seemed a panic-stricken route, I added that I had told the men to disperse when they entered the field, and every man for himself, to run for the pike, for the enemy would doubtless pursue and have them at a disadvantage. Then, pointing to the pike, I said, "And now, General, you see they are re-forming." Then, lifting my hat, I asked, "Have you any further orders?" He replied, "No, re-form on the pike." This was the most extended interview I had had with Gen. Thomas, and was the foundation for that good opinion the General ever manifested toward my command.

The night after the first day's fight was a trying one to my command. They maintained all night the line upon which they formed during the afternoon, and, having to lie down upon the wet and muddy ground, their clothes were in a sorry plight. The night turned cold, and

many had their garments frozen to the ground. Fires were not permitted, even to boil their coffee. The officers, however, had no difficulty in enforcing this command, for the striking of a match to light a pipe would bring a bullet whizzing by and thus prove the wisdom of the order. The movement of the ambulances and cries for help and water from the wounded, who were strewn over the field, was alone sufficient to drive away all sleep. One poor fellow, not far from me, kept up an incessant cry of "Oh, God Almighty!! God Almighty!! God Almighty!!!" I sent a staff officer repeatedly, to assist and comfort him, but without avail, for he kept up that piteous wail until the hospital detail bore him off. There is something awful and mournful in death under all circumstances, but with the dead arranged for burial by a professional undertaker there is a calmness, a repose, a dignity, a reverend and subdued tone and order that saddens but does not horrify, but on the battlefield there is a different scene. Here, as at some vast morgue, you are gathered to identify the dead, and it appalls the

senses, for here they lie as they fell, their eyes unclosed, their forms stiff in the positions in which they died, their gory wounds through which noble lives ebbed away, augmenting and fixing upon the mind the ruthless, cruel and ghastly spectacle. But I will not dwell upon these shocking details.

The place designated by Gen. Rousseau to take my brigade, to refresh them with coffee (which is mentioned in my report) was not far from the headquarters of Gen. Rosecrans, which fact I accidentally discovered by wandering into the room where he and his staff officers were assembled. They were seated on chairs or reclining on the floor, nodding their drowsy heads. The yellow light of a tallow "dip" dimly outlined the cheerless and somber group. The General looked worn and anxious. His disasters on the right were enough to sadden a colder heart than his. I did not speak to him, but I yearned to do so. From my heart welled up a flood of sympathy and devotion to him. I longed to assure him that the Army of the Cumberland was not whipped, and that the men were yet determined and

confident. As day began to dawn, he, with his staff, rode to the front, and approaching a line of troops in the rear of the position my brigade had so gallantly won and maintained during the night, he stopped, and with surprise sent for the commander and asked him, "Have you been here all night?" "Yes sir," replied the officer. Then followed words of praise and a telegram from the field to Washington for the officer's promotion. The officer doubtless merited his star and I never envied him, but many an old soldier knows that I drank wormwood and gall when the incident was related to me. "It was fun for the boys, but death to the frogs."

The position assigned to my command early on the morning of the second day was well chosen and an important one to hold. After the batteries were in position and my troops settled in their places, and such defenses constructed as our limited knowledge of engineering made available, my confidence was increased. My hopefulness of triumph in this battle had never deserted me. Having passed through "The Valley of the Shadow of Death"

in the cedars, I felt that I would not be killed, and had reached such exaltation of mind as not to care if I was. A new creation, an enlargement of my faculties seemed to pervade me like inspiration! So certain did I feel of myself, that had the command of the army devolved upon me, I could have assumed it without misgivings, and without hesitation have taken the responsibility of directing the battle. I knew no hunger, no thirst, and did not think of sleep. I was never before nor since in such a state of mind, and mention it merely for its psychological interest.

On the afternoon of the third day's fight, from an advantageous position, I made the discovery of a movement of the enemy through a cotton-field in the rear of the brick house on the Nashville and Murfreesboro pike. They were moving toward the ford of Stone river, near the clump of trees which Bragg designated as "Round Forest," which obscured the battery which annoyed us so much. Having called to my assistance Lieut. Martin, of my staff, we continued to watch them, and by counting the mounted officers passing a certain point, esti-

mated their number. Thereupon I directed Lieut. Martin to report to Gen. Rosecrans that a brigade of the enemy were moving to their right—his left. I continued to observe the enemy, and when Lieut. Martin returned, he was despatched again with a message that another brigade, in addition to the one previously reported, was passing to their right (our left). When Lieut. Martin came back to me from the delivery of these messages, he was asked what Gen. Rosecrans said, and in reply he quoted the General's words: "Do you hear that, Crittenden?" and said that Crittenden mounted a horse and dashed off, while Rosecrans' staff officers were dispatched with orders to Negley and others. Soon after this the noise of battle was renewed; the enemy made a furious onset upon Crittenden, and the division of Van Cleve was overpowered by the vigor and number of their assailants, whom they were unable to resist, were driven from their position and forced into the river to make their escape; but reinforcements were at hand, and not a moment too soon. Col. J. F. Miller's brigade of Negley's division came to the rescue, and,

fording the river, they rushed upon the enemy. Checking the pursuit, they encountered the foe and drove him, and continued to drive him, capturing a battery and regimental flag. Other troops having joined in the pursuit, it was continued until they were ordered to cease. Crittenden's chief of artillery, Capt. Mendenhall, had now formed a line of fifty-eight guns, which made the welkin ring with their resounding thunder, and lit up the waning day with their lurid lightning. They protruded their red tongues from their open mouths far out into the darkness, as if all the Dogs of War had been let loose to set up pandemonium's reign. This was the beginning of the end. The mind of Bragg was now employed with his retreat; the snap and vim of his first day had oozed away. He made one more spasmodic effort on the next day, when he had another pyrotechnical display. Guenther and Loomis with their guns opened upon Round Forest and the battery ambushed there, when that splendid soldier and gentleman, Gen. John Beaty, with his brigade and some other troops, dashed in and through the woods, and we were no longer disturbed from that direc-

tion. The next morning the enemy was gone, and after burying the dead, we marched into Murfreesboro.

## CHAPTER IV.

### LIGHTS AND SHADOWS.



THE division of Gen. Rousseau was encamped near the town on the Salem pike. The weather was very inclement, with rains, freezes and thaws in frequent succession. The constant moving about of such a large body of men so tramped up the mud that it became over shoe tops in many of the streets of the companies. Our communication by rail with Nashville was intercepted, and about as soon as the road and bridges were repaired, they would be again destroyed by the guerrillas. So for a time it was difficult to provide the army with their most pressing wants, and this and the winter prevented aggressive movements being made.

Bragg had halted at Shelbyville, Tenn., sixteen miles distant, and acted as though he intended staying there until we came for him again. Forage for the horses became very