

and returned to his home in Pottsville, leaving the regiment in command of his nephew, Major John Wynkoop.

Disease also did its deadly work in our company during the latter part of the summer. Corporal John Hull succumbed at last to chronic diarrhoea. A truer soldier never drew a sword, than "Captain John." His manly form, for many months, stood as the right-hand post, on which the company formed line at roll-call.

Corporal John Eyre died in his tent, of typhoid fever. These were laid beside their comrades in the Soldier's Cemetery at Nashville.

The following members of Company "E" were elected to fill the vacancies in the list of corporals: Daniel Herr, better known as "Buster," John Rhoades, and George Adams.

A number of new recruits joined our company in the fall of sixty-two, consisting of George and Isaac Smith, S. B. Jobson, J. P. Haslett, W. C. Hughes, T. R. Dennis, B. Catherman, Lewis Catherman, and Q. A. Brown. These recruits arrived in time to engage in the "*Battle of Stone River.*"

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CHAPTER IX.

BATTLE OF STONE RIVER.

THE withdrawal of the enemy from Kentucky, after the battle of Perryville, exposed Nashville to the assault of the combined forces under Bragg and Breckenridge.

The advance of Rosecrans' army under McCook and Crittenden, relieved Nashville from siege, to the great disappointment of the enemy, who several times had arrogantly demanded its surrender.

Early in November, Rosecrans established his head-quarters at Nashville. At once he turned his attention to the equipment and re-organization of his army.

He assigned to General Thomas the command of the "centre," comprising the divisions of Rousseau, Negley, Dumont, Fry, and Palmer; to McCook, the "right wing," consisting of the divisions of Davis, Johnson, and Sheridan; the "left wing" was placed in command of Crittenden, comprising the divisions of Wood, Smith and Van Cleve. General D. S. Stanley was appointed chief of cavalry.

The first brigade consisted of the Seventh Penn-

sylvania, the Third Kentucky, and the Fourth Michigan, Colonel Minty commanding.

The second brigade consisted of the First, Third, and Fourth Ohio, Colonel Zahm commanding.

The cavalry in reserve, under Stanley's immediate command, was the Fifteenth Pennsylvania, known as the "Anderson Troop," the First and Second Tennessee, a Battalion of the Third Indiana, Battery "D" of the First Ohio Artillery, and the Fourth U. S. Cavalry, body-guard to General Rosecrans.

On Friday morning, December twenty-sixth, the Army of the Cumberland was put in motion toward Murfreesboro. The weather was damp and cold. The "Old Seventh" led the advance all day on the Murfreesboro road. Heavy skirmishing commenced about ten miles from Nashville. The enemy's pickets fired from stables and cedar thickets. Two of our battalion were wounded early in the day. At Lavergne, fifteen miles from Nashville, the "Johnnies" made their first stand. A brigade of infantry and a battery of artillery, belonging to Crittenden's corps, were ordered to the front. Our guns opened on the enemy's artillery, and the infantry advanced into the woods to the right of the village. A sharp engagement followed, resulting in the capture of some prisoners, and in driving the enemy from his strong position. Night closed the

scene. It was disagreeable to bivouac on the open field. It rained during the greater part of the night. Next morning (Saturday) the enemy had disappeared in force. Owing to the heavy condition of the roads, the centre and right wings of the army were retarded in their progress. The resistance on the part of the enemy seemed more *stubborn* on the right than in our immediate front. We advanced only four miles beyond Lavergne, and camped in front of the enemy Saturday night.

On Sunday, the whole army rested. Nothing disturbed the peace and quiet, but the occasional shots fired by the enemy's pickets.

At daylight Monday, the army moved forward. Every foot of ground was stubbornly contested. Our cavalry, deployed in line of battle, and supported by infantry, advanced through cornstalks, woods, and streams. Heavy cannonading was going on to our right on the Nolensville pike. Detachments of Hardee's corps were resisting the advance of our right wing. The "Anderson Troop," the Fifteenth Pennsylvania, pushed the enemy at full charge for six miles, on the Nolensville pike. A heavy loss was suffered, however, late in the evening, in an unfortunate attack upon two regiments of infantry in ambush. Major Rosengarten and six men were killed, and Major Ward and five men were wounded.

Tuesday, the thirtieth, was busily occupied in

driving the enemy behind their breastworks, and into their rifle-pits in front of Stone River. The divisions of Davis and Sheridan had severe fighting to do in order to get into position on the right of Negley. Before night-fall, our army was in line of battle, covering a distance, from flank to flank, from four to five miles. Crittenden's corps occupied the left, resting on Stone River, Thomas' in the centre, and McCook's on the right, resting on the Franklin road. Confronting this line of battle was Bragg's whole army, consisting of three corps, aggregating about sixty-five thousand men. Breckenridge's confronted Crittenden, Polk's corps opposed our centre, and Hardee's corps confronted our right wing. Both armies lay upon their arms that night within gun-shot of each other, waiting for the dawn of the last day of the year, which should witness one of the bloodiest battles of the war.

That night the commanding generals of both armies had in mind the same identical plan of battle. Rosecrans proposed to cross Stone River on the left, and drive Breckenridge before him through the streets of Murfreesboro. Bragg was massing his forces on *his* left, proposing to rout McCook, and bag the whole Federal army in the fork of Stone river and Overall creek.

At daybreak of that memorable Wednesday, the battle opened in dead earnest on the extreme right.

The "Seventh" was hastily detailed to form a line of couriers in rear of the battle front, for the purpose of conveying messages from one wing of the army to the other, and to stop stragglers from skulking to the rear. Rosecrans had already crossed the river with two divisions, and was preparing for a vigorous assault on the enemy's right, when the battle opened on our extreme right. The heavy cannonading caused Rosecrans to halt, and inquire into the issues of the battle. Soon it became manifest that our right wing was yielding ground before the advancing columns of the enemy. Our lines seemed to melt into the earth before the terrific fire of overwhelming numbers. We shall never forget the awful scene presented in the cedar woods in the rear of Sheridan and Negley's divisions. Stragglers first appeared, who reported that the whole army was annihilated. We tried to stop them, but you might as well try to stop a herd of buffaloes in the midst of a hail-storm. They were routed, and they defied the whole Union army to stop them. Next came the wounded men, with bloody faces and mangled limbs. The enemy was close behind. The air was shrieking with shot and shell. The shower of minie balls was cutting the limbs and the bark from the trees. A number of the wounded huddled together in a kettle-shaped hollow or depression in the wood, where they were partially sheltered from the leaden hail that was

mowing down everything before it. A road was hastily cut through the cedars with axes and hatchets, and portions of Sheridan's artillery were taken to the rear on a full gallop. The wheels striking the stumps, cannons and caissons seemed to be flying in mid-air. The enemy pushed forward rapidly, and seemed to be irresistible. To an observer on this part of the field, everything seemed to be lost. Sheridan had lost all his brigade commanders, his men were out of ammunition, the enemy had gained his rear, and now there was no alternative but to fall back to a new position.

The first man the writer saw after emerging from the cedar thicket, was Rousseau, riding among the teams which had camped in an open field between the woods and the Murfreesboro pike. His voice was heard clear and distinct above the din of battle, crying: "*Clear this field: on this ground the battle must be fought!*"

The teamsters, for once, got up in a hurry. They mounted the saddle-mule, cracked the whip, and off they went up the pike, four wagons abreast, on a full charge.

In ten minutes the field was cleared. Colonel Shepherd's brigade of regulars lay on their breasts with muskets in hand just at the edge of the woods. Thomas planted three batteries on the hill a short distance in the rear, supported by infantry. Beatty's brigade threw their knapsacks on a pile, and lay

down in rear of the guns. The exultant enemy soon emerged from the wood and fell under the fire of Rousseau's division. The brigade of regulars quivered under the shock. The men were loading and firing while lying on the ground; Colonel Shepherd was riding his horse along the line, cheering his men. The sight was truly sublime. The writer can never forget that officer. His manly form is imaged forever on memory's page, and his name shall be cherished as one of the noblest heroes of the war. His promotion to Brigadier-General for gallant service on this day, and in this critical hour, was well deserved. The guns on the hill were double-shotted with grape and canister, and when the enemy came in close range they poured death and terror into the advancing columns, sweeping down whole platoons at a single discharge.

But the charging lines closed up the gap, and, intoxicated by former victory, advanced again and again to the assault of Thomas' corps. Rousseau instructed his men to reserve their fire from the enemy until they could see the "white of their eyes."

For the fourth time the enemy was repulsed, and driven back to the woods at the point of the bayonet.

After a brief lull in the battle, the assault was renewed farther to the left, in front of "Round Forest," which was the key to Rosecrans' position.

corps, with reinforcements from Brecken-
 vere hurled repeatedly against this position.
 ns knew the importance of holding this
 He superintended its defence in person.
 ritical moment, when our lines began to
 he rode up to a brigade, composed largely
 Catholics, and said: "Soldiers, cross your-
 nd march forward." These words, coming
 ir commanding general and a brother Cath-
 ant something, and the "Irish brigade"
 rward and put the enemy to flight. Dur-
 errible encounter, Rosecrans' chief of staff,
 Jaresche, was beheaded by a cannon ball,
 ing by his side.

this terrific battle was going on between
 try and the artillery, the cavalry was
 on the flanks and rear. The Fourth rég-
 de a gallant charge on the Wilkinson
 to save an ammunition train belonging to
 corps. The "Seventh" made a charge
 ernoons to re-take a hospital, which the
 d captured a few hours before. During
 he enemy's cavalry, under Wheeler and
 attacked our wagon trains in the neigh-
 f Lavergne. They captured a number of
 ls, picked up several hundred stragglers,
 ge number of wagons, and ran away with

This general stampede among the team-
 d great excitement at Nashville. Strag-

glers reported that Rosecrans' army was completely
 surrounded, and would be compelled to surrender.

At the close of that day all was quiet in front,
 but for our side it was indeed "blue Wednesday."
 The right wing of the Union army was driven
 from its position, losing ten thousand men in killed,
 wounded, and missing, and thirty pieces of artillery,
 and now lay in fragments along the Murfreesboro
 road, forming a right angle with the centre and left
 of the original line. Both armies watched each
 other with a wakeful eye that night. The
 "Seventh" served on vidette duty on the right.
 We sat on our horses weary and hungry. With
 heavy eyelids and distended pupils, we strained
 the optic nerve to penetrate the thickening fog—to
 catch the outline of the victor of yesterday and the
 antagonist of to-morrow. We shall never forget
 how hard it was to keep wide awake. The eyelids
 would drop in spite of all we could do. By beating
 the skull with the fist, and pinching the ears, we
 managed to keep sufficiently wakeful to halt the
 "Grand Rounds."

Thursday morning, New Year's day, opened
 bright and cheerful. Bragg expected Rosecrans to
 retreat. He thought he had punished the Federal
 army so badly that he would have nothing more to
 do than to follow the retreat and complete its utter
 destruction. After feeling the strength of our lines,
 he found that he had more to contend with than a

few *skirmishers*. The forenoon was occupied by an "artillery duel" between the two armies. The firing of one hundred and fifty cannon rent the air with bursting shell, and shook the earth like the roar of distant thunder.

Neither army ventured to make the assault. Thursday night passed quietly. Friday forenoon another "artillery duel" was fought. The enemy's cavalry was again in our rear, embarrassing the passage of trains, and ascertaining the facts concerning Rosecrans' movements. Bragg was anxious to hear that he was retreating, but Rosecrans did not propose to retreat as long as he had plenty of ammunition. Our cavalry attacked Wheeler's command, and recaptured a train. Colonel Milliken, commanding the First Ohio cavalry, was killed by a pistol shot, while using his sabre in a hand-to-hand conflict.

On Friday afternoon, an ominous stillness reigned over the field for a few hours. The "Seventh" stood in line on the high ground to the right, where we had a magnificent view of the whole battlefield. A strange feeling of expectancy seemed to leap from heart to heart like a spark of electricity. Something mysterious was in the air. It was like a calm before a storm.

At three o'clock the silence was broken by a volley of musketry on the left.

Every soldier sat in breathless suspense as the rattle of musketry and the booming of cannon increased in intensity.

We could see the white columns of smoke rise above the scene of conflict. The firing seemed to come nearer to us; the anxiety became more and more painful. It was evident that Bragg had massed his forces against our left, and meant to crush Crittenden's corps, as he had that of McCook. But fortunately, Rosecrans was prepared for just such an emergency. He had fifty pieces of artillery planted on the north bank of the river, which swept, in front and from either side, the open field through which the dense columns of Breckenridge's corps were advancing.

The first line of our troops, on the south side of the river, broke at the first onset of the enemy, followed closely by their pursuers. The enfilading fire of the artillery mowed great swaths through the Confederate ranks; in the river they were met by grape and canister, and a galling fire of musketry. They recoiled before this sheet of flame. Again they rallied to the charge, and again they were swept from the field as by a tornado of death. During this dreadful onslaught, fifty-eight of Rosecrans' guns were bearing directly on the enemy's columns. When the broken lines began to reel backward, Colonel Miller's brigade, consisting of the Seventy-eighth Pennsylvania, the Thirty-seventh Indiana and the Eighteenth Ohio, sprang forward, and with fixed bayonets, charged across the river and over the open field, driving the flying cohorts before them.

Other brigades of Crittenden's corps rushed to the fray, and joined in assaulting a rebel battery; and when darkness dropped her sable curtain upon the scene, the enemy was retreating toward Murfreesboro, and a shout of victory went up along the Union lines, giving vent to long pent-up feelings, covering the hills and filling the valleys with echoes of resounding joy. The Twenty-first Ohio captured four guns, and the Seventy-eighth Pennsylvania bore off the colors of the Twenty-sixth Tennessee infantry. Two thousand of the enemy's dead and wounded were left on the field that night.

This practically ends the battle of Stone River. The weather on Saturday was wet and cold. It was unfavorable for any offensive movement. Saturday night Bragg ordered his army to fall back to Shelbyville and Wartrace. He made heavy demonstrations with his artillery on Saturday night before his final withdrawal.

Sunday was occupied in burying the dead. Long trenches were dug, into which the fallen heroes were laid side by side. Shoulder to shoulder they fought, and now elbow to elbow they sleep in death. Some were wrapped in their blankets, others had no other winding-sheet than the blood-stained garments they wore in battle. Many of our dead, who had fallen into the hands of the enemy, were stripped of their coats, shoes, and outer garments, leaving them almost naked upon the ground where

they fell. The sight of the slain was heart-rending. Friend and foe lay side by side on the gory plain.

Several prisoners we noticed going to the rear through the mud in their stocking-feet. Monday morning the cavalry charged into Murfreesboro. The rear-guard of the enemy was routed, and chased at the point of the sabre for four or five miles on the Shelbyville road. Suddenly our advance was checked by the well-directed shots of a concealed battery. After driving them from their position, night came on, and the Army of the Cumberland went into camp in and around Murfreesboro.

The writer took occasion to visit the Confederate hospitals in town. Almost every house displayed a red flag, indicating a hospital. The churches were filled with wounded. Every pew held a wounded soldier. As we entered the door, the stench arising from so many open sores almost drove us back. Pity and curiosity together conquered. We sat down beside a poor fellow, shot through from breast to back. A minie ball made a ghastly wound in his breast and lungs, from which the air was escaping at every breath. He was in his right mind. He was fully conscious that he had less than twenty-four hours to live. He seemed to rest in the sweet belief that he had fallen in a righteous cause.

Farther down the aisle we conversed with a wounded captain, who fell in the open field on the

ft, which was swept by the murderous fire of Pittenden's artillery. He said the destruction of Reckenridge's troops was frightful! The scene blood-shed was appalling! Men around him fell heaps. Heads and arms and limbs were discovered from the body by cannon-shot. The air is full of blood, of mangled limbs, of shrieking ell, and hideous with the groans of dying men.

"No human valor," said he, "could withstand such a tempest of iron hail." Many of our own wounded lay on the field uncovered, from Wednesday until Monday. As fast as they became able to move by rail, they were shipped to Nashville.

Before any rations could be issued, the Seventh was sent out on the Shelbyville pike to do picket duty: Hunger will drive any man to desperation. It drowns the reason, and paralyzes the conscience.

Up to this time there were a few members of Company "E" who conscientiously refused to eat any chicken or pork that was gotten out of the old-fashioned way of "paying for it." Our picket post was near a wealthy plantation, that was abundantly supplied with young porkers. Seeing one of these roughbred, fat-hammed Berkshires rooting after hogs in our immediate presence, the temptation was irresistible. The sergeant of the guard, a full-blooded Presbyterian elder, seized the hilt of his sword, and with scabbard dangling at his heels, charged furiously upon the intruder. He sat astride

of the animal, holding with one hand to the long bristles, and with the other delivering Herculean strokes—"right and left cut against hog infantry." Re-enforced by a deacon or two, the "*critter*" was ridden down, knocked in the head, carved into quarters, and hung up to roast by the genial camp-fire. We can testify from actual experience, that *sweeter meat* never passed the lips of mortal man.

The first Sabbath in Murfreesboro, we looked into the Catholic church, during the hour of service. In front of the altar, on his knees, was Rosecrans, the general of the army. Long and devoutly he knelt in prayer. He had abundant reason to thank God for the salvation of his army, and for the wonderful preservation of his own life. Near him knelt General D. S. Stanley, Chief of cavalry. We honor these men, though Catholics, for acknowledging their dependence on Him who rules the armies of heaven.

Those missing out of Company "E" were Sergeant Hughes, Miller, Brown, Karsteter, and Logan. Several of these received a free pass back to the regiment by way of Libby prison.

George Royer, a faithful soldier and comrade, died at Nashville. The "Seventh" lost all its wagons and baggage at Lavergne. All we had left were the clothes on our backs. The last grip-sack was gone!