

CHAPTER 13

While we were plundering the Confederate camp at Laurel Gap, Major Sweeney, with 400 men, had attacked Col. Holman of Wheeler's cavalry at Byrdstown, but had been repulsed and driven back towards Albany. Here, they were reinforced by Col. Brown, of Burnsid's, and Col. Whetherford, of Burksville and our two companies of scouts.

We lay here about three days confronting each other without firing a gun, as Col. Brown had orders from General Hobson not to force a fight, and as the Confederates seemed indisposed to fight. We just lay there in full view of each other.

The third day the Confederates were reinforced, and that night our command moved back to Monticello, and the enemy did not follow us, but moved back the next day to Byrdstown.

Our troops then crossed the Cumberland River to Burksville. Here we learned that General Hobson had succeeded in capturing, or destroying the command of Gen. Adam Johnson, who pretended to be recruiting for the Confederate service in Southern Kentucky, but who, in reality, was there for the purpose of menacing Hobson's rear. This compelled Hobson to dispose of him first.

We also learned that Gen. Johnson was a prisoner and badly wounded, full details of which will be given later.

Gen. Hobson had been advised almost daily of our movements to Gen. Wheeler's rear and its results, through his chief of scouts, Tom Palmer, who was well known by a great many of the older citizens of Green County, (Ky.) and who spent about as much of his time with the Confederates as he did with the Federals.

During all of these operations, Palmer was with Wheeler, but was in communication with others of Hobson's scouts outside.

So, Gen. Hobson was kept posted as to Gen. Wheeler's movements. It will be seen, that Hobson's object in sending our scouting party to Wheeler's rear in such strong force, was not only to cut off his supplies or destroy his forage trains, but to attract the attention, and keep him off his own left and rear while he operated against Johnson.

It was impossible for General Wheeler to judge our strength, as we were in the mountains. And besides, we attacked his trains in so many different places, so remote from each other. He naturally, supposed we were moving in several strong detachments. Thus, it kept the whole brigade maneuvering to watch us, and trying to cut us off.

In our trip to Wheeler's rear we lost six men killed and 21 wounded. We captured 12 prisoners, 59 mules, and over 100 guns and pistols. We destroyed 5 trains of provisions and forage, and thousands of rounds of ammunition, besides killing and wounding, as we were informed, over 50 men.

I will say, that I am not boasting in this narrative of being more daring in our expeditions than the Confederate soldiers, or that we were more gifted in war craft than they, for they did many things equally as valiant.

We were as often surprised, as we surprised them. While General Morgan, and his valiant band of brave Kentuckians were the most crafty body of men ever known, Gen. Wheeler had men under him who would have undertaken almost anything for lost cause.

But, for hazardous scouting expeditions, I believe Kentucky and Tennessee turned out more men who considered it more like a sport than a dangerous mission, than all the other states combined.

I am not writing a history of what the Confederates did, but, what we did, and what I saw or knew actually occurred.

We now had orders to await the coming of General Hobson, who was to concentrate his forces along the Cumberland River below Sabina, preparatory, as all supposed, to attacking Wheeler's forces, which occupied the opposite side of the river. About this time, a funny circumstance occurred which I will try to relate.

The colored people had been free just about a year and a half. Immediately after their freedom, they commenced a revival, which had been kept up by meeting every night and Sundays since. They had a mighty host of converts, and thereon, hinges the story I now desire you to read.

After one has lived a long time on camp grub, even if he has plenty of coffee, crackers, green bacon and rice, he gets hungry for a good old-fashioned country dinner. I was in this condition, so one day I wandered off through the country in quest of a change of diet.

In a broad hollow, remote from any settlement, I came upon an old log cabin filled with negroes. Their preacher was expounding the scripture in the good old fashioned way that made a sinner groan, and the righteous shout.

All became still for a moment after I entered. They seemed to be surprised, but after eyeing me very closely, either my uniform satisfied them, or they took a new hold upon the promises, for they broke out afresh with their acclamations of approval of the minister's words. Such as.

"Dat's rite; yes, God; Bless de Lord; I'm so glad I'se born to die no mo," etc. It was a true service of devotion and seemed to be catching, for I was soon feeling good and joined them heartily in their worship.

When the meeting was over I had a long talk with the good old minister. He told me they would have a basket meeting and Baptizing next day, which was Sunday, and invited me to come and bring some of my good comrades with me.

Of course, I accepted the invitation, for if there is anything a soldier enjoys, it is a basket dinner where good mutton, chicken, light bread (Good salt-rising) cake and pie is plentiful. I could hardly wait for the next morning to come. I dreamed of cake and pie and mutton all night.

The next morning I selected several of the best boys I could think of, who would behave themselves. None of them were extra good, but reasonably moral and polite. I was afraid to tell them, while in the camp, where I wanted them to go, for fear they would tell, and then the whole regiment would want to follow us.

When we got to the old cabin we found enough negroes congregated to fill a dozen such houses, but it was a fine day and the old minister soon had a bench in front of him for a pulpit out under a tree. It seemed like some of the other boys had learned of the meeting, for there was about a dozen other soldiers there beside our squad.

We listened to a splendid sermon, one, not as Paul said, in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but, one filled with the Holy Ghost. Not one with the enticing words of man's wisdom, but overflowing with thanksgiving and the acknowledgement of the power of God over man in behalf of the friendless of the world.

After the sermon, all of us soldiers were seated on the grass. On nice clean linen was placed a bountiful supply of good things. O, how happy Brother John Berry would have been at that feast.

After dinner, the names of 40 candidates for baptism were called and all were present. We had all behaved so well, and the congregation took such a liking to us, that one old fat fellow insisted that one of God's soldiers should form them in line and march them to the river, meaning one of us.

The boys shoved me forward and told me to do my duty, saying at the same time, I was a "Preacher". I soon had them in line, and after a few maneuvers, had them pretty well drilled in forming fours. I then placed two files of soldiers in the front and rear as guards of honor, and by fours, with the old preacher and myself in the advance, I marched them down to the Cumberland River, two miles away.

The minister gave out line after line of a favorite hymn as we marched along, which was answered in song, by hundreds of voices, followed by shouts of exaltation.

When we reached the river, I waded in to measure the depth, and not being very careful, I was soon floundering in the water over my head. The deacon had made a mistake in locating their baptising place, but, moving upstream a little further, we found a good place, and after a fervent prayer by the old preacher, thanking God for 'saving one of God's soldiers from a watery grave, and for our friendship toward them, and our love for our Heavenly Father,' the baptising commenced.

We soldiers were all seated on high rocks overlooking the place of baptism, and while we sat there, the old fat darky with the yellow bandana around his head, came dancing up, shouting, "I wans one of God's sogers to baptise me."

He kept repeating this as he shook each of us by the hands. The old minister came up from the water worn out, sat down and said, "Brudern, if any of you is a minister of the gospel, I'd be so glad if you'd help me out a little, for I is jist woh out, an jes only baptised 20, and the good Lord has gin me 20 mo' to baptise."

Again, the boy pushed me forward saying, "here's your minister, old man."

I was pulled through the crowd of shouting negroes, the old fat fellow holding the tail of my blouse, shouting, "I want ye to baptise me fust, marse soger," and when I promised to do so he shouted, "I'se gwine to be baptised by a God's soger."

I soon had all those who had not been baptised in line and we marched down into the water, two by two, fatty and me leading.

When we reached a depth of a little above my waist, I stopped, but he said, "Massa, dis yer ain't enuf water fo me, I wants all my sins washed away."

As he pulled me into deeper water I motioned the parties following, composed of men, women and children, to stop. Old Fatty pulled me on until the water was up to my shoulders, and very swift. It seemed he believed in much water.

Here, I turned him with his back upstream, crossed his hands over his breast, took a good hold in the crossings of his galluses, and pronounced the ceremony.

Everything was as still as a grave. I then laid him backwards in the water and attempted to raise him to his feet. But, the water was so swift, both feet flew up, the strong current broke my hold on his galluses, and away he went down the

river. He floated like a barrel, passed over a deep pool and around the high rocks into an eddy.

The soldiers mounted the rocks, and looking down on him, saw he was floating near the branches of a tree that had fallen with its top in the water. One of them yelled, "Grab a root."

Old fatty grabbed a limb, and by this time I had recovered my wits, looked toward the congregation, and found every candidate had retreated to the bank. I then requested them to sing some appropriate hymn, and everyone began, "Pull for the shore, sailor."

Old fatty pulled himself up on a limb, blew his nose, knocked himself on the side of the head to get the water out of his ears, and then he said, when the singing ceased and all was still, "I clars fo de Lo'd, bruddern, ef dis ---- foolishness don't stop, somebody's vallyable nigger gwine to git drowned heah, sho."

He then crawled and went off, up the hill, and never did look back. The old preacher then said, "Brudder, I specks I better try baptising de res', as I'se rested now, an you is a little too light fo de water, anyhow."

My account of General John Morgan's raid through, and for hundreds of miles to the rear of our lines, which was the boldest and most daring act ever committed by any leader of men, and whose brave followers seemed to be imbued with the same spirit, was reported finished in THE RECORD, issued Oct. 21st, 1898. I was away, and the editor had no more manuscript, and had no means of knowing but that I had finished my narrative of that wonderful exploit.

But, I am not willing to pass this most daring adventure by so lightly, or, without giving due credit to those concerned. Though an enemy at that time, and having both a dread and hatred for that brave band, yet, they have my sympathy and respect and admiration, and I feel it my duty to give them full justice so far as I know how, for privations, fatigue, and other hardships that men are heir to. No flesh and blood in the shape of men ever volunteered to endure such a sacrifice.

The raids around our lines while McClelland was trying to push his great army toward Richmond; by General Stewart, in 1862, and the raids in Grant's rear, through Maryland, and even to the suburbs of Washington by Stewart and Mosby in 1864, and the raids by Stoneman and Kilpatrick through Georgia, and those by Gens. Kautz and Wilson to Lee's rear, around Richmond, although on a larger scale, and more damaging to the communications of the enemy, were

insignificant when compared with the hardships and dangers and distance traversed by Morgan and his followers through Kentucky, Indiana and Ohio.

No men ever merited greater praise from those who sympathize with the lost cause, than Morgan and his brave men. No men ever made greater sacrifices for the love of country or cause than they, and that too, without a thought of compensation, or a word of praise in the future.

Even when they reached the line which separates Kentucky and a state on whose soil no armed rebel soldier had ever trod, and with almost an assurance that no quarter would be given if captured north of the Ohio River. While hundreds of them could have turned back and escaped, yet, they said, "no; where you lead, we'll follow. If you die on a scaffold, we will also die. If in prison, in dungeons, we will be thy companions. If exiled, we will be with you. We are willing to sacrifice all for our cause."

Such are the thoughts of our true patriots. By their acts, ye shall know them. Today, rejoicing; tomorrow, in sorrow; Today, feasting, tomorrow starving; today, lying in the shade, joking, singing, jumping, wrestling, or playing games, tomorrow trudging along through mud or snow, with the cold winds whistling through worn and tattered rags. Sleeping on the cold, wet earth without tent or fire, sick and foot-sore, sleepy tired and hungry. Trudging through the dust with bare and blistered feet, suffering for water. Today marching to victory, free and happy, tomorrow, in prison or under the gallows, or buried in a shallow grave with perhaps a hand or foot protruding.

Such is the rapidity with which these extremes of fortune come to the soldier in time of active warfare. How wonderful it seems, that men will do so much for the welfare of home and friends.

It is hard to know that such brave men are passing away after suffering so much for a cause they believe to be right, with so little praise or attention. Those of Kentucky who went into the Confederate service, not only left their homes, families and property, but left it in the hands of the enemy.

Many of them parted from home and friends at the hour of midnight, never to return to them again, while others left, to return after witnessing four years of strife and bloodshed, broken in health, and disabled by disease and wounds. Many who were wealthy when they left, had poverty staring them in the face when they returned to their once prosperous homes.

This often causes me to think, how merciful we have been to Spain after she had sent 260 of our innocent sailors to an untimely grave, to compensate her, by paying her 20 million

dollars for her despicable treachery, and for what we had won from her in battle. And how ungenerous we have been to our own people.

I had much rather seen the heroes of the southern states receive a hundred millions than to have given Spain one cent. They were discussing a right guaranteed to them by our Constitution, and the only wrong they were guilty of, lay in a perverted judgement, and for this they suffered.

And what the Confederates suffered during those four years of war, our Union boys also suffered, for we often fared equally as bad.

I will now leave the many acts of Morgan's brave followers untold. There are men now living in the county who followed him in all his raids, and they could tell the wonderful story more in detail. L. Durham, White Cox, Fred Cox, Richard Webster, and many others of our county, men who could give us a good deal of unwritten history that we may never get, but the half will never be told.

I will now continue the unwritten history of our gallant, energetic county man, Gen. E.H. Hobson, who, at the time of which I write, was to be found recuperated in health after the Morgan raid sufficiently, to again take the field, and was in command of the first Cavalry Corps, with headquarters at Lexington, Ky.

General Burbridge was at that time in command of the department of Kentucky with headquarters also at Lexington.

General Hobson was ordered to Lebanon, to take command of all the cavalry forces in southern Kentucky, which consisted of the First, Thirteenth, Thirtieth, Thirty-Seventh and Fifty Second Kentucky, the Eleventh Michigan, Twelfth Ohio, Fifth and Sixteenth Colored Cavalry, stationed at Burnside's Point, Glasgow, Burksville, Bowling Green, and Lebanon.

These forces, under General Hobson, were to confront Wheeler, who was on the south side of the Cumberland River, and to drive Gen. Adam Johnson, who was in command of the Confederate forces in Southern Kentucky, from the state, and if possible, destroy his army.

General Johnson had his headquarters at Cadiz, Webster County, Ky., within easy supporting distance of Gen. Wheeler.

Gen. Hobson moved from Lebanon Aug. 10th, 1864, with three regiments of cavalry. Before reaching Calhoon, he sent his scouts in search of boats with which to cross the Green River with his command.

Having already ordered the Fifty Second Ky. to move south of

Cadiz to cut off Johnson's retreat, Gen. Hobson, and his entire force crossed Green River by means of one little old boat, after which, he hurriedly surrounded the town of Rumsey, which was full of people who had fled Cadiz to escape from Johnson, who had orders to enlist all he possibly could for the Confederate service and disarm the country.

Hobson's object in surrounding Rumsey was to prevent anyone leaving town to inform Johnson of his presence. For up to next morning after our troops surrounded Rumsey, or until we fired on Johnson's pickets, he had no thought of an enemy being near.

At Cadiz, Johnson's pickets were driven in and he was surprised by a charge from Hobson's cavalry before he was fairly ready to do battle, and was compelled to retreat south. In this attempt he was met by another surprise when he encountered the Fifty Second Ky. drawn up in line of battle ready to strike a deadly blow. This routed Johnson's army and scattered it in every direction.

Here, General Johnson was badly wounded, being shot through the temples in such a way that both eyes were forced from their sockets and resting on his cheeks. He was taken to a farm house and then sent for Gen. Hobson, who quickly responded to the call and promptly offered any assistance in his power to render.

Gen. Johnson assured Gen. Hobson that he was well cared for, as he had his own surgeons attending him. He only asked that he be given protection. General Hobson gave him papers that would protect him and furnished a guard so that he would not be molested, and also granted the privilege of removal to his father's home at Henderson, Ky., as soon as his wounds would permit his removal.

General Johnson apologized for his request for Gen. Hobson's presence, saying, he had not called him for the purpose of diverting his attention from his plans. Here, Gen. Hobson assured him that he had neglected no duty, as his men were in full pursuit of Johnson's army under his orders, and he would capture the whole command by the next morning.

This, he accomplished, as he caught up with them the next morning at Canton Tenn., and immediately attacked them with the Seventeenth, Thirty Fifth, Fortieth and Fifty Second Kentucky. After some severe fighting, some of Johnson's men plunged into the river and a number of them were drowned; many more were killed and wounded, and about 60 were captured. A large number of horses, guns, wagons, and army stores were also captured.

During this raid, Gen. Hobson kept his left and rear guarded against an attack from Wheeler by the First, Thirteenth, and Thirty Seventh Kentucky, Eleventh Michigan and Sixth Colored

Cavalry. General Johnson is still living, but sightless in Texas.

After Gen. Hobson had accomplished the destruction of Johnson's army, he moved up the north side of the Cumberland River with his army, to form a junction with his other brigades, watching Gen. Wheeler who was on the opposite side. This movement was made more as a dare than anything else, as Wheeler had a much larger force than Hobson had under his command, and was therefore better prepared for making an attack than Hobson.

Wheeler, however, did nothing, and Hobson moved on up the river leisurely to Burksville and Marrowbone, Ky., where he was joined by his other regiments. Except the Fifth and Sixth Colored, and the Eleventh Michigan which were left at Burnside's Point.

He was now fully prepared to move on Wheeler, and drive him back from the Cumberland River. We waited anxiously for the command to move forward, which we expected at any moment. But while Hobson's staff were eating a fine dinner one day at Uncle Bob Elliot's near Burksville, a courier arrived with an order to Gen. Hobson from Gen. Burbridge, to move at once with all his available force, to Camp Nelson, Ky., leaving a sufficient force to watch Wheeler.

The order directed him, after equipping himself with Quartermaster's supplies, to report to Gen. Burbridge at Mt. Sterling, Ky., carefully avoiding Lexington and Richmond, Ky.

Gen. Hobson immediately took the Thirteenth and Thirty Seventh Ky. and started for Camp Nelson. The order was a great puzzle to us all, but, little did we think that we were now to undertake such a trip within the Confederate lines as General Morgan had taken the year before to the rear of our lines. And, although it was much shorter, and occupied only about two-thirds of the time, it was equally as dangerous, while the privations suffered from hunger and fatigue were still greater.

Both of these raids of which I write, and which, undoubtedly were two of the hardest made by any army, virtually commenced at Burksville, one for the Union and one for the Confederacy, and both proved disastrous.

While Gen. Hobson succeeded in bringing his army back to Kentucky, his losses from battle, exposure and capture were very great. It required the most perfect strategy, continued vigilance, daring deeds and rapid movements to save his whole army from being captured as Morgan's was. If Hobson had continued under the command of General Burbridge, he most certainly would have been captured, but, luckily, that Gen. and his staff deserted us on the field of battle, accompanied by his chief of staff, Gen McLean, after giving up the command to Gen Hobson.

CHAPTER 14

"Blood will tell," is an old axiom, and for ages has never been disputed, though sometimes favoritism pushes a man forward who will make a disastrous failure, and hold back those who would succeed. A man who does a brave or heroic act carries within his veins a quality of blood that urges him forward, and sustains him through some extremely dangerous enterprise, though it may never have been denoted by any act of his ancestry.

Little is said in history of Hobson, Wolford, Morgan and his followers. Little is said of the many brave acts of privates, which, if they had been done by some favorite officer, would have been heralded to the world, and handed down to history. As the recent act performed by Lieut. Hobson at Santiago had been. With no disparagement to Lieut. Hobson's feat of sinking the Merrimac, I believe that I have known many acts performed by private soldiers in our late war, that would discount that act, two to one.

Yet, little was ever said about those acts, or their perpetrators. Parental tradition and favoritism have given more honors than actual service.

Gens. Hobson, Morgan and others of whom so little has been said in history, were men of emergencies, who volunteered to do what favorites failed to do through fear or incompetency. Monuments and busts adorn the avenues, parks, and halls of Washington, Philadelphia and other great cities of our country, of men who were creatures of favoritism, and to which alone, history could truthfully ascribe the right of conspicuous memory.

I have seen in those halls and parks, busts and statues of men that in my short life, and lack of opportunities, had never heard or read of. And when I look at them, their features, and names indicate more English and French than anything else. I wondered if they had done more to make this nation a free republic than the Irish, Scotch or Germans had. Whether they had merited the honor of valor on the field, or had it been given by traditional, "Blood will tell?"

It is the blood of those who act, not to those appointed to high places on account of heroic acts of an ancestor, or political favor. The son of capital is no greater than the son of labor when a strong arm is needed in the defense of our country. The greatest and best are those who have taken the helm voluntarily in case of emergency, or when true patriotism was required.

Whose blood foretold the acts of courage and devoted patriotism of Hobson, Kilpatrick, Wilson, Wolford, Morgan, Mosby, Forrest, Wheeler, and their followers? It did not need a shield like that of old, on which the heroic deeds of it's

possessor were emblazoned to show the genuineness of their knighthood. In those days, the chivalrous spirit of the American Soldiers, who offered themselves as living sacrifices on the altar of their cause or country, have proven, on land and sea.

In war, or in peace, the best qualities of genuine knighthood they uphold, regardless of nationality or the past dissention between the north and south. In all the important principals of free and independent government for and by the people, with proper credit, the heroes of 1861-65 would stand head and shoulders above the heroes which ancient history loves so well to honor, both in heroic deeds, and strategy.

They were their equal in courage, and greatly exceeded them in human sympathy and courtesy. A Morgan was just as necessary, for the work laid out for him to perform as was a Lee, who commanded the Confederate Armies. A Hobson was just as necessary and as serviceable to the Union, as was Grant, who took the sword of Lee at Appamattox.

Gens. Burbridge and McLean were both appointed over Gen. Hobson as his senior, not for any act of heroism or exhibit of strategy they had made on the field of battle, but because of favoritism. They were graduates of West Point.

As has been stated, Gen. Hobson started, as he was ordered, from Burksville, with detachments of the 13th and 37th Ky. At Lebanon Ky. he picked up the 35th and 40th Ky. and moved to Winchester where he met Gen. Burbridge and his chief of staff Gen. McLean with detachments of the 26th 30th and 39th Ky. 12th Ohio and 11th Michigan and the 5th and 6th Colored Cavalry, which had been ordered to Winchester by Hobson via Somerset.

While this command represented at least eleven regiments, it was only parts of regiments, some having only one battalion in the expedition. We had, in numerical strength, only about four thousand effective men.

To us veterans, these two "dress parade Generals", used too much discipline, as we thought, for much fight.

However, on Sunday morning we were ordered into line, after a regular "red tape" inspection in which 500 of General Hobson's horses were condemned, dismounting that number of men, and reducing until we had not over 3500 effective men.

We were then ordered to draw two and a half days rations and eighty rounds of ammunition each. We now started south, , no one but our commanders knowing our destination.

We were instructed, when we drew our two and a half days rations, that they were to last ten days. This, of course, would be supplemented by any provision we might be able to

find in the country through which we passed. And right here I want to say, that I don't think God intended that anything except animals could subsist on paw-paws and grapes, to live in the portions of Virginia that I saw. It was a most dismal, tumbled up nest of hollows and hills, capped with rock and covered with dense forests.

It was soon known, from the direction that we were traveling, that we were to go far into the Rebel lines, as our course led us in the direction of Virginia. Passing through Menifee and McGoffin counties, we reached Pikeville, Ky. on the second day and rested overnight. This was the last rest we got, day or night, until we returned to Kentucky, twelve days later. Except one night in Richland Valley, and the night we lay before Saltsville.

Our Advance guard and sharpshooters had commenced a long range skirmish with the Confederate scouts early in the evening before we reached Pikeville. Here we crossed the Louisa Fork of the Big Sandy River and started in the direction of Laurel Gap, which we knew to be occupied by a strong Confederate force.

The boys all soon became more and more disgusted with Gen. Burbridge, who would order us to climb the banks out of the road when he and his staff wished to pass us.

We were now in Virginia, and every hill seemed to be swarming with bushwhackers. Gen. Hobson was in command of the advance from the time we left Pikeville, until we reached Saltsville, Va. It was soon known that we were to attack Gen. Early and Jackson's forces who blocked our way, and drive them from the only pregnable point by which we could reach the interior of Virginia.

Gens. Early and Jackson then held Laurel Gap, Saltville and Bull's gap, while Gen. Breckenridge held Morristown, which was within easy supporting distance, with a force, all told, of about 15,000 men. All these places were well fortified and well supplied with artillery. Why such a small army was sent against such a strong one, and one too, that was so well fortified, was never known, except to those who ordered it, and even they could have had no idea of the difficulties with which we were even now contending.

Our artillery consisted of twelve mountain howitzers and we carried our surplus ammunition on one hundred pack mules. The country through which we passed was traversed by only one road which was, most of the distance, a very fine mountain road. This passed over Sand Mountain and Laurel Gap, which was the only mountain passage for miles along the Cumberland Mountain chain.

We were now marching night and day. As we drew near Sand Mountain, the Confederate scouts and bushwhackers increased

their fire until puffs of smoke were seen to belch forth from every cliff or hill for a mile to the right, left, front, and rear of our line of march. We could not leave the road to go in quest for them, for there were no roads to travel and no way to reach the bushwhackers except on foot, and to seek them in a strange country, in which they alone were familiar, was too hazardous an undertaking. So, we just had to let them whack away, and for this reason, we were glad sometimes that night would come.

Gen. Hobson managed to keep his artillery well up to the front, knowing that it would be useful in the event we found the Confederates in force.

At Sand Mountain the enemy offered us stubborn resistance, this being the first stand they had made in force. The 37th Ky. was in the advance, with the 13th Ky. immediately in their rear. Next came our artillery which was soon in position and opened on the enemy. After a few shots from our cannon, the enemy was dislodged and retreated toward Laurel Gap.

The 13th Ky. were now placed in the advance and pushed the enemy back until we reached Laurel Gap, which we did on Saturday, I believe, about 2:00 PM. We found this position strongly guarded with both men and artillery. It's rugged cliffs made it look to me like we had struck a snag, But Gen. Hobson immediately attacked it with the 30th Ky. in the center, while he moved the 13th and 35th Ky to attack the left and right flanks, and held the 37th and 40th Ky. in reserve.

The writer was sent to the left flank as orderly with the 13th Ky. which was dismounted and moved through the timber under command of Lieut. Morrison. As we were passing around under the hanging cliffs hunting for a safe place to scale the mountain, we were so close under them that the Confederates could not see to shoot us, but they commenced rolling large rocks down on us which wounded several of our men, including Major Rigney.

Col. Morrison first hallowed to them to stop, saying they were killing some of their own men, he thinking that one of our regiments had got upon the bench of the mountain just above us. He at last became very angry and commenced to climb the steep cliff, holding onto bushes that grew out of the crevices of the rocks.

Lieut. Hughes was climbing immediately behind him. When he got nearly to the top, a Rebel ran at him with a bayonet on his gun, exclaiming, "Hain't you dead--Yank?" Col. Morrison came tumbling down carrying Hughes with him to the bottom.

The Confederate fired at him, but missed. Both Morrison and Hughes were badly crippled.

Col. Morrison was sent to the rear and Major Rigney, though wounded, took command of the regiment.

Gen. Hobson gradually advanced his center while he was waiting for his right and left flanks to gain their positions. I returned to Hobson to inform him that the 13th had gained their position and were formed on the left awaiting his orders.

Just then, Burbridge sent him an order to charge the center and take the gap. Hobson sent word back, that he would take the Gap in his own way. I was then sent to Gen. Burbridge, who was two miles in the rear, with an order from Hobson to move his second brigade up within supporting distance.

This seemed to exasperate Burbridge and he sent me back with an order to Hobson, that if he did not charge the gap and take it immediately, he would send someone to take his place that would do it.

When I delivered the order, Gen. Hobson only said: "You tell Gen. Burbridge to go to h---. I will take this gap when I get ready, and in my own way or not at all." I knew the General was mad, so I waited for him to cool off a little.

Meanwhile, the bullets flew around as thick as flies in a hotel kitchen, while the bursting shells and bellowing cannons were making entirely too much noise for a fellow to just be standing around to listen to. The men at the cannons were ducking their heads like a country dog with a tin can tied to his tail.

I could not wait any longer, and as soon as I caught the General's eye, I saluted him and asked if I should deliver his message to Gen. Burbridge.

He answered quickly, "Yes, tell him to go to h---, and if he sends me any more orders, I will shoot his blamed head off."

I then rode back to Gen. Burbridge and said, "General, I have delivered your order, sir." He then asked what message Gen. Hobson had sent in return.

I answered, "Gen. Hobson says, for you to go to h---, sir, that he would take that gap when he got ready, and in his own way, or not at all; and if you sent him any more orders he would shoot your blamed head off." I said this a little brisk and loud so all his staff heard it. I expected him to knock me off my horse, but he only said, after looking me all over, "How dare you bring me such a message, sir?"

I answered that, "I had received that message from Gen. Hobson and that he had repeated it to me with apparent anxiety that I should deliver it correctly."

As I have stated, Gen. Burbridge and staff were about two miles to the rear of the field of battle, which was about as close as he ever got to the line of battle. Except the next day at Saltsville, when he was within half a mile of the field to consult with Gen. Hobson, who refused to go to the rear, but he had a hill between himself and the enemy.

By this time, we could tell from the sound of Hobson's guns, that he was charging the gap and the battle was raging all along the line from left to right. An orderly soon rode up and announced that the Confederates were retreating and that Hobson was in possession of Laurel Gap.

An exciting incident occurred just before we reached Sand Mountain. The writer was sent forward to notify Capt. Woods of Co. C, 13th Ky., who had command of the extreme advance guard and who had been attacked by two companies of Confederates. He had called for help and a battalion was being pushed forward to his relief.

When I got to the front I found his company dismounted and deployed as skirmishers, fighting the Confederates who were ambushed. When the Confederates discovered the advancing battalion at a distance, they commenced retreating. Capt. Wood ordered his men to their horses and we were soon in pursuit. The running fight which took place was very exciting. It suited me very well and I stayed with them to share the fun.

When we had run about a mile, one of the confederate companies was turned into a hollow that came down from among the hills, and formed an ambush about fifty yards from the road. This, we did not observe until we had passed them and they fell on our rear.

We were now pursuing a company of Confederates while another company were pursuing us, and a battalion of our men pursuing our pursuers. This made quite a mixed up mess, and for the next mile or so we had to fight for our lives and freedom, front and rear. A part of the time we were so close to each other that we used our carbines as clubs by which men knocked each other from their saddles, and riderless horses, maddened by wounds and excitement, were plunging and kicking among the combatants.

The rear Confederate company, finally, when they were pressed by the battalion, left the road and climbed the hills leaving most of their horses and a good many prisoners in our possession.

Gen. Hobson's command now crossed the bridge over Clinch River, but found that the river had washed the road entirely away. Hobson put his men to work digging a road along the mountainside for about three fourths of a mile, wide enough to move his cavalry and pack mules.

Here, we had to take the artillery to pieces and carry it around the mountain a piece at a time. Being under the fire of the enemy the whole time made this a very difficult task. Our whole force now moved down in the Clinch River Valley and rested on our arms until early dawn Sunday morning, with the 12th Ohio thrown out as pickets and skirmishers.

It now had been a week since we had drawn our two and a half days rations, and everybody was living on grapes, paw-paws and promises that we would get plenty when we captured Saltsville. I don't think there was a pound of rations in the whole command, unless it was on Burbridges special pack mules

Hobson fared just as the rest of us, washed his feet for supper, his face for breakfast, and did without-dinner.

One fellow was eating green-persimmons and when his captain ordered him down from the tree, he just eat away, saying that he knew what he was doing. "Yes, you are killing yourself," said the Captain. "No," said the soldier, "I'm just drawing up my stomach to fit my rations."

I was terribly hungry from the time we left Pikeville, until we returned to Kentucky. Of course, I got my share of paw-paws and grapes, but they didn't seem to answer the purpose.

In Richland Valley, near the farm of Rebel Gen. Bearn, I wandered off, up a small valley in search of something more substantial. I stopped several times and listened to hear a hen-cackle or a pig squall. On I went, risking the dangers of bushwhackers, until I came in sight of a house across a little sassafras field with a lot of horses hitched to the yard fence. These, I supposed, were some of our own men on the same kind of an errand as myself. I also saw a spring house not far from the house.

I hitched my horse and made for the spring house where I found a lot of milk, and a tin bucket with four rolls of butter in it. I drank all the milk I could, filled my canteen grabbed the bucket of butter and started for my horse. I was not far from the house when the men who had seen me come to the spring house came out. When I started to get over the fence into the field which was near the spring house, I looked toward the house and saw two men riding toward me in a lope. They were dressed in Rebel uniforms, and as I jumped the fence, I was ordered to halt.

By this time they were in twenty yards of me, but had stopped. I drew my navy and asked who they were. They told me they were Gen. Breckenridge's scouts. I immediately fired on them and both their horses reeled around before they were able to fire. By this time, several others had mounted their horses and were coming toward me.

I run through the sassafras bushes as fast as I could while the bullets fairly sung a tune around me. On the other side of the field the fence was high, and in rolling over this, I hung my bucket on the top rail which broke the pail and it fell onto the opposite side of the fence.

I reached through a crack and grabbed one of the rolls of butter and started on the run licking my hands as I went.

By this time they all had dismounted and were coming through the sassafras. Their bullets were coming uncomfortably close to my ears. Just before I reached my horse, he was grazed across the hip with a ball and he broke loose and ran.

A sergeant of the 26th Ky., who was out on the same errand with a small squad of men, heard the shooting and come up the valley to see what it meant. They immediately charged down on the Confederates, eight in number, and they scattered, after losing two of their men.

I went back after my butter and found it pretty dirty, but I divided it among the men and we ate it. We went to the house and filled their canteens with milk. We got about half a side of bacon, a bushel of corn, dug a few potatoes, got a few apples and a few twists of tobacco. This was about all we could find.

During the night as we lay in front of Saltsville, the pickets of both sides were hearing of each other all night, but had orders not to fire unless forced to do so.

During a council held that night by Burbridge, Hobson, McLean and Harrison, Gen. Burbridge complimented Gen. Hobson very highly for his management of his troops in the assaults at Sand Mountain and Laurel Gap.

Our march to Saltsville had now consumed seven days and nights, and I do not think there had been an hour of that time that we were not skirmishing, or engaged in battle with the enemy. The movement had been so loudly talked of before it was commenced that the enemy was aware of our coming and were entrenched, besides largely out numbering us. Gen. Breckenridge had sent re-inforcements to Gen. Early the night we arrived in Clinch valley.

Early Sunday morning, Oct, 3, 1864, which was a beautiful morning, our pickets commenced skirmishing, and as Saltsville is only five miles from Clinch Valley, we reached there about ten o'clock and immediately attacked. All day long we fought as only hungry men can fight, for we well knew that if we failed that we could not stand seven more days of hard marching on empty stomachs.

As I turned my haversack wrong side out and was licking the dirty crumbs and grease from the seams, one of our commissary

sergeants commenced bragging about the good things his mother was cooking that morning while she was waiting for the preacher. This made some of us mad, for a hungry stomach can't bear too much tantalizing to a miserable man, than to parade before his mind a comfortable home with it's Sunday dinners.

I told him to shut up his lying and try to think how our commissary had figured out that two and a half days rations, which only lasted three days, would make a man fight harder for the next four days without a bite to eat, than full rations would. "But, we are on light marching orders," chimed in a hungry looking officer; "then we have the privelege of foraging off the country, which is full of grapes, paw-paws, persimmons, and --" "yes," said I, interrupting him, "Rebels and clay hills. If a crow had to take a journey through the part of Virginia I have seen, in order to keep from starving, he would have to take his rations with him."

"Yes," chimed in an old sergeant, "I took ten men yesterday while Hobson was working with his cannon and pack mules around Laurel Mountain, and went five miles up a valley foraging. And after whipping off a squad of Breckenridge's Rebel scouts from a house, I told the boys to just load up everything in sight, and while some of the boys were keeping the johnnies off, I took the rest and went through the whole shebang and only found a pack of pop corn and a twist of tobacco. There was not a hog, chicken or cow on the place. The old lady said that Early's men had cleaned out everything long ago.

There is not enough in this country to keep one man alive all winter, unless coons, much less an army of over three thousand men."

This was about eight o'clock in the morning. Gen. Burbridge's plan of attack on Saltsville was to assault with his whole line, from right to left, which was about two miles in length. The main assault was to be made by Gen. Hobson, who was in command of the center with the 13th, 26th, 30th, 35th and 40th Ky. and two pieces of artillery.

Gen Ratcliff commanded the left flank with the 5th and 6th Colored, 12th Ohio, and 11th Michigan regiments and four pieces of artillery. As the 1st Ky. had been sent to pound gap to prevent the enemy from making a flank movement from that direction. This left Burbridge entirely without a reserve to draw from in case of emergency, to which Gen. Hobson called his attention.

I never knew where Gen. Burbridge's other four pieces of artillery was, but I am sure that not over eight pieces were in action, and those could only be used at close quarters. I will say here, that Gen. Burbridge had no way of ascertaining any information regarding the strength of the enemy, either

as to their numbers, heavy ordinance or position. The country, with it's numerous bands of guerillas under Champ Ferguson, Sue Monday and other guerilla chiefs, who infested every cliff and valley, challenging every stranger they met, made it impossible for him to use his scouts to any advantage. So, he was attacking a hidden foe without any knowledge of either their immediate strength or the strength of those who lay in easy supporting distance.

Our commanders, were therefore surprised when, in the afternoon they found that the Confederates had in reserve a large force of both cavalry and infantry, and were not only able to hold their own at their works, but to spare a force to go to our rear.

It was now about 9 o'clock, and we were lying in a line of battle about 500 yards from the Confederate works, waiting for orders to move forward. Gen. Hobson rode up and down our lines encouraging the men by saying, That if we fought like men we would take the place in three hours.

Near the center of this line he dismounted and was standing near a fallen hickory tree, searching the Confederate works with his glasses, when he observed a puff of smoke from the Confederate artillery. He dodges behind the hickory log just as the shell struck it, and tearing off a slab from it, plowed through our lines and burst in our rear. This was the first cannon fired in the battle.

Our artillery opened on the Confederate works vigorously, but our howitzers, which, like a shot gun, are only effective at close range, done us little service.

All day long our center swayed back and forth, with our lines sometimes within one hundred yards of the Confederate forts.

Gen. Hobson was in the thickest of the battle continually, encouraging the men, riding his milk white horse from regiment to regiment giving orders in person. It seemed impossible to reach the Confederate works, their fire was so terrific and they seemed to have our range as perfect as if they had measured every foot of ground on which we fought.

Hanson suffered considerably on the right, while Ratcliff, on the left, became engaged at close quarters with overwhelming numbers. The writer, being sent with orders to Gen. Ratcliff in answer to his call for reinforcements, telling him that the 13th Ky. would be sent immediately, saw the 5th and 6th Colored charge right into a Confederate rifle pit, with bayonet, which was defended by a brigade of Confederates, and drove them back into the town of Saltsville. When they came into close quarters with the Confederates they invariably used their guns as clubs instead of using the bayonet.

All their white officers had deserted them in the charge, leaving a negro sergeant in command. Here the 13th Ky. came to their assistance, but had only got about half way up the hill when Lieut. Smith, of Company K, and Sergeant James Guy of Company L, fell mortally wounded. Sergeant Guy fell close by the side of Comrade Jack Stults, who now lives in Campbellsville, (Ky.). A great many others of the 13th whose names I cannot now remember, were killed and wounded in the charge.

CHAPTER 15

The enemy were reinforced by fresh troops which were hurled against us in overwhelming numbers and we were recalled, leaving our killed and wounded on the field. Comrade Hawkins, who was supposed to be one of the bravest men in the regiment, as he belonged to the original family of the notorious Hawkins', proved to be a very poor fighter, as he lay down and pulled a large flat rock over his head as a protection from the flying bullets. He was made a great deal of fun of afterwards by the boys of his company.

When the 13th Ky. were recalled, the two negro regiments came bounding out of the Confederate works badly used up, leaving many of their dead and wounded on the field. Their wounded, who were not already dead, were clubbed to death or bayoneted by the Confederates. I saw one old colored sergeant in command of what was left of his regiment.

After the bayonet charge, they retreated over a little hill and the blood was pouring from his mouth. When he had rested awhile he got up and said, "come on boys, youse rested as long as I has."

He soon had his men in line, and when they reached the top of the hill in which the Confederates had advanced their lines, they were met by a withering fire, but they charged, and drove the Confederates again from the hill. Here, a Confederate force which was ambushed opened on their left. Their sergeant was killed, and a charge at their front demoralized the whole body and they fled to the rear.

When a negro is mad he is the best fighter I ever saw, but when he gets rattled and takes a notion to kill, you had as well try to stop a cyclone.

At this moment, their white officer, who was slinking to the rear, was ordered by Gen. Ratcliffe to stop them. This, they undertook to do, running before them with drawn swords, but the negroes clubbed their guns and knocked them winding, and never stopped until they were entirely out of range.

Soon after noon, Gen. Breckenridge arrived with more fresh troops and took command of the Confederate forces. Our men were now exhausted from hours of continual battle, and at the same time, suffering from intense hunger. Hobson, Hanson and Ratcliffe all needed reinforcements, but neither could spare men to succor the other.

Gen. Hanson had reached a position within two hundred yards of the Confederate fortifications, which was on a hill at least one hundred and fifty feet high. He was also flanked on his left by a Confederate rifle pit, while Clinch river, which was very deep at that point, lay between his line and the enemy's works.

The enemy's fire from both cannon and musketry became so intense that Hanson and his men had to lay down close to the ground. Gen. Burbridge ordered him to make a charge, which Hanson attempted to do, but fell badly wounded, while his men were also falling thick and fast, and they again had to stick to the ground.

Gen. Hobson, on, learning of Hanson's predicament, sent him the 35th and 40th Ky. and two pieces of artillery. Gen. Hanson, being disabled, Col. True, of the 40th Ky. took command of the brigade.

Gen. Breckenridge now hurled a large force of fresh troops against each of the commanders, and Ratcliff was especially crowded. The battle now, especially on our left, became a hand to hand combat, it being Breckenridge's intention to turn our left and cut off our retreat to Laurel Gap.

About 3 o'clock PM, Gen. Burbridge learned that Gen. Breckenridge was sending troops around the mountains to our rear to occupy Laurel Gap and cut off all hope of our retreat. He now became very much concerned for his own safety and sent for two companies of the 26th Ky. armed with colt rifles, as a bodyguard.

When this was accomplished, he sent the writer to Gen. Hobson, placing him in command of all the army now in line of battle in front of Saltsville, excepting his staff and bodyguard. He never intimated to Hobson that the Confederates were moving to our rear, neither did we know this until we reached Laurel Gap on our retreat and found the bridge destroyed.

Hobson, naturally, supposed that Gen. Burbridge was taking care of our rear. Gen. Hobson accepted the command, saying that he would retain Capt. Hall and a few others of Burbridge's staff who had proven themselves very efficient officers, adding that he would not give a d--n for any of the rest of his staff.

Gen. Burbridge now left the field with his staff and body guard, taking the nearest route from our lines, leaving his army to providence and Gen. Hobson. He managed to avoid being cut off by the enemy, having crossed Laurel Gap bridge just before the Confederate Scouts reached it. He reached Cincinnati at least a week before Gen. Hobson reached Kentucky with his tattered and exhausted army, taking with him the curses of the whole army that he had so disgracefully deserted. Even his old regiment the 26th Ky.

When I carried the information along the line to the left flank, that Hobson had assumed command, it was heralded with shouts of joy from every throat. This caused the Confederates to believe that we were being reinforced and checked their

determined assaults on our left and center. We now realized that our attempt to capture Saltsville was a failure, and that our chances for light diets for the next six or seven days was no joke, but a certainty.

Capt. Gorin, who is one of our county's best citizens at the present writing, and who, at the time, commanded a company of the 26th Ky., charged up a steep hill with his company to clear it of some very annoying sharp shooters. He made the ascent with little loss and drove the enemy back towards their works. When he reached the top of the hill he was tantalized with such remarks as, "come on Yanks, we have got plenty to eat up here and you will get your bellies full. We will feed you all the pills that will last you a lifetime."

Captain Gorin held all the ground he had gained until he was drawn off at night in the retreat, in which he commanded the extreme rear guard. As his rear passed, trees would be felled across the roads to prevent the enemy's pursuit. One of the axmen that felled the trees that night was our Countyman, John Womack.

We now took advantage of the lull in the enemy's efforts, caused, I have no doubt, by the thought that we had been reinforced, and stormed their lines with shot and shell until darkness put an end to hostilities

This, we welcomed with pleasure, notwithstanding the fatigue of a full day of battle added to hunger. It was now well known to all, that Burbridge had deserted us in the face of the enemy, but few knew what Hobson's intentions were until it was fully dark, and we commenced building fires all along the line. Regiments were moved to the rear and ordered to build fires all along the roads toward Laurel Gap.

This was to make the enemy think that our reinforcements were camping in our rear along the road. The 26th Ky. was left to keep up the fires along the battle line, while the rest of the army with its artillery and pack teams were silently retreating. When we got well out along the road, the 26th called in their picket line by whispers, and they followed after the silent retreating army.

Through carelessness of someone, Sergeant J.D.Holland, brother of our countyman R.B.Holland, was left on vidette with his squad of ten men. But, after some hours had passed they began to grow suspicious, and on examining the road with lighted matches, they found that the whole army had left them. They caught up with us at day break the next morning.

General Hobson had managed to get all our wounded off the battlefield that were able to travel. Gen. Hanson, Lieut. Elzy Smith, Sergeant Jim Guy and many others that the writer knew well, and who were badly wounded, were left on the field near the Confederate works and were captured.

Lieut Smith was killed the next day in the field hospital by his cousin, the guerilla chief, Champ Ferguson, on account of an old grudge. They had been enemies as well as neighbors and relatives a long time before the war commenced. This, I may speak of more fully later as it is my intention to give as full an account as possible of the exploits of the guerilla chieftans, Ferguson, Hamilton and Richardson, and the deaths of the two latter, in which Lieut. Smith played quite a conspicuous part.

When Hobson reached Laurel Gap, five miles from the Saltsville battlefield, he found the bridge that spanned the gulch with precipitous sides, had been torn away to arrest his retreat, and a large force of Confederate cavalry waiting to give him a warm reception. Breckenridge had not had time to get any infantry or artillery to his rear.

Hobson realized that a very short delay would find a strong force in his front, as well as rear, and that our chances of being captured were increasing with every passing moment.

Having heard of some stacks of wheat down the river, he ordered a brigade to carry them up on their horses, which they did, and before daylight we had a bridge built with wheat to cross on. The making of this fill, like the cutting of the road near this place a few days before, was done under a steady fire from the enemy, though we now had the advantage of the darkness. When we crossed and got at the johnnies we soon drove them from the gap.

By this time the enemy had missed us from before their lines at Saltsville and were marching in pursuit in force. About 10 o'clock next day, they attacked our rear vigorously. Gen. Hobson in person, commanded the rear with the 13th and 26th Ky. until we passed over Blue Ridge Mountains.

At Holston River, Gen. Hobson ordered two guns of his artillery to be spiked and thrown over the bluffs, as some of his artillery horses had either been killed or broken down, and he hadn't enough stock left to draw them.

At Sand Mountain, we found our way blocked by Gen. Williams with a brigade of Wheeler's cavalry. They were formed in line, in a wall, a chosen and advantageous position, and I have no doubt, they thought they had us dead sure. But, hungry men when almost in sight of food are not so easily resisted, as it proved in this instance. We went against them with such fury and determination, that we swept them from our front like chaff before a whirlwind, capturing 150 of their men and killing or wounding over 40.

In this battle, we lost, in killed, Col. Manson, of the 11th Michigan, and 12 men and about 30 wounded. Gen. Williams was afterwards censured by his government for his lack of Generalship in letting Hobson escape.

In this battle, an incident occurred which I will relate.

When the battle first commenced, Gen. Hobson placed the two colored regiments, which had been greatly reduced in numbers on account of casualties at Saltsville, on our right, under one of their white Majors, among some cedars, with an old field in their rear, with orders to hold the place at all hazards. This was done on account of a movement being made towards our right rear, by a regiment of Confederates.

Before the regiment attacked them, their white Major was seen leading his men across the old field on a trot. I, at the time, happened to be Gen. Hobson's immediate, attending orderly and was standing near him. Hobson saw in a moment that the Major was retreating from his post, through fear. If not checked, their retreat would uncover Hobson's right rear and endanger the whole army.

He grabbed his reins, put spurs to his horse, and went right for that Major. With pistol in his hand, he rode right up by the Major's side before the coward knew he was near. He grabbed his horse's reins and gave him such a jerk that the Major's horse fell back on his haunches. Then, pointing a cocked pistol at his head he said, "You cowardly scoundrel, didn't I tell you to hold that place (pointing to it) until I ordered you to leave it? If you demoralize my army and cause it to be captured I will blow your d--d head off. Now, sir, turn your columns around and go to the position I assigned you, and hold it until further orders, or I will kill you."

The cowardly Major was so scared that he could hardly give the command to his men, but he was more afraid of Hobson than the Confederates. He got back in his position and did some good fighting, never yielding a foot of ground.

At this time, Hobson had all he could attend to, as Breckenridge's cavalry, who had followed us continually from Saltsville, and had harassed our rear every step for a hundred miles, was upon us while Williams was in our front.

We were attacked on the right, left front and rear and had no one to help us except Ratcliff and his subordinates. This was our last battle, and Breckenridge, seeing Williams' failure to bag Hobson, withdrew from the pursuit. How thankful we were to get a little rest.

Just after we left Sand Mountain, we found a barefooted, bareheaded woman with a short linsey dress on, standing on a rock with a piggins of buttermilk on her head, asking for the 'gineeral of the army'. When Hobson rode up and asked her very politely what she would have, she said, "Are you the gineeral?"

He said, "this is what is left of me, madam."

"Well," she said, "I have heard that your men were a starvin' an I've brought you this piggin of buttermilk. It's all I've got, but I don't allow any body to starve around here while I've got plenty at home."

"Well, this is very kind of you," said Hobson, as a tear trickled down his cheek. "But where did you come from, I haven't seen a house for the last five miles."

"Oh," said she, "I live about five miles up in the mountains an you can't get thar critter back without going about fifteen miles around the mountain. Now you are welcome to what I've brung you, help yourselves."

The boys raised such a yell that she was a little frightened, until the general explained to her that they were only rejoicing over her patriotism.

"Law," she said, "I've shot at many a Rebel, besides, I've got a man in Woolford's Yankee Critter Company that I Hain't seed fer over two years, an he's as good a fiter as anybody. I tell you, I'd be awful glad if I jest node he'd git some good buttermilk if he was right hungry, fur he does lub hit better en anything in the world. He says it fills him up quicker en anything he can get. I'd be mity sorry to hear he was starvin somewhere."

About this time the 1st Ky. were passing, and her husband rode up and was passing by. But, he recognized her, and checking his horse, he called from the road, "Hello, Sal, what in the devil yer doin down here? What yer got in the piggin?"

She explained that she had brought some buttermilk to the boys. "Any left?" said he. "Not a drap," said she, turning the piggin bottom upwards. (The fact was, General Hobson had drank every drop of it, and when some of us remonstrated, he said, he was at the head of this army.)

"Bob'" said Sal, "haint yer goin by home?" He looked back and listened as if expecting to hear firing from the rear and then said, "No, but I'll try to get around to seein yer all next year." and then he rode on, not even saying goodbye. He never left the road to greet her. "That's a darn good gal," he said to one of his comrades as they rode along. "If she could only keep down her temper, but she's got grit, I'll tell yer, equal to any of em."

When we got safely out of the clutches of Gen. Breckenridge's Cavalry, and they had ceased to pursue us, and all the excitement of battle was over, hunger came to me ten fold greater than I had ever felt it. I was crazy with hunger. When I dozed off on my horse, I would dream of fine victuals being set before me, and when we were permitted to sleep in peace the first night, I dreamed at least twenty times that I was at home, and that our neighbors had come in from every

part of the county to greet me. Fine tables were set before me on which was everything good to eat. As I sat with the pangs of hunger ravaging both mind and body, I wondered too, is this a dream? Then I would say, no, for there is my father and mother, and there is uncle Martin and aunt Lizzie, yes, and there is my little sister whom I loved so well, and there comes Mr. and Mrs. Hughes. Whoop, I would yell, this is no dream.

I was sleeping between two comrades who woke cursing me for disturbing their slumbers. I was yelling like a Comanche. When they would get me awake and settled down, I was again soon in dreamland to see the same thing. I would now wonder if Ma would have any ham, then I would look over the table with longing eyes at the white spread covered with dishes.

Yes, there was a large covered dish with brown brown gravy. I would then wonder if she had any milk, butter, eggs, coffee, everything, in fact, I could think of that I used to love so well. Yes, there they are, all in their proper places as they used to be before I knew what hunger and war meant. I would wonder why ma didn't say, "Johnnie, come and get a piece of ham and a biscuit, for you look hungry." Just like she used to before I was a soldier.

No, I thought, I am a man now, I am a soldier and ma don't know I am so hungry. At last, when the table was loaded with good things, my Mother, God bless her, I can see her now as plain as I did in that dream feast, came in, and laying her bonnet aside, showing a flushed face from working hard over a cooking stove, and would say, "Well, come, sit up to dinner. It's ready at last."

At these words I would jump to my feet as I thought and make for the nearest seat at the table. This would again arouse my comrades who were sleeping on either side of me. And, besides the disappointment in not getting a good dinner, I would get a genteel cursing.

The next evening after this night of torture I got acquainted with a burly mountaineer. I introduced myself through a friend of mine called Apple Jack. Peter, for that was his name, I found, thought a great deal of Apple Jack, and after I had given him a couple of snorts, I told him I was hungry and would like for him to get me something to eat.

He took me home with him where we arrived late at night and found his mother had retired. The two lived alone. When Pete pushed the door open, the old lady said, "Pete, that you?"

"Ye-hic-y-e-s," said Pete.

"Had any supper?" "No," said Pete.

"Wal, said the old lady, "there's a pone of bread in the

cupboard and a pot of cabbage at the end of the table."

Pete got the bread and found the pot as we thought, and we pitched into eating.

After we had been eating for a while the old lady turned over and said, "Pete, what yer doin'?" "Eatin'," said Pete.

"That ain't the end of the table the pot is at, stir up the fire so yer can see."

Pete stirred up the fire, and we found we were eating cabbage leaves and stalks out of the slop bucket instead of the pot. We now found the pot and finished up on the cabbage, and I went away next morning after eating a breakfast of bread, bacon and coffee, as happy as could be.

We reached Lexington Ky., where we rested up for a few days and got some fresh horses. Our command was scattered, some remaining at Lexington, some were sent to Burnside's Point, Burksville and Glasgow.

I could never imagine what kind of report it was possible for General Burbridge to make without being censured by our government without he made it from Gen. Hobson's report. He came to Lexington a few weeks after our return and stopped at a large hotel. A colored waiter asked him to have some salt. Burbridge picked up a chair and knocked him down saying, "The next time anyone hints Saltsville to me I will kill them."

The writer was sent to Gen. Fry at Camp Nelson with maps and plans of the Saltsville fortifications and the country surrounding Saltsville, which were procured by Gen. Hobson while on the raid, for the future use of the government. I was detained by Gen. Fry a few days at Camp Nelson. Then I was sent to Gen. Stoneman at Knoxville, Tenn. with these plans, as he was to command the next expedition to Saltsville, from the rear, which I will speak of later on.

Gen. Hobson had now been in the saddle almost continually from Aug. 10th to Oct. 19th and was completely exhausted, which would compel his retirement for at least a while. This raid had so endeared us to Gen. Hobson that we almost idolized him. We knew that to him alone, we were indebted for being saved from the prison pens of the south. We also knew that we had been led into a trap by the weakness of his superiors, and against his judgement and protests.

He had been identified with us for a long time, and our immediate commander for fifteen months, and we felt that none could successfully fill his place, at least in affection and esteem. No commander, living or dead, had the love and confidence of his troops in a greater degree than Gen. Hobson.

He has washed his face in the same branch, stood around the same campfire, and dipped coffee from the same kettle with privates, sergeants or commissioned officers. But, with all his familiarity with his men, he never lost their love and respect. When he gave a command we knew it was no joke and obeyed with alacrity.

Then how could we but regret to see him depart from us? We were now put in the division of one we detested above all others. We were placed in a division under Gen. Burbridge who was to participate in the next raid upon Saltsville, which was to commence a month later under the supreme command of Gen. Stoneman.

After the writer had delivered Gen. Hobson's maps of Saltsville and vicinity to Gen. Stoneman at Knoxville, he delayed his expedition until he could see Gen. Hobson and consult with him personally, which I learned he did after getting his plans, adopting them, and was successful in his raid in Nov. and Dec. following. He captured Bull Gap, Morristown and Saltsville with many prisoners and stores. This I will try to speak of more fully later.

TEXAS LETTER

Mt. Vernon, Texas, Aug. 14th 1899

I have finished reading the Record of the 11th inst., and how vivid is the picture of that awful day and night at Saltsville. Comrade Russell draws a pen picture of that event that is like a panorama. I could almost hear the thunder of the enemy's guns and the screeching of the shells as I read the history of the battle.

There are, however, two slight mistakes in his account of the Battle.

First, not all of the white officers deserted their colored troops. Several boys from the 26th Ky. took commissions in the 6th Colored U.S. Cavalry, and they went with their commands and led the charge on the Confederate works. Henry O. Wise was killed; Rufus Hackett was wounded, and had to be left in the hands of the enemy; E.E. Shull led his men on in the charge and stayed until the last with them. There may have been some others whose names I have forgotten.

The other mistake is only a slight one; The rear guard was commanded by Sergeant Sam Harrison, and the writer was in command of four men who were placed as videttes of the rear guard and were left long hours, until Sgt. Harrison discovered the fact that our right had left the field, and he sent one of the boys up to where we were stationed with the glad orders to withdraw from our post and follow the retreating army at a distance, to give warning of the approach of the enemy. We realized the position we were in and scarcely drew a full breath until after we got through

Laurel Gap next morning.

I am glad you are having nice showers and some pleasant weather there. It makes me sigh for the "Old Kentucky Home". Here we are being broiled, baked and blistered by the sun. Scorched, withered and dried up by the hot winds.

The corn crop is fair, but the cotton crop is nearly ruined; May possibly make half a crop.

There is considerable sickness here at this time, consisting of slow fever, congestion, and malarial fever.

J.D.H.
(John D. Holland)

In answer to comrade J.D.Holland, of Mt. Vernon, Texas, I will say that it is a great pleasure to me to note the comrade's letter in the last issue of the Record.

In answering it I will say that I have no doubt that I made the assertion too sweeping when I said all of the white officers of the 5th and 6th colored cavalry deserted them when they charged the Confederate works at Saltsville.

I will say to the readers of my reminiscence, that it was not my intention to make it appear that all of those officers were cowards. As those of them who had left some of our old veteran ranks and taken commissions in colored regiments were too brave or fearless to cower before an enemy.

I was personally acquainted with Capt. Shull, Gen. Burbridge's Assistant Adjutant General, on the last Saltsville raid, and to whom I was special Orderly until we left Bean Station, Tenn., and knew him to be a brave and efficient officer.

I also concede to comrade Holland, the correctness of his statement regarding his being left on videt near the Confederate fortifications on that memorable night. I must say that he had a very narrow escape, and I congratulate him on this late day on his good luck.

As this is the first time that anything has been written about the Saltsville raid, and as I have had so little information from others, having to depend entirely on what I saw and heard myself, I feel that I have done exceedingly well to make so few mistakes.

I have had letters from many who participated in these raids, Congratulating me on the correctness of my statements.

In conclusion, I will say that I am thankful to comrade Holland for his comment that I had made a complete pen picture of the raid, which was one of the greatest raids made. I only regret that I cannot tell it all.

One incident I wish to relate occurred when we captured Saltsville on the second raid, in Dec., is that among other bushwhackers captured, was a buxom girl about 18 years, armed with a carbine and two navies. She had captured some of our men on our first raid. She also wore a new cavalry jacket and an officer's vest and cap, but wore a woman's skirt.

Adjutant Gen. Shull, to whom I was aid, was questioning her. She said that her sweetheart and herself had been in the scouting business for about two years, and that they had made lots of money out of it. That he was killed on our first raid and she made the fellow howl that killed him.

She said that she got over a thousand dollars out of our first raid. When she caught sight of me she asked if I was not a girl. This got the laugh on me, and I asked her many questions about the first raid and found that she knew all about it. She said they followed us back towards Ky., as far as any of their men went, and that they allowed her to keep five of the best horses out of the fifteen and that she had sent them home, but she would not tell where she lived.

She said, that the man who buried our dead gave watches, pistols, knives and jewelry, and that she had sold them all for good prices. While we were talking, she said, "Say, little fellow; I'll call you that anyhow; but I believe you are a gal, was you an orderly to the Generals when you come up, here in Oct.?"

I told her I was. "Well," said she, "who was that old devil that rode around so brisk on a white horse?"

I told her it was General Hobson. "Well," she said, "lead never was made to kill that fellow, for I shot at him eighty times and never touched him, and he is the only man I ever shot at more than the second time without fetching him."