

DEEDS OF VALOR

FROM RECORDS IN THE ARCHIVES OF THE

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

HOW AMERICAN HEROES WON THE

MEDAL OF HONOR

HISTORY OF OUR RECENT WARS AND EXPLORATIONS

FROM PERSONAL REMINISCENCES AND RECORDS OF OFFICERS AND ENLISTED
MEN WHO WERE REWARDED BY CONGRESS FOR MOST CONSPICUOUS
ACTS OF BRAVERY ON THE BATTLE-FIELD, ON THE HIGH
SEAS AND IN ARCTIC EXPLORATIONS.

AMONG OTHER RECORDS THE STIRRING ADVENTURES OF:

Admiral W. S. SCHLEY
Admiral GEO. DEWEY
Lieut-Gen'l NELSON A. MILES
Maj.-Gen'l WM. R. SHAFTER
Admiral D. G. FARRAGUT
Admiral D. D. PORTER

Admiral GEO. W. MELVILLE
Lieut. G. W. DeLONG
General A. W. GREELY
Commander W. D. CUSHING
Hon. L. P. di CESNOLA
Gen'l F. J. BELL

Hon. WM. F. CODY, (Buffalo Bill)
Gen'l MARION P. MAUS
Gen'l ARTHUR McARTHUR, Jr.
Gen'l DELEVAN BATES
Gen'l JULIUS STAHL
Hon. JOHN C. BLACK

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INTRODUCTION BY

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Illustrated

COMPLETE IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME I

THE PERRIEN-KEYDEL COMPANY

DETROIT, MICH., U. S. A.

1907

A CHARGE IN WATER AND DARKNESS



MILTON T. RUSSEL,
Captain, Co. A, 51st Ind. Vol. Infantry.
Born at North Salem, Ind., Sept. 25, 1836.

"ABOUT nine o'clock on December 29, 1862," writes Captain Milton T. Russel, "an orderly came quietly along the line of sleeping soldiers and in a low tone called my name, and said that Colonel Streight wanted to see me. I went a short distance with the orderly and found the colonel and General Harker standing by their horses in consultation. They had just returned from a reconnoissance. The colonel said: 'Russel, take your Company A, move quietly to the front until you come to the river (which was about 200 yards in our immediate front), wade across, form your company on the south bank, and wait for further orders.' He explained that General Wood, our division commander, was ordered to cross and attack the enemy at that point at daylight the next morning, and he wanted to know more about the ford and find whether or not the enemy were close down on the bank of the river. This move was necessary in order to fully develop the enemy's position. It required but a moment to return to my company and form it in line, as the men had rolled up in their blankets without removing any of their clothing. It was cold and chilly, and all the men were lying on their arms. Without further ceremony the company moved off. As we left the regiment, the officers were busy forming the men into line to support us. We moved down and crossed the river, wading it with the water

Stone River.—On the 30th of December, 1862, the Confederate General Bragg had concentrated his army of 62,000 two miles in front of Murfreesboro, Tenn.

The position of the Union Army 43,000 strong, under the Reserves, was on the west bank of Stone River. The line ranged north and south three or four miles, the left wing touching the river.

On the 31st Johnson's Union Division was furiously charged and swept away by the enemy's left under Bragg, who followed up his advantage by driving off Davis, and rushing upon the next division under Sheridan, who retired after an hour's hard fighting, losing 1,630 of his men.

Rosecrans had massed his artillery on a knoll in the rear, which was assailed by four charges of the enemy, who were repulsed with great loss.

Bragg then brought up Breckenridge with 7,000 fresh men, but his attacks were also unsuccessful.

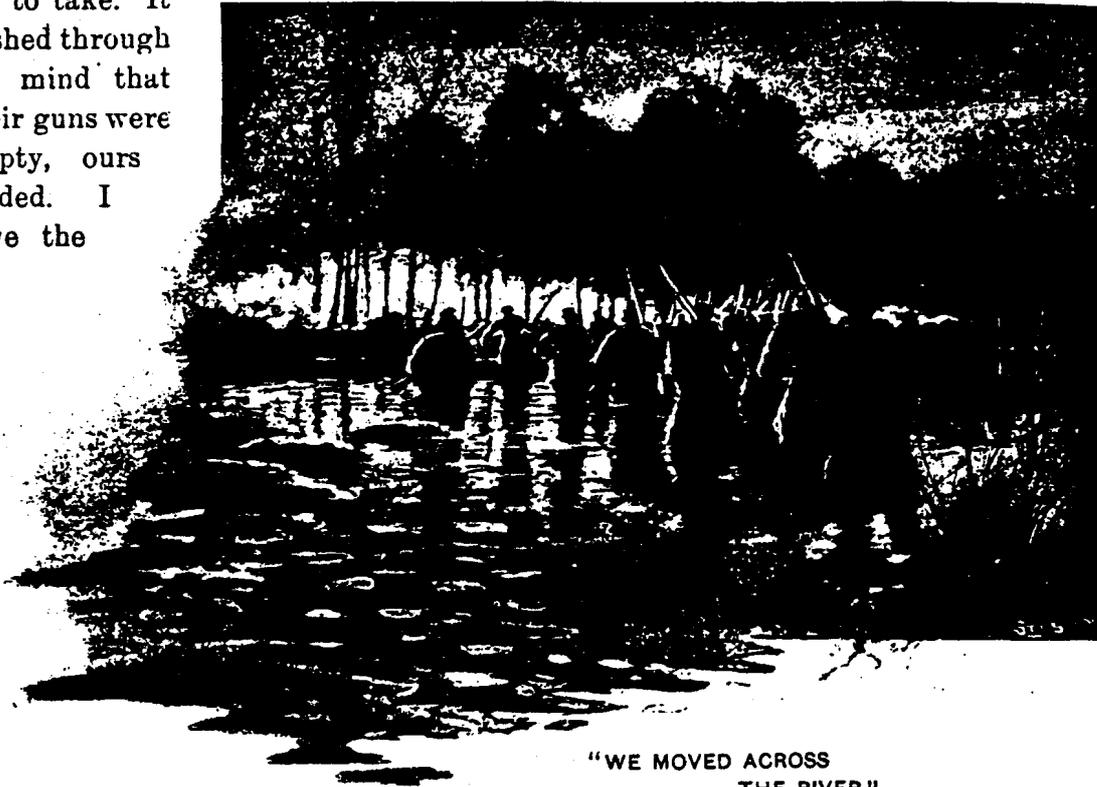
On the 1st of January nothing was done. On the 2d, Rosecrans threw a force across the river, and, with his artillery on the heights almost destroyed Breckenridge's Division, which was ordered to drive him from the river.

On the 3d Bragg withdrew. His loss was 14,700 men. On the Union side there was a loss of 11,553. More than a third of our artillery and a large portion of our train were taken.

in some places up to our hips. Talk about cold water or a cold bath, it was so cold that our teeth chattered!

"As the company was nearing the opposite shore a terrific volley was fired from behind a rail fence not over forty steps in our front. The enemy, being on higher ground than we, fired too high, their bullets taking effect in the regiment that was standing in line where we left them on the opposite side of the river. There were but two ways out of the trap: one was to recross the river, the other was to advance. There was only a second in which to decide which horn of the dilem-

ma to take. It flashed through my mind that their guns were empty, ours loaded. I gave the



"WE MOVED ACROSS
THE RIVER"

command: 'On right into line, double-quick, charge'; and in less time than it takes to tell it, we were over that fence. My boys emptied their guns, fixed bayonets, and went at them. The best troops on earth will not stand with empty guns and receive cold steel. The Johnnies gave way and Company A, Fifty-first Indiana Volunteer Infantry followed right at their heels. Before I could bring the men to a halt the rebel line was driven back 400 yards and the desired information obtained. Had the charge proved a failure I would have been court-martialed for exceeding my orders. As it turned out all right, Uncle Sam has conferred this beautiful medal on me, but no captain ever had the honor of commanding a braver body of troops than I had in that charge."
