THE BATTLE OF FRANKLIN

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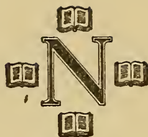

THE BATTLE OF FRANKLIN

November 30, 1864

The Bloodiest Engagement of the War Between the States

By

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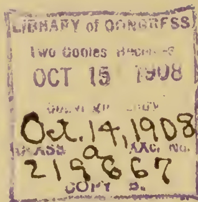

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To the memory of Edward Cary Walthall, a Major-General in the Confederate States Army and, later, United States Senator from Mississippi. A patriot-soldier of knightly counsel and heroic deed; a statesman of lofty ideals, pure in purpose and sturdy in performance; and a sage to whom duty to his people was duty to God, this great Mississippian lived without fear and died without reproach.

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The battle of Franklin, Tennessee, November 30, 1864, was, on some parts of the line, the bloodiest of the Civil War.

Never on any field did braver men go. Nor did men ever dare and do more than was done by the Confederates to whom it fell to bear the heat and burden of that fateful day. That much will be demonstrated in the following narrative so plainly that the assertion may hereafter be accepted as a historic truth; for no statement of material fact will be made which the writer is not prepared to authenticate.

To place a proper estimate upon the prowess of the Army of Tennessee at Franklin it is necessary to keep in mind its antecedents, in the then recent past. Within the preceding six months it had braved the hardships and dangers of the memorable Georgia cam-

paign, "The One Hundred Days' Fighting," under Johnston and Hood, respectively. From Dalton to Atlanta there were conflicts nearly every day. Almost every mile of the distance was marked by the blood of the bravest and best in the rank and file of that splendid body of men, composed of the flower and chivalry of the Southern States. These conflicts were not limited to mere exchange of shots between sharpshooters, firing between advance posts, or fighting on skirmish lines.

Serious trouble began May 9, 1864, at Rocky Face and Resaca, and there was little let up until the close of the following December, after Hood's heroically planned but unfortunately executed advance into Tennessee.

Joseph E. Johnston was superseded in the command of the Army of Tennessee by John B. Hood, July 18, 1864. That army, on the 6th of the preceding May, with the reinforcements it received during the next two weeks, numbered something like 70,000 effective

men, all branches of the service included. Its headquarters were at Dalton, Georgia.

About this time Sherman set his forces in motion, and active operations between the two hostile armies were commenced, which resulted in Johnston's withdrawal from Dalton on the night of May 13.

For the next two months it was advance and retreat—Sherman forward, Johnston backward. With the troops under the latter, retreating became well-nigh a regular procedure.

In the beginning the retrograde movement was in nowise discouraging to those executing the orders, for it was regarded as strategic rather than essential to the life of the army.

At Cassville the following famous "battle order" of Johnston was issued, and read to regiments:

"Headquarters Army of Tennessee,
"Cassville, Georgia, May 19, 1864.
"General Orders No.—

"Soldiers of the Army of Tennessee, you have displayed the highest quality of the soldier—firmness in combat, patience under toil. By your courage and skill you have repulsed every assault of the enemy. By marches by day and by marches at night, you have defeated every attempt upon your communications. Your communications are secured.

"You will now turn and march to meet his advancing columns. Fully confiding in the conduct of the officers, the courage of the soldiers, I lead you to battle. We may confidently trust that the Almighty Father will still reward the patriot's toils and bless the patriot's banners. Cheered by the success of our brothers in Virginia and beyond the Mississippi, our efforts will be crowned with the like glories.

"J. E. JOHNSTON,
"General."

These commendatory and cheering words of the commanding general were received with enthusiasm. They persuaded his faithful followers that on the morrow there was to be serious work for both armies. To be sure, the thought in every man's mind, and more or less disturbing, was as to what his individual fate might be; but all were inspired by confidence, and there was little doubt as to which side the victory would fall. The writer, then a mere stripling, was sergeant-major of the Thirty-seventh Mississippi Infantry, but acting aide-de-camp to Colonel Virgil Murphy, Seventeenth Alabama Infantry, who, in the absence of Brigadier-General Cantey, was in command of the latter's brigade, and well remembers the impression made by the promulgation of that order. We felt sure there was to be a hot time, but all believed that "Old Joe" knew what he was about, and that he, at last, "had Sherman where he wanted him." But it was not to be

that Johnson should on that occasion lead us to battle. A few hours later an order came for details to be made, which were to hammer and make a noise, as though erecting fortifications. Before midnight, following his lead, we silently stole away.

The failure to give battle at Cassville was a disappointment, but there was little if any fault-finding indulged. Confidence in General Johnston was unshaken. The writer has before him now a number of letters written to members of his family during that period, and below is a verbatim extract from one which voiced his boyish sentiments, and is a fair reflex of the feeling of the men in the ranks at that day. It was penned, as the reader will perceive, for the eyes of his family only, and the youthful candor and pride it displays will, he trusts, be therefore pardoned. He had recently been on duty under different officers, at brigade headquarters, as acting aide-de-camp, and had returned to his

regiment, which accounts for the allusion to different officers under whom he had served.

The extract is as follows:

"Bivouac, Thirty-seventh Mississippi,
"Cantey's Brigade, Polk's Corps,
"Near Atlanta, Georgia, May 23, 1864.

"Dear Father and Mother:

"All is quiet along the front this lovely May morning, although there was slight skirmishing yesterday afternoon, and we were ordered to hold ourselves in readiness to move at a moment's warning.

"General Johnston has repeatedly offered the enemy battle, which he has as often declined, preferring a flank movement to a general engagement. The Army of Tennessee has been forced to fall back because of Sherman's superiority in numbers. It may turn out all for the best—let us trust so, at all events. Remember that McClellan once said, 'Beware of Johnston's retreats.' The troops are in fine spirits and eager for a decisive fight. All are hopeful, and confident of suc-

cess. In the past fortnight our troops have undergone many hardships—have endured without murmur marches by day and marches by night. Thus far the loss of this brigade, in killed and wounded, amounts to about 250. We have only three regiments—Seventeenth and Twenty-ninth Alabama and Thirty-seventh Mississippi. By the providence of Him who doeth all things well, I have escaped unhurt, and have the consciousness of knowing that I have done my whole duty, and have the approval of every officer I have served under; and, though I have been unwell at times, I have never been away from my post even for a few minutes.

"Everything is now uncertain. None can tell whether the next movement will be a retrograde or forward one, but all are of the opinion that it will be for the best, regardless of direction."

The monotony of falling back was broken by much fatigue duty. For nine or ten weeks the order of business seemed to be fortifying

by day and falling back by night. General Hood grimly and stingingly sized up the situation in an official report subsequently made, when, with pardonable bitterness and epigrammatic terseness, he said: "The men became travelers by night and laborers by day. They were ceasing to be soldiers by the disuse of military duty. Thus for seventy-four days and nights that noble army, which, if ordered to resist, no force that the enemy could assemble could dislodge from a battlefield, continued to abandon their country, to see their strength departing, and their flag waving only in retreat or in partial engagements."

This routine under Johnston was, it is true, sufficiently varied by fighting to admit of his losing, without a single general engagement, according to Hood, more than "22,750 of his best soldiers."

Between Generals Johnston and Hood there is a discrepancy as to the actual losses of the army in the campaign during the

period from May 6 to July 18, while the former was in command, but General Johnston practically admitted that, in killed and wounded alone, from Dalton to Atlanta, his loss aggregated 9772, taking no account of losses from disease, desertion, and prisoners. So, I take it, General Hood was approximately correct in the figures used.

Be that as it may, when Hood assumed command a new order of things was without delay established. Under the leadership of this one-legged hero it soon became evident that traveling by night and laboring by day was not to be a fixed habit of the survivors of the so-called Fabian policy of General Johnston, under which the army daily grew smaller in numbers and weaker in spirit. Within forty-eight hours after Johnston was relieved, Hood, spurning his predecessor's precaution and preparations for retreat, had arranged to give battle to Sherman. Thus, about the middle of the afternoon of July 20,

the ball opened, and soon the battle of Peach Tree Creek was on.

Two days later there was more trouble growing out of Hood's aggressive spirit. In his report, April 5, 1865, to S. Cooper, Adjutant and Inspector General, Lieutenant-General Hardee characterized "the engagement of the 22nd of July, 1864," as "one of the most desperate and bloody of the war, and which won the only decided success achieved by the army at Atlanta."

The extracts below, from two letters by the author of this article, explain themselves, and will be of interest as showing something of the morale of the army at the date on which they were written. The writer was then acting aide-de-camp to Colonel E. A. O'Neal, whose regiment, the Twenty-sixth Alabama, had a short time previously been assigned to Cantey's brigade, of which O'Neal, as senior colonel, was in command.

"Headquarters Cantey's Brigade,
"Walthall's Division,
"Near Atlanta, July 25, 1864.

"Dear Father:

"I have only time to write a hurried note. I am safe, and well, so far. Army in good spirits, and confidence in General Hood unabated. The grief for loss of General Johnston was painful, but borne by the troops in silence. His removal fell upon us so unexpectedly that it made all feel sad, but we do not lack confidence in our present commander. I passed through battle of Peach Tree Creek on the 20th instant unhurt. The brigade lost 287 in all. The Thirty-seventh Mississippi, Colonel Holland commanding, captured 152 prisoners. Adams's brigade not engaged on that evening, and our friends in Fourteenth and Forty-third Mississippi safe."

Again, on the same date:

"Headquarters Cantey's Brigade,
"Near Atlanta, 7 o'clock P. M.,
July 25, 1864.

"Dear Father:

"I wrote a hurried note this morning, but, having another and better opportunity for mailing a letter, write again now in greater haste than before.

"It seems to be General Hood's policy to give the enemy battle here, if he can do so with any prospects of success.

"We whipped them in the fight the other day. [Alluding to July 22, in which the writer's command, Stewart's corps, was not engaged.]

"On the 20th instant our brigade was engaged. Colonel Holland and his regiment distinguished themselves, driving the enemy from the trenches and planting the colors of the Thirty-seventh Mississippi on his works in advance of the brigade. In addition to this, they captured 152 prisoners. Out of 210 men, he lost only 48, so rapid was his charge."

Six days later, July 28, near Ezra Church, there was another fierce engagement. That some idea may be had of its severity, a brief extract from Major-General Walthall's report of the operations of his division, to which the writer belonged, will here be given. Says the report:

"I found him [the enemy] in strong position and large force on a hill in front, and failed to dislodge him after vigorous and persistent effort, in which I lost 152 officers and nearly 1000 men, considerably over one-third my force."

Then, on the 31st of August, and September 1, the battle of Jonesborough was fought, in which the loss, on the 31st, of Lee's corps, alone, amounted to "about 1300 men killed and wounded," according to General S. D. Lee's official report.

After defending Atlanta for about six weeks, and fighting four battles, to say noth-

ing of skirmishes and cavalry fights, Hood retired from the city, and the enemy entered it September 1, the Army of Tennessee being within a few days thereafter concentrated near Lovejoy Station. There it remained for recuperation, and such reorganization as was deemed necessary and practicable, after the arduous campaign it had undergone.

Here the war-worn veterans were comparatively at rest until September 18, when the movement to Palmetto commenced. At Palmetto we remained a week or ten days. There the army received a visit from President Davis, who reviewed it September 26.

September 26 it started on its offensive operations to Sherman's rear and on his line of communication. By the middle of October it was back at Dalton, having destroyed many miles of railroad between Atlanta and that point. A month later (November 14) it was at South Florence, and six days thereafter crossed the Tennessee River on a pon-

toon bridge at Florence, en route to Tennessee. The roads in places were in fearful condition, and the horses so poor and jaded that entire regiments were detailed to help the artillery along, the combined strength of horses and men often being required to get the pieces up the hills.

It would be interesting, perhaps, to give an account of the march to Franklin, and the stirring things that occurred by the way, especially of the serious error at Spring Hill, in which there is no lack of evidence that "some one had blundered." But let us hurry forward.

On the morning of the 30th of November the army was near Franklin, Tennessee, having marched over 500 miles since leaving Palmetto, Georgia, just two months before, and suffered much from hard weather in November, and from want of clothing, shoes, blank- etc., etc. The inner man, too, had had discomforts to a degree to cause much suffering

from the pangs of hunger. There were times when in some of the commands rations of corn, three ears to a man, were issued, and occasionally nothing but cornmeal was to be had. It was a time that tried the strength and spirit of soldiers to the limit, and yet the fortitude of the veterans of this indomitable army proved equal to every emergency. Their patient endurance is worthy of the highest praise, for it was unsurpassed save by the dauntless courage they displayed in the battle by night, as well as by day, on that Wednesday of terrible, yet glorious, memories, at the close of November, 1864.

It is not the purpose of this narration to describe in detail the battle of Franklin. To relate with particularity the exact part borne in it by each Mississippi command, and make mention of every case of conspicuous individual gallantry exhibited by Mississippians alone on that bloody field, would require a special edition of a great daily newspaper.

The consensus of opinion of the fierceness of the fight can be arrived at from accounts of those of the commanding officers engaged who survived to tell the tale, and from the concurrent testimony of painstaking historians. Among the latter, President Jefferson Davis in his book, "The Rise and Fall of the Confederate States Government," refers to it as "one of the bloodiest battles of the war," in which the Confederates "won a victory, but at a fearful cost."

The New England Historian, Fiske, mentions:

"The escape of Schofield's little army that seems marvellous. * * * Again and again they [the Confederates at Franklin] renewed the attack with bravery and pertinacity almost incredible. But against the storm of grape and canister and musketry in front, with the enfilading fire of the batteries across the river, no human gallantry could stand. * * * When we bear in mind

that the battle of Franklin began at four o'clock in the short afternoon of the last day of November, the destruction of life seems awful. More than 8000 men were killed and wounded—nearly 6000 on the Confederate side, about 2300 on the Union. * * * The losses of the Confederates bore melancholy testimony to their magnificent fighting. Especially noticeable was the loss of officers, including eleven generals. Among the dead was Patrick Cleburne, 'the bravest of the brave.' "

Colonel Henry Stone, of General Thomas's staff, in "Battles and Leaders," page 446, says:

"The afternoon and night of November 29, 1864, may well be set down in the calendar of lost opportunities. * * * The heroic valor of the same troops the next day [at Franklin] and their frightful losses as they attempted to retrieve their mistake shows what might have been."

Again he says:

"It is impossible to exaggerate the fierce energy with which the Confederate soldiers that short November afternoon (November 30, 1864) threw themselves against the works, fighting with what seemed the madness of despair."

In a paper prepared nearly thirty years ago, and read before the Southern Historical Society of Louisville, Kentucky, D. W. Sanders, major and assistant adjutant-general of French's division, Stewart's corps, furnishes valuable testimony.

That the Major's evidence may be properly weighed it should be borne in mind he participated in the battle and was an alert, observant, accomplished officer. Indeed, to the excellence of his record for conspicuous courage and efficient soldierly conduct, as well as to his high character, intelligence and patriotism, is due his retention in the capacity of

assistant adjutant-general by Walthall when that nonpareil major-general, the youngest commander of his rank in the army, was turned to, December 20, 1864, and preferred by both Hood and Forrest, as the officer best equipped to command the rear-guard of the ill-fated Confederates.

It was at the time when Thomas was aggressively endangering Hood's escape after the calamitous disasters, December 15 and 16, 1864, which shattered the Army of Tennessee and practically destroyed its organization; crushed the ambitions of its ill-starred leader; dissipated every dream of success for the cause it upheld; drove hope from the hearts of its private soldiers, and filled the souls of its officers with despair. And yet, it should be added, gloomy, helpless and hopeless as the situation then was for Hood and his decimated legions, the moment it became known to the rank and file of his dispirited followers that the knightly Walthall's sword was be-

tween them and the advance of the flushed pursuing Federals, dismay fled before returning spirit, and confidence, in a measure, was restored.

From the foregoing it is plain that the testimony of Major Sanders is that of an eye-witness fully competent to reach correct conclusions and give accurate expression thereto.

What he said now follows:

"The Federal troops received the charging lines with steadiness and courage, and their fire was the most rapid and destructive of any during the war. The fire of small-arms and artillery was so heavy, constant, and incessant that great clouds of smoke 'hung like a pall of universal darkness' over that fatal field, and completely obscured the movements of the assaulting lines except when the flashes of musketry lifted it like rifts in the clouds, and then could be seen, and only for the instant, the forms of men in the lines, with their regimental colors, waver and reel to the ground, fatally stricken, as the dense smoke again settled, to be lifted, again and again, by suc-

ceeding and rapidly successive flashes. On one part of the Federal lines, fronting the right of the Confederates, the musketry was rapid, constant and destructive, and was almost alive with fire from the incessant flashes. Line after line was hurled on the works, but, in each and in every instance, the brave and heroic men were repulsed with a loss of life fearful to contemplate. Officers and men, with their regimental colors, lay thick on that field from the abatis, in front of the works, where Featherstone's and Adams's men were piled, in some instances seven deep on each other, in the outer ditch, to the rifle-pits, where lay the manly form of Colonel Garland, of Cockrell's brigade, who was the first killed in French's division as it crossed the rifle-pits.

* * * * *

"The Confederate loss in the battle was appalling. The exact number will never be known. A report of the killed in French's division has never been made, and now can not be. This division, as an organization, was destroyed in the Tennessee campaign. Cockrell's brigade carried into action 680

effectives, and left on the field 419. Quarles's brigade of Tennessee troops, of Walthall's division, was carried into action by General Quarles, and came out under the command of a captain. No army at any time ever responded to the call of its commander with greater courage and assaulted breastworks with more individual gallantry and heroism than Hood's soldiers at Franklin."

General Hood makes especial mention of "the extraordinary gallantry and desperate fighting witnessed on the field." In his official report he says:

"The troops moved forward most gallantly to the attack. We carried the enemy's first line of hastily constructed works handsomely. We then advanced against his interior line, and succeeded in carrying it also in some places. Here the engagement was of the fiercest possible character. Our men possessed themselves of the exterior of the works, while the enemy held the interior. Many of our men were killed entirely inside the

works. The brave men captured were taken inside his works or on the edge of the town. The struggle lasted until near midnight, when the enemy abandoned his works and crossed the river, leaving his dead and wounded in our possession.

"Never did troops fight more gallantly. * * * We captured about a thousand prisoners and several stands of colors. Our loss in killed, wounded and prisoners was 4500. Among the killed was Major-General P. R. Cleburne, Brigadier-Generals Gist, John Adams, Strahl and Granberry. Major-General Brown, Brigadier-Generals Carter, Manigault, Quarles, Cockrell and Scott were wounded, and Brigadier-General Gordon was captured."

Lieutenant-General Stephen D. Lee, an officer of much experience, whose rapid promotion from one grade to another was almost unparalleled on either side in the Civil War, says:

"The enemy fought gallantly and obstinately at Franklin, and the position he held was, for the infantry defense, one of the best I have ever seen."

Elsewhere in his report he makes mention as follows:

"The brigades of Sharp and Brantley [Mississippi] and Deas [Alabama] particularly distinguished themselves. Their dead were mostly in the trenches and outer works of the enemy, where they nobly fell in a desperate hand-to-hand conflict. Sharp captured three stands of colors. Brantley was exposed to severe enfilade fire. These noble brigades never faltered in the terrible night struggle. I have never seen greater evidences of gallantry than was displayed by this division."

And just here it is proper to record an incident, unsurpassed in the annals of war for the high courage displayed, in which a Missis-

sippi youth—a mere boy—of Sharp's brigade was the central figure. That General Jacob H. Sharp should have borne himself with conspicuous bravery on any field, at any time, and under any circumstances, is not to be wondered at by those who knew him in those eventful days, when he was in the flush of glorious manhood. Handsome of figure, debonair and dashing, "danger seemed to be his element, and he rejoiced in combat." His presence, when the conflict raged, was an inspiration to his men, who willingly followed where he led—and usually he was in the thickest of the fray.

Before introducing the incident and the hero, let us for a moment notice the report of Generals Hood and Lee.

It is a noteworthy fact that General Hood reports, "We captured several stands of colors," and General Lee says, "Sharp captured three stands of colors."

General Hood's statement is indefinite, ex-

cept as to the fact "several stands of colors" were taken; but General Lee's is definite, both as to number captured and the command which took them. The tale, as told by Lee, embraces only a dozen words, but they recite a historic fact replete with patriotism and valor, and establish beyond peradventure how Sharp and his "High Pressure" Mississippians bore off the honors and added to the imperishable renown of the State, by their sublime heroism on the soul-trying, bloody occasion. Let me add, in passing, that it is also a historic fact that only three stands of colors were officially reported as captured by the Confederates at Franklin, and to General "Jake" Sharp and his command the honor for their capture is solely due. There may have been, and doubtless were, other colors captured or more accurately, perhaps, "picked up" on the field the next day, but, if so, no report of them was made to, or by, General Hood, and there is no official evidence of it.

Ed. Russell (now Honorable E. L. Russell, the distinguished vice-president and executive officer of the Mobile and Ohio Railroad Company) was color-bearer of a Mississippi regiment in the "High Pressure Brigade"—an appellation the command had won for distinction on many fields. In the charge of Johnston's division, Russell reached the inner breastworks of the Federals and planted his colors there.

So far as the writer knows, the only public mention ever made of Russell's unsurpassed conduct was that of General Sharp, when a member of the Legislature of Mississippi, an account of which will now be given.

The Legislature of Mississippi (1900-1902) was in session. A railroad bill of importance was up for consideration by the House, and excited such interest that many railway representatives were at the capital lobbying, it was alleged, for its passage. For a time the result was in doubt, and it looked

to the friends of the measure as though the day was lost. Certain members opposing the bill fought it fiercely and, with more or less unfairness, appeals to passion and prejudice were freely made by opponents of the bill through flings at the railroad men present, who, it was charged, were spending money and extending courtesies with open hands, in the wish and purpose to influence the Legislature.

It was at this juncture General Sharp, feeble and emaciated from increasing years and the effects of recent ill-health, arose to address the House. At the moment he was suffering from a severe cold—bordering on pneumonia. His voice which in years gone by was strong and clear, and often in the shock of battle rang out like a clarion call when danger was abroad and there was music in the air, was now so weak and hoarse that it at first could scarcely reach the Speaker's stand. But as he warmed to his subject it

was seen "there's life in the old land yet," and if the veteran soldier had lost much of his strength he still retained the spirit and some of the fire of his younger years.

The Speaker, Honorable A. J. Russell—"Jud" Russell of blessed memory, may his soul enjoy eternal bliss!—was in the chair. When General Sharp arose to address the body no one knew his position, and all eyes turned to him in close attention. He said:

"Mr. Speaker, I feel a delicacy in projecting myself into a discussion almost purely local. I do so to show the advocates, and the opponents, of the bill how it looks to an outsider. I have cause to observe that while the House is sometimes influenced by what a man says, it is more influenced by the surroundings of the man who says it. A railroad man might speak until he was hoarse, and it would have no effect on the anti-railroaders; an anti-railroad man might speak until the argument was exhausted, and it would have no ef-

fect on the railroaders. I therefore define my position.

"Personally, I know but one railroad man in the universe, but my love for him is so great that I feel kindly to the whole railroad tribe. For four years he was my comrade—he bore the colors of one of the regiments of brave Mississippians who carved with their bayonets the names of Mississippians beside the names of the bravest and most patriotic people who ever struggled to establish for themselves an independent nationality. I have seen him plant his colors upon an enemy's works, while his rejoicing comrades rallied around him. That man, Mr. Speaker, is your brother and my friend. For years he has been, and is now, a prominent official of the Mobile and Ohio Railroad. This man, gentlemen of the House, is one of those terrible railroad vampires who is sucking the life-blood out of the people of the State of Mississippi; this man is that terrible railroad 'octopus' who is seeking to clutch in his de-

stroying grasp the very people whom he offered his young life to protect."

Here he faltered—he was losing his voice. The pause was of short duration, and he resumed with renewed energy:

"I must say, Mr. Speaker, that those disreputable railroad lobbyists who are overrunning us, are either the most stupid set of lobbyists or the most considerate or clever set I have ever met; not one of them has sought to be presented to me, has sent me his card or has complimented me with a bottle of wine. Now, having defined my position, I will address myself to the facts in the case."

At this point his voice again failed—went off into a hoarse whisper that could not be heard at a distance of ten feet. Unable to proceed, he yielded the floor to Honorable Eaton J. Bowers (now a member of Congress from Mississippi), of Bay St. Louis, who, with consummate tact, called for a vote, which

was taken, and the bill carried by a gratifying majority.

In describing the occasion, the *Clarion-Ledger* made the following comments:

"When the General lost his voice some of the members of the House who were near him raised a cry, 'Go on, General; go on; if you can't talk, whisper!' It was as much the manner of the delivery as the matter that reached the hearts of his hearers, and, when the speech was over, big-hearted Major Vardaman [since then elected Governor of Mississippi] made his way to the General, clasping his hand in both of his, saying, 'God bless you, God bless you!'

"United States District Attorney Lee came, and leaning over him said, 'General, I could not help it; I had to cry while listening to your heartfelt tribute to my friend Ed. Russell.'

"A lady, calling a member of the House, said, 'Tell General Sharp I love him.'

"Judge Mayes said, 'General, your voice

failed you at a most happy moment. It was a tribute of which any man might well be proud.' "

Beautiful and touching as is General Sharp's tribute to Honorable E. L. Russell, it does not enter into details with the precision desirable to the historian. Had he done that he would have brought out the facts to establish the incident, with historic fidelity, as having occurred at the battle of Franklin, Tennessee, November 30, 1864. The heroism of it deserves more than passing notice. It is worthy of historic record, and should be commemorated for the evidence it furnishes of the cool courage and intrepid patriotic spirit of the Confederate volunteer—of the American patriot soldier—of whom young Russell was a splendid type.

The circumstances, briefly related, were these: E. L. Russell, when sixteen years of age, volunteered in the Confederate States

Army and was enlisted in January, 1862, in Company E, Forty-first Mississippi Infantry. Passing over his honest and faithful service from January, 1862, to July, 1864, in which he creditably participated in many a hard-fought battle, we find him with his regiment at the battle of Jonesboro, August 31, 1864. The command was in line of battle and about ready to advance. The color-bearer was taken suddenly ill, and the commanding officer of the regiment, Colonel Byrd Williams, notified that he was unfit for duty. It became necessary to appoint a color-bearer immediately, and the Colonel called for a volunteer to fill the place, which was a post of honor, but at the moment one of great danger. There was some hesitation, until young Russell stepped forward to know if he would do; the banner was given into his hands. In the battle that ensued Colonel Williams was killed and the other field officers wounded, so that, when the battle was over, the regiment

was commanded by a lieutenant. From that time on Russell was the color-bearer.

The Forty-first was one of the regiments which composed Sharp's brigade of Mississippians, a part of Johnston's division, Lee's corps. At Franklin, late in the evening, November 30, 1864, Johnston's division was ordered forward, Brantley's brigade occupying the extreme left of the division, Sharp's forming on Brantley's right. By those familiar with the topography of the field, and the part that Lee's men bore, it will be remembered that in front of Johnston's command was a locust thicket made famous by the trouble it occasioned when the Confederates encountered it in their forward movement. Those of the command who succeeded in forcing their way through or around the thorny obstruction and continuing the advance to the enemy's fortified line, there encountered an undismayed force which, for a time, refused to recede. Among the Confederates who in

the charge reached this line was Russell, with his flag. Here he and his comrades found themselves on one side of the rampart, with an obstinate enemy on the other. It was then, calling to his friends to follow, he mounted the embankment and went over with his colors. In crossing the parapet there was a struggle with the enemy, a hand-to-hand contest over the colors. At length, breaking away from his antagonists, Russell jumped down into the enemy's trench, followed by some of the Confederates. There they had, as it were, a bayonet fight in the dark. Only a small number were engaged, and the Confederates succeeded in forcing the enemy out of his works, whereupon he retired to another line a short distance in the rear of that from which he had just been driven. Russell and his companions had to remain some time in the captured fortification. They dared not go forward again to charge the enemy in his new position, for that, they realized, meant

inevitable death or certain capture. They were unable to withdraw by reason of the incessant firing of the Confederates on the other side of the rampart, it being impossible in the roar of arms and tumult of battle to communicate a request to their friends to cease firing long enough to permit their return. After a time there came a lull in the firing, of which Russell and his comrades took advantage to recross the parapet and rejoin their command. Returning, they carried with them two stands of colors which he and those with him had captured in the hand-to-hand fight in the trenches.

The firing on this part of the line was kept up until midnight.

In the early morning the Federal firing became desultory, and a short time thereafter ceased entirely, when the Confederates again advanced, to find the enemy had fled. Rejoicing in their escape, General Schofield and his

Union veterans, in hot haste, were hurrying on to Nashville.

The lesson of the foregoing episode is that it established the fact that two out of three of the only stands of colors officially reported captured by the Confederates at Franklin were captured by E. L. Russell, the youthful Mississippian, and his handful of incomparable followers. The daring of Russell, together with its unforeseen, phenomenal success, is without parallel.

It was in this night charge of Johnston's division that the splendid young Lieutenant-Colonel of Blythe's Mississippi regiment, William H. Sims, afterward Lieutenant-Governor of his State, lost a leg while gallantly leading his regiment in the forlorn hope in which the command was engaged.

On the Confederate side there were less than twenty thousand men actually engaged. That is a proposition easy of demonstration. Only one division (Johnston's) of Lee's corps

was in the battle, and but a part of French's division. The seven divisions engaged in the battle—Walthall's, Loring's and two brigades of French's (Sear's and Cockrell's) of Stewart's corps; Brown's, Cleburne's and Bate's of Cheatham's corps; and Ed. Johnson's, of Lee's corps—had marched from Spring Hill to Franklin, a distance of more than twenty miles that day, in pursuit of the fleeing Federals under Schofield. The men were well-nigh worn out from the exertion of the forced march. Many had dropped out of line, and had not caught up, from sheer exhaustion. The Confederates were ill-prepared for the duty ahead of them. And yet, when the word was given, those who had proven equal to the fatigue of the hurried advance fell into line and went forward to meet the dangers of the day with a courage and fortitude which were the very acme and pitch of patriotism.

There were no recreants in their ranks.

There was no dallying because of the dangers confronting them.

If the Confederate artillery had been vigorously utilized, the enemy could have been dislodged. But it was not brought into full play. The humane proprieties of the occasion forbade its effective use. Only four guns were engaged on the Southern side, and they for but a short time. On the other hand, the roar of Federal cannon was incessantly terrific, and the carnage awful. Hood, although realizing the unequal contest in which he was engaged, when he saw the bravest of his army being slaughtered in the repeated desperate assaults upon the enemy's formidably fortified lines, did not forget the humanities nor ignore the rules of civilized warfare. He was restrained in the use of his artillery because of the exposure to which its heedless employment would have subjected the women and children of the sore-beset town.

The loss among our officers was extraordinarily great. General Hood mentions the names, elesewhere given, of two major-generals and nine brigadier-generals among the killed and wounded, and one brigadier-general captured.

In addition, there were forty-five regimental commanders killed or wounded, and eight others missing.

Think of that casualty list of commanding officers!

How eloquently it bears witness to gallant Confederate leadership!

How many color-bearers nobly died will never be accurately known until the Angel Gabriel sounds the last reveille to summon the quick and the dead to the final roll-call.

Among the Mississippians, Major-General E. C. Walthall, matchless as a soldier, superb in conduct always and magnetic everywhere, —the Chevalier Bayard of the American armies,—had two horses killed under him,

and was himself severely bruised, although he did not leave the field. His chief-of-staff, Captain W. R. Barksdale, was wounded, and his aide-de-camp, Lieutenant H. Powell, killed—both exceptionally intelligent and fearless officers. And every other member of his staff was dismounted by having his horse shot from under him early in the action.

The presence of mind which, in the hour of peril, rendered Walthall peerless and always enabled him to do the correct thing is illustrated by the following incident: He had just had two horses killed under him. The last one shot had scarce ceased his plunging and struggles from the death-wound, when, turning to a subaltern, the General said, "Let me have that horse, if you please." The subaltern quickly assented. "Has this horse been appraised?" inquired the General. "No, sir," came the reply, whereupon Walthall then and there had appraisers appointed and the value of the horse fixed. And it

was all done, comparatively, in the twinkling of an eye. That is a thing never before published; and, I dare say, one that never before occurred under like surroundings.

For a painter's brush no finer opportunity in the history of war was ever presented than that offered by the death of Brigadier-General John Adams leading his brigade of Mississippians. The serried ranks of his brave followers were being rapidly thinned—his men dropping from shot and shell like leaves falling in wintry weather. A color-bearer sinks; from his nerveless grasp the flag falls. But another quickly seizes the banner and promptly takes his place, to find a like fate. The enemy's outer line of works is gained. The Confederate emblem waves above the parapet for a moment, and again is forward. The foe, retiring precipitately, is further pursued by the victorious assailants.

General Adams, reckless of life and limb, leads the charge.

The colors everywhere are in the hands of men striving to be in advance. Ever and anon, in the headlong race for the second line —the interior works—a bearer falls, and a banner goes down, to be again unhesitatingly seized and borne aloft, and on, by another hand. Each sees the danger, and spurns it, in the effort "to lead in Glory's fearful chase."

The inner line of the enemy's works is gained, and the rebel yell is heard above the roar of cannon and rattle of musketry. It is the rejoicing shout of admiring comrades rushing to the assistance of the brave men in the van.

Brave John Adams falls.

Horse and rider go down as one.

The horse lies across the interior breast-works. The leg of the intrepid, daring man is caught under the body of the animal.

The foe, witnessing this dauntless ride into the jaws of death, are struck with admiration

and rush to his rescue. The weight is lifted from the limb, his foot released from the stirrup and he is tenderly borne over the parapet. The magnanimity of the act is splendid, but it cannot stay the life of the seven times wounded hero. Soon the end comes, and a few feet from the empty saddle lies the lifeless form of the glorious rider of a moment ago.

Riderless horse; horseless rider—side by side—each lifeless.

Above the parapet of this inner line—this dead line—for a second waves a Confederate battle flag, but whoso plants the Southern Cross there challenges death by the act. The act becomes glorified suicide—suicide made sublime.

Brigadier-General W. S. Featherstone, who seemed to delight in the shock of battle and, when there was need of personal exposure, courted danger as though it were a mere bauble—a toy to be played with—escaped un-

scathed. In his brigade the standard bearers of the Third and Twenty-second Mississippi regiments "planted their colors on the enemy's works, and were wounded and captured with their colors. The color bearer of the Thirty-third [Mississippi] was killed some fifteen paces from the works, when Lieutenant H. C. Shaw, Company K, carried them forward, and, when in the act of planting them on the works, was killed, his body falling in the trenches, the colors falling in the works." (Featherstone's report to Major-General Loring, December 9, 1864.) The Fifteenth Mississippi [Adams's brigade] lost its colors, but not until "four men were shot down bearing it." (Lowry's report to Major-General Loring, December 9, 1864.)

Never did mortals behave more handsomely.

The spirit and fortitude shown were godlike.

Inspired by the principle back of the cause

for which they were contending, and incited by the patriotic ardor of their compatriots in the other armies, and by their love of home and hearthstone, there was no limit to their prowess.

The contagion of enthusiasm and example was everywhere.

Soldierly courage became epidemic and, in generous rivalry men unconsciously vied each to outdo the other in heroism.

The colors of the Fifteenth Mississippi fell into the hands of the Federals under the following circumstances:

When ordered into battle the flag was borne by Charles Frierson, of Company F, who, when several hundred yards distant from the enemy's fortified line, was severely wounded. As he fell the flag was picked up by another soldier, name unknown to the writer, who bore it only a short distance before he was killed. The banner was then taken by still another soldier, name unknown,

who carried it safely until the bois d'arc hedge was reached. There he fell. Then Private McMath of Company E, after making an opening through the obstruction, grasped the flag, and shouting, "Come this way, boys!" rushed forward with it. When he reached the fortified line he attempted to go over the embankment, and was shot and so seriously wounded that he was caught, pulled over the line into the enemy's trench and, with his colors, captured.

Another unusual incident, showing the spirit that pervaded the men of this (Fifteenth Mississippi) regiment, is worthy of record. Private W. P. Peacock, of Company G, had a short time previously been exchanged, and, returning to duty, reached his command that morning. Having just reported to his company, there had been no opportunity to provide him with arms before the battle began. Anxious to be with his comrades in the impending battle, and de-

termined not to be outdone, he said to them, "Men, I have no gun; but I am going into this fight, and will carry an axe!" This he did, and when the command reached the bois d'arc hedge, and could advance no further, Private Peacock was there with his axe, and, seeing the trouble, at once commenced to cut the hedge to make openings. Bravely he stuck to his self-imposed task and, strange to relate, notwithstanding the galling fire to which he was thus exposed, he passed through the battle unharmed by the enemy's missiles.

The God of Battles, it seems to me, extended His special providence to this brave man, and thus made possible his escape unharmed from the Sheol of shot and shell through which he went on that dread day.

As an illustration of the intrepidity of men who go into battle when they have a well-defined conviction that going in is duty, and duty will end in death; and that such antecedent impressions of calamitous things

about to happen do, now and then in a soldier's career, happen as anticipated, I will here give a remarkable instance which I am sure has never before been published. It, too, is in connection with the Fifteenth Mississippi Infantry and the field of Franklin—on which occasion it may be mentioned, *en passant,* the regiment lost thirteen out of the twenty-one officers who participated in the battle. The Fifteenth Mississippi belonged to Adams's brigade, Loring's division, Stewart's corps. On the morning of November 30, 1864, it was following the retreating enemy from Springhill to Franklin. They arrived in sight of Franklin after mid-day and, a little later, were put in position on the Confederate right, and not very far from the Harpeth River. There they rested on their arms possibly two or more hours, waiting for other troops, Cheatham's probably, to come up and take position. While they were near, or maybe on, "the De Graffenried farm,"

two miles, perhaps, from Franklin, a young man (brother to a member of Company E, Fifteenth Mississippi, who had been permitted that morning to go by the home of his father, near Thompson's Station) came to Lieutenant Charles H. Campbell, of the company, bringing him a lot of provisions, with the compliments of the absentee brother and his family. The food was much needed, and was a godsend. Lieutenant Campbell, perceiving the abundance, called Colonel Mike Farrell, commanding the regiment, Captain Smith, and Lieutenant Allen, of his own company, to join him. Colonel Farrell, realizing there was more than enough bountifully to go around, asked permission to invite Lieutenant-Colonel Rover, of the Twentieth Mississippi, and Major Crumpton, Fourteenth Mississippi. Lieutenant Campbell also invited Captain Roland Jones, Rayburn's battalion, and Major Bruner, Twelfth Louisiana, to share in the meal, which, to

those wearied, war-worn, an-hungered veterans, was a feast deemed fit for the gods. The meal was eaten in haste, each officer with his belt buckled on and side-arms in place, for momentarily they were expecting orders to move upon the enemy in the fortified town. While eating, the impending battle was freely discussed by those eight officers, all of whom were in serious, thoughtful mood. Two only were optimistic. The other six took a gloomy view of the situation. The latter frankly expressed the opinion that the approaching battle would end the chapter of their respective lives. They anticipated it was to be the finale to their individual endeavors as Confederate soldiers. They had presentiments that when it was over their records for time and eternity would be made up; that for them the curtain would not only be rung down upon the last scene of the last drama of war, but that with its fall the end to their earthly careers would be at hand.

And they substantially so expressed themselves. Sadder prognostications it would be difficult to imagine. Prognostications more swiftly, and direfully, fulfilled it would be impossible to discover. Before the sun went down six out of the eight received mortal wounds. Lieutenant-Colonel Rover, Major Crumpton, Major Brunner, Captain Smith, and Lieutenant Allen fell dead upon the field, the last two in such quick succession that poor Allen fell almost across the body of his dead captain, who preceded him to the Farther Shore by less than half a minute. In close proximity to the spot on which these two fell, and almost simultaneously with them, seventeen others of the same company were killed or wounded. Colonel Farrell, a young and brilliant officer, was shot through both legs, the left being so badly shattered it had to be amputated. He spent an agonizing night on the field, and the next morning was gently carried by faithful friends to the near-by

home of Honorable John McGavock, where he remained until death relieved him of his sufferings. The other two of the eight, Captain Roland Jones and Lieutenant Charles H. Campbell, were seriously wounded—each crippled for life—and left upon the field in agony unspeakable to spend the night. Captain Jones died after the war. Lieutenant Campbell is yet alive,—limping from wounds received that day,—and is a fine specimen of the kindly hearted, loyal, and loving old Confederates who honored America by the fidelity and courage with which they upheld the honor of the flag of the Confederacy.

Lieutenant-Colonel James R. Binford was not serving with his regiment (the Fifteenth Mississippi) on that day. As Providence would have it, Lieutenant-General Alex. P. Stewart was utilizing him in the capacity of a staff officer, in which position he rendered distinguished service. After the battle he

was returned to his regiment, succeeding the high-souled Farrell to its command, and, a fortnight later, was conspicuous for courage and efficient conduct in the battles, December 15 and 16, at Nashville, Tennessee.

Colonel Robert Lowry (Sixth Mississippi) is another hero who went through it all unhurt, and yet so nobly did his part that Adams's mantle fell to his shoulders, and he worthily wore the brigadier's stars and wreath until the end came. When the war was over he was rewarded by a grateful people, by whom he was elected Chief Magistrate of Mississippi.

General Adams fell to the Confederate right of the Columbia pike, which ran hard by the famous gin-house, on either side of which the conflict raged as ferociously as if wild beasts, and not men, were engaged.

At no great distance from where Adams fell, and not far from the old gin-house,

which was immediately in rear of the left center of the enemy's interior fortified line, another young Mississippian had a flag experience, but, happily, fared better than his color-bearing comrades of Loring's division. He was serving as adjutant of the Twenty-ninth Alabama, in obedience to the following order:

"Headquarters Cantey's Brigade,
"November 25, 1864.

"Special Order No. ——

"Application having been made for the appointment of R. W. Banks, sergeant-major Thirty-seventh Mississippi Regiment, as adjutant of the Twenty-ninth Alabama, he is hereby assigned to duty as acting-adjutant of said regiment, and will be obeyed and respected as such.

"By order of Brigadier-General Chas. M. Shelley.

"W. K. McConnell,
"Lieutenant & A. A. A. General."

The application alluded to in the forego-

ing order was made a few days previously by Colonel J. F. Conoley, Twenty-ninth Alabama Infantry, and was addressed to S. Cooper, Adjutant and Inspector-General, Richmond, Virginia.

To make the incident about to be related more readily understood, an extract from Walthall's official report will be made. It will give an idea of the organization, the positions, and movements of the command at the opening of the battle.

"We thereupon left the pike [Columbia and Franklin] and moved to the right through woods and fields until about a mile and a quarter of the town. Here a line was formed to attack the enemy, who, by our last movement, had been compelled to withdraw to his works around the town. My command, now numbering but 1400 guns, was the center of the corps and presented two brigades front, (Quarles's on the right, Reynolds's on the left,) with Cantey's under command of Brigadier-General C. M. Shel-

ley, in reserve. The advance was ordered about four o'clock, and my instructions were in making it to conform to the movements of the division on my right. There was an impenetrable brier thicket of considerable extent immediately in front of my left brigade, and Brigadier-General Reynolds was directed, when the line was put in motion, to make his way around it, and when he had gotten upon the ground that would enable him to do so, to move up at double-quick and resume in the line. After moving a short distance the line of the corps, which had become somewhat disordered by reason of the broken ground and undergrowth, when they had passed, was halted and reformed. Here Brigadier-General Shelley, whose brigade had followed Quarles's, was directed to move up and take the position assigned to Brigadier-General Reynolds, who, without fault of himself or his command, had not been able to regain his place in the line by reason of the natural obstacles in the way of his march. Brigadier-General Shelley came promptly upon the line, and in a few moments afterward, when

the entire line was rectified, the advance was resumed. Both officers and men seemed alive to the importance of beating the enemy here at any cost, and the line moved steadily forward until it neared his outer works, and then fell upon it so impetuously that the opposing force gave way without retarding the advance, and retired in disorder to the strong intrenchments in the rear. There was an extensive, open, and almost unbroken plain between the outer and inner lines, across which we must pass to reach the latter. This was done under far the most deadly fire of both small-arms and artillery that I have ever seen troops subjected to. Terribly torn at every step by an oblique fire from a battery advantageously posted at the enemy's left, no less than by the destructive fire in front, the line moved on and did not falter till, just to the right of the pike, it reached the abatis fronting the works. Over this no organized force could go, and here the main body of my command, both front line and reserve, was repulsed in confusion; but over this obstacle, impassable for a solid line, many officers and

men (among them Brigadier-General Shelley) made their way, and some, crossing the ditch in its rear, were captured and others killed or wounded in the effort to mount the embankment. Numbers of every brigade gained the ditch, and there continued the struggle with but the earthworks separating them from the enemy until late in the night."

The field and staff of regiments had been dismounted, as a precautionary protective measure to the officers, and the horses sent to the rear, before the action began. For some time after the resumption of the advance, to which General Walthall in his report refers with particularity as occurring a few moments after the entire line had been rectified, Adjutant Banks was near the extreme right of the regiment, which was moving at a double quick. The situation was becoming critical. The firing was increasing in intensity, and there was a music in the air more or less disturbing to men of stout hearts, to say

nothing of its effect upon persons of weak nerves and easy resolution. At one time, under these conditions, General Charles M. Shelley, the brigade commander,—a brave, competent officer, always on the alert, and intelligent to do the right thing at the right time,—who was riding a short distance to the right of the regiment, discovered some confusion in the regimental line. Spurring his horse toward the Twenty-ninth Alabama, he rode in speaking distance of the Adjutant, whom he recognized, and said, "Banks, where are your colors? Your men are wavering!" Captain Alfred V. Gardner, senior captain present, was in command of the Twenty-ninth. He at that time was opposite the center of the regiment and leading it. Only a few days before he had returned to duty from a sick leave, and was still weak, and easily fatigued. In response to General Shelley's inquiry and suggestive comment, the Adjutant, already at double quick, quick-

ened his pace and ran from the right of the regiment obliquely down the line until he came across Captain Gardner.

Before gaining the side of Captain Gardner, he shouted out, "Bring forward the colors! Bring the colors to the front!" The color-bearer promptly lengthened his stride. Captain Gardner, looking back to see what the matter was, shortened his step until the colors were brought forward, when he quickly reached out, took possession of them, and quickened his pace. By this time the Adjutant was at Captain Gardner's side, the two a few paces in advance of the charging line, the men of which were advancing gallantly, although not preserving anything like a dress-parade alignment. Indeed, it was no time for exact observance of the niceties of drill, even had it been possible to execute movements with the precision of a battalion passing in review. Keeping immediately to the right, and almost in touch of him, Adjutant

Banks soon discovered that the strength of Captain Gardner was well-nigh spent. The command was at a considerable distance from the enemy's interior works. Banks, seeing Gardner's exhaustion, seized the flag-staff, saying, "Give me the colors! I can get there, Captain, quicker than you!" Gardner, realizing his exhausted condition, relinquished the colors to the Adjutant who, shouting, "Come on, boys!" struck forth at his own gait and quickly shot ahead, closely followed by a number of officers and men.

The convergent fire to which the command was subjected became terrific, and there was little order in the charging line. The only concert of action conspicuously evident was the purpose and effort on the part of both officers and men to get to the enemy's fortified line and drive him out quickly as possible. The direction pursued by Adjutant Banks carried him to the pike, at a point southwardly from the gin-house, which was near

the pike and near the enemy's interior fortified line. Striking the pike then, and finding the traveling along it so much better than the rough ground he had just gone over, he stuck to it until he passed through, and beyond, the abatis, which did not obstruct the pike. He then left the pike, going left obliquely to the ditch which was between the abatis and earthworks. This point was a salient in the enemy's line, and here had been erected a sort of bastion as though intended for artillery, and the moat or ditch, around the outer side of it, while not deep was wide. When Adjutant Banks reached the ditch he found a few men already entering it. These and those that came with and after him filled it. The men who got to the ditch, it should be said, belonged to no one command, but represented various regiments of different brigades and divisions. Working his way through the crouching men to the edge of the escarpment, and finding that no one could go

to the top of the parapet, much less go over it, and escape instant death, even if the men had been fresh, instead of being, as they were, exhausted by the great distance over which they had just raced, he stood upon the escarpment and planted the colors, the staff to which was shod with a steel point, as high upon the embankment as he could reach to strike the point in the earth, and then stooped, as closely to the earth as possible, for protection. The flag at once became a target upon which the enemy's fire concentrated. It was kept flying from a little after five o'clock until after nine o'clock that night. During that time, there being only the scarp and parapet between the Union forces and the Confederates, the firing was practically incessant—the din and uproar frightful.

In efforts to repulse the attack, some of those behind the breastworks held their guns overhead, with muzzles pointing downward across the parapet, and thus fired, striving to

inflict the greatest damage upon the assailants with the least exposure to themselves. This particular point was enfiladed with fearful effect. So thick were the dead and wounded in the ditch there, it became a sort of out-door "chamber of horrors." When night came down, the groans and frenzied cries of wounded on both sides of the earthworks were awe-inspiring. The ravings of the maimed and mangled victims were heart-rending. Crazed by pain, many knew not what they did or said. Some pleadingly cried out, "Cease firing! Cease firing!" while others agonizingly were shouting, "We surrender! We surrender!"

And here it may be interesting, however painful to those who may have had friends or brothers there, to mention an instance illustrative of how callous even a band of brothers may become in the hour of supreme suffering and helplessness.

When the colors of the Twenty-ninth Ala-

bama were planted on the enemy's fortified line, the Confederates were huddled in the ditch like sheep in a shambles. They had not been there long before men were being killed and wounded in more rapid succession than the writer ever saw before or since. They were crowded as closely as it was possible for them to be and were practically helpless. To go over the works was certain death, or wounds or capture. To run to the rear, aside from the shame of it, was almost of equal hazard. To remain was to accept the most fearful odds imaginable in favor of death. It was a perilous hour, in which the confusion much of the time was so great it seemed neither Fame could tell who bled nor Honor's eye discern daring deed. The situation for four agonizing hours was appalling.

We had not been there five minutes before a fair-faced, blue-eyed, beardless youth, apparently about seventeen, was severely wounded in the neck. He evidently had not

been long in the service, for he had a knapsack which could not have seen much usage. No one of us knew his name or regiment. When the ball struck him he cried out, "Oh, I am wounded!" and his head fell backward against the man in his rear. We tried to do something for him. No bandage or rag could be had. In a little while, gasping, the poor boy began to struggle with his arms and legs, but the crowd was so dense there was small room for movement. Death was holding high carnival. Man after man was either killed or wounded in quicker time than it takes to write this account of it. Nothing could be done for him or them. And so he was permitted to continue his struggles—his fight for life—until he had nearly worked himself into a reclining position. In the meantime, as the carnage grew, the first law of nature asserted itself, and those in greatest danger began to think only of themselves. Before death came to their unfortunate com-

rade, who had lost consciousness, men were sitting or kneeling upon his prostrate body. While his life-blood oozed away, they, seemingly, were as callous as though such misery was a thing of daily occurrence, and to be unaffected in its presence was natural.

Along toward nine o'clock the firing began to slacken. Away off to the enemy's left it would begin, and could be heard coming along down the line, with brief intermissions, growing gradually louder as it approached and passed, and then die away in the distance, as it receded. It was irregular, unmethodical, inconstant.

So, noting that, the Adjutant, who had escaped unharmed, and was anxious to be among personal friends (for he knew not a single man out of all those in his immediate neighborhood) and bear the flag safely back to his regiment, determined about nine o'clock, or a little later, perhaps, to make a break, and take the chances of retiring, there

being with him at that time, so far as he could see or judge, few but the dead and wounded.

During a lull, after the firing had become desultory, the Adjutant rose, preparatory to leaving the ditch. When disengaging the staff from its hold in the earth, it broke off, about two-thirds of its length up, and the banner fell over toward him. Pulling the lower piece out of the ground and attempting to furl the flag, he found the staff broken in another place. Then he rolled the pieces in the folds of the banner and withdrew.

In making his way from the escarpment to the outer edge of the ditch his feet did not once touch the ground. At every step his foot rested upon a man, so thick were the killed and wounded in the ditch. Out of the ditch, making his way straight from the works to the rear, he directly encountered the abatis, but it interposed little obstruction, as he was going through it from the butt ends

of the brush—and from the enemy, too—in the direction the limbs grew. Emerging from the abatis, he stepped upon, and over, a dead horse lying almost at the brush. About it were many victims of the fight, there having been no possible chance up to that time to move the dead or helpless wounded from the field. When the firing was brisk he would lie flat upon the ground; during the lulls he would break into a run. In this way he continued until he struck the turnpike, and then, the distance justifying, he more leisurely pursued his way. Presently he saw a small camp-fire in a slight depression near the pike, and to the left as he was traveling. Several persons were about it.

He hailed to inquire, "Can you tell me where I will find Walthall's division?" A voice, which he recognized as that of Captain Sam Abernethy, of the Twenty-ninth Alabama, answered, "Yes! Here is General Walthall." He advanced to the fire, and was

rejoiced to find General Walthall of Mississippi, General Reynolds of Arkansas, Captain George M. Govan of Mississippi, inspector on Walthall's staff, and Captain Sam Abernethy, with each of whom he was personally acquainted. Dropping his colors at General Walthall's feet, he said, "General, here's yer colors!" The General, who knew him, and felt an interest in him, expressed pleasure and surprise at his escape, General Shelley having told him, so he said, that he thought "Banks had been killed."

The General, then, in reply to inquiries as to how he and certain members of his staff and other friends had fared, told Adjutant Banks of the safety of General Shelley—of Captain Barksdale's wound, and Lieutenant Powell's death; and of having three of his horses killed—two shot from under him, and one, a very fine saddle-horse, shot under his younger brother, George, who that day re-

ceived his baptismal fire, and stood it like a veteran.

The next day, December 1, Adjutant Banks was assigned to duty as an aide-de-camp on General Walthall's staff.

On examining the colors the morning after the battle, it was found that the staff had been hit in five separate places, and was brought off the field in three pieces. The banner itself was so badly riddled it really was in tatters. Indeed, the flag was so shot up it was literally "put out of business," and rendered unfit for further service except as a relic. The writer is under the impression that it was turned over to the ordnance sergeant of the regiment, but he is not sure of it. At any rate, he has never known what finally became of it. The color-bearer, from whom Captain Gardner received it during the charge, was seriously wounded in the battle, and so was Captain Gardner, who was, also, captured. Adjutant Banks had a hole shot

through his coat and one through his hat, but escaped without a scratch.

Ector's brigade was on detached duty and missed Franklin, but the other two brigades of French's division, Sears's and Cockrell's, were present and suffered fearfully. Brigadier-General Quarles, of Walthall's division, was severely wounded, losing a leg, and lost, by death, every member of his staff. So terribly effective was the fire of the enemy, and so fearlessly led were the men of Quarles's brigade, that not only was the general commanding seriously wounded, and his staff completely wiped out, but every field officer of the brigade fell, either killed or wounded, leaving a captain of the line in command as ranking officer. Sears's force, too, sustained an enormous loss in killed and wounded, among the former being the genial, gentle, gallant Colonel Witherspoon, Thirty-sixth Mississippi, who, booted and spurred, fell in battle at a time and on a spot and in a manner and amid

surroundings which ought to cause a thrill of pride to fill the heart of every Mississippian at the mention of his name.

One cannot do justice, in speaking or writing, to the officers and men of either French's, Loring's, or Walthall's division without employing superlatives. To exaggerate their valor would be impossible. And yet, as much as has been said of the deeds of Stewart's men, rank and file, so much may be said of those of Lee's and Cheatham's corps who were put into the thickest of the fight, as were Stewart's, on that day of ordeals in which the spirit of the Southern soldier was tested to the last extreme and, in every extremity, found dauntless.

To very many the foregoing doubtless will appear as the extravagant hyperbole of a sedulously communicative old soldier. But it will not be so rated by the survivors of that night of horrors, some of whom yet live, who passed along the Columbia and Franklin pike

the following morning, December 1, 1864, and saw the human hecatombs—the victims being of the very choice and flower of the Army of Tennessee—piled near the old gin-house, which itself, scarred by shot and shell, was an inanimate but eloquent witness to the havoc of the day.

Of all the grewsome sights of war, nothing better calculated to affright and demoralize an army could have been devised than the exhibition of the dead, as they appeared to those who viewed them there in marching by the gin-house that morning.

Why any considerable portion of the army which had encountered so many dangers and undergone so many discouraging, heart-breaking experiences in the recent past, under Johnston as well as Hood, should have been permitted to witness that sickening, blood-curdling, fear-kindling sight is difficult to understand, when it might so easily have been avoided by a slight detour in the line of march. That was in daylight—the immedi-

ate danger had passed—but the hell of war was depicted cruelly in the ghastly upturned faces of the dead. The darkness of the preceding night kindly shut out such sights from our eyes. Still the situation was none the less uncanny. For we knew the dead were all around and about us, and that danger was imminent,—that it lurked in the air,—and we were made unhappily to realize the hell of it by the harrowing, heart-breaking cries of our mangled friends, and by our utter helplessness to give them any relief while under the pitiless, murderous fire of an entrenched enemy whom, after the most heroic efforts, we found it impossible to dislodge.

Nothing like it was ever before witnessed. God grant nothing like it may ever be witnessed again! For, after all, it resulted in a victory barren of fruits. The cause for which our side contended with so much valor was finally lost; and widows and orphans were made to pine in starving solitude, until

the desolated land was rehabilitated by the dauntless hearts-courageous paroled by Grant and Sherman.

The Union forces were commanded by General John M. Schofield, a brave officer possessing much of the genius of common sense. He well understood the situation, and the importance to General Thomas, at Nashville, of delaying General Hood, as well, also, as the importance of the safety of his own command. To a clear perception of his duty, and the responsibility resting upon him and his army, he added absolute loyalty to obligation. These admirable soldierly qualities made him equal to the occasion, else his force, which, fortunately for the Union cause, escaped, would have been ousted, routed, and converted into a fleeing mob; for the Confederates performed such prodigies of valor on that occasion that no troops not well-officered and gallantly commanded would have withstood such repeated impetuous and intrepid assaults.

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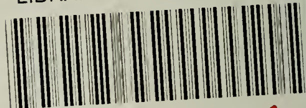
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