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# HISTORY

OF THE

76th

# NINETY-SIXTH REGIMENT

ILLINOIS VOLUNTEER INFANTRY,

PUBLISHED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE

Historical Society of the Regiment;

CHARLES W. EARLE.

CHARLES A. PARTRIDGE.

EDWARD A. BLODGETT.

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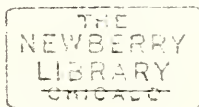
EDWIN DRURY.

M. UMBDENSTOCK, JR.

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EDITED BY

CHARLES A. PARTRIDGE.



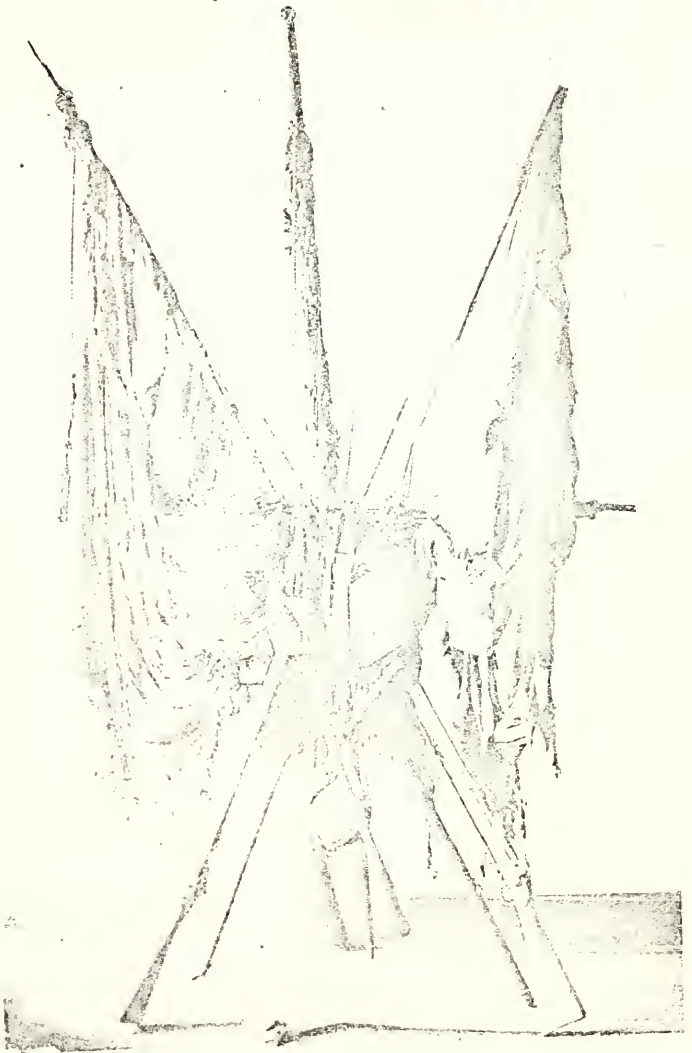
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1887.





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BATTLE FLAGS OF THE REGIMENT.

(See Page 938.)



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## HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S NOTICE.

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TWENTY years had passed since its disbandment, and yet no history of the NINETY-SIXTH ILLINOIS had been written. The only plan ever formed which promised any definite result was at the reunion of the Regiment, held in Waukegan, Lake County, Illinois, in September, 1875, and that had failed. No one person or persons had yet come to the front and expressed the willingness to assume the financial burden. All were disappointed, and many were inquiring, as they met at Fairs and County Reunions, or wherever chance threw a number of them together, if something could not yet be done to put in connected form the more important events in which the command participated. It was in response to these requests and to give definite shape to the half-defined plans of those who had talked the matter over that "The Historical Society of the NINETY-SIXTH Regiment Illinois Volunteers" was organized under the laws of the State, the incorporators being Lieutenant Charles W. Earle, Adjutant E. A. Blodgett, Sergeant Major Charles A. Partridge, Corporal Henry H. Gage, Edwin Drury, and M. Umbdenstock, Jr. In the organization of this company abundant capital for the enterprise was assured and the details for the work at once commenced. Charles A. Partridge, our former Sergeant Major, and for fifteen years the able editor of the *Waukegan Gazette*, was secured as Editor. A historian, selected because of his known literary ability, was appointed for each Company, different comrades engaged to furnish chapters upon various special topics not strictly a part of the general history of the command, and a thousand and one other things set in motion by which was insured a full, complete and truthful history of the Regiment.

We proposed to write a history of the NINETY-SIXTH Regiment Illinois Volunteers and not the personal achievements or altiloquence of any one or two men.

Only about one-half of the Company historians carried out the work allotted to them, and, as a consequence, much additional labor fell upon the editor. If omissions in regard to Company organizations or personal sketches are noticed the blame cannot justly be placed on the editor, for that which appears has in many instances only been secured by oft-repeated solicitations.

It was early decided that the work should be written, in part at least, in the form of a diary, this plan seeming to promise the best results in giving a complete and connected history of the Regiment. It was also determined that there should be a brief sketch of each Company, in which should be stated the main facts relating to the manner of its organization and a narrative of any detached service performed by it, to be concluded by a brief personal biography of every man in the Company. A blank, forwarded to every member of the Regiment whose





address could be ascertained, in many instances failed to elicit a reply. Such must not complain if they find their personal sketches deficient, although the Editor has searched the reports in the Adjutant General's office to complete them.

The maps and battle scenes have been made expressly for this work, at considerable expense, and we believe will be satisfactory to the comrades familiar with the scenes portrayed. We are gratified at being able to present the portraits of a large number of the officers and men of the command. These have been prepared at the expense of the comrades whose faces appear, or by some of their personal friends. Many are from old and faded photographs and daguerreotypes, and could be but imperfectly reproduced, but nearly all are true to life. Although they have cost the Historical Society much labor, and a considerable sum in excess of the amounts charged, we have no regret that this feature of the work was undertaken. These photo prints have been made by M. Umbdenstock, to whom we are under many obligations. In this connection, it should be mentioned that the utmost harmony and hearty coöperation has prevailed among those who assumed the task, and in addition to the work performed by the editor and portrayer, it would be unjust to omit an acknowledgement of the valuable assistance of Mr. Edwin Deury in many of the details, and Messrs. Blodgett and Gage for financial advances while the enterprise has been developed.

While the magnitude of the undertaking was in no measure comprehended by us at the outset, and more time and money has been required for its completion than was anticipated, yet we trust that the volume will be satisfactory to those for whom it was written—our comrades in arms and those who loved them. We promised a work of five hundred pages; we give, instead, a volume of nearly twice that size. We believe that in other respects we have exceeded the promises made in the prospectus. We had no expectation of pecuniary gain, and with the entire edition sold, the copy retained by each member of the Historical Society will be the most expensive. For this we care nothing. If our comrades, after a careful perusal of the book, shall give it their approval as a careful, truthful and well-written history, we shall feel that we have been fully compensated for our work and all our sacrifices.

Cherishing the memory of every comrade, whether living or dead; proud of the fact that it was our privilege to be associated with them in the days when they were making a record of which any soldier might be justly proud, and rejoicing that we have been able to be the means of putting in a more connected and enduring form than had hitherto been attempted some record of their achievements; and, finally, with a silent tear for those and with those whose wounds will be opened afresh by the perusal of these pages because of the "vacant chair," we submit this History, earnestly hoping that it may meet the approval of our surviving comrades and their friends.

In behalf of and for the Historical Society of the NINETY-SIXTH Regiment Illinois Volunteers.

CHAS. WARRINGTON EARLE,

*Chairman.*

CHICAGO, July 1, 1887.



## PREFACE.

---

To me was assigned, by the Historical Society, the work of editing a history of the gallant Regiment with which it was my lot to be associated during the War of the Rebellion. The trust was accepted with extreme reluctance, and with many misgivings, for I knew the work would be at once delicate and difficult. After discussing various plans with the members of the Historical Society, and agreeing upon a general outline, I entered upon the work assigned me, and the pages which follow are the result. As the work has progressed I have not unfrequently found my memory in conflict with the letters and diaries of myself and comrades, written at the time the events here narrated were occurring. In all such cases I have given credence to the written record, believing it to be more reliable than mere recollection. I ask every comrade whose memory contradicts what is here given, in any material respect, to refrain from criticism until he has carefully read again his own or his comrades' letters and diaries, penned when these events were fresh. If, upon a perusal of these records, material errors are found I shall be glad to have them stated. It was impossible that all should have seen events from the same stand-point, or that any one should have known of all the interesting experiences of the various members of the entire command. It is too much to expect of any one person, after a lapse of twenty years in which no thought was entertained of undertaking such a work, to recall from memory, or to gather from the hastily written letters or the brief pencilings in a boy's diary, a title of the interesting personal reminiscences that might have been written had their narration been contemplated when the events were occurring.

The chapters written by myself have been made impersonal: no statement has been made that is not believed to be strictly truthful; no event has been too highly colored; no fact has been so strongly stated that it will not bear the closest scrutiny and investigation.

In my work I have been fortunate in having the cordial encouragement and support of my comrades generally. No committee could have been more kindly critical, or more considerate and cordial toward an editor than has the Historical Society been toward myself. No comrades could have responded more zealously than have a majority of those to whom I have applied for information or for access to their written



matter. While I cannot mention all who have been helpful I should do violence to my own sense of justice did I not name some whose assistance has been most frequently given. In addition to the members of the Historical Society, Gen. J. C. Smith, Col. Geo. Hicks and Surgeon F. W. Byers, of the Field and Staff; Capt. Wm. Vincent and Sergt. C. H. Berg, of Company A; Captain G. H. Burnett and Lieutenant George Wait, of Company B; Captain John K. Pollock and Captain W. M. Loughlin, of Company C; Captain A. Z. Blodgett, Lieutenant J. H. Linklater, A. R. Thain and R. S. Thain, of Company D; Captain W. F. Taylor and Sergeant P. Fleming, of Company E; J. Q. Robinson, William S. Nash and the late Sergeant John C. Lee, of Company F; Captain B. G. Blowney, of Company G; Captain J. L. Pierce, of Company H; William M. Perry, William W. McDonald and Moses Rees, of Company I, and Lieutenant George W. Pepoon, of Company K, have each contributed materially in assisting to gather necessary data. The material for the closing chapter was mainly collected and compiled by Edwin Drury, of the Historical Society, and was the result of much diligent research.

As I have lived over again the days when the history was made of which I have so feebly written, my feelings have been of mingled sadness and pleasure. Forms and faces almost lost to memory have seemed to come again, and events almost forgotten have returned with a vividness that had seemed impossible.

Although this volume has grown to be almost double the size at first contemplated, it is entirely too meagre to tell of more than a fraction of the heroic deeds of the brave men who marched and fought beneath the banner on which was inscribed the magic figures, "96." Words cannot fittingly portray the lofty heroism which inspired the gallant soldiers whose valorous deeds are here so feebly told. With a fidelity that I trust all will concede, and with such ability as I could command, the work has been pursued until the three years' service of the Regiment has been, in some measure, covered. Of the reader I ask that what is written be accepted in a spirit as charitable as he would have asked in his own behalf if unexpectedly called to the duty of writing a similar work.

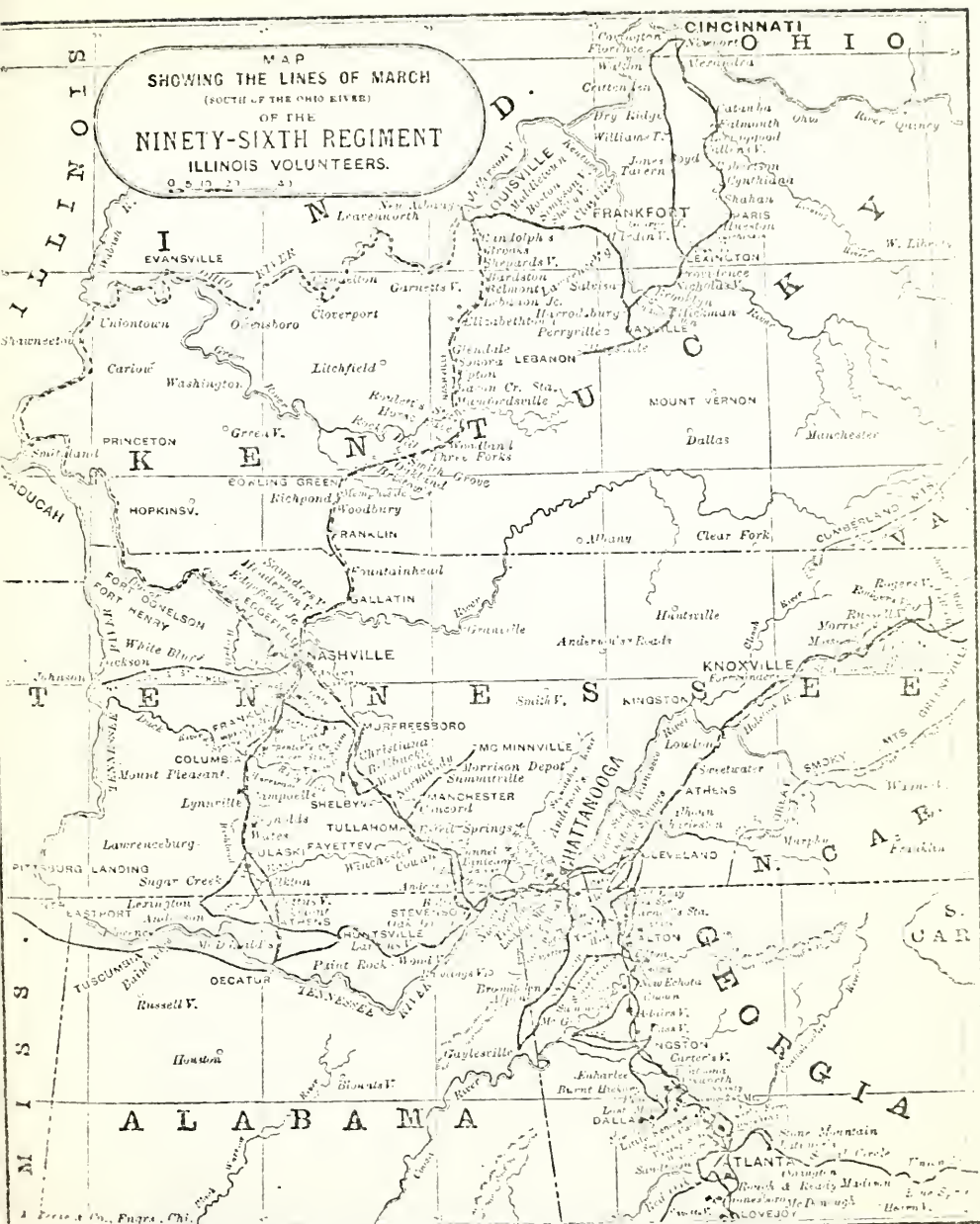
CHARLES A. PARTRIDGE.

*Waukegan, Ill., July, 1887.*



MAP  
SHOWING THE LINES OF MARCH  
(SOUTH OF THE OHIO RIVER)  
OF THE  
**NINETY-SIXTH REGIMENT**  
ILLINOIS VOLUNTEERS.

0 5 10 20 30



- Roads over which the Regiment marched one or more times.
- - - - - Routes traveled by Rail or Steamboat.
- Location of Battles in which the Regiment participated.
- Location of Skirmishes in which the Regiment participated.





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THOMAS E. CHAMPION.

COLONEL AND BREVET BRIGADIER GENERAL.



## CHAPTER I.

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Events Leading to the War—The Slavery Question—The Missouri Compromise—Fugitive Slave Laws Enacted—The Difficulty of Enforcing Them—A Supreme Court Decision—Anti-Slavery Literature—Lincoln's Election a Pretext for Rebellion—Preparations for War at the South—The Great Conspiracy—Secession Ordinances Passed—The Guns of Sumter Echo Through the Land—The Response at the North—Alternate Victories and Defeats—Advantages Gained—A Crisis Reached in the Summer of 1862—A Second Grand Uprising at the North—A Half Million Enlistments in Two Months.

To THE general historian must be committed the task of relating, in detail, the events which preceded and culminated in the War of the Rebellion. And yet, in a work of this character, there seems to be an appropriateness in outlining these events, and also in narrating, briefly, the work undertaken by the armies of the Union during the year and more that intervened between the firing upon Fort Sumter and the organization of the gallant Regiment whose history these pages are intended to set forth. Hence this opening chapter.

There had grown up in the Nation two civilizations. Beginning with the introduction of negro slaves into the Virginia colonies the people of the North and South had grown apart. At the North there was a general adherence to the principles laid down in that clause of the Declaration of Independence, which recites that "All men are created free and equal." In the South the black man was regarded, not merely as a convenience, but as a necessity as well, and was looked upon as belonging to an inferior race whose province it was to serve. In that section custom came to sanction this idea, and the great majority of the people acquiesced in the laws which were enacted for the protection of Slavery, and which bound more tightly, year by year, the fetters of the black man. True, there was even at the South an undertone of disapproval, many quietly expressing regret that the institution had gained a foot-



hold upon the then new world, but few were bold enough to advocate either an immediate or gradual emancipation of the unfortunate chattels. Indeed there was but little toleration of sentiments of this character, and, for many years, neither the press nor the pulpit in any of the Slave States dared express other feelings than those of approval of the system. Visitors from the North were not allowed to advocate their anti-slavery principles publicly, and abolition newspapers found little countenance or patronage in any community where there were slaves.

In Congress there was ceaseless discussion of the vexing problems growing out of this troublesome question. In 1820, there was great excitement over the admission of Missouri as a slave State. Slavery already existed there, being protected under the terms of the treaty ceding to the United States the Louisiana territory, from which Missouri had been carved, and Congress refused to prohibit or abolish it, quieting, in a measure, the consciences of enough of those who had a voice in the matter to secure a majority in Congress for the bill by attaching to it a clause which declared that there should be no extension of slavery into any of the territorial possessions of the United States north of latitude  $36^{\circ} 30'$ , which was the southern boundary of Missouri. This was known as the "Missouri Compromise," and timid politicians hoped that it would forever set at rest the slavery question. But such was not to be its effect. Slaves were continually escaping from their masters, and being aided on their way toward Canada by the liberty loving people of the North. Slave-owners complained at this, and demanded the enactment of laws for the protection of their slave "property." Their demands were complied with, and in 1850 the Fugitive Slave Laws were enacted. The enforcement of these laws was a difficult matter, however, as public sentiment at the North did not sustain them, and the Supreme Courts of some of the States gave decisions in favor of persons who were sought to be prosecuted for their violation. These enactments were the theme of almost constant discussion in the halls of Congress, and in the newspapers of the day. In 1854 Kansas and Nebraska were





organized as territories, and, notwithstanding the terms of the Missouri Compromise, the bill by which they were created declared that they might be admitted as States, with or without slavery, as the people should determine. Immediately the slave-holders attempted to colonize this western region. A counter movement was undertaken, hundreds of men going West from New England, resolved to rescue these territories from the grasp of the devotees of Slavery. The excitement was intense, and numerous personal encounters resulted. In the home of every man sent to Kansas from the East there was understood to be a Bible and a Sharpe's rifle, provided at the expense of a Massachusetts society organized for the purpose, it was said. At length freedom won, the people of Kansas voting, by a large majority, that the State should be "free." But so strong was the opposition of the slave-holders, that it was several years before Congress would permit it to become a full-fledged State.

The Dred Scott decision, which came a few weeks following the exciting Presidential campaign of 1856, heaped ready fuel upon the political fires. Dred Scott was a slave who had been taken to Illinois and Minnesota and held in bondage for two years in each State. He had married a free woman of color, and two children had been born to them. At the suggestion of his anti-slavery acquaintances, Scott brought suit for his own freedom. Judge Taney, of Maryland, then Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, rendered a decision in which he enunciated the doctrine that the negro "had no rights which the white man was bound to respect," and declared him still a slave, notwithstanding his involuntary residence in a free State for a period of four years or more. Not only this: he declared that the right of property in human beings was distinctly affirmed in the Constitution of the United States, and that there was no authority whatever by which slavery could be prohibited in the territories. He went even further, and declared that Scott had been lawfully held as a slave in the free States, and would have been so held had his master gone there with the intention of taking up a permanent, instead of a temporary, residence. No decision from the Supreme Bench ever



before caused such intense excitement throughout the country or led to such universal discussion. The people of the South saw in it an opportunity to make slavery National, and were highly elated. Throughout the North it was very severely criticised, and quite generally condemned. James Buchanan had just been elected President, and both branches of Congress were overwhelmingly Democratic. But public sentiment at the North was being roused to an extent not anticipated by the upholders of slavery. In the newspapers, in the debating societies, in church conferences, everywhere, this remarkable decision was made the theme of discussion.

Meantime. "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and other works of kindred character, in which the horrors of human slavery were painted, had been gaining wide circulation at the North, and the anti-slavery sentiment was growing stronger and stronger day by day. In 1858 occurred the memorable contest between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas, who were candidates for the office of Senator of the United States from Illinois. The former argued, not for immediate emancipation, but for curtailing the slave power by forbidding the extension of slavery into the territories. The latter claimed that the people of the territories should decide for themselves whether or not they would have slaves, and argued that the Dred Scott decision was well grounded and should be sustained. Joint debates between these rival statesmen were had at many points in Illinois, and great crowds gathered to hear the all-absorbing questions of the day discussed. The speeches of these able debaters were published and sent broadcast throughout the land, attracting wide attention. At the election in November of that year a Democratic Legislature was chosen in Illinois, and Mr. Douglas secured the Senatorship. But the speeches of Abraham Lincoln and other anti-slavery orators were having their effect. At the same time the Southern leaders became more confident,—nay more, defiant,—and seemed to think that they had obtained a hold upon the Nation that could not be thrown off. Viewing it from the standpoint of these later years, however, it would seem that they were merely acting a part in a great conspiracy, for in



1860 they not only permitted, but actually planned, a division of the Democratic party, going into the canvass with two candidates for the Presidency—Stephen A. Douglas, of Illinois, and John C. Breckenridge, of Kentucky. The nominee of the Republicans was Abraham Lincoln, of Illinois. The contest was a most exciting one, and resulted in the election of the Republican candidate.

The Southern leaders, or a majority of them, made the election of Abraham Lincoln the pretext for rebellion, not even waiting for his inauguration or attempting to ascertain what his policy would be. Militia companies took forcible possession of arms and ammunition in the Government arsenals in several of the slave States. Cabinet officers and Congressmen vacated the seats to which they had been chosen, returning to their homes and making violent disunion speeches. Even before the close of the month in which the election occurred both of the United States Senators from South Carolina resigned, and a call was issued for a convention, at Charleston, to consider the question of seceding from the Union. The Virginia and Louisiana Legislatures were speedily convened to discuss the same question. The Georgia Legislature appropriated a million dollars to arm the militia of that State. In December, South Carolina passed the Ordinance of Secession, and demanded the removal of the United States troops from the forts in Charleston harbor. This demand was not acceded to, but President Buchanan went so far as to send a formal message to the Secession Convention, promising that no reinforcements should be sent.

On the 26th of December Fort Moultrie was abandoned, Major Anderson taking the 111 men under his command to Fort Sumter, and two days later South Carolina troops took possession of the abandoned fortress. Early in January, 1861, numerous other forts on the southern and southeastern coast were taken possession of, and on the ninth of the month the steamer "Star of the West" was fired on by the South Carolina forces while approaching Fort Sumter with provisions for Major Anderson's little band, and forced to return without accomplishing its mission. Before the month closed Jefferson



Davis resigned his seat, as a United States Senator, and numerous other Senators, as well as Representatives in Congress and members of the Cabinet, did the same. Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas followed the example set by South Carolina, and they in turn were patterned after by other slave States.

February was fruitful of exciting events. In every Southern State the militia was carefully organized and systematically drilled. From every Southern city came notice that debts due to Northern creditors were being repudiated. Ships, forts, arsenals, navy yards, mints and custom houses were seized, and their contents turned over to the authorities of the so-called Confederacy, which had been formally organized at Montgomery, Ala., February 4, with Jefferson Davis as its recognized head. The South was terribly in earnest, and all through that memorable winter went forward with the most stupendous preparations for war.

At length Inauguration Day arrived, and Abraham Lincoln became President of the United States. But even the pacific utterances which his inaugural address contained had little effect in stilling the tempest rising all about him. There was treason in the Army and in the Navy, in the Departments and in Congress, at the Capital and throughout almost one-half of the States. The North, slow to believe that the extreme threats of Southern orators would be carried out, waited and wondered, hoping, almost confidently, that war would be averted.

But it was not so to be. The authorities at Charleston, South Carolina, claiming to act for the Confederate authorities, refused to allow the Federal troops stationed at Fort Sumter to be reinforced or provisioned, and demanded that they evacuate the works. The commander of the fort declined to leave his post, whereupon its bombardment was ordered by the Southerners, and begun on Friday, April 12, 1861. A gallant defense was made, but in vain, for in a few hours the position of the Federal troops became untenable, and on Sunday capitulation followed. This event aroused the nation. Public meetings were held in every city and village of the North, and





the patriotic sentiments uttered gave President Lincoln assurance that the people of the free States would stand by him in sustaining all attempts at enforcing the laws and preserving the Union. A call was issued for 75,000 troops for three months' service. There was an immediate response, and within forty-eight hours many more had tendered their services than could be accepted. Neither the General Government nor any of the Northern States had any considerable number of arms, and there was much difficulty in procuring a supply. It was speedily evident that additional troops would be needed, and as soon as they could be equipped 300,000 men were called into the field for three years, the quotas of the several States being filled with little difficulty or delay.

The early engagements of the war were rather disastrous than otherwise. Bull Run was a crushing defeat, the Union troops falling back upon the National Capital in sore discomfiture. At Wilson's Creek, Mo., the army was obliged to retreat, after the loss of their gallant leader, General Lyon, and many men. The advantages gained at points in Missouri and in West Virginia were not decisive. The battle of Belmont, Mo., fought in November, 1861, served to give the Western troops confidence in themselves, although the results achieved were not of great magnitude. The late Winter and the early Spring witnessed some striking victories in the West, and were greatly encouraging. At Mill Spring, Ky., the Union forces achieved a handsome victory, the rebels being driven southward with the loss of their commander, Gen. Zollicoffer, and many men. They were also driven from Missouri and defeated at Pea Ridge, Ark. Fort Donelson was captured with 15,000 prisoners and an immense number of cannon. Pittsburg Landing, fought in April, 1862, was a pronounced victory, though dearly won, and Corinth was occupied by the National forces in the early summer. Missouri, Kentucky and Tennessee were now reclaimed. New Orleans had been occupied by the National forces. On the Atlantic coast important points had been captured.

But with the Summer of 1862 came reverses. The Western armies, decimated by frequent and severe engagements, and



weakened by the enervating influences of climatic and other diseases, and the severe strain in maintaining their long lines of communication, were barely holding their own. The Eastern armies, which had been expected to capture the Confederate Capital, had come to a halt, and were being rapidly thinned by disease in the Chickahominy swamps. Their gallantly fought battles had been but half victories at best, and it became apparent that retreat was possible, if not probable. Evidently a crisis had been reached, and it was a question whether the Union armies were not to be forced backward, the scenes of strife transferred to the States north of the Potomac and Ohio rivers, and free soil watered with the blood of the heroes who should fall in battle.

In this emergency, a letter, breathing the highest patriotism, and pledging the most earnest support to the Government in all efforts to suppress the rebellion and restore the Union, was drawn up and signed by the Governors of all the loyal States. This letter was dated July 1, 1862. Upon its receipt, President Lincoln issued a call for 300,000 additional troops, to be mostly infantry. The people seemed to appreciate the situation fully, but there was some delay in assigning quotas and providing quarters, so that but little recruiting was attempted until July had nearly closed. It should be remembered that because of the heavy enlistments which had occurred but a few months previously there was an actual scarcity of men to do the work in the large shops and manufactories and upon the farms. The haying was not completed, and a golden harvest was just maturing. How could the men be spared? But by the time the recruiting machinery was in readiness volunteers were responding in large numbers. The closing week of July and the early days of August witnessed large enlistments. On the 4th of August the President issued another call for 300,000 men in addition to the 300,000 called out in July, and directed an immediate draft. The second call stimulated enlistments to such an extent that the draft was temporarily postponed, and in Illinois and some other States the quotas under both calls made up by volunteers. A bounty of one hundred dollars was offered by the General



Government to each recruit, but on the condition that only twenty-five dollars should be paid in advance and the remainder at the close of service of the soldier, providing the period of service should be not less than two years. In addition to this from forty to sixty dollars county bounty was given recruits from most of the counties in Illinois. These bounties, although meager as compared with the amounts subsequently given, encouraged some men with families to enlist, as they were thus assured of a small fund of ready money to leave with their dependent ones. However, a great majority of the volunteers of that year would have enlisted without one dollar of bounty.

The State authorities authorized recruiting officers to say that men enlisted in Northern Illinois would be allowed to remain at home until toward the close of the month, in order that the harvest might be secured. That month of August, 1862, was one that will be long remembered by those who shared in its exciting events. Recruiting went forward with great rapidity. Meetings were held almost nightly, not alone in every city and village, but in every township and in almost every school district,—churches and school-houses as well as public halls and court-rooms being used for these gatherings. Men of every profession and occupation took the stump, and plead with those of military age to respond to the call of their country in its hour of need. And the response was a wonderful one, recruits thronging from the shops and the farms, from the offices and from the business houses, all through the North. Business of every ordinary kind was almost wholly suspended, men and women gathering to witness the drilling of the newly organized commands at their places of temporary rendezvous, and to bid good-bye to loved ones who had placed their names upon the muster-rolls, and were preparing to leave for the larger camps of instruction. To the casual observer the cities and villages might have been said to wear a pleasant aspect, as the great throngs moved up and down the streets; but the firm, set lips of the younger men, the undertone in conversation, the dewy eyes of maids and matrons, the severe, determined look of men of maturer



years, and the great pain tugging away at the heart-strings of all, of either sex and every age, as the hour of parting drew near, told plainly that these were by no means holidays. The people of the North were fully resolved that the Nation should lack neither men nor means in its efforts to suppress the great Rebellion and uphold the National authority, and their young men, to the number of more than half a million, responded to the call of their country within the brief period of two months, and the closing weeks of August and the early days of September, 1862. saw them hurrying forward to the aid of the Union army whose depleted ranks they were to reinforce.





## CHAPTER II.

How and Why Lake and Jo Daviess Counties Joined Hands—In Camp at Rockford—A Lesson in Obedience to Orders—The Formal Muster-in—Other Regiments in Camp—Early Experiences—The Field and Staff—The Companies Lettered—Drawing Arms and Uniforms—Battalion Drill and Dress Parade—On Escort Duty—Visits from Home Friends—Major Brown and the "Obstacle" Movement—The Sutlers Made Unhappy—Incidents of the Last Days at Camp Fuller.

AMID the stirring events to which the closing paragraphs of the preceding chapter allude THE NINETY-SIXTH REGIMENT ILLINOIS VOLUNTEER INFANTRY had its birth. Recruited at a gloomy period of the war and when a high grade of patriotism was required to nerve men to enlist, composed of excellent material, carefully organized and admirably commanded, it was given opportunity to bear a conspicuous part in the great drama of war, and its record, forged in the white heat of conflict and under the heavy hammers of oft-recurring battles, is one to which its members have ever been able to refer with pride. To the recital of some of these events and to the narrative of the doings and whereabouts of the command from day to day during its three years in camp and field the following chapters are devoted.

Without instituting comparisons with "our brothers gone before," this much may at least be said: The novelty had passed away. The pomp and circumstance of glorious war had now but few attractions. All knew that war meant, not only wounds and death, but hunger and hardship and privation; that it meant a surrender of personal liberty, on the part of the enlisted men at least, that was a sacrifice to the son of America, in whom the spirit of independence was strong, and who was entirely unused to the restraints which military life imposed.



But the men who composed this organization had considered all of these matters and resolved to make the sacrifice. Not in response to a passing impulse had they written their names upon the muster rolls, but deliberately and from a deep sense of personal duty. They would help their brothers at the front who had gone out to battle in the months gone by. They would aid in turning back the tide of treason and rebellion that was threatening to engulf their homes. They would be among those to stand as a living wall between the Nation and its enemies, and bear honorable part in bringing to a close the conflict that was to determine whether or not the Union of the States was a rope of sand, and,—as all knew, although at that period not all were free to admit as much,—to determine whether, in a land of boasted freedom, there should be a race enslaved.

In subsequent chapters will be found somewhat detailed statements as to the enlistment and organization of the several companies which entered the service with the command. In making up the several regiments recruited in Northern Illinois many questions arose as to which companies should be put together. In nearly every county there were men ambitious to become field officers, and they were generally ready to form combinations or make alliances that would further their personal interests. Neither the four Companies from Lake county nor the six Companies from Jo Daviess county were able to make up with Companies in counties immediately adjoining them without conceding to these other counties the major part of the Field and Staff. It happened that Hon. E. B. Washburne, of Galena, then a Representative in Congress, and Hon. H. W. Blodgett, of Waukegan, then a State Senator, were warm personal and political friends, and through their interposition the Companies from the two counties in which they resided, and which, although one was the extreme northeast and the other the extreme northwest county in the State, were then in the same Congressional District, were brought together. As some one facetiously remarked: It was the marriage of Miss Issippi and L. Michigan, Esq., a union that proved congenial to those most directly interested, and, it



may be truthfully said, fortunate for the cause in which they were engaged.

Before this result was brought about several conferences were had, prominent men in each county visiting the other to arrange the details of the organization and secure the consent of the State authorities to the proposed union.

On Wednesday, September 3, 1862, the six Companies from Jo Daviess county went by train to Rockford, Winnebago county, Ill., and marched out one and one-half miles to Camp Fuller, where quarters in barracks, which had been recently erected in a grove near the banks of Rock river, were assigned them. On Friday, September 5, at 2 o'clock p. m., the four Companies from Lake county arrived by train, and joined them in this camp. Heavy rains had occurred during the week previous, and the entire camp ground was very muddy, water standing in many places. Indeed, the building assigned to what afterward became Company G was almost entirely surrounded by water, which even came into and partially covered the lower bunks. The members of the Company were entirely disgusted with the outlook, and their commander, on reporting to Headquarters the condition of affairs, was given a half dozen Sibley tents, and the barracks assigned to them were left unoccupied. Next day, however, drains were dug, and the condition of affairs considerably improved, although the grounds remained very muddy.

There were in Camp Fuller at this time three other regiments,—the 74th, 92d and 95th Illinois,—all of whom were formally mustered in September 4, although the 74th and some companies of the other regiments had been in camp for a fortnight or more. The rendezvous had been named in honor of the Adjutant General of the State, whose home was at Belvidere in an adjoining county.

On their arrival in camp, the Lake county boys were given an immediate lesson in prompt obedience to orders, and made to know that an officer's wish outranked a soldier's appetite. It was long past the dinner hour, and they were thoroughly hungry, but as the aroma of boiling coffee and the odor of frying meat were just giving evidence that the meal was nearly



ready there came the noise of the rattling drum and the rather unwelcome order to fall in. And so, because the mustering officer wished to finish his day's work, the hungry men were marched out a half mile or so to join their Jo Daviess county comrades and be mustered in.

It was a memorable meeting as that body of nearly one thousand gallant men gathered for the first time and became a Regiment. With little delay a hollow square was formed and an inspection held, a few men being rejected, in nearly every instance because of being under eighteen years of age. The inspection completed, the process of muster-in was proceeded with.

As these stalwart men stood there, and, with hands upraised to Heaven, swore to serve their country for "three years unless sooner discharged," it was indeed an impressive spectacle, and one that will never be wholly forgotten by the participants who still survive. Hon. Allen C. Fuller, of Belvidere, then Adjutant General of the State, acted as chief mustering officer, and, as he put it, introduced the giants of Jo Daviess county to the sturdy farmer boys of Lake. Spectators and participants alike agreed that the "material" of the Regiment was admirable, that officers and men averaged high as regarded intelligence and avoirdupois, and that the organization was one that gave promise of excellent work whenever opportunity offered. The unusual proportion of very tall men and of large men was the cause of considerable comment. Officers and men from the two counties eyed each other closely, but each seemed pleased, and from that moment it is doubtful if there was ever a regret expressed or felt that the combination of Lake with Jo Daviess had been formed.

The inspection and muster-in occupied considerable time, and it was nearly six o'clock when the men were marched to camp, the Lake county boys at least being exceedingly hungry, not having had any food since early morning except a few nick-nacks purchased on the train. It was to them a foretaste of after fasts amid more stirring scenes.

After a hearty meal the boys began the work of preparing for the night. Their quarters were fairly comfortable. The





barracks were partitioned off so that each Company had one large room in which were about fifty bunks, and the line officers of each Company a smaller room designed to be used as an office and sleeping room. Nearly all of the men had provided themselves with blankets before leaving home, and with very little trouble the officers were able to find covering for those who had come without. The bunks were built in two tiers, and where men could not readily agree as to which should have the upper and which the lower berth "cuts" were drawn. Each bunk was designed for two persons, and it was necessary that the soldiers should pair off. There were a few who seemed to have no mates, and for a night or two—there being a few absentees in each Company, so that there were extra bunks—these odd ones slept alone. As a rule, however, each soldier had some one companion nearer to him than any other, and the matings made those first nights in camp continued for months, and in many instances until the close of the war.

In the evening the officers met to complete the organization of the Regiment. It had been conceded from the first that to Jo Daviess county should be given the positions of Colonel and Major, and the men composing the Companies from that county had decided, by ballot, whom they would have. Thomas E. Champion, of Warren, who had recruited Company K, was chosen as Colonel: and John C. Smith, who had recruited Company I, as Major. No election was held by the members of the Lake county Companies, but to Isaac L. Clarke, who had recruited Company G, was conceded, by common consent, the position of Lieutenant Colonel. These selections were ratified at this evening meeting. Some progress was also made in the selection of Staff Officers, but the list was not completed for some days. The following is the list, as finally made up, of

THE FIELD AND STAFF:

*Colonel:* THOMAS E. CHAMPION, of Warren, Jo Daviess County.

*Lieutenant Colonel:* ISAAC L. CLARKE, of Waukegan, Lake County.

*Major:* JOHN C. SMITH, of Galena, Jo Daviess County.



*Adjutant*: EDWARD A. BLODGETT, of Downer's Grove, Du Page County.

*Quarter-Master*: STEPHEN JEFFERS, of Hanover, Jo Daviess County.

*Surgeon*: CHARLES MARTIN, of Warren, Jo Daviess County.

*First Assistant Surgeon*: MOSES EVANS, of Waukegan, Lake County.

*Second Assistant Surgeon*: DANIEL A. SHEFFIELD, of Courtland, Jo Daviess County.

*Chaplain*: JONATHAN M. CLENDENNING, of Warren, Jo Daviess County.

#### NON-COMMISSIONED STAFF.

*Sergeant Major*: FRANCIS P. QUINN, of Company I.

*Quarter-Master Sergeant*: WILLIAM S. BEAN, of Company A.

*Commissary Sergeant*: MORRIS S. HILL, of Company B.

*Hospital Steward*: HARVILLAH COOLEY, of Company C.

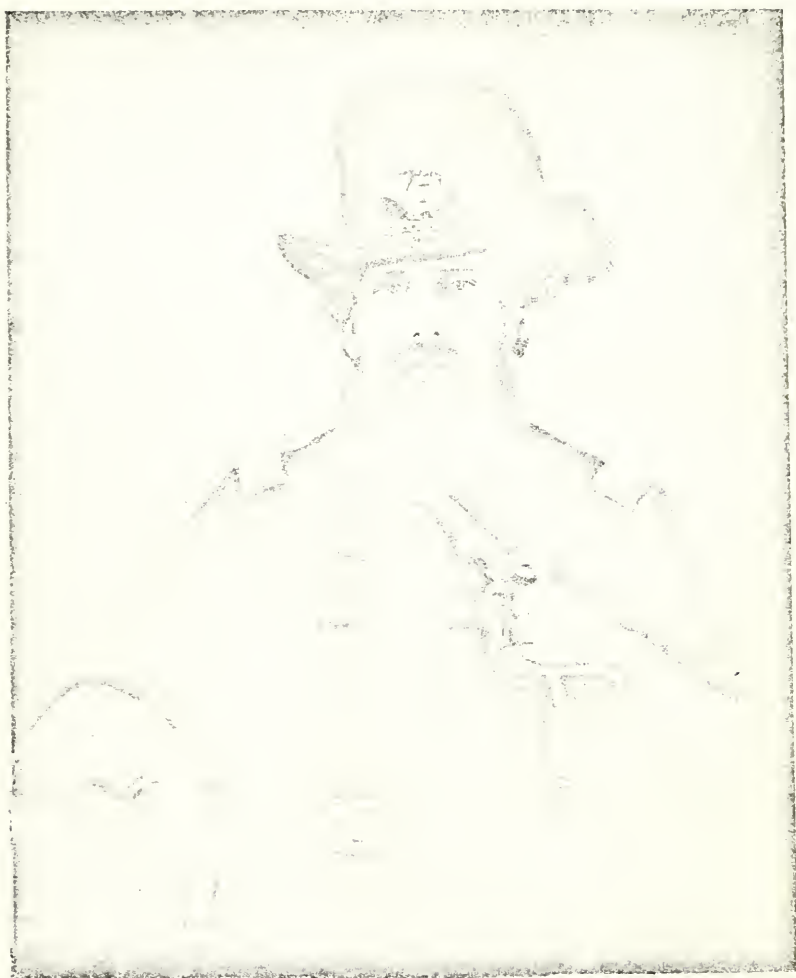
*Principal Musician*: NILES CARVER, of Company H.

After some discussion, it was decided that the letters A, B, C, etc., should be written on slips of paper, these slips to be placed in a hat and each Captain be permitted to draw one of the slips from the hat, his Company to be assigned in accordance with the letter drawn by him. Before this plan was adopted, there was a suggestion that Captain Hicks' Company, being the first recruited and organized and having previously been in camp at Rockford for quite a period, was by right entitled to be considered Company A. The reasons given were deemed sufficient, and the suggestion was adopted without dissent. The letters of the other Companies were designated in the manner mentioned.

When the line was first formed the Company letters, running from right to left, were as follows: A, F, D, I, C, H, E, K, G, B, Company A thus becoming the right Company, B the left Company, C the center Company, D the right center Company and E the left center Company, so that when column was formed by Division each of the five ranking Captains had command of two Companies. This formation was continued throughout the service.

The first night in camp was a somewhat trying one. The





ISAAC L. CLARKE,

LIEUTENANT COLONEL.



boards upon which the soldiers slept, covered by a single blanket, were not as soft and comfortable as the mattresses and feather beds to which they had been accustomed. The surroundings were all new. The boards creaked as the soldiers turned from one side to the other, and as they turned pretty often and there were somewhere near one hundred men in each room, this creaking was almost continuous. As a rule, each Company had one or two men who were persistent snorers, and between the creaking and the snoring, and the noises of the camp and the heavy rainfall which prevailed throughout the night, the sleep of all was more or less disturbed. Those first nights in camp were not always restful, although the men soon became accustomed to their surroundings and slept comparatively well.

Saturday, September 6, dawned gloomy enough, the weather being lowery and the camp almost flooded. At an early hour the drums beat *réveille*, and there was roll-call by Companies. Immediately thereafter the men, actuated by a common impulse, started for the river, and, being provided with soap and towels, in a few moments the river bank was thronged with men engaged in the laudable undertaking of washing their hands and faces. Tin cups were used, one comrade pouring water upon the hands of another in school-boy fashion. Pocket combs and pocket mirrors were brought into requisition, and the men soon completed their toilets and returned to their barracks. This experience was repeated morning, noon and evening during the stay at Rockford, and, for that matter, during the entire period of service. The breakfast that morning was rather an informal one. Coffee had been made in the big, sheet-iron camp kettles, and was served out to the men in tin cups. There was an ample supply of genuine hard-tack and both salt and fresh meat. The meal over, the men set about making tables and seats, to be used when future meals were served. The forenoon was largely occupied in procuring Quarter-Master's stores, and in distributing cooking and eating utensils. In the afternoon there was Company drill, lasting for an hour and a half. At





this time only the officers were in uniform, the enlisted men being in citizens' clothing, except that here and there a military cap appeared.

Sunday, September 7, was quite unlike the usual Sunday at home. A large portion of the men were permitted to go to the city and attend church, and in a few Company quarters sermons were read in the afternoon and prayer meetings held in the evening; but still there was more or less necessary work, for rations had to be issued and wood provided, and in the afternoon each Company was marched to Headquarters and \$13 paid to each member by Lieutenant Tibbitts, of the Regular Army. It had been agreed that the men should each receive a month's pay in advance, and this payment was a carrying out of the promise.

Monday, September 8, there was the usual routine of camp duty, and a detail was made from each Company for fatigue duty, the men thoroughly policing, or sweeping, the grounds about the barracks. Muster rolls for bounty and premium were made out. Company and squad drill occupied a considerable part of the day. In the evening the officers had a "School," where they undertook the task of mastering the intricacies of military text-books. Few of them had had previous military experience, and Major Brown, a resident of Rockford, was employed to instruct them. This evening school for officers was continued with considerable regularity for two or three weeks.

Tuesday, September 9, the Regiment was called upon for its first detail for guard duty, five men being asked for from each Company; during the day two hundred gray army blankets were issued to the Regiment, and given to the men most needing them. In the early evening the Regiment had its first dress parade. The Adjutant and Sergeant Major, having had previous military experience, readily formed the line, and the parade was gone through with quite creditably, albeit somewhat awkwardly.

Wednesday, September 10, there were many visitors to the camp, and on Thursday a picnic was had which was sadly interrupted by an almost continuous rain. A few of the



visitors thought it would be a nice thing to share the experiences of the soldiers, and so remained in camp for the night. But it was noticeable that very few cared to repeat the experience, most of them preferring hotel fare and hotel beds to hard-tack and the soft side of an unplanned pine board.

Friday, September 12, and weekly thereafter, quite a number of the officers and men were given furloughs for five days, and permitted to return to their homes. In the afternoon occurred the first battalion drill, which, by the aid of the Adjutant, Major Brown, Lieutenant Johnston, — a former officer of the 51st Illinois,—and others, was gone through with quite creditably. Saturday, September 13, was full of hard work, there being squad drill, company drill, battalion drill and dress parade.

Sunday, September 14, was spent rather quietly. There was Company inspection at ten o'clock, and in the afternoon there was preaching in the grove by the Chaplain of the 74th Illinois, nearly the entire encampment attending. In the early evening there was considerable excitement all through the camp with regard to the Sutlers. It was alleged that these Sutlers had issued checks which they refused to redeem, and also that they had passed counterfeit money in making change. Not a few of the soldiers were disposed to take the law into their own hands, but wiser counsels prevailed and quiet was restored. The excitement was renewed and increased next day and evening, and there was danger that the Sutlers' tents would be demolished. As a result, the men were ordered to quarters at eight o'clock, and all found outside after that hour were taken into custody by the patrol guards.

Arms and accoutrements were received by the Regiment on the 16th, and issued to the Companies the following day. The arms were the Enfield rifled muskets, and were as good a weapon as was then in general use. Many Regiments at that time had to put up with old Austrian or Belgian muskets, and the NINETY-SIXTH was regarded as fortunate in securing new Enfields. Some of the guns needed to have their sights filed down and their locks adjusted. Fortunately there was a practical gunsmith in the command, in the person of Sergeant



Geo. H. Burnett, of Company B, and he was detailed for this work, so that in a few weeks all were in admirable condition. About this time it came to the knowledge of the officers that there was more or less gambling in camp. Very strict orders were issued prohibiting all games of chance, and in some of the Companies even card playing was forbidden in the barracks. On the 16th Colonel Champion for the first time took sole charge of the Regiment during Battalion drill, conducting it admirably considering that this was his first attempt. On the 18th the Regiment had its first drill and dress parade with arms.

On the 19th some of the men were given permission to attend the agricultural fair, then in progress at Rockford. During this and succeeding days drill was kept up according to the following order: Officers' drill from eight to nine, and guard mount at the same hour; Company drill from nine to eleven; Battalion drill from two to four; Dress parade at half past five; Officers and non-commissioned officers' drill and recitations in the evening.

On the 20th, clothing, received direct from the Assistant U. S. Quarter-Master at Philadelphia, was issued, each soldier receiving a dark-blue dress coat, sky blue pants, woolen shirts and socks, cotton drawers and felt hats; such as had not been previously supplied were provided with blankets, and all who wished drew shoes. The clothing was of good quality, except the pants, which were shoddy enough. With the hats were sent brass bugles, eagles, tassels, letters, numbers and feathers. Some of the experiences with the new uniforms were ludicrous enough. Often tall men found themselves the possessors of very short pairs of pants; large men had coats with sleeves reaching but little below the elbows, and small men were provided with coats the sleeves of which reached far below the finger tips. But by dint of considerable swapping the majority found themselves fairly fitted. In nearly every Company was someone who had worked at tailoring. These men, being excused from other duty, set about with needle and scissors making the clothing fit, and in a day or two, all made a very presentable appearance. The guns and equipments were



bright and clean, and the clothing new, so that the transformation in the appearance of the Battalion was complete.

September 21st brought with it the usual Sunday morning inspection, and in the evening there was dress parade. Large numbers of men visited the churches in the city, and others attended the religious services held on the grounds.

On Monday, the 22d, light blue overcoats were issued. They were of regulation pattern, with capes, and a great comfort in cold weather. In the afternoon the Regiment was drilled for the first time in the manual of loading.—Major Brown acting as drill-master.

Tuesday, the 23d, the Regiment marched to town and escorted a large picnic party to camp. Most of the visitors were from Jo Daviess county, but there were quite a number from Lake county as well. Next day *The Rockford Register* published the following very complimentary notice :

THE NINETY-SIXTH REGIMENT.—This fine Regiment have received their uniforms, and were down town on Tuesday on parade under command of Major Brown, and presented a splendid appearance. With the Major as drill-master, who has seen service, the Regiment has made rapid proficiency in its drill, doing credit to themselves and Major B., who has shown himself an excellent officer. It is composed of a splendid looking set of men, of whom Jo Daviess and Lake counties may well be proud. We acknowledge the compliment of a military salute while passing the office.

The newspapers of the 23d contained the Proclamation of President Lincoln, in which he gave warning to the rebels that unless hostilities ceased within one hundred days he should declare the slaves free. This proclamation provoked much discussion, and, strange as it may seem at this day, not a little criticism, a few men in every Regiment declaring that they would not fight in what they termed a "nigger war." As a rule, however, the action of the President was most heartily endorsed, and officers and men alike "thanked God and took courage."

The 24th and 25th were passed without incident of especial note. Major Brown continued to assist at the Regimental drills each afternoon. Like many other men, the Major had a hobby; his was what he termed the "obstacle movement."





The Regiment would be marching in line of battle when he would call out: "Fourth Company, obstacle! By the right flank to the rear into column, march!" At this command the Fourth Company, or whatever Company had been designated, would break files to the rear, leaving a gap in the line, and when the imaginary obstacle had been passed would double quick back to its place. So far as can be remembered this movement was never executed after Major Brown left; but this much can at least be said, that long before leaving Camp Fuller every Company in the Regiment had been through the movement and knew how to pass around an obstacle.

On the 26th, knapsacks were issued to the men, and the little keepsakes which had occupied the corners of the bunks, or been carried about in pockets, were safely stowed away in these receptacles.

Sunday, the 28th, the Regiment escorted the 74th Illinois to town, the latter Regiment embarking for Louisville. In the afternoon there were religious services in the camp, conducted by Rev. J. M. Clendenning, who had enlisted as a Private in Company K, but had been appointed Chaplain of the Regiment.

Monday, the 29th, there was a large party of visitors in the camp from Lake county. The Regiment received haversacks and canteens, which completed its outfit.

Tuesday, September 30, there was a formal sword presentation to Lieutenant Colonel Isaac L. Clarke, the sword being the gift of the members of Company G. A large bay saddle horse had been purchased by his Lake county friends, and was received about the same time. The Lake county boys received one-half of the \$40 county bounty which had been voted them in cash, and a county order for the remainder which was soon redeemed. The Jo Daviess county soldiers had been paid \$60 each before leaving their county. It being the last day in the month, the First Sergeants of the several Companies were called upon for their monthly reports.

Up to this time a few furloughs had been granted to members of each Company every week, but on the 1st of October the commander of the Regiment, having been notified to hold



his command in readiness to proceed to the front, sent telegrams to the local papers in Lake and Jo Daviess counties, notifying absentees to return immediately to camp. The early days of October were very busy ones, both Regimental and Company commanders seeming determined to put their men in the best possible condition for field service. The officers were already gaining confidence in themselves, and the men were becoming quite proficient in their drill.

Sunday, October 5, there was a careful inspection of the barracks and grounds with a view to promoting the utmost cleanliness, and the following day Major Smith, Captain Hicks and Lieutenant Loughlin made a very careful examination of the clothing of the men, the shoddy pants being declared an imposition on the soldiers.

Tuesday, October 7, the Paymaster again came to camp, and each man was given \$25, that being the amount of Government bounty allowed them. The same day marching orders were received, the Regiment being notified that they were to leave for Louisville, as it was then understood. The following day the destination was changed to Cincinnati. During the evening some difficulty arose between members of the NINETY-SIXTH and 92d Illinois, in attendance upon a party in the city of Rockford, which resulted in a personal encounter between several enlisted men and a bitterness of feeling which caused a renewal of the difficulty on two occasions after the Regiments had reached Kentucky. Subsequently these difficulties were explained, and the Regiments became the best of friends.

On the whole, the stay at Camp Fuller brings up few but pleasant memories. The Regiment made rapid progress in drill and obedience to orders, and when it left for the front, after nearly five weeks in its camp of instruction, it was much better fitted for field service than the average regiment which had been in camp for so short a period. Nearly all had suffered to some extent from colds, the result of sleeping in the damp barracks, and the entire change of diet had affected many unfavorably. However, but very few had been sent to the large brick building outside the camp grounds, over which



waved the yellow hospital flag, and but two or three from a Company were left behind because of sickness when the command started for the front.

There were many sad leave-takings on the grounds during the last day or two at the camp. All knew that the war was to be fought in earnest from that time forward ; that it was no holiday affair upon which they were entering, and that only stern duty awaited them. How well they bore their part in the years succeeding that October day when they took up their line of march for the South, the following chapters will attempt to tell.



## CHAPTER III.

Off for "The Front"—A Rain-Storm En Route—The Trip to Cincinnati—A Tedious Night March—Happenings at Camp Champion—The Tents Erected—Episode of the Tall Men—A Skirmish with Mules—Detachments Sent to the Forts—More Presentations—A Night Alarm—Fresh Pork that Had to be Paid For—Unfortunate Explosion of a Shell—Five Companies Sent to Falmouth and Five to Covington—An October Snow-Storm—Visits From the Father and Son of General Grant.

AT about nine o'clock on the morning of Wednesday, October 8, 1862, THE NINETEENTH REGIMENT ILLINOIS VOLUNTEER INFANTRY bade adieu to Camp Fuller and marched to the depot of the Chicago & North-Western Railway. The morning was not a pleasant one, and on the march a drenching rain set in which dampened the persons but not the ardor of the troops. The people of Rockford were thoroughly patriotic, and, notwithstanding the rain, flags were waving everywhere, while men, women and children came out to cheer the soldiers and add their "God bless you, boys," to their good-byes. At the depot there was some delay, so that it was eleven o'clock or a little later when the two trains required to convey the Regiment finally started. The trip was not a rapid one, and it was about five o'clock when Chicago was reached. Many friends of members of the Regiment had been advised of their coming, so that on arriving at the depot in that city the soldiers were accorded quite a reception. Numerous packages containing dainty lunches were brought to the cars by the visitors, and these gifts were highly prized. Officers and men availed themselves of the brief stay in the city to purchase such articles as were needed to complete their outfits, or to write hurried letters to loved ones at home. The two trains were finally consolidated, three engines attached, and at half-past nine o'clock in the evening a start made for Cincinnati. There were eighteen passenger coaches and four





or five baggage cars, the latter filled with mess chests, officers' horses and other necessaries. With so heavy a train the run was a slow one. The trip was without incident or accident of especial note. Lafayette, Indiana, was reached at about eight o'clock next morning, and Indianapolis at noon. At the latter city there was a large camp, embracing infantry, cavalry and artillery. As this rendezvous was passed lusty cheers were given by those in camp and responded to by the Regiment. At every station where the train stopped the citizens came out and watched the soldiers with much interest, and often there was a waving of flags and a cheer from the patriotic people. At eleven o'clock on Thursday night, October 9, Cincinnati was reached. The men were thoroughly tired with their long ride in the crowded cars and glad of the order to "fall in," for they were at least sure of a change, if not of a rest. Few had slept at all the previous night, as there were two in every seat, and not all were disposed to be entirely quiet. Some had lain down in the aisles and dozed for an hour or two, but there had been little restful sleep since leaving Camp Fuller. The arrival at Cincinnati was apparently unannounced, for there was no one at the train to receive the Regiment or give orders what to do or where to go. The men marched out upon the street, and as soon as the column halted stretched themselves upon the sidewalks, where many slept a little, although the autumn air was cool and there was no protection. At last the officers' horses were unloaded, and a start made for headquarters. There another delay occurred, and then, definite orders having been received and a guide provided by Gen. Granger, then in command at that point, the march was resumed. The guide proved to be no other than the father of Major J. C. Smith of this Regiment, who was at that time a member of the Second Kentucky and on duty at Gen. Granger's headquarters. He piloted the Regiment to camp, and remained with it for some hours.

Going down the bank to the long, pontoon bridge that spanned the Ohio river orders were given to break step, so as not to strain the frail, floating structure, as might be done should all continue to step together. The river was wide, and



this bridge, being the first one of the kind ever seen by a great majority of the command, attracted close attention, and it would not be untrue to say that a few, at least, were slightly timid as they stepped upon it, and felt relieved when solid ground was again reached.

As the column passed up the southern bank of the river the soldiers assumed that, notwithstanding Kentucky's alleged neutrality, they were in Dixie, and despite the lateness of the hour and the severe fatigue to which they had been subjected they made the night air ring with shouts for the Union and the old flag beneath whose folds they marched. Passing through a portion of Covington they crossed Licking river to Newport, and, with an occasional brief halt for rest, made their way to the Two-Mile House, an ancient tavern whose name indicates its distance from Newport. The entire march did not exceed five miles, but as the roads were very hilly and terribly dusty, and the men not only greatly fatigued but generally pretty heavily loaded, it seemed much longer, and all were heartily glad when the head of the column filed to the right into an open field, and word was passed along the line that this was to be their camping ground.

One incident of this night march may be of interest. Adjutant Blodgett, who had already served for nearly a year with the 37th Illinois, halted beside the road, and in reply to some remark made by a tired soldier as the column passed, said: "Boys, you are only just beginning to die for your country." There were many longer marches made by the Regiment, and often over worse roads than this Kentucky turnpike, but for many months there were none more fatiguing than this night trip. A few fell out by the way and did not come up until long after the main body of the Regiment had halted.

It was four o'clock, and the gray of morning was almost upon them, when the camp was reached. The lines were speedily formed, guns were stacked and ranks broken. Officers and men quickly threw aside their equipments, and, without tents or other protection than their light blankets, sought repose. It was their first experience in Dixie, their first night



beneath the stars. And they slept soundly, as only tired soldiers can, upon the Southern sod, dreaming, perchance, of homes and friends from whom they had so recently parted, or of the future and the more stirring events upon which they were just entering.

The rest was not a long one, for in two hours the rattling drums aroused the camp and orders were given to "fall in for roll-call," after which preparations were made for breakfast. The meal was prepared under difficulties. The company cooks scrubbed from the big camp-kettles a portion of the dust that had accumulated on the march, found water at the well in the tavern yard, and "foraged" for wood in the neighborhood. Coffee, hard-tack and bacon constituted the bill of fare. To the epicure this would not have been a dainty repast, but to the soldier who had for two days lived principally upon this diet, minus the coffee, and who had slept but little for two nights, this was a meal over which thanks might be returned, and one which was certainly partaken of with keen relish.

The main incidents of the day were the drawing of the tents and the naming of the camp. What were known as "wedge tents" were provided for the enlisted men. They were small and not so numerous but that all were crowded, six men being placed in each. Two wall tents of comfortable size were issued to the officers of each Company, one to each of the field officers and three to the commissioned and non-commissioned staff and musicians. The tents provided for the enlisted men were not what were expected, but, while disappointed in their size and quality, there was little complaint, and all seemed determined to make the best of them. The work of putting them up, although promptly begun, was not very quickly accomplished, for very few were experienced in this branch of soldiering. Men laughed at each other's awkwardness, but upon responding to the suggestion to "try it yourselves, then," were quickly entangled, and found the task one not as easy as it looked. Many a good laugh was had, but progress was made, and in time all were up. Some were askew or out of line and had to be reset, but it was a lesson not soon forgotten, and the experiences of that day were



often alluded to in after months when the putting up of tents had come to be so much of a science that in ten minutes from the time the wagons containing them arrived in camp all would be in place.

“Camp Champion” was the name given to this temporary rendezvous, the intention being to thus honor the Colonel, who was even then winning the high regard of his men. This camp was a gently sloping but dusty field, and fairly well adapted for all of the purposes of a camp, and a drill and a parade ground. There were numerous and rugged hills all about it, many of them scamed with rifle-pits or surmounted with huge forts or heavy earth-works, in which were cannon of varying sizes. Most of these earth-works and forts were occupied by detachments from the 13th Regulars, which, as it transpired, THE NINETY-SIXTH was to relieve. There was much to interest the men who had come from the prairies of Northern Illinois, for the hills were more steep and numerous than many of them had ever seen before. The vineyards along the hill-sides, the heavy forests prostrate in front of the forts,—having been cut to give the artillery a wider range when it was believed that the Confederates had Cincinnati for their destination, only a few weeks before,—the heavy thirty and sixty-pound guns, all were novelties to the newly arrived soldiers. It should be remembered that this was a trying time in this section. The Confederates were making a desperate effort to force the National troops north of the Ohio river. But three weeks before had occurred the disastrous battle and surrender at Mumfordsville, Ky., and on the very day the Regiment left Rockford the battle of Perryville was fought, but about one hundred miles away. Kirby Smith, with a large force of rebels, had recently approached within a few miles of this very point, and it was even then feared by many that his troops, united with those of Gen. Bragg, would defeat or, possibly, pass the flank of Gen. Buell and make a rush for Cincinnati. The expense incurred in the construction of these earth-works was enormous, Beechwood Battery alone having cost about \$200,000, it was said.

An incident which occurred the morning after the arrival





of the command at Camp Champion is worthy of narration here. As has been stated before, there were an unusual number of tall men in the Regiment. On the morning in question, before the tents arrived, and while the men were in the open field, some discussion arose as to the comparative height of two or more of them, and a wager was made. Considerable talk resulted, and finally about all of the tall men in the command were brought together. The wager settled, such of the crowd as were convivially inclined marched over to the tavern, arriving there just as a sleepy bar-tender, who barely knew that a new regiment had arrived during the night, was preparing for his day's work. As the crowd entered the bar-room, the taller ones ducking their heads as they passed through the low door-way, the bar-tender eyed them, first with astonishment, then with trembling, but managed to gasp out: "Where did you-uns all come from?" Being told that they were all from Northern Illinois, he asked: "Be the whole regiment as tall as you-uns?" He was solemnly assured that this was only a fair sample of the command, and also informed that the Minnesota and Wisconsin troops were even taller. A further suggestion was added that if he sympathized with the Confederacy he might do it a service by sending word to Jeff Davis of what the rebels might expect when these regiments of giants got into the field. The bar-tender was awe-stricken, and tremblingly set out the drinks, even forgetting, it is said, to collect his pay.

During the day many visited the forts and batteries, strolled among the large vineyards in the neighborhood, or visited the cemetery and entertained themselves by reading the quaint inscriptions on the tombstones. After the first day a camp-guard was established, the line closely encircling the grounds. The sentinels were each given a beat, and required to walk back and forth upon it after the style of the Regular Army. None of the enlisted men were allowed to go in or out without passes, signed by the Colonel, unless accompanied by a commissioned officer. Troops farther toward the front did the picket duty. The sentinels were required to call out the hour after taps, and so, at regular intervals all through



the night, the cry would be taken up: "Post No. 1, twelve o'clock, and all is well; Post No. 2, twelve o'clock and all is well,"—and so on, taking up the different hours as they came. This was all very well in theory, but the practice was abandoned when more active duties came.

The Regiment was assigned to the Second Brigade, Third Division, Army of Kentucky, Col. P. T. Swayne, of the 99th Ohio, being placed in command of the Brigade. The other Regiments of the Brigade were the 92d Illinois, 115th Illinois and 14th Kentucky.

On Saturday, October 11, a large detail of men was sent to Cincinnati for mules and wagons. Their experiences were novel, and, at times, exciting. The mules were in a large corral. Many of them were but three years old and entirely unbroken. They had to be lassoed and drawn up to a post or tree by main force, and were harnessed with much difficulty and not a little danger. Hitching six of them to a large army wagon was not an easy task. The animals were afraid of the wagons, of the harnesses, of the men and of each other. Usually two or three that bore harness marks or gave other evidence of being at least partially broken, were selected and put into each team; but it was with great trouble that a start was made. When a team had been hitched up the wagon wheels were locked and a man stationed at the head of each mule. Then the driver, armed with a rawhide whip, mounted the near wheel mule, and grasped the single line leading to the bit of the near leader. With most of the men this was an entirely new way of driving, and some of the teamsters were scarcely less awkward than their mules. By dint of some daring and considerable swearing the train was made ready, and the procession started. There were some thrilling adventures on the way, and a few incipient runaways, but no serious accidents. The crossing of the river was accomplished with much difficulty, the timid mules being induced to step upon the pontoon bridge only by considerable persuasion. But the trip was finally made, and some time after dark the motley procession reached the camp. The teams were unhitched and unharnessed with only a little less difficulty than had attended



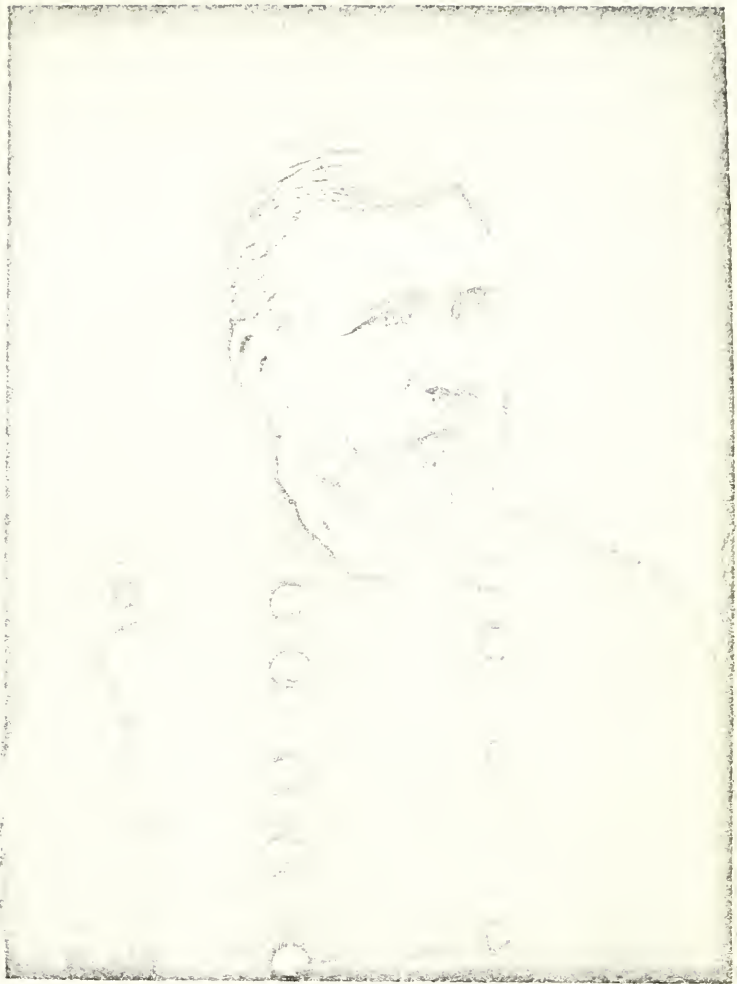
the hitching up. The mules were then tied to the wagons and fed, and the detail dismissed. The men comprising that detail were a tired lot, and some of them declared that they would prefer to charge a battery rather than to repeat the day's experiences. The mules were a wiry set, and for many days thereafter those who wanted a little genuine excitement could find it by visiting the wagon train and assisting in harnessing and hooking up the long-eared but exceedingly useful animals. One team was allowed to each Company, and seven teams in addition for the use of the Regimental officers, and the transportation of ammunition and rations. Besides these there were two ambulances, with a pair of horses to each.

Companies D, I and K were detached from the Regiment on the 11th and sent to guard forts in the vicinity, all of these detachments being under the command of Major Smith. Company D was sent to Beechwood Battery, Company I to John's Hill Battery, and Company K to Fort Shaler. A few days later fifty men of Company B were sent to Fort Mitchell. Several of the Companies had their first experience in target shooting on the 11th.

Sunday, October 12, was spent rather quietly. There was Company inspection in the forenoon, and in the evening one or more prayer meetings in the vicinity of the camp. An elegant sword was presented to Colonel Champion by the members of Company E, Captain Black making the presentation address.

October 13 the Companies took up their regular drill, and one or more of them began the skirmish drill. On the 14th there was a sword presentation to Sergeant Major Quinn, and a saddle presentation to Colonel Champion. On the 15th there was an inspection by Major Flint, and, while the Regiment was on dress parade in the early evening, Brig. Gen. Absalom Baird, who was commanding the Division to which the Regiment was attached, rode up and watched the proceeding, complimenting both officers and men upon their soldierly bearing, and expressing surprise on being told that the Regiment had been in the service less than six weeks. Forty





J. C. SMITH.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL AND BREVET BRIGADIER GENERAL.





rounds of ammunition were issued to each man, and the First Sergeants had a light sword added to their outfit.

News came at this time of the death, from typhoid fever, of Henry W. Ostrander, of Company G. He was taken sick at Camp Fuller, and went to his home at Rockland, in Lake County, and died October 12. This was the first death in the Regiment.

The principal incident of the 16th was an alarm at night. The "long roll" beat at about eleven o'clock. The Companies were hastily formed, and the command proceeded to the parade ground. There was some excitement and not a little mixing up of boots, hats and equipments in the haste to fall in, but the line was formed in a surprisingly short time and with as little confusion as was to be expected. The alleged cause was the firing upon an outpost in front of Fort Shaler. It was not so accepted by the citizens and civil authorities at Covington and Cincinnati, however, for they believed it to be a mere ruse on the part of the Colonel to test the promptness and coolness of the officers and men of his Regiment. It happened that the alarm was taken up by other camps in the neighborhood, reaching the city and causing intense excitement there. Few knew it at the time, but it afterward leaked out that this little episode came near costing the Regiment its commander, and losing to the army the splendid services afterward performed by the gallant Colonel Champion. The civil authorities were so exercised that they demanded the head of the officer who started the alarm, and were pacified with the utmost difficulty. The Regiment was kept in line for about an hour, and then sent to camp. On the whole it was a good lesson, for the men afterward made it a rule to know where their boots and hats were when they retired for the night.

About this time some of the troops that had been forced to retreat from Cumberland Gap arrived and went into camp in the neighborhood. They were a tired, ragged and foot-sore lot of men, having made a long and rapid march.

An event that will be remembered by the line officers of Company C happened on one of the days while at Camp



Champion. A fine hog was missed by a loyal farmer, and the presence of bristles and the odor of fresh pork was deemed sufficient to warrant a strong suspicion that certain members of the Color Company had sought to vary the monotony of army rations. The hog was estimated to be worth \$30, an amount that the officers quietly paid; but the affair leaked out, and for a time the boys of Company C were the butt of numerous jokes. They learned one important lesson, however, which was that when it was impracticable to burn or bury hogs' bristles, they should at least take them into the street of some other Company.

On one occasion a detail was sent out to cut wood, going several miles from camp. A roadside booth attracted them, and finding that both beer and cider could be bought, some of the men indulged in a glass or two of their favorite beverage. That night two of the men were terribly sick, with every symptom of having been poisoned, and their lives were saved only by the most strenuous exertions of the Surgeon of the Regiment. Investigation revealed the fact that these two men were the only ones who had drunk cider, and it was confidently believed that some Rebel, too cowardly to fight, had sought their lives. A scouting party visited the locality at daylight, but the man who sold the cider could not be found, although the booth was watched for several days and nights. He had probably gone South, or concealed himself in Cincinnati to await the removal of the Regiment.

On Sunday, October 19, a few members of Company K were sent out in front of Fort Shaler on a reconnoissance. Finding a percussion shell, but supposing it to be an ordinary cannon ball, they were examining it, when, being carelessly dropped, it exploded with terrible effect, wounding five of the Company, some of them quite seriously, and fatally injuring a citizen who stood by. The wife of the citizen was also seriously injured. A more circumstantial account of this accident may be found in the sketch of the Company in another part of this work.

The same day five Companies of the Regiment were ordered to guard a wagon train about starting for Falmouth.



Ky. They were Companies A, E, F, G and H, and were under command of Lieutenant Colonel Clarke. These Companies marched to Covington, but, as the train was not ready, returned to Camp Champion for the night, and on the following day, Monday, October 20, made a final start, having in charge one hundred or more wagons loaded with supplies for troops in that region. The same day Company K returned to camp from Fort Shaler, Company C taking its place.

Wednesday, October 22, Companies B, C, D, I and K marched to Covington, and on reporting at headquarters were directed to commodious barracks just vacated by the 33d Indiana, remaining until the 29th. Detachments were left at several forts, but joined the command during the week. On the 24th occurred a rain to partially relieve the terrible drouth that had prevailed for two months or more, and on the night of the 25th there was a snow-storm which was quite heavy, considering the latitude and the time of year, some three or four inches remaining on the ground at daylight, but all disappearing within a few hours. There was some brisk snow-balling while it lasted, the men enjoying the sport with keen zest.

During the stay at Covington Barracks, Jesse Grant, Esq., of Cincinnati, and Master Fred Grant, of Galena, the father and the son of Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, called once or twice, spending some hours with their Jo Daviess county acquaintances. Fred's first visit was made alone. A boy, mounted on a pony, came riding up to the gateway leading to the grounds surrounding the barracks. The entrance was guarded, and the soldier on duty asked the visitor for his pass. The boy replied that he had none, whereupon the Sergeant of the Guard was called. This officer chanced to be Sergeant Thomas J. Smith, of Galena. As he came to the gate he recognized the visitor, and remarked: "Why, that is a son of Gen. Grant, and doesn't need a pass. Let him in." The boy was rather quiet and modest than otherwise, although quite a hero in the eyes of the soldiers owing to the distinguished achievements of his illustrious sire.



## CHAPTER IV.

Five Companies Start Southward—Hard Pikes *vs.* Tender Feet—Marching and Tenting in the Snow—A Muddy Cut-Off—Loyal Whites and Enthusiastic Blacks—Five Companies Sent via Williamsburg and Georgetown to Lexington—Slaves and Slave-Hunters—Milling for the Military—A Night's Foraging—The Regiment Reunited—Experiences at Lexington—Visits to Henry Clay's Monument—The First Death in Camp.

MONDAY, October 20, Companies A, E, F, G and H again took up the line of march, with Falmouth as their supposed destination. They were under command of Lieutenant Colonel Isaac L. Clarke. Lieutenant Samuel H. Bayne, of Company H, was assigned as acting Adjutant, and Lieutenant William Vincent, of Company A, as acting Quarter-Master. First Assistant Surgeon Moses Evans accompanied the battalion and cared for the health of the men. This was not to be a march in the cars or on boats, but on foot, the men carrying well-filled knapsacks, haversacks containing from one to three days' rations, canteens of water, forty rounds of ammunition, bayonets, accoutrements and heavy muskets. Many of the officers had taken trunks with them to Kentucky, but strict orders were issued that they must not be put in the wagons, and, as there was no other method of transportation, they were sent back to Cincinnati and stored, most of them being subsequently returned by express to Illinois, although a few were again in camp in Central Kentucky. Doubtless some of them are still in Cincinnati.

A start was made about eight o'clock A. M., Companies A and F taking the lead of the train as an advance guard. Company H was placed near the center of the train and Companies E and G in the rear. The distance traveled that day was about eleven miles over the Alexandria turnpike. This macadamized road was excellent so far as the wagons were





concerned, but decidedly hard on the feet of the men, and, as a result, many were very sore and lame when the final halt was made. The camp that night was in the fair grounds at Alexandria. The men were made very comfortable, although the water at this place was not agreeable to the taste, being taken from a huge cistern. However, it was an improvement on the water taken from ponds at other points, and the camp was pleasantly remembered.

Tuesday, October 21, an early start was made, the order of march being the same as on the previous day, except that the position of the Companies was changed. The distance traveled was fifteen miles. As there were a few empty wagons in the train the knapsacks of the men were carried, thus relieving them greatly. A part of the way the column marched upon the dirt road, which was much easier for the sore and tired feet than the pike had been. About four o'clock in the afternoon there was a rattle of excitement growing out of the report sent to the commander of the detachment by the advance guard that several horses were tied in a ravine a little off from the pike, indicating the presence of rebel cavalry in the vicinity. Captain Clark and about a dozen men of Company G volunteered to reconnoitre. Once away from the column and finding that there was no truth in the report, the Captain concluded to indulge his inclination to roam over the country, and so led off on a long detour. After a tramp of four or five miles the party returned to the column without having found either horses or soldiers. Their trip was a hard one, and they were pretty well fagged out when they returned to the train. Many of the farmers along the route through that part of the State treated the soldiers quite liberally with apples, and often provided meals for those who left the column. The camp that night was on Flour Creek, and was a very comfortable one.

Wednesday, October 22, the column started at about nine o'clock, passing over a very hilly and stony road and reaching Falmouth about noon, camping near a branch of the Licking river where was an abundance of good water. On the march quite a percentage of the men were employed in chaining the



wheels of the wagons, so that the train might safely proceed down the long and steep hills.

At Falmouth the wagons were unloaded, and the men generally supposed that they would remain in camp for several days. Such proved not to be the case, however, for on Thursday at about noon, to the surprise of all, the wagons were again started out and the battalion ordered to accompany them. They made about sixteen miles, camping at Robinson's Station near the railroad. The roads were quite hilly, requiring considerable chaining of wagon wheels, and this afternoon's march proved a very severe one.

Friday, October 24, was a day of rest, the soldiers improving it by washing their clothing and cleaning up generally. Notwithstanding that strict orders had been issued to the contrary, there was considerable foraging; but, as a rule, only known secessionists suffered. About 100 men were at work rebuilding the trestle bridge burned by the rebel Gen. Morgan a few weeks before. During the day the wagons were again loaded, and on Saturday, October 25, the command marched to Cynthiaana, where several other regiments were camped. The day was an unpleasant one, some rain falling, and after going into camp a corn-field was visited and a large amount of fodder appropriated, the men spreading it on the bottoms of their tents to keep them off the wet ground. In the evening it began to grow cold, and by bedtime snow was falling. In the morning the ground was covered to the depth of nearly six inches, but the snow had piled up around the bottom of the tents, keeping out the wind, and the men slept more comfortably than on any previous night. The snow rendered the work of preparing for the march quite slow, and it was ten o'clock when the column started out on Sunday morning. On the pike arms were presented to the 19th Michigan and 115th Illinois as they passed to take the advance, the battalion then falling in the rear of the line. Passing through Cynthiaana the column had proceeded about ten miles when Gen. Baird ordered this detachment and the 92d Illinois to take the dirt road to Paris, as it would save some two or three miles in distance. It was a great mistake, for the snow had wet



up the clay to the depth of two or three inches, making it terribly sticky and unpleasant. Not unfrequently the men lifted their feet from their shoes, and in some instances were obliged to march barefoot or go back to the wagons and ride. A soldier wrote: "Every time we lifted our feet from the clay it awaked an echo not unlike the sound of a pop-gun." The entire distance traveled that day was sixteen miles, one-third of which had been over this clay road. The day was cold and unpleasant, the march a very severe one, and the stragglers from the ranks, owing to the great fatigue caused by the muddy roads, were more numerous than on any previous day. Arrived in camp somewhat late, the men had a most disagreeable task before them. The snow still lay deep upon the ground, and they were obliged to clear it away and pitch their tents. They did not then know as well as they learned afterward how to make themselves comfortable, and to many the night was a most cheerless one. However, they set about most diligently to fix up their temporary quarters and prepare for supper. Huge fires were built in front of the tents to dry the ground; straw was procured from neighboring plantations for beds, and at least a portion of the command passed the evening and night quite pleasantly.

Monday, October 27, a start was made at nine o'clock, the expectation being that the evening would find the detachment in Lexington, but the column only marched about four miles, going into camp before noon. At Paris, which was passed early in the day, there was a profuse display of flags, indicating a strong Union sentiment.

Tuesday morning, October 28, the command started at seven o'clock, passing through a beautiful country. The column halted for quite a time in the city of Lexington while waiting to be assigned to camp. The citizens, and especially the colored people, watched them with much interest, coming to talk with the men, and, in some instances, bringing "hoe-cake" and other edibles, and also pails of water, with gourd-dippers, which they passed along the lines.

Moving to the outskirts of the city the female seminary was passed, and the young lady students came out, waved their



handkerchiefs and hurraled for the Union. It was interesting to note the instant change that came over the soldiers as the ladies made their appearance. The martial band struck up a lively air. The scattered column immediately closed to the center of the highway, elbows were touched, the step was taken, the limping gait of those whose feet had been blistered by the long march over the hard pike disappeared, the shoulders that had been stooping through the weary miles were quickly straightened, heads were thrown back, the carelessly carried muskets were brought to a "right shoulder shift," and everything in the army regulations strictly obeyed, unless it be that all eyes were not directly toward the front. There was an inspiration in the presence and approval of the loyal beauties that caused all to forget their weariness and nerved every man to do his best. Could the battles of the war have been fought with such surroundings, instead of in gloomy forests or amid tangled swamps, it is easy to believe that there would have been no cowards; indeed, it is probable that absolute extinction of one side or the other would have resulted. The column kept well closed up until a halt was made and a camp ground selected at a point where the guide-board read: "Georgetown 10 Miles."

Wednesday, October 29, the camp ground was changed to a point about one and a half miles from Lexington. The location was a fine one, water being abundant and of good quality, and only about a quarter of a mile distant from camp. The colored people in the neighborhood showed great joy at the arrival of Union troops. An old "aunty" standing by the roadside cried out, "O Lor bless me, I wish I had some thing to gib em;" and an aged colored man was repeating, as rapidly as he could speak it, "Hurrah for de Union! Hurrah for de Union!" and once in a while sandwiching the remark, "The Unioners is come." There was a large camp in the neighborhood, not less than 20,000 troops being stationed near by. The men assumed that they were to make this a permanent camp, and proceeded to construct fire-places in their tents by digging holes in the ground about one foot square and eight inches deep, with a flue leading to the outside for the smoke.







NICKAJACK, 1863-4.

ROBERT A. SMITH,

RIGHT GENERAL GUIDE.

SAMUEL H. SMITH,

LEFT GENERAL GUIDE.





MRS. J. C. SMITH.



to pass off. A few sheet-iron stoves were procured, and a number of brick or stone fire-places were built. The regular rations were supplemented with corn-meal, bought by the soldiers at the rate of fifty cents per bushel, flour at three cents a pound and molasses at \$1.40 per gallon. There was often a surplus of coffee and rice, which was sold to citizens or exchanged for the articles mentioned. Near the camp was a large grist mill and jeans factory. From these the rebels had taken some \$80,000 worth of goods, only a few weeks before, compelling the owners to accept Confederate scrip in payment. The factory was not only a thing of interest to the troops, but a great convenience, for the soldiers were permitted to take warm water from the pipes for the purpose of washing their clothing, a privilege which they availed themselves of with alacrity.

The remaining days, until the arrival of the detachment under Colonel Champion, were passed without incident of especial note. The camp regulations were strict, and drilling was vigorously begun. Colonel Clarke was a strict disciplinarian and disposed to see that all orders issued for the government of troops were literally obeyed. He had been a school-master through all the early years of his manhood, and some of the men thought him too strict. This criticism came to his knowledge, and he was frank to talk with his officers and such of his men as he knew best personally about the matter, so that a pretty good understanding was reached. Later on, officers and men came to know each other better, and the soldiers learned that it was absolutely necessary in order to discipline that the soldier should subject himself to the officer. This much can certainly be said, that long before his death those who had been disposed to criticise him came to see that his orders were, after all, best for the men. They learned that he was a man of high character and fixed principles, and that he meant to do just what was right and honorable by those under his command, and by the citizens near the camp or on the line of march.

It is now necessary to turn back and see what the other five Companies of the Regiment, under Colonel Champion,



had been doing since Colonel Clarke's command left Camp Champion.

On Wednesday, October 29, at a little before nine o'clock, Companies B, C, D, I and K, under the command of Colonel Champion, left their comfortable quarters in Covington Barracks, where a week had been so pleasantly spent, and started on the trip to Lexington. Already the radical change of diet and mode of life was beginning to tell on the men, and each Company left a half dozen or more of their number in the various hospitals in the neighborhood. Marching to headquarters, definite orders were received, and the column passed out through Covington and near Fort Mitchell, where a rest of half an hour was taken. Two miles further on there was a stop for dinner, after which the command marched to the fair grounds near Florence, halting about half-past three o'clock in the afternoon and occupying the amphitheatre. The distance made was about ten miles, and the trip a rather leisurely one. There was plenty of wood and water, and the Battalion had a delightful camping place.

Thursday, October 30, the column started about 7 A. M., and made sixteen miles, passing through Walton and camping near Crittenden at a little after 5 P. M., in an open field. Wood and water were scarce and had to be carried about a mile. The march was through a beautiful country a part of the way, there being many fine plantations. Many of the people showed their loyalty by coming out and waving flags or cheering. At other places they stood sullenly and silently, their looks indicating a displeasure they dared not voice. It was amusing to witness the actions of the negroes at these latter places. Keeping partly in the rear of the buildings so as to be out of sight of their masters, they would swing their hats and dance or otherwise manifest their joy, but without daring to shout. This second day's march was quite severe on the men, and many were lame and foot-sore when camp was reached.

Friday, October 31, the column started at 8 A. M., and passed through Crittenden, Dry Ridge and other hamlets, and camped near Williamsburg, making about twelve miles. At





this latter place a beautiful young lady, dressed in a costume made up of the stars and stripes, came out to cheer the soldiers on their way. It was a pretty tableau, and heartily was the beautiful and loyal lady cheered in return. There were but few springs along the route, and most of the wells were deep but dry. At some points details were sent ahead and teams impressed to draw to the roadside barrels of water taken from springs or ponds. Some of the men quietly left the ranks and "drew" sweet potatoes from the fields or gardens along the route. There was a suggestion at many points of the poet's dream of heaven, when he said :

"Of the women there seemed an innumerable throng,  
But the men you could count as they passed along."

For while there were from six to ten women at about every house there was hardly a white man to be seen. Just at night two men, believed to be Confederate soldiers or bushwhackers belonging to Morgan's command, were captured and sent under guard to the Provost Marshal at Williamsburg. The regular army rations were somewhat low, but there was a good variety of fresh meat in camp next morning, and a few "secesh" rails were burned to cook it with. Water was not only very scarce but very muddy, being drawn from cattle ponds. The men came into camp in much better condition than on the previous day.

Saturday, November 1, the command started at 7 A. M., and marched seventeen miles, camping near Jones' Tavern. The day was quite warm, and the men pretty well used up when a final halt was made. An incident of the evening was the enlistment of the two deserters from the rebel army mentioned in the sketch of Company C. Many criticised the action, but the officers concluded to take the risk, and after events fully vindicated them.

Sunday, November 2, the Battalion broke camp at 7 A. M., and marched six miles, camping on Eagle Creek. As but five days' supplies had been taken, the regular rations were about exhausted. The Quarter-Master purchased beef, corn and wheat in the neighborhood, and a mill near camp was set in motion by some of the men in charge of Sergeant Schooley,



an experienced miller, Corporal John Lee acting as engineer, and by evening four hundred pounds of flour and a like amount of corn meal had been ground out and issued. The steam whistle at the mill was sounded repeatedly, and soon all of the colored people of the neighborhood and of Georgetown village seemed to be approaching the camp, apparently thinking that the whistle proceeded from a fleet of Lincoln gunboats that must be coming up the diminutive creek. Many of the young colored men desired to accompany the command, and, as a natural result, more or less trouble ensued. Most of the Generals in the department at that time were in partial sympathy with the "peculiar institution," and strict orders had been given requiring officers to surrender any negroes who might be found in the camp whenever their alleged owners demanded them. The fugitive slave laws were at least nominally in force, and commanders of regiments who refused to obey these laws not unfrequently found themselves the principals in vexatious law suits. Some of these suits were not concluded until long years after the war was over, occasioning considerable personal expense and trouble to those involved. But with the NINETY-SIXTH Regiment officers there was never litigation, Colonel Champion being too good a lawyer to allow himself or his officers to be involved in law suits. Nearly all were radically opposed to slavery, and the negro who sought refuge in the camp was protected, but in such a manner as not to involve any one in a legal way. Usually a camp guard was established whenever the Regiment went into bivouac, often, as it seemed, more for the purpose of excluding citizens from the camp than to prevent the soldiers from going outside. Not unfrequently citizens would come to the guard line and ask, or even demand, to be admitted to headquarters, but whenever it was suspected that they were negro hunting they were excluded and compelled to return to their homes without taking the negroes who had sought their liberty. A few negroes followed the command from Eagle Creek, most of them being employed as cooks for the officers.

On the second, learning that the plantation of a Confederate Major was but two miles distant, about forty men, in charge of



Lieutenant Montgomery, of Company D, set out in the early evening on a foraging expedition. Arrived at the house, the soldiers quietly deployed about the buildings, while the Lieutenant and a half dozen men who had brought their muskets with them rapped at the front door. Some ladies came to the door, and, in response to the officer's inquiry, asserted that there were no men in the house. Unfortunately for the truth of this assertion, a man appeared at the head of the stairway just at that moment and demanded to know what was wanted. The Lieutenant asked him to come to the door, which he did with manifest reluctance. They told him that they were a detachment from the command encamped on Eagle Creek, and that, being short of rations, they had come for a few bushels of potatoes, at the same time saying that if he was a loyal citizen a receipt would be given so that he could collect pay. He pretended that there were no potatoes on the plantation. It happened, however, that a negro who had previously been interviewed, and who accompanied the expedition as its pilot, had assured them that in a field adjoining the buildings were numerous "pits" of potatoes. The Lieutenant asked the man to remove his hat, raise his right hand and repeat after him the oath of allegiance, which he did. The oath was a very lengthy one, the Lieutenant injecting numerous excerpts from the Declaration of Independence, Webster's orations and such other literature as he could call to mind, in apparent good faith, but really to gain time for the boys who were reconnoitering. Before he was half through there was a loud outcry from the poultry, and the citizen was becoming very anxious. As soon as the extended oath was concluded he appealed for protection, and begged the officer not to allow the men to take his poultry. The officer, leaving the man under guard, ran to the outbuildings, and in loud tones demanded that the foraging should stop, saying that they had come for potatoes, not for poultry; but, seizing a grain bag, called in an undertone to the men to hand him some chickens and turkeys, which he crammed into the sack. As soon as the noise ceased he turned his game bag over to some of the men, returned to the citizen and told him that he had better go in the house for the night,



but that, having taken the oath of allegiance, he could come to the camp next morning, bring two or three reputable citizens of known loyalty to establish his identity and character, and get pay for his potatoes. The citizen quickly made his way to the house, but never came to camp for his pay, and inquiry revealed the truthfulness of the first information that the entire family were notorious secessionists. Meanwhile the potato field had been visited and the men were on their way to camp. A soldier, in writing of the affair, said: "The men from Company C brought in thirty chickens, ten turkeys, a lot of ducks, four bushels of potatoes, a churn full of syrup and twenty quarts of honey, which, considering that it was the only Company in the Regiment that ever laid claim to being especially 'good,' must be considered a pretty fair showing." As the other four Companies each had an equal number of men in the expedition, it can be judged that the affair was a pretty successful one.

It may be mentioned here that the colored man who acted as pilot was James Joyce, who remained with the Regiment until Nashville was reached, and then went North with Lieutenant A. B. Partridge, living in Lake county until his death, which occurred about 1875.

Monday, November 3, the Battalion was called in line early, fired off their guns by volley, and marched fourteen miles, camping at two o'clock p. m. on Elkhorn Creek, near the residence of ex-Gov. Robinson. The village of Georgetown was reached early in the day, and the country passed through was the most beautiful portion of the Blue Grass Region. Several negroes were following the Regiment, and at Georgetown citizens undertook to stop them, but failed in their efforts.

Tuesday, November 4, reveille sounded at half-past four, the column filing out of camp at six a. m., and marching to Lexington, ten miles, arriving about eleven o'clock a. m. The other five Companies came out to meet Colonel Champion's command, and escort it to camp.

It was a very pleasant meeting when the two battalions came together at Lexington, and the Regiment was again con-





solidated. For many days the boys compared experiences, and related to each other the incidents that had happened during their two weeks' separation. There had been considerable irregularity about the mails up to this time, but here the accumulated letters were received, and an immense mail distributed.

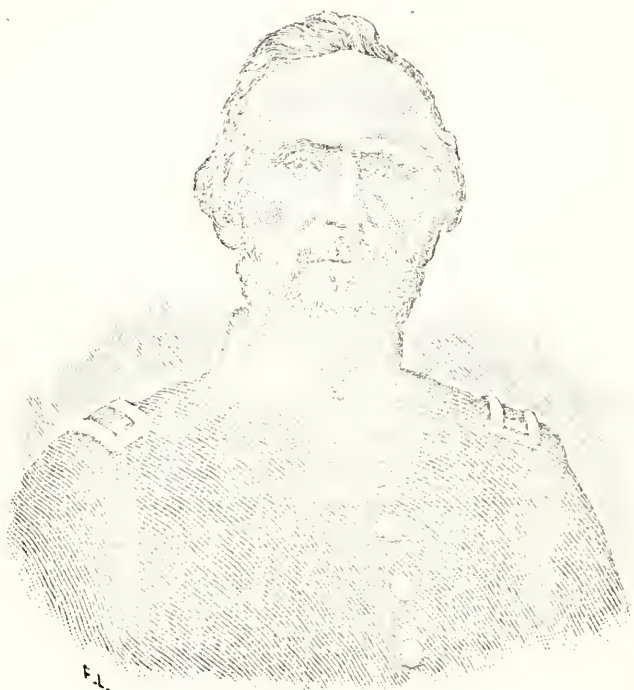
The Regiment remained at Lexington until November 13. It was not a time of leisure, but rather of hard work, for drilling was pushed with great vigor, the men being out for many hours every day when the weather would permit, either in squads, companies or as a regiment, and perhaps at no other point was more rapid progress made in acquiring military knowledge. The weather was cold much of the time, and one or two light snow-storms occurred, but this did not interfere very materially with the every day drill. At dress parade the men were required to wear overcoats. Rations were abundant, and of very good quality, but there was much trouble concerning the matter of cooking them. Up to this time the plan had been for each Company to keep its coffee, beans, rice and some other articles together, and men were detailed to serve as Company cooks. There were usually two for each Company. Many of these cooks were not experts in their line, and much of the cooking was simply execrable. Three times out of four the beans or rice would be burned. The big black kettles had to be used for cooking both meat and coffee, and often there was a film of grease upon the top of the kettle of coffee, the sight of which was not well calculated to serve as an appetizer. The matter was discussed by officers and men, and finally permission was given to break up each Company into messes, the men to take turns in cooking. This arrangement proved more satisfactory, although too many cooks spoiled many a broth. However, a few developed into excellent cooks in every Company, and when the Regiment was in camp as a rule it fared pretty well. During the stay at Lexington there were frequent reviews of the Brigade and Division, and dress parades were held almost every evening, large numbers of people coming out from the city to witness the evolutions of the battalions.



There were few in the Regiment, and probably but few in the army then encamped in the neighborhood, who did not visit the tomb and monument of the great statesman, Henry Clay, and no doubt hundreds of soldiers copied the inscription upon the coffin, which reads: "I can, with unshaken confidence, appeal to the Divine Arbiter for the truth of the declaration that I have been influenced by no impure purpose; no personal motive; have sought no personal aggrandizement, but that in all my public actions I have had a sole and single eye, and a warm, devoted heart directed and dedicated to what, in my best judgment, I believed to be the true interest of my country." This monument is 55 feet square at the base and considerably more than 100 feet in height, and is surmounted by a statue of the man whose memory it is intended to perpetuate.

The first death in the camp, and the second among the members of the Regiment, occurred at Lexington,—George Bryan, aged 19 years, and a member of Company II, dying from typhoid fever.





ADDISON B. PARTRIDGE.

FIRST LIEUTENANT COMPANY C.



CHAPTER V.

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Southward to Harrodsburg—Kentucky River Scenery—A Halt at Shaker-town—The Stay at Camp Clarke—Visits to Perryville Battle Ground—Recovering Federal Property—Issuing a Newspaper—Marching to Danville—In Winter Quarters at Camp Baird—Occasional Alarms at Night—The First Sergeants Lectured—Breaking Camp by Fire-Light—The Lebanon March—A Terrible Rain Storm—The Night at “Camp Wet”—The Return to Danville—Frequent Deaths Among the Soldiers—A Scouting Expedition—Close of the Year 1862.

Thursday, November 13, the Regiment struck its tents, packed its knapsacks, loaded its wagons, left its fire-places and straw beds, and again started out upon the march, breaking camp at seven o'clock or a little later, and taking position at the rear of the column. It was a beautiful day, and the road lay through an attractive and highly cultivated region. The distance traveled was fourteen or fifteen miles, and the camp for the night near Nicholasville. A large number of men had to be left at Lexington, owing to sickness, and others were really too unwell for so long a march, although, with commendable pluck, they persisted in remaining with the Regiment. As a consequence the ambulances were crowded before the day's march was ended. Field and staff officers walked a considerable part of the time, allowing those who were foot-sore or unwell to ride their horses. Some of these officers carried one or two muskets for tired members of the command, a favor that was fully appreciated. The camp that night was in a pretty grove near a spring, and as there was an abundance of straw in the neighborhood the men made themselves very comfortable. Next morning the column passed through Nicholasville, making their start at eight o'clock. Toward noon, on nearing the Kentucky river, the country became more broken. The pike lay along a deep gorge or ravine, descending for a mile or more until the river bottom was reached. On one side of the roadway, at a point where the column





halted, the rocks rose precipitately to a great height, and on the other side was a deep chasm, down which the waters dashed themselves into a spray and disappeared beneath the overhanging boulders. Even those who had visited the Rocky Mountains grew enthusiastic at the unexpected scene, and admitted that the view was one of true grandeur. Great layers of rock surmounted each other to the height of hundreds of feet, and here and there little white cedars, so beautifully green, cropped out from the crevices in the rocks, while all about icicles were pendant from the vines, greatly enhancing the beauty of the surroundings. Fifty feet above the road a horse was drinking from a spring, and it was a question with many as to how he reached the place or in what way he was to leave the spot without falling.

The river was reached at noon, and the command went into bivouac until its turn came to be ferried across the stream. There were two boats, each of which would accommodate about one company, and in these the crossing was made without mishap, except that once a boat ran aground, causing a little excitement and some delay. The distance traveled that day was about eight miles, and the camp for the night was made at Brooklyn, on the river. The scene from the camp was a most beautiful one, and will not pass from the minds of those who witnessed it until memory fails. Looking across the river the tall cliffs rose precipitately for hundreds of feet, giving the impression, as night came on, of a vast thunder cloud rising up against the sky.

Saturday, November 15, the command marched ten or twelve miles, halting at Harrodsburg. The first few miles lay through a broken country, emerging from which Shaker-town was reached. This village, inhabited by the sect whose name it bears, was a novelty. The houses were not especially numerous, but all were large and substantial, and some of them bore dates, 1811, 1814 and later years, indicating considerable antiquity. The apparel of both men and women was drab or gray material, made up in the plainest manner possible. The women all wore shaker bonnets. It was noticeable that nearly all the inhabitants were either quite old or



quite young. The column halted for a time in the village streets, and the soldiers talked with the citizens, the latter answering all questions freely. It was learned that no marriages were allowed among the people, and that the population of the village was kept up by the adoption and education of orphan children from all parts of the country. Upon arriving at mature years these wards were given permission to go elsewhere and adopt a different mode of life if they saw fit, a privilege of which nearly all availed themselves, scarcely five per cent. consenting to remain and take upon themselves the vows of celibacy. These people took no part in the stormy scenes attending the rebellion, being opposed to war on principle, but it was a well established fact that all of them were opposed to the institution of slavery, and in hearty sympathy with the North. A few weeks before, the Rebel forces had levied heavy tribute upon them, taking considerable live stock, some goods, and, it was even said, more or less money.

The command arrived at Harrodsburg about one o'clock, and camped a few rods from a large hospital filled with Rebels, wounded at the battle of Perryville. This being the first lot of uniformed Rebels with which the Regiment had come in contact, there was much curiosity on the part of the men to see and converse with them. Many of the prisoners were quite defiant and saucy, and as quick to enter into an argument on behalf of "Southern rights" as were their Yankee visitors. There were about 1,500 Confederates in town, most of them being quartered in buildings or barracks.

Perryville was about ten or eleven miles from Harrodsburg, and not only many public buildings, but numerous private residences were filled with the sick and wounded of both armies, left there immediately following the battle of the 8th of October. Before the command had been there many hours, men starting out from the camps found muskets, tents, saddles and other articles quite numerous among the citizens, some of them being secreted and others openly displayed as relics. This coming to the knowledge of the officers, detachments were sent out, in some instances remaining for a day or two, and gathering up large quantities of camp and garrison



equipage,—several wagon loads of muskets, many horses and mules and a few tents being the more valuable articles recovered. On these expeditions many got their first glimpse of the horrors of the battle-field. In some instances the dead remained unburied, and at many places the rain had washed the dirt from the bodies of those buried in the shallow graves, leaving feet, arms and heads exposed to view. There were many dead horses here and there through the woods, and the stench arising from their decaying carcasses was terribly sickening. The enemy had occupied a portion of the battle ground for the night, and had made an attempt at burying their dead, but the work was not very thoroughly done. Nearly all the Union dead had been carefully buried, and their graves plainly marked with wooden head-boards.

On one of the trips to Perryville the soldiers encountered a somewhat unusual experience. When five miles from camp they learned of a shooting affair that had just taken place, and, on going to a house pointed out by a guide, found a woman greatly excited because of threats made against her life. It transpired that the woman had shot a citizen, and the neighbors were threatening revenge. The facts, as developed, were, that her husband, who was a Union man, had been engaged to run a grist-mill. The proprietor of the mill was a Secessionist. Some controversy had previously arisen, and was not settled at once. On this occasion the owner of the mill had ridden to the house on horseback, and inquired for the miller. Something in his language or actions convinced the woman that his mission was not a friendly one, and, seizing a gun, she ran toward the mill to warn her husband. The man spurred his horse, and was apparently attempting to ride over her, when she pluckily turned and shot him dead. The case was investigated sufficiently to convince the officer that the statements of the woman were true, and the couple were given a guard to accompany them to a place of safety. This was but one of very many tragedies among citizens growing out of those troublous times, and but for the timely arrival of the soldiers it is probable that a half dozen lives might have been required to settle the existing feud.



The Regiment, with the exception of Companies C and I, remained at Harrodsburg about a fortnight. Sunday, the first day in this camp, there was inspection in the forenoon and dress parade in the evening. During the afternoon religious services were held in an old church, Chaplain Clendenning preaching to the large congregation, composed mainly of soldiers. It was said that nearly all the members of the congregation who formerly worshipped there were in actual sympathy with the rebellion. The church had been cleared of its pulpit and a portion of the seats, so that it could be used as a store-room by the army quartermaster. The pulpit, therefore, had to be improvised, and it was somewhat suggestive when the men piled up boxes of ammunition upon which the Chaplain could lay his Bible and unroll his manuscript.

The drought, which had been very severe all through this region, having been interrupted by only one or two light showers and two or three snow-storms, was now thoroughly broken. A rain-storm set in on the seventeenth, which prevailed for many hours, and was supplemented by frequent heavy showers during succeeding days. The camp became a sea of mud, and the surroundings were most gloomy. On one occasion a citizen came into camp, and on his invitation a member of Company H accompanied him to the village and drank a glass of wine. Soon after returning to camp the soldier became alarmingly ill, and it was believed that he had been poisoned. The surgeons succeeded with much difficulty in saving his life. One day a couple of men having in charge about twenty horses passed through the town, going southward. The officers became suspicious afterward that the horsemen might be Rebels, and the Colonel, with five men, started in pursuit, bringing them back to camp. They protested their loyalty and were allowed to go for witnesses, but never came back, and their horses were turned over to the Government Quartermaster. There was occasional firing on the picket lines at night, but no casualties occurred, unless it may have been to stray porkers or poultry.

On the eighteenth Colonel Swayne was relieved from the command of the Brigade. He was an admirable soldier,





and did excellent service, but was not at this time very popular among the officers of the command, probably more because of the fact that his own regiment was not in the Brigade than for any other reason. He was succeeded by Col. Cochran, of the Fourteenth Kentucky.

Thursday, November 20, Colonel Champion was directed to send two Companies to Danville, ten miles distant. Companies C and I were chosen, and on reaching their destination were assigned to quarters in the Baptist Church. During the following week or more they were given pretty heavy duty, large details for provost guard and funeral escorts being required daily. There were many sick and wounded of both armies in the city, and to preserve order among the convalescents, prevent escapes of Rebels who had so far recovered as to be able to travel, and furnish escorts for from two to six funerals daily, would have kept them busy; but in addition to these duties they were obliged to scout and picket outside the city, and more than once were called out, expecting an attack from Rebel cavalry hovering in the vicinity.

The main body of the Regiment was kept busy at Harrodsburg, scouting, doing guard duty and drilling. The Confederate prisoners were accustomed to watch the drill, and manifested much interest, heartily applauding any especially well executed movement, and laughing at the occasional errors of commanders or their men. One night there was some excitement because of the firing of two shots from the Rebel hospitals, the bullets whistling past some of the camp guards. An investigation was made, but no arms could be found in the hospitals.

The camp at Harrodsburg was known as Camp Clarke, being named in honor of Lieutenant Colonel Isaac L. Clarke. Captain J. P. Black, of Company E, was assigned to duty as Provost Marshal of the post, remaining on duty in that capacity for several weeks.

On the 24th the resignation of Captain Thomas A. Green, of Company F, was accepted, and he returned home. First Lieutenant Charles E. Rowan succeeded to the Captaincy of the Company, Second Lieutenant Nelson R. Simms was pro-



promoted to First Lieutenant, and Sergeant William Dawson to Second Lieutenant. This was the first change among the commissioned officers after the organization of the Regiment.

On the 25th occurred the death, in hospital, of Hiram Hollister, of Company B; and on the 30th, at the residence of J. W. Cardwell, Esq., Frank Pool, of Company E, died from pneumonia. The latter was a brother of Lieutenant Pool, of Company A.

During the stay at Harrodsburg some of the members of the Regiment took possession of the office of *The Kentucky Press*, and set themselves at work to publish a newspaper, issuing *The Soldier's Letter*. It was a five-column paper, and 2,500 copies were issued. Captain George Hicks, of Company A, had editorial charge of the publication. His assistants were Corporals Christopher H. Berg, of Company A, Edmund S. Stevens, of Company D, and John A. Boothby, of Company H, and Privates John W. Connor, James Edward James and Anderson S. Allison, all of Company A. These men were all practical printers. The paper contained a complete Roster of the Regiment, a sketch of the organization, camp experiences and marches of the command up to that time; also brief biographies of the field officers, a sketch of Colonel Daviess, for whom Jo Daviess County was named, a description of Harrodsburg, several patriotic poems, some humorous communications, several illustrations,—including the Williamsburg lady with the flag wrapped about her,—more or less local news, and an apology because the paper was not larger so that other articles, ready for the press, might be given to the world through its columns. The issue was speedily exhausted, the boys purchasing the paper at five cents a copy to send to their friends at home. In 1885 several members of the Regiment living in the vicinity of Galena, Ill., issued a duplicate edition, and numerous copies of the original and the duplicate are to be found among the possessions of the soldiers of the Regiment.

Thursday, November 27, the Regiment was ordered to Danville, but in view of the fact that it was Thanksgiving Day permission was given to defer the move until Friday. Quite



liberal preparations were made for Thanksgiving, and nearly all fared sumptuously. The Ninety-second Illinois were not as fortunate, being compelled to march, instead of celebrating the day in camp.

At eight o'clock on the morning of Friday, November 28, the main body of the Regiment took its leave of Harrodsburg and marched to Danville, ten miles, in two and one-half hours. Companies A and E were left on duty at the former place for a short time, Captain Hicks being in command of the post, and Captain Black continuing to act as Provost Marshal. The next day Companies C and I, which had been quartered in a church at Danville, joined the Regiment in camp, a half mile from the village. About fifty men were left in the hospital at Harrodsburg, quite a percentage of them having measles. Most of the men rejoined the Regiment within a few weeks. Danville was really a very pretty city at that time, having numerous large business blocks, churches and seminaries, and was a stronghold of Union sentiment.

From the 28th of November until the 26th of December the Regiment made no general movement, but lay in what was named "Camp Baird," in honor of the General commanding the division. Company and battalion drill was kept up with as much regularity as the weather would permit, and inspections and dress parades were frequent. There was a snow storm early in December, and some of the officers improvised a sleigh, found some sleigh-bells in town, and enjoyed a ride about the camp and in the city. Enlisted men contented themselves with snow-balling. A few days after the arrival at Danville, Colonel Champion called the men together and stated his wish to make the guard details lighter, closing a short address by saying that if they would promise not to leave the camp without permission he would reduce the camp guard from 64 to 27. The boys quickly agreed to it, and gave three rousing cheers for the Colonel.

The shoddy pants before alluded to had not been replaced up to this time, except in a few cases where the wearers were exposing too much of their anatomy, but on the eleventh all who needed trousers were supplied. There was much atten-



tion given to the personal appearance of the command all through the winter, perhaps all the more because of the fact that a number of ladies,—wives and mothers of the soldiers,—visited Camp Baird, some of them remaining several weeks.

There was keen disappointment when news came of the disaster to the Union forces under Gen. Burnside at Fredericksburg, on the Rappahannock, and the want of success on the part of the expedition under Gen. Sherman, sent against Vicksburg. Up to this time hopes had been entertained that the war might be brought to an honorable close within a few months after the calling out of the 600,000, but these reverses convinced all, or nearly all, that the war was to be prolonged. All eyes were now turned toward the Army of the Cumberland, then mainly in the vicinity of Nashville, and under the command of Gen. Rosecrans. It was understood that they would soon make a forward movement, and there were strong hopes that with them it would be victory and not defeat.

The little wedge tents were used up to the 18th of December, at which time Bell tents were drawn, five or six being allowed to each Company. Prior to this, Company K had obtained some large Sibley tents, found near the battle-field of Perryville. The men had by this time learned to make themselves quite comfortable in camp. Walls of various materials, such as boards, rails, stone and brick, were built to the height of from two to four feet, and good fire-places with chimneys were constructed in nearly all of the tents. A few sheet-iron stoves were used. Sometimes excavations two or three feet in depth were made, the dirt thrown out being used to bank up the tents. This latter arrangement was deemed unhealthy, however, and was discouraged by the officers and surgeons.

The large tents proved very pleasant and convenient. In the evening each one was a most cheerful place. Bright fires blazed in the improvised fire-places, and bayonets, stuck in the ground, were used as candlesticks. From the center-poles hung the accoutrements, and on racks built for the purpose lay the shining Enfield muskets. The men, lounging on their blankets spread upon the clean straw, told stories, pro-





pounded conundrums, read, sang, or played cards, checkers, or chess, as their humor dictated, until tattoo and taps sent them to bed. Thousands of letters were written and received, and the arrival of the mail each day was the signal for a general turnout of the command. Many daily papers were taken, and the soldiers, during that winter at least, knew what was going on throughout the country almost as well as their friends at home. In the evening the camp, as viewed from a little distance, was a pretty scene. The tents, standing in regular rows, and each lit up from within, were a pleasant study.

Early in the month Lieutenant C. A. Montgomery, of Company D, was detailed on the staff of Col. Cochran, as Brigade Commissary, and Lieutenant George W. Pepoon, of Company K, as Aide de Camp.

Almost daily details were sent into the country, often for five or six miles, to cut wood, which was hauled to camp in army wagons. This duty was quite severe, as the choppers were required to walk one way, and sometimes both ways. A heavy picket line was established all about the camp, but as there was no large force of Rebels in the neighborhood the reserve posts were allowed to keep up good fires, although heavy screens of evergreen were placed in front of them so that they should not be too plainly visible from points outside the lines. On a few occasions, when an attack was apprehended, these fires were extinguished, to the great discomfort of the men, the long winter nights passing most drearily.

On the night of December 10 a rumor reached camp that a portion of Morgan's command was in the near vicinity, and Company C was hastily sent down town to guard a building where ammunition was stored. The picket lines were doubled and every preparation made to give the noted cavalryman a warm reception should he see fit to pay the camp a visit; but he did not come, and next day all was quiet. There was frequent firing on the picket lines at night, cattle and horses wandering near the outposts being frequently mistaken for cavalrymen by the zealous guards, and sometimes even trees and stumps being tortured into imaginary enemies. Undoubtedly more or less of this shooting was purely wanton, the



men firing their guns as much for their own amusement as because they thought a real enemy was approaching. It should be remembered, however, that many of the soldiers were mere boys, from sixteen to eighteen years of age, and as it was known that there were numerous bands of cavalry in the neighborhood, it is hardly to be wondered at that in the long and weary watches they became a little over-anxious and imagined any object they might see outside the lines a scout or spy attempting to reach the camp. As a rule, one-third of each guard detail was kept on outpost, one-third kept awake and under arms at the reserve post, and one-third allowed to sleep beside the fires.

All through the winter the camp regulations were very strict, no one being allowed to pass the limits of the camp without written permission. Réveille sounded every morning at half-past five o'clock. Roll-call followed immediately, every man being required to take his place in line in the Company street, those failing to respond being placed on extra duty. Then followed preparations for breakfast, after which the grounds were thoroughly policed. At half-past eight came guard-mount, a part of the detail being assigned for picket duty, a part for camp guard, and a part for provost duty in the city. These latter men were required to arrest all citizens and soldiers found without written passes in the daytime or the countersign at night. At half-past nine Company drill was begun, continuing from one to two hours. In the early afternoon there was Battalion drill, and at half-past four came Dress parade. At half-past seven occurred the final roll-call, and at eight o'clock came taps, which was the signal for all lights to be out. After a time the First Sergeants became a little careless as to the manner in which the evening roll-call was responded to. It was not that they meant to be willfully negligent, but rather because of their real kindness of heart. At first those who had been on guard the night before were excused from coming out and forming in line; then some soldier answered to the name of another; a stormy night came, and the Sergeants made the usual noise in the streets, while the men answered from the tents; next night



the same form was gone through with, although there was no storm. A week passed in this way, but one evening the First Sergeants were summoned to Regimental Headquarters. When all had arrived Colonel Champion made a little speech, which ran about as follows: "I understand that there has  
"been some deviation from the prescribed rule in the matter  
"of the evening roll-call. I have only this to say: If the  
"present First Sergeants are unable or unwilling to obey the  
"orders heretofore made, I have no doubt that I shall be able  
"to find men in each Company who can and will. Good  
"evening, gentlemen."

The abrupt termination of the Colonel's address fairly dazed his auditors, but it was not many seconds until all had filed out of the tent into the darkness, each feeling very much as if he would like to find a very small hole somewhere into which he could crawl. The rolls were called in due form from that time until active campaigning and thinned ranks rendered it unnecessary.

Christmas was spent quite pleasantly in the camp, with ample rations, and was indeed with many quite a merry day. Just after the evening dress parade, orders were received to march at daylight next morning. The men who were thought to be unable to march were sent to the hospitals in town, extra rations were issued, and everything put in order for the start. Between three and four o'clock next morning réveille was sounded. Then followed breakfast, after which the tent stakes were all drawn, except barely enough to hold the canvas houses in position, and at a given signal every tent went to the ground and was rolled up and placed in the wagons. It was a weird sight as that canvas village disappeared. All about were blazing camp-fires, which served to make the outside darkness more intense. The huge army wagons standing here and there, the men moving around in the uncertain light, the braying of the mules, the shouting of the drivers, the sounding of the bugles, the rattling of the drums, the merry faces of the eager soldiers, as they piled the boxes and tables and heaped the floors of the tents high on the blazing fires, destroying all the little camp conveniences—not caring to



leave them for the enemy, and not dreaming that they would again occupy the same ground within thirty-six hours—formed a strange spectacle, and one not easily described.

At a quarter before six o'clock, and while it was yet quite dark, knapsacks were slung and the men filed into line by Companies and marched to the parade grounds. There was a little delay, but at half-past six the column moved forward. All were eager to know the destination of the Division, but those who could tell would not. The column, embracing nearly the entire Division, moved out toward Lebanon, over a good macadamized road. The weather was mild, and in the early morning not unpleasant. About nine o'clock, however, a drenching rain set in, increasing in violence and making the march a most severe one. General Granger and his staff were riding at the head of the column. They had good, fresh horses, and were no doubt in a hurry to get to the end of the march. It seemed then as if they had little regard for the comfort of the men, for through that drenching rain, when every moment made overcoats and knapsacks heavier, they plodded on at a fast walk, for miles together, without giving them an opportunity for rest. Rumor had it that Morgan was in the front, and that this body of troops was to reinforce the garrison at Mumfordsville. Plainly there was great haste, for rarely have men been so overmarched. It was as if infantry was trying to keep up with cavalry. Through long miles the men cheered and sang to keep up their spirits, but as their loads grew heavier, their limbs tired, their feet sore, and their judgment confirmed their impression that they were being imposed upon, many of them became moody and marched in silence. The General at last took the hint, and made several stops. At half-past two or three o'clock, the rain, which had been coming in torrents, began to abate somewhat, and when, at four o'clock, after traveling fifteen or sixteen miles, the column filed to the right into a muddy cornfield, and it was announced that this was to be the camp, it had entirely ceased for the time being. That was a camp to be remembered. At every step the men sank into the ground to their shoe-tops. Strict orders were issued by Gen.





Granger against taking the rails composing the fence for fuel, but the officers commanding the Regiment very properly told the men to take the top rails and that they would be responsible. Fuel was actually essential to the comfort of the troops after such a march and in such a camp-ground. Gen. Granger ordered details to be sent out to chop wood, and a score or more of tired soldiers followed the wagons to the timber and cut and loaded wood to be brought to camp. They worked hard and returned late with their green fuel, that was not to be burned, for the "top rails" had been used long before the wagons arrived. The General used some "cuss" words in his discussion of the Volunteer officers, but evidently concluded that discretion was the better part of valor, and refrained from having any prolonged contest over the little matter of a few fence rails. A stack of hay, a pile of straw, a large quantity of cornstalks, and, these failing, a stack of oats, were carried into the tents of the soldiers, all disappearing within twenty minutes. In this way the men kept themselves out of the mud, and it was really surprising to see how comfortable they had made themselves within an hour after their tents were up. Hardly was the camp established before the rain again began to fall in torrents, continuing for some hours. At ten o'clock in the evening two regiments and a battery were ordered forward to Lebanon without baggage and in great haste, but before they had started the order was countermanded, and they returned to their tents.

In the morning the weather was colder. There was an early réveille and breakfast. Plainly the commanding officers were uncertain what to do, for there was much marching and countermarching, but within an hour or two the column was headed for Danville and made the march over the ground passed by them the day before, camping at four o'clock in the afternoon on the identical grounds they had vacated so recently. How the boys wished then that they had not burned their boxes and gun-racks and tables and tent floors! However, they made the best of the situation, and fitted up their tents in good order. This trip was very severe upon the men, and following it many were sick. For a time it was supposed



that the movement was intended as a diversion to hold the Rebel force in Kentucky, and prevent their reinforcing Gen. Bragg, then contending with the Army of the Cumberland at Stone's River. It afterward became known that the Rebel Gen. Morgan had tapped the telegraph wires and sent bogus dispatches to Gen. Granger, hurrying him forward to Lebanon, himself marching off toward Kentucky River at his leisure, picking up more or less horses and gathering in a few recruits. A day or two later two Regiments of the Division repeated this march to Lebanon and return.

Tuesday, December 30, Companies B and I were sent out on a scout to the Kentucky River, a battery of artillery accompanying them. There were also several infantry companies from other regiments, their destination being Hickman Bridge, about fifteen miles away. They had a most disagreeable march in the cold rain storm. They were absent from the Regiment for some days, but did not find any organized enemy. On the night of December 31, there was a rumor of trouble on the picket lines, and the men were required to sleep under arms all night. Next day the teams were kept harnessed and the men under orders to be ready to fall in at a moment's notice, but still no trouble came.

On the thirtieth Captain James H. Clark, of Company G, resigned and returned home, whereupon First Lieutenant David L. James was made Captain, and Second Lieutenant Benj. G. Blowney was promoted to First Lieutenant. An election was held for Second Lieutenant, First Sergeant Hiram W. Farnsworth and Sergeant James O. Havens being the principal rivals. The latter received the most votes and entered upon the duties of the position; but within a few days, and before a commission had been issued, a contest occurred in Company B which resulted in a tie vote, whereupon the vote in each Company was disregarded, and, upon the recommendation of the Colonel, the Governor of the State issued commissions to the next in rank, and First Sergeant Farnsworth became Second Lieutenant, Sergeant Havens being appointed First Sergeant.

Following these severe winter expeditions many were



prostrated by sickness. From the very organization of the Regiment there had been frequent cases of measles, men being left sick with this disease at almost every stopping place. Mumps, pneumonia and typhoid fever were also common, and deaths were very frequent.

Those dying during the month were, Henry H. Swan, of Company C, December 3; John Chope, of Company D, December 8; Richard Wilton, of Company D, December 19; Robert Pollard, of Company K, December 19; Terhan Shaffer, of Company E, December 29; the latter at Harrodsburg; all of the others at Danville. In several instances the parents and near friends of sick soldiers came to attend them, but in two or three cases arrived too late to find their loved ones living. In most cases the remains were taken North for burial. It was an invariable custom to provide a military escort to the grave in case of local burial, and to the express office when the bodies were sent home. Religious services were held, and a quartet or choir always furnished music. The selection most frequently sung was :

OH, WRAP THE FLAG AROUND ME, BOYS.

Oh, wrap the flag around me, boys,  
 To die were far more sweet  
 With Freedom's starry emblem, boys,  
 To be my winding sheet.  
 In life I loved to see it wave  
 And follow where it led,  
 And now my eyes grow dim, my hands  
 Would clasp its last bright shred.

CHORUS.—Then wrap the flag around me, boys,  
 To die were far more sweet  
 With Freedom's starry emblem, boys,  
 To be my winding sheet.

Oh, I had thought to greet you, boys,  
 On many a well-won field,  
 When to our starry banner, boys,  
 The trait'rous foe should yield.  
 But now, alas! I am denied  
 My dearest earthly prayer;  
 You'll follow and you'll meet the foe,  
 But I shall not be there.





GEORGE HICKS.

MAJOR AND BREVET COLONEL.





But though my body moulder, boys,  
My spirit will be free,  
And every comrade's honor, boys,  
Will still be dear to me.  
There, in the thick and bloody fight,  
Ne'er let your ardor lag,  
For I'll be there, still hov'ring near,  
Above the dear old flag!



## CHAPTER VI.

The Negro Question—Waiting for News from Stone's River—Drilling Resumed—Visitors in Camp—Pay-day Arrives—Eleven Deaths in a Single Month—A Heavy Winter Storm—Changes Among the Officers—An Eighty-five Mile March to Louisville—Aboard the Transport—The Arrival at Fort Donelson—The Second Battle at that Historic Point—Up the Cumberland to Nashville.

UP to the close of the year 1862 the slavery question continued to be a fruitful theme of discussion; indeed, for some time following that date the subject was the occasion of numerous orders by both the civil and the military authorities, and a fruitful source of argument with both citizens and soldiers. On one or more occasions at Danville there was a public sale of negroes, which was quite largely attended by soldiers. Not all of the spectators were impressed alike by the strange spectacle of a human being on the auction block, although to the majority there came a feeling of indignation that was not attempted to be concealed. But the time was at hand when the Emancipation Proclamation was to settle some of the problems of the war, and to destroy the value of the negro as "property." Meanwhile there were more or less incidents occurring that served to show the terrible spirit of the hateful institution. On one occasion, at Danville, Ky., Captain Rowan and Sergeant Lee, of Company F, went to the hotel to take dinner. The Captain's waiter, or servant, a colored man whom he had hired, accompanied them, for the purpose of carrying some supplies back to camp, and waited outside while they ate dinner. On returning to the office at the close of the meal the Captain looked in vain for the colored man. The office, or bar-room, was filled with citizens, who seemed rather amused than otherwise at the Captain's inquiries as to the whereabouts of the missing "contraband." After some delay the Captain drew a revolver and suggested



that he proposed to secure the information requested without delay. Seeing that the officer meant what he said, some of the bystanders vouchsafed the information that a "nigger" had been seen there, but as he did not seem to have any owner, and, moreover, as that office was intended for "gentlemen" and not for "niggers," the intruder had been treated precisely as a stray animal would be at the North, and was in the "pound." Rowan was a resolute fellow, and demanded that the "gentleman" who had caused the servant's imprisonment should immediately take steps looking to his return to the hotel. Very little attention was given to this demand, although it was evident that the visitors were somewhat troubled over the situation. There was a moment of painful silence, which was broken by the sound of a scuffle in the hall leading from the dining room. The guests had not noticed that Sergeant Lee, a powerfully built man, several inches over six feet in height, and as strong and resolute as he was large, had disappeared from the scene, until the Captain bade them a pleasant "good day," and passed into the hall and out through the front door. In a moment the crowd followed. Arriving on the street they were somewhat taken back to see Lee and the Captain walking toward camp with the head-waiter of the hotel safely in their clutches, the white apron fluttering in the wind, and the bare-headed servant making a feeble show of resistance. Instantly the hotel man started in pursuit, remonstrating against their taking his most valuable "nigger." "Bring back my servant and you can have yours," was Captain Rowan's reply. It did not take long for the boniface to make up his mind that he could not trifle with his Yankee guests, and an exchange was speedily arranged and quickly carried out. This was but one of several incidents that had amusing features in them.

In a certain temporary camp in Kentucky, in the autumn of 1862, a couple of citizens approached two soldiers of the Regiment, and, after some parleying, made an offer of \$100 if the soldiers would deliver two colored men who were in the camp into their custody. The proposition was, that at a given hour the negroes should be brought to a designated spot in the



woods not far from a certain spring. The soldiers agreed to consider the matter and let them know. Once away from their tempters the boys began to reason concerning the matter. The inducement was certainly a strong one. One of the boys suggested that, as pay-day had been long deferred, it would be very handy just then to be able to send \$100 to his mother, who really needed the money, and remarked that the negroes would have no trouble in running away again if they cared much for their freedom. Still they were a little loth to surrender these escaped slaves into bondage, and had some compunctions of conscience. But they reflected that it was not much worse for them to force the citizens into a contract that might be advantageous to the soldiers than it had been for the citizens to force the negroes to labor through long years without compensation. As the result of their deliberations they concluded to demand \$200 of the citizens, and at the same time secure the liberty of the escaped slaves. In accordance with the plan formed, they took two comrades into the secret, told the negroes of what they proposed to do, and notified the citizens that for \$200 they would surrender the fugitives. This proposition was accepted and the plan carried out. After the \$200 had been received by the soldiers the citizens started off with their slaves, the latter apparently feeling greatly distressed. They had gone but a short distance when the soldiers who had been taken into the secret suddenly sprung out from a clump of bushes, confronted the citizens with a pair of revolvers, demanded that they raise their hands and stand perfectly still, and called to the colored men to run for camp. All of the orders were obeyed, and the negroes, in accordance with previously arranged plans, left that part of the country in the early evening, and were not seen again until the Regiment took up its line of march the next morning and had proceeded for some miles.

The writer does not seek to justify this action, but, as a faithful historian, can hardly omit to mention the circumstance.

New Year's Day, 1863, was bright and pleasant, and there was considerable jollity in camp. Col. Atkins, of the 92d





Illinois, was serenaded and responded with a pleasant speech, which was listened to by a large portion of his own command and the NINETY-SIXTH Regiment. At this time there were a number of visitors to the camp from both Lake and Jo Daviess counties, several ladies among the number, most of the latter being the wives of officers. On the third, Companies I and B came in from their Kentucky River scout. From that time until January 26 there was no move on the part of the Regiment. There was considerable drilling, the men taking up the bayonet exercise.

It was the understanding that pay-day in the army should come once in two months. However this may have been the paymaster did not come as frequently as that. He had been long expected and once had arrived in camp, but as it was just at the time of the Lebanon expedition he did not remain to pay off the troops, going to another camp, and returning to Danville January 15. Pay-day had been so long deferred that it was hoped and expected that he would pay the men up to December 31. The Government had been very heavily taxed, however, and, being short of funds, instructed the paymasters to settle up all accounts to October 31, 1862. Most of the men had overdrawn their clothing accounts, so that the amount received by the privates was generally about twenty dollars,—a very small sum for men with families at home dependent in any considerable measure upon their wages for support.

There was quite a heavy storm prevailing throughout a considerable part of the 15th and 16th of January,—a severe rain being succeeded by sleet and snow. The trees were coated with ice for several days, and the ground thickly covered with snow. As a consequence the camp was left in bad condition, and there was but little drilling during the remainder of the stay at Danville.

The unfavorable news from the Army of the Potomac, in December, when the Union forces were obliged to retire from Fredericksburg and the Rappahannock, after sustaining a loss not compensated for in direct results, had been a great disappointment to all, for it was confidently hoped that with the



heavy reinforcements that had been sent to Gen. Burnside from the troops enlisted during the summer and autumn, that our army would be able to overcome all obstacles and make its way to Richmond. The disappointment over, all eyes were turned toward Gen. Rosecrans and the Army of the Cumberland, who were reported to have moved out from Nashville in search of the enemy, determined to drive him to a less threatening position than that which he had occupied for some months. But the news was slow in coming, while anxiety deepened as the days went by. At last word came that the advance had been entirely successful, and that the advantages gained had been very decided. About the same time the report gained currency that the armies under Gens. Grant and Sherman had captured Vicksburg, and there was great rejoicing, but the latter report proved untrue.

The First Sergeants again became a little lax in their duties, and for a night or two some of the Companies turned out for evening roll-call without arms. The eyes of the officers at Regimental Headquarters were open, however, and the Orderlies were summoned to the Adjutant's tent, and that official gave those who had violated the rule of the camp a little time for reflection, placing them under arrest, but subsequently releasing them without punishment. Another time they were given a lecture upon the subject of reporting their Companies on dress parade as "all present or accounted for," when, as a matter of fact, more or less of those who should have been present were not in line. However, the relations between the Adjutant and the First Sergeants were never strained or unpleasant, but the latter learned that they must not trifle with their superior officers or neglect their full duties in matters of this kind.

A part of the time flour was issued to the men in lieu of bread, but the results were not entirely satisfactory. Some of the Companies effected an exchange with a local bakery, and were fairly pleased, while others detailed men to do the baking. Later on these men became experts, and many a brick oven was constructed, excellent "soft bread" being made by the Company cooks.



Toward the close of the stay at Camp Baird the weather was so cold and disagreeable, and the camp ground became so wet and muddy, that the camp guard was dispensed with for a night or two. The men were obliged to remain inside their tents and keep up rousing fires in order to have any comfort. Fortunately the mails, which had been missent to Cairo and Memphis for some weeks, were returned about this time, and as a result almost every man had a handful of letters and a bundle of papers with which to while away the otherwise tedious hours. Cards were also used a great deal, and an occasional game of "chuck-luck" was indulged in, particularly during the week following the visit of the paymaster.

Sickness continued to weaken the Regiment all through the month, and deaths among members of the command were very frequent. Not all died at Danville, for a few had been sent to hospital elsewhere, or had been left at points where the Regiment had previously camped. James M. Beall, of Company A; James Brown, Alfred Collins and George Rix, of Company B; Corporal Edwin A. Bartles and Samuel Clements, of Company C; William Hubbard and Brainard E. Strong, of Company E; Leroy Demmon and Freeman James, of Company G, and James D. Lester, of Company K, all died in January, or during the early days of February. The remains of nearly all were taken North for burial, but a few were interred in the public cemetery at Danville.

Chaplain Jonathan M. Clendenning resigned on the twenty-third, and his place was not filled for several weeks. Owing to the protracted illness of Surgeon Charles Martin and Second Assistant Surgeon Daniel A. Sheffield, Captain David Salisbury, of Company B, who was a physician, was detailed to assist First Assistant Surgeon Evans in the care of the sick. First Lieutenant Rollin H. Trumbull, of Company B, resigned, and Second Lieutenant Allen B. Whitney succeeded to the place thus made vacant. An election was ordered for Second Lieutenant, which resulted in a tie between Corporals Wait and Folsom, whereupon the Colonel recommended to Governor Yates that First Sergeant Evangelist J. Gilmore



be commissioned, which was done. Colonel Champion was quite ill for a time, and took up quarters in town, leaving the Regiment under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Clarke. A number of the line officers were also sick, and took up quarters at private houses.

Sunday, January 25, marching orders were received, the destination being Louisville, Ky. All soldiers not able to march were sent to the hospitals in the city, and the usual preparations made for breaking camp. Six days' rations were issued, a considerable part of the provisions being loaded upon the wagons. Many were the regrets at leaving Danville, for during the two months in which the Regiment had been camped there most of the officers and a few of the enlisted men had formed pleasant acquaintances among the loyal people of the town.

Monday, January 26, réveille sounded at half-past three o'clock in the morning, and the camp speedily became full of activity. A start was made at half-past six, the column passing out through Danville and Harrodsburg, the latter place being passed about noon. As the Division was to march toward, and not away from, its base of supplies, there was an abundance of transportation for all baggage, and the knapsacks of the men were loaded upon the wagons belonging to the Brigade supply train. This was a great relief to the men, and enabled them to march more comfortably and more rapidly than they otherwise could have done. It was understood that Louisville must be reached by Saturday night, and as the distance was about eighty-five miles, this would make the daily average a little more than fourteen miles. The time was shortened, however; the first day's march being about seventeen miles, the column going into camp at a little after two o'clock, near Salvisa. The day was thoroughly disagreeable, a rain-storm prevailing much of the time, and lasting throughout the night, turning into snow next day. The pikes were in good condition, so that the mud was not deep, but the road was wet and slippery, and covered to the depth of an inch or two with a limestone paste about the consistency of thin mortar. The camp ground for the night seemed to have been





strangely selected, for, in a region full of meadows, and where the ground was broken so as to admit of abundant drainage, the Regiment was halted in a plowed field so badly drained that water was standing on many parts of the ground. Fortunately there were some oat stacks near at hand, which were speedily taken into the tents, and the men were able to make themselves comfortable beds.

Tuesday, January 27, found the camp early astir, and at seven o'clock a start was made. The teams had a trying time in getting from the camp ground to the pike, and large details of men were required to lift upon the wheels, or unload the wagons that were hopelessly stalled in the mud. This occasioned some delay, but once fairly started the march was rapid, and by three o'clock seventeen miles had been reeled off. The day being cold and snowy a ration of whisky was issued about noon. This was the first occurrence of this kind in the Regiment's experience. That night there was considerable forage in camp, the men ascertaining from negroes who of the residents in the vicinity were disloyal, and then levying contributions from the poultry houses and sweet potato bins.

Wednesday, January 28, the Second Brigade had the advance, the 14th Kentucky leading, and the NINETY-SIXTH being next. The Kentuckians were veterans, and had made many long marches. As they left camp in the morning they declared their intention of leaving their Illinois comrades long before night. Taking a long, swinging gait that well befitted the immediate posterity of Daniel Boone, they counted off the miles so rapidly that it soon began to tell upon their own number, for the stragglers were quite as numerous from the leading regiment as from the one immediately following. The grit of the NINETY-SIXTH was up, and they crowded hard upon the heels of their leaders, ever and anon calling to them to go faster. But such work was senseless, and, after a time, the officers used their authority to check the speed somewhat, but by two o'clock, at which time the head of the column went into camp, a distance of eighteen miles had been traveled. The men were thoroughly tired and heartily glad when camp was reached. The principal towns passed during the day were



Hardinsville and Clayville. During the march whisky was again issued. The snow had fallen to a depth of three or four inches, and it was necessary to scrape it from the ground before the tents could be made comfortable. To those who were strong and well marching in the mud and camping in the snow was hard and tiresome enough, although many were in excellent spirits and made the camp merry with song and shout; but in each Company were a few who were weak and ill, and for such these experiences were very trying.

Thursday, January 29, the Second Brigade was at the rear of the column, the NINETY-SIXTH leading the Brigade. There was no foolish racing, but a leisurely march of seventeen miles, camp being reached at four o'clock. The villages passed were Shelbyville and Boston, the former the reputed home of the hero of "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

Friday, January 30, the NINETY-SIXTH had the rear of the entire column, and did not leave camp until eight o'clock. The day was pleasant, and for the first time since leaving Danville the command had the sunshine in which to march. Middletown was passed early in the day, and the outskirts of Louisville reached at three o'clock, where a halt was made for the night, the command having made about fifteen miles. The entire trip was made in a day less than had been anticipated. The artillery did not halt, but went immediately to the boats. The 14th Kentucky was here detached from the Brigade, Col. Cochran being assigned to an independent command in his own State. This necessitated a change of Brigade Commanders, and Col. Smith D. Atkins, of the 92d Illinois, being next in rank, assumed command. Colonel Champion, who had come from Danville by stage and rail, here rejoined the Regiment. Word was received of the death, at Danville, of Lieutenant Montgomery, of Company D, who had been left ill, but who had not been regarded as in a critical condition until two days before the Regiment started. The announcement caused universal sorrow, for he had from the first been one of the most popular officers in the line. In his last hours he was attended by his wife, who on the first intelligence of his illness had started for the South. The vacancy



occasioned by the death of Lieutenant Montgomery was filled by the promotion of Lieutenant Hastings; First Sergeant Theodore F. Clarkson being commissioned Second Lieutenant.

Saturday, January 31, the command marched some three or four miles to the landing and halted. After some consultation the Regiment was divided, the right wing—Companies A, F, D, I and C—going upon the steamer “R. B. Hamilton;” and the left wing—Companies H, E, K, G and B—going upon the steamer “Nashville.” Colonel Champion and Adjutant Blodgett accompanied the right wing, and Lieutenant Colonel Clarke and Major Smith the left wing. Then began the work of loading the camp equipage. There were large details to take the wagons to pieces and stow them away, together with the tents, mess-chests, extra ammunition and rations, in the holds and upon the decks of the vessels. The mules and horses were placed upon the lower decks, and the soldiers, packed as thickly as they could well be, occupied such space as was not filled with baggage. The work of loading required nearly the entire day. Fires were built on shore, and the cooks spent the time in boiling the rations of meat, it being understood that there would be little or no opportunity to cook anything but coffee on the trip. How tired the men became of “cooked rations.” Everything was “boiled,” usually until overdone or scorched, and the rations became terribly distasteful, especially to men who were half sick or homesick,—and there were many of either kind. The homesickness seemed to have increased as the troops neared “God’s country,” as the soldiers were ever wont to call the region north of the Ohio River. Those who were seriously unwell were taken to hospitals; others were allowed in the cabin, such staterooms as were not required by the officers being assigned to those regarded by the Surgeons as least able to endure the rigors of the deck passage. So great was the discontent, that in every regiment in the Division there were a few desertions. When the rolls were made out, February 1, the NINETY-SIXTH was ten men short, that number having left between Danville and Louisville, or while passing Smithland; several others leaving on the trip a few days later, at or near Fort Donelson.



Strict orders had been given that no negroes be taken aboard the boats, but the officers assumed that they had a right to take their hired employés, regardless of color, and set them at work to help in carrying the baggage aboard. Once on the boat, few of the negroes left, and those who did were not compelled to, but acted as they chose in the matter. Other regiments had a great deal more trouble with the negro than the NINETY-SIXTH, but it is doubtful if many regiments aided more slaves in escaping from bondage.

During Saturday and Sunday all the troops in the Division were loaded on the large fleet of transports. The steamers took on coal, filled up any unoccupied space in their holds with government stores, and during the night dropped down the Ohio River about ten miles, and tied up on the Indiana shore until morning, when a large amount of baled hay was taken aboard, the bales being set up on end to protect the boilers in case of an attack from the shore. The pilot houses were protected by boiler iron. During Monday more coal was taken on, at Cannelton, Ind. The weather at this time was thoroughly disagreeable, rain and snow alternating, and the wind blowing fiercely. Those who had been assigned to quarters upon the upper decks found their positions well nigh unendurable; indeed, most of them gave up trying to keep warm there, and sought refuge in the holds of the steamers, where they could at least be out of the wind.

On Tuesday Evansville and Shawneetown were passed, and early in the afternoon the mouth of the Cumberland River was reached. Up to the time of leaving Louisville there had been much speculation as to the destination of the command, some thinking that the Division was to be sent to reinforce Gen. Grant or Gen. Sherman, then operating on the Mississippi, and others firm in the opinion that Nashville and the Army of the Cumberland were to receive this substantial reinforcement. But at Smithland all doubt was set aside. It had been announced that the boats would tie up for the night at the last-named point; but the sullen sound of distant cannon could be heard, and they kept on through the night up the Cumberland, for word had been received that the enemy.





in large force, was in the vicinity of Fort Donelson. Only meager particulars could be learned, for the wires were cut almost as soon as they had begun their report, and refused to give up the story of the unequal contest. All through the long night the fleet kept on its way up the river. The firing had ceased, but there was considerable apprehension as to the fate of the Union troops. At the first dawning of the morning there were many on deck, watching the precipitous bluffs that formed the river bank. The wind was still cold and bleak, but at many points these bluffs were so high and the river so narrow that there was some protection from the chilling blasts. Those so fortunate as to have money treated themselves to a good "square" meal in the cabin at occasional intervals on the trip, but the great majority were obliged to content themselves with cold boiled meat, hard bread and coffee. On the morning of the third, James Shay, of Company E, was missing. As there had been a number of desertions, he was supposed to have left the boat voluntarily, but those who knew him best felt certain that he was not a man who would desert, and there can be little doubt that, unobserved, he fell overboard during the night and met death by drowning.

Wednesday, February 4, as the boats steamed up the river many bales of hay were noticed floating about. A mule jumped overboard from one of the boats and swam to the shore, his struggles in the water being watched with keen interest. The soldiers concluded that he must be a "deserter." The men were kept ready for a fight, standing at arms all day. It was expected that the boats would be fired on from the shore, as it was known that Wheeler's Cavalry had started out with the intention of cutting off the fleet and preventing its passage to Nashville, if possible. The landing at Dover, a little above Fort Donelson, was made at about four o'clock in the afternoon. Before this point was reached there was considerable anxiety as to the outcome of the engagement of the day before. The cannon had been heard plainly at Smithland, and as it was known that Wheeler had a heavy force, while there was but a single regiment at Fort Donelson, it was feared that this point might be found in possession of the



enemy. Proper caution was observed, however, a portion of the 92d Illinois being landed from one of the advance boats, and moved forward until a house was reached and reliable information obtained to the effect that Gen. Wheeler had been badly defeated, and that Fort Donelson was still in possession of the Federals. This fact ascertained, the fleet moved on, and tied up at the landing near which, just a year before, the first substantial victory of the war had been achieved by the Union forces. The soldiers scrambled from the boats as soon as the gang planks were lowered, to learn the news and ascertain how the troops had fared in the battle of Tuesday. The particulars of that second battle of Fort Donelson are matters of history. Nine Companies of the 83d Illinois, numbering about 650 men, under the admirable leadership of Col. Harding, and assisted by a single battery of artillery and a 32-pound rifled siege gun, successfully held in check 8,000 cavalry and mounted infantry under Gens. Wheeler and Forrest. Going out for quite a distance they harrassed them with a deadly skirmish fire all the afternoon and until half-past eight o'clock in the evening, falling back from time to time as necessity compelled. The ground all about Dover was strewn with the dead, and all of the houses were filled with the wounded. It is a fact that the Federals killed and wounded more of the enemy than it carried muskets, about 200 dead being buried by them, and several hundred wounded falling into their hands. The loss of the 83d Illinois was 13 killed and 51 wounded. The 13th Wisconsin, which had been stationed at Fort Henry, twelve miles distant, had marched over to Fort Donelson, and many of them were gathered near the landing to watch the boats as they arrived. Of a sudden there was a glad cry of joy from one of the boats, and Franc Milheiser, of Company C, was seen rushing to the shore, where he seized a sturdy soldier from the 13th, hugging him and manifesting every feeling of delight. Nor did the soldier seem averse to this unusual treatment, for, while less demonstrative, he was none the less pleased, and when Franc began the work of introducing him to the officers and his particular friends as "mein boy," all felt to rejoice with them at the



pleasure afforded by this entirely unexpected meeting of father and son.

Large details were at work gathering up the dead and wounded, or digging long trenches in which to bury the brave but misguided men who yielded up their lives in the hard-fought battle. During the night following the engagement the air was bitter cold, and snow fell to quite a depth, so that the wounded left upon the field suffered greatly. Many of the dead were found frozen to the ground. Dead or disabled horses, in large numbers, were found all through the woods, and it was evident that the enemy had been severely punished. Especially brilliant does this feat of the Union arms appear when it is remembered how great was the disparity in numbers, the attacking force outnumbering those assailed at least ten to one, and the battle being fought almost wholly outside the intrenchments. Just at the last, one or more gunboats came up and aided the defenders, but even before their arrival the enemy had been well whipped and were in retreat.

The last of the fleet did not arrive at the Fort until Friday. This gave those curiously disposed an opportunity to visit the scene of Grant's memorable battle of February, 1862; it being announced that the enemy had retreated, so that it was entirely safe to do so, many took long walks over the entire field, bringing back to the boats numerous mementoes of the battle. There were still many marks of the terrible contest, arms, accoutrements, haversacks and other articles, rendered useless in the conflict or thrown off by wounded men, lying here and there all about the large area over which the waves of battle had swept, with fragments of tents and blankets, and an occasional bit of faded blue, where some desperately wounded Union soldier had torn off a portion of his clothing that the blood might be staunched.

Friday, February 6, at a little before noon, the boats sounded the call for all to come on board, and by the middle of the afternoon all were steaming up the river in the direction of Nashville: The boats were lashed, two and two, those on which were the two wings of the NINETY-SIXTH being side by side. There were seven gunboats and more than thirty



transports in the fleet. The gunboats were distributed through the fleet, two being in the lead, two in the rear, and the others near the center. Occasionally they shelled the timber along the shore to drive out any force that might attempt to intercept them; but there was no response to their noisy salutations, and the long line passed on in safety and in triumph.

There were a few exciting episodes, as when the "Hamilton," crowded suddenly forward by her consort, struck the flagship "Prioress," on which was Gen. Baird and staff, with such force as to cause some damage to either craft. Not all of these captains had volunteered their services or the use of their vessels for this trip, and not all were loyal to the Government. Among those known to be positively disloyal was the Captain of the "Nashville," and it was believed that this collision was not only intentional on his part, but far less serious than he had meant to have it. On the early part of the trip it came to the knowledge of Colonel Clarke that there was serious discontent on the part of the men of his command, and an effort making to induce a large number of them to desert when the boat should touch some point on the Illinois shore. Satisfied that the captain of the boat was aiding in the work of fomenting the discord, he quietly stationed some armed men near the pilot house, giving them positive orders to shoot the pilot and the captain should they see anything to indicate an attempt to land the boat except where others in the fleet were stopping, or should they fail to follow closely the lead of the vessel in its front. After this collision with the "Prioress" the guard was renewed, and the captain given to understand that his life was not held in high estimation by the military authorities. It would seem that he should have been held to an account for his actions, but it is doubtful if a case could have been made against him.

It was a splendid sight as that magnificent fleet of steamers, like some triumphal procession, moved steadily forward up the winding Cumberland. Regimental colors were unfurled, and when the weather was not too cold the decks were fairly blue with officers and soldiers. All through the night of the sixth, and until five o'clock on the afternoon of the







E. A. BLODGETT,

ADJUTANT.



seventh, the stately, floating column proceeded on its way, finally reaching Nashville at the hour named, the troops having traveled nearly 550 miles upon the steamers.

The forenoon of Sunday, February 8, was occupied in unloading the boats and putting the wagons together. In the afternoon the NINETY-SIXTH marched out past Fort Negley, and went into camp near what was called Fort Jackson, some three or four miles from Nashville, at the left of the railroad and the Franklin Pike, but a short distance from where, almost two years later, they were to make one of the most brilliant and successful charges of the war.



## CHAPTER VII.

The Irrepressible Conflict with Greybacks—A Half Dozen Promotions—Policing the Camp Grounds—A Brigade Dress Parade—Resolutions Adopted by the Regiment—The Sound of Cannon—The Movement to Franklin—Disaster to Coburn's Brigade—The Duck River Campaign—Frequent Alarms, and Fighting Near at Hand—Ten Days at Brentwood—Heavy Fatigue and Guard Duty—A Man in Company F Killed on the Picket Line—The Paymaster in Camp—Shelter Tents Received—How the Month of May Passed—The Nine Months' Fever.

AT Nashville began the fight with that pestiferous little insect known among military men as the "greyback." True, a few had made his acquaintance before, but his presence had not been general until the Regiment left the boats and reached the old camp grounds near the city. From that time forward, whatever else the command may have been short of, there was seldom a time when it was not abundantly supplied with this very numerous and exceedingly industrious camp follower. It was one of the serious annoyances of army life, and no amount of care on the part of the soldier could long rid him of the pest. The very ground seemed to be alive with them, particularly if it was a region that had been previously occupied by either army, and the boiling of the clothing and the most diligent and unwearied "skirmishing" on the part of the soldier served at best only to keep them in check, without exterminating them; for two or three nights and days of active service, in which the clothing could not be removed, gave ample assurance that the pest was still there. Nor were the officers exempt from the attentions of this unwearied worker, for they, too, shared the annoyance of the bite and the pleasure that came from scratching, and were also subjected to the necessity of an occasional "skirmish," as the work of hunting through the seams of the soldier's nether garments was called.



The long trip upon the river had served to cause more or less sickness, cases of jaundice being especially frequent. Not a few were compelled to go to the hospitals direct from the boats, and others within a few days after the march to camp. The cold, disagreeable weather which had prevailed throughout the trip gave way to a few warm, pleasant days, not unlike what might have been expected two months later. Advantage was taken of this to put the camp in prime condition, a large area being policed. It was interesting to watch the process of cleaning up a camp ground. The men were sent to the woods for brush with which to make their brooms, these being constructed by tying bushes together. Then a long line of soldiers would sweep off the ground in their front, clearing up the entire camp from the line of the cooks' fires to the color-line, and often for a considerable distance beyond. The NINETY-SIXTH had by this time learned to take pride in having its grounds neat, and although a few always grumbled, most of the men did their work cheerfully and well.

Drilling was at once resumed, and the camp presented an animated scene whenever the weather would permit of the maneuvering of troops with comfort to officers and men. About this time occurred several changes among the officers. Surgeon Charles Martin and Second Assistant Surgeon Daniel A. Sheffield, who had been absent from the Regiment for a few weeks because of ill health, both resigned, leaving the service February 6. Their places were not filled for some time, the work of caring for the sick falling almost wholly upon First Assistant Surgeon Moses Evans. His duties for some weeks were very arduous, for the daily sick call was responded to by a large number of men, variously afflicted. It was a pitiable sight to see a half dozen or more from each Company dragging themselves up to the Surgeon's tent each morning, many of them thin and haggard, some suffering from dysentery, others coughing violently, and still others yellow from malaria. Perhaps at no other time in the history of the command, excepting at the time of or immediately following a battle, was there so much required of the Surgeon.





The changes among the line officers in February were three. Second Lieutenant Reuben L. Root, of Company H, resigned on the sixth, and was succeeded by First Sergeant Joseph L. Pierce. First Lieutenant Addison B. Partridge, of Company C, resigned on the sixteenth, and was succeeded by Second Lieutenant William M. Loughlin, First Sergeant Chas. W. Earle being promoted to Second Lieutenant. Captain David Salisbury, of Company B, resigned on the seventeenth. First Lieutenant Allen B. Whitney was made Captain, Second Lieutenant Evangelist J. Gilmore was promoted to First Lieutenant, and First Sergeant George H. Burnett to Second Lieutenant. All of these newly promoted officers entered upon their duties at once, although none of them were mustered until April 4.

The 14th Kentucky having been left in Louisville, the 84th Indiana and the 40th Ohio were assigned to the Brigade, Col. Atkins still remaining the senior Colonel and retaining command. On the seventeenth the Brigade was ordered to move to Franklin, but before the hour of starting the order was countermanded. A few days later Col. Coburn's Brigade made the march. February 25 the camp was moved about a half mile toward Nashville, and three days later it was again moved a short distance, to a beautiful piece of ground owned by Mrs. Governor Aaron V. Brown. A mass meeting was held in Nashville on the twenty-third, speeches of the most enthusiastically loyal character being made by Parson Brownlow and others. Many from the Regiment attended, and returned greatly pleased with the stirring addresses to which they had listened. This meeting was intended as a celebration of Washington's Birthday, having been postponed for a day because of the fact that the twenty-second came on Sunday. The artillery about Nashville did not wait for Monday, but fired a salute on Sunday in honor of "The Father of his Country."

Sunday, March 1, there was a grand dress parade, the five Regiments composing the Brigade participating, and Col. Atkins, the Brigade commander, receiving the salutes and



afterward making a patriotic speech. The NINETY-SIXTH occupied the left of the line.

Monday, March 2, was in some respects a memorable day. As before stated, the Emancipation Proclamation, issued two months before, had been the cause of much discussion among the officers and men. In many of the Regiments, and particularly in those from the State of Kentucky, there had been great dissatisfaction, and desertions were quite frequent. Those who were opposed to the Proclamation were often loud in their denunciation of the President, and active in their attempts to produce and extend dissatisfaction among such of their comrades as they could influence. There was danger that this continuous agitation and these expressions of discontent would, in time, have an unfavorable influence upon the men, and that, even though they did not induce still further desertions, they would at all events discourage and dishearten those who had not well-founded opinions upon the question of slavery. To meet this growing discontent a meeting of the Field, Staff and Line Officers of the Brigade was held at Brigade Headquarters at nine o'clock A. M., Col. Smith D. Atkins, of the 92d Illinois, being called to the chair, and Adj. I. C. Lawyer acting as Secretary. After some discussion a committee was appointed to draft resolutions expressive of the sentiments of those present. The committee retired, and, after considering the subject carefully, presented the following preamble and resolutions :

WHEREAS, We, the officers and soldiers of this command, have, in common with our comrades in arms, cheerfully periled our lives and every earthly interest, to save to ourselves and to our posterity a country and a government, the same which, in historic times, were bought with blood, and established by that quality of wisdom which, though human, seems divine; and,

WHEREAS, A number of intriguing demagogues at home have recently, by word and act, sought to create disaffection among us, block the wheels of wise legislation, excite discontent in the public mind, and, in every way, to baffle all earnest efforts to conquer the rebels; therefore,

*Resolved*, That we hold in utter detestation that clique of miscreants in the loyal States, who, under the garb of assumed loyalty, use the stolen revenue of arch treason to excite petty treason in their own communities; who have no censures save for the officers of our government; no complaints, save that energetic measures are employed to crush the



rebellion; no aspirations, save to embarrass our Executive and Legislative Departments, and engender mutinies in our armies; and no hopes, save for an ignoble peace and the substantial triumphs of the rebels; that we regard them as enemies of our country and mankind, who, to accomplish their hellish purposes, would not hesitate to blot forever from the hopes of man the cherished thought of self-government; and that they merit the scorn of all loyal citizens and true-hearted soldiers, combining, as they do, the deep guilt of the traitor with the essential meanness of the coward.

*Resolved*, That, despite the frenzied efforts of our foes before us, and the despicable intrigues of our other foes behind us, we will abate not one jot of faith or hope; but, believing the maintenance of our government is worth all the cost expended in its establishment, we emphatically assure all traitors at home, that not until we have undergone a seven years' struggle (if need be) will we cease this contest, and not until we have experienced such sufferings as were bravely endured at Valley Forge will we begin to murmur. By all the sacrifices already made and hardships endured by us; by all the sufferings of our comrades in hospital and camp; by all the precious blood which has crimsoned our eastern and western waters; by all the hearths made desolate, and heart-strings rent asunder, because of this wicked rebellion, we do solemnly pledge our honor as Americans and soldiers to see this contest through to a successful issue, or yield up our lives a willing sacrifice to our country's weal.

*Resolved*, That we are utterly opposed to any armistice or cessation of hostilities until our glorious flag of thirty-four stars waves triumphantly from the dome of every capitol in our land.

*Resolved*, That we fully and unequivocally indorse the policy of our civil rulers, in using all necessary means to strike decisive blows at the unholy rebellion, and to bring the war to a speedy, sure and glorious termination, so that traitors in the South may meet with deserved punishment, and damnable traitors in the North may be brought to a terrible justice, "that heap be not created in vain."

*Resolved*, That to the loyal millions who encourage us in our efforts, who sympathize with us in our hardships, and who rejoice with us in the success of our armies, we tender such heartfelt gratitude as soldiers, facing a hostile foe, only can feel.

*Resolved*, That to Governor Todd, of Ohio; Governor Morton, of Indiana; and Governor Yates, of Illinois, we extend our hearty thanks for their ceaseless labors in behalf of the soldiers from their respective States.

That evening, at dress parade, the NINETY-SIXTH was formed in a hollow square, and the resolutions were presented by Captain Hicks, of Company A. The captain was a good elocutionist, and read them admirably, awakening intense enthusiasm in the ranks. As soon as the reading was concluded, Colonel Champion delivered a brief but earnest address, and



then called out: "As many of the soldiers of the NINETY-SIXTH ILLINOIS as indorse the resolutions just read, will manifest it by saying 'aye.'" The ayes were numerous and enthusiastic, but, strange to say, not universal. In an instant the Colonel commanded: "Sergeants, take your Companies to quarters." The officers were kept together for a few moments and then went to their tents. That night, in every tent, there was a long discussion of the resolutions. In the light of after events it is difficult to comprehend how it was that any Union soldier should think for a moment of opposing them, but the fact remains that there was most strenuous objections on the part of a few, quite a percentage, even of the members of the Illinois Regiments, not favoring the absolute emancipation of the slaves. Colonel Champion caused to be forwarded to the Chicago papers, and also to the papers in Lake and Jo Daviess Counties, copies of the resolutions, and stated that they were adopted by the NINETY-SIXTH Regiment "without a dissenting voice." This was literally true, but the Colonel afterward declared that he dared not put the negative for fear the nays would be so numerous as not to look well for a Regiment from the State which was President Lincoln's home. All of the Regiments in the Brigade adopted the resolutions, but not all "without a dissenting voice."

Tuesday, March 3, the command was notified to be ready to march at a moment's notice, as the Brigade under Col. Coburn had moved out from Franklin, and was likely to have a fight. There was Company and Battalion drill, but the men were kept close at hand and ready to move if called upon.

Next day there was a wild report in camp to the effect that Gen. Grant and Gen. Sherman had just been terribly beaten in the vicinity of Vicksburg, with a loss of 20,000 men. Fortunately this report proved entirely untrue.

Thursday, March 5, the south wind wafted to the camp the sound of distant cannon. The troops were busy at their drill, but the ominous sounds sent them back to camp, where they awaited orders. Their conversation was in a little lower tones than usual, and there was somewhat less of levity in the camp than was the custom. About two o'clock in the





afternoon Col. Atkins galloped over to the camp, exchanged a few words with Colonel Champion, and then rode away. Soon after his brief call orders were given to prepare to move to Franklin immediately. Tents were struck and loaded upon the wagons, the sick sent to the city, and the column marched to the railroad in front of the camp.

In a little while a train arrived and took on board the 84th Indiana, and the 92d and 115th Illinois Regiments. The NINETY-SIXTH remained in bivouac until about ten o'clock in the evening, and then, together with the 40th Ohio, clambered into the freight cars. The men were crowded as thickly together as possible, all being obliged to stand. As a consequence they could get little rest during the four or five hours required to make the eighteen miles. A few took "deck passage," riding on top of the cars. The road was none of the best, the train was heavily loaded and the locomotive was so worn-out that it was frequently stalled, hardly making a single grade in the run without stopping, backing down and having a long wait for steam. A heavy rain-storm set in early in the night, and when, between two and three o'clock in the morning, a final stop was made, and the tired troops alighted from the cars in a cornfield, the ground was thoroughly soaked, although the storm had abated somewhat. The tents and all of the camp equipage had been left at Nashville, so that the men had no protection. Some threw themselves upon the ground, wrapping their blankets about them, and getting such sleep as was induced by sheer exhaustion. Others stood around the camp fires, waiting for the morning and wondering what it would bring. All agreed that the probabilities pointed to an early engagement. Up to this time there had been only surmises as to how the battle of the day before had gone, but in the morning the worst fears of all were realized, for it was learned from the men remaining at Franklin that nearly the entire Brigade sent out on the reconnaissance toward Spring Hill had been made prisoners by the enemy. The advance made by this Brigade had been ordered by Gen. Rosecrans, through Gen. Gilbert—the latter being in command at Franklin,—the intention being that they should



march direct to Spring Hill, and then move to the left to meet a force that had been sent out from Murfreesboro. It had been supposed that Spring Hill was occupied merely as a picket post, and that the main body of Rebels was at Columbia. Col. Coburn's surprise was therefore great when, about three miles out, he met a large force of the enemy marching toward Franklin. Deploying his troops he moved forward, the cavalry falling back in his front. He soon became satisfied that his force was greatly outnumbered, and so informed Gen. Gilbert. Receiving orders to continue the forward movement he advanced for some distance, and then went into camp for the night, at the same time sending word that he believed his position a critical one, and urging that reinforcements be sent him. He was peremptorily ordered to advance, however, and did move forward next morning, only to find a large force upon his front and flanks. Again he sent word to Gen. Gilbert that it was sheer desperation to assume the offensive with his single Brigade; but the order to advance was repeated, with the intimation that to do otherwise would be to show that he was a coward. Out to the quick by the taunt, Col. Coburn moved forward to Thompson's Station, and made a gallant fight, but was soon hemmed in on every side, and, after some ineffectual attempts to cut his way out, concluded that it was inhuman to further sacrifice the brave men under his charge, and surrendered, first exhausting his limited supply of ammunition. His cavalry, a battery of artillery, and his train and train guards retreated in time, and reached Franklin in safety; but about two-thirds of the 22d Wisconsin, eight companies of the 19th Michigan, and all of the 33d and 85th Indiana,—1,800 or 2,000 in all,—were captured. After events fully confirmed Col. Coburn's belief that there were 15,000 rebels in the army with which he had been contending with his force of perhaps 2,500 men. The prisoners were sent to Richmond and paroled, returning to Tennessee in June following.

At the time of the arrival of the Brigade to which the NINETY-SIXTH belonged there were in Franklin only Gen. Gilbert's Division, a few cavalry, one battery, a small number of



stragglers, some sick and wounded men, and a remnant of the 22d Wisconsin, which had effected their escape from the enemy just before the surrender by Col. Coburn. The tents, containing much of the baggage of the captured Regiments, were still standing and looked lonesome and deserted enough.

The NINETY-SIXTH, with the other Regiments of the Brigade, stood about in the mud and rain during all of Friday; but just at dusk the wagons arrived from Nashville, tents were pitched, and the night was passed in a semi-comfortable way. The camp was located near the railroad track, on the north side of the river, and a half mile distant from the village. The surroundings were pleasant, and as this region figures quite extensively in the Regiment's history, it should be briefly described. To the rear, looking in the direction of Nashville, the country was broken, high points being numerous. The most conspicuous of these was Roper's Knob, a bold peak used as a station by the Federal Signal Corps. This was a half mile or more from camp. Just to the left of camp the railroad wound through a deep cut, emerging from this depression a short distance below. The pike leading to Nashville was a short distance to the right. To the front and left, on the north bank of the river, was the beginning of what afterward became a formidable earthwork, known as Fort Granger. On the south bank of the river was clustered the pleasant village of Franklin. From the village, roads or pikes led in various directions, and from the height on which the camp was located a fair view of the open fields beyond the village could be had. Near the camp were a few large houses, mostly of brick. There were heavy bodies of timber in all directions, but generally at quite a distance from the camp. On the open fields, stretching to the southward from the village and in plain view from this camp, was to be fought, long months afterward, one of the most desperate battles of the war, and in that battle the Regiment was to have a part; but this was not to be until it had marched and fought, again and again, far to the southward.

Saturday, March 7, it was confidently expected that an advance would be made, and throughout the forenoon the



troops held themselves in readiness to leave camp at a moment's notice. The wind blew a gale all day. Extra ammunition was issued, and the arms of the men were inspected to make sure that all were in fighting trim. During the afternoon, it having become apparent that there would be no forward movement that day, several members of the Regiment asked and obtained permission to visit Roper's Knob. Two of them,—James Pinley and Patrick Conway, both of Company F,—went from the Knob to a house near by to procure some butter, and were captured by a squad of the enemy's cavalry that chanced to be scouting in the neighborhood. They were the first members of the Regiment captured. Both were exchanged, and returned in time to take part in the battle of Chickamauga, where Pinley was killed and Conway seriously wounded. For a more circumstantial account of their experiences reference is made to the chapter on "Prisons and Prisoners of War," in another part of this volume. During Sunday the troops sent out from Murfreesboro, under the command of Gen. Sheridan, and which it had been expected Col. Coburn's Brigade would meet at or near Rally Hill, made a detour and reached Franklin. Other forces arrived from Nashville, and by Sunday night some 15,000 troops including quite a force of cavalry, had been concentrated. Every day the cavalry reconnoitered in various directions, making sure that the enemy had not again moved toward or past Franklin.

Monday, March 9, the little army moved southward, the main body upon the Columbia pike. Every man had three days' rations in his haversack, and twenty rounds of ammunition in his pockets in addition to the forty rounds in his cartridge-box. Tents were struck and loaded upon the wagons, but the wagons did not follow. The cavalry led the column, and maneuvered on the flanks. The enemy's cavalry was encountered a few miles out, but fell back without serious resistance, although at times the skirmishing was lively, and occasionally the artillery was called into use. It was a strange spectacle to watch the movements of the advance troops. Deployed in line of battle on either side of the pike, they





stretched away across the fields. As fences were approached one man in four would dismount, run forward and throw back the rails from every other corner, so that the horses could pass without breaking the line for more than a few seconds. The work of throwing down a fence required but a moment, often a mile or more being made ready for the passage of the line of battle in as little time as would be required to throw open an ordinary gate. When a stone wall was encountered there was a little longer delay, and the gaps would be less frequent, but in a very few moments the wall would be made easy of passage, and the labor of the wall-layers for long months would be undone.

Near Thompson's Station and Spring Hill there were many marks of the disastrous battle of the fourth. Most of the white men had apparently followed the army southward, for, except in rare instances, only women and negroes occupied the houses along the line of march. Gen. Sheridan's Division led the advance of the infantry forces the greater part of the day, but toward night Gen. Granger's command moved to the front, passing Sheridan's troops in bivouac. That night the Regiment, with other troops, camped in an open field in front of a large farm house, having marched a dozen miles. Upon the arrival of the command there was a board fence upon one side of the pike and a rail fence upon the other, but in half an hour not a vestige of these remained, except here and there a fence post that had been set so deep that it could not easily be pulled out. The troops being without tents, the fencing was used to provide shelter and fuel for the night. All felt that they were in an enemy's country, and that there should no longer be any restraint in the confiscation of property when the comfort and well-being of the soldiers was under consideration. The region was rich in supplies, and the troops fired sumptuously,—fresh pork, bacon, potatoes, poultry, tobacco and honey being secured in liberal amounts. The day had been pleasant, but before midnight a drenching rain set in, making it most uncomfortable for the soldiers.

Tuesday, March 10, the cavalry again took the lead, beginning to skirmish with the enemy almost as soon as



they left camp. A few shells came over from the front, bursting near the Regiment,—the first that had ever been fired at the command. The advance was cautious, the infantry moving forward well to the front, advancing two or three times and then halting, as if there was an expectation that the enemy would resist the attack, and perhaps assume the offensive. After a time the cavalry moved more rapidly, and the firing receded. About noon the order "forward" was given to the infantry, and a very rapid march of six or eight miles was made, the column occasionally breaking into a double quick. Then came a brief halt, and later a further advance of a half mile was ordered. All day the artillery, which accompanied the cavalry, shelled the woods in front, and a lively skirmish fire was kept up, but with few casualties. At six o'clock the troops went into bivouac in the woods, in close proximity to the enemy, the pickets exchanging shots and the camp fires of either army being plainly visible to the other. It was the nearest approach to the enemy that the Regiment had yet made, and all felt that a battle was imminent. The rain, which had been falling moderately throughout the day, increased as night came on, but ceased at ten o'clock, the weather turning severely cold. The troops having been subjected to so much exposure and fatigue, and the night being so unpleasant, the usual detail for picket was omitted and an entire Company sent out for four hours, when a fresh Company was called up and sent to relieve them. It is to be feared that had army regulations been strictly enforced, and every man found asleep on his post that night been given the full sentence of the law, there would have been several executions during the days immediately succeeding, for certain it is that there were some who could not, or did not, keep awake. This is not to be wondered at when it is remembered that the command had been given little opportunity to sleep the previous night, and that many had slept but little since leaving Nashville, five days before.

Wednesday, March 11, the cavalry and artillery engaged the enemy, and quite a lively skirmish took place at one of the crossings of Duck River and at Rutherford Creek. The



water was so high that the formidable streams could not be crossed, and as it was not practicable to bridge them, no further advance was attempted. A few prisoners were taken and a few of the cavalry were killed or wounded. Exaggerated reports as to the losses and gains came from the troopers at the front, but the day passed without any general movement of the infantry forces.

Thursday, March 12, the entire command marched back to Franklin, Gen. Sheridan's Division taking the lead. While there was plainly no cause for hurrying, yet Sheridan's veterans led off at a rapid pace, evidently undertaking to show Granger's troops how to march. The entire distance of about twenty or twenty-two miles was traveled in seven and one-half hours, the camp ground at Franklin being reached at four o'clock in the afternoon. It was a very severe and unnecessarily rapid march, many of the men falling out from sheer exhaustion,—those from Sheridan's Division being quite as numerous as in the command that followed them. Subsequently the report was current that two Division commanders had made a wager of a basket of champagne as to the ability of their commands to march; if so, it was a most heartless undertaking, for quite a number of the men were entirely used up by this experience. Next day Gen. Sheridan's Division resumed their march, making a leisurely trip to Murfreesboro. Thus ended what has gone into history as the Duck River campaign.

March 13 and 14 were given to resting, and clearing up the camp grounds, although on the latter day there was an inspection of all the troops by Gen. Granger, Gens. Gilbert, Baird and Smith being with him. The men were ordered to keep three days' cooked rations in their haversacks, and to be ready to move at a moment's notice, it apparently being expected that the enemy would make an attack on Franklin and attempt to drive our forces back to Nashville.

Sunday, March 15, eighty men were detailed from the NINETY-SIXTH to work on the fort, and on the twentieth one hundred men were called for. On the twenty-second the entire Regiment was on picket duty across the river, going



out at daylight and remaining for twenty-four hours, the line of the Regiment entirely surrounding the village, and both flanks resting on the river. There was some excitement through the night, and a little picket firing. Only a night or two before a Captain from one of the other Regiments was killed by a Rebel scout, and the knowledge of this served to keep the soldiers unusually vigilant. Matters remained quiet until the twenty-fifth, at which time there was a report of trouble in the rear, and skirmishing was going on all around the lines, the Rebel cavalry approaching so near as to exchange shots with the pickets, and threatening to attack the post. It soon transpired that the remnant of the 22d Wisconsin and two Companies of the 19th Michigan, which had been guarding a bridge at Brentwood, about midway between Nashville and Franklin—and which were the real objects of attack—had found themselves surrounded by a large infantry force at daylight in the morning, and were compelled to surrender. The NINETY-SIXTH, as well as the other troops in camp at Franklin, were kept in line until nine o'clock in the evening, but the commander did not attempt to make any aggressive movement.

On the twenty-seventh the NINETY-SIXTH, with the 22d Illinois Infantry, 6th Kentucky Cavalry and 9th Ohio Battery left Franklin at five o'clock in the afternoon and marched back to Brentwood in a pouring rain storm. The distance traveled was about nine miles, a halt being made at half-past ten. The night was terribly dark, the roads muddy, and the men pretty thoroughly tired with their long walk. A deep and rapid stream had to be forded on the way. When the wagons finally came up and were unloaded there was much trouble experienced in erecting the tents, as the camp ground was on a stony hillside, and the rain was pouring down in torrents. The underlying rocks prevented the driving of tent stakes, but all were put up after a fashion, and, a few rails being secured, most of the men spent the balance of the night in an upright position, the rails being laid down and the knapsacks placed upon them and thus kept out of the wet. Sometimes the soldiers, sitting upon their knapsacks, would





sleep so soundly as to lose all consciousness, and fall over into the mud and water. Often streams of water poured through the tents, and the night was a thoroughly disagreeable one. The next morning the soldiers spent an hour or two in looking over the partially burned camps of the captured troops, reading their letters, looking at photographs, and speculating as to how the "accident" happened. During the forenoon the entire command went into camp near the railroad bridge, the infantry beginning the work of fortifying its position, while the cavalry reconnoitered the surrounding country. Major J. C. Smith, of the NINETY-SIXTH, laid out a line of earthworks capable of accommodating the two regiments of infantry. The trench was in a zig-zag shape, about six feet wide, and so deep that the men would be protected while loading. There was a bench on either side for them to stand upon while firing, the works having the advantage of facing either way. The timber and orchards in the immediate front were cut, and heavy timbers, rolled upon skids, served as head-logs, under which the men could place their muskets if called upon to fire from their position. In front of the works an abatis was constructed from the limbs of the trees. The branches were sharpened, and hooked stakes driven into the ground to hold down the limbs. These earthworks ran along the crest of a hill and commanded the country for quite a distance in every direction. The men worked zealously in constructing them, and a few negroes in the neighborhood were compelled to assist. There was at least one white citizen called upon to do a couple of days' work in the trenches. He was a resident physician, who had the audacity to ask for a pass to go in and out of the lines, by day or night, but who declined to take the iron-clad oath to give no information to the enemy under penalty of death, or to swear that he was and would remain a loyal citizen. The Doctor did not really enjoy working side by side with his own negroes at hard, manual labor, and at the end of two days was so thoroughly used up that Major Smith relieved him. Although a little careful, owing to the disaster that had happened to Coburn's troops, the men made more or less excursions into the country, and



C. W. Poweroy



more than one citizen was doubtless surprised on attempting to milk his cows in the morning to find that he had been anticipated by the Yankees. There was considerable foraging in the neighborhood, and the boys were quick to possess themselves of anything that came in their way, provided only that there was no safeguard about the place, being certain that the military authorities had sifted out the truly loyal people and given them ample protection. A mill in the neighborhood was set in operation, and quite an amount of meal ground out and issued to the men, thus adding to the variety of their rations. There was more or less suffering from scurvy, owing to a lack of vegetables, which was partially relieved through the efforts of the officers, who made an urgent request for potatoes, cabbage, and other edibles in this line. Here, as at many other points during the early part of the Regiment's service, and while the command was in easy communication with the North, many boxes, filled at the homes of the soldiers with butter, fruit and other things not on the list of army rations, came by express, bringing good cheer and adding to the happiness and health of all. The picket duty of the command was very heavy at Brentwood, two or three Companies being called for every twenty-four hours, besides daily details for camp guard. On one occasion, when an attack was apprehended, all of the camp kettles and mess-pans were filled with water and taken to the rattle-pits, so that the troops should not suffer from thirst in the event of a siege of a day or two.

An incident of the stay at Brentwood was the dressing up of an ancient donkey that had wandered through the camp. The boys arrayed the animal in military clothing, using cast-off garments, tied on his head a hat decorated with an ample amount of brass and feathers, and put on either shoulder a large shoulder-strap. Thus arrayed, the animal went here and there about the camp, braving out his protestations against this unusual treatment. The officers and men enjoyed the sport, the former assuming that at all events it must be some one higher in authority than themselves whom the soldiers were trying to "take off."



On Sunday, April 5, the new Chaplain of the Regiment, Rev. Horace G. Woodworth who had been mustered in March 22, and had just reached the command, preached an able sermon. He was a man of fine ability, and was very entertaining. His sermons were of a character to inspire the men to patriotic action and honorable living. About the same time Dr. Byron G. Pierce came to the Regiment and entered upon his duties as Surgeon, to which position he had been commissioned. There was considerable excitement in camp on the fifth, as an attack was expected, the Rebel cavalry being in the neighborhood. They evidently found the force too wide awake, and concluded to retire without even attempting to take the command prisoners.

Here twenty men from the Regiment were detached, under Lieutenant William M. Loughlin, of Company C, and entered an organization known as the Pioneer Corps, being subsequently transferred to the 1st Regiment of United States Veteran Volunteer Engineers. In a subsequent chapter will be found a detailed statement as to their organization and work.

On the 8th of April a Division of Infantry, under Gen. Morgan, arrived from Nashville, and the NINETY-SIXTH, with the other portions of Baird's Division, marched back to Franklin, leaving Brentwood at five o'clock and reaching Franklin at eight p. m. The ninth was spent in fixing up the very dirty camp-ground, nearly the entire day being consumed. The Regiment was usually called at four o'clock in the morning, as were all the troops at Franklin,—then numbering about 5,000 infantry and 2,700 cavalry,—and stood to arms until after daylight. Indeed, throughout the entire stay at Franklin this was the rule, the men being obliged to stand in line,—or engage in drilling if they preferred,—for at least an hour before daylight every morning, and occasionally réveille sounded as early as three o'clock. The weather was often damp and the mornings almost always foggy, so that this duty was very severe. There was a great deal of complaint about it at the time, although there is little doubt that those morning drills at Franklin added materially to the efficiency of the command in after months.





Friday, April 10, at about noon, firing was heard on the picket lines in front of town, and in an instant all was excitement at the camp. With hardly a moment's delay the line was formed, and the Regiment ready for service whenever needed. Artillery at the fort began throwing shells to a point far beyond the picket line, quickly getting range and doing considerable execution. This was responded to for a time, the flashing of the rebel guns being distinctly visible from camp, and a few of their shot striking just outside of the fort. The Rebels, under Gen. Van Dorn, charged directly upon the picket lines, most of their forces being upon the Lewisburg pike just south of the village. The 46th Ohio was on picket that day, and gave the saucy troopers a hot salute as they came up, checking their advance, but only for a few moments, for soon the cavalry charged again, this time riding past the picket line and directly into town. Some of the more reckless riders made their way almost to the pontoon bridge, and one or two were shot close to the river and only a few rods from the fort. The main force halted in the village, where they were harrassed by the 40th boys and the patrol guards, who took shelter in houses and kept up a continuous firing upon the disorganized raiders. Soon Gen. Van Dorn seemed to become convinced that the force upon the north side of the river was one with which he did not care to cope, and accordingly he ordered the recall sounded, his forces galloping southward as rapidly as they had entered town, the Union pickets giving them a parting salute as they rode away, which brought a number of them to the ground. The advance had been made with a large force, and apparently with a good deal of determination, and as the force at Franklin was not large, it is difficult to understand why the attack was so readily abandoned. At this very time Gen. Stanley, with a large force of cavalry, was moving from Murfreesboro toward Spring Hill, and it may have been that Gen. Van Dorn thought to make a dash upon Franklin for the purpose of capturing the regiment on outpost duty, and diverting the Union forces from their southward trip. It seemed a useless sacrifice of life to go so far with a movement and then abandon it. Just what the Rebel



loss was cannot be told, but nineteen of their dead and quite a number of their wounded were left in and around the village, and it was known that several wagons or ambulances were driven close up to the outposts and filled with those who had been disabled. The 40th made a gallant fight, and lost six killed or mortally wounded, a few injured and ten captured.

The fighting lasted until two o'clock. Col. Atkins' Brigade, the NINETY-SIXTH leading, marched out across the river at four o'clock, following the retreating forces some four or five miles. Men and horses lay where they had fallen as the column filed out through town and past the picket lines. A short distance out an advance guard was thrown forward, and a little later four Companies of the Regiment were deployed as skirmishers, but the enemy did not resist the advance, although there was some skirmish firing on the part of the troops directly at the left of the Regiment. Just at dark the Brigade halted, in line of battle, along a stone wall, only a short distance from where a heavy force of the enemy had made a stand upon a line of hills that lay at right angles to the pike, remaining in that position until about ten o'clock P. M., when they returned to Franklin, reaching camp about midnight.

On the eleventh the cavalry moved out to the front and engaged the enemy, the sound of firearms being heard in camp a considerable part of the day. Their expedition was fairly successful, quite a number of prisoners being taken without serious loss to the Union forces.

Sunday, April 12. Chaplain Woodworth again preached. Everything was quiet at the front, and the usual dress parade was had in the evening. All of the time during the stay at Franklin heavy guard details were required to picket the rear of the little army, but south of the river the picketing was done by regiments and not by details.

Tuesday, April 14, the Regiment was on picket on the south side of the river, having its headquarters at the cotton press, which afterward became historic; the line being formed at the very point where, a year and a half later, Hood's forces charged with such dash and courage against the lines of the



4th and 23d Corps, only to be beaten back so terribly defeated as to be of little further service to the Confederacy. It was anything but agreeable weather, as rain fell much of the time throughout the day and night. During the day everything was quiet on the line, but at night there was more or less firing, and James M. Scott, of Company F, was killed. The advance line, under the order of their commanding officer, fell back a short distance, and the relief post was aroused, but no further trouble occurred during the night. Next night a rebel was shot, close to the spot where Scott fell, by a member of the Regiment that relieved the NINETY-SIXTH on the morning of the sixteenth. He was crawling up to the lines, probably intending to kill another Yankee.

Wednesday, April 15, the Regiment returned to camp and spent the day in resting and cleaning up. On the sixteenth the remains of Scott were buried with military honors. He was but twenty, and had always been a favorite in the Regiment. The funeral was an impressive one, the entire command attending the services. In the afternoon there was battalion drill.

Friday, April 17, Maj. Terrell visited the camp and gave the men four months' pay each. His visit was most welcome, for the officers and soldiers had long been short of funds. The first questions with most of the men after receiving their pay, were, What shall I do with it? How shall I send it home? How much of it can I spare? As a rule, \$10 or more of the \$52 received by the privates was sent home through the State Agent, an officer appointed by the Governor to look after the Illinois troops. At that time the express companies would make no guaranty of safe delivery, as on a portion of the route northward they considered the risk too great. Many had sutlers' bills to pay, and a few retained a little change to invest in chuck-luck and draw-poker. During the day there were rumors of an attack by the Rebels, but quiet was maintained.

The next week was spent rather quietly, although almost every day heavy details were made for work on the fortifications. Friday, April 24, the Regiment was again on picket



across the river, having a quiet time. On the twenty-sixth Captain J. P. Black, of Company E, resigned. First Lieutenant William F. Taylor was promoted to Captain, Second Lieutenant Halsey H. Richardson to First Lieutenant, and First Sergeant Sidney B. Funk to Second Lieutenant. Two days later First Lieutenant Samuel H. Bayne, of Company H, resigned, and was succeeded by Second Lieutenant Joseph L. Pierce; First Sergeant George F. Barnes being promoted to Second Lieutenant.

Monday, April 27, the Regiment was detailed for wood-chopping and started for Brigade Headquarters, when there was an alarm, and the order was given to countermarch and prepare for a fight. They immediately marched to town, crossing the river on the pontoon bridge, but were at once directed to countermarch and again started for camp. On the way they were a second time ordered to the front, this time crossing the river on the railroad bridge and taking up position near the depot, where they remained in line for an hour or more. Meanwhile the cavalry, under Col. Watkins, which had been out on a surprise visit to some Rebel camps, sent word that all was going well, and the NINETY-SIXTH was ordered to return to camp and proceed with its woodchopping. Later in the day the cavalry returned with 128 prisoners, 300 horses and mules, eight wagons, and a complete camp outfit for quite a force, the expedition having been remarkably successful.

The experience of the Regiment in the woods that day was an interesting one. The column, when it left its position near the depot, passed out near its camp and up over the side of Roper's Knob, halting on the plantation of a man whose family was living quietly under the protection of the old Flag while he was serving as an officer in Bragg's army at the front. On the plantation was a beautiful forest or park of some forty or fifty acres, embracing a great variety of timber, including oak, elm, ash, hickory, cottonwood, maple, beech, and probably other kinds. The trees had been nicely trimmed, there being hardly a branch lower than twenty feet from the ground; but the Rebel forces had been threatening to make






a dash upon the camp from the direction of this timber, and the commander had determined to make that plantation impassable for cavalry. The Regiment, probably numbering 600 men, received about one-half that number of axes, and were accordingly counted off in two reliefs. Then began the work of destruction, 300 axemen raining heavy blows upon these beautiful trees. Usually two men worked on the same tree, and it was a musical chorus as the sharp and heavy axes rained their rapid blows upon the doomed forest. In ten minutes there was a crash; then another and another until they came in such rapidity that the sound of falling timber was almost continuous. This was kept up all through the forenoon and until the middle of the afternoon, special pains being taken to fell the trees in such a way that their tops should interlace and cross each other. When one relief had worked an hour the other relief would be called up and go to take its place. It really seemed almost too bad to destroy this beautiful park, but the fact that its owner was a Rebel, and that cutting the timber would protect one side of the camp from attack, entirely reconciled a great majority of the men to the destruction of the beautiful forest. By four or five o'clock in the afternoon there were hardly a dozen trees standing, the few remaining being in a position where they could not be readily reached, owing to the fact that the tops of other trees had fallen all around them. Not an accident occurred that was at all serious, although there were some narrow escapes from falling trees.

Wednesday, April 23, the Regiment received shelter tents, and turned over to the Quartermaster the large Bell tents drawn at Danville. There was much feeling among the men regarding the matter, as they were strongly prejudiced against the shelter tents, or, as they were then called, the "dog tents" or "pup tents"; but the order had been received, and most of the other regiments about Franklin had already made the change. Orders were given to strike the Bell tents, but no sooner were they down than a tremendous rain storm set in. There had been little preparation for the change, and as a result the men were obliged to pack up their things.



Most of them put on their ponchos and endeavored to protect their earthly effects until such time as the rain should cease, and they be permitted to go to the timber, some distance from the camp, and secure tent poles. Showers were frequent all day, but in the intervals between them the tents were erected, and the men made themselves at home. During the afternoon Gen. Granger came riding along near the color line. In an instant the men began to disappear, much as prairie dogs on the western plains dive into their holes when a traveler approaches, while all along the line there came the greatest possible variety of barking, whining and yelping that can be imagined. The probable intention, so far as there was any plan in it, was to impress the General with the fact that they knew that these were "dog tents." The General looked indignant but said nothing. In a very short time, however, the men were more than reconciled to the change, and at no time in their after experience would they have voluntarily given up these shelter tents for any others ever made. Perhaps these tents should be described at this point. To each man was given a piece of cotton cloth, five feet six inches square. The edges were made double, by a strip three or four inches wide being sewed across them. At each of the two lower corners a loop of rope was fastened so that stakes might be driven through them into the ground. At the upper edge there was a row of latches and button holes. Two men would button their pieces of tent together, drive a pair of stakes four and a half feet in length into the ground, lay a pole six feet long across the top of the stakes, and over these place their tent, fastening the lower corners to the ground with tent pins. There being no protection at the ends they were certainly very thoroughly ventilated, but they were easily put up, and at the end of a march there was no waiting for the wagons to come up before the men could be provided with shelter. In case of a storm they were easily shifted so that the rain could not sift in on the sides, or, if it was impracticable to change the position of the tents, then a poncho could be fastened on the windward side. Usually, where there was a probability of remaining in camp for more than a day, four men would join together and





C. W. POMEROY,

COMPANY K.

(Copied from a war time photograph.)



put up their tents so that they would lap each other. As the days grew longer and the weather became hotter the men erected shades above these tents. Crotches were set in the ground and poles laid across them, evergreens or the limbs of other trees being cut and placed over them. In this way the camp was protected from the direct rays of the sun, and the quarters made not only very comfortable but really very pleasant to look upon.

Thursday, April 30, was a day set apart by President Lincoln for fasting and prayer throughout the nation. The commanding General issued an order directing that the day should be observed; as a consequence there was no formal drill, but, in the forenoon, it being the last day of the month, there was muster and inspection. In the afternoon the Chaplain preached an excellent sermon. Toward evening the other Division was called in line, and started out toward the front, the cavalry, under Col. Campbell, accompanying them. There was expectation of the capture of a rebel camp, but next day the troops returned without having accomplished all that was intended, although they had taken part in a lively engagement and routed the enemy, capturing a few prisoners. Rumor had it that a citizen had notified the camp that the Yankees were coming, just in time to prevent a surprise and capture.

As the men were to carry their own tents from this time forward, there was no longer need of so many Regimental wagons. Accordingly orders were issued to turn over to the Quartermaster at Nashville all surplus teams, leaving four to each Regiment. Friday, May 1, the extra teams and wagons of all the troops at Franklin were given in charge of Lieutenant Burnett, of Company B, who, with a large detail of guards, escorted them to the rear. As they neared Brentwood the enemy's cavalry were seen hovering on the flank, watching an opportunity to rush in and capture or destroy the train. The troops at Brentwood were notified and came to the rescue, so that no trouble resulted, although for a time the danger was imminent. They went into park at Brentwood, and next day proceeded to Nashville, where a delay of some days





occurred before the receipt of the busy Quartermaster could be obtained. The detail then returned to Franklin by rail.

Monday, May 4, the Regiment was again on picket. During the day the artillerymen were practicing with their guns from the fort, firing directly over the picket line. One shell burst close to the line, the fuse probably having been cut too short, but no harm was done. All was quiet through the night and until toward morning, when there was a little firing by the cavalry *videttes* in front.

There had been considerable scurvy in the Regiment from the time of leaving Danville, but potatoes and other vegetables had been issued, and the command was now in much better health. There was but little drilling except before daylight in the morning, but almost every day there were heavy details at work upon the fort or at Roper's Knob, or in cutting timber in the neighborhood, so that the men received sufficient exercise, and were really in good health.

Newspapers could be had at ten cents each. Those from Nashville were usually received the day on which they were published; those from Louisville the day after their issue from the press; while those from Cincinnati and Chicago were from two to four days old. As both money and time were plenty these papers found ready sale, particularly during the early days of the month, when all eyes were turned toward the army of the Potomac, as it again essayed to take Richmond. Great was the disappointment when news came that Fighting Joe Hooker had met with disaster at Chancellorsville, and his army had again been withdrawn toward Washington.

On the sixth the Regiment was detailed for wood chopping, and cut down a large amount of timber in rear of Roper's Knob. The day was rainy and unpleasant, and the work anything but agreeable. The season had now so far advanced that the trees were almost in full foliage, and small grain was approaching maturity. The river was so near to camp that the men could bathe with little trouble, and for an hour just at dusk daily there was a lively scene not far from camp, many taking their first lessons in swimming, and enjoying the sport with keen zest.



Rations were fairly abundant, and there was a great improvement in the methods of cooking them. A brick oven was constructed by every Company, and much of the beef issued was nicely roasted, instead of being boiled. Flour was issued and "soft bread" baked, the cooks using peach leaves in place of hops, and finding them a very good substitute. Biscuit, pancakes and even cookies were indulged in. The following recipe for making pancakes—or "slapjacks," as they were called—is copied from an old letter of one of the Publication Committee of this work: "To one quart of water add one teaspoonful of salaratus (bought from the sutler at 35 cents a pound), three table-spoonful of vinegar, and stir to a thick paste with flour: then salt to taste. It makes them better to let them stand over night before cooking." The rations issued consisted of salt pork, bacon, fresh beef, hardtack, flour, beans, dried peas, coffee, sugar, candles, vinegar, rice, salt, pepper, and sometimes black tea, molasses and potatoes. On the march or in active campaigning many of these articles were omitted, but the hardtack, salt meat and coffee could generally be expected once in three days, that being the usual period for which rations were issued.

During the month Dr. Frederick W. Byers, who had been commissioned Second Assistant Surgeon, joined the Regiment, thus making full the medical staff of the command. Second Lieutenant Hiram W. Parsonsworth, of Company G, resigned, and was succeeded by First Sergeant James O. Haven.

On the twenty-seventh the resignation of Captain Alexander Burnett, of Company H, was accepted, First Lieutenant Joseph L. Pierce being promoted to the place made vacant; Second Lieutenant George F. Barnes being commissioned First Lieutenant, and First Sergeant Charles H. Yates being promoted to Second Lieutenant. This made an entire change of the commissioned officers in that Company within a period of less than four months.

On the eighth Colonel Champion returned from an absence of some weeks, having been home on sick leave. During the tenth the Chaplain did double duty, preaching two ser-



mons, a somewhat unusual undertaking for an army Chaplain. On the eleventh there was an inspection and grand review of the troops. On the twelfth the Regiment was wood chopping, and a large amount of work was done. On the fifteenth drill was taken up with a little more regularity. On the sixteenth the Regiment was on picket again across the river, but all was quiet. On the nineteenth occurred the first full-fledged Brigade drill, the troops having to march about two miles to find a piece of level ground on which they could maneuver, and all be in sight of their commander. On the twentieth there was a very strict inspection of the camp and of the arms of the men, and the same day three regiments, including the Ninety-Sixth, had target practice. On the twenty-first there was a Division drill, under Gen. Baird, which occupied the greater part of the afternoon.

Sunday, May 24, the usual religious services were held in camp, and in the evening there was a Brigade dress parade. On the twenty-sixth the Regiment was again on picket on the south side of the river, and had a quiet time. On the following night there was some excitement on the line, and the Regiment was called at three o'clock, expecting an attack which did not materialize. The weather for the last half of the month was dry and pleasant, although quite warm at times, the camp becoming very dusty. On the twenty-ninth occurred a heavy rain, which laid the dust and purified the air somewhat. Sunday, May 31, there were religious services, and following this quite an excitement because of a report that the Regiment was to move.

About the time the command first moved to Tennessee occurred what came to be known as the "nine months fever." In calling out the troops the year before, President Lincoln had stated that 300,000, or one-half of all asked for, would be accepted for nine months, and several of the Eastern States filled their quotas with men recruited for that period. It was held by many that it would be entirely unfair to require Illinois to continue men in service for a longer period than did the Eastern States. Of course every man in the Regiment was enlisted with the distinct understanding that he should remain



for three years should his services be required for that period, but with each obligation was coupled the phrase "unless sooner discharged," and many saw in those three words the loop hole by which they were to be permitted to return home simultaneously with the nine months' troops at the East. Not a few came to believe that they were really to be sent home. There were mischievous men in every Company who would assume that such was the case, and argue it by the hour, knowing all the time that their arguments had no real foundation. Some of these men would report, with apparent candor, that when on guard at Brigade Headquarters, and while near Col. Atkins' tent, they had heard some discussion of the subject, and were sure the officers believed that they were going home. Next day they would report that Colonel Champion had been overheard to say that there was good reason to believe in the nine months' theory. On the whole the discussion was most unfortunate, for many a man grew homesick as he heard the oft-told tale, and conceived the idea that the authorities were doing him an injustice in retaining him in the service beyond nine months. Not until the nine months had fully passed did the last ray of hope depart from a few in almost every Illinois Regiment organized under the calls of 1862.

During the period covered by this chapter Death was still busy in the ranks, taking off one and another of the command. A majority of the deaths occurred in the hospitals in and about Nashville, but some at Danville and others at points further north. Those dying were: Robert Neal and Josiah Beall, of Company A; John J. Price, of Company B; Caleb E. Colgrove and Henry Schnell, of Company C; Corporal John Sluman and Miles Jones, of Company D; Joseph E. Fletcher, James Gunn, Thomas Keyes, John Sage and Albert Demure, of Company E; Daniel Goble, W. Irving Edgerton, William Sturges, Corporal Channey Wakefield and Corporal Henry Trefz, of Company F; Asel Hawkins, of Company G; J. P. Davis and William Corley, of Company H; John Bennett, John Williams, Humphrey Leslie and Corporal G. W. Roberts, of Company I.





## CHAPTER VIII.

The Summer of 1863—The March to Triune—Lightening the Knapsacks—Partial Reorganization of the Corps—The Paymaster and the Enemy Arrive Simultaneously—Again Under Fire but at Long Range—Skedaddle of the Sutler's Clerks—Punishment of Sleepy Sentinels—The Tullahoma Campaign—A Succession of Rainy Days—Again Under Fire—Guarding Prisoners to the Rear—The Advance to Shelbyville—The March to Wartrace—Close of the Brief Campaign—Good News from Vicksburg and Gettysburg—A Day of Thanksgiving.

THE spring of 1863 had passed, summer had come, and quiet still reigned along the lines in Middle Tennessee. True, there were almost daily engagements at some point, but they were on the part of small forces, and their results had little significance. The main body of the army had made no general movement for a period of nearly five months. Apparently Gen. Rosecrans and Gen. Bragg were each waiting for the other to take the offensive. The Confederate forces were mainly north of Duck River, their infantry being at Shelbyville and Wartrace, covering Tullahoma, which had been heavily fortified, and was their headquarters and main base of supplies. Their cavalry was on either flank, with headquarters at McMinnville on their right, and Spring Hill and Columbia on their left. The main body of Gen. Rosecrans' army was at Murfreesboro, but there were considerable forces of both infantry and cavalry at Franklin and Triune, and a large body of cavalry at the left of Murfreesboro.

The authorities at Washington, growing impatient as the weeks went by, began to demand that an advance be made, and that the war be carried into Alabama and Georgia. Gen. Rosecrans insisted that his force was entirely too small; that he was especially deficient in cavalry, and that the roads were likely to be so bad that supplies could not be drawn by wagons to a point much in advance of that then occupied by his army. The controversy was mainly between Gen. Halleck and Gen.



Rosecrans, and became very acrimonious. Some additional cavalry was provided, and a forward movement ordered on the one hand and promised on the other. The work of concentrating the army began on the first of June.

Tuesday, June 2, the NINETY-SIXTH, with most of the other troops comprising Gen. Granger's command, in accordance with orders received the night before, was called in line at about three o'clock in the morning, standing to arms until daylight, when ranks were broken and preparations made for the march. The men were in high spirits at the prospect of a forward movement. The weather having become so warm that it was desirable to be rid of all surplus clothing and baggage, overcoats were rolled up, and, with all other articles not regarded as absolutely necessary to comfort in a hot weather campaign, packed in boxes and barrels and shipped by the soldiers to their Illinois homes. By sunrise tents were down, knapsacks were packed and the men ready to move. A long wait occurred, however, as Gen. Granger and his staff were not ready, and it was seven or eight o'clock before the column finally moved out across the fields, intending to take the wagon road leading to Triune.

Thus the cool morning hours were idled away, and the command compelled to make its march in the heat of the day. Whether for the purpose of deceiving the enemy or because the guide made a mistake in the road is not quite certain, but the column was led out of its way several miles. The weather was sultry, and the roads extremely muddy, so that the march was one of great severity, and many were the stragglers from the ranks as the day wore on. As already stated, the men had previously packed up and sent away all of the clothing that they deemed superfluous. Long before noon, however, many of them concluded that they still had clothing to spare, and as the column halted for a brief rest knapsacks were thrown open, and out came extra shirts, letters, books and many other articles, to lighten the heavy loads. A few had undertaken to carry two blankets, but it is doubtful if there was a man in the Regiment who had more than one when he reached camp at night, while many had thrown away the only



woolen blanket with which they started. The distance traveled was nearly twenty miles, and the final halt made only a short distance from Triune at about five o'clock in the afternoon. One of the other Brigades, which started about the same time as the Second Brigade, and took the direct road, reached Triune at noon, having traveled but about twelve miles. The country passed was rather pleasant, the trees being in full leaf, the crops thriving and the occasional fields of wheat nicely headed out. All day there was some firing in the rear, and it afterward transpired that the enemy had made a reconnoissance of the position upon the moving out of Gen. Granger's command, for the evident purpose of ascertaining how large a force was left at Franklin.

On the third all was quiet, the men taking a much needed rest, and discussing the rumor which spread through camp to the effect that the command was to move to the front the following day. The commonly accepted theory was that Gen. Bragg, commanding the enemy in their immediate front, had been weakening his army for the purpose of reinforcing Gen. Pemberton, then at Vicksburg, and that Gen. Rosecrans was about to assume the offensive.

Here there was a partial reorganization of the Corps, the Brigade of which the NINETY-SIXTH was a part becoming the First Brigade of the First Division of the Reserve Corps, but still retaining the same Commanders.

There was a large force at Triune, but just how large few except the commander knew until Thursday, June 4, when, there having been a critical inspection of cartridge boxes and knapsacks in the forenoon, the entire command was called out for a grand review, by Gen. Granger, in the afternoon. In this review, between twenty and thirty Regiments of infantry and a half dozen or more batteries of artillery participated. It was much the largest and most imposing review in which the Regiment had taken part, but quite as tedious as it was interesting.

The same afternoon the Rebels made a very vigorous reconnoissance in the neighborhood of Franklin, attacking the force there with the evident intention of capturing Fort





JOSEPH L. PIERCE.

CAPTAIN, COMPANY H.





Granger and giving the army serious trouble on its right. The cavalry at Triane was hurried off across the country in the direction of the heavy firing, but their services were not needed, as the force at Franklin proved sufficient to hold the place and severely punish their unwelcome visitors. The firing continued into the night and was renewed next morning, being kept up until nearly noon, when the enemy retired.

Friday, June 5, the Regiment moved a short distance and went into camp in a field on the left of the Shelbyville pike. The spot chosen was very pleasant, with an abundance of good water in the near vicinity. It seemed as if there was a fatality hanging over the Regiment, for here, as on most previous occasions, the changing of the camp ground was attended by a severe rain storm, which prevailed a greater part of the night following.

Saturday, June 6, battalion drill was resumed, and everything indicated that the command would remain in camp for some time. Rifle pits were thrown up in the neighborhood, and a force of cavalry was sent out to reconnoiter the front. In the evening a large barn connected with the beautiful residence in front of the camp, and which was the property of a noted secessionist, was discovered to be on fire. The house near by was said to have cost \$50,000, and the barn corresponded well with the residence. There was no fire apparatus handy, and, strange as it may seem, the men, knowing the character of the owner of the property, manifested but little sorrow while the flames were lighting up the camp. Whether true or not, it was believed at the time that a few nights before the owner of this property had shot and killed a Union picket on duty in the garden adjoining the buildings. The day the army moved forward the residence was destroyed by fire.

Sunday, June 7, there was more or less skirmishing on the part of the cavalry a short distance in the front, but no infantry firing. There were some very nice gardens in the neighborhood of the little village of Triane, and some of the soldiers discovered that new potatoes were large enough to cook. Unfortunately, however, there were not enough to go around.



and those who could not secure new potatoes had to content themselves with digging up and cooking some seed potatoes that had just been planted and had not yet sprouted.

Monday was passed quietly with the usual drill. Tuesday, June 9, just as the Regiment was preparing for battalion drill, there was a sound of skirmishing in the front, and orders were given to remain in camp, prepared to move at a moment's notice. There was no serious fighting, however, and that afternoon and the next day all was quiet.

Thursday, June 11, Maj. Terrill began the work of paying off the Regiment. Companies A and B had already received their money, and Captain Pollock, of Company C, had called his men in line and had just got his pay, but before any of his men had been called to the Paymaster's table brisk skirmishing again began, and the Regiment was ordered into line. Musketry firing was quite brisk, and distant only about half a mile. The Paymaster left rather abruptly, and the Regiment fell in almost instantly, Company A being sent to the front as skirmishers. The line had but just been formed when shells from the enemy's batteries came whistling overhead. The men were directed to strike tents, and their knapsacks were sent to the rear of a line of breastworks a short distance from camp. A section of Miller's Chicago Battery took position at the front and right of the Regiment, on a little eminence just in the edge of a grove. There was an open field about a quarter of a mile wide at the front, on the opposite side of which was another stretch of timber. The Rebels planted two guns on the pike, just at the edge of this timber, and a brisk artillery duel began. The first shots from the front seemed to be directed at Col. Atkins and staff, who were in plain view upon their horses. The Brigade commander and his escort very wisely retired a short distance, where they could not be so distinctly seen. The Third Brigade of the First Division occupied a position just to the right of the pike. A rebel shell passed over the tent of the regimental sutler, Mr. E. H. Mason, so frightening the clerks in charge that they left for safer quarters, whereupon some of the soldiers concluded to invoice the goods. Mr. Mason was absent



at the time, having gone North for supplies. Whatever the stock on hand was in the morning, that evening the amount was very trifling, most of it having been appropriated by the soldiers. As the clerks ran to the rear they kept directly in range of the battery, and the shells struck very close to them more than once. Indeed, they were in much greater danger than they would have been had they remained at their posts. Both of them were thoroughly ashamed of their conduct, and shortly afterward left for Illinois, concluding that if non-combatants were to be the targets for rebel batteries they would leave the front. The money drawer of the sutler was undisturbed, but the canteens were disposed of in very short order. One of the rebel shells struck a loaded wagon immediately in the rear of the line, and another tore up the ground just in front of the infantry, on the right of the pike, but without inflicting any casualties. This firing became so annoying that another section of Miller's battery was brought up and soon succeeded in silencing the enemy's guns. Meanwhile the skirmishers were making a stubborn fight, and the sound of their firing became almost continuous. At one time there were indications that the enemy was intending to make a general charge, but whatever the plans of Gen. Forrest may have been, he wisely concluded to withdraw without an assault. Had he charged across the open field he would have encountered a deep gully, impassable for horses, and his losses would certainly have been heavy. After several hours of vigorous skirmishing the enemy retired. Although the NINETY-SIXTH was in line for six hours and under fire a considerable part of the time, it sustained no loss. Those who had been on the skirmish line, and so fortunate as to have the opportunity to exchange shots with the enemy, were looked upon by their less exposed comrades with a feeling almost approaching envy. The shells passed close to the line, and the position through the long hours had been anything but a pleasant one. With rare exceptions the men were cool, and acted in a becoming manner. One man foolishly ran to the rear a short distance and clambered into a sink that had been newly dug, and commenced to pray in a loud tone; but the



taunts of his companions soon brought him to the front again. The newspapers reported the loss of the Rebels at about one hundred, while the Union loss was one Lieutenant and two or three men killed and a few slightly wounded. About one hundred head of horses and mules, grazing in an open field near the skirmish line, were stampeded, and most of them deserted to the enemy. The Union cavalry moved out to the front and engaged the enemy, following them as they retreated southward for a distance of five miles, returning in the evening with a few prisoners. This was even nearer to a battle than the Franklin experience, and the boys began to feel quite like veterans.

Friday, June 12, the Paymaster resumed operations at the old stand," and the boys were each given two months' pay. On Saturday a Brigade of infantry and quite a heavy force of cavalry under Gen. Steedman marched southward toward Shelbyville. The same afternoon, while Col. Atkins' command was out for Brigade drill in a large clover field in front of the line, brisk firing was heard at the front, and the troops were ordered to the support of Gen. Steedman, marching very rapidly for nearly four miles, when the reconnoitering party was found retiring leisurely, the Rebels skirmishing with its rear guard. The column then moved back to camp, reaching there at dusk. At about eleven o'clock the same evening they were again called out, with the order to put two days' rations in their haversacks, fill their canteens, roll up their blankets, and be ready to march at a moment's notice, it being reported that the Rebels had followed the troops back to camp and were preparing for a night attack. There was no further disturbance, although the men were kept in waiting until daylight next morning. The night was cool, and the unprotected troops had little or no sleep.

Sunday, June 14, there was morning inspection, and in the forenoon religious services were held, three Regiments joining and having an interesting time. In the afternoon there was a large prayer meeting. The troops were ordered to keep constantly on hand two days' cooked rations, and every soldier was required to have twenty rounds of ammu-





dition in his pockets besides the forty rounds in his cartridge box. Cooked rations meant cold rations, and not unfrequently spoiled rations, for the weather was hot and the meat would not keep. The men were at considerable inconvenience in this regard for a week or two. There was a very heavy rain storm in the evening.

Monday, June 15, the Regiment made a general business of putting up nice shades, or awnings, over their shelter tents, occupying most of the time when not on drill. Up to this time nearly all had worn the heavy dress coats first provided, but the weather being very warm, light blouses, made from dark blue flannel, were issued. The dress coats were retained, however, and used on dress parade for a few days; but when the first march occurred most of them were left in camp, to be gathered up and worn by the negroes of the neighborhood, or were thrown out beside the road after carrying them a few miles, and until the shoulders of the soldiers began to be tired and demanded the lightening of their loads. A rebel lieutenant and private came to the lines one day and gave themselves up, being tired of the war. They represented the Confederates as so discouraged that they were about ready to give up the contest, and claimed that the majority of the members of the companies to which they belonged desired to desert. About this time Chaplain Woodworth resigned his commission and returned home, much to the regret of the majority of the command, for he had always been quite popular among the men. He was subsequently recommissioned, at the earnest request of many of the command, but did not again come to the Regiment. The remainder of the week was without notable incident. The weather was excessively hot much of the time during every day, and occasional showers and an exceptionally heavy rain storm visited the camp in the afternoon of the eighteenth. Col. Atkins had his command out for Brigade drill quite frequently, and the various movements were admirably made. There was more or less trouble in some of the Regiments about men being found asleep upon their posts, and in one of the Regiments of the Brigade several of the men were tried



and sentenced. In some instances their pay was declared forfeited and they were sent to military prison to be confined at hard labor; in other cases they were compelled to stand upon a barrel for two hours in the forenoon and the same length of time each afternoon for ten days: while still others were compelled to drag a ball and chain or a heavy fence rail up and down in front of the tent of their commander for a couple of hours daily. Be it said to the credit of the men and officers, there was never any trouble in the NINETY-SIXTH about sleeping on post. Undoubtedly it sometimes happened that some soldier, fatigued with an unusual march, the great amount of night service demanded, or the arduous duties required of him in camp, may have dozed upon the picket post: but such cases were rare, and when discovered the officer in charge usually deemed his own reprimand and warning a sufficient punishment, and never reported the facts to higher authority.

Tuesday, June 23, the Regiment had been called out at the usual very early hour, and was standing in line, when an Aide rode up and notified the Colonel to have his command ready to march at seven o'clock. Everything was in readiness at the hour named, but the wagon trains were in the way and the column made but little progress until the forenoon was well advanced. The direction taken was toward Murfreesboro, and the camp, which was made about ten o'clock at night, was within five miles of that city, near a small place called Salem. The distance traveled was about fourteen miles, and the march a very tedious one, a portion of the route being through a dense cedar forest. A dozen or more of the wagons broke down, and a small guard of men was left to watch them. Next morning a body of rebel cavalry discovered the wagons and made a dash, as if intending to take them, but as soon as they saw the infantry, wheeled their horses about and "skedaddled," followed by a few bullets fired at long range.

Gen. Rosecrans' plans were now complete, and his army was well consolidated, Murfreesboro and Salem being near together, and the main body of troops being at and between



these points. Knowing how strong were the entrenchments of the enemy he determined to attempt to flank Shelbyville on the east and force the enemy to the alternative of a battle away from his earthworks or a retreat from his established lines. To the Reserve Corps and Mitchell's Division of cavalry was assigned the work of making a vigorous push toward Shelbyville, and deceiving the enemy into the belief that the main army was on that road, intending to attempt to take the place by direct assault. The movement was successful, the forces keeping up a vigorous and noisy demonstration as far to the right as Unionville, and concealing the real plan, until the main body of the infantry, under Gen. Rosecrans' personal supervision, had made considerable advance toward Manchester. It was the intention to force a battle, if possible, north of the Cumberland Mountains, but the terrible rain-storms which prevailed almost continuously from the very inception of the campaign prevented rapid movements, and allowed Gen. Bragg to make his choice between a fight and a retreat, and he withdrew to the Tennessee River.

The general movement of the Union army began on the morning of Wednesday, June 24. The camps were aroused at an early hour, and the men stood to arms until their hasty breakfasts were prepared, and partook of the meal with accoutrements strapped about them. In the camp of the NINETY-SIXTH, as soon as breakfast was over, the tents were taken down, and the men set about the camp ground on their knapsacks or on old logs awaiting orders. At seven o'clock it began to rain. It was not one of your gentle semi-pleasant showers, that is rather enjoyable than otherwise, but a fierce and prolonged deluge. The very flood-gates of heaven seemed to be opened, and the torrents poured down upon the devoted heads of the thousands of soldiers in the Army of the Cumberland who had just started upon their active campaign. It was nearly noon when the column on the right finally moved. The direction taken was not toward Murfreesboro, but at first directly south along the pike leading to Middleton, and thence easterly, across the fields, to the Murfreesboro and Shelbyville pike. All through that dreary afternoon the men plodded



slowly onward through the mud, the sound of cannon at the front, in the vicinity of Middleton, giving them the idea that they would shortly be engaged with the enemy, although the firing receded as they advanced. Stone River was forded, but the water was not so deep as to give serious trouble, although all got their feet wet. It was one o'clock at night when the Regiment bivouacked near Walnut Church, on the Shelbyville pike. There it was learned that Willich's Brigade had taken Liberty Gap, and that Wilder's Brigade had taken Hoover's Gap. The distance traveled by the Regiment was only about seven miles, although the column had been on the road for fully twelve hours. The skirmishing at the front, and the delay caused by the miring or breaking down of the heavy army wagons made the trip a very tedious one. The rain had ceased falling during the evening, and most of the men lay down without putting up their tents. Before daylight it was again raining, but a large part of them were so tired as to sleep soundly, and when they woke in the morning many found themselves lying in an inch or two of water.

Thursday, June 25, the column started out early, but only marched a mile or two, taking a position near the pike, and waiting the result of the contest at the front. The roar of artillery was continuous a greater part of the day. Orders came that all knapsacks should be loaded into such of the wagons as had been previously emptied by the distribution of rations, and sent back to Murfreesboro. Most of the men retained their woolen blankets, but a few kept only their ponchos. It was thought that there would be a battle right away, and the soldiers were generally glad to avail themselves of the opportunity to lighten their loads. The NINETY-SIXTH stood in line for an hour or two on the pike, and then relieved the 115th Illinois on the picket line, but did not have any skirmishing with the enemy, as the Union cavalry, still further at the front, kept them at a safe distance. Picket duty was continued all the next day, the other Regiments of the Brigade moving to the front. The headquarters of the Regiment was at the very house where Vallandigham, the notori-





ous southern sympathizer from Ohio, had been, by order of the President and the War Department, turned over to the tender mercies of his Southern brothers, only a few days before. The occupant of the house said that Vallandigham declared his belief that he would be elected as the next Governor of his State, notwithstanding his enforced absence; a prediction that did not come true, as he was beaten by more than one hundred thousand majority. There were in the neighborhood a large number of long, lank, lean hogs running about the woods, and, being out of pork, the boys made sad havoc among them. One sentinel said that fifty dead hogs passed the post where he was standing in a single day. Blackberries were quite plenty in the neighborhood, so that the living of the men was quite good. It may have seemed like sacrilege, but the church was turned into a grand cooking house, and the incense of frying pork filled the atmosphere.

On Friday the right of the army kept substantially the same position, the Regiment still doing picket duty, and listening to the reports of cannon and small arms a few miles southward.

Saturday, June 27, there was a forward movement toward Shelbyville, but the NINETY-SIXTH, together with the 5th Iowa cavalry, was left to guard a wagon train. A very heavy column of troops passed the position occupied by the Regiment, requiring between three and four hours to file by. It was said that there were seventeen regiments of cavalry, seven of infantry and two batteries of artillery. After they had filed past, the Regiment moved back a mile to a point where the wagon train was in park. Companies B, G and K were on picket that night. At about ten o'clock in the evening a courier brought word that Gen. Wheeler, with a large force of Rebel cavalry, was hovering in the near vicinity and contemplating a night attack upon the supply train. The Regiment was called out and remained in line for about two hours and a half. There was a little firing on the skirmish line, but nothing serious occurred. It was afterward learned that the position of the Regiment was critical at that time, as the enemy were about to attempt the capture of the train when



they were called off to assume defensive operations at another point.

Saturday, June 28, the train remained in the same position, and the Regiment was held in readiness to march at any moment, but it was not until three o'clock in the afternoon that any movement occurred. At that hour the other Regiments of the Brigade came marching back from Shelbyville, distant some eight miles, having in charge 489 prisoners, taken at that place the day before by the Union cavalry. They represented a half dozen different regiments. The charge upon the Confederate force had been led by the 2d Tennessee cavalry, many of whom had their homes in the neighborhood. Much of the fighting took place right in the village. Shelbyville was quite a strong Union centre, and the citizens, who still loved the old flag, and who had suffered through the long months the persecutions of their enemies and the enemies of their country, came out to greet the Federal troopers as they dashed through the town, often bringing flags with them that they had kept securely through the months when the Rebel forces were among them. The charge was a most gallant one, and sabres were freely used. Perhaps at no other time during the war did the Regiment see so many men who had been cut with sabres in a cavalry charge as on this occasion. Besides the prisoners taken, a large number of the enemy were killed in the charge or drowned in attempting to swim Duck River, the number thus losing their lives approximating two hundred. Quite an amount of artillery was also captured.

The Rebel prisoners were halted near the wagon train, and rations issued to them, Capt. Espy, of the 115th Illinois, who was then the acting Commissary on the Staff of the Brigade Commander, even prepared hot coffee for them, and gave them an abundance of hard bread and bacon. There were among the prisoners a Colonel, a Lieutenant Colonel, a Major, an Adjutant and about thirty-five line officers. At four o'clock P. M. the NINETY-SIXTH took the prisoners in charge, and escorted them back to Murfreesboro. The prisoners seemed quite happy and jolly, and were apparently familiar with the



ground over which they were passing. At one place a lady came out and shook hands with some of them, one of the prisoners remarking: "I have stood guard here many a time, and while I would go into the house and eat, on the invitation of the lady, she would come out and stand guard for me until my meal was finished." At another place a matron with two or three blooming daughters came out to the road side and threw kisses to the prisoners, expressing the hope that they wouldn't be gone long. The old lady expressed the wish that all the negroes might be killed, and that all the white boys, north and south, might be saved. The trip was a very tedious one. The prisoners were all cavalrymen, unused to marching, and many of them became very foot-sore. There were several ambulances in the rear of the column, and those who gave out were permitted to ride. The members of the NINETY-SIXTH marched, with guns loaded and bayonets fixed, along the edge of the pike, the prisoners traveling in the centre. The distance traveled was not more than ten miles, but Murfreesboro was not reached until after ten o'clock, and both the guards and their prisoners were thoroughly tired. The prisoners were turned over to Gen. Van Cleve, and at a little before midnight the Regiment bivouacked in an open field or yard, hoping to have a quiet night's sleep. Hardly had they got comfortably settled and fairly asleep before the rain came pouring down in torrents. There was a scramble on the part of the majority, and under the lead of Major Smith, who had been reconnoitring the locality, those who were first roused made their way to a large warehouse. This building consisted principally of a roof, and was piled full of boxes of hard bread. The men crawled to the top of the vast pile of boxes and slept close under the roof. Many of the Regiment were so worn out, however, with their long nights on picket and the hard marching in the rain and mud that they were not awakened by the storm, although it was raining hard, until the water was standing all about them, and they were thoroughly soaked. A few even slept through until morning, but before daylight nearly all were in the warehouse.



Sunday, June 29, the Regiment moved to the baggage train and drew rations, and at ten o'clock set out from Murfreesboro for the front again, first strapping on their knapsacks, parted with four days before. About a mile out a Company of Federals were met, having in charge thirty or forty prisoners, and about five miles out another Company with about an equal number. Following this latter squad were three pieces of captured artillery and a lot of captured horses. Arrived at the camp from which the Regiment had started the day before, it was hoped and expected that a halt would be made and the troops given an opportunity of securing some much needed rest, but it was found that orders were awaiting the arrival of the NINETY-SIXTH for the Brigade to immediately march on, which it did, finally camping at eight o'clock in the evening eighteen miles south of Murfreesboro and about nine miles from Shelbyville. This was about the first night since leaving Triune that it did not rain, and the Regiment enjoyed a good night's sleep. It should be stated, however, that there had been heavy showers during the preceding afternoon. The members of the Regiment appreciated this season of quiet, for all were greatly fatigued with their long march, and worn out by the severe night duty imposed on them.

Monday, June 30, the Brigade started at seven o'clock in the morning and marched about seven miles. On the road Gay's Gap was passed. There was a strong line of fortifications, and the trees and fences bore marks of the sharp fighting on the part of the cavalry. Shelbyville was reached, and a camp made on the ground which but two or three days before had been occupied by a large force of the enemy.

On Tuesday, July 1, word having been passed through the line that the Brigade was to remain at Shelbyville, the men set about fixing up the camp in good, comfortable shape. After an hour or two of hard work the assembly was sounded and they were called in line, marched to the other side of the town and camped near Duck River. The distance traveled was not more than a mile or two, but the weather was of that peculiar, sultry character, occasionally encountered in





warm latitudes, which is thoroughly enervating and depressing, and the men suffered greatly before they had completed the march and the erection of their tents.

Wednesday, July 2, the Regiment was permitted to lie idle and enjoyed a good rest. They explored the town and examined the fortifications, finding numerous forts and a very heavy line of breastworks extending partially around the pleasant village, either flank being protected by the river. Many refugees came into town, most of them being men who were known to sympathize with the Union, and who had been forced to leave their homes during the period when that region was occupied by the Confederates. Many and hearty were the greetings as families came together for the first time in long months. Quite a number of the Tennessee cavalry had enlisted from Shelbyville, and when they charged the Rebels on the Friday previous, one of them shot a man as he was riding past his own house. Some of the men left the ranks for a moment and rode up to their homes, kissed their wives or parents, or children, as the case might be, and then rode off again into the battle. Fortunately the casualties were not very numerous, and most of these men were permitted to remain at their homes for a day or two.

Major J. C. Smith was here assigned to duty as Provost Marshal, on the staff of General Baird, with headquarters at Wartrace, which were subsequently transferred to Shelbyville, and then to Murfreesboro, where he remained until the forward movement of the Division, in September.

Thursday, July 3, the Regiment marched to Wartrace, a distance of about eight miles. Rain fell in torrents at times, and every little creek and stream was swollen to unwonted size. As a consequence the soldiers were often compelled to wade in water two or three feet deep, and once at least they forded a stream waist deep, being obliged to take off their accoutrements and carry them on their bayonets. When it rained the hardest the troops seemed the happiest, shouting and singing and making merry, even though the surroundings were hardly such as to make it easy to account for such hilarity. However, all were in high spirits at the news of the



capture of Tullahoma, and rejoiced at the substantial progress made by the army. Strange as it may seem, most of them regarded the rain as rather favorable to campaigning, as it served to cool the air, which otherwise would have been intolerably hot. At times, on this short march from Shelbyville, the sun came out and the weather was oppressive in its salubrity. Wartrace was a little station on the Nashville & Chattanooga Railroad, and not an important point except that there were two or three railroad bridges to be guarded in the neighborhood. Camp was reached early in the afternoon, and all set at work to make themselves comfortable. The ground selected was a little to the east of the village, and had formerly been occupied as a camping ground by the enemy. It was filthy in the extreme, and much labor was required to put it in order.

This campaign of less than a fortnight had been a remarkably successful one. The enemy had been forced to abandon its strong line of fortifications and retire to the mountains, yielding a country of vast size, much of which abounded in supplies useful to the troops that occupied it. The strategy of Gen. Rosecrans had been of a high order. With a loss of less than six hundred men, and in a country naturally rich in defense, he had outflanked and forced backward from their chosen lines an enemy almost, if not quite, equal to his own, and would have gained still further advantages had not the streams been so swollen as to make rapid pursuit impossible. Tullahoma was occupied by the Union forces June 30. Some of the troops were at once pushed out toward the mountains, and the cavalry penetrated to the Tennessee River, behind which Bragg's main army retreated. The two armies at this time occupied almost the same relative positions and the identical territory held by them exactly a year before, when the Confederate invasion of Kentucky was planned and the race for the Ohio River began between the forces led respectively by Gens. Buell and Bragg. During the month that followed the main body of the infantry of the Army of the Cumberland was comparatively idle, camping in the neighborhood of Decherd and Winchester. The cavalry was active,



However, and kept the line of the Tennessee River patrolled. Work was also begun on the railroad, so that the supplies should not have to be brought through on wagons.

The NINETY-SIXTH now came to know that being in the Reserve Corps meant that they were to be stationed at various points along the railroad guarding bridges, wagon trains and prisoners. The Reserve Corps was widely scattered from the neighborhood of Fort Donelson to Duck River,—a Brigade, a Regiment or a Company in a place, according as its importance demanded. For the time being the First Brigade of the First Division, to which the NINETY-SIXTH belonged, remained at Wartrace.

Saturday, July 4—a memorable day at Vicksburg and Gettysburg—the Regiment lay idly in camp. Tired with their long march in the mud and rain, most of them slept a considerable part of the day, and there was no attempt at anything like a celebration except that Capt. Hicks and Col. Atkins, with a few invited guests, had a banquet, with after-dinner speeches. There were very heavy guard details from the Regiment, a line of pickets extending around the camp, and quite a distance out, in all directions. Blackberries were abundant, and the men feasted on this luscious fruit.

Sunday, July 5, there was preaching in the camp. The blackberry crop inside the picket line being about exhausted, permits were given to a few men in every Company to go outside the lines in search of fruit. New potatoes and apples were found in the neighborhood and supplemented the army rations. The men had learned the art of soldiering pretty well, and as soon as they arrived in camp, if there was a prospect of remaining longer than for a single day, would set about constructing bunks, raising them above ground by means of posts or crotchets. For the construction of these bunks, barns, abandoned houses or board fences were used, and if the supply gave out small poles would be substituted. On these would be laid a few bundles of corn blades, or some cedar boughs, straw or leaves. Sometimes the officers interfered, in the endeavor to prevent the destruction of buildings, but in such cases the first dark night the building was pretty



sure to disappear. In this way the men made themselves comfortable, and the beds were dry and well ventilated.

Monday, July 6, there were heavy details from the Regiment for the purpose of chopping wood. Now, chopping wood at any time is not especially easy work, but take it in Middle Tennessee, on a hot July day, and the average American soldier rather rebels against this class of labor, and regards it as almost drudgery. It was explained, however, that it was absolutely necessary to procure fuel for the locomotives to be used on the railroads. At this announcement there was an entire change of sentiment, and the work was cheerfully performed. The amount of wood cut by any one man was not large, but in a few days there was a goodly pile at every station. For the first time in months the men were allowed to remain in bed until sunrise, a privilege that they appreciated after the long period of three and four o'clock réveillés.

At this time the 92d Illinois was sent to a point on Duck River, about seven miles toward the front, to build a wagon bridge. Col. Wilder's Brigade of mounted infantry, then camped at Wartrace, furnished an escort, the Colonel himself accompanying the expedition. Col. Atkins, of the 92d, had been commander of the Brigade for about six months, and it was well understood that there was anything but a cordial feeling existing between him and Gen. Granger, the commander of the Reserve Corps. On the return of that Regiment, toward the close of the week, announcement was made that the 92d and NINETY-SIXTH, which had been together almost constantly from their organization, must part company, the former having been assigned to Col. Wilder's Brigade. Word passed through the camp immediately, and within an hour every Regiment in the Brigade was clamoring for horses and a transfer. Not that the dissatisfaction regarding Gen. Granger was so universal, but the men of a sudden seemed to be seized with the idea that it would be a fine thing to march on horseback and go to the front, rather than to tramp around on foot, chop wood for the railroad, and be on picket about every second or third night.





GEORGE W. PEPOON.

FIRST LIFUTENANT, COMPANY K.



The "nine months' fever" had, of course, been dropped, but for some weeks there was an almost equal rage in the camp, the new disease being the "cavalry fever." Only the 92d received the coveted transfer, however, and it was with great difficulty that they succeeded in procuring horses and saddles.

Tuesday, July 7, there was great excitement throughout the day, dispatches having been received from the Secretary of War, Hon. Edwin M. Stanton, announcing that Vicksburg had surrendered to the army under Gen. Grant, and that the Union forces under Gen. Meade had won a great victory at Gettysburg. The successful advance of the Army of the Cumberland had made them all hopeful, and now that such good news was received from other departments there was the wildest joy. These dispatches were read to each Regiment, and the remainder of the day was spent in a grand informal celebration.

Wednesday, July 8, the officers concluded that, as the men were feeling so elated over the recent victories, they would not object to resuming the routine of camp duties, which had been in a measure omitted since leaving Triune. Accordingly there was a dress parade in the early evening, and orders for a resumption of drill next day. The bridges between Murfreesboro and Tullahoma having been repaired or rebuilt, a locomotive, with a baggage car or caboose attached, passed southward through Wartrace, and was the signal for hearty cheering. Next day it returned with about three hundred prisoners, captured by Gen. Rosecrans' command a few days before. Additional dispatches were received confirming the good news of Tuesday. It was stated in the dispatches that Gen. Meade had captured 35,000 prisoners; that Gen. Lee's army was hemmed in along the Potomac, his pontoons being swept away by the high water, and that his capture was inevitable. Word was also received that Gen. Prentiss had captured a large number of prisoners at Helena. These dispatches were read to the Regiments, and were the signal for the most vociferous cheering, but unfortunately their statements were not fully verified by the facts.



Friday, July 10, the first passenger train from the North passed through the camp, bringing a large letter mail and the Nashville daily papers. As there had been great irregularity about the mails for nearly a month, all were eager for papers, and the newsboys were able to sell, at almost any price they chose to ask, all that they could carry. Fifteen cents was the price usually obtained.

The diary for the following month would be rather monotonous than otherwise. The weather continued warm, with frequent rains, and guard duty was very heavy. On the fifteenth there was a visit from the Brigade Inspector, and the same day a large amount of clothing was issued to the Regiment. From the arrival at Wartrace there had been a great amount of sickness in the camp, the cases puzzling the surgeons of the Regiment, as they were unable to define the cause. At times almost one-half of the command was unfit for duty, nearly all suffering from dysentery. It happened about this time that a physician, who was a resident of the neighborhood, but who had long been a refugee because of his Union sentiments, returned from his wanderings. Coming to the camp he reported to the officers that the spring from which they were obtaining water was regarded by the inhabitants as a poisoned spring, and he stated that not less than 400 Rebels had died from the effects of using it. Whether the report was strictly true or not, it was deemed best to move the camp about one-fourth of a mile to a field near which was another spring. The first camp was behind a range of hills where the sun did not reach until nine o'clock or later, and was consequently somewhat damp. Certain it is that the health of the men very materially improved as soon as its location was changed.

Word reached the Regiment about this time that Corporal Worthy S. Taylor, of Company D, had been killed in action near Camp Denison, Ohio, July 17. He had been sick in hospital for some time, but having partially recovered was called out, with other convalescents, to repel the Rebel raiders then sweeping through Southern Ohio under the lead of the notorious Gen. John H. Morgan, and met his death at the



hands of the enemy, far away from the comrades with whom he had enlisted.

July 21, the Regiment received two months' pay, Maj. Williams being the Paymaster. This closed all accounts to the first of the month, and made money very plenty in camp, although large amounts were sent home. The same day Colonel Champion took command of the Brigade, Col. Atkins having gone to the front with Col. Wilder. In a few days Gen. Walter C. Whittaker relieved Colonel Champion, the latter returning to the command of the Regiment. About the same time Gen. James B. Steedman succeeded to the command of the Division, relieving Gen. Baird, who went home on sick leave, subsequently returning and taking a command at the front.

On the twenty-seventh there was a grand review of the Brigade by Gen. Whittaker, who expressed himself as delighted with his new command, and was especially profuse in praise of the NINETY-SIXTH.

On the twenty-sixth Jacob Harwick, of Company F, died in hospital at Nashville. On the twenty-eighth Hadden Huntington, of Company C, died in the regimental hospital. Huntington was a mere lad, but seventeen years of age, but of quiet yet happy demeanor, and had greatly endeared himself to his comrades. At the earnest request of his brother, Sergeant Huntington, his remains were enclosed in a metallic casket and taken home to Lake County for interment. On the thirtieth William D. Sells, of Company D, died in the same hospital. He left a family at home to enter the service. A pretty spot near the camp was chosen for his grave.

Captain Black, who formerly commanded Company E, but who had resigned some months before, visited the Regiment. During all this long stay at Wartrace there was more or less excitement regarding threatened raids on the part of the enemy, and heavy guard details were kept at each of the railroad bridges along the line. Occasionally a scouting or foraging party would go out, and once or twice they encountered Rebels, but no serious collisions occurred.

August 3, Gen. Rosecrans and staff spent part of the day at





Wartrace, inspecting the troops and looking over the ground, and in the afternoon having a grand review. As the General rode along the line he made many remarks that were quite amusing. Referring to Lieutenant Colonel Clarke, who was quite portly, he remarked: "There is a Colonel who doesn't live on salt pork altogether." Pointing to a very short Corporal in Company E, he said: "That Corporal ought to be fed on soup a while to see if he wouldn't grow." To others he made similar remarks, keeping the line in excellent humor. He declared that he could tell, by the looks of the men, what kind of cooks they had. On the whole his visit created a very favorable impression. A conspicuous figure on his staff was Brig. Gen. James A. Garfield, then his Chief of Staff, and afterward President of the United States. Gen. Garfield's reception by the 46th Ohio, of the First Brigade, which had been in his command in Eastern Kentucky in 1862, was especially cordial. For a time there had been but little drilling, but now strict orders were issued to resume battalion drill. The weather was hot, and the drilling was consequently done early in the morning, being kept up for a week or more.

Thursday, August 6, occurred a special Thanksgiving day, under a proclamation from President Lincoln, the recent victories of the Union army being deemed such as to call for especial thanksgiving on the part of the people, both citizens and soldiers. The day was observed by abstinence from drill, and also by formal religious services, which were participated in by large delegations from each of the Regiments encamped at Wartrace.



## CHAPTER IX.

The Chattanooga Campaign—The Difficulties and Delays Attending its Inauguration—Conditions Named but not Complied with—Gen. Bragg Outwitted and Outflanked—The "Gateway of the South" Opened with Unexpected Ease—The Part Taken by the Reserve Corps in the Campaign—The March to Dstill Springs—Scouting Experiences—An Anniversary Celebrated by a Portion of the Command—Forward—Climbing the Cumberland Mountains—A Brief Halt at Bridgeport—A Forced March over Lookout Mountain to Rossville—The Conflict at Haud—Preparing for the Sacrifice.

THE student of military science will find few more interesting chapters in all the world's history than those which give the particulars of the brilliant movement by which Gen. Bragg was forced to abandon the line of the Tennessee River. Behind this line he had retired at the close of the brief but spirited campaign which ended in the abandonment of Tullahoma by the Confederates and its occupancy by Gen. Rosecrans' command. That movement was begun in August, and in less than one month the stars and stripes were waving over Chattanooga. Prior to its inception there was a spirited and almost bitter correspondence between Gen. Halleck and the commander of the Army of the Cumberland. Gen. Rosecrans insisted that he must have a larger cavalry force; that he must wait for the ripening of the corn, unless larger provision should be made for a supply of forage than there had been up to that time; that he must wait for the completion of the railroad to the Tennessee River, and that a movement must be made by other forces on his right and left flanks, in order that a diversion might be created in his favor, and even though troops might not be drawn from his front, at least that the enemy in East Tennessee and Northern Mississippi might be kept diverted and occupied so that they could not go to the support and assistance of Gen. Bragg. A portion only of these demands were complied with. Before the close of July the



railroad was rebuilt and trains were running to Bridgeport, Alabama. Meanwhile the corn was approaching maturity, and some gains were made in accumulating provisions at Nashville, Murfreesboro and points nearer the front. On the fifth of August imperative orders were given from Washington for the army to advance. Gen. Rosecrans, claiming that he was the better judge as to when a movement should be made, delayed the advance for some days. Despairing of the asked for diversion on the part of other commands he sent a portion of his cavalry to Huntsville, on the right, with instructions to move along the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, protecting it so far as possible, and guarding the line of the Tennessee River from Whitesburg to Bridgeport. After a time Gen. Burnside moved into East Tennessee, but succeeded in holding only a small force of the enemy in that region.

These preliminaries attended to, an active and brilliant campaign was inaugurated. August 16, the Army of the Cumberland was on the move, the main body—which had been in camp in the vicinity of Winchester and Decherd—climbed the Cumberland Mountains, and was soon feeling for the enemy, whose main force was at Chattanooga. With numerous ranges of mountains and the mighty Tennessee to protect his rear and flanks, Gen. Bragg deemed himself secure, and fancied it impossible that Gen. Rosecrans should ever drive him from his seemingly impregnable position. Indeed, he had promised the Confederate authorities that, if given certain reinforcements, he would soon take the offensive and drive the Federal forces from Tennessee. At this time began the brilliant strategy which was to disconcert the over-confident Confederate leader and compel him to quit his stronghold without a battle. Moving a considerable force of cavalry and infantry into the Sequatchie valley, Gen. Rosecrans made a bold push, as if intending to force a crossing of the river in the near vicinity of Chattanooga and attempt to take the city by direct assault. So bold and aggressive were the troops, and so skillfully were they maneuvered, that Gen. Bragg seems to have believed that the entire Federal army was concentrated in that immediate vicinity. Meanwhile the greater part of it



had moved, by various routes, to Stevenson and Bridgeport, where the long pontoon trains were gathering behind the hills, and on the fourth of September had laid bridges and was crossing, undisturbed, and making its way toward the railroads in rear of Chattanooga. The demonstrations against the doomed city were continued, and it was at least a day or two after the main army was south of the river before Gen. Bragg became fully aware that it was not Chattanooga, but the communications leading to it, that were in danger. The Federal army was now moving in three columns from the neighborhood of Stevenson and Bridgeport; one, under Gen. Crittenden, going directly toward Chattanooga, as if intending to cross the point of Lookout Mountain; a second, under Gen. Thomas, moving over the mountain to the right and penetrating nearly to La Fayette; while the third, under Gen. McCook, bearing still further to the right, marched to Valley Head, a portion of the force even reaching Alpine. The cavalry pushed still farther, raiding the country to the Coosa and Oostenaula Rivers. Early on the morning of the eighth the enemy evacuated Chattanooga and retreated southward. Gen. Rosecrans seems to have been convinced that Gen. Bragg would continue his march southward, and make a stand only when another strong defensive line was reached. He therefore directed that a vigorous pursuit be made with the view of striking Bragg in flank, and, if possible, battering his army to pieces outside of any fortifications. But this was not to be accomplished. The advancing columns soon found their way opposed by a defiant enemy, and Gen. Rosecrans learned, almost too late, that the army of Gen. Bragg had been largely reinforced and was turning at bay, not only prepared to defend itself but also to assume the offensive.

While these movements were being planned and carried forward, the NINETY-SIXTH had been bearing a less conspicuous, but no less essential part. It was at first confined in the work of guarding the long and slender line of communications, over which must come the provisions of the large army operating at the front. Even before the campaign was inaugurated the Regiment was ordered forward from War-





trace. The movements of the main army having been thus briefly outlined, it is now in order to take up the narrative of the doings of the command of which this work is a history.

Wednesday, August 12, without previous warning, the Regiment was ordered to strike tents and be ready to march. Soon afterward the 113th Ohio and the 98th Ohio, which had been stationed at Shelbyville, marched into camp, and at three o'clock the same afternoon the NINETY-SIXTH started southward, marching five miles and going into bivouac.

Thursday, August 13, reveille sounded very early, and at daylight the Regiment was on the move. The road lay through a deep ravine, or creek bottom, and the unbridged stream was crossed a dozen times or more before Tullahoma was reached. A halt was made at this place about 10 o'clock a. m., a distance of nine miles having been traveled. At two o'clock in the afternoon the march was resumed, the column traveling through a more level country, making about eight or nine miles, and camping on the bank of Elk River, near Estill Springs, in the early evening. The 40th Ohio was left on duty at Tullahoma. From August 13 until September 7, the Regiment remained at Estill Springs. Life there was too monotonous to call for a daily diary. The First Division of the Reserve Corps was now strung along the railroad from Murfreesboro to Elk River, the NINETY-SIXTH being the nearest to the front. At this point the 1st Michigan Engineer Regiment was at work getting out timber for railroad bridges. A negro regiment was being organized on the south bank of the river, recruits coming from the neighboring plantations.

August 16 the 115th Illinois was sent back to some station in the rear, and a few days later the 84th Indiana followed. About one third of the Regiment were on picket duty all the time. The weather being hot and the flies very abundant, there was but little opportunity for sleep in the daytime, so that the men were kept pretty well tired out. Heavy details for various duties were called for every few days. Once a large number of men were sent to Tullahoma to guard a wagon train, and later a still larger force was sent to Stevenson for a like purpose. The men composing these details had severe



duties to perform, the marches being long and disagreeable. Almost daily a considerable number of prisoners were seen to pass toward the rear on the cars, giving assurance that matters were going well at the front. Toward the close of the month the weather, which up to this time had been very sultry, became quite cool,—the nights almost cold. Camp was moved a short distance on the twenty-third, the new grounds being admirably located near the bank of the river.

August 26, pursuant to orders received before leaving Wartrace, a number of non-commissioned officers went to Stevenson, Alabama, by train, for the purpose of being examined with reference to their fitness to receive commissions in negro regiments, then forming in that Department, and a few weeks afterward four or five commissions came to the Regiment for those who had passed the most satisfactory examinations.

August 28 a scouting party of between thirty and forty men went out some twenty miles, under command of Captain Taylor, of Company E. They were all mounted, their horses having been picked up in the vicinity of camp. At about one o'clock A. M., while passing through some timber, they surprised and captured two prisoners and three horses. One of the prisoners proved to be a noted bushwhacker named Weaver, and the other a man less famous but not less infamous. Further on three additional prisoners were taken, but all of them claimed to be, and probably were, deserters from the Confederate army, trying to get to their homes in the rear of the Federal lines. All were sent to Nashville under guard.

Two days later another scouting party was sent out to investigate rumors that a Rebel regiment was being organized in an adjoining county. Their investigation did not confirm the truth of the rumors. The officer in charge was considerably chagrined, a few days later, to learn that a noted rebel had escaped his clutches by the very means subsequently adopted by his notorious leader.—Jeff Davis. While the scouting party were at a house, where were a number of women, an elderly person, dressed in female attire, including a huge sunbonnet, and carrying a young child, said that she



must go home. The Lieutenant was as polite as he was brave, and called a soldier to hold the horse and assist the supposed woman to mount, while he held the baby, passing up his charge when she was safely in the saddle. A day or two later it was learned that it was not a woman, but a man, whom Lieutenant Richardson had so gallantly assisted, and his explanation that the night was dark and the light in the house extremely dim, did not save him from considerable chaffing on the part of his brother officers. Two or three times it was reported that Forrest was in the near vicinity with a large force of cavalry, and that the bridge at Estill Springs was to be burned by him if he could possibly gain access to it. As a consequence the pickets were kept constantly anxious and vigilant, and there was no sleeping on the outposts.

Saturday, September 5, was the first anniversary of the muster-in of the Regiment. Company A celebrated the event by a grand dinner, provided by their officers, and had an exceedingly jolly time. Other Companies observed the day with less formality, but the cash receipts of the sutler were considerably larger than on ordinary days.

Sunday, September 6, there were again rumors of a move, and all the men unable to march were sent back to Tullahoma by train. There were a large number from each Company, for the hot weather and the almost constant guard duty, supplemented by green peaches, unripe vegetables and bad cooking had put many men on the sick list, and there had been several deaths in the command. Charles Jennings, of Company K, died August 29; John Vaughn, of Company G, August 22; James Bottom, of Company B, August 23; Isaac Addule, of Company H, August 31; and John Baker, of Company G, September 6. All of these deaths occurred at Estill Springs, in camp or at the regimental hospital, and the effect upon the survivors was by no means favorable. In addition to these Corporal James O'Connell, of Company B, died at Nashville, August 24, and a little later Wm. Trudgian, of Company F, died at Tullahoma.

Monday, September 7--the day before the Union advance



occupied Chattanooga—orders were received for the Regiment to proceed to the front. For the first time in some weeks drill had been resumed, but while the companies were out the order came, the assembly sounded, and by half past eleven o'clock the Regiment had broken camp and was filing out toward the south. Not far in advance were the low ranges of the Cumberland Mountains, and the men knew that their road was to be a hard one, for it lay directly over these ranges. The distance traveled that day was about ten miles; Dechard was passed on the way and the camp being made about dark, at Cowan Station. The weather was exceedingly warm. Several other Regiments joined the column on the march, coming up from the rear.

Tuesday, September 8, réveille sounded at half past two o'clock. By four o'clock the column was on the road, and immediately commenced the ascent of the mountain, crossing over the tunnel and past Tantalou, camping near Anderson. The distance traveled was said to be fifteen miles, but the men declared that this must have been measured by the railroad, and that the wagon road was not much, if any, less than twenty miles. The climb was a very severe one, and all were greatly fatigued with the long, hard day's journey.

Wednesday, September 9, réveille was heard sounding at half past two o'clock, and again at four o'clock the column filed out upon the wagon road and pushed rapidly southward. Anderson was passed early in the morning, and the camp was made soon after noon, at a point about a mile distant from Stevenson. The weather was hot and the road terribly dusty--so dusty in fact that it was almost impossible to recognize the men or the officers. Through the narrow, wooded roads the column filed mile after mile, the stifling dust, created by the numerous trains that for a fortnight had been pushing back and forth over the wagon roads, rising in such clouds that at times it was impossible to see more than a few rods. The men were fairly choked, and as they toiled on, their sweaty faces became as black as the negroes at the occasional houses by the roadside. On portions of the route water was very scarce. At one time, after a very long interval, a magnificent





spring gushed out from the mountain side, and the thirsty men gathered about it as eagerly as ever cattle rushed to a watering place, hundreds crowding around and almost pushing their associates into the water in their haste to procure the precious fluid.

To many of the command this was a first experience in the mountains, and the ever changing panorama as the column passed along the tortuous roadway was most pleasing. The year had grown prematurely old, and the forests were taking on their autumnal hues. As the clouds of dust were wafted to one side so that the outlines of the wooded mountains could be seen, there were few so weary that they did not share in the enjoyment afforded by the magnificent view.

Thursday, September 10, the Brigade marched from Stevenson, starting at six o'clock in the morning and camping near Bridgeport about one o'clock in the afternoon. All were thoroughly tired out with their four days' march through the dust and over the mountains, and many of them extremely foot sore. In the distance, less than half a mile from camp, could be seen the waters of the Tennessee River. Hardly had guns been stacked and knapsacks unslung when the entire command, embracing almost every man in every Regiment in the column, started for the river. All seemed to forget their blistered feet in their eagerness to wash off the dust and dirt accumulated on the march. It was a spectacle to be remembered, when that two or three thousand men, hurriedly stripping off their clothing, sprang into the waters of the Tennessee. It must be left to the imagination to picture the scene, for words cannot describe it. A half hour later, refreshed and revived by their plunge in the water, they made their way back to camp, near the ruins of the bridge, and prepared their dinner, after which they rested for the day.

Friday, September 11, was spent quietly in camp. Some strong earthworks were observed in the neighborhood, and the point was deemed an important one by the military authorities. There was an island in the river on which the piers of the large railroad bridge were still standing, although the bridge itself had been burned when the Rebels retreated south-



ward a few days before. The command was again moving to the front, and an occasional artillery salute could be heard, indicating that active operations were going on not far from Chattanooga.

Saturday, September 12, the Regiment marched at seven o'clock in the morning, moving directly across the river, and going into camp upon the southern bank. The men were directed to fix up the camp nicely and given some assurance that they would remain at that point for a time. Accordingly the grounds were carefully policed, and large quantities of straight pine poles, with which the region abounded, were cut for the construction of bunks. After some hours had been spent in hard work of this character, they were notified to send back all their extra baggage, as they would be required to go directly to the front. The camp and garrison equipage, including tents, knapsacks, blankets and mess-chests, were packed up and sent to Stevenson, Captain Pollock, of Company C, being detailed to accompany and take charge of them. Quite a number of men, who were unfit for the long march, were sent back with him. A few came up from the rear to take their places, keeping the number of the Regiment up to nearly 500 men.

Sunday morning, September 13, between six and seven o'clock, the column filed out in the direction of Chattanooga. The Regiment was near the rear of the column, and as there were several hundred wagons ahead of them loaded with twelve days' rations and a large amount of ammunition for the command, progress was very slow. Shellmound was passed early in the day, the column halting for a time near the entrance to the famous Nick-a-Jack Cave, from whose rocky depths a mammoth spring poured out its cooling waters. Some extensive saltpetre works, from which the Rebels had obtained large quantities of material for gunpowder, were near by and attracted much attention. A large squad of prisoners, on their way to Bridgeport under guard, were met during the afternoon.

All day the scenery along the line of march increased in grandeur, and as night approached was truly magnificent.



Sand and Lookout Mountains were bold peaks, and loomed up as if near at hand. Whiteside was reached just at dark and the tired troops went into bivouac, having marched about fifteen miles. But their rest was not to be a long one, for at eleven o'clock the sleepers were aroused and ordered to resume the march. That night trip, over the rugged mountain road, was one to be remembered. Great boulders lay in the roadway, and frequent ledges of rock cropped out to make the path uneven. Through the long hours the column toiled wearily onward, up and down, over the hills and through the narrow valleys, hindered by the artillery and wagon trains in front, and yet not allowed to tarry more than a few moments at any point for rest. Men fell asleep as they marched along, and, stumbling over the rocks and ledges, partially fell, while ever and anon a musket would drop from the unconscious hands and go rattling down the stony ravines. Some sank down from exhaustion and declared they could not go another step. Others, chafed and blistered, fell to the rear of the column, but still kept on. Shoes wore through, and many were the feet whose every step left on the rocks a trace of blood. Through the uncertain light the outline of Lookout could be dimly traced against the sky. The lines were shortened as the hours wore away, for many could not bear the strain of continuous marching over the rugged roads and fell to the rear. At last the gray of morning came, but still the silent, sullen column, like a huge serpent, wound its way along. Then came daylight, and as sleepiness disappeared with the darkness, the men grew more cheerful and ventured to talk again. At sunrise the wearied column halted, and the soldiers set about preparing coffee and toasting meat over the quickly kindled bivouac fires. They were rather jolly than otherwise, for their spirits rose as they partook of the exhilarating coffee and the satisfying hard-tack. The pluckier stragglers came up in goodly numbers and resumed their places, but the lines were by no means full when the bugle sounded the order to move on.

The halt had been made at the base of Lookout, and the long climb over the nose of the mountain was at once begun.



Stiffened and sore, the troops made slow progress, and the forenoon was well advanced when the highest point of the wagon road was reached. The scene which there opened out was one of beauty. Chattanooga was in the distance. The broad Tennessee seemed like a silver ribbon winding in and out among the timbered hills which lined its banks. Missionary Ridge lay at the front, and seemed hardly more than a rifle-shot away. Beyond this were the fields and forests where the main bodies of the two armies were soon to be engaged in the first mighty struggle which was to make that region famous, and in which so many of the tired feet then toiling across the mountain should halt forever at the bugle call of death. To the left, and near at hand, were alternately deep, ragged chasms and huge ledges, and just beyond, where a glance would say a boy might throw a stone, was Moccasin Point, where a remnant of the Regiment were to shortly watch for showers of iron from the mountain sides. To the right, across acres where the crops had been naught but rocks, and these ungathered through all the centuries of the past, loomed up the palisades, crowned by the crest of that soon to be historic mountain. None knew it then, but over these rocks, and up against those palisades, the Regiment, in a brief two months, was to make its way, in the flame and smoke of battle.

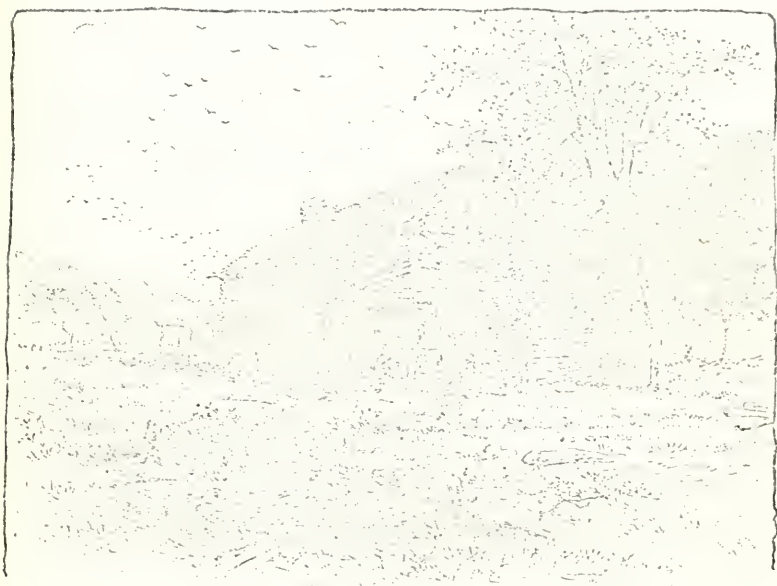
The halt on Lookout's side was not a long one, for soon the bugles sounded again and the column wound down into Lookout Valley, and across the intervening plain to Missionary Ridge. It had been supposed that the march would be directed toward Chattanooga, but instead the line passed on to the southeast, leaving the city to the left, and camping a little before noon at Rossville Gap, four miles away. All through the afternoon and until the evening was well advanced, the tired stragglers came limping in. The trip had been an exceedingly tedious one, not alone because of the natural difficulties of the route, but also because of the annoying delays occasioned by the heavy wagon train accompanying the command, and in whose rear the Regiment, with other portions of the command, had been obliged to travel.





There were now at Rossville three batteries of artillery and fourteen regiments of infantry. Most of these were troops that had never been under fire, except at long range. As for the NINETY-SIXTH, it had been gathering strength through all the months for the mighty conflict of arms that was now so near. It had listened to distant artillery in Kentucky; it had seen a nearer view of war at the second Fort Donelson; it had been in the outer margin of the fray at Franklin; it had been closer to the front at Trimme, where for many hours it lay under an annoying artillery fire, and where the bullets pattered along its line; it had heard the roar of shot and shell at Guy's Gap and Shelbyville; it had taken part in frequent scouting expeditions and picket forays where there was enough of danger to try the nerves of its members, but it had never been in heavy battle. During the year excellent discipline had been maintained, and the men had been getting ready. Now it was to know—and that right speedily—of what material it was composed, and whether it should do honor to the hopes of those who had sent it forth to battle. Chickamauga was less than a week distant.





#### ROSS HOUSE.

Headquarters of the Brigade, at Rossville, Ga., first prepared and on the morning following the Battle of Chickamauga.



## CHAPTER X.

Chickamauga—Preparations for the Impending Battle—Collecting the Scattered Forces—The Enemy not in Retreat—Bragg's Lost Opportunity—The Lines Forming Along Chickamauga Creek—A Reconnoissance from Rossville—Under Fire with Unloaded Guns—Cold Nights in Line of Battle—Saturday's Battle—The Fighting Renewed on Sunday—The Reserves to the Rescue—The March to the Right—Three Desperate Charges—Repulsing the Enemy—Desperate Fighting and Terrible Losses—Both Armies Baffled—Again at Rossville—The Long Casualty List—Companies C and H Captured—Arrival at Moccasin Point—Official Reports—The New York *Tribune* Letter.

CHICKAMAUGA! Though long years have passed since that name was hurled into history from the smoking throats of a hundred cannon and a hundred thousand muskets, yet the hand trembles and the pen falters as the word is written. It is a theme too vast to be fully discussed in a work like this. It was a battle of tremendous proportions and fraught with mighty import. It extended over miles of territory, through fields and woods embracing thousands of acres. It occupied two full days, beside the preliminary skirmishes attending it. The nature of the ground occupied by the opposing armies was such that often but little could be seen by the General officers,—and much less by line officers or enlisted men,—except of their immediate surroundings. Divisions, brigades, even regiments, at times became detached and had engagements that seemed wholly their own, for the heavy timber on many parts of the battle-field so covered and concealed them that movements could neither be seen nor anticipated; and they fought, independently and alone, giving and taking terrific blows, often without support, and until exhausted and out of ammunition. Commanders have discussed and grown angry over it, disagreeing widely as to their locations and the work accomplished by their commands. They all agree, however, that it was a desperate battle, and the soldiers



of the Army of the Cumberland, whenever they meet to talk over their experiences,—as old soldiers will,—almost invariably end up with Chickamauga.

The movements of the main armies, in the campaign by which Gen. Rosecrans wrested Chattanooga from the enemy, have been briefly outlined in the preceding chapter,—the events there alluded to occupying until about September 10. Before taking up the narrative of the NINETY-SIXTH, in connection with the battle, it will be proper to describe, briefly, the movements of the three main columns of the Federal army, and also of Gen. Bragg's forces, during the week that intervened between the date named and the opening of the mighty struggle.

Drawing his forces back twenty-five or thirty miles, to the neighborhood of La Fayette, Gen. Bragg repeated the appeals for reinforcements,—made to the Confederate authorities when he first discovered Gen. Rosecrans' strategy,—promising, if certain troops were sent to him, to retake Chattanooga, and drive the Federals northward into or across the Tennessee River. The troops were sent,—two divisions from Mississippi, Gen. Buckner's command from East Tennessee, Gen. Longstreet's Corps from Virginia, and several thousand of the Georgia Militia; and thus was concentrated, before the opening of the battle, a force much superior in point of numbers to that commanded by Gen. Rosecrans.

Hardly had the Federal commander formulated his plans for pursuit when evidences began to multiply that the enemy, instead of being in retreat toward Rome, as had been supposed, was concentrating between La Fayette and Lee & Gordon's Mills. This fact was not definitely ascertained until dispositions for pursuit had been made and the advance had been well begun. Crittenden's Corps, after crossing Lookout Mountain into Chattanooga, had moved on Ringgold, driving the enemy from that place and pushing southward, the cavalry going beyond Tunnel Hill, and a portion of the infantry nearly to that point. Those farthest to the left soon became aware that they were actually in the rear of the right wing of the main body of the Confederates, and in great danger. As





soon as practicable they were withdrawn, returning to the neighborhood of Ringgold, and then,—two Brigades having been previously sent to cover the roads leading into Chattanooga from the southward,—moving more directly toward La Fayette. In this latter movement they encountered unexpected opposition, and were obliged to move by the right flank, finally joining the two Brigades mentioned near Lee & Gordon's Mills. From this point reconnoitring parties were sent in various directions, the one going toward La Fayette encountering two corps of the enemy, under Gen. Polk, moving to the attack of Crittenden's position. This reconnoitring party made a vigorous and noisy resistance, which so disconcerted the enemy that they abandoned their advance movement and assumed the defensive, supposing that they had been mistaken in believing Gen. Rosecrans' army still divided. Within a day or two,—a portion of the Reserve Corps having reached Rossville and being within supporting distance,—a part of Gen. Crittenden's force was sent to the right to cover the road leading to Chattanooga through the valley to the east of Lookout.

While the movements just described were in progress, Gen. Thomas, in command of the centre column, attempted to pass through Dug Gap, but, finding it occupied by a large force of the enemy, withdrew his lines, and by a dextrous movement avoided a general engagement and reached a position more suitable for defense. He had a lively skirmish at McLemore's Cove, however, but was not so involved but that he was able to fall back without a battle. Owing to the distance to be traveled and the rugged and tortuous roads in the rear of the Union forces, much difficulty was experienced in communicating with Gen. McCook, who, from his position at Alpine, had also found that the enemy was preparing for battle. On the thirteenth, pursuant to orders received the night before, Gen. McCook began the movement to his left which was to concentrate the Union forces. The march was a most toilsome one, the column being encumbered with considerable artillery and heavy wagon trains, which were moved with difficulty, owing to the mountainous roads.



The enemy controlled the direct roads, and the troops and trains had to cross and recross the mountain before effecting a junction with Gen. Thomas. The march was made almost continuous, fires being kindled at night to light up the road at the more difficult points and allow the teams to continue on their course. On the seventeenth the three Corps were within supporting distance of each other. For nearly a week the situation had been critical in the extreme. Gen. Bragg had it in his power during all of that time to strike any one of the three Corps with his entire army without fear that either of the others would reach the column attacked until a battle could be fought. It is matter of history that he more than once gave positive orders to his subordinates to make the attack; but some unexpected move of the Federal forces, or some division of counsels on the part of his corps or division commanders, cost the Confederates their opportunity, and delayed a battle that was to be desperate enough, even after the Union forces were united.

Having failed to take advantage of the opportunities offered during this long period in which the Federal forces had been separated, General Bragg changed his plans, and decided that the battle must be nearer Chattanooga. General Rosecrans' army was mainly to the right and rear of Lee & Gordon's Mills, and not yet well in hand. The Confederate leader now began moving his forces by the right flank, in order to make easy connection with such of his reinforcements as had not yet arrived and must make the march from the railroad, intending to strike the left flank of General Rosecrans' command, and interpose his own army between them and Chattanooga. But here again divided counsels, a slight delay in the arrival of Longstreet's Corps, and the positive timidity on the part of his immediate subordinates conspired to cost Bragg another golden opportunity; for the attack, positively ordered on Thursday evening to be made the following morning, was deferred until Saturday, the nineteenth. The dust, which had so stilled the Union troops in their long marches, now came to their assistance, for it rose in great clouds off to the east, betraying the movements of the Confederates, and thus en-



abling the Army of the Cumberland to meet this unexpected change of plan. The Union forces were moved to the left as rapidly as possible, but as the enemy was pressing in the vicinity of Crawfish Springs, the utmost caution had to be observed, and the movements were made at some disadvantage. Then, too, the distance was considerable, and the route lay through tangles of forest and along narrow and difficult roads, so that the close of Friday found the Union lines but partially formed, while many of the troops were still some miles from the position chosen for defense, and must march long hours in the darkness before they could be assigned to positions and given opportunity to catch a little sleep before the battle of the morrow. Indeed, large portions of the army were in motion throughout the entire night, while others were thrown into bivouacs because of the impracticability of moving them over the fields in the darkness, and resumed the march at daylight of Saturday morning; those farthest to the right not closing up on the main army until the afternoon was well advanced, and then, after a double-quick of some miles, going immediately into action. The lines of the main army, as formed during Friday and the early part of Saturday, were on the west bank of Chickamauga Creek, and extended from Lee & Gordon's Mills to Reed's Bridge, a distance of about five miles. A portion of McCook's Corps was still farther to the right, occupying a position near Crawfish Springs, so that the extreme right and left wings were almost twelve miles apart. The several bridges and fords along the stream were guarded by cavalry, with infantry in support. Three or four miles in rear of the line was Missionary Ridge, an irregular range of hills, parallel with the general line of battle, and so steep and high that it would almost pass for a range of mountains in a country less rough than Northern Georgia. Through this Ridge were but two roads over which wagons or artillery could pass. One led through Rossville Gap on the left of the main army; the other through McFarland's Gap, nearly in rear of the left centre.

Having described how the main armies were ranged on



either bank of Chickamauga Creek, it will be in order to again take up the narrative of the NINETEEN-SIXTH.

The previous chapter left the Regiment at Rossville, four miles distant from Chattanooga, and nearly eight miles from Lee & Gordon's Mills. There were with Gen. Gordon Grainger, at Rossville, the First Brigade of the First Division of the Reserve Corps,—to which Brigade the NINETEEN-SIXTH belonged,—under the command of Gen. Walter C. Whitaker; the Second Brigade of the same Division, under the command of Col. J. G. Mitchell, and which had marched from the neighborhood of Wartrace and Shelbyville; the Second Brigade of the Second Division of the same Corps, commanded by Col. Daniel McCook, which had marched from the neighborhood of Columbia; the 89th Ohio, of the Fourteenth Corps, which had marched from Tracy City; and the 22d Michigan, of the Second Division of the Reserve Corps, which, having been on provost duty at Nashville, had been brought to Bridgeport by rail and marched from there with the rest of the command. Few who were on that march will fail to remember the appearance of this last named Regiment. Their ranks were full, their clothing new and tidy, and many of them wore white shirts and paper collars. There was some good-natured chaffing on the part of the troops that had been in more active field duty, but these men showed themselves admirable soldiers, and those who survived the battle were ever afterward held as worthy to be called brothers by their veteran comrades. Although the Corps Commander was present, it is understood that all of the orders sent to the command were addressed to Gen. J. B. Steedman, who was the commander of the First Division, and to whom the Brigade of Col. McCook and the two detached Regiments had been assigned. This was all of the troops that could be spared from the rear to assist the main army at the front. It was a paltry number, a beggarly reinforcement compared with the scores of regiments that had been sent at the call of the Rebel Commander, but enough, thank God, to save the day. They did not know their peril—perhaps it was better that they did not.





From the fourteenth to the seventeenth these troops lay idly in their camps, resting from the long march. Rossville Gap was well picketed, and a lighter line of guards was put out along the valley and toward Chattanooga. Gen. Gordon Granger, the commander of the Corps, exercised his authority by causing a number of foragers, who had been outside the picket lines, to be arrested by his guards and tied up by the thumbs near his headquarters. Instantly there was "music" in the camp. Captain Hicks and other officers from the NINETY-SIXTH walked deliberately to the line and demanded the release of their men. A crowd of soldiers gathered near by, and officers from other regiments imitated the example set by Captain Hicks and his associates. Gen. Granger was profane, and made terrible threats, but the murmur that ran through the crowd indicated that he could not misuse intelligent volunteers in an active campaign, and he slunk away into his tent, damning everybody. Shortly afterward, upon the demand of Gen. Steedman, the Commander of the Division, all were released and quiet restored. It was better so, for the feeling among the soldiers was so intense that nightfall would have seen a raid upon headquarters and the release of the foragers, even though it might have inaugurated a tragedy.

Thursday, September 17, the Second Brigade and the 22d Michigan and 89th Ohio, all under Gen. Steedman, leaving Rossville at three o'clock A. M., went out on the Ringgold road some twelve or fourteen miles, driving a light force for the last half mile or so. From the high ground overlooking the village of Ringgold they could plainly see large forces of the enemy, on the march and in bivouac. The temptation to give them a surprise was too strong to be resisted, and a section of the battery was taken to the ridge and begun a vigorous shelling of the camps. This was soon responded to; but the purpose of the expedition was to reconnoitre and not to fight, and as the clouds of dust indicated that the enemy was moving to the right and left of their little force, as though intending to surround and capture it, they withdrew, the rear guard skirmishing as they fell back. At nightfall they formed their lines on either side of the road, not far from Greysville,



and went into bivouac. At eleven o'clock the enemy opened upon them with a gun which had been placed in position near their picket lines. Ordering the men to maintain silence and extinguish their fires, Gen. Steedman awaited an attack, but the enemy soon ceased firing and withdrew.

Next morning they resumed the march, retiring leisurely to Rossville, and going into their former camp at a little past noon. Gen. Steedman at once communicated with Gen. Rosecrans, giving the latter the startling information that Longstreet's Corps had arrived to reinforce the Rebel army, as learned from prisoners taken on the reconnoissance. He also gave assurance that the Rebels were concentrating near the left of the main Union force. These facts, coupled with others gleaned from citizens and scouts, determined Gen. Rosecrans to move his army still farther to the left. He also ordered Gen. Steedman to move a portion of his troops to the front. At four o'clock that (Friday) afternoon Gen. Whittaker's and Col. McCook's Brigades were called in line, the understanding being that they were to go out on a reconnoissance similar to that made by other portions of the Division the day before. There was little to do by way of preparation, as the baggage had been parted with at Bridgeport some days before, and the column soon filed out through the Gap. A few of the sick, those who had been worn out by the march, and some who had worn out their shoes in crossing the mountains, and were consequently barefoot, were left in camp. A detail from the NINETY-SIXTH, consisting of about thirty men, had been sent to guard a wagon train that morning, and were not relieved, but remained on duty for three days, joining the Regiment only after the succeeding battle had been fought. Company A was on picket duty on the side of Missionary Ridge, and did not go out with the command.

The NINETY-SIXTH was given the head of the column, Gen. Whittaker and Staff riding just in front. Contrary to custom no advance guard was thrown forward. Strict orders had been issued that all guns should be kept unloaded in camp, and, as no instructions had been given to load, every musket was empty. The column filed out through Rossville Gap,



taking the right hand, or La Fayette, road for a mile or more, and halted. There was a brief consultation at the front, and then the Regiment was countermarched and crossed over to the Ringgold Road, by which Gen. Steedman had returned from his expedition four hours earlier. Col. McCook's Brigade kept on by the direct road, however, going nearly to Reed's Bridge.

The First Brigade marched forward at a good, swinging gait, not apprehending any danger, and chatting merrily as they passed along. Two or three miles out a soldier ran to the door of a house near the road, and conversed for a few moments with a woman, whom he found greatly agitated. She repeated, over and over: "There's going to be a battle;" "there's going to be a battle," and stated that a "critter-back company" followed the Yankees as they retired to Ross-ville, and turned back near her house. The soldier reported what he had heard, and word was sent to Gen. Whittaker, but no attention was paid to the matter, and the somewhat rapid march continued.

It is understood that the original intention was that Whittaker's Brigade should march out five miles to Red House Bridge, on the Ringgold Road, and McCook's Brigade to Reed's Bridge; but events transpired which prevented either destination being reached. Whittaker's Brigade had lost some time in the march and countermarch upon the La Fayette Road, and it was after five o'clock when they filed past McAfee's Church and entered the heavy timber which lined either side of the roadway. Here a little stream—best known as the Little Chickamauga, but down on the maps as Spring Creek—was encountered. It was, perhaps, twenty or thirty feet wide in the highway and unbridged, except that a fallen tree just at the right of the road, in some bushes, served the purpose of a foot bridge. Gen. Whittaker, followed by his Staff, rode into the stream and gave his horse the reins that the animal might drink; the men broke to the right in some disorder, looking for points where they might cross without wetting their feet. The right Company had just commenced crossing on the log, when, like lightning from a clear sky, the sharp



crack of a rifle rang out, and a bullet whizzed past the General's head, apparently barely missing its mark. A second bullet came an instant later, striking the rolled up blanket and poncho of a drummer boy—Thomas Reynolds—with such force as to penetrate it and throw him backward into the arms of a comrade, but fortunately giving him no greater injury than a severe bruise on the breast and shoulder. Instantly the men on the log dropped back to the shelter of the bushes, and those who had scattered to the right fell into line. A glance at the front revealed a little column of smoke in the bushes just at the left of the road, and it was evident that a Rebel sentinel, stationed to give warning of the approach of any forces, had been cooking his coffee, unaware of the nearness of his opponents until the splashing of the water attracted his attention. It was the work of but a moment for him to seize his carbine and fire the shots that had startled the command. Instantly Gen. Whittaker shouted out his commands to deploy a Company as skirmishers, and Colonel Champion called, "Attention!" and gave the command to load at will. Another shot or two was heard, but the bullets did no harm. There was a moment's delay, owing to the absence of Company A—which would most naturally have been sent to the skirmish line—and then Companies D and F were deployed, the latter going to the right. Upon the order of Captain Blodgett, commanding Company D, his men faced to the left and began to deploy. The first man to start to cross the road was Corporal Elisha Huggart, but the moment he emerged from the bushes he fell, his brain pierced by a bullet. Five minutes later Captain Blodgett had caught a bullet in his shoulder, but did not at once go back, although the wound was painful. The 40th Ohio moved to the left of the road, and in line with the NINETY-SIXTH, also throwing out two companies of skirmishers. The fire of the enemy was quickly replied to, the skirmishers moving gallantly forward for a half mile or more, the main body of the two regiments following closely in line of battle. The bullets cut wickedly through and over the line, and Robert C. Allison, of Company E, received a wound from which he died a few days later. The 18th Ohio Battery,





which was with the Brigade, took position in rear and began firing, bringing a speedy response from a Rebel battery posted in the timber just beyond an open field, to the edge of which the skirmishers had advanced. Pickets were thrown on the flanks, and as night was now closing in the lines halted, although the firing continued for a time. The men lay in line all through that chilly night, without removing their accoutrements, every one clutching his rifle and thinking of the morrow. Few had any but rubber blankets; no fires could be built; even the solace of a cup of hot coffee was denied them. How the teeth chattered as the long hours rolled slowly by! It seems almost incredible in that latitude, and at that time of year, but old letters and diaries assert that there was a heavy frost on that and the following night. Certain it is that the cold was sufficient to cause intense suffering, and forbid sleep to the unprotected soldiers. At intervals of an hour or two the men on the skirmish line were visited by the officers in charge, and one of the latter declares that he found some of them holding their bayonets in their mouths to prevent their teeth chattering together so loudly as to attract the attention of the enemy. Every sound from the front was listened to with the closest attention, but no movement was discovered, and it is probable that the Rebels were shivering with the cold much as were the Yankees in their front.

Col. McCook's Brigade, which had gone toward Reed's Bridge, had an experience similar to that of Gen. Whittaker's command, encountering the enemy and having a lively skirmish. Most writers assert that McCook reached and burned the bridge, but such was not the case. The cavalry had undertaken to destroy the bridge an hour or two before, but only succeeded in tearing up a few planks when they were driven off, and the enemy had crossed in large force before the infantry reached the vicinity. Next morning McCook withdrew, under orders from his superiors, and covered the roads leading toward Rossville, remaining within supporting distance of Whittaker on his left and Brannan on his right.

The morning of Saturday, September 19, was at hand, but ere its first glimmer had lightened up the east, word was



passed from man to man to move to the road. Silently, hardly a bayonet or a cup rattling to give the slightest sound, the crouching soldiers passed through the forest to the roadway, and marched back a mile or more, to a field near McAffee's Church. The march had stirred the blood and aroused the troops so that they were more like themselves. Fires were kindled, and hot coffee,—added to the relief afforded by the removal from the close proximity to the enemy,—made all quite jolly again. Breakfast over, the line shifted position once or twice, and was then moved slightly to the front, the Regiment being placed upon a ridge at the left of the road, a position which it occupied for the following twenty-four hours. During the day the Rebels advanced upon the new line, but at the right of the road, and while there was heavy skirmishing on the part of the other Regiments of the Brigade, and numerous casualties, the tide of battle did not cross the road. Two or three times the enemy sought to drive the forces from this position, but in vain. The Rebel artillery fired over the hill held by the Regiment occasionally, and overshot bullets hummed across the field. A heavy skirmish line was maintained on the front and flank all day and throughout the night. Early in the day Company A came up from Rossville, and took its place in line. The Second Brigade and the two detached Regiments also came up and took position near by. Gen. Granger and Gen. Steedman spent a great part of the day in the immediate vicinity. During the afternoon Captain Charles E. Rowan, of Company F, who was at the time serving on the staff of Gen. Whittaker, was sent with orders to one of the Regiments near the right of the Brigade. He had left them but a few moments before, but during his absence they had retired to a more favorable position, and the Rebels having advanced, he galloped directly into the enemy's lines, when, being confronted by half a hundred muskets, from all directions, he surrendered. This was the only loss to the NINETY-SIXTH on Saturday.

While the day had been by no means uneventful at the extreme left of the army, farther to the right a terrible conflict had been raging, the noise of which soon reached the



Reserve Corps and added to their anxiety, and the nightfall shutting in was most welcome to them, as well as to the tired troops of the main army. From those who had come up to the Regiment from Rossville only meagre particulars could be gathered, but it was reported that large numbers of wounded had passed that point all through the afternoon on their way toward Chattanooga, and that the valley was filled with wagon trains, sent back from the front.

The history of that eventful Saturday can be but briefly described. Gen. Rosecrans, in forming his line of battle on the west bank of Chickamauga Creek, had expected that the stream would serve an admirable purpose for defensive operations. With this expectation he had ordered that every bridge and ford should be securely guarded by cavalry, with infantry in support, and that the strongest possible resistance should be offered to the passage of the enemy. But it transpired, early on Saturday, that the stream was not a formidable barrier. Indeed, on Friday evening, while Col. McCook's\* Brigade of the Reserve Corps was marching to Reed's Bridge, the cavalry posted there had been driven back, and a large force of the enemy had crossed before dark. Col. McCook believed it to be but a single Brigade, and so reported; but when, at about ten o'clock Saturday morning, Gen. Brannan attempted to move his Division to the bridge and capture it, he found himself confronted by a force greatly outnumbering his own. Simultaneously with his advance the enemy were moving to the assault, and the two forces met and began a terrible struggle for the mastery. Speedily the roar of battle ran to the southward, as division after division of the Rebel army took up the charge. The order of Gen. Bragg had been for a series of charges, beginning on his extreme right, each Division to move as rapidly as it should appear that the Union lines withstood the contest at their right, until *some* weak point should be found and penetrated. Such a point was found, but farther to the southward and later in the day. As the

\* The reader should not confuse Col. Daufel McCook with Gen. A. McD. McCook. The former commanded a Brigade in the Reserve Corps, and the latter was the commander of the Twenty-first Army Corps.



terrible roar of musketry gave evidence that the contest was to be a full-fledged battle, and that the plan of the Rebel leader was to break back the Union left if possible, troops were hurried from the right centre and thrown into the maelstrom where Braman's Division, and subsequently Baird's and Johnson's Divisions, were striving, with desperate courage, to withstand the terrific efforts of the enemy. Some ground was lost, and a half dozen pieces of artillery had to be abandoned; but the left was by no means routed, and the losses of the brave battalions in gray that had opened the battle were such as to render them cautious in their subsequent advances. Gen. Rosecrans soon ordered that portion of Gen. McCook's Corps that had been left in the neighborhood of Crawfish Springs to move toward the left, closing up on the forces at Lee & Gordon's Mills. This movement was not begun until afternoon, and when the tide of battle had swung far toward the Union right. The assaulting columns found more than one weak place in the Union lines before the right had been reached, but the Brigades and Divisions in reserve had been able to move into the breaks in the lines, and but little ground was lost along the centre. Near the Mills the Union forces were driven backward, before the arrival of the troops from Crawfish Springs, and these latter, after a long double-quick, and under the order, "On the right, by files, into line!" went at once into action: in a few cases the right of a regiment being actively firing and moving to the front before the left had come into line. Some disorder resulted, but a gallant defense was made, and the right wing, although borne backward somewhat, met no serious disaster. Night closed with no great advantage gained by the Confederates and no serious loss, so far as position was concerned, to the Union forces.\* True, the losses had been heavy, and both the right and left were forced to yield ground, but the lines had been fairly maintained, and the situation at dark was not critical. Nearly

\* Gen. Hood, who commanded the right of the Rebel army on Saturday, in his work entitled "Advance and Retreat," says that a majority of the Confederate corps commanders, at their council that evening, were rather dispirited than otherwise at the result of Saturday's battle, and by no means a unit in favor of renewing the contest on Sunday.





every Regiment of the Fourteenth, Twentieth and Twenty-first Corps had been engaged, and most of them had sustained heavy losses, but all had maintained their organizations, and were ready for the conflict that all knew must be renewed on the morrow.

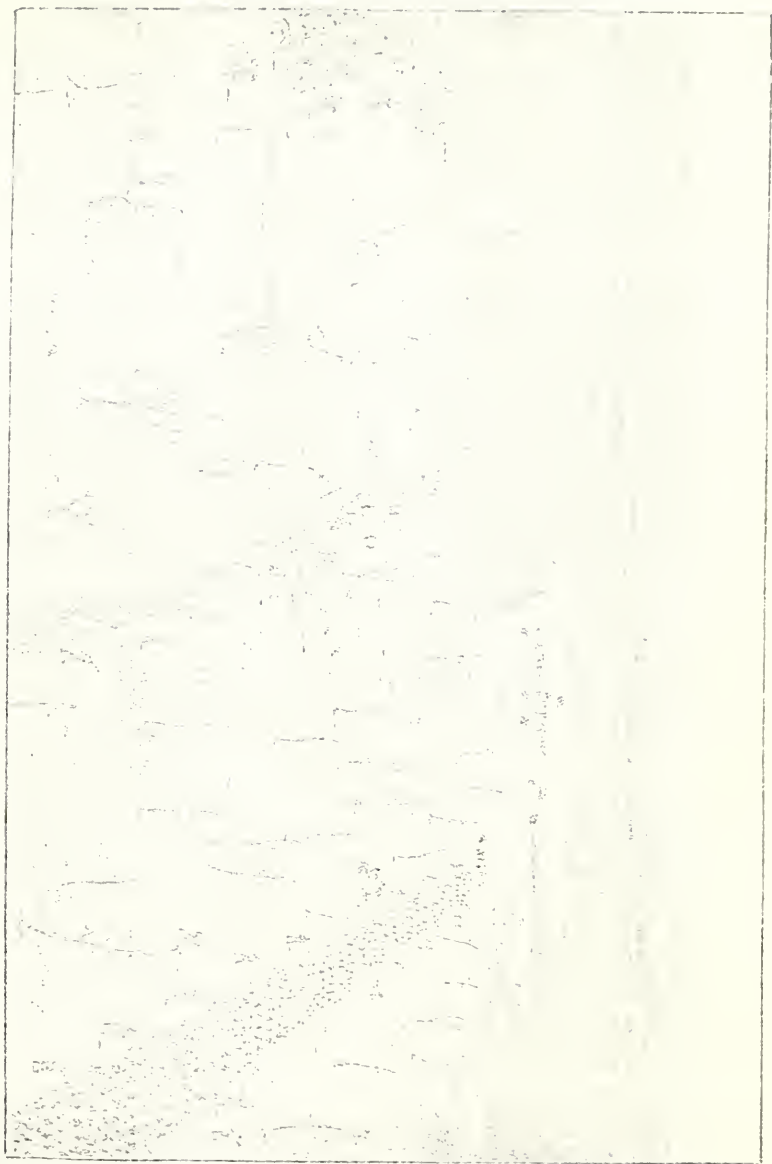
The soldiers of the NINETY-SIXTH, occupying the extreme left of the infantry forces of that great army, shared in the general anxiety as to the result of the contest, and—it is but the truth to say it—were almost disappointed that they had borne so inconspicuous a part in the battle. They did not know as well as did the troops at the right, that the conflict was only well begun. There was an expression, common enough in those days, but which, in the lapse of years, may have in a measure lost its significance, that to the old soldier who reads these pages will exactly describe their condition: They were “spoiling for a fight.” Half in hopes that they might be spared the dangers of the battle, and half in fear lest they might not share in its honors, they saw darkness settle down upon the fields and forests. Then they sought such comfort as might be secured. They were still blanketless, but they had been provided with hot coffee and were in much better condition for securing rest than on the previous night. Large details were upon the picket lines, and were compelled to remain in position, unrelieved, all through the chilly hours, for it was deemed imprudent to attempt to change guards in the face of an active and vigilant enemy. To these sentinels the night was one of much suffering. On the main line, however, the soldiers gathered up the leaves, or picked pine boughs from the young timber covering the ridge, and “made up their beds.” A dozen would lay down close together with the command “by the right flank spoon!” and three or four ponchos covered the squad. For a time everything was all right, but after a little the outside ones began to freeze out, and by midnight all were up. Small fires were kindled in a ravine in rear of the line, and there they sat through the lonely hours and tried to keep warm. Before daylight breakfast was eaten, and the men were ready for their work. A few had been made ill by the two nights’



exposure and were sent back to Rossville, while a few others came up, so that 419 men and officers were in line. Early in the day Gen. Steedman, accompanied by Major Smith of his Staff, and followed by a few orderlies, rode out upon the open ground near the skirmish line to look over the situation, and soon drew the fire of the enemy's pickets. The shots were at widely separated points, and experience and soldierly instinct told the commander that the force in front must be a light one, merely held there as a party of observation, or to detain the force in their front and keep up a show of battle. Riding leisurely back to the high ground near the main line, Gen. Steedman expressed this belief to Major Smith. Presently Gen. Granger and a portion of his Staff rode up. The usual morning salutations were passed, and other conversation followed. As the morning wore away, the sounds of battle at the southward were wafted to them, indicating a renewal of the conflict of the main armies. The roar deepened, and both musketry and artillery could be plainly heard. They listened for a time and then Gen. Granger said: "Steedman, they are pushing our forces; we are needed badly over there, and are not needed here. I can't order you to go; you are ordered here by the General commanding the army." Gen. Steedman replied: "I know we are needed over there, and if satisfied there is no considerable force in our front I'll take the responsibility and go." A little later clouds of dust off to the southeast indicated that the enemy had left the Ringgold road and were pushing down toward the main army, when Gen. Granger again spoke: "Do you see that cloud of dust? That shows where they are." "Yes," said Gen. Steedman, "they are going where the fight is thickest, and I'll go too." Gen. Granger interposed: "It's a fearful thing, General, to disregard orders and abandon a position in the face of an enemy." "I know it is," said Gen. Steedman, "but everything is changed since we were ordered here. I'll take the responsibility and go." Meanwhile staff officers and orderlies had been sent to the right to ask that the command be relieved from the irksome duty of guarding a wagon road on which there was no enemy. One of these orderlies



PLATE IV





was William M. Perry, of Company 1, and his experience was a thrilling one. With a comrade he galloped along, only to find, at a sudden turn, that the road was full of Rebel infantry. Putting spurs to their horses they galloped through the crowd, Perry escaping, although his horse was wounded, but his companion falling, doubtless killed. The survivor reached the main army, but the General to whom he reported would not ask him to return. It is probable that still others were captured or killed in the attempt to reach Gen. Rosecrans, as none came back to the left.

Meanwhile a reconnoissance in force had been ordered by Gen. Steedman, and the lines were advanced for a half mile or more, but without developing any considerable force of the enemy. It was a splendid sight as those battalions moved across the fields in line of battle on that beautiful Sabbath morning, their colors kissed by the breezes and their muskets gleaming in the bright September sun. The troops, having been in reserve, were under strict discipline, exceptionally well drilled, and their swords and muskets all as bright and clean as though they were moving out for an inspection instead of for a battle. Moving back to the lines, they still waited while the battle sounds came, wafted from the southward. Would the orders to move never come? Was the battle to be fought to its close, and the Reserve Corps to have in it no part save the insignificant one already played?

It was at this time that the final conversation between Gen. Granger and Gen. Steedman, alluded to above, occurred, and staff officers rode along the line with orders to move. Col. McCook's Brigade was ordered to remain on the line, while Gen. Whittaker's and Col. Mitchell's Brigades, at a little past eleven o'clock, filed out from the position at McAfee's Church, and, with the sound of battle for a guide, moved southward. The 22d Michigan and the 89th Ohio had been assigned to Gen. Whittaker's Brigade, so that the column comprised ten regiments of infantry and two batteries of artillery. Again the NINETY-SIXTH was given the lead, the three right Companies, alternately, taking the front and left flank in line as skirmishers. There were frequent corn fields





and occasional open meadows, but the greater part of the country was heavily timbered. The march was a rapid one. A wooded road was followed for a time, and then the fields were taken, until the La Fayette road was reached. This highway was followed for quite a distance, and until the enemy's cavalry was seen in front, when the fields were again resorted to, and the troops moved in a more compact mass, in order that they might the better resist a cavalry attack. The din of battle was growing louder. Carriage boxes, muskets, knapsacks and other abandoned articles were seen. An occasional straggler or wounded man was encountered, who told pitiful stories, and claimed to be about the only survivors of their respective commands. Deflecting to the right to avoid the cavalry now appearing in force, they found themselves still with the enemy between them and the Union line of battle. The commanding officer now sent a staff officer with orders to Col. McCook to move his Brigade from the Ringgold road to the La Fayette road, and cover and protect this line of retreat to Rossville. Then a hollow square was formed, and in this way, with Rebel cavalry hanging on front and flank, the two Brigades moved on. But valuable time was being consumed, and when the enemy sought the cover of the woods the formation was changed. Soon the hospital, near a spring, and which had been used by the left wing of the Union forces, was reached. It had fallen into Rebel hands two or three hours before, and a number of Rebel soldiers were guarding it. These were surprised and captured, and such as were under arms were sent to the right and rear, across Missionary Ridge, under charge of Sergeant Berg, of Company A, three or four guards accompanying him. Through the trees near the hospital the soldiers caught glimpses of a long row of Union dead, and thus had additional evidence of the bloody work going on near by. Passing to the right of this hospital they hurried along, and, making their way through a terrible snarl of tangled vines, emerged into an open field, across which they passed on the double-quick. A Rebel battery galloped into the field at the left and unlimbered its guns, not more than three or four hundred yards away. The soldiers saw the puffs



of smoke and heard the hiss of the shells, like the sound of a rocket as it leaves the pyrotechnic stand, a hundred times intensified. Section after section unlimbered and joined in the terrible work, until the air seemed full of iron and the ground was seamed and furrowed. It was a fitting introduction to the still more terrible scenes through which the command was soon to pass. Strange to say, only a few were hurt. A shell burst above Company D, and Lieutenant Theodore P. Clarkson fell, terribly wounded in the head, John Swindells had a hand shattered, Alza M. Stewart was badly wounded in the leg. Edmund S. Stevens was seriously bruised on the leg, and Corporal O. V. Young had a heel considerably cut. The two last mentioned remained with the command, but the others were taken to the right and rear. Some not mentioned were struck by flying fragments of the shell, but none seriously hurt.

The regiments following also sustained some loss. But through it all the troops kept straight forward, never furling their banners nor deflecting from their course. The commanders knew that here was not the place where they were most needed, and hurried forward. The air was full of smoke, the fences and fields burning in many places and adding to the more sulphurous smoke from the burning powder. Wounded men were frequently met, and dead bodies lay here and there, giving evidence that the ground over which the columns were passing had been the scene of a hot contest. After crossing this field, they bore still further to the west, and succeeded in passing the Rebel right without encountering serious opposition.

They had traveled almost continuously for two hours, fully one-half of the time at a double-quick. The distance, if measured in a direct line, would not have exceeded five miles,—possibly it was not more than four,—but they had resisted the several times repeated attempts of the enemy to engage them, although suffering themselves to be somewhat delayed. At last they had reached and passed Gen. Thomas' lines. Halting near the burning out-buildings, of the Suedgrass farm, where Gen. Thomas had his headquarters, they



rested for a moment. Near by were two or three other General officers with their Staffs, and the field seemed full of couriers, stragglers and wounded men.

The arrival was most timely. Until eleven o'clock the principal fighting had been on Thomas' left, not far from the ground over which the Reserves had passed, and the enemy had again and again assaulted the lines with the view of turning the Union left, and thus cutting off retreat from the gaps through Missionary Ridge. They had not fully accomplished their purpose, but had gained repeated slight advantages. Gen. Rosecrans had fully appreciated the situation of affairs, and, anticipating exactly the movement that Gen. Bragg would make, had shortened his lines somewhat, during Saturday night, retiring both his flanks and arranging to have supports thrown from his right to his left, as needed. The Corps had not been formed in regular order, and the continuous shifting of troops to the left during Saturday had seemingly disarranged the army; the order of formation Sunday morning being Baird's Division of Thomas' Corps on the left, then Johnson's Division of McCook's Corps, Palmer's Division of Crittenden's Corps, and Reynolds' and Brannan's Divisions of Thomas' Corps, in succession. Still farther to the right were Sheridan's and Davis' Divisions of McCook's Corps, and to their rear, in support, Wood's and Van Cleave's Divisions of Crittenden's Corps. Some of the cavalry and mounted infantry regiments were sandwiched between the Divisions near the right. Gen. Negley's Division was in reserve, with orders to move to the extreme left, at the time the battle opened. Light breastworks covered a portion of the lines, but none were as formidable as would have been constructed a year later.

Gen. Bragg, having reorganized his lines and received numerous reinforcements, ordered Gen. Polk, commanding his right wing, to attack heavily at daylight. Fortunately for the Union cause, delays occurred, the enemy making no general assault until after nine o'clock. But even at that hour Gen. Negley had not reached Baird's left, and when the charge was made the line of gray overlapped the Federals.



and Beatty's Brigade of Van Cleve's Division, which had been hastily thrown out to meet the movement, was swept backward in disorder. It was on the grounds passed over by the Reserves on their way to Thomas, that this opening engagement of the morning had occurred. The advantages gained by the Rebel forces at this point were not important, and they withdrew,—having been repulsed in Baird's front,—after sustaining heavy losses. A second assault resulted as did the first. Following these sanguinary struggles, and deceived by the quiet on his right into the belief that Gen. Bragg was massing his troops for a still further effort to turn the left, Gen. Rosecrans had ordered a large body of troops from his right centre to go to Thomas' support, the others to close up the gaps thus made. Just at this critical moment, the enemy, apparently despairing of turning the Union left, were moving forward, under cover of the hills and woods, to assault the Federal right. Coming in large force and catching the right wing in the midst of these movements, they had forced the greater part of Sheridan's and Davis' Divisions of McCook's Corps, Van Cleve's and a portion of Wood's Division of Crittenden's Corps, and the cavalry and some artillery and trains to the rear and right in much disorder, and with heavy losses in artillery and prisoners. Gen. Rosecrans and two of his Corps Commanders—McCook and Crittenden—had been caught in the confusion which ensued, and made their way across Missionary Ridge to the Crawfish Spring Road, going thence by way of Rossville to Chattanooga. There is a conflict of testimony as to the hour at which this disastrous break occurred, but it was probably not long after eleven o'clock, or almost at the moment that the Reserves left McAfee's Church. Nor is it entirely clear as to who was responsible for the irregular movement by which the gap was opened and the opportunity given for the Rebel columns to pierce the right centre. The rapid driving of a battery of artillery that had been forced to retreat from an advanced position, and which struck a division as it was marching to the left, breaking the column, throwing it into disorder and injuring many men, doubtless played an important part. At all events the army was





cut in twain, and Gen. Brannan's Division occupied the right of that portion of the line which still remained firm. Owing to intervening hills and woods, Gen. Thomas, who was now the only Corps commander on the field, was not aware of the extent of the disaster on his right. He did not know that his Commander had left the field and that the Rebels had gained, with but little fighting, on his right, what they had failed to accomplish, with heavy slaughter, on his left. Gen. Brannan soon became aware that he was flanked, and drew back his right to a position favorable for defense, and threw up a light barricade.

Gen. Longstreet, after his exultant troops had pierced the Union lines, pushed his advantage for a time, but dared not wholly pass the new Union right without reorganizing his forces. He therefore halted and formed his troops in a succession of strong lines of battle, meanwhile consulting with Gen. Bragg and caring for his prisoners and the numerous cannon that had fallen into his hands. He then determined to again strike the Union right a terrific blow and seek to shatter it by force of numbers. But the Rebel assaults were repulsed, and other tactics made necessary. A show of fighting was kept up along the ridges where the Federals were posted, while the main portion of Longstreet's force was pushed northward, confidently expecting to reach and pass the rear of Gen. Thomas, and surround and capture the well-nigh exhausted forces still remaining on the field. Almost two hours had passed since the disaster on the right. It had been improved by the Confederates, and they were now ready for the movement which was to encircle the broken battalions still fighting under the Old Flag. The situation was growing critical. The Federal forces occupied an irregular half circle, either flank being a little west of the Lafayette and Rossville road. There were portions of seven Divisions, but all had been heavily engaged and sustained severe losses. They were irregularly grouped, and the commanders were disconcerted by the movement of Rebels to their right and rear, from which direction, if at all, reinforcements rather than an enemy had been expected. To add to the anxiety the



cartridge boxes of Thomas' men were well-nigh empty, and the ammunition train had disappeared, some unauthorized person having ordered it to Rossville, as was afterward learned.

Gen. Longstreet was now moving his heavy lines of infantry to some ridges, from which he could compel the Federal forces to form a final "square" where they must exhaust themselves with defensive operations or cut their way out at a frightful cost of life. At one o'clock his methodical movements were well advanced. With his forces well in hand, he was preparing to swing in his Division, like a ponderous gate, and completely envelope Gen. Thomas' army. A half hour more and the movement would be complete.

It was just at this critical juncture that help arrived. Gen. Thomas had observed a cloud of dust off to the left, and was alternating 'twixt hope and fear, thinking, until a staff officer, sent for the purpose, brought him other word, that the chances were that it was Rebel and not Union reinforcements. It was just at this supreme moment in the battle, and while the enemy was preparing to take advantage of the favorable positions they had obtained with unexpected ease, that the Reserves arrived, hot, dusty and fatigued with the long march at double-quick. There was a hurried consultation between the Generals and their Staff Officers, a brief inquiry as to the number and condition of the reinforcements, and then the First Brigade was faced toward the right centre of the semi-circle with orders to move to the support of Gen. Wood and fill a gap in the lines. Before the proposed forward movement had begun the heavy masses of the enemy on the right became visible, and the commander knew—what he had but guessed before—that his right was gone, and that a great danger was confronting him from an unexpected direction. Instantly the order to move to Wood's support was countermanded. The battalions were faced and filed to the right, moved across an open field into the woods and halted. The NINETY-SIXTH still had the lead, and a company of skirmishers preceded it. On the way the Division Commander and his Staff, who realized something of the work before them, were discussing the situation, when Capt. Moe, then A. A. G.



to Gen. Steedman, said, in substance: "There are often disputes as to the time when important military events occur, and as this is likely to be an important event, gentlemen, just remember that it is now ten minutes past one o'clock."

After a short march the column was commanded to halt and come to a front. The NINETY-SIXTH thus formed the extreme right of the line. Directly at its left and separated from it by a brief interval was the 115th Illinois, and at their left the 22d Michigan. A second line was formed, the 40th Ohio being directly in rear of the NINETY-SIXTH, and the 84th Indiana and 89th Ohio at the left of the 40th. On a ridge at the front several Rebel skirmishers were seen, who fired a few shots and then ran back. But they had fired to some purpose, for there was a dull thud as a bullet struck a man in the Regiment just in rear of the NINETY-SIXTH, and a sickening sensation came over those who heard it. "There is a 'Reb' on the hill," said one of the skirmishers just in front. "Why don't you shoot him, then?" calmly replied Colonel Champion, and the man responded with a rifle shot. In a moment the skirmishers had been sent to the right, guns were hastily inspected, the men were counted, and the double line moved forward. There were fallen trees, which served to break up the lines somewhat, but the movement was, in the main, admirably executed. A series of little ravines were passed, and the soldiers broke into a double quick. Ascending a longer ridge, there came the pattering of shots, like the first drops of a shower; then the ragged, tearing report of an irregular skirmish volley; then the constant, deafening roar, as regiment after regiment took up the deadly work. The first line of Rebels gave way, and the lines of blue pressed on down the long slope, with a wild cheer, bounding over logs and stones, through the hollow and up to the crest of another ridge. The noise was deafening. The enemy was but from six to ten rods distant, but through the smoke and bushes they could hardly be seen, although the guns belched forth a terrible fire seemingly right in their faces. Halting there, from ten to twenty shots were fired by each of those not disabled. Scores of brave men had been shot, and were either lying silent



in death, or making their way to the rear in such manner as their wounds would permit. Every moment thinned the ranks. A half dozen cannon in front of the right centre of the Regiment poured a destructive fire diagonally across the line and into the left of the 40th Ohio and the right of the 8th Indiana. The hot breath from their terrible throats seemed like a blast from the infernal regions, and the dense smoke hung like a pall above. "Fire at the battery!" was the order, and presently most of the guns were silenced. But there were other batteries and a cloud of infantry coming, line after line, and all above those trodden across the air screamed with merciless bullets. Lieutenant Colonel Clarke sat calmly on his horse near the left of the Regiment, speaking words of cheer to the men as they met the terrible fire. A moment later a bullet struck him, inflicting a mortal wound. He was assisted from his horse and carried to the rear upon a blanket. Colonel Champion's horse was twice wounded, but its rider stood unscathed behind the centre of the line.

At times the number of wounded going to the rear was such as to create the impression that the line was giving way, but for a time there was no break. There came a lessening of the terrible roar. A regiment at the left was giving ground. The regiments comprising the second line, although they had halted some distance in the rear, were unable to endure the terrific storm, and fell back. Then came the indescribable "Rebel yell," as fresh battalions of the enemy came through the opening at the left. Men looked into each other's faces as if to read their thoughts. Officers blanched as they took in the situation. The left was gone. The troops in rear had gone. There was as yet no support or protection on the right. The incessant fire from the front was being supplemented by enfiling shots from left and right as the lapping lines passed both the flanks. Mingled with the roar of musketry rose the hated yell of the exultant enemy as they swarmed after the retreating battalions. To remain longer meant the absolute destruction of the entire Regiment; to give ground was the only alternative, as there were no indications of support, and the NINETY-SIXTH retired: slowly at first, some of the officers back-





ing down and the men loading and firing in retreat; but as the waves of Rebel gray swept after them, they ran back in some confusion, through the hollow, up the long slope, while shot and shell screamed and hissed and exploded all about them. But the Rebels had been so terribly punished that they did not follow far. The ridge passed, the Regiment again formed, most of the men rallying on the colors. But Oh, the lines were terribly shortened. Lieutenant Colonel Clarke, to whose fatherly care and strict discipline the Regiment owed so much of its effectiveness in that supreme hour of its history, was being borne to the rear. Captain Blodgett had been struck down and badly injured by a heavy treetop torn from its place by a Rebel shell, and was, to all intents and purposes, a prisoner, being held by the limbs while the Rebel lines passed over or around him and then retired, and only being released from his position when the Union lines advanced in a second charge, some of the men then helping to remove the tree and get him up. Lieutenant Blowney had a shot across his head, from which the blood was flowing freely over his face, but he was bravely rallying his command, and doing gallant service. Captain Taylor had been wounded, but remained with his command. Captain Pierce and Sergeant-Major Quinn were among those hit,—the latter being so severely injured as to cause his capture. Lieutenants Simms and Barnes were being assisted to the rear, each with a mortal wound. A hundred officers and men must have fallen in that first half hour. Other regiments had suffered scarcely less. Gen. Whittaker being slightly wounded, Colonel Champion took temporary command of the Brigade, and as Major Smith was on Gen. Steedman's staff, the command of the Regiment devolved upon Captain Hicks, of Company A,—as gallant and brave a man as ever wielded a sword. Most of the men responded promptly to the call to reform the lines. Stepping to the front, Captain Hicks spoke as follows: "Comrades, you have made one charge—a gallant charge. On yonder hillside lie the bodies of your fallen comrades. Forward to avenge their deaths!" The men responded with a cheer and again moved to the front, bearing somewhat to the right, to cover



the extended Rebel lines and support a section of artillery that had been moved to that part of the field. In the brief interval while the lines were forming some of the wounded had been carried to the rear, but those who fell at the extreme front could not be reached. In all of the succeeding movements of the afternoon the Union lines did not penetrate so far, and these men lay between the fire of the two armies much of the time, although occasionally the Rebels advanced a few rods past them.

As the lines moved forward there was again a swift charge and a wild cheer, and again the leaden messengers sped across the field. Both lines were charging, but this time it was the Confederates who first hesitated, halted and fell back, while Union shots momentarily lessened their number. But again there were other Rebel lines and other batteries, and the Brigade, whose line, working still to the right, had grown to be scarcely more than a skirmish line, was compelled to halt. Officers sheathed their swords and took up muskets. The color guard of nine were all gone but two or three. Sergeant Bruner, who carried the Stars and Stripes, was terribly wounded. Corporal Swanbrough, who had already had the staff of the Regimental flag shot off twice in his hands, caught the National colors as they fell, and gallantly bore both flags aloft. Later, he, too, was struck down by a falling limb, stunned for a moment, and recovered his senses barely in time to save the flags from capture, after the Regiment supposed them lost. But who can describe those terrific charges and counter charges, as the Rebels again and again sought to drive back the Reserves and gain possession of the roads leading through McFarland's Gap. The fighting, in each of the advances, was severe,—intensely so,—and yet there was not the noise or the impetuosity that attended the first grand onset. But if the men did not keep the perfect lines observed on grand reviews, they at all events took good aim and did remarkably effective work. There were those whose boldness and enthusiasm led them to the front, and others whose timidity kept them a little in the rear. But all the time that dreadful afternoon they hardly once sought cover, rarely even



going behind a tree, but stood out, manfully, as if courting death, while the dread storm of shot and shell raged over the timbered ridges, and the hills and valleys reverberated with the roar of battle.

So the battle raged, with occasional intervals, from before two o'clock until dusk, the men advancing and driving the Rebels, only to be in turn driven back over substantially the same ground. Sometimes there were two lines, but by some strange fate, the NINETY-SIXTH was always in the front one. Always there seemed a cloud of Rebels, far outnumbering the Union troops, and rarely, if ever, did the enemy charge with less than two lines and often with three or four. Once the NINETY-SIXTH advanced so far as to receive an *enfilading* fire from the other regiments of the Brigade, and Colonel Champion declared his belief that with five hundred fresh troops he could have driven the entire left wing of the Confederate army from the field. The ground seemed almost fairly covered with the bodies of the killed or desperately wounded of the enemy over acres across which the Regiment advanced. Gen. Hindman, commanding one of the Rebel Divisions with which the Reserves fought, in his report says of the engagement on that part of the field, that he had never before seen Confederates fight better or Federals fight so well. In some of the advance movements a few Rebels were captured, and from them it was learned that the troops were not Bragg's men, but Longstreet's veterans from the Potomac, who had rarely known defeat, and who boasted, as they came upon the battle field, that they had been sent to show Bragg's army how to fight.

The left of the line moved less than the right; in fact, the left of the Brigade seemed to be the pivot on which the Reserves swung, like a great pendulum, for four terrible hours. In the retreats there was a deliberateness and stubbornness seldom equalled. Colonel Champion was as cool and courageous as man could be, and his bravery, seconded by that of the line officers, acted like an inspiration.

Two Regiments of the Brigade—the 89th Ohio and 22d Michigan—being out of ammunition, met a charge of the



enemy with their bayonets, but were overpowered and surrounded, most of them being made prisoners. This was near the close of the fighting and after most of the troops at the left had moved to the rear. It was a terrible sacrifice, for they had made a gallant fight, but probably necessary in order to the protection of the retreating column.

At a little before night-fall the enemy, baffled and discouraged, drew back their lines a little, and the fighting ceased except that an irregular skirmish fire was continued for a time. And it was well that it was so, for the Union forces were well-nigh exhausted and almost out of ammunition, except as they took it from the cartridge boxes of the dead and wounded. At one time a few boxes were brought upon the field. Were gold thrown out in handfuls among a crowd of Chicago news-boys it could not be more eagerly seized than were the coveted cartridges on that afternoon. Gen. Thomas was not slow to take advantage of the lull in the terrific storm, and at sundown or a little before he ordered his men to move quietly but quickly back through McFarland's Gap and out toward Rossville. But the right of the line was the last to be withdrawn, and the NINETY-SIXTH Illinois and 121st Ohio still kept up a desultory musketry until the fire grew red and the short, southern twilight had almost deepened into night. Then they drew back, a little band of resolute men, the last organized body to leave the field. The four or five miles to Rossville was made in sullen silence. Between eight and nine o'clock the camp was reached, and the men threw themselves down on the "bunks" they had left less than three days before. Oh, how weary they were. For two nights they had hardly slept at all. Since before daylight of that morning they had eaten nothing except an occasional bite of hard-tack from their haversacks. For hours many had had no water. They were dusty, powder-gripped, so hoarse that they could hardly speak above a whisper; so tired that they could hardly rise after they had lain down. But darkness and distance had relieved them from the terrible strain induced by the deadly peril of the battle, and no wonder that one soldier, as he seized a cup of hot coffee and threw himself down beside





a camp-fire, exclaimed: "Boys, this is heaven." And he felt it, so great was the relief experienced.

As they gathered around the camp-fires--the unhurt and some of the wounded who had been able to get back--and discussed the incidents of the day in undertones, the groups were sad, for so many were gone. All of the dead and many of the severely wounded were lying unprotected and uncared for on the battle-field. Each Company had its list of heroes. Almost every man had narrowly escaped some imminent peril, and fully one-half of the survivors had bullets through their clothing or equipments. Colonel Champion, who had proved a very lion in the fight, was unharmed, although he rode his third horse, two having been shot under him.

The Brigade had lost forty-four per cent. of its entire number; the Regiment almost fifty per cent. But the Reserves had saved the right; and in saving the right had saved the army; and in saving the army had, perhaps, made final victory possible, and thus saved the Union of the States.

In withdrawing from the field there had been some breaking up of commands, and daylight of Monday, September 21, found the army in much disorder. Col. McCook's Brigade had been drawn back toward Rossville, and picketed the Gap through the night. Shortly after sunrise Sheridan's Division of McCook's Corps moved out on the Crawfish Spring road, along the west side of Missionary Ridge. Other commands soon formed and were sent into the Gap and upon the Ridge at its right and left. The troops of Steedman's Division were moved a little toward Chattanooga, shifting position here and there for a time, and then marching to the top of the Ridge at the left of the Gap, and near the extreme left of the main army. Throughout the day it was expected that the enemy would move forward and attack this position, but their losses had been so heavy that they were not anxious to renew the battle, and they contented themselves with a reconnoissance along the new line. During the skirmishing the only casualty in the NINETY-SIXTH was the wounding of C. W. Graham, of Company H, and one or two others. The troops did not fortify their position until toward evening, when a light barricade was con-



structed of rocks and logs. There was no despondency among the troops, but on the contrary a feeling of confidence and a belief that they could resist any direct attack the Rebels could make.

The position of the army, although admirable for defensive operations, providing that the enemy were to make a direct assault, was such that a force might pass its right and cut it off from Chattanooga. It was therefore determined to move back to the city soon after nightfall. Meanwhile engineers laid out a line of works, either flank of which rested on the Tennessee River, and to this line, commencing at nine p. m., Division after Division was withdrawn. At eleven o'clock Steedman's Division was in motion, the main body, after a slow and tedious night march, reaching Chattanooga, where the First Brigade, including the NINETY-SIXTH, was detached and sent across the river, and thence to Moccasin Point, confronting Lookout Mountain.

But in this movement a serious disaster befel the Regiment. Company H, under Lieutenant Yates, had been posted in front upon the skirmish line, during the day. In the early evening, it being reported that the line was too weak, Company C, under Lieutenant Earle, was sent to reinforce them. When the main line was drawn back into Chattanooga these Companies were not relieved or ordered back, and with several other Companies found themselves surrounded, and were captured about ten o'clock on Tuesday morning, after making a brief resistance, in which James Forsyth, of Company H, was killed, and two or three from other commands were wounded. Thus the Regiment lost two gallant officers and thirty-four brave men, more than one-half of whom were to perish in the foul prison-pens to which they were committed. For a more circumstantial account of the experiences of the men captured at this time, the reader is referred to the chapter on "Prisons and Prisoners of War," in another part of this work.

It was not until Moccasin Point was reached that an opportunity was given to attempt to fully measure the losses of the Regiment in the terrific experiences of Chickamauga, or to estimate the services it had performed. From all sources



came unstinted praise for the heroic action of the Reserve Corps on Sunday afternoon. It had fought more than three times its own numbers. Three times it had hurled itself against the solid lines of the enemy when attack seemed hopeless, and each time it had broken and driven back their front lines. Repeatedly it had withstood the assaults of the doubled and quadrupled lines of gray, fighting, at fearful odds, until the night had come and given Gen. Thomas opportunity to withdraw his forces. And in all this dreadful fighting the NINETY-SIXTH had been in the front line and at the right, where the work was most severe and the danger most intense. It had charged the most frequently, penetrated farthest to the front, held its advanced positions longest, and was always slowest in falling back. Its losses in killed and wounded had been the heaviest of any Regiment in the Reserve Corps, and, considering the number of hours it was engaged, the heaviest of any Regiment in the Army. Of 419 who went into the fight 200 were killed or wounded, while the total loss, including those captured on Missionary Ridge, was 234, or fifty-eight per cent. of all who took part in the battle,—a percentage rarely reached by any command in a single battle. The following is

#### THE CASUALTY LIST.

##### Field and Staff.

KILLED OR MORTALLY WOUNDED.—Lieutenant Colonel Isaac L. Clarke; Quarter-Master William S. Bean.

WOUNDED.—Sergeant Major Francis P. Quinn,\* shot through lungs.

\* Captured.

##### Company A.











KILLED OR MORTALLY WOUNDED.—First Sergeant John G. Schaefer, Corporal William Price, Color Corporal David Isbell, Christian Kaufman, John H. Witman.

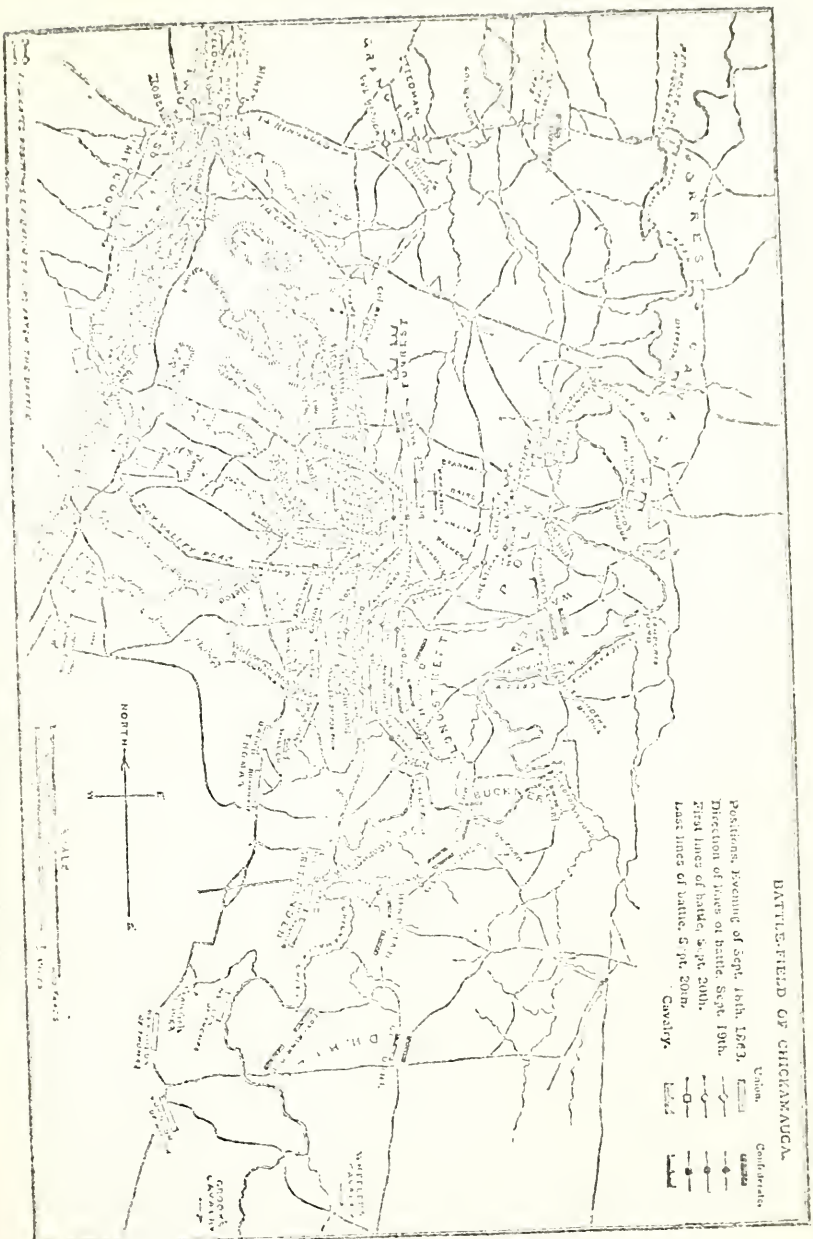
WOUNDED.—First Lieutenant William Vincent, leg; Sergeant Frank A. Weh, arm; Corporal Jason B. Isbell, shoulder; Gottlieb Beck, face; John W. Connor,\* side; John Einsweiler, thigh; Milton Glover, head; Edward Reubeno, finger shot off; Edward Simpson, head; Joseph D. Young, leg; Josephus Metcalf,\* head.

\* Captured.



BATTLE-FIELD OF CHICKAMAUGA.

Union. Confederate  
 Positions, Evening of Sept. 18th, 1863.    
 Direction of lines of battle, Sept. 19th.    
 First lines of battle, Sept. 20th.    
 Last lines of battle, Sept. 20th.    
 Cavalry.  



NORTH  
 SCALE  
 1 MILE





## Company B.

KILLED.—Emery Dart, Charles Fox, William Kinaball, Thomas Potter.

WOUNDED.—First Sergeant A. A. Baugs,\* head; Sergeant William D. Whitmore, shoulder; Color Corporal Hamilton Whitney,\* † side; Corporal Caleb Whitney, foot; Henry Annis, leg; John H. Cruver, † arm; John Cashman, † foot; W. W. Fowler, leg; Charles McCusker, shoulder.

\* Captured.

† Disabled for further field service.

## Company C.

KILLED OR MORTALLY WOUNDED.—Corporal John Y. Taylor, William Bonner, John H. Ehlers, John Fidler, Acting Color Corporal Squire Inman.\* †

WOUNDED.—Second Lieutenant Charles W. Earle, arm and wrist; Sergeant Edward Murray,\* † shoulder, hip and arm; Sergeant Charles A. Partridge, hip; Corporal George C. Dodge,\* † ankle; Corporal William B. Lewin, shoulder; Corporal Lewis H. Bryant, both legs; Corporal John McGill, right arm; Henry P. Barnum, face; John W. Bailey, arm; Henry Eater, shoulder; Henry H. Cutler, arm; Ira Cobb, shoulder; Leonard S. Doolittle,\* † right leg; William Diver, arm; William H. Ehlers, arm; Norris Hamilton, face; Orrin Howe,\* † leg; James McCredie, leg; Oscar Reeder, right shoulder and lung; Michael Umbdenstock, right arm.

CAPTURED SEPTEMBER 22, 1863.—Second Lieutenant Charles W. Earle; Sergeant Harrison Huntington; † Privates John Bensinger, † Henry H. Cutler, Henry C. Green, † James Kearney, William McClellan, † William McCredie, † Laughlin Madden, † Henry C. Payne, † Hugo Rodenberger, † Joseph Schweri, Joseph Savage, Charles Sturm, † Christian Weistoff.

\* Captured.

† Disabled for further field service.

‡ Died while a prisoner of war.

## Company D.

KILLED OR MORTALLY WOUNDED.—Sergeant William W. McKey; Sergeant Isaac Quigley; Corporal Elisha Haggart; Elias Hosley, James Rich.

WOUNDED.—Captain A. Z. Blodgett, shoulder and back; Second Lieutenant Theodore F. Clarkson, head; First Sergeant John H. Collier, thigh; Corporal Charles Ellis, leg; Corporal Orson V. Young, foot; Walter Crapo, arm; Edward Rix, head; Joseph A. Roth, left hand; H. G. Levagood, † arm; Edmund S. Stevens,\* † leg and body; John Swindells, † hand; William Sabin, † left thigh; Alza Stewart, hip; Robert E. Stanley, face; John C. Thompson, knee; Jacob Van Patten, knee and breast; Eli Thayer,\* † head; James T. Guppy, head.

\* Captured.

† Disabled for further field service.

‡ Died while a prisoner of war.



## Company E.

KILLED OR MORTALLY WOUNDED.—Corporal Henry Cashman, Corporal Edgar Warner, Robert C. Allinson, Alfred Edeekin, William Edge, James A. Thomas, Joseph Tinkler, Daniel Harrington, Stephen F. Blackstone,\* Thomas B. Martin,\* Henry Mack,\* Dennis O'Leary.\*

WOUNDED.—Captain Wm. F. Taylor, ear; First Lieutenant Halsey H. Richardson, thigh; Second Lieutenant Sidney B. Funk, † face and shoulder; Sergeant Wm. H. Robbins,\* † arm and lung; Sergeant Royal J. Cooper, foot; Color Corporal Wm. F. DeGraff, leg; Corporal William Hill, † leg; John A. Bush, leg and side; \* Solomon Birby, arm; James Cole, † arm and body; George W. Dimick,\* † head and hip; John H. Pooley, † thigh; George Teal, arm; Andrew King, wrist and side; Thomas Scott, knee; Charles F. Hayth,\* † ankle.

\* Captured.

† Disabled for further field service.

‡ Died while a prisoner of war.

## Company F.

KILLED OR MORTALLY WOUNDED.—First Lieutenant Nelson R. Simms; Corporal John R. Oatey, Color Corporal Walton Reed, Corporal Augustus Armbruster, Hiram L. Bostwick, James Phaley, Frederick W. Miller.

WOUNDED.—Corporal John A. Robinson, † lost right arm; James Brown, back; William Culvert, leg; Patrick Conway, hip; Joseph Gannon, † chest and leg; Thomas Graham, face; John Hocking, thigh; Bennett Holtkamp,\* † Edward Weanne,\* † thigh; John Kneebone, leg; Hugh Williams, hand.

CAPTURED.—Captain Charles E. Rowan.

\* Captured.

† Disabled for further field service.

‡ Died while a prisoner of war.

## Company G.

KILLED OR MORTALLY WOUNDED.—Thomas Davis,\* William H. Wheeler, William H. Whaples.

WOUNDED.—First Lieutenant Benjamin G. Blowney, head; First Sergeant Aaron Scott, hand; Sergeant B. F. Shepard, thigh; Corporal Walter Drew, side; Corporal James Hickox, side and leg; Corporal H. H. Gage, hand; Daniel Benson,\* thigh; George Butler, † foot; Jared O. Blodgett, Myron J. Brown, groin; John A. Corbin, thigh; Joseph Darby,\* † left arm; Daniel H. Gail, leg; William Joyce, foot; John Ladd, thigh; Lewis Miller, hip.

\* Captured.

† Disabled for further field service.



## Company H.

KILLED OR MORTALLY WOUNDED.—First Lieutenant George F. Barnes; Color Corporal Ward L. Morton, Corporal Henry Simons, Corporal Thomas Morris,\* James J. Curry,\* Albert Farley, James Forsyth, Thomas K. Johnson.\*

WOUNDED.—Captain J. L. Pierce, right arm and side; First Sergeant J. A. Francisco,† leg and side; Sergeant Michael Hileman, Color Sergeant M. M. Bruner,† arm and breast; Sergeant H. S. Vandervoort, leg; Sergeant Charles P. Howard,† arm; Corporal Charles L. Metz, hand; Corporal H. F. Hastings, arm; Edward McGinniss,† wrist; James Rees,† arm; Patrick Farrell, 1st, leg; Patrick Farrell, 2d, arm; Hiram W. Nelson,† shoulder; Geo. W. Andrews, foot; John H. Foster, face; Norman P. Ward,† thigh; James McCafferty, face and neck; Charles W. Graham,† hand; Charles D. Bunch,\* Benson Moore, arm; Samuel Wilcox, arm.

CAPTURED SEPTEMBER 22, 1863.—Second Lieutenant Charles H. Yates, Sergeant Michael Hileman, Corporals John A. Boothby,† Patrick Flannery,† and Alphonzo Marshall,† and Privates George W. Andrews,† Richard Cullen, Daniel W. Dowd, John H. Foster, Peter Hawkes, William Ingersoll,† Andrew Johnson, John Kirby,† Nathaniel McWain, George H. Stanchfield,† James M. Sallee, Edwin Van Dyke, Adam Vrowman,† Alberto Wheelock,† John V. Wilkerson.

\* Captured.

† Disabled for further field service.

‡ Died while a prisoner of war.

## Company I.

KILLED OR MORTALLY WOUNDED.—John Adams, Truman F. Bennett, Henry Bonitell, John Bowman, Gains W. Young.

WOUNDED.—John Pablinger, shoulder; James Hutchinson, side; Francis S. Keontz, breast; Frank M. Pogue,† leg; August Stendie, shoulder; Hugh Williams, side; Benjamin B. Wilson, shoulder; Thomas Reynolds, shoulder; Daniel Malone, scalp.

† Disabled for further field service.

## Company K.

KILLED OR MORTALLY WOUNDED.—Corporal Thomas Porter, Anson Brinkerhoff, Joseph Bowker, Mathew Dunbar, Michael Fox, Darius W. Kenney.

WOUNDED.—First Sergeant C. C. Cowen,† right shoulder; Sergeant Garrett W. Luke, scalp wound; Sergeant Charles N. Elston, right leg; Corporal Wm. E. Tilton, side; James E. Black, arm; Acting Color Corporal Thomas A. Conlee, shoulder; James F. Champlin,\* Thomas C. Graves,\* foot; Edward Graham, arm and thigh; Hiram H. Hamilton,\* left leg; Cyrus Pomeroy,† leg; Carl Richardson, leg; Henry Schultz,\* left breast and arm; Charles Smith, left leg hurt by the fall of a horse.

\* Captured.

† Disabled for further field service.



The casualties among the troops in Gen. Steedman's command in this memorable battle were as follows :

Second Brigade, Second Division, Reserve Corps, Col. Daniel McCook commanding :

	Killed.	Wounded.	Captured.	Total.
52d Ohio.....	0	2	3	5
85th Illinois.....	1	6	0	7
86th Illinois.....	1	5	1	7
125th Illinois.....	1	2	4	7
Total.....	3	15	8	26

First Brigade, First Division, Reserve Corps, Gen. Walter C. Whittaker commanding :

	Killed.	Wounded.	Captured.	Total.
96th Illinois.....	45	130	40	215 *
115th Illinois.....	24	137	6	167
40th Ohio.....	18	94	11	123
84th Indiana.....	20	87	11	118
18th Ohio Battery.....	0	9	0	9
Total.....	107	457	68	632

Col. Heber Le Favour's Demi-Brigade, attached to and fighting with Gen. Whittaker's Brigade :

	Killed.	Wounded.	Captured.	Total.
2d Michigan.....	36	89	247	372
89th Ohio.....	23	64	140	227
Total.....	59	153	387	599

Second Brigade, First Division, Reserve Corps, Col. John G. Mitchell commanding :

	Killed.	Wounded.	Captured.	Total.
78th Illinois.....	17	74	55	146
98th Ohio.....	7	38	18	63
113th Ohio.....	26	90	40	156
121st Ohio.....	12	73	7	92
Battery M, 1st Illinois Artillery... 2	11	0	13	
Total.....	64	285	120	470

The total casualties were 1,727 out of a command not exceeding 4,000 men, excepting Col. McCook's Brigade, which was not with Gen. Steedman on the right.

The detail of men who had been guarding a wagon train during the battle—numbering about thirty—those who had

\* This total of 215 was exclusive of the slightly wounded who remained on duty with the command.





been left at Rossville sick, a few detached men and several of the slightly wounded joined the command on Monday and Tuesday, so that there were, including musicians and the medical staff, about two hundred and forty men with the Regiment on the arrival at Moccasin Point. But the thinned ranks closed up, and all resolved to do their duty and retain, to the last, the bright name won on the field of Chickamauga.

Military writers vary widely in estimating the results of the battle of Chickamauga. The campaign had for its object the possession of Chattanooga, and that was still occupied by the Federal forces. Nor had the battle itself been a complete victory for the Confederates, for their army had about spent its strength before the fighting closed, and at the very moment Gen. Thomas was drawing back through McFarland's Gap they were moving to a defensive position. Even when they discovered that the Union forces had fallen back they made no attempt to follow, and did not occupy that portion of the battle field where the two Brigades of the Reserve Corps fought until the forenoon of Monday was well advanced. This statement is made upon the testimony of the severely wounded of the Regiment left upon the battle field, and also upon the fact that at least two—James Guppy, of Company D, and William Joyce, of Company G—remained upon the battle field all night and left it some time after sunrise next morning, without seeing any organized force of Rebels. In his official report of the action Gen. Bragg admitted a loss of two-fifths of his army. Gen. Longstreet, who commanded the left wing of the Rebel army, reported 1,080 killed, 6,506 wounded and 270 captured, on Sunday. It is known that ten Brigades were directly in front of Whittaker's and Mitchell's Brigades and the right Brigade of Brannan's Division, and several of them were very full when the engagement opened. The Rebel right wing suffered hardly less. The enemy was confident of victory, and fought most desperately, but without achieving the result promised by their chieftain. The best authorities place their total strength at 70,000, while the Federal force was but 56,000, and it is doubtless true that the entire Federal force on the battle field during Sunday after-



noon was not more than one-half the number of the Confederates. The troops under Gen. Thomas embraced portions of every Corps in the army, the emergencies of the battle widely separating Brigades and Divisions, and breaking up commands to an extent hardly equalled in any other great battle of the war. As a victory to the Confederates it was most barren. The total loss to the Union arms was reported at 16,336, of whom more than two thousand were killed. Fifty-one cannon, 15,000 muskets and a large number of wagons and ambulances fell into the enemy's hands.

The campaign had ended, and on the morning of Tuesday, September 22, the Union forces occupied an entrenched line about the city of Chattanooga, while Missionary Ridge, Look-out Mountain and the intervening valleys swarmed with the men in gray, who calmly waited for the Federal forces to be starved out of a position that seemed well nigh untenable.

The following is Colonel Champion's

#### OFFICIAL REPORT.\*

On Friday, the 18th instant, the NINETY-SIXTH Illinois Regiment left camp at Rossville, with the balance of the Brigade, about three o'clock P. M., and went out on a reconnoissance about three miles on the Ringgold road. As the head of the column (the NINETY-SIXTH being in the advance) arrived at the Little Chickamauga, and was about crossing the stream, we were fired upon by the enemy. Four companies were immediately thrown forward and deployed as skirmishers. The NINETY-SIXTH then crossed the stream, and formed in line of battle on both sides of the road and advanced to meet the enemy. A sharp skirmish ensued, lasting about forty-five minutes, during which time we drove the enemy about three-fourths of a mile. We lost one killed—E. Haggart—and three wounded. The Regiment lay on their arms during the night, and at daylight on the 19th, in obedience to orders, took up a position on the ridge, north of McAfee's Church, where it lay in line of battle until about noon of the 20th, when orders were given to move, with the balance of the Brigade, in a southwest direction, toward Missionary Ridge. Going to the assistance of Gen. Thomas, we arrived on the field of battle about two o'clock P. M., and immediately went into action. The NINETY-SIXTH occupied the extreme right of our front line. We charged the enemy's left in the face of a murderous fire of infantry and artillery, at

\* Colonel Champion's first report was of much greater length, and made numerous personal mentions, but being warned that it must be brief he condensed it as herewith given. The original report is not now obtainable, a fact to be regretted, as it was a very full and interesting document.



short range, and maintained our position until every regiment on our left and in our rear had given way. We then fell back about five or six hundred yards and re-formed. In the meantime a section of our artillery had been planted about six hundred yards to the right of our previous position, and we were ordered up to repel the charge of the enemy. We repulsed the enemy after about twenty minutes' desperate fighting. We then moved to the left of the battery and again charged the enemy, driving him down the ridge running nearly parallel with our first line, nearly half a mile, until we received an enfilading fire from the 84th Indiana and 115th Illinois, and were compelled to retire. Our officers seem sanguine that with five hundred more men we could have driven the enemy completely from the field. We then fell back and re-formed, with the remnant of the regiment on the right of the first line of the Brigade, and as the left of the line successively gave way, we fell back with it until night ended the contest. Officers and men behaved with great gallantry, and where all did so well discrimination would serve to be invidious. Among the most conspicuous in rallying and encouraging the men during the entire conflict were Captain Geo. Hicks, Company A, and Lieutenant Charles W. Earle, Company C. Our loss was heavy in both officers and men, including Lieutenant Colonel Isaac L. Clarke, killed on the field. He behaved with great gallantry.

The Regiment went into action on Sunday with four hundred and nineteen men, including the field, line and staff officers.

The losses of the NINETY-SIXTH (exclusive of captures and slightly wounded) at last reports stood as follows :

Killed .....	42
Wounded .....	121
Missing .....	11
Total .....	<u>174</u>

The following is an extract from the official report of Major-General Gordon Granger, Commander of the Reserve Corps :

\* \* \* The position of my forces on the morning of the twentieth, and up to the hour of battle, was as follows: Col. McCook's Brigade was moved to a point near the McAfee Church, and was placed in such a position as to cover the Ringgold road; Gen. Whittaker's Brigade, together with Col. Mitchell's, retained the same position that they had the evening before, and Col. Minty, who reported to me at daylight on the morning of the twentieth with a brigade of cavalry, was posted at Missionary Mills, which positions completely covered our extreme left flank.

The enemy did not make his appearance in our immediate front during the morning, but large clouds of dust could be seen beyond our position arising from the Lafayette and Harrison roads, moving in the



direction of the sound of battle. At 10.30 A. M. I heard very heavy firing, which was momentarily increasing in volume and intensity, on our right, in the direction of Gen. Thomas' position. Soon afterward, being convinced, judging from the sound of battle, that the enemy were pushing him hard, and fearing that he would not be able to resist their combined attack, I determined to go to his assistance at once. It was now about eleven o'clock A. M. I started with Gen. Whittaker's and Col. Mitchell's Brigades, under the immediate command of Gen. Steedman, and left Col. McCook's Brigade at the McAfee Church, in position to cover the Ringgold road. Gen. Thomas was at this time engaging the enemy at a point between the La Fayette and Dry Valley roads, in the vicinity of ——— house, about three and a half miles from our place of starting. We had not proceeded more than two miles when the enemy made his appearance in the woods to the left of our advancing column, about three-fourths of a mile from the road. They opened upon us quite briskly with their skirmishers and a section of artillery. I then made a short halt to feel them, and becoming convinced that they constituted only a party of observation, I again rapidly pushed forward my troops. At this juncture I sent back and ordered up Col. McCook's Brigade to watch the movements of the enemy at this point, to keep open the La Fayette road, and cover the open field on the right of the road, and those that intervened between this point and the position held by Gen. Thomas. As rapidly as possible, Col. McCook brought up his Brigade, took the position assigned to him, and held it until he marched to Rossville from the field of battle, at ten o'clock P. M. At six o'clock the enemy opened an artillery fire upon Col. McCook, but he soon silenced their battery, which had done little or no damage to his troops.

At about one o'clock P. M. I reported to Gen. Thomas. His forces were at that time stationed upon the brow of and holding a "horse-shoe ridge." The enemy were pressing him hard in front, and endeavoring to turn both of his flanks. To the right of this position was a ridge running east and west, and nearly at right angles therewith. Upon this the enemy were just forming. They also had possession of a gorge in the same through which they were rapidly moving in large masses, with the design of falling upon the right flank and rear of the forces upon the "horse-shoe ridge."

Gen. Thomas had not the troops to oppose this movement of the enemy, and in fifteen minutes from the time we appeared on the field, had it not been for our fortunate arrival, his forces would have been terribly cut up and captured. As rapidly as possible I formed Gen. Whittaker's and Col. Mitchell's Brigades, to hurl them against this threatening force of the enemy—which afterward proved to be Gen. Hindman's Division. The gallant Steedman, seizing the colors of a Regiment, led his men to the attack. With loud cheers they rushed upon the enemy, and after a terrific conflict, lasting but twenty minutes, drove them from their ground, and occupied the ridge and gorge. The slaughter of both friend and foe was frightful. Gen. Whittaker, while rushing forward at





the head of his Brigade, was knocked from his horse by a musket-ball, and was, for a short time, rendered unfit for duty; while two of his staff officers were killed, and two mortally wounded. Gen. Steedman's horse was killed, and he was severely bruised, yet he was able to remain on duty during the day. This attack was made by our troops,—very few of whom had ever been in an action before,—against a Division of old soldiers who largely outnumbered them. Yet with resolution and energy they drove the enemy from this position, occupied it themselves, and afterward held the ground they had gained with such terrible losses. The victory was dearly won, but to this army it was a priceless one.

There was now a lull in the battle; it was of short duration, however, for within thirty minutes after we had gained possession of the ridge we were vigorously attacked by two Divisions of Longstreet's veterans. Again the enemy was driven back, and from this time until dark the battle between these two opposing forces raged furiously.

Our whole line was continually enveloped in smoke and fire. The assaults of the enemy were now made with that energy which was inspired by the bright prospect of a speedy victory, and by a consciousness that it was only necessary to carry this position and crush our forces to enable them to overthrow our army, and drive it across the Tennessee River. Their forces were massed and hurled upon us for the purpose of terminating at once this great and bloody battle. But the stout hearts of the handful of men who stood before them quailed not. They understood our perilous position, and held their ground, determined to perish rather than yield it. Never had a commander such just cause for congratulation over the action of his troops.

The ammunition which was brought in our train to this part of the field was divided with Gens. Brannan's and Wood's Divisions early in the afternoon, and we soon exhausted the remainder. All that we could then procure was taken from the cartridge boxes of our own and the enemy's dead and wounded. Even this supply was exhausted before the battle was over, and while the enemy was still in our front, hurling fresh troops against us. It was almost dark; the enemy had been driven back, but we had not a round of ammunition left. All now seemed to be lost and we should return to the contest. Anticipating another attack, I ordered the command to be given to the men to stand firm, and to use the cold steel. After an ominous silence of a few minutes the enemy came rushing upon us again. With fixed bayonets our troops gallantly charged forward and drove them back in confusion. Twice more were these charges repeated, and the enemy driven back, before darkness brought an end to the battle. Night came and the enemy fell back, whipped and discomfited. At three o'clock p. m. Gen. Garfield, Chief of Staff, appeared upon that part of the field where my troops were then hotly engaged with the enemy. He remained with me until dark, animating and cheering both officers and men. \* \* \* At seven o'clock p. m. I received orders from Major-General Thomas to withdraw my troops from the position they held at dark, to march back to Rossville, and to cover the



rear of the forces falling back upon that place with McCook's Brigade. These instructions were promptly carried out, and I went into camp that night in accordance therewith.

My two Brigades numbered 216 commissioned officers and 3,697 men when they went into the action. Between the hours of one P. M. and dark there were killed, wounded and missing 109 commissioned officers and 1,623 men—a total of 1,732. These losses are subdivided as follows: Killed, 234; wounded, 936; missing—all of whom, with the exception of a very small fraction were taken prisoners—461.

\* \* \* It is with pleasure that I call the attention of the Commanding General to the bravery and gallantry displayed during the battle by Brigadier-General James B. Steedman. He fearlessly rushed into the midst of danger, and was ever present with his troops, handling them with ease and confidence, rallying and encouraging them, and establishing order and confidence. Gen. Whittaker and Col. Mitchell, commanding Brigades, were also conspicuous for their bravery and activity. They managed their troops well, and contributed much to our success during the day. Col. Daniel McCook, commanding the Second Brigade, Second Division, properly and promptly carried out all orders and instructions I gave him. Although his Brigade was not engaged in the battle, it held a very important position, protecting the rear of those who were fighting.\*

Shortly following the battle, Lieutenant Wm. M. Loughlin, then on detached service with the Pioneers, wrote a letter to Colonel Champion, congratulating him upon the good name won for himself and the Regiment, and received the following reply:

HEADQUARTERS NINETY-SIXTH REGT. ILL. VOL. INF'T.,  
CAMP OPPOSITE LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN, NEAR  
CHATTANOOGA, October 10, 1863.

LIEUTENANT WM. M. LOUGHLIN:

*Dear Lieutenant,*—I received your very welcome and kind letter of the 3d instant. So far as it relates to myself personally I am inclined to think the encomiums are, perhaps, hastily bestowed. But so far as the NINETY-SIXTH Regiment is concerned it is deserving of all praise. Its record on the terrible and bloody field of Chickamauga entitles it to rank as one of the truest and bravest of any in the field, or that ever defended the Old Flag. When it is remembered that the NINETY-SIXTH Regiment went into the fight at two o'clock P. M. of Sunday with 415 officers and men, and before sundown had lost 42 men, killed on the field, 121 wounded and 11 missing, and that of the missing all thus far heard from were either killed or wounded, making our loss in killed and wounded 174, and that of the wounded so many have since died that our total loss in killed will

\* A long list of officers conspicuous for their bravery is published in Gen. Grainger's report, included with which appear all of the field officers of the NINETY-SIXTH; also, Captain Hicks, of Company A.



be 55 or 60, you may rest assured that the NINETY-SIXTH did not fail to do its whole duty. Three several times we charged upon and drove the enemy, once laying down on the crest of a hill, and for half an hour pouring a heavy fire into the enemy so near his guns that every discharge from them, the hot air was literally blown into our faces, holding our position until every Regiment in our rear and on our left had given way. We occupied the extreme right of our lines, and for some reason or other, when there was any hard work to do we were called upon to do it.

I have not time to write you at length. Suffice it to say that other Regiments were in that fight for two whole days and did not lose, comparatively nor actually, what we did in the two hours fighting.

My regards to all.

Very respectfully yours.

THOS. E. CHAMPION.

The following letter, written by Major George Hicks to the *New York Tribune*, is a graphic account of the part borne in the battle by Gen. Steedman's Division :

#### THE BATTLE OF CHICKAMAUGA.

GEN. STEEDMAN'S DIVISION—THE RECORD IT MADE ON THE TWENTIETH.

[From our Special Correspondent, in the field, opposite Chattanooga, September 30, 1863.]

Among the many Divisions of the Army of the Cumberland which acquitted themselves nobly in the battles of the nineteenth and twentieth the First Division of the Reserve Corps, commanded by Brig. Gen. James B. Steedman, deserves some mention.

On the eighteenth the First Brigade of the Division, commanded by Brig. Gen. W. C. Whittaker, was sent from Rossville to the Little Chickamauga, on the road to Ringgold. Here, after sundown, a brief skirmish was had with the enemy, in which neither party suffered any considerable loss.

On the afternoon of the nineteenth the tide of battle, which had been running heavily on our right during the day, reached this Brigade, and an engagement of some fierceness was had with the enemy. The position held by the Brigade was on the extreme left of our lines, and the key to Rosecrans' line of retreat. The position was much coveted by the enemy, and they made repeated assaults to obtain it, but were handsomely repulsed, and suffered quite severely, especially from our artillery.

During the night of the nineteenth the Second Brigade, commanded by Col. J. M. Mitchell, of the 113th Ohio, was sent to the aid of Whittaker, also, Col. Dan. McCook's Brigade, of the Second Division of the Reserve, and the 22d Michigan and 89th Ohio, which two Regiments were attached to Whittaker's command.

During the forenoon of the twentieth these forces, under the command of Gen. Steedman, held their position at that point, in line of battle, awaiting a more formidable effort, which it was supposed the enemy



would make to turn our left. But no assault was made, for the enemy had withdrawn his troops from that point to mass them against Thomas. While waiting there pursuant to orders from Gen. Rosecrans, the troops listened with anxious impatience to the heavy cannonading and sharp musketry which resounded along the line on the right, and which, approaching nearer and nearer, begat fearful suspicions that it was not Rosecrans but the enemy who were driving the opposing forces. Our suspense was broken, and our fears confirmed when, about noon, urgent orders were received to hasten to the relief of Thomas, who was in great danger.

The troops did not then know in how critical a condition the Army of the Cumberland was compelled to meet, unassisted, the flower of three large armies which the Rebels had assembled, intending to overwhelm it. They did not then know that while they were hastening to turn the tide of battle, it possible, portions of Crittenden's and McCook's Corps were retiring from the field. But they did know the time had come when the Reserve must be tested, and the question determined whether or not it were worthy of its honorable position in the great Army of the Cumberland.

Steedman's Division, followed by McCook's Brigade, was speedily put in motion, and the column moved forward at a rapid pace, sometimes breaking into a double-quick. The sun shone hot, and the dust in the narrow road rose in dense, suffocating clouds; but all thought of heat, and dust, and fatigue was lost in the eager anxiety to relieve our brave comrades who were in peril. After thus marching some three miles, the head of the column reached a portion of the battle field from which our forces had retired, and which the enemy occupied with his mounted infantry. Formed hastily in line-of-battle, Whittaker's Brigade advanced upon them. They did not await our approach, but gave up the ground, retreating in a direction which, had we followed, would have diverted us from the main purpose. In passing over this portion of the field the dead and dying of both armies were seen in considerable numbers, and some Rebels, separated from their commands, were encountered on the right and taken prisoners by the NINETY-SIXTH Illinois.

Soon a point was reached directly opposite to and about three-fourths of a mile distant from Gen. Thomas, and the whole Division turned square to the right. Here they formed in close columns by regiments, with division front; and, with a line of skirmishers thrown forward and along the left flank, the Division resumed its march. It was through an extensive stretch of meadow land, overgrown with weeds almost breast high, that our course lay. Heavy batteries of the enemy's artillery were posted in the woods on our left, and as we advanced through the meadow to form a junction with Thomas they opened upon us a fearful fire. But few troops in the Division had ever seen more of war than is encountered in brisk skirmishing, and none had ever been under such a fire. But Whittaker, with his staff, and Col. Mitchell and staff, rode steadily in front of their Brigades, and their troops, although the shells and shot fell fast





and thick around and among them, wavered not in their march, but kept right on, leaving many of their comrades dead and wounded on the field. At that moment the spectacle, to one not inured to all the pageantry of war, was intensely grand. The brigade and regimental colors floated gaily in the light of the midday sun. The far-stretching columns of troops, with glistening weapons, moved forward with uniform motion, presenting, at a distance, the appearance of one compact mass. On the left dense masses of sulphurous smoke hung just above the trees, and in front and along the lines the shells were bursting in the air, while the solid shot, seemingly imbued with infernal energy, plowed the ground, bounding and plunging over the fields, leaving all over the meadow little clouds of dust to mark their course. That march, through that storm of shell and shot, was a fit introduction to the scenes upon which that Division was about to enter. But little time was occupied in reaching Thomas, where Gen. Granger, commanding the Reserve, and Gen. Steedman were already holding consultation with him. As we approached, Gen. Whittaker, whose Brigade was in the advance, was told that it was absolutely necessary that he should drive the enemy from the ridge on our right, where heavy forces had been massed, as if for the purpose of flanking Thomas. Indeed, the occupation of that ridge was so threatening that if the enemy continued to hold it Thomas must have retired. Whittaker said he would take the ridge, and he did it.

This is the way it was done: The six Regiments of the First Brigade were formed in two lines—the first comprising the NINETY-SIXTH Illinois, Colonel Thomas E. Champion, on the right; 115th Illinois, Col. J. H. Moore, in the centre, and the 22d Michigan, Col. Le Favour, on the left. Then came the order to advance. With a yell the first line bounded forward on the double-quick. Up and down the little hills and through the narrow valleys which intervened they pressed hastily forward until they came within short range of the Rebel musketry, which opened upon them furiously, while the grape and cannister from the battery on the ridge swept cruelly through their ranks.

Almost exhausted with their hurried march and their long continued double-quick, the troops recoiled for a moment under that withering fire, but ere the most timid could think of retreating, Colonel Champion promptly gave the command to halt, lie down, and fire, which was obeyed on the instant. There the line lay for five minutes, responding resolutely to the fire of the enemy. That five minutes was a terrible ordeal for our soldiers, for during that short period their ranks were more than decimated. Then came the order to fix bayonets and charge upon the enemy. The ardor of the men overcame their fatigue, and, tired as they were, they resumed the double-quick march as they advanced up the ridge, right in the face of a galling fire. If a man fell—and many did—he was left to enrich the soil of Georgia with his life's blood, or, if able, to creep, alone and unassisted, to the rear; for none who were able, to march left the ranks, which were kept well closed up, and the line was firmly maintained.



By this time the 78th Illinois and 121st Ohio, of the Second Brigade had come up and were advancing on the right of the first, and a little to the rear. Never was support more opportune, for while Whittaker's men were charging up the ridge, the enemy received a well-directed fire from Col. Mitchell's forces, and, when the crest of the ridge was gained, the enemy was discovered retreating in confusion, and their battery had disappeared. With a loud huzza we followed them, but not far. Fresh troops were sent against us, and the fire became as scathing as ever. We halted in our advanced position, and held it, while the contending musketry, sharp and incessant, almost stunned the ear. The enemy constantly strengthened his lines, and their fire became hotter and quicker. The first line was ordered to fall back. The second line took its place and held the position a short time, when the forces were ordered to retire to the crest of the ridge from which the enemy had been driven.

That was the way the fight, on the part of Steedman's Division, opened on that day. It had gained a great advantage, but it was not to maintain it without a severe struggle. Bragg's Reserves—the flower of the Potomac Army—were sent to dislodge us from our newly gained position. But it availed them not. Battery M, 1st Illinois Artillery, was planted far to the right, in a commanding position, and such was the conformation of the ground that, as the Rebel lines advanced to the assault, they came under the sure and effective range of our guns. Their battery had been planted in a new position, bearing upon ours, and the continued roar of artillery soon was mingled with the sound of musketry.

Our lines were extended to the right so as to reach and support our battery, which the Rebels were threatening to attack. A general assault was soon made upon our lines, but it proved disastrous to the Rebels. Our grape and cannister made great havoc in their ranks, while our soldiers took careful aim before pulling the triggers of their Enfield muskets. The Rebels were badly repulsed, and as they retreated we followed, pursuing them a considerable distance. But while this move exposed us to the fire of their artillery, they were much less in danger from our battery. Other troops, in heavier force, took the place of those whom we had driven, and the battle waged fiercely again until we were ordered to retire.

Let the simple truth be told. That retreat, in fact, that whole battle in which our Division was engaged, was not conducted with precisely the same order observed on a dress parade. I have read of such things: I have heard of troops acting with arctic coolness and impassability under the most galling fire, minutely observing every direction of the tactics. It may be so, but it was not so with our Division on that day. When the men were ordered to advance they kept their line pretty well, but there were many whose eagerness carried them ahead of it, and some whose timidity kept them in rear of it. In retreating, the men paid but little attention to keeping their lines well dressed, and had the appearance of a mass rather than a line. Nay more; some of the troops on the left actually broke, and were thrown into some disorder. But it is also



true that when the desired point was gained the troops were readily halted and rallied with but little difficulty. Once, the 115th Illinois—which did exceedingly well that day—seemed unable to rally; but Gen. Steedman was near at hand, and, seizing the colors from the standard bearer, advanced toward the enemy, saying to the men: "Boys, I'll carry your flag if you'll defend it!" They rallied around him and did noble deeds. There was not one instance of failure to rally the troops, though the leaden hail fell so thick and fast among them that nothing but their native heroism and the animating courage of their officers could have kept them up to the work. Let it not be forgotten that on that afternoon there was but little fighting, except upon Thomas' lines, whose right Steedman held, and on the right the fiercest fighting apparently was done. There was nothing to prevent the enemy from sending almost overwhelming forces against us, and we learn from prisoners, and we judge from the incidents and character of the contest, that they were fighting Steedman with the odds of at least three to one in their favor. Thomas was holding their whole army in check, saving from irretrievable disaster the Army of the Cumberland; and there was nothing akin to a holiday parade in the terrible momentum of their assaults to break through that bulwark, or the heroic endurance with which our soldiers met and repulsed them. More depended upon the individuality of the soldier than upon the harmonious movements of regiments and brigades. This was felt by our officers and soldiers. There was little manœuvring, but there was a great deal of fighting. There was no waiting for commands in detail—no firing of volleys by platoons and companies. When we had gained a position in advance, and the line was halted in view of the enemy, the men fired at will, each intent only on doing his own duty well. After that repulse another assault was made, and with the same result. The Rebels advanced, were checked; we drove and followed them until fresh troops were arrayed against us, and we in turn were forced to retire. But this time we drove them further, and kept them at bay longer than before. One of our regiments, the NINETY-SIXTH Illinois, pursued them nearly half a mile, and held that advanced position until it began to receive an enfilading fire from some of our own troops.

Thus the contest continued until dark, and all the time we held the ridge. Sometimes a regiment or more would fall back beyond the ridge, but enough always remained to hold it. At last Gen. Thomas gave the order to retire, but it failed to reach a portion of the NINETY-SIXTH Illinois and a remnant of the 121st Ohio, who at the time occupied a position on the right, somewhat advanced beyond the line, and there, for a considerable time, they continued to fight with unabated vigor. The order to retire was at last given to this devoted band, who reluctantly left their position. That closed the fighting for the day. We retired from the field, not knowing that the enemy was at the same time also retreating, baffled and discouraged, in fact, beaten. So the bloody field was left unoccupied that night. No, not wholly unoccupied, for James T. Guppy, a private of Company D, NINETY-SIXTH Illinois, not knowing that our



troops had fallen back, slept upon the battle field, and, next morning, as he awoke, found a Rebel surgeon near him looking for Rebel dead, and who advised him, if he ever wished to see his Regiment again, to hurry on to Chattanooga. The fight was over, and while the Union army was sad the Rebels were not exultant. The fight was over, and Steedman's Division had made its record. It had done more than that. Said Gen. Thomas to Gen. Steedman: "You have saved my Corps."

That was a deed worthy to be proud of, for, from what disaster did not that Corps save our army and our cause!

But there was little feeling of pride that night among the troops of the First Division of the Reserves. We were busy reckoning up our losses, and they were appalling! The long list of killed and wounded is a sad proof of the trial by fire to which, that afternoon, our Division was subjected.

Was ever such havoc made with a staff as that which Gen. Whittaker's suffered? There were eight of them, including the General. Three were killed, three wounded, one captured or killed, and only one escaped. How often has it happened that a Regiment, in one afternoon's engagement, has endured a greater loss in killed and wounded than the NINETY-SIXTH Illinois? It took into battle 415 men. It lost 42 killed and 121 wounded—considerably more than one-third. Of its 23 field, staff and line officers engaged, 11 were killed and wounded. It happened that that Regiment, during the fight, was always in the front line, and was greatly exposed to the enemy's artillery, but, under the cool and able leadership of Colonel Champion, it maintained its place, and, with the 121st Ohio, was the last to leave the field.

Whittaker's Brigade of six Regiments lost nearly one thousand men, killed and wounded, and Col. Mitchell's Brigade of four Regiments lost nearly four hundred.

There were many noble men who fell on that hard-fought field—many who deserve special mention. I know but few of the many, yet let me speak of two or three.

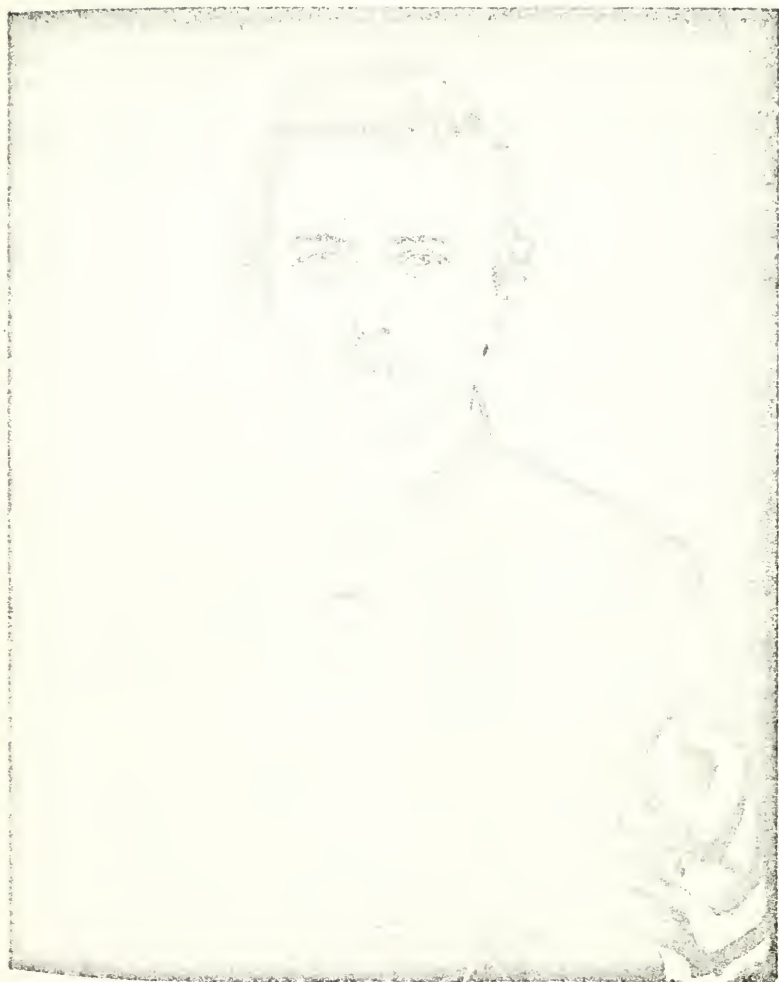
Capt. S. B. Espy, Assistant Commissary on Gen. Whittaker's staff, was a very lion that day. He was advised to remain with his trains; but, too noble spirited for that, he remained on the field, fearless of danger, doing wonders in cheering and rallying the men under the destructive fire of the enemy. He was one of Illinois' noble sons, and his loss is severely felt.

And there was a Quarter-Master Sergeant, William S. Bean, who, like Capt. Espy, chose the field of danger rather than the post of safety. He might have remained in the rear, and the breath of censure could not have touched him; but he was right where the bullets flew thickest and fastest, and did the work almost of a General in encouraging the bold and animating the timid. He was a genuine hero.

Capt. Wells, of the 113th Ohio, and Lieut. Col. Kinman, of the 115th Illinois, were two of the best men and bravest soldiers who yielded up their lives on the twentieth on their country's altar.







JOHN G. SCHAEFER,

FIRST SERGEANT, COMPANY A.



And the scores of privates, corporals and sergeants, men of families, who had left all—wife, children, home—for their country, from a pure sense of duty; young men, who left college walls and the merchant's desk, and the plow, and the anvil, all because their country called them, to face death on a battle field; darling sons, the hope and stay of widowed mothers, whose early death will break more than one sorrowing heart—what of these? Alas! too many such there are—as brave, as heroic, as truly martyrs as ever died in the cause of humanity—to mention here by name. Would you know them? Read the list of the killed!

We will not, in our sorrow for the heroes dead, forget the surviving brave. These, thanks to a merciful Providence, are even more numerous than the dead. Among the many who did well, Gen. Steedman, and Major Smith, and Capt. Moe, of his Staff, merit special praise. And Gen. Whittaker and Col. Mitchell, and their Staff Officers, and the Regimental Commanders, are most highly honored by the soldiers, for they were brave and unflinching leaders.

Let me refer to two men in humbler positions. One is Lieutenant C. W. Earle, commanding the Color Company of the NINETY-SIXTH. He stood by the colors throughout the fight, and, though all but two of the Color Guard were killed and wounded, and the colors were cut to pieces by the bullets and grape and cannister that pierced its folds, he faltered not one instant. He is a Second Lieutenant, and but a boy, yet few full-grown men, in much more exalted positions, excelled him in cool, cheerful courage.

The other is Capt. Clason, of the 121st Ohio, who, with the little remnant of the Regiment, fought so stubbornly and unyieldingly to the very last, preserving their colors and keeping them afloat proudly in the face of the enemy, until the last shot was fired.

And Col. Le Favour, who led his 22d Michigan on a bayonet charge, after they had expended all their ammunition, should not be forgotten when the roll of honor is made out. But time and space would fail to name every man who flinched not from his duty on that memorable day. The 8th Indiana, the 40th, 98th and 89th Ohio, and the 78th Illinois—all of Steedman's Division—has each its list of heroes.

Enough that, at that critical hour, the Reserve failed not. And it could have done more had it been necessary, for Col. McCook's Brigade was not engaged. As to our Division, it has confidence in its officers, while they are proud of their men; and it is now ready to test its mettle again with a Rebel foe. It is with not a little of pride that I can write of such a Division, and its fight on the twentieth, *parva pars fui*.\*

MILES.†

\* Of which I was a small part.      † A soldier.



## INCIDENTS OF THE BATTLE.

NOTE.—To write fully of the experiences of each of the members of the Regiment who participated in the battle of Chickamauga is impracticable, if not impossible, for it would require a volume to record what would be of interest. And yet, it does not seem best to omit these personal incidents altogether, even though but a few can be rescued from the oblivion into which the years are rapidly passing them. Naturally those which are the best known to the writer are such as occurred in the Company of which he was at the time a member, or to individuals whom he knew most intimately or has met most frequently in the years that have intervened. These, if any, must be recorded. It is hoped that no one will attribute the mentions to favoritism or the omissions to a want of appreciation on the writer's part of the genuine merit of those whose names do not appear. It was simply impossible that any one man should know more than a minor portion of the incidents that would be of interest while a battle was raging, or that,—entertaining no thought at the time of writing of them,—he should cherish any considerable portion for a score of years, or gather more than a fraction of them in the limited time now at the command of

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Early in the engagement the horse ridden by Gen. J. B. Steedman was shot. As the animal fell the General was thrown violently forward, and badly bruised on the head and face, the injuries being such as to cause the blood to flow freely and give the commander the appearance of having been badly wounded. Gen. W. C. Whittaker, commander of the Brigade, was struck in the abdomen, his injury being painful but not so serious as to take him from the field for more than a half hour or so. He thought himself mortally wounded for the moment, and his words,—which he supposed were his last on earth,—were of good cheer to his command, and an encouragement to them to do their duty. Rarely has a Staff fared so roughly as did that of Gen. Whittaker. Capt. S. B. Espy, of the 115th Illinois, Acting Brigade Commissary, and Lieut. Mason, of the 84th Indiana, who was serving as an Aide, were killed outright. Capt. James Allen, of the 40th Ohio, who was in the English army at the siege of Lucknow, and who had been decorated by the Queen for bravery, was severely wounded through the arm. Lieut. John M. Moore, of the 84th Indiana, and at the time A. A. A. General of the Brigade, was shot through the thigh and crippled for life. Lieutenant G. W. Pepon, of the NINETY-SIXTH Illinois,—then an Aide, and who, although continually riding the lines, was the only one who escaped unharmed,—left the field at dark in charge of Lieut. Moore, walking or riding beside him, and



helping to hold him on his horse until Rossville was reached. Captain Charles E. Rowan, of the NINETY-SIXTH, was captured on Saturday afternoon, and Lieut. Jesse Hannon, of the 115th Illinois, was captured just before the battle closed on Sunday.

In the Regiment no mounted officer escaped except the Colonel, and he was twice dismounted. The gray horse which he took from Illinois, but which had been disposed of some time previously, was finally brought and bore him safely from the field. Toward the close of the fight, and when the line had been reduced to a mere skirmish line, the Colonel took a musket and used it for a time, the soldiers loading it for him. Always his presence was an inspiration, and his position so conspicuous that it was marvelous how he escaped. Major J. C. Smith, on staff duty, had many thrilling experiences and narrow escapes, but rode safely through the storm. Sergeant-Major Quinn rode into the battle a horse from which a Rebel Major had been shot at Franklin. Early in the fight Quinn was wounded, a bullet passing through his shoulder and lungs, and so disabling him that when the lines retired he was left in the enemy's hands. He was subsequently paroled and furloughed home, meeting death by drowning a few months later. Quarter-Master Sergeant Bean was shot from his horse while bravely riding the lines, and instantly killed.

The experiences of the Color Guard were almost without precedent. Nine men moved forward under the flags in the first charge on Sunday afternoon, and a tenth subsequently joined them. Only one retired that evening, all of the others having been killed or wounded. Color Sergeant M. M. Bruner, of Company H, was disabled by a raking shot across his breast and through one arm. Corporal David Isbell, of Company A, had an arm shattered. Turning to leave the field he was again struck and doubtless killed, as he was not afterward heard from. Corporal Hamilton Whitney, of Company B, escaped until almost night, but was then shot through, and left for dead upon the field, but fortunately survived, being paroled and sent to Chattanooga ten days later. Acting Color Corporal Squire Inman, of Company C, was badly wounded in the leg, and left on the field, where he died within a week. Cor-





poral William F. De Graff, of Company E, was severely wounded in the leg, but survived, only to be mortally wounded in a subsequent battle. Corporal Walton Reed, of Company F, was killed. Corporal John A. Robison, of Company F, lost his good right arm. Corporal J. W. Swanbrough, of Company G, carried the regimental flag into the fight, and bore both flags from the field, being uninjured, except from the bruises occasioned by the falling branch of a tree, although the flags were literally riddled and the flag-staffs splintered in his hands. Corporal Ward L. Morton, of Company H, who was sent to act with the Color Guard after the disabling of Sergeant Bruner, was killed. Acting Color Corporal Thomas A. Conlee, of Company K, was wounded in the shoulder. It must ever remain a mystery how Corporal Swanbrough escaped that day. In every advance the colors waved at the very front, and whenever the line became in any way scattered the flag was the rallying point. Once, after the line had been forced backward, there seemed a disposition not to halt just where ordered, but to form a line a little to the rear. "John," said the Colonel, addressing Corporal Swanbrough, "can you carry the colors a little farther up the ridge?" and the resolute color bearer started forward, while the men quickly gathered around him and formed the line even farther to the front than had first been planned. His example, and the fact that the line was moving, gave them courage, and they made ready response.

Lieutenant Vincent, of Company A, was severely wounded in the leg while using a musket. Josephus Metcalf, of Company A; Eli Thayer, of Company D, and George W. Dimick, of Company E, were each struck on the head and stunned, regaining consciousness only to find themselves prisoners. Each endured a long confinement, and the two last named died without ever rejoining the Regiment.

In Company B, Charles Fox fell while calling encouragingly to his comrades to go forward. Near him fell Thomas Potter and William Kimball—all fatally shot in the first charge. Emery Dart was among the bravest, but suddenly disappeared, and was doubtless killed outright, although he



one noticed him as he fell. John H. Cruver had an arm shattered at the elbow early in the afternoon, which disabled him for further service. W. W. Tower was severely wounded in the leg, and long disabled, but returned to receive a fatal wound a few months later. Sergeant Bangs tarried too long when the Regiment fell back, and, in the momentary confusion, missed his command and found himself with the 22d Michigan. Taking part with them in a charge, he became a prisoner with a large portion of that regiment. Sergeant Whitmore was badly wounded in the shoulder, but returned in a few months, and was subsequently killed.

Lieutenant Earle, commanding Company C, was wounded in the arm, but did not leave his command. On Tuesday morning, before the surrender of the skirmish line on Missionary Ridge, he was again hit, this time on the wrist, but not disabled. John Fidler, of Company C, was wounded in the hand or arm, and turning to leave the line was again hit and instantly killed. Sergeant Murray was struck in the shoulder near the spine, and so badly paralyzed as to render him entirely helpless. He lay between the lines all through the afternoon, and in this trying position was subsequently twice wounded. His great fear was that, in his helpless condition, he would be burned to death from the fires catching in the woods, and at his earnest request a Rebel soldier scraped away the leaves and drew him upon the bare ground. Corporal Lewis H. Bryant was at one time of the opinion that the lines were retreating too far, and thrusting the butt end of his musket against the ground, began reloading, muttering between his teeth that he wasn't going back another step. In a few moments a bullet passed through both his legs, and he was compelled to go to the rear. Henry P. Barnum was terribly shot through the face, and for a few moments was inside the Rebel lines. He was bleeding profusely, and terribly thirsty, when a soldier in gray, at his request, gave him a drink from a canteen. Fearing that he would bleed to death, and remembering that some one had told him that if ever severely wounded he must cord the injured member, he tried to devise some way by which he might tie a handkerchief or canteen strap



about his neck and stop the hemorrhage, but before his experiment had proceeded far the Union lines again advanced, and he was sent to the rear, but received very little attention for some days. Leonard S. Doolittle was very severely wounded through the leg, below the knee, in the last advance movement. George Farnsworth, of Company G, assisted him to his feet and fairly carried him until he had fainted from pain and loss of blood. The Rebels were close upon them, and reluctantly the brave soldier laid down his unconscious burden. Doolittle was a prisoner for about ten days. William Bonner was shot through the body in the first charge, and subsequently carried a short distance to the rear, where he doubtless died. Corporal Lewin had a long, raking shot on the shoulder and back, but rejoined the Regiment next day, and after the capture on Missionary Ridge was the sole representative of the Company with the command.

In Company D, Sergeant McKey was instantly killed. Sergeant Quigley, who had previously served for many years in the Regular Army, was fatally shot, doubtless dying in a few hours. Elias Hosley was shot through the body. That night some of his comrades assisted him to the rear a long distance, and until he begged them to desist, saying that he could not endure the pain. Making him as comfortable as they could, they left him, with other wounded, at a house, where he died a few hours later. Edmund Stevens, who had been hurt by the shell that disabled Lieutenant Clarkson, fought on until shot through the body. He was left for dead upon the field, but subsequently revived; was exchanged in a few days, and eventually recovered, although never again able to take his place in the field. Corporal Orson V. Young, whose heel was severely bruised by the fragment of a shell, limped around all of the afternoon, fighting bravely to the last, although his injury was such that he would have been fully justified in going to the rear. Lieutenant Clarkson, whose face and jaw had been terribly cut, and whose wound was thought at the time to be fatal, was carried to the ridge and placed in an ambulance. He recovered in time, but bore serious scars to the day of his death. John C. Thompson's



injury was not of the regulation pattern, he having his knee-cap knocked out of position by a fall from a fence which the command was crossing while on the way to the right. After Captain Blodgett was obliged to leave the field, First Sergeant Collier took command of the Company. Soon he was shot through the thigh, and the command devolved upon Sergeant Linklater.

In Company E, a large proportion of the casualties resulted from a single charge of grape shot, which cut out almost every man for several files near the centre. No less than twelve were killed or mortally wounded during the battle,—the largest number of fatalities in any one Company. Several of those most severely injured fell into the enemy's hands. Charles F. Hayth, whose wound was not serious, remained at a house near the battle-field to care for the wounded, and was taken prisoner the next day, enduring a long confinement. Lieutenant Funk was struck in the face, his jaw being fractured, and the missile passing downward into his shoulder. He was disabled for further field service.

In Company F, Lieutenant Simms, who had served safely through the Mexican War, was desperately wounded in the hip, and died at Nashville shortly afterward. William Buchanan and William S. Nash bore him from the field and literally carried him to Rossville, part of the time supporting him between them, and part of the time taking him singly on their backs. James Pinley, who had but just returned from imprisonment,—having been captured at Franklin,—was one of the many killed outright. Thomas Shannon captured a Rebel Major, and was proudly conducting him to the rear, when an officer from some other command sought to relieve him of his charge and ordered him to the front. Shannon objected, and triumphantly walked away, with the remark that there were plenty more at the front, and suggested that if the officer wanted any he should go up where the fighting was and get one.

In Company G, the first man hit was William Joyce, a musket ball cutting his foot. In a very tempest of bullets he deliberately removed his shoe, examined the wound, and





then, as if disgusted with himself at having spent so much time with so trivial a matter, replaced the shoe and resumed firing. A moment later Daniel Benson and Thomas Davis fell, each shot in such a way as to be disabled. Both were assisted to the rear for quite a distance, but not so far but that they were captured next day, and held by the enemy about ten days. Davis died soon after being paroled. William H. Whaples was killed early in the fight. William H. Wheeler was also among those hit in the first charge. It was rumored ten days later that he was alive and had been paroled, but the report could not be verified, and it is probable that he was killed outright or died in a few hours. Corporal Hickox was twice quite severely wounded in the second charge, and Daniel Gail, received a bullet wound in the leg. George Butler was disabled near the close of the fight, and has never fully recovered. First Sergeant Aaron Scott lost a finger during the afternoon, his musket being shattered by the same bullet. He was in a kneeling posture, and in the act of capping the piece. Turning to Lieutenant Blowney, he coolly remarked that he could be of no farther service, bade him good-by and left the field. Corporal Walter Drew, although quite seriously hurt, refused to leave the field, and fought bravely to the last. John Corbin, when shot through the leg, insisted that he should stay and continue to fight; but the persuasions of his comrades and the loss of blood soon induced him to accept the opportunity offered of riding back on a caisson. Sergeant Shepard was severely injured in the thigh, and got back to the rear with great difficulty, being disabled for many months.

In Company H the losses, exclusive of the captures of the following Tuesday morning, were very severe. Lieutenant Barnes was hit early in the engagement, receiving a mortal wound. Lieutenant Yates was one of the most conspicuous line officers in the Regiment, doing gallant service. Being captured two days later, he endured a long imprisonment, returning to the Regiment in the spring of 1865. First Sergeant Francisco was three times hit, the first bullet clipping his leg, the second his side, and the third his ankle.



When the second bullet struck him he fell to the ground, and supposed himself mortally wounded. Springing up, he started to run, but quickly fell for want of breath; at the same time he thought he could feel the blood running from his side upon his hand. Turning to look, as he got breath again, he discovered that it was not blood, but the water from his canteen that was running out through a pair of holes, and that the bullet had struck his waist-belt but had not penetrated his side, although for a time he was badly "winded." However, he resumed his place, and fought on until hit a third time, when he received a wound that disabled him for further service. Corporal Simons was kneeling when shot, being just in the act of firing. Turning to a comrade he said, as cheerfully as it is possible to conceive, "'Tis sweet to die for one's country," and closed his eyes. The two Patrick Farrells did not forget their native politeness, but each saluted their commander when hit, and asked permission to retire.

Company I did excellent service, notwithstanding the demoralization of its Captain, and had five men killed or mortally wounded. Among the most severely wounded who survived was James Hutchinson, who at the time was believed to be fatally hurt. Sergeant Thomas J. Smith was sent to the rear with Colonel Clarke after the latter was wounded, remaining with him until his death, which occurred Tuesday afternoon while crossing the Tennessee River in an ambulance. He escorted the body to Bridgeport, and attended its shipment to friends at the North.

In Company K, Sergeant Elston found himself confronted by a soldier in gray, near the close of the fight. They were but a few yards apart, but Elston demanded the surrender of his opponent with an air of authority that the Rebel was compelled to recognize. It happened that Elston's musket was empty at the time, but as the man who stood in front of it was not aware of that fact, it was just as well. A moment later the plucky Sergeant was badly wounded, and demanded of his prisoner assistance to the rear, which was readily given until a wounded artillery horse came along, when the Ser-



geant turned his prisoner over to some retreating troops, and rode back to camp.

Following the battle Jacob Elberth, of Company F, who had been detailed at the camp and taken no part in the engagement, on learning of some of the strange and terrible experiences of his comrades, uttered a cry of surprise and fell to the ground, dying instantly, of heart disease it was supposed.

Often the gun barrels became so hot that they could hardly be handled, and so foul that it was difficult to load them. There were a dozen instances at least in which muskets were shattered in the hands of the soldiers. Henry C. Payne, of Company C, had two guns ruined and used his third. Two days later he was captured, and subsequently died in prison. W. V. Trout, of Company B, was also among those who had a gun shattered. Trout assisted in carrying Colonel Clarke to the rear a short distance, and then resumed his place in the ranks.

There was no organized force of stretcher-bearers in the Reserve Corps. and as a consequence those who were disabled by wounds had to be left where they fell, unless helped from the field by comrades. As a consequence the ranks were at times somewhat thinned by the going to the rear of those who assisted their friends to a place of safety, although in some Companies not a man left from first to last, those who fell at the extreme advanced positions passing into the hands of the enemy. The bodies of all of those of the Regiment killed on Sunday were left upon the battle field unburied. But, still worse, more than thirty of the severely wounded were also left to endure the sufferings from their wounds, with the attendant thirst, and from the chilly night air. It was impossible to remove them, as nearly all had fallen in the very front of the battle, when the situation was so desperate that men could not be spared, and where the positions taken could not be maintained until the injured could be carried to the rear. To them the night seemed like an age, and the survivors still recall it as a hideous nightmare. Most of those who were able to travel at all made their way to Rossville.



The few ambulances at hand were crowded to their utmost, but could accommodate only a mere fraction of the severely wounded. Wounded horses were compelled to carry one or two persons, as their strength would permit. A few ammunition wagons were halted and filled with human wrecks. Artillery caissons were taken possession of by wounded men. Many walked, fatigued and faint, back through the weary miles. Some, exhausted from the terrible strain, halted at a wayside house to rest, and, becoming too sore to resume the march, were made prisoners next day. There were many touching scenes along the way, and no one can fittingly describe the devotion manifested by comrades for their wounded friends. In some instances men were carried in blankets for miles; in other cases they were borne upon the back, or two comrades would support a third between them, toiling on wearily through the hours, and along the road that was at once so strange and so long. None had ever been over the road before, and they only knew in a half-certain way that it led to Rossville and rest. And many of these were not strong, robust men, but boys, tired, hungry, campaign-worn, slender in stature, though mighty in courage and devotion to duty. They had been lions while the battle lasted, but now that the night had come and the fighting was over, tenderly hunted up their fallen comrades and, at fearful cost of nerve and strength, aided them back along the road to safety. A score of men lost their haversacks or canteens, bullets having cut the straps that held them; others had bullet holes through their accoutrements, or found their cartridge boxes shattered, while a majority could point to bullet holes through their hats or clothing. Nearly every one had shared the narrow escapes of the battle, and the killed and wounded by no means embraced all of the real heroes of that eventful day.

Of the 419 who went into the fight more than 130 never again marched with the Regiment; for, in addition to those killed, many were permanently disabled, or died in Rebel prisons. Toward night on Sunday the flag of an Alabama Regiment was passed over by the troops of the Brigade, and it is claimed that its capture is entirely due to the NINETY-





SIXTH, but so eager were the soldiers in pursuing the Rebels that it was not cared for at once, and fell into the hands of other troops or of some officer who never officially accounted for it. The work of the Surgeons was most trying. Sometimes a half hundred wounded would be clustered about them, each needing attention. There were but few ambulances, and when the battle closed and the troops fell back to Rossville, some of the severely wounded could not be carried. Warned by the officers to do so, Surgeons Pearce and Evans went back to Rossville, where they resumed their work, spending most of the long night in extracting bullets and binding up the lacerations of the scores of victims of their own and other Regiments. Next day they went to Chattanooga and thence across the river. Their work was most trying, but patiently and tenderly, for days together, they plied their humane task, sleeping little until all were made as comfortable as the untoward circumstances would permit.

The experience of the wounded after the battle was often trying. During Monday the buildings in Chattanooga were crowded to their utmost capacity, but word was sent that all who could walk or ride should be taken to the north side of the river, and by Tuesday only a few of the seriously wounded remained. On Monday night hundreds of the maimed lay in the grove just above the river bank without other shelter than their blankets. Next morning an ambulance train was ordered to Bridgeport, and a wagon train followed, each vehicle being loaded with wounded. But many were still left. Some made their way back on foot to the hospital tents, stationed from one to three miles in the rear, and a day or two later those thought to be able to make the trip were taken by teams to the railroad. The first teams were able to go by the river road, a distance of about thirty miles, but within a few hours the Rebels held the opposite bank, and made this route impracticable. As a consequence, the trains were obliged to make a circuitous route, traveling more than sixty miles. The road was exceedingly rough, and the trip usually occupied the greater part of three days, two nights being spent in camp. Thousands of wounded soldiers



were jolted over this long, stony road, and at nightfall, when a halt was made, or next morning, before the train started, shallow graves were dug in which to bury those who had died *en route*. From Bridgeport rude hospital cars were provided, most of the wounded being sent to Nashville, but a few to points farther north. The sufferings on the long trip and in the hospitals were severe, but, as a rule, they were borne with a cheerful fortitude, as remarkable as had been the bravery of the heroes in the battle.

The Regiment had fought its first and greatest battle. In the supreme moment it had been found able and willing to meet the demands made upon it. Its long casualty list could be pointed to as an evidence of its valor. Its survivors were battle-trying, and worthy of the high name accorded the command. It was now ready for the hard service still before it, and resolutely it again set its face to the enemy, resolved to defend as gallantly, in the future battles, its tattered battle flag and the cause of which that flag was the emblem, as it had at CHICKAMAUGA.



## CHAPTER XI.

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF CHICKAMAUGA. BY GEO. HICKS, CAPTAIN  
COMPANY A, NINETY-SIXTH ILLINOIS VOLUNTEERS. EXTRACTS FROM  
AN ADDRESS DELIVERED IN KINGSTON, JAMAICA, WEST INDIES.

## Prefatory Note to the Editor.

KINGSTON, ISLAND OF JAMAICA, January 12, 1886.

DEAR COMRADE :

It would give me great pleasure to prepare, for the forthcoming History of our Regiment, as requested, a full and complete account of the important part the Regiment bore in the great battle of Chickamauga : but it will be quite impracticable to do so in a manner at all adequate and satisfactory. I should need to refer to many general and special reports, to which I have not access, and, especially, I should wish to go over the incidents of the engagement with representatives of each Company,—which is utterly out of the question.

Instead, therefore, of attempting what, at the best, would be very defective, I beg to send you, as a contribution, simply, toward an account of the action of our Regiment in that battle, some extracts (revised) from an address delivered here twelve years ago, in which I gave my personal recollections of Chickamauga.

You will notice how much is omitted that should enter into a full statement of what was done and what was suffered by the Regiment in that battle ; for I have made no attempt to describe in detail what was meritorious and worthy of special note in each Company. Of necessity, my recollections deal specially with the soldiers of the Company of which I was then the commander ; and you and all of our comrades will understand that when I make particular mention of any of these it is because they come vividly within the scope of my recollections, and not because I wish them to be considered more eminently worthy of mention than soldiers in other Companies. In fact, in all that is commendable they are to be regarded as types of forth to be found in every Company.

I have endeavored to be so faithful in what I have set forth that I trust those who read my recollections of the battle will feel that there is no occasion to make any abatement from such words of praise as my heart and judgment have prompted me to utter.

I am, yours sincerely,

GEO. HICKS.

C. A. PARTRIDGE, Esq., Waukegan, Ill.

## PRELIMINARY.

\* \* \* \* \*

SHALL I tell you what sort of men were the Volunteers who enlisted with me? Some were farmers, owning and cultivating their own homesteads ; many were stalwart sons of farmers ; a number were clerks in public offices and in mercantile houses ; others were mechanics ; several were school teachers ; some were studying for a profession ; a few were day laborers. Some were heads of families, leaving wife and



children at home; but the majority were young men from eighteen to twenty-five years of age. Nearly all were men of intelligence and character. Doubtless some, partaking of the general excitement and moved by the popular impulse, enlisted without seriously counting the cost; but by far the greater number volunteered from an imperative sense of duty to their country and to the cause of humanity, both of which they felt to be imperiled. What noble hearts they were! How worthy of highest eulogium!

Of the many, let me speak especially of two, with whom I had become intimately acquainted prior to the war. These young men were bosom friends, heart companions—much alike in their outward circumstances of life, as well as in their principles, sympathies and tastes, and closely associated in Christian labors. Both were educated, intelligent, cultured; and their presence would have graced any drawing-room in the land. Each was the eldest son in a large family, with brothers and sisters looking up to him for guidance, and each was the stay and staff of a widowed mother. It was not without serious thought, and many an anxious prayer, and the most solemn conviction of duty, that those widowed mothers could give up their first-born, and those young men could break away from such home ties, and abandon the bright prospects of life opening before them, to venture all upon the field of battle. The Governor of the State and the President of the Republic were pleased, in the course of the war, to honor me with military rank; but the highest honor I received was when such mothers entrusted their sons to my charge and such sons chose me to be their Captain in the war. One of these young men was made my First Sergeant\* and the other was chosen to be Quarter-Master Sergeant of the Regiment. †

\* \* \* \* \*

Ten such Companies as mine constituted a Regiment, ours being the NINETY-SIXTH Illinois Infantry. As a rule, from three to six Regiments constituted a Brigade, three Brigades a Division, three Divisions a Corps, and three Corps an Army. The Army of the Cumberland, in addition to its three Corps.

\* John G. Schaefer.

† William S. Bean.





comprised a Reserve Corps of three Divisions, and to this Reserve Corps our Regiment was attached.

For nearly a year we were soldiers without seeing a battle. We had enough of marching over the hard pike roads of Kentucky and Tennessee; we had plenty of drilling; plenty of rough campaigning; now and then a little skirmishing; but no hard fighting. Our turn came at last, and after that it came often and continuously. Our turn came at the battle of Chickamauga—a battle which the soldiers of the NINETY-SIXTH Illinois will remember as long as they remember anything.

If we judge by the number of killed and wounded, the battle of Chickamauga was the severest battle in the West, and, next to Gettysburg, the severest battle of the war. For us of the NINETY-SIXTH Illinois it was, beyond all comparison, our great battle.

I shall try to tell you something about that battle—to describe that which is well-nigh indescribable. What I saw of the great battle was confined to a limited part, for the battle was fought in the woods, and no one actively engaged with his Company or Regiment could see much beyond his own Regiment or Brigade. For one, during the battle, I found I had very little leisure for any observation beyond the range of my own immediate duties. Therefore, if I attempt to describe what I saw of the battle, I must speak chiefly of my own Company and Regiment; and if I venture to speak of a soldier's feelings in entering into and going through a battle, I must of course rely chiefly upon recollections of my own personal experiences. So I must beg that, for the time being, you will kindly allow me to forget that I am a stranger in a strange land, and permit me to speak as freely and with as little reserve as if I were addressing a private circle of indulgent and intimate friends.

#### MARCHING TO THE FRONT.

Gen. Bragg, with his Confederate Army, had retreated from Tennessee into Georgia, where he occupied the stronghold of Chattanooga. Gen. Rosecrans, commanding the Army of the Cumberland, followed with three Corps under Gens.





WILLIAM F. TAYLOR.

CAPTAIN COMPANY E.



Thomas, McCook and Crittenden, while the Regiments of the Reserve were stationed at various distances in the rear, guarding railway lines. By dividing his forces and executing a flank movement, threatening the enemy's communications, Rosecrans compelled Bragg to retreat from Chattanooga. While the enemy was retreating, followed by Rosecrans, reinforcements from the East and South were hurried forward to strengthen Bragg, who soon was able to turn at bay and resume the offensive. Rosecrans, falling back toward Chattanooga, endeavored to bring together again the three Corps, which were widely separated, and urgent orders were sent to the Reserve to hasten to the front.

As soon as the orders were known we were all on the alert, and speedily put ourselves in marching order. We made forced marches over the Cumberland mountains and down into the Tennessee Valley. I well remember how weary at one time were the soldiers, plodding on from early dawn until long after dusk; then, after a hurriedly prepared supper, lying down upon the ground to snatch two or three hours of sleep; then, aroused by the bugle, cheerfully resuming the march, pushed steadily on through the hours of the night and into the new day. So we hastened to the front, eager to bear our part in the conflict and share in the anticipated victory. Skirmishing along the slope of Lookout Mountain, leaving Chattanooga a little to one side, we passed on a few miles farther to Rossville, at the foot of Mission Ridge, about midway between Chattanooga and Chickamauga Creek. We had reached an important point, for Rossville Gap was one of the two available avenues of approach to Chattanooga from our front. Here we halted and rested for a day or two, while the three Corps to the front were endeavoring to form a junction and establish a line of battle on the bank of Chickamauga Creek, where they might withstand the confident onslaught of Bragg's largely reinforced army.

On Friday, the 18th of September, 1863, the distant cannonading indicated that the expected battle had begun. During the day our Regiment was ordered to prepare for action; the sick and those disabled by the long march were left at



Rossville, with the tents and luggage ; our musicians also left drums and fifes, that they might be free to assist the wounded ; the soldiers took three days' rations in their haversacks, and forty rounds of ammunition in their cartridge boxes, and marched out to feel for the enemy. My Company being on picket duty, and not relieved until next day, did not participate in this movement. The Regiment encountered a small force of the enemy's cavalry, and suffered some loss in the brief skirmish which took place. The Regiment lay in close proximity to the enemy that night.

On Saturday my Company rejoined the Regiment. The Brigade was deployed in line-of-battle, taking up a defensive position to repel any assault that might be made with a view to obtain possession of Rossville Gap. Some of the Regiments had, for a brief time, a sharp encounter with a force of the enemy, but the attack was successfully repulsed, and was not repeated. During the day we were under the spasmodic fire of artillery, which inflicted no loss upon us. We remained in line-of-battle, prepared to resist any attack, and the hours of Saturday wore on, uneventful to the Regiment ; but the distant cannonading, heavy and continuous throughout the day, gave evidence that the battle elsewhere was severe.

#### WAITING FOR ORDERS.

We lay upon our arms through the chilly hours of that night, out under the open sky of heaven, without tent or blanket. Long before sunrise the men were ordered to be in readiness to form line-of-battle at a moment's notice.

Our breakfast was speedily despatched. Every soldier had his oyster can, or tin can of some sort, in which he roughly pulverized his coffee grains with the butt end of his bayonet ; then filling the can with water, and holding it upon a stick over the bivouac fire, a good draught of coffee was soon ready for him. A piece of bacon, fastened upon a forked stick, held over the fire, was broiled in a few minutes, the drippings being carefully caught upon his hard biscuit. Then, with his biscuit and bacon and coffee he made as good a breakfast as heart of soldier could wish. Next, the Entfield





mus-kets were carefully cleaned, extra ammunition was dealt out, and we formed line-of-battle and rested and waited.

While we waited we began to hear the distant rumbling of artillery. A little later the cannonading had greatly increased in violence—was multiplied at many points—grew more continuous. Evidently a great battle was in progress, and as the morning hours drew on we made sure that we should have a part in it; for the tide of battle was surging toward us, the noise of battle was becoming louder, the sound of the artillery was drawing nearer. But the battle was not in our immediate front. We shifted our position now and again, sometimes moving a little distance forward in line-of-battle, sometimes moving in column to the right, and again to the left, but most of the time simply resting and waiting until it should become known where we were needed.

Perhaps I should tell you that when a Regiment is formed in line-of-battle the men are in two ranks. Those of the front rank stand side by side, close enough to touch each other's elbows. The men in the rear rank form a similar line, standing just behind the men of the front rank. In the rear of the second rank are the Sergeants and the Officers. In the centre of the front rank are the Colors and the Color Guard—a guard composed of a chosen Corporal from each Company of the Regiment. The skirmish line consists of one rank of men, not close together, but from five to ten feet apart. When moving by the front, in line-of-battle, the soldiers form a continuous line, marching side by side in the two ranks. In moving by the right flank, or the left flank, they march in column, following one another, four abreast.

The morning was wearing slowly away, and, as the cannonading grew continuously fiercer and more vehement, the nerves were drawn to a sharper tension and the pulse began to throb with a quicker beat.—and we still rested and waited for orders.

It was a beautiful, cloudless Sabbath day,—one of the famous battle Sundays of the war. While we rested, the Sabbath hours were variously employed. The two sergeants I have mentioned had been accustomed to meet on Sunday



for united study of the Bible, and I noticed that on this day they were seated together on a fallen tree, with their muskets beside them, reading from the New Testament, as was their wont. One—the Quarter-Master Sergeant—might have remained idle and safe in the rear with the wagon train; but he enlisted to be a soldier, and his heart would not permit him to shrink from the toil and danger which fell to the lot of his comrades. So he never gave up his musket, and often managed to find time from his duties to take part in the Company drill; and now he was with us, to share in the duties and the dangers of the battle-field. Like them, many other soldiers also had their Testaments open, and were reading in them, reclining upon the ground, waiting for orders to enter into the battle. Others were conversing in low tones, and a few boisterously; but the tone of bravado was rare, and was not long maintained. Others simply waited—listened and waited in silent expectation. There was an intense earnestness, a soberness, a thoughtfulness expressed on the countenances of the men which I had not seen before. I noticed that some, who had been accustomed to relieve the tedium of camp life with games at cards, had strewn their cards upon the ground, preferring not to take them into battle.

I spoke of the impending battle to our Lieutenant Colonel Clarke. I remember that some one has said: "I am afraid of nothing but fear," and I believe it was some such feeling as that which I expressed to him. I said to him that I was extremely solicitous that my Company and myself should acquit ourselves well; that, while I felt great pride in their acquirements in drill and their discipline and soldierly bearing, all this would count for nothing, would be absolutely worthless, if now, at the supreme moment, in the hour and the test of battle, we should fail. Colonel Clarke said: "I have no fear for our men. They will do their duty, every man of them. And I have no fear for myself. I shall go into this fight, and go through it, and come out of it all right." Alas! that for himself, and for so many, the result was otherwise. I spoke to my men, wishing to gauge their temper. As the ominous boom! boom! boom! of scores and hundreds



of cannon near and far distant burst continuously upon the ear, I said: "Well, boys, that sounds as if there would be some work for us to do to-day." "Yes, Captain." "Well, I hope Company A will do well whatever it has to do." "We'll try, Captain." "One thing, boys—we must all try to keep together." "We'll stick by you, Captain, as long as you stick by us."

Still, we waited; and the sun got up high in the heavens and poured down its rays straight and hot upon our heads, and the pealing thunder of the guns was incessant.

The battle was going against us. As we afterward learned, the day was already lost and the army was in a very perilous situation. Gen. Rosecrans had left the field and was making his way into Chattanooga,—had left the field, and the Reserves had received no orders. Portions of Crittenden's Corps were retiring from the field. McCook's Corps had been driven back and was in retreat, and, excepting Sheridan's Division, was retreating in much confusion and disorder. Thomas only was left to bear the whole brunt of the battle and prevent what was already defeat from becoming irretrievable disaster.

We waited for orders, but no orders came. Staff officers and orderlies had been sent during the forenoon to find Rosecrans or Thomas to report the position of the Reserves and to ask for orders. Some were taken prisoners on the way; some found their way blocked, and they returned; and if any finally reached Thomas they could not find their way back to us. At last Gen. Steedman, commanding our Division, fully satisfied that the Brigade of the other Division which was with us was sufficient to guard the point where the Reserves were stationed, determined to move, without orders, to where the main army was evidently fighting a desperate if not a losing battle.

#### MARCHING INTO BATTLE.

Before the movement began, Company A was sent some distance to the left to extend our skirmish line and ascertain if any force of the enemy was concealed there in the woods. I had barely succeeded in placing my men in position when



word came that the Division was in motion and that my Company must rejoin the Regiment with all possible speed. All the troops were moving rapidly, and we exerted ourselves to the utmost to rejoin our comrades. We found the main road thronged with artillery and ammunition wagons, all hurrying on, while the hot dust, inches deep, rolled up in volumes. Leaving the road we pushed our way through the fields, passing Regiment after Regiment, until, hot and weary, we reached the NINETY-SIXTH, which was at the head of the column. Just as we arrived, the column was halted, for the enemy's cavalry were threatening to dispute our progress. Company A was again thrown forward on the skirmish line; but the cavalry retreated, and the march was resumed at almost double-quick time. We found ourselves in a field over which a wave of battle had already passed, leaving, as traces of its progress, abandoned muskets and knapsacks, here and there dead and wounded soldiers, a straggler or two in blue, and a few soldiers in gray or butternut, whom we sent as prisoners to the rear. Once more we halted, and prepared to encounter an opposing force of cavalry, but the cavalry speedily retired, and again we were in motion, hastening forward in the direction of the heaviest fighting. We passed near a large farm house, which had been converted into a hospital, filled with the wounded, while scores of wounded soldiers lay stretched on the sward near by. Hurrying on through the wooded fields we emerged into a large open plain of meadow land and stubble field, with an extensive field of corn to the right and woods to the left.

We were nearing the conflict, and the sharp crack of musketry began to be heard amid the din of the batteries. We halted on the edge of the open field until the troops could come up and be properly formed for the march forward. The Regiments of the First Brigade were massed in column doubled on the centre to march abreast, each Regiment presenting a front of two Companies, the intervals between the several Regiments being sufficient to permit the Brigade to be deployed into a continuous line with the least possible delay. The Second Brigade was formed in like manner in





rear of the First. At the head of their respective commands were the General and Staff Officers, and Regimental Field Officers. In front of all, advanced to some little distance, was a line of skirmishers, consisting of one Company from each Regiment of the leading Brigade,—my Company being on the skirmish line in front of the NINETY-SIXTH, occupying the extreme right of this line, which extended some rods into the field of standing corn.

At the word of command the troops moved forward in this order, afterwards changing, while still in motion, into columns by fours. We had but fairly begun the march over the open field when we heard a sudden screaming, shrieking sound in the air,—a sudden boom above our heads,—and there was a cloud of white smoke where a shell had burst, and rising up from the field near our feet a dozen little cloudlets of dust, where fragments of the shell had struck the ground. And then came another—and another—and another—a host of them, hot and quick; for over there on the left, just in the edge of the woods, a battery had been moved into position to break our ranks and stop our march. The heavy, constant booming of the cannon to our left, the sharper boom of the bursting shells all about us, the thud of the solid shot as it struck the ground and ricocheted over our heads, plunging on and far away through the corn field,—all this was fearfully exciting. How the shells did fly toward us and about us! And with what a Satanic vim, with what an infernal energy, they seemed to come, with an indescribable scream, and a shriek and a rushing whizz, as if each shell were a malignant demon, with a will of its own, determined to tear us to pieces! It was exciting and fearful,—a fitting prelude to what was before us. But, looking back from the skirmish line upon the massed columns of our Brigade, while the air was filled with little clouds of sulphurous smoke, and innumerable clouds of dust were springing up all over the field, it was a magnificent spectacle to see those thousands of soldiers, with flags proudly flying, marching steadily through that storm of shot and shell and never a break in the ranks! Or, if there was a moment of confusion, as when a shell burst in the midst of the NINETY-



SIXTH, disabling some of our men, the broken ranks were at once closed, and the march was not interrupted.

As we approached the farther end of the open field the continuous piercing clang and racket of musketry sounding in front gave sure token that the battle was raging fiercely not far from us. On a distant knoll we observed a group of officers watching our advance. It was Thomas and his Staff. A very anxious group it had been when the movement of our troops in the distance was first noticed; for, whether friend or foe, it was impossible to tell. "If that is the enemy," said Thomas, "we're lost; if the Reserve, the army is saved."

#### IN THE BATTLE.

Gen. Steedman had galloped forward and reported himself to Thomas. As we approached nearer the troops were halted, the skirmishers were called in, and the Brigade was deployed in line, the NINETY-SIXTH holding the right, my Company having the extreme right of the line. We had halted barely long enough to recover our breath, and wipe the perspiration from our faces, and wash the dust out of our throats with water from our canteens, when word came that the enemy was moving in large force to turn the right of Thomas' line, and that the Reserve must hasten into position to protect the flank. Our Brigade moved quickly to the right for a considerable distance, and then faced to the front. Company A was again deployed as skirmishers, and began to advance, when immediately was heard, here and there, the sharp crack of the rifle. The men advanced, returning the fire, but were met with a rattling volley. "Ah, this is no skirmish work!" I thought, and I shouted to the men to rally together as quickly as possible. By the time the Company could be formed, the Regiment, with the Brigade, was abreast of us, and we resumed our place at the right.

Facing the fire, the line pressed forward on the full run, keeping the ranks tolerably well—closing up the ranks as men and officers fell dead or wounded upon the field—driving the enemy before us over the rise of ground, over the slight depression, and up toward the top of the ridge—still driving the



enemy and gaining the top of the ridge—encountering a withering fire—halting and lying down—firing a few rounds—then forward once more, running, and yelling, and again driving the enemy—on and over a little valley—on and on and up to the summit of another rise of ground—when our advance was suddenly checked. “Lie down!” ran along the line, and instantaneously the men prostrated themselves upon the ground. For we were right in the teeth of a battery that opened upon us a fearful storm of canister and grape, and the showers of Minié balls from the doubled or trebled lines of infantry that now confronted us made the fire terrific—horrible—murderous! By lying close to the ground the men were somewhat protected, most of the balls and shot flying over them. And our men were not idle! They made good use of their Enfields—firing—turning upon their backs and reloading while still lying down—then turning and firing again. So they kept up the dreadful fight, while with clenched teeth and bated breath and stiffened sinews, and nerves strung to the highest tension, they received and endured and returned the terrible fire of the enemy. How appalling the din of battle! How fiend-like the screech of the iron missiles, rushing forth with deafening roar from the savage throats of the artillery! How furious the rattling clangor of musketry,—without stop,—without a moment’s pause,—without any let up or respite,—persistent,—incessant,—unremitting! How unceasing the whistling of the bullets—tzip! tzip! tzip!—speeding with continuous whizz through the branches of the low oak shrubs that thinly covered the ridge, denuding them of their leaves, which fell dissevered in flakes of green constantly dropping, dropping, upon the jackets of blue lying beneath! Ever and anon would be faintly heard the soldier’s muttered cry, “Oh!” or “I’m hit!” And some would leave the ranks to seek a surgeon or hospital in the rear,—and some, wounded in leg or foot, but not in arm, would resolutely continue to reload and fire their muskets until, weak and exhausted, they would crawl away to find shelter behind any friendly tree,—and some would remain helpless where they lay, bravely suppressing every groan,—and some would lie



still and stiff and motionless! And, without cessation, the missiles of death still flowed in two deadly streams from us and toward us, and the thought would force itself upon me,—“Oh, my God! is any cause so righteous and holy as to justify such work as this!”

Clouds of powder smoke began to gather over us and to envelop us. We breathed nothing but powder! Clouds of powder smoke hung heavily, like a dark curtain, between the two armies, hiding them from each other's sight;—but through the smoke the streams of bullets still made their way. Then the enemy's fire slackened a little. Probably a portion of the line opposed to us was yielding under our fire, and the battery was being removed to a less exposed position. Masses of fresh troops, however, were hurried forward to strengthen the enemy's line, and another battery was brought into action. When the fire slackened, it seemed to us that the enemy was giving way, and our men instinctively began to get upon their feet, and, with a rousing cheer, were about to dash forward in another charge, when they were met by a fire fiercer and hotter than ever. “Lie down!” was the word. On the right of the Brigade it was promptly obeyed; but on the left the line recoiled from the fire of the new battery and the redoubled fire of the infantry, and gave way. The word was passed along the line that our men were retreating. Some one called out, “Fall back!” Then we heard the voice of Colonel Champion—“Don't move, men! Who is it that says, ‘Fall back?’ Keep where you are! Hold your position!” But the Regiments on the left were falling back, and it was useless, as it probably would have been unwise, to attempt to hold our position isolated from the rest. “Fall back, then, but keep in line. Keep to your colors! Don't scatter! Keep to your colors! Keep your line!” The line, however, was not kept. The Brigade line was already badly broken, and we could not keep the Regimental line intact. Some of our men retreated on the run; others less rapidly; still others more slowly, keeping more with the colors and our Colonel. Soon, instead of a well-preserved line, marching with regular uniformity, one saw an irregular mass, moving back in not a





little disorder. The retreat was checked as soon as we had repassed the ridge from which we had driven the enemy at the first charge. Here our men were halted, and our officers began to form them into line again.

The supporting line, which, upon our advance, was placed in position a little to our rear, had partially given way even before our line in front; but Gen. Steedman, with some of the Brigade and Division Staff Officers, promptly rallied it, and it now moved forward in gallant style and took position on the summit of the ridge which we had just passed, and kept up a brisk fire, but not at such close quarters as had made the conflict so destructive to us—destructive also to the enemy. Our battery, too, had come up, and was sent forward toward the right, and began to take an active and effective part in the fierce contest.

While the forces now in front were keeping up the battle strenuously, we were recovering from our disorder. But, first of all, before anything else, we sought to quench the intolerable thirst incident to the battle field. Our throats were parched, and the canteens of our men were soon emptied. I sent back one of my men with a dozen empty canteens slung over his shoulder, with orders to find water somewhere—anywhere—and rejoin us as soon as possible. It was late in the afternoon before he could again find the Company. I sent two others back to the ammunition wagon for a supply of cartridges. Not a few of the men had expended every cartridge they had taken into battle. Some had obtained a new supply by cutting off cartridge boxes from dead comrades, and others had picked up cartridge boxes which the wounded had thrown away. Those who had cartridges shared with those who had none, and when our men returned, as they did speedily, with the box of ammunition, each man was fully provided with a double supply.

While I was thus absorbed in looking after my Company and getting it into fighting trim again, giving little heed to what was going on with the rest of the Regiment, a Staff Officer came up hurriedly, with arms outstretched, a sword in one hand and a revolver in the other (he had been rallying



stragglers), his manner and tone indicating intense excitement. Doubtless I was equally excited; probably we all were. "Captain! why in thunder don't you form this Regiment?" "I am forming my Company, sir. Where's Colonel Champion?" "He's taken command of the Brigade; Whitaker's wounded." "Well, where's Colonel Clarke?" "Why, don't you know? Clarke was killed at the first fire!" As our remaining field officer, Major Smith, was with Gen. Steedman, on staff duty, I at once assumed command of the Regiment. "Attention, NINETY-SIXTH! On the colors, right and left, dress!" That is the command prescribed in the Tactics, and I gave it; and then followed others not found in the drill book. "Officers, get your men into line! What are you men about? Why don't you dress up there, on the colors? Oh, you men, get into line! Hello, Sergeant, where is your Captain?" "We haven't seen anything of our Captain." "Where's your Lieutenant? Isn't there any officer with this Company?" "He is wounded or killed; I don't know which." "Well, Sergeant, take command of the Company and do the best you can with it. \* \* \* You Corporal, back there! Where are you running to?" "I'm looking for my Regiment." "Here it is. Come up here. Bring those men with you." I noticed that the Color Guard was greatly reduced in number. Very few officers were with our shattered Regiment; but those who were present were doing splendidly. One officer had tied his handkerchief around his head, bandaging his ear, which had been pierced by a Minié ball. Another had wrapped his handkerchief around his hand, from which the flesh had been partly torn. Having roughly dressed their wounds they were busily preparing their men for further action. The officers spoke to the men in cheery tones, and the Sergeants were nobly filling the place of officers left dead or wounded on the field, and the men in the ranks were active and eager, providing themselves with a new supply of cartridges, wiping out the barrels of their muskets, fouled by repeated discharges, and forming the line to renew the contest.

We were getting to look like a Regiment again, and officers



and men were encouraging one another and pledging faith to each other, with determination intensified tenfold because of the great gaps in our ranks, when a Staff Officer came riding up at full gallop. "Who commands this Regiment?" "I do." "Move to the right as quick as you can; the devils are outflanking us!" "Battalion! Right face! Forward—double-quick—march!" Other Regiments of our Brigade followed. When we had gone so far to the right that no part of the column was covered by the line already engaged in action we turned to the front, forming an extended line of battle. Again it was a charge—a running and yelling and rapid discharge of musketry. Ere long we again encountered a heavy fire—halted—lay down and returned the fire. It was almost the same thing over again that we had had at the former charge, only the enemy had not now a battery close upon us pouring its shot into our ranks. A few men seemed inclined to fall back at once, but a word or two from the officers and sergeants kept the line unbroken. The battle raged fiercely, a very tempest of fire; nor was it less fiercely tempestuous on our left, at the point where we had made our first charge. The strength of the Division had been brought up to hold that ridge, and so vigorous and unflagging and well directed was the fire of our infantry and artillery that the repeated furious assaults of fresh forces of the enemy failed to break the line. After a while the enemy's very severe fire in our front and to the left slackened. For the time the extreme fury of the tempest was abated. The foe had been repulsed. In vain had Bragg hurled against us the reinforcements of confident veterans who had come to him flushed with victories gained in the East. The effort to drive us back had failed; we held the ground and the right flank was still secure. Here our hearts were cheered by our Major Smith, who, having traversed the line to our left, brought us glorious tidings of the battle; how victoriously the Division had withstood the desperate onslaught, and the whole line remained intact. Soon a Staff Officer came along the line, urging us for heaven's sake to maintain our position, telling us that Burnside had just arrived with his Corps and was only halting behind some hills



until he could form his men into line, and then he would be up to support us. We had heard rumors that Burnside was to join Rosecrans, and this report of his arrival was very cheering.

The enemy made one more and final effort to turn the right of our line. Additional troops had been brought up to extend his lines and overlap us on our right flank. Our Second Brigade was put in motion to check this new movement, and had orders to form line-of-battle on the right of the NINETY-SIXTH. But the danger was imminent; there was not a moment to lose; and once more the NINETY-SIXTH was moved by the right flank at the double-quick. I observed that our Colonel was now with us, near the left of the Regiment, but I supposed he was there as Brigade Commander, not knowing that Whittaker's wound had proved to be slight, and that he had resumed his command. As we marched, our direction was changed so as to move obliquely to the front.—gaining ground to the right and to the front at the same time. The Second Brigade, moving rapidly, was up with us, when the order was given to change direction and move direct to the front, the intention being that that Brigade should pass us and form its line on our right. Colonel Champion, with a portion of the Regiment on the left, heard the order and changed direction accordingly; the rest of the Regiment failed to hear the command, and continued the oblique march. This left a gap, and the foremost troops of the Second Brigade pushed into it. Then I began to hear, "Give way to the right! Give way to the right!" And I gave way to the right; and kept on giving way to the right, until the Brigade had formed its line, sandwiched between the severed parts of our Regiment. I had discovered that the Regiment was broken; but it was utterly out of the question to leave the front to hunt for any missing Companies. So a portion of the Regiment still continued to occupy the extreme right of the whole line,—a position which during that Sunday afternoon had been the critical point of danger. When the line of the Second Brigade was fully formed it charged forward gallantly, and we joined in the charge and ran as fast and as far, and





yelled as loud and fired as rapidly as any. This was a very successful charge, and was continued half a mile or more, the enemy not making such strenuous fight as in the earlier part of the afternoon, and we took a number of prisoners. Then the line fell back to a more advantageous position, where we could more easily repel an assault. My Regiment occupied a little hill, heavily timbered. Here the men were allowed to scatter themselves as if upon the skirmish line, taking position behind trees about as they pleased, and keeping up a slow, irregular fire upon the enemy, all being cautioned not to run themselves out of ammunition.

It was now not quite an hour to sunset. Never did I long for sunset as on that Sunday at Chickamauga. With us it was not "Night, or Blucher," but "Night, or Burnside!" But no Burnside came, and our single line was left to hold its own without support. The firing now was not very severe, and gradually grew weaker, sensibly slackening all along the line. At length it grew so still on our left I went out of the woods to see what was going on. One of my Sergeants called out, "Captain, you're not leaving us?" "Oh, no; I'll be back in a moment." I discovered that the whole line was in motion, retiring leisurely, and it was already at some distance to the rear. I gave the word to call in our men and fall back with the rest. I found that I had now but a very few men with me; and I should have thought that I had wholly strayed from my Regiment were it not that I had with me the colors of the Regiment, together with the commander of the Color Company—the intrepid boy-lieutenant, lion-hearted, fearless, unflinching—Charlie Earle, whose name must be inscribed high among the highest on the roll of Chickamanga heroes.

The line fell back half a mile or more, and halted. Most of our Division had already retired still further to the rear. Soon after halting we saw our Colonel coming up, looking for us. He, with the portion of the Regiment separated from us, had joined in the last forward advance of our own Brigade, ~~and~~ more encountering the foe, and successfully holding the advanced line until ordered to retire. When he discovered



his lost command, he exclaimed,—“Oh, Captain! there you are!” “Yes, Colonel, here we are!” “I feared you were lost,” said the Colonel; “how many men have you got with you?” “About fifty or sixty.” “Well, I’ve got twenty-five or thirty. Let’s get them together.” So we tried to bring the men into Regimental line again. “Where’s Company E?” said one of the men, seeking to find his Company. “Here it is—I’m Company E,” replied another. It seemed that the reply was not far out of the way—so few of the Company could be found. “Never mind your Companies, boys,” said the Colonel. “Let us get into line, somehow—what there is left of us! Get into line anywhere! Dress up on the colors!” There didn’t appear to be much left of us to get into line, and certainly there was but little left of the colors to align ourselves upon. Of the ten picked men forming the Color Guard, nine had been killed or wounded. One flag-staff had been quite shot away, and the other was cut and badly splintered. The two flags were riddled with Minié balls and grape shot, but what remained of our Color Guard had gallantly clung to them. Our Color-Bearer had tied the fluttering shreds about the splintered staff, which he now held aloft as a guide for us in forming our line. Here our troops formed their last line-of-battle to resist any attack that might be made. Our foes had also retired a little and formed their last line. Neither side molested the other. Both had had enough of fighting for that day!

#### RETURNING FROM BATTLE.

So that long, long Sunday afternoon at last came to an end, the sun slowly disappeared, night closed down upon us, and we breathed more freely, with a sense of infinite relief. Not long afterward we received orders to retire from the field. We soon reached the main body of our Division, and here we began to gather up our missing men of the NINETY-SIXTH. Some who had courageously borne their part in the heaviest fighting of the day had followed other Regiments of the Brigade as they fell back, thinking the NINETY-SIXTH was also retreating. Some had been sent back to help the wounded





Gen. W. T. SHERMAN.



Gen. U. S. GRANT.



Gen. GEO. H. THOMAS.



Gen. O. O. HOWARD.



Gen. D. S. STANLEY.



Gen. J. T. STEEDMAN.



Gen. W. WHITTAKER.



Gen. JOS. HOOKER.



Gen. NATHAN KIMBALL.



off the field. Others had been sent back for water or for ammunition, and when about to return had heard that it was useless to go forward again,—that our whole line was in full retreat, and that there was nothing left of the Regiment! We learned that most of our wounded had been conveyed to the rear, on their way to Chattanooga. Others of the wounded were placed on the caissons of the artillery, or on the ammunition wagons, or on horses—for the ambulances were crowded—and we got them along somehow, as best we could, as we moved back toward our camp at Rossville. The ambulances and the artillery and the wagons clogged the road, and it was too dark to move across the fields; so we plodded along slowly and wearily, and with frequent tiresome interruptions. When we had gone two or three miles we came upon acres of troops in bivouac, gathered about myriad fires, cooking their supper. “Ah! there’s Burnside’s men!” we said. “What Corps?” we asked. “McCook’s.” No Burnside there; he must be farther on. After awhile we came upon other acres of troops in bivouac. “What Corps?” “Crittenden’s.” Nothing of Burnside! It was all a myth about Burnside. Burnside, with his Corps, was at Knoxville, a hundred miles away! There was really no foundation for the camp rumor that Burnside was on his way to reinforce us; and the extended cloud of dust which had been seen rising at a distance, and which was supposed to be caused by the tread of Burnside’s approaching columns, was in fact occasioned by a force of cavalry charging to protect a wagon train.

It was nearly ten o’clock that night when we reached our camp. The wounded were cared for as best we could. At our Company tents we found the small squad of men which had been sent to the rear in charge of prisoners. “Hurrah! Here’s our Captain! He isn’t killed, after all! Why, we heard there wasn’t a man left of Company A!” “Some of us are left, boys. But do get us some coffee as soon as you can.” The coffee, which was soon prepared, and some hard biscuit, furnished a supper most welcome after the day’s long fast. Then, with the sensibilities of the mind and the heart stunned by the dreadful work of that afternoon, and with





physical powers almost utterly exhausted, we were glad to throw ourselves down upon our blankets and obtain rest and sleep. There was but one break to the night's rest. At midnight the officers of each Company were aroused by our Quartermaster, who told us that a Brigade of the Second Division was wholly destitute of rations, the Brigade wagon train having been captured by the enemy's cavalry, and he asked if we would divide our rations with them. We kept awake long enough to say "Yes," and fell asleep again.

#### OUR LOSS IN BATTLE.

At réveille next morning we assembled for roll-call. Those who had become separated from the Regiment came in during the night, and we could now count up our loss.

The Regiment went into battle a few more than four hundred strong. When we left Illinois we numbered 1,000 men, but a year of marching and drilling and roughing it in camp had sifted out a great many. Some had died; some had been discharged; many were in hospital. Many, also—the less robust—had been sent from the Regiment,—detailed to garrison forts, to guard baggage wagons and provision trains, to protect railway trains, to aid in building bridges and in repairing roads. Our 400 with us on the morning of Chickamauga were nearly all young men, who had endured the severe strain of active military life much better than the middle-aged. The battles of the war were fought chiefly by the young men. The nation was saved by the boys!

We went into the battle of Chickamauga with 400 men; we came out with a loss of about two hundred killed and wounded. We could well spare half our rations! Our loss was extraordinarily large. When the reports of the battle were all in from Rosecrans' entire army I carefully examined the tabular statements of the numbers engaged and the losses, and it appeared that, in proportion to numbers, no Regiment had suffered so heavily in killed and wounded as the NINETY-SIXTH Illinois. We afterwards bore our part in Sherman's Atlanta campaign of a hundred and twenty days, and nearly every other day were engaged in skirmish or battle, and every



day, with hardly an exception, were under fire; but in all that long campaign our entire loss did not exceed the loss we suffered during those few fateful hours on the field of Chickamauga!

I had looked forward to the test of battle with not a little solicitude, lest our men should fail fully to meet the stern demands of duty when the supreme hour of trial came; but how nobly they bore themselves throughout the fearful ordeal of that Sunday afternoon, enduring a test such as rarely falls to the lot of any Regiment in its first battle! How many of the men—the boys—in the ranks proved themselves to be true-born heroes that day! And the officers shared with the men alike the danger and the loss. Of the twenty-three field and line officers of the Regiment on duty that day eleven were killed or wounded. Were all equally undaunted? Was there no exception? The terrible storm of plunging shot and exploding shells, bursting suddenly upon us as we marched over the open meadow field to enter into battle, seemed to unnerve and quite bewilder one of our Captains, who, in our subsequent rapid movements, lost his Regiment, and was not again seen that day by his soldiers. His Company was worthily led in the battle by a Lieutenant, who, a few days afterward, was promoted to fill the vacancy caused by the Captain's resignation.

The morning roll call disclosed how heavy had been our loss; yet we dare not indulge ourselves in any tender, relaxing emotions of grief. The heart must remain still firmly braced to meet the peril of another day. The danger to our army—with the cause of our country closely linked to that army's fate—was still imminent; for we were in the presence of a foe who was marshaling against us greatly preponderating numbers. We were yet on the battle field, as it were, and must steel our hearts to bear, if need be, still further loss. And the loss was not delayed, for our picket guard sent out that night did not return to us; only a few of them, long afterward, were seen again, when they rejoined the Regiment as returned prisoners of war. We were yet on the battle field, and on the battle field there is no room for emotions of grief.



In battle there is an exaltation of feeling which lifts one quite above the plane of all ordinary sentiments and feelings. I recall an incident: During the few moments when my Company was rallying from the skirmish line, just as the battle opened upon us, my leading Corporal\*—the man who always marched so proudly at the head of the Regiment—generously shared with me the scanty store of water in his canteen; the next minute, as we were advancing, he fell lifeless before me, and I pressed forward with the men with but half a glance at his prostrate form, without being conscious of the slightest feeling of pity, or sympathy, or any gentle, kindly emotion. The supreme duty of the moment overwhelmed all else! Nor did our wounded soldiers yield to any feelings of self-pity. We heard little groaning from their lips. When my Color Corporal† was struck in the arm he came to me and said, in quite his ordinary tone of voice: "Captain, I'm hit; this arm is useless." "Go to the rear, Corporal; take your musket with you if you can; if not, drop it." I remember what a noble type of manhood he was—tall, upright, square-built, broad-shouldered, keen-sighted, clear-toned, always manly in bearing, trustworthy to the core, and every inch a soldier. Alas! I never saw him nor could hear of him again!

In connection with that memorable battle the soldiers of the NINETY-SIXTH Illinois had, in the person of some of its members, nearly every experience of hardship that can fall to the lot of a soldier. We all shared in the forced march by day and night, and in the skirmish, and the shock of battle. Some met instantaneous death. Others, less fortunate, lay upon the field, fatally wounded, uncared for, suffering untold agonies, until death came to their relief. Some, wounded and retiring from the field, were struck a second time, and fatally. Some of our wounded fell into the hands of the enemy. Others lay for many miserable hours upon the field before they were brought into our hospitals. Many died while in hospital. Some others—sent to a hospital over the mountains because our hospitals could not receive them—died on the way. Some of our men, taken prisoners, endured all that

\* William Price.

† David Isbel.



could be endured, and cannot be described, of the miseries and horrors of Libby and Andersonville. How many of the wounded, how many of the prisoners, were never in line again with the Regiment!

When we had fortified Chattanooga, and lay within its besieged lines, waiting for the coming of Grant and Sherman, we then had leisure to estimate how great had been our loss at Chickamauga. It seemed to us—nor was it all illusion—that we had lost our best and bravest. The Regiment mourned the death of its Lieutenant-Colonel—staunch and true, a firm commander in camp, a brave leader in battle. Each Company had its list of heroes, beloved by their comrades and worthy of all honor, the memory of whose patriotic devotion, even to the sacrifice of their lives, shall never, never fade. For myself, I mourn a host of true-hearted soldiers, my comrades of the NINETY-SIXTH, who upon the field of Chickamauga gave to their country a soldier's last and supremest offering. Among them are numbered the two Sergeants of whom I have spoken, who rest upon that battle field, somewhere, in unknown graves. Lovely and pleasant were they in their lives, and in their death they were not divided. My First Sergeant, valiantly engaging in the battle with his chosen rifle, was really entitled (unknown to all) to exchange the rifle for a sword; for his commission as Captain, granted to him because of his superb soldierly acquirements, had been duly signed and was on its way to him, while his life blood was ebbing away, enriching the soil of Georgia. The other Sergeant was prominent in the battle, performing notable deeds—now joining in the onset where the peril was the greatest, and now rallying the men along the line of the Brigade wherever there appeared signs of faltering; but before the close of the battle he had shared the fate of his bosom friend. Both had fought with a magnificent heroism beyond all praise. Never was battle field consecrated to humanity by the sacrifice of worthier soldiers.





## THE SACRIFICE AND THE GAIN.

The vast armies of the Union, gathered from every town and village and neighborhood throughout the East and the West, comprised patriots and heroes innumerable. During the protracted years of that great war, waged on a scale stupendous and destructive beyond all precedent, it happened time and again that at some critical juncture occurring in a battle of almost decisive consequences, the gallant work of some Regiment, some Brigade, some Division, saved an army, and went far to save the cause. Honoring all heroic souls in the armies East and West, rejoicing in all that was gloriously achieved by other soldiers, by other Regiments and armies in many great battles now listed among the famous battles of mankind, the soldiers of the NINETY-SIXTH Illinois feel that at Chickamauga they earned the right to claim kinship with all soldiers who braved much and accomplished much for their country. All honor to Thomas, the "Rock of Chickamauga!" All honor to Thomas and his Corps, grandly holding the whole opposing army at bay! But there came an hour when Thomas was reaching the utmost limit of his power of resistance. Unless speedily aided he would have been unable to withstand the accumulating forces, which, overwhelming him, would have brought immeasurable disaster upon the army, would have made incalculably more difficult the subsequent task of Grant and Sherman, and would have had a far-reaching effect, which one shrinks from estimating, upon the issue of the war. At that hour, at that critical juncture, our Division reached the field and gave that aid which was imperatively needed. Our Brigade was the leading Brigade, and being first on the field the severest task fell to its share. Our Regiment, leading the Brigade and the Division, was placed at once in the front line; and while other Regiments during the battle alternated their position between the front and the supporting lines, the exigencies of the battle kept the NINETY-SIXTH, with the briefest intermission, continuously in front. It happened, therefore, that at the most critical juncture of the battle of Chickamauga, the NINETY-SIXTH Illinois had a most important part to play.



The simple record is, that it did not fail; and it can justly claim its share of that high praise bestowed upon our Division, when Thomas, at the close of the battle, said to our General, "Steedman, your Division has saved the army!"

In that battle we paid a heavy price; but how inestimable the value of what we purchased. If we consider—as we reasonably may—that our few tragical hours at Chickamauga constituted one of those critical periods of the war when a different result might have long delayed, if not quite changed, the final issue of the years of contest, we cannot murmur at the sacrifice required of us. We are to think of the new nation, of the South and the North, redeemed, disenthralled, united, marching forth buoyantly among the nations, erect as never before.—entering upon a career transcending all former possibilities and conceptions, in the blessings of whose onward progress universal humanity shall share,—inspiring the people of Europe with higher aspirations for freedom and loftier ideals of the worth of simple manhood,—and touching the remote peoples of Africa and Asia and the neighboring peoples of the western hemisphere with influences whose beneficent effects, multiplied with the years, only the ages to come can fully disclose; and then, if it be asked, "Was it worth the while? Was the cause so righteous and holy as to justify such sacrifice of life?"—we would seek the answer from the lips of those who, in their desolated homes and sorrow-burdened hearts, have most painfully realized the full measure of that sacrifice. Shall we ask the widowed mothers, whose first-born sons now lie mouldering somewhere on that deadly field of Chickamauga, whether, if they had the power, they would cause the wheels of Time to roll back over the intervening years, that they might have restored to them their sons as they were in the full flush of their young manhood, leaving undone all that was dared and endured and suffered and accomplished by them and their comrades that fatal Sunday afternoon? What is their reply? "We rejoice more in our dead sons lying there in unknown graves, than we could in all the living sons of Christendom who at such an hour would shrink from like peril and sacrifice in such a cause."



Time does its own work ceaselessly and silently, without beat of drum or blare of bugle, and each succeeding year is carrying over to "the great majority" survivors of the battle field. Meantime, those who remain are wont to meet at intervals in reunion with each other; and at each latest reunion the magnitude of what was attempted and the vastness of what was achieved are seen more and more clearly; and the heart swells with increasing pride in beholding the growing strength and benignant greatness of the beloved country at whose call they went forth, in her hour of need, to do battle for her and for humanity.

"Be proud! for she is saved, and all have helped to save her!

She that lifts up the manhood of the poor,

She of the open soul and open door,

With room about her hearth for all mankind!

Oh, Beautiful! my Country! ours once more,

What words divine of lover or of poet

Could tell our love and make thee know it,

Among the Nations bright beyond compare?

What were our lives without thee?

What all our lives to save thee?

We reck not what we gave thee;

We will not dare to doubt thee,

But ask whatever else, and we will dare!"



## CHAPTER XII.

BY A. R. THAIN, OF COMPANY D.

The Situation after the Battle of Chickamauga—In Camp on Moccasin Point—Artillery and Skirmish Fire—Bragg's Starvation Policy—Wheeler's Cavalry Raid—Short Rations for Men and Mules—Corn—The "Wusser"—Arrival of Gen. Hooker—Gen. Grant Placed in Command—Bridging the River at Brown's Ferry—Supporting Hooker in Lookout Valley—Corn and Shells—The March to Shell Mound—Nicajack Cove—Building Winter Quarters—Strange Architecture.

AFTER the battle of Chickamauga, Gen. Rosecrans withdrew his army to the immediate neighborhood of Chattanooga, and threw up a strong line of earthworks to protect his position. He had a large bend of the Tennessee river behind him, in the hollow of which the city lies, and on his front a line of works crescent in form, the flanks resting on the river above and below the city. The objective point of the campaign had been Chattanooga, and that was in our hands; and we now prepared stubbornly to hold the prize which had been so gallantly gained, and at so fearful a cost.

Lookout Mountain was abandoned to the enemy, and with it the railroad and our direct wagon road to Bridgeport; a measure which nothing save the plea of military necessity could justify, for it subjected us to constant annoyances, and compelled us to transport supplies over Wallen's Ridge<sup>#</sup> by a long and difficult road, open to attacks from the enemy's cavalry.

Our Brigade withdrew from Missionary Ridge on the night of September 21, and on the 22d we marched through Chattanooga, crossed to the north bank of the river, and encamped on Moccasin Point. This memorable piece of ground lies within a loop of the Tennessee at the northern extremity of

This is variously called Waldon's, Waldron's and Wallen's Ridge, but there seems to be the best authority for the last.





Lookout Mountain, its shape bearing some resemblance to an Indian moccasin, the toe being thrust between Lookout and Chattanooga, and the heel lying down toward Brown's Ferry. Judging from the size of the foot, and the length of stride which must have gone with it, the next impression of that gigantic moccasin must be searched for in some loop of the Chattahoochee many miles toward the south. The side of the point which lies next to the mountain is low and fertile, and prior to our occupancy had been covered with a fine crop of corn and beans which, fortunately for us, had been somewhat carelessly harvested. Our camp was situated several hundred yards from the river, nearly opposite the northern base of the mountain, and a little distance behind the camp rose a considerable ridge—the instep of the moccasined foot—on which was posted the 18th Ohio Battery. This loud-mouthed neighbor occasioned us a good deal of anxiety during our stay on the point. As soon as it was securely sheltered by strong works it began to talk to the mountain in a very emphatic way, and Lookout wrinkled his rocky brows and began to talk back. These occasional dialogues would not have troubled us in the least if the principal parties had kept the conversation exclusively to themselves, but the Boanerges who held forth from behind Pulpit Rock on the crest of Lookout had an inconvenient way at times of talking at large to the whole camp. At such times he had many listeners, who paid very close attention to his remarks, but who fervently wished that he would bring his fire-and-brimstone preaching to a speedy close. The northeast side of a tree was the favorite point for listening, and a puff of smoke on the point of the mountain was the signal that a monosyllabic remark, in the shape of a shell, would, in a few seconds, utter itself somewhere on the point, and the question was—*where!* The 9th Ohio and 10th Indiana Batteries were sent to assist the 18th Ohio, and all were bomb-proofed by the infantry,—the NINETY-SIXTH on one occasion working an entire night with picks and shovels. But the artillery on Lookout, beyond its disquieting effect, did us very little injury. The distance was considerable, the elevation of the guns above the river was



great, the marksmanship was not good, and to this should be added not only the saving fact that owing to poverty the Rebels were sparing in their use of ammunition, except in hours of close conflict, but the farther fact that our artillery was superior to theirs and responded very promptly to each salutation. Indeed, the second shot from the point took down their signal flag, and the admirable practice occasionally indulged in by our artillerists was doubtless the means of putting the enemy on their good behavior. After showing us a few times that they could throw shells into our camp, the battery on Lookout let us alone, and, with the exception of the skirmish fire along the river, our camp was as peaceful as though there had been no enemy in our vicinity. We maintained a strong skirmish line along the bank of the river, and at first many sharp shots were exchanged with the rebel skirmishers, sheltered by rocks on the side of the mountain; but as the river is several hundred yards wide, their fire did us little bodily harm, and served only to develop watchfulness and caution. After a few days these two lines fell into the regular routine of picket duty; and, by that mutual understanding which soon arises between opposing pickets, they seldom exchanged shots except when an unusually tempting opportunity offered itself. Occasionally, however, the severe artillery duels were renewed, and more than once the soldiers sought their bomb-proofs and the officers vacated the log building occupied as a Regimental headquarters. Once a bullet passed between the logs of the building where the chinking was out and spoiled an inkstand upon the Adjutant's desk. In riding between the camp and Brigade headquarters one day, the Adjutant found himself the target for Rebel sharpshooters, but escaped injury, although the horse ridden by him was disabled by a bullet.

Gen. Bragg had decided to force Gen. Rosecrans out of Chattanooga by the gradual process of cutting off his supplies, maintaining in the meantime as close a siege as possible, with the expectation that we must soon abandon the place to avoid starvation. Gen. Longstreet favored a flank movement, as bolder, speedier and more likely to lead to success; but the



Southern army had suffered so severely in the battle of Chickamauga that his more cautious chief preferred the slower but less hazardous methods of a siege.

The pretense of a siege was little more than a farce; but the question of how to obtain a sufficiency of supplies in the face of a watchful enemy who held our direct line of communication, soon became serious enough. Our base of supplies was at Bridgeport and Stevenson, close at hand by rail, and easily reached by steamer; but the possession of Lookout and Raccoon Mountains gave the enemy full control of this short and easy line, leaving us only the route over Wallen's Ridge on the north side of the river, over a road so bad that transportation was extremely difficult, and so long that it could not be effectually guarded against cavalry raids. The difficulty of supplying our army over this route was soon demonstrated. On October first, Gen. Wheeler, with a large force of cavalry, started on a raid toward our rear, with the intention of interrupting, and, if possible, of destroying our communications. On the second he captured a large wagon train in Sequatchie Valley, coming from Bridgeport, laden with supplies. Being closely pressed by Gen. Crook, with a force of cavalry, and threatened by an infantry command under Gen. McCook, he burned several hundred wagons, with their contents, and took with him a large number of mules. Our cavalry gained some advantages over him, recapturing eight hundred mules; but he carried his raid as far north as Murfreesboro, doing an immense amount of damage before he recrossed the Tennessee, in a badly demoralized condition, on the eighth. The effect of this raid and other efforts of a similar nature soon began to appear in our camps. The animals showed the effects first. It is calculated that ten thousand horses and mules died of starvation and of hard usage on the terrible roads. Forage in the neighborhood of Chattanooga was soon exhausted, and the watchful Rebel cavalry were ever lurking on our flanks, seeking to capture or destroy trains sent to a distance to obtain corn or fodder. So many draft animals died that the task of supplying the army became more and more difficult.

Hon. H. W. Blodgett, of Lake county, on learning that



the Regiment had suffered very heavily in the recent battle, started at once for the front, and, on arriving at Bridgeport, took a horse and followed after the wagon train which was burned by Gen. Wheeler, overtaking it and being near its head when the Rebel cavalry made their attack. He had an exciting experience, but escaped, as did most of the train guard. Mr. Blodgett reached the Regiment in safety, and spent several days in the camp and hospitals. On the occasion of one of these cavalry raids, Hamilton D. Crane, of Company K, while driving a team, was fatally shot, being taken to McMinnville, where he died from his wounds October 10. At one time a number of men from the Brigade were captured, but all were paroled within an hour or two, being first stripped of everything possessed by them which their captors either needed or fancied.

During the early part of this period trains passed along the river road, but at great peril, several men being wounded and the mules killed, so that a blockade was created. On one occasion First Assistant Surgeon Moses Evans, of the NINETY-SIXTH, accompanied an ambulance train of wounded. While passing "The Narrows," he was wounded by a bullet, which cut his ankle, but was not seriously injured.

The daily ration issued to the men was reduced, not to the point of starvation, but to such a degree that we hung on the edge of hunger for a number of weeks, and sometimes we dropped over the edge, and found great difficulty in climbing back again. The field of corn on the point delayed this result in our camp for a time, a large ear of corn being about equal to the daily ration then issued to us: but soon the vast hunger of the mules stripped the fields so bare that one might search for hours and be rewarded with only a few poor "nubbins." Corn near the bank of the river was worth its weight in Rebel lead. One man of Company D can testify that he drew the Rebel picket fire four times one forenoon while gleaning a few handfuls of corn.

The members of the Regiment usually alluded to this camp as "Starvation Point" in after months. At no other time during our entire period of service were the rations as





low as here. On one occasion soap, candles, pepper and vinegar comprised the bill of fare. The comments made upon this occasion would be entertaining could they be reproduced. Later, corn alone was issued on a few occasions, and the men would ask the officer issuing it, in a semi-serious way, how they could be expected to eat corn without any soap or candles, or if they would not prefer to keep the corn and give them some pepper and vinegar. But notwithstanding the short rations, the lack of blankets and clothing, the continuous exposure, the constant danger, and the anxiety, felt if not expressed, lest retreat should become necessary, and disaster to the army and the cause result, the men were cheerful and uttered few complaints. They were by no means discouraged, but each had an abiding faith that help would come from some source, and that the army would succeed in driving from the strongholds in their front the then exultant enemy.

When the hungry quadrupeds were fed, the teamsters had to mount guard over the feed-troughs; for if they did not, hungry bipeds clad in blue, who were ever on the watch for ways and means to eke out their scanty rations, would filch corn from the very mouths of the mules, regardless of the silent glances of reproach cast after them by those much-abused partners in adversity.

The corn, when obtained either by fair means or foul, was first parched, then ground in a coffee-mill, or grated upon the perforated sides of a tin canteen, and when made into mush and fried in pork fat it was a dish fit for a king,—that is a very *hungry* king.

The following episode took place at the hungriest point of the quarter-ration period. Two members of Company D were on guard in the woods some distance north of our camp. They were very hungry, and had not between them so much as a grain of parched corn. Inspired by hunger, their imaginations made out endless bills of fare, and their memories recalled the many appetizing things which they had eaten before leaving home. When by these mental exercises they had whetted their appetites to a keenness which was almost unbearable, they saw, to their great joy, a quadruped ap-



proaching through the bushes. It was one of those long, lean, hound-like Southern hogs, which were known among the soldiers as "wussers." It looked like the genius of starvation, wearing a swine-like form. Indeed, if it had been the sole survivor of that Gadarene herd into which the devils entered, and had eaten nothing during the intervening centuries, it could not have been much leaner. A whole herd of such swine could hardly have cast one respectable shadow.

It is probable, however, that this particular "wusser" had been born and bred on Moccasin Point, and had been eaten out of house and home by Uncle Sam's men and mules. In the struggle for existence then going on around Chattanooga, his fitness to survive had been for some time a constantly decreasing quantity, and it had almost reached the vanishing point. But he still lived; and hunger being uncritical, he seemed to those two soldiers a prize worthy of a vigorous campaign.

But how to secure such shadowy game was a difficult question. As well attempt to catch a grayhound by direct chase; and a bullet, though aimed with the greatest skill, might easily miss an object which was so thin that you had to look twice before you could see it,—except the head, which, owing to its bony structure, stood out distinctly in all the unlovely angularity of its osseous outlines. But something must be done, and done quickly; and so one of the soldiers shot at the shadow and hit it,—in the head of course, for it was nearly all head.—at the junction of the jaws, for it was mostly jaw;—and then began a chase which, for vigor and speed and the urgent nature of the interests involved, has rarely been equaled. The lower jaw of the pig dropped square down, but otherwise it held its forces well together; and with a continuous squeal issuing from its throat, it started through the bushes at a high rate of speed, followed by the comrades in hard pursuit. An epic poem might be written on the chase, if a bard could be found worthy of the theme. It might be entitled, "Hunger in Pursuit of Famine's Master-piece."

"Long time in even scale the contest hung;"



but at last one of the pursuers seized a large iron bolt which had fortunately been dropped by some passing wagon, and threw it with such strength and skill that the porcine prize soon lay at their feet.

Panting and triumphant, they bore it to the picket post; skinned it, roasted it bit by bit at their fire, and ate it up at one meal. But then they were very hungry, and it was very lean. If the proverb, "The nearer the bone the sweeter the meat" is true, that was the sweetest meat, as it averaged, ever eaten by man.

But soon after this gastronomic episode reached such a happy termination, our direct line of communication was opened up, and the reign of hunger came to a close. The way in which this was done deserves special mention, not merely because the NINETY-SIXTH helped to bring it about, but also because it was executed with a skill and boldness which took the enemy by surprise, and at once put an end to the fiction that Chattanooga was in a state of siege.

Early in October Gen. Hooker, from the Army of the Potomac, arrived in Nashville, bringing with him the Eleventh and Twelfth Corps. He did not at once march to our relief, for, having come the entire distance by rail, he had no wagon train; but he effectually protected our line of communication from Nashville to Bridgeport, and we lived in daily hope that some bold movement would soon enable us once more to assume aggressive operations.

Following Chickamauga there was a reorganization of the army in and around Chattanooga. In this reorganization the troops of the old Reserve Corps were scattered through the various commands. Of the Brigades which had fought at Chickamauga, Col. Mitchell's became the Second, and Col. McCook's the Third Brigade of the Second Division of the Fourteenth Corps. Gen. Whittaker's Brigade, to which the NINETY-SIXTH was still attached, became the Second Brigade of the First Division of the Fourth Corps. Besides the NINETY-SIXTH, there was the 115th Illinois, 40th Ohio, and 84th Indiana,—these Regiments having comprised the old Brigade,—and the 51st Ohio, 99th Ohio, 35th Indiana, and





ALEXANDER R. THAIN.  
WILLIAMSON V. YOUNG.

GEORGE E. SMITH, JR.  
CAPT. THEODORE F. CLARKSON.  
First Lieut. J. H. LINKLATER.

RICHARD S. THAIN  
ROBERT J. DOUGLAS.





sth Kentucky, these last Regiments having been formerly the Third Brigade of the Third Division of the Twenty-first Corps. All of these Regiments had lost heavily at Chickamauga, and the eight had for duty but about two thousand men. The Twentieth and Twenty-first Corps were for the time being discontinued, the Fourth and Fourteenth Corps absorbing all of the troops that had been actively engaged in the battle.

October 18, by an order of President Lincoln, the Military Division of the Mississippi was created, and Gen. Grant was placed in command. Pending the arrival of Gen. Grant, Gen. Thomas assumed command of the army at Chattanooga; and Gen. Rosecrans withdrew from his position as leader so quietly, that for some days it was not generally known that he had been relieved from command. He was favorably regarded by his men; but the smoke of Chickamauga had clouded his reputation as a commanding General, and, justly or unjustly, he went to the rear.

Gen. Grant arrived at Chattanooga October 23, and with characteristic promptitude and vigor he addressed himself to the task of changing the military situation. But with justice to others, it should be said that before his arrival a bold and promising measure for our relief was nearly ready for execution. For some time Gen. Smith had been building pontoon boats, with a view of establishing a bridge at Brown's Ferry, a few miles north of our camp at Moccasin Point, thus opening a way into Lookont Valley, preparatory to the advance of Gen. Hooker on the direct road from Bridgeport.

On the morning of the 27th, at three o'clock, a fleet of pontoon boats left Chattanooga, loaded with a force of 1,300 picked men under command of Gen. Hazen. Their intention was to float down the river under cover of the darkness, glide past the enemy's pickets unseen, capture their post at Brown's Ferry, and transform the fleet of boats into a bridge before the enemy could rally a force strong enough to resist the movement.

The distance from Chattanooga to Brown's Ferry by the river is nine miles, but across the neck of the point it is only four miles. For some distance below the city the force on



the pontoons had nothing to fear, for both banks of the river lay within our lines; but where the river turns northward along the base of the mountain, they knew that a line of Rebel pickets extended along the left bank of the stream for miles, and past these they must glide unseen and unheard. Closely hugging the right bank of the river, and under the shelter of a friendly fog, the movement was executed so successfully that the first boat reached the appointed place at dawn, captured or dispersed the Rebel force stationed at the Ferry, and by ten o'clock the bridge was stretched from bank to bank.

This brilliant movement was not accomplished without opposition. Our guns on Moccasin Point and the Rebel guns on Lookout had a violent quarrel about the new bridge. The guns on Lookout sent their protests down the river in the shape of shells; but a line of boats miles away, and rising only a foot or two above the water, is hard to hit, so Lookout protested in vain.

On the twenty-seventh we left our camp and passed the night near the eastern end of the bridge, and on the twenty-eighth we crossed over to form a junction with Hooker's column, which was advancing toward Lookout Valley from the west. The enemy resisted Hooker's advance with great vigor at first. A heavy fire from Lookout assailed the head of the column as it pressed into the valley on the twenty-eighth, and at one o'clock A. M. on the twenty-ninth a fierce assault was made on Geary's Division of the Twelfth Corps, at Wauhatchie. This desperate night attack seemed to call for our presence on the scene of action, and at sunrise we began to advance toward the western base of Lookout; but it soon became evident that "Fighting Jo," as Hooker was popularly termed, would be able to take care of himself, and our reinforcing column sought shelter behind a range of hills from the annoying artillery fire which from the crest of Lookout had disputed our advance.

At this point occurred the only disaster of the day in our entire command. A shell exploded near a tree behind which a number of men were standing, mortally wounding a member



of the 101st Illinois, severely wounding George Shaw, of Company D, NINETY-SIXTH Illinois, and inflicting slight wounds on Henry J. Ring, Walter Crapo, and D. G. Stewart, of the same Company. That unlucky shell spoiled George Shaw's marching step, and has ornamented him with an honorable limp ever since.

On the thirtieth we recrossed the river and returned to our camp on Moccasin Point.

This dash into Lookout Valley will be remembered by our men, personally, as being remarkable chiefly for two things—corn and shells. To our hungry men it seemed almost like an entrance into paradise to find corn: not poor, occasional ears such as we had lately gleaned after long search or at the risk of our lives, but large, golden ears, stored away in cribs. We began to draw rations of corn with a celerity which soon emptied the cribs and filled our haversacks. Corn was King all along the line. Ears were passed from hand to hand as gifts worthy of being tests of true comradeship. Corn was eaten from the cob with apparent satisfaction, and parched corn was regarded as a luxury.

But with an over-generosity which we did not at the time appreciate, the Rebel artillerists on Lookout offered to *shell* our corn; at any rate they shelled us with great vigor, and much to our discomfort. A fragment of a shell actually made its way into Henry Ring's haversack, in search of corn,—a kindness which called forth anything but thanks from the Antioch soldier.

But this movement, crowned with such entire success, brought speedy relief to our entire army. With the exception of a short detour to avoid the guns on Lookout our direct line to Bridgeport was once more open; and abundant supplies came to us by wagon train, and up the river by steamboat, demonstrating the fact that Bragg's attempt to reduce Chattooga by siege was a failure. But the reign of plenty did not come to us on Moccasin Point. On October 31st, at an early hour, we bade good by to that memorable camp, and moved in the direction of Bridgeport. We did not, as was usual when starting on a march, draw three days' rations, but



each man received three small squares of hardtack. The "cracker line" was open, but very little had come over it as yet. But we began the march with hearts as light as our haversacks; for he is a poor soldier who cannot provide for the partial supply of his wants when on the march, and hunger had taught us that there is much virtue in an ear of corn. Corn continued to be King until we arrived at Shell Mound, on the afternoon of the second day, but there he was ignominiously dethroned, for again we drew full rations for the first time in many a day.

The principal natural curiosities at Shell Mound are a large mound of shells on the bank of the Tennessee, and Nickajack Cave, which furnished nitre for a powder factory until the advance of our army put a stop to operations. This cave has a splendid entrance hall, some three hundred feet wide, four or five hundred feet long, and thirty or forty feet high. Beyond this noble hall the cave turns to the left, becomes narrower, and extends into the mountain for a great distance.

According to an Indian tradition, one of their braves made a wager that he would ride through the cave on his pony, and find an exit at a distant point. He entered the cave full of bravery and bad whisky, and after a considerable length of time he and his pony came out on the other side of Raccoon Mountain, sixteen miles away. It may be; but that pony must have been web footed, for a stream runs through the cave, and, in exploring it, much of the distance has to be made by water.

To the left of this cave Nickajack Cove cleaves its way into the mountains in a southerly direction. It is of considerable width at its entrance, but narrows as it advances, and ends abruptly against the side of a mountain about three miles from the entrance.

About half way up this sheltering cove, on an easy slope of the left hand mountain, we went into winter quarters, with wood and water right at our doors. Only the NINETY-SIXTH and the 40th Ohio occupied this cove, the other Regiments of the Brigade being camped near Shell Mound. For a week or more after the camp was laid out, an epidemic of architecture





raged in the cove, with most astonishing results. If the four winds of the earth had brought strange structures from all quarters and had set them down on the hill side, there might have been greater variety in materials, but hardly greater variety in styles. No particular order of architecture was followed, for the reason that each man was an original architect and did not wish to cramp his individual genius by conforming slavishly to conventional styles. So each man did what was well pleasing in his own eyes ; and the result was a picturesque combination of all known orders of architecture, with a strong dash of dis-order.

A description of one Company D mansion will give a faint idea of one structure, which was like nothing else on the whole mountain side, and the same might be said of every other structure in the camp.

It was about twelve feet square, built of three-inch planks split from the heart of straight-grained trees, notched together at the corners, with one opening for a door and another for a window. The roof had a single slope from front to back, and was covered with "shakes." At one end was a large fireplace and chimney, built of mud and stones at the bottom, and mud and sticks at the top. A description of the interior might demoralize the dictionary, and so will not be attempted ; but at night, when a large fire burned in the fireplace, and the boys sat around it on bunks and benches, that cabin contained a vast amount of comfort.



## CHAPTER XIII.

BY A. R. THAIN, OF COMPANY D.

The March to Lookout Mountain—Before the Battle—The Colonel's Speech—Nature of the Battle Field—The Forces Engaged in the Battle—Crossing Lookout Creek—Climbing the Mountain—Rough Nature of the Ground—Our Advance—Skirmishing—Artillery Fire—The Charge—The Rebels Fall Back—The Battle in the Clouds—A Modern Sinai—Doubling Point Lookout—Cheers of Victory—Steep Charge over the "Nose"—Writing on the Wall—Last Stand of the Enemy—Was it a Battle?—Facts Say Yes—Rebel Loss—Our Loss—Our Captures—The Bivouac on Lookout—Planting the Flag on Point Lookout—Cheering the Flag—The NINETY-SIXTH on the Summit—Description of the Scenery—Battle of Missionary Ridge—Return to Nickajack Cove—The Winter.

BUT it was decreed by the military powers that we should not settle down to the full enjoyment of our shanty city until we had taken part in stirring scenes at the front. On November 19 we drew six days' rations, and were ordered to hold ourselves in readiness to march. Sherman's troops were passing by the Cove on the way to Chattanooga, and everything indicated that Gen. Grant was preparing for an aggressive movement on a grand scale.

The column that filed out from our camp was not a long one, for notwithstanding the return of a number of those slightly wounded, the hardships had been such as to break down many men, and there were less than two hundred and fifty for duty. Colonel Champion was in command. There had been several changes among the officers since Chickamauga. The vacancy caused by the death of the lamented Lieutenant Colonel Clarke had been filled by the promotion of Major J. C. Smith, but the latter was still on staff duty. Captain George Hicks, of Company A, had been promoted to Major and was with the command. First Lieutenant William Vincent, who was still absent nursing wounds, had



been promoted to Captain, and Second Lieutenant Pool to First Lieutenant. Second Lieutenant William Dawson had been commissioned First Lieutenant in Company F, to succeed Lieutenant Simms, who had died from his wounds. A commission as First Lieutenant had also been issued to Second Lieutenant Charles H. Yates, of Company H, the intention being that he should fill the vacancy caused by the death of Lieutenant Barnes, but as Yates was a prisoner of war he could not be reached, and the commission was subsequently recalled. In Company I Captain John Barker had resigned, and Lieutenants Tarpley and Moore had each received promotion. No Second Lieutenants were commissioned at this time, as the Companies were all below the minimum number. As the column started out for a renewal of the campaign there was but one Captain along the line—Captain Taylor, of Company E—and but a dozen line officers in all.

We marched from the Cove on the twenty-third, leaving everything standing, with the expectation of returning to pass the winter there. We arrived at Wauhatchie late in the evening, and bivouacked for the night.

The morning of the twenty-fourth was misty and disagreeable. The elements seemed to frown on us as we lay in the valley, but the elemental frown which lay between us and the summit of Lookout in reality turned a friendly side to us and a frowning side to the enemy. That foul day was the fairest day of all the year for the execution of the purpose which our leaders had in view.

The mist which had clung closely to the contour of the valley had lifted somewhat when we fell into line after a hasty breakfast. While we stood in regimental line facing the mountain, Colonel Champion took station on our front, seated on horseback, as if for a parade. Each man seemed to divine that something unusually serious was before us, and silence fell along the line. From the back of his horse the Colonel made a speech, the shortest, perhaps, that he ever made on a public occasion, but it is doubtful if he ever made one which produced a deeper impression. He said: "Boys, I have a few words to say to you. Before night I expect we will have



to climb the side of yonder mountain. You all know that at Chickamauga the NINETY-SIXTH covered itself with glory, and I hope that to-day we shall do nothing that will lessen the fair fame of the Regiment. I expect every man to do his duty; I shall try and do mine." That speech gave us the first intimation of the arduous task which lay before us. For a few moments not a word was spoken, but we thought volumes. All eyes were lifted toward Lookout, and the rugged giant seemed to be answering the Colonel's speech. Standing on his bema of rock, with his cloudy toga wrapped about him, he seemed to say to his audience of five States and to the two armies at his feet, that human valor could not avail against his natural strength.

We knew something about the difficulties of the proposed battle ground. From our former camp on Moccasin Point we had become familiar with the rocky outlines of the mountain, and knew something as to the position and strength of the Rebel works; and that morning, through occasional breaks in the clouds, we caught glimpses of Point Lookout, with its crowning battery; we could see the sheer descent of the palisades, declaring, with cold, stony logic, that the crest of the mountain could not be carried by direct assault, and lower down we knew that there were steep ravines, rock-strewn slopes, terrible tangles of felled timber, and strong lines of works filled with watchful foes. We were willing to face men, but were we not asked to do that and to fight with the elemental forces of nature at the same time? Very little time was left us, however, to debate the chances of success or failure. The time for action had come, and at once we set out to make, if possible, a secret side entrance on the lofty stage of that splendid theatre of war.

The troops commanded by Gen. Hooker in the battle of Lookout Mountain were, Gen. Geary's Division of the Twelfth Corps, Gen. Osterhaus' Division of the Fifteenth Corps, and Gens. Whittaker's and Grose's Brigades of the Fourth Corps. The Reserve Corps, to which we had belonged until within a few weeks of this time, had been incorporated into various commands, and we now belonged to the Second Brigade. First





Division, Fourth Army Corps, our Corps commander being Gen. Grainger, with Gen. Charles Cruft as Division commander for the time being, and Gen. Whittaker as Brigade commander.

The general plan of the battle was that while Gen. Hooker was making a direct attack on the mountain in the face of the Rebel works, a flanking force under cover of this attack and concealed by the fog, should cross Lookout Creek, scale the side of the mountain, advance in line-of-battle along the side of the mountain, with their right resting on the palisades, and strike the enemy on the flank and rear.

Gen. Geary's Division and our Brigade formed this flanking force; Gen. Grose's Brigade of our Division being left in the valley to seize the road bridge just below the railroad crossing, repair the bridge, cross over and form a junction with our line when we should have advanced that far.

From Wauhatchie we marched up Lookout Valley under cover of the fog, and before crossing Lookout Creek to make the direct ascent of the mountain we laid aside our knapsacks and all the dead weight that we could possibly spare. In our coming struggle with altitude and gravitation we must carry no needless burdens. The man, his musket, and something to put in it, was about all that such ground permitted. Even the horses of the field and staff were left behind. Lookout Creek was so high from recent rains that it was not easily crossed. Our Regiment clambered across on an old dam which was in part overflowed, reaching the right bank at about 8 A. M. The direct ascent of the slope was effected with no opposition save that offered by the difficulty of the ground. When the right of our column neared the palisades we formed in line-of-battle, our right resting near the perpendicular rocks which rose grimly above us, our line stretching far down the slope toward the creek, and then we advanced toward the Rebel works, sweeping the entire side of the mountain. Much of the ground over which we advanced was rough beyond conception. It was covered with an untouched forest growth, seamed with deep ravines, and obstructed with rocks of all sizes which had fallen from the frowning wall on our right.



The ground passed over by our left was not quite so rough ; but, taking the entire stretch of mountain side traversed by our force in driving the enemy around Point Lookout, it was undoubtedly the roughest battle field of the war.

At first our Regiment was in the second line, but soon we were ordered to take the right of the first line, as close under the palisades as possible, which position we retained during the day. This necessarily required us to face the steepest and roughest ground along the whole line, and brought us nearest the sharpshooters, who were posted along the crest of the ridge ; but that which seemed to threaten our destruction was, in fact, our safety, for the guns of the upper battery could not touch us, even when their depressed muzzles almost kissed the rocks ; and though the steep, raking shots of the sharpshooters, fired from the edge of the cliff, had a very wicked sound as they went whizzing down the regimental line, most of them were too high to do any injury.

But our advance at first was unopposed and seemingly unnoticed. The attention of the enemy was centered on Osterhaus, who was engaged in forcing a crossing directly on his front. The silence was almost painful for a time. Every moment we expected to hear it broken by sharp shots from the rocks overhead, or by a rattling volley from behind the innumerable boulders in front of our advancing line. But nothing was heard save the tramping of many feet, and the hard breathing of men unused to mountain climbing.

But soon heavy skirmishing began on our left toward the base of the mountain. Grose was forcing his way across Lookout Creek and preparing to bring his right into alignment with Geary's left, and farther down the creek Wood was ranging his battle front, with the intention of climbing into the clouds over the rebel works.

At 11 A. M. our left connected with Osterhaus' right, and the line-of-battle was complete from the palisades to the mountain's base, thence curving away toward the northern end of Lookout : a sickle of Mars, whose blue blade and fire-tipped edge was that day to sweep around its point as a pivot, and reap a glorious harvest.



The upper slopes and northern end of the mountain were now assailed by a fierce artillery fire from batteries in Lookout Valley and on Moccasin Point. A number of commanding hills in the valley took a strong interest in the topography of Lookout, and began to drop shells in advance of our line in places where they were likely to do the most good—for us—and over the shoulder of the mountain we could hear Brannan's guns on Moccasin Point, defying their old antagonist with a fury which boded ill for all who lay within the range of that upsoaring tempest of iron.

And the batteries of the enemy were prodigal of powder, now that the hour of conflict had come. The guns on the side of the mountain swept the slope, along and up which our troops were making their toilsome advance, and the high-perched battery on the crest of the mountain threw iron gages at the feet of its circle of antagonists in both valleys, challenges which were promptly accepted and gallantly answered.

The auricular effect of this artillery fire on us, who were close under the palisades, was grand and startling beyond description. The rocky sounding board rising on our right tossed back the reports of our own guns, and multiplied them into a continuous roar, and when the guns above our heads made answer it seemed as though the entire vault of the sky had exploded with each report. A little later in the day, when this battery was thundering out of the clouds which densely shrouded the crest of the mountain, it would have required but little stretch of the imagination to have supposed that "cloud-compelling Jove" had appeared as champion of the Confederacy, and, from a new Olympus, was hurling thunderbolts of modern make with more than his old-time vigor. But alas for the cause which no champion could save! for the blue-coated Titans needed no Ossa on Pelion to aid them in their upward climb, and in a few hours they would pluck the thunderbolts from the cloud. This artillery fire quickened our advance along the side of the mountain, and opposition was soon developed on our immediate front. It was a skirmish fire at first, but it became more and more spirited as we advanced. A Rebel soldier came running toward us with



uplifted hands, in token of surrender, and taking this as an earnest of victory, our men clambered over the rocks with cheers, driving the advance line of the enemy before them. Soon we came in sight of their works, but to our joy we saw that they had been constructed to resist a direct attack from below, and that from our position we could rake them with an enfilading fire, or even pass around their refused flank and attack them in rear.

No doubt our leaders ordered a charge, but with such advantages in plain sight, to charge and capture the works hardly called for a formal command. Soldierly instinct was enough; or, if anything more had been necessary, the yet fresh memories of that bloody field, lying eight or nine miles on the other side of Lookout, would have made us irresistible had the opposition been twice as great.

Col. W. F. Dowd, of the 24th Mississippi, who commanded this part of the Rebel line, says, in a description of the battle published in the *Southern Biennac*, that his orders were "to hold his post till hell froze over;" and, thinking at this juncture that the ice was about five feet thick, he ordered his men to fall back.

But the gallant Colonel does not seem to have been well informed as to the temperature of the infernal regions at that particular time, for the resistance which he opposed to our advance was such as a thin skin of ice would oppose to a Commodore when under full headway. Our charge on the entrenchments was like the rush of an avalanche. The enemy forsook their works and retreated along the side of the mountain toward the Craven House, leaving many prisoners in our hands.

No regular line-of-battle confronted us after this until we reached the eastern side of the mountain; but the broken Rebel line maintained an active skirmish fire, and the rough nature of the ground afforded them such ample cover, and at the same time made our advance so difficult a task, that our progress, though steady, was not rapid.

The cloud, which had not been very dense when we charged on the enemy's works, now settled very densely along the side





of the inountain, and was at once a source of perplexity and a great protection. Wrapped in a seamless mantle of vapor, we became confused as to locality, direction and distance. Some of our men became entangled in the felled timber, which, at this point, obstructed the slope, and were separated from their command. But the cloud effectually concealed us from our unassailable foes on the upper part of the mountain, who could have inflicted severe loss on us had the day been clear.

This battle has been poetically termed "The Battle above the Clouds," but literally it was a battle *in* the clouds. It seemed like a war waged by the elements rather than a battle fought by men. The viewless artillery of the skies seemed to bellow above our heads and beneath our feet, and the bursting shells were dread thunderbolts. To some minds it seemed like cloud and fire capped Sinai, when God came down on its dread top to give the law. From the veiled summit burst thunderings and lightnings, and the mountain quaked as though the feet of Jehovah were treading its high places; and, as of old, a vast concourse of spectators in the valley below were anxiously waiting to see what results would come forth from the clouds. And did not God, by the results of that day and the day following, say to the States which lie around that commanding summit, "Let the oppressed go free?" The original Emancipation Proclamation was written by the God of Battles with fire and steel, and President Lincoln somewhat tardily copied it with pen and ink.

At 12 o'clock our line was swinging around Point Lookout, the right of our Regiment being the pivot, and the left of the line sweeping around toward Chattanooga. Is it too much to say that the clock of history struck high noon when that mighty index finger pointed due north on that rocky dial face? Certainly the afternoon of the Southern Confederacy began to decline from that hour.

The cloud now began to lift, and spectators in Chattanooga Valley could dimly see our advancing line. They needed no courier from the mountain side to tell them that those advancing flags meant victory; and as we had little breath for cheer-



ing, they cheered for us with all their might. The Brigade Bands in the valley began to play, and we wrote the score which inspired them.

Before 2 P. M. we had reached the eastern side of the mountain, and were driving the enemy toward the Summer-town Road. Members of the NINETY-SIXTH will never forget the headlong charge over the "nose" of Lookout to the relief of the 40th Ohio, when in the eagerness of their advance they were actually in the rear of part of the Rebel line, and were in danger of being crushed by superior numbers. The descent between us and the enemy was almost as steep as a Gothic roof, and down this declivity we slipped and rolled—rather than charged—on the astonished foe. Bullets and shells they had expected, and had become somewhat accustomed to, but when we threw a whole Regiment of *men* at them they promptly retired. This movement on our part was a most timely and telling one, for the position of the 40th was perilous. Colonel Champion grasped the situation in an instant, and, with the instinct of the true soldier, gave orders for a left wheel. The Regiment executed his orders unhesitatingly, and, gaining a position along a rude fence, poured a destructive fire into the ranks of the startled enemy. Instantly the 40th saw the movement, and not only ceased to retreat, but instantly rushed forward across the opening and charged the foe, capturing a section of artillery and a large number of prisoners. As soon as their relief was assured the NINETY-SIXTH swung to its former position, still occupying the extreme right of the army and again advancing.

Our lines were now plainly visible to the Army of the Cumberland in Chattanooga Valley, and as they saw the flash of guns and the gleaming of steel brought out distinctly by the dark background of rock above us, it required no Daniel to interpret the meaning of that stern writing on the wall. It said of Bragg, whose headquarters lay directly over against us on the crest of Missionary Ridge, "Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting." One libration of the scales the day before had shown his weakness before Chattanooga; and now Lookout, which was expected to weigh heavily



against us in the hour of conflict, was being lifted lightly in air by the ascending beam of another victory, its vast bulk and great natural strength being outweighed by the courage and audacity of our attack; and on the morrow—the sharp crest of Missionary Ridge being the pivot of the beam—the broken fragments of Bragg's army—"weighed and found wanting"—would be tumbled out of war's dread scale in the confusion of utter defeat.

There was no severe fighting on the mountain after 2 P. M. The Rebel line, reinforced by Gen. Jackson's Division from the upper part of the mountain, occupied a very strong position some distance south of the Craven House, and there they made a determined stand to retain possession of the Summertown Road, the only road by means of which they could speedily withdraw their forces and artillery from the mountain. By this time our ammunition was almost expended, and exhausted as we were by our hard climb up and around the mountain, we were in no condition to drive the enemy from their last position by dint of bravery and bayonets. Later in the day reinforcements came to us from the Chattanooga side of Lookout, bringing such supplies of ammunition as they could carry on their persons, but the battle was not renewed. A skirmish fire was maintained until late into the night, varied by a considerable demonstration made by the enemy between nine and ten to cover their intended retreat. They withdrew during the night so cautiously and silently that the mountain was in our possession for some time before we became aware of it.

There has been some dispute among military critics as to whether that rough-and-tumble fight over the shoulder of Lookout was a battle or not. Some say that though it was striking in spectacular effect, affording abundant materials for the use of the artist and poet, yet from a military stand-point it hardly deserves to be called a battle. But if these adverse critics had viewed the battle from the front rank of the force which fought it, they might have been converted to the contrary opinion. This strange misconception arises in part from the smallness of our loss on that eventful day, and in part



from the dwarfing effect of the grand movement which rolled the Rebel lines from the crest of Missionary Ridge on the day following. But the smallness of our loss was due to favorable natural conditions, and Missionary Ridge has glory enough of its own without reaching across the valley to rob Lookout of its laurels.

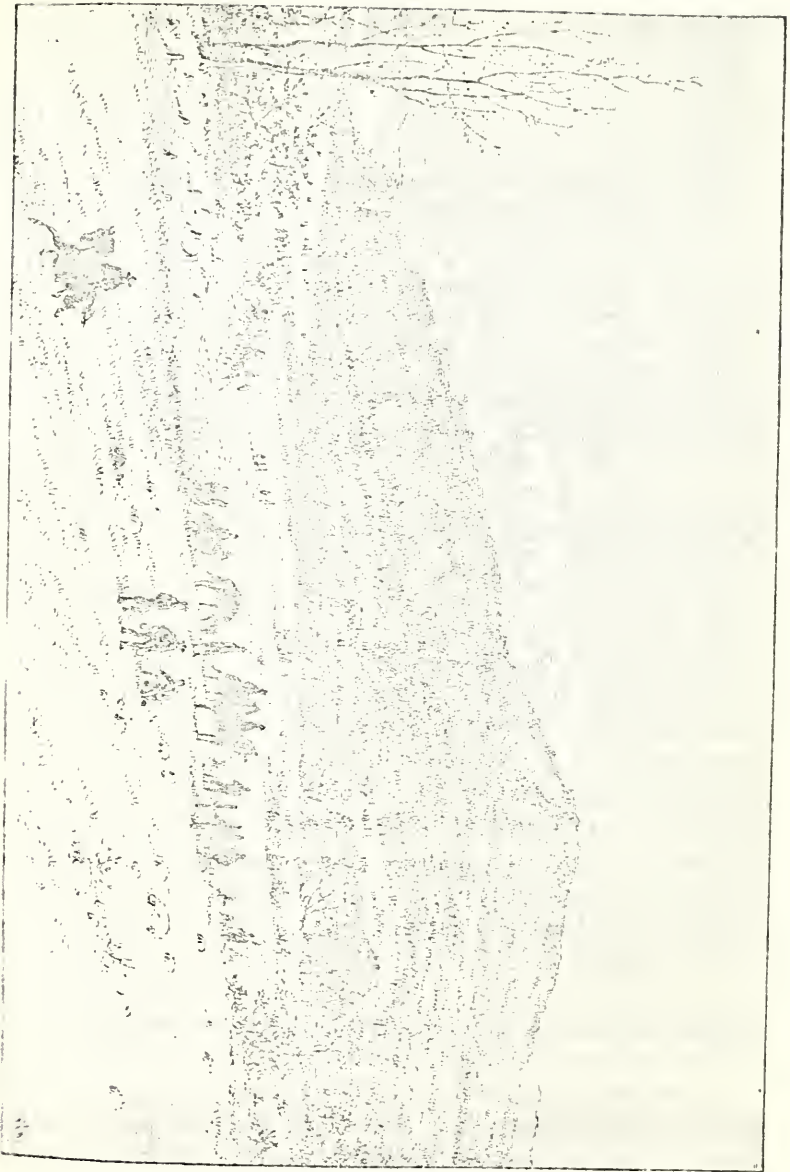
Had the day been clear our loss would have been very heavy. So great were the natural advantages possessed by the enemy, that, could they have overlooked the movements of our forces, they would not have been driven from their natural fortress except by an engagement which would have reddened the rocks of Lookout with the blood of many brave men. A captured Colonel declared that if it had not been for the cloud their sharpshooters would have riddled our advance like pigeons, and would speedily have left our command without leaders. The men who took part in that engagement *know* that it was a formidable undertaking, and let no one attempt to take their glory from them. It is true that General Fog commanded on the side of the mountain, while Gen. Hooker commanded in the valley, and the former covered our advance so effectually with his cloudy battalions that our loss was comparatively slight; but even with this advantage in our favor we earned our battle laurels by hard climbing and gallant fighting. The glory of a battle should not be measured by its mortality list, but by the courage of the men engaged in it, and by the measure of their success.

And the battle was by no means a bloodless one on either side, as may easily be gathered from the loss suffered by one Rebel Regiment, the 24th Mississippi. According to the report of their Colonel they had three hundred and fifty-six men and officers present for duty in the morning, of whom one hundred and ninety-nine were killed or wounded during the day. The 40th Ohio, of our Brigade, suffered a considerable loss, both in killed and wounded, including Maj. Acton, who was killed. The loss in our Regiment was small, because we were so close to danger that much harm passed harmlessly over us.

The following is the









## LIST OF CASUALTIES.

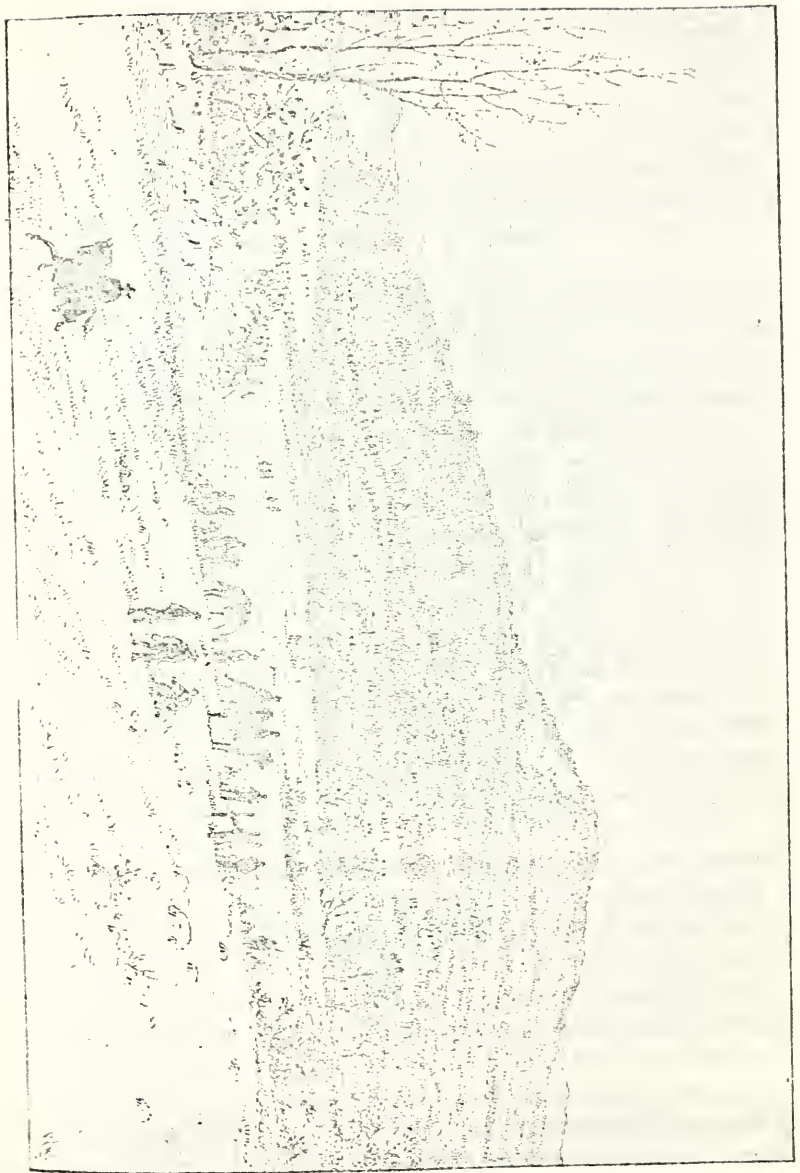
KILLED.—Esau Rich, of Company B.

WOUNDED.—Adjutant E. A. Blodgett, hand ; First Lieutenant Robert Pool, Company A, head ; Sergeant John Vincent, Company A, ball entered just below right eye and passed out back of left ear, but he recovered ; Harry Menzemer, Company A, slightly ; Nicholas Wearmouth, Company A, left side ; Harlow D. Ragan, Company A, hand ; Second Lieutenant George H. Burnett, Company B, scalp wound ; James Litwiler, Company B, face ; W. V. Trout, Company B, foot and leg ; Corporal Henry A. Webb, Company D, head ; R. S. Thain, Company D, leg ; Sergeant R. J. Cooper, Company E, hip ; James Junken, Company E, side ; William S. Nash, Company F, chin and left shoulder ; Corporal John W. Swanbrough, Company G, foot ; Joseph K. Clark, William Joyce and John King, all of Company G, were each wounded in the head ; First Lieutenant George W. Moore, Company I, leg ; Harrison Gage, Company I, arm ; Daniel Malone, Company I, leg ; First Lieutenant E. E. Townsend, Company K, foot ; Corporal Henry W. Goding, Company K, head ; Thomas Carleton, Company K, leg ; Oscar W. Cowen, Company K, body.

Some of these wounds were slight, and did not disable the recipients. A few, however, proved severe. When Sergeant Vincent was shot, all thought that his wound was necessarily fatal, and supposed they would never see him again ; but he was so full of courage and manly strength that he soon recovered, and, notwithstanding the loss of an eye, returned to the Regiment, doing gallant service and carrying the colors in several engagements. Corporal Swanbrough's wound was received while carrying the colors. He had been the only one of the Color Guard to escape at Chickamauga, and was now among the first hit. His wound disabled him for only a few weeks. Lieutenants Moore and Townsend were each disabled for a time, but not permanently. Indeed, not one of the entire list of wounded was absent from the command for more than a few months.

Our Brigade captured two pieces of artillery and a large number of prisoners ; and when we reached the top of the mountain the next day, we found in the abandoned camp of the enemy a great variety of stores and supplies which they had left behind in their precipitate retreat.







That night bivouac on the "nose" of Lookout will never be forgotten by the men who tried to court sleep amid a chaos of rocks, swept by a keen northwest wind. We longed for our knapsacks, but they were miles away and a thousand feet below us in Lookout Valley. Camp fires seemed indispensable, but they were a dangerous luxury, for certain sharpshooters on the rocks above us, like the "King of Shadows," loved "a shining mark," and more than one camp-fire group, while cooking their much-needed supper, were disturbed by officious offers of the enemy to settle their coffee with lead. But shots in the dark are uncertain; and, in spite of Rebel protests, we speedily promoted old Lookout, putting shining stars on his shoulders and decorating his rugged breast with a sloping sash of camp fires, very comforting to us, and a blazon of victory to our comrades in the valley.

But when we sought sleep that night we were made to realize that rubber blankets form a poor protection against cold; that rocks are uncomfortable pillows, and that though a slightly sloping bed may be favorable to slumber, yet when it rises fifteen or twenty degrees above the horizontal line, sleep will be in inverse ratio to the steepness of the slope. But so great had been the fatigues of the day that though our pillows were no softer than those pressed by the head of Jacob of old, and our bivouac was rougher than the ancient Bethel, yet we snatched sleep enough for a soldier from the jaws of difficulty, and were ready in the morning for whatever might lie before us.

The morning of the 25th dawned clear and beautiful. Boreas had wielded his windy besom so diligently during the night that not a wisp of fog or cloud clung to the crest of the mountain, nor cobwebbed a corner of the rocky ravines. But fog had served us so well the day before that we were almost in love with it, and we began to wish that the vapory army which had departed during the night might return again to assist us. All illusions as to distance and danger were now dispelled. From where we lay the crest of the mountain was startlingly near, and the unassailable strength of the position was only too evident. Point Lookout and the palisades on





either side frowned above us, and so close at hand that to all appearance an army of schoolboys might have stoned us out of our position. As the light increased we watched anxiously for some evidence of hostile presence on the rocks above us, but as we saw neither flutter of flag nor flash of steel, nor glimpse of moving gray, and heard not so much as the snapping of a twig on that summit which had been the especial seat of battle thunder the day before, we began to suspect that the eagles of war had forsaken their eyrie, and that by a bold climb we might gain the deserted nest.

The NINETY-SIXTH might properly have claimed the honor of making that climb, for they had hugged the base of the precipice during the battle. But time and the elements, supplemented by the tornado of shot and shell at Chickamauga, had so riddled the regimental colors that they could hardly be distinguished from the flag of the enemy; and as there was at hand a regiment with a stand of colors new and bright, our Brigadier, who was a Kentuckian, with pardonable partiality, gave the honor to his native State. General Whittaker asked for volunteers from the 8th Kentucky to plant the Union flag on the mountain by climbing a narrow rocky stairway which leads up to the point through clefts in the rocks. Fifteen men at once volunteered, and began the ascent. Looking back on events we now know that there was no danger in the enterprise; but looking up at the little band of brave men as they reached the base of the upright rocks that morning and began to climb that stony stair, we feared that they might be devoting themselves to captivity or death.

But our suspense was short. Our eyes were soon gladdened by seeing our flag waving from Point Lookout. Never did it seem so grand as when the sun kissed its silken folds on the apex of that ragged cliff, and never was our national banner greeted with such cheers as then stormed the mountain from all sides to hail our victorious flag. All the breath which we had spent the day before in climbing the mountain seemed to come back to us, and we poured it out in cheer after cheer, which surged around the crest of Lookout, and rolled down into the valley in cataracts of sound.



But the men who had fought the battle had many comrades who united with them in cheering over the victory. The multitudinous shout of a great army came up to us from below. Fifty thousand throats hailed Lookout under his proper flag, and the mountain monarch seemed proud of his new honors, and nodded to all the hills around to prolong the shout and multiply it with echoes. The shout ran up the Tennessee to our extreme left, and told Sherman, who was then preparing to attack the northern end of Missionary Ridge, that another victory had been gained.

To our Regiment and the 8th Kentucky was assigned the honor of holding the mountain, while the rest of our Brigade went with Gen. Hooker toward Rossville Gap to assist in storming Missionary Ridge. In a short time we were comfortably reposing on the upper part of Lookout, near its northern end, taking in the magnificent view which it commands.

At your feet lie parts of Georgia, Alabama and Tennessee, while in the blue distance far to the east dim summits loom up, whose rocky roots strike under the soil of the two Carolinas. Here, on your left, is Lookout Valley, out of which we climbed yesterday. Over against you is Sand Mountain, standing on a line with Lookout, the two mountains looking like mated monsters, who, if properly yoked, might draw a whole State after them. Yonder, toward the north and west, is Raccoon Range; and here, beneath you, a great loop of the Tennessee incloses Moccasin Point with beadwork of silver, and within that loop lies our former camp ground, so close at hand that we wonder the Rebels did not shell us out of it.

To the right of the Point the river sweeps northward in a semi-circle as graceful as Ulysses' bow of shining horn; and Chattanooga, the fair Penelope who has been so rudely wooed of late by Southern suitors, grasps the bow near its centre, and stands waiting for deliverance. She will not have long to wait, for *Ulysses is here*, and before night that inverted bow will flame from tip to tip with bolts more terrible by far than those which sped from the twanging bowstring of the ancient hero, and at sunset *our Ulysses* will stand in this mountain hall without a rival.



Off toward the east stretches Missionary Ridge, frowning like the wrinkled front of Mars. It is a false and schismatic gospel which is now preached from that ridge, but before daylight shall fade, the feet of them that bring good tidings shall climb its smoking sides, and their evangel, though turbulent and fierce in its utterance, will yet bring liberty to the oppressed and peace to our land.

Chattanooga Valley, which lies between us and the Ridge, seems calm and level, as viewed from this elevation; but go down into it and it breaks into a ground swell of hills and ravines, a battle field which carpet knights would not care to tread.

Two-thirds of the distance across the valley from where we stand rises Orchard Knob, a fortified hill somewhat higher than its fellows, and on it Gen. Grant now stands to direct the battle which has already begun. Gen. Sherman, having crossed the river on a pontoon bridge near the mouth of North Chickamauga Creek, is now assailing the northern end of Missionary Ridge. The distance is so great, and the obstructions to vision are so many that we cannot see the movements of the troops; but Lookout is busy catching battle sounds in his rocky palms, and tossing them back across the valley; and we know that in the midst of that tumult men are climbing the outlying hills at the northern end of the ridge, with a storm of iron and lead beating in their faces.

It is noon, and with occasional pauses the storm of battle on our left still rages. It is three o'clock, and our centre begins to stir a little, as though impatient of so long a delay. Gen. Hooker has been toiling across Chattanooga Valley all day, repairing burned bridges and overcoming various obstructions; and now he is ready to strike the ridge at Rossville Gap, and roll the Rebel line back toward Sherman.

It is half-past three, and the centre has not yet moved; but the air over Orchard Knob seems tense with suppressed thunders, and they must soon utter their voices.

It is twenty minutes to four—and hark! Bridge's Battery over yonder is speaking in a very significant way. Six guns,



fired in regular order, like the tolling of a mighty clock, say to listening ears. "*The time has come.*"

The valley below us gives birth to an army. Arising from the entrenchments, where they have been lying for hours, our men, with cheers, begin a charge, which, if successful, will carry them over a mile and a half of uneven ground, exposed at every step to a terrible artillery fire, and then up a ridge eight hundred feet high, seamed with three lines of works filled with resolute foes.

For a little distance a screen of timber conceals our advancing line, but now it appears in the open valley, stretching in a magnificent line from Rossville Gap off toward the Tennessee. And now Missionary Ridge becomes volcanic along its entire crest. Seventy pieces of artillery are playing on our line, and the air over their heads is dotted with white, circular clouds, born from the fiery hearts of bursting shells; making that "the valley of the shadow of death" to many who will not climb the ridge with victorious feet. Brave boys! it was in their hearts to do it; and we will crown them as victors though they fall in the early stages of that glorious race.

But our artillery is not silent. Orchard Knob, which gave the signal for the battle to begin, confronts its huge antagonist with miraculous audacity, and slings shells as though it were little David standing in the valley of Elah, and yonder wrathful ridge were the forehead of Goliath. Forts Wood and Negley fire their guns so fast that they seem bent on emptying their magazines along the enemy's line before sundown; and Moccasin Point, though almost out of the fight on account of distance, sends its compliments over the heads of our troops, done up in hard packages, to be distributed by "free delivery" when they reach their proper destination. Fort King speaks with a royal voice; Fort Palmer shouts like a giant, and every gun along our line hurls iron defiance at those flaming batteries, which pay no attention to anything save that line of Blue which is steadily sweeping towards the base of Missionary Ridge.

Well might the heroes of all time covet the privilege of standing here to view the grand spectacle. Here is all the





pomp and magnificence of a great battle within easy view, and yet so far removed that all the horrors of wounds and death are eliminated from the scene. Here is a panorama of war four miles in length, a panorama where the guns paint their own smoke as it rolls in sulphurous clouds from their hot mouths; where the fire is not streaks of pigment on canvas, but leaps and flashes like the live lightnings of heaven; where lines of men move forward, and battle flags flutter, and the sound of the battle—ah, who can paint *that!*—filling the valley with unceasing roar, and enlisting every echo lurking in surrounding hill or mountain to add its voice to the astounding tumult. If we could forget that our comrades are marching under those sulphurous clouds which are now flecking the whole valley and raining jagged fragments of iron out of their deadly bosoms on the defenceless heads of our brave men, we could enjoy to the full the scenic grandeur of the spectacle. But with the close sympathy of comradeship we join in the charge; the hot breath of the batteries blows into our faces; the iron hail of battle smites against the rocks of Lookout; and Missionary Ridge is not four miles away, but close at hand, daring us to climb its embattled sides.

Look at that line now! for we cannot join it except by sympathy. It moves forward as though the guns in front of it were firing blank cartridges, and it were taking part in a harmless sham battle. There is no straggling, and the line is nearly continuous from right to left. No doubt conflicting emotions agitate thousands of panting breasts along that line; but to us it moves forward as though not a man of them all could feel fear, and nothing could stop them save the hand of God.

Now they near the base of the ridge, and with a triumphant dash they capture the first line of works. If their endurance were equal to their courage they would climb the ridge at once, but even heroes must take breath, and they pause for a time before putting their lives in jeopardy on the high places of the field.

Sense of time is lost at such hours, and seemingly before the heart can beat sixty strokes they are on their feet again,



and have begun the perilous ascent. And now there comes across the valley the quick, sharp rattle of musketry, which soon deepens into a continuous roll, more dreadful to experienced ears than the loudest cannonade. It tells us that the tug of war has come at last; that foemen are looking into each others' faces; that angry eyes are glancing over deadly tubes and selecting individuals out of the struggling mass to aim at; that every man who faces that slope will have to pass a score of bullets on his way to the crest, and that many of them will never reach the crest through that downrushing tempest of lead. The marvel is that any of them dared to face it and lived through it; for twenty-eight balls were counted in one small tree after the battle.

But to us who view the battle from Lookout, that grand line moves slowly but steadily up the ridge, takes the second line of works, and, as though that were not worth a pause, presses resolutely up towards the third and last line. That line is not at all like the trim lines-of-battle often seen in pictures, but irregular, scattering, bent upward here and downward there; a very crooked line drawn across a very rough page, dotted with flags at the points of highest elevation—an altogether unmilitary line—except that it *will* go forward.

The sun is now balancing level rays across the back of Lookout, and what our men do to win the day they must do quickly. Yes, and they are doing it! The grand old Army of the Cumberland are bent on taking a look over towards Chickamauga from the crest of Missionary Ridge before the sun goes down, and though Bragg himself is putting men into the entrenchments above them they will not be denied.

Yonder is a flag within a few rods of the works! It flutters and disappears! Another Color Sergeant is added to the honorable roll of the many who have fallen to-day carrying the flag. Now it is up again in new hands and forward it goes—it is at the works—on them—and part of our line goes surging over the crest of Missionary Ridge. But not at that point alone, for the whole line gains the crest at nearly the same time, and when all have done so well it would be invidious to make comparisons.



As our Regiment did not take part in this engagement except by viewing the picture which has been faintly outlined on these pages, a general description of the battle is not necessary. Suffice it to say that it completely delivered Chattanooga from the presence of the enemy, and shattered their strength to such a degree that we enjoyed nearly two months of almost unbroken quiet.

We remained on Lookout Mountain for a full week after the battle. For summer weather ours was an ideal camp; but winter was now at hand, and when strong winds played leap-frog over the back of the mountain, and cold clouds trailed their gray hair through the trees which sheltered our camp, we began to think longingly of our comfortable cabins in Nickajack Cove. There were plenty of tents and blankets, as the camp equipage of two Rebel Brigades had fallen into our possession, but the position was too exposed to permit of comfort. During a severe wind storm one night a tree was blown over, falling across one of the tents and fracturing a leg for Lieutenant Pool, of Company A, and disabling him for several months. Corporal W. H. Richards, and one or two other members of the Company were also considerably bruised.

We soon took up our line of march for that sheltered nook among the mountains, going down the west side of Lookout, and early in December we were back in our shanty city and snugly established in winter quarters.

The winter was unusually severe, both North and South; but we had abundance of wood close at hand, we were well housed, and as we had direct railroad communication with the North, our men fairly reveled in boxes from home filled with a bewildering variety of articles.

Shortly following the battle of Chickamauga, the mails brought a Captain's commission to one of the many whose lives had passed away,—First Sergeant John G. Schaefer, of Company A, one of those who had successfully passed the examination of the Board designated to choose officers for the Regiments of colored troops then forming in that department. During the autumn and winter, Sergeant Wallace Tear, of



Company K, who, after the battle, had been acting as Sergeant Major of the Regiment; First Sergeant Richard Garrett, of Company E; First Sergeant John H. Collier, of Company D; First Sergeant J. M. Woodruff, of Company I, and Lovett S. Rivenburg, of Company E, were each accorded promotions as Lieutenants in Colored Regiments. Quartermaster Jeffers was also assigned to duty at Chattanooga, and subsequently, on the recommendation of Gen. Grant, appointed an Assistant Quartermaster in the Regular Army. A little later Captain Allen B. Whitney, of Company B, resigned, and First Lieutenant E. J. Gilmore was promoted to Captain, and Second Lieutenant George H. Burnett to First Lieutenant.

During the early part of September, Mrs. J. C. Smith, wife of Major Smith, went south, intending to visit her husband, then on duty at Murfreesboro, but as the army was advancing she remained in Nashville for some weeks. Accompanying her were their three little boys. Following Chickamauga she spent much time in the hospitals, rendering such service as a thoughtful, patriotic woman could to the many sick and wounded in that city. She was startled, in October, to find that her own children were prostrate with the dread disease of small-pox. Her experience was a most trying one, and one of the boys—little Freddie Parker Smith—died November 4. The father could not leave the front, and alone she consigned her loved one to the ground. Late in December she took the two remaining boys with her to Nickajack, spending about a month at the headquarters of the Regiment.

Among the incidents of the camp at Nickajack were the wounding of Captain Taylor, of Company E, and J. E. Clarkson, of Company D. A negro, found outside of the lines, was arrested and taken to camp. At headquarters he was searched and a revolver taken from him. The gun was of a peculiar make, and as Lieutenant Colonel Smith took it out it was discharged, the bullet striking Captain Taylor, passing through one leg and into the other, lodging in such a way that it could not be removed. The Captain was disabled for quite a time, and still feels some ill effects from the wound. The injury to Clarkson, which was of a similar nature, but less serious in its effect, was received while cleaning a revolver.





Colonel Champion obtained a leave of absence early in the winter, and spent some weeks at his Illinois home. Several line officers and enlisted men also obtained furloughs, usually for thirty days, and visited their families or attended to business matters at their homes.

During the period covered by this and the preceding chapter, the losses to the Regiment were not wholly incurred in battle, or as the result of wounds. George J. Cooper, of Company B, died of disease at Louisville, Ky., November 18; Mason C. Beecher, of Company D, died at Nashville, Tenn., September 27; Arnold Willett, of Company D, died at Nashville, Tenn., October 28; Andrew Farrier, of Company D, died at Murfreesboro, Tenn., December 2; Samuel Feun, of Company E, died at Stephenson, Ala., October 10; John Harding, of Company E, died at Evansville, Ind., December 24; William Mathew, of Company E, died at Chattanooga, Tenn., October 14; George Sidner, of Company F, died at Nashville, Tenn., November 12; John G. Thrasher, of Company G, died at Shellmound, Tenn., December 11; L. C. Crowell, of Company H, died at Chattanooga, Tenn., November 3; William J. Forbes, of Company I, died at Pleasant Valley, Ill., November 20; Butler Newton, of Company K, died at Nashville, Tenn., November 7.

January 1, 1864, a pair of new flags from Lake and Jo Daviess Counties were presented to us by a committee consisting of Judge J. D. Platt, L. P. Woodworth and Edgar Scaee, of Jo Daviess, who received in return our tattered battle flags, which were separated and taken one to each county. It was a matter of regret that, owing to some disarrangement of plans, the Lake County members of the committee were not present. The new flags were very beautiful, with their gilded lettering shining on their unsullied silken folds; but the old flags, though torn and soiled, had a beauty which the new did not possess, for had they not passed through Chickamauga, and had they not led us over Lookout? We parted with the rolls of glorious rags with regret, and resolved to make our new flags famous when we should enter on another campaign.



## CHAPTER XIV.

Good-by to Nickajack—A Leisurely March over Historic Ground—The Camps at Tyner and Ooltewah—Building Houses for a Day—Blue Springs Reached—Frequent Scouting Expeditions—Engagement Near Dalton—Sergeant Harriman Killed—More Wounds and Captures—Taunts from the Skirmish Line—Ten Hours under Fire—One Hundred Miles in Six Days—An Accidental Shot—A Ready-Made Camp—Frequent Furloughs—Captain Rowan and Lieutenant Earle Return from Prison—Drilling Renewed—Reading Clubs Formed—Vaccinating the Regiment—Scurvy and the "Potato Squad"—Deserters Drummed Around the Lines—The Army Concentrating—Waiting for the Order Forward!

TOWARD the end of January the weather became mild and pleasant, and on the twenty-fifth the Regiment was not greatly surprised by an order to be ready to march next day, the reported destination being Cleveland, Tenn. The health of the Regiment had been excellent, and many even of the severely wounded from the recent battles were again with the command. The prospective excitement of a new campaign helped in some degree to overcome the regret at leaving that camp in the mountains, but as the column marched out of the cove at nine o'clock of Tuesday, January 26, many a lingering look behind was cast at that strangely built city on the hillside. The other Regiments of the Brigade being at Shellmound, the NINETY-SIXTH and the 40th Ohio marched only about four miles and camped on the banks of the Tennessee. Lieutenant Colonel J. C. Smith was still in command of the Regiment. Col. Jesse H. Moore, of the 115th Illinois, was temporarily in command of the Brigade, Gen. Whittaker having gone to Kentucky to take his seat in the Legislature of that State. Gen. D. S. Stanley was in command of the Division. It is, perhaps, worthy of note that the Regiment left Nickajack just one year from the day they marched from Danville, Ky.

Wednesday, January 27, the march was not resumed until about noon, a delay being made to allow the wagon trains to pass through that purgatory of transportation known as "The



Narrows." The road through this portion of the route, which is bad enough at best, was worse than usual, and so trying upon both teams and wagons that but a half dozen miles were traversed by the infantry in rear, the camp for the night being near the high trestle bridge at Whiteside or Falling Waters. On the twenty-eighth the march was a leisurely one, the camp for the night, which was reached at three p. m., being at the base of Lookout Mountain. Lookout greeted the command with the familiarity of an old acquaintance, and seemed to promise the soldiers a gracious reception if they would honor him with another visit.

The invitation was accepted at seven o'clock on the morning of the twenty-ninth. The gay and easy march over the "nose" of Lookout was in striking contrast with the toilsome climb over the same "nose," several hundred feet nearer the rocky eyebrows, two months before, for the engineers and pioneers had built a fine macadamized road of easy zig-zag slopes and ample width, and though not at that time entirely completed it was an Appian Way compared with the former road, and made the march over the mountain seem like a triumphal procession. The march through Chattanooga was with drums beating and the new colors unfurled. Passing Orchard Knob a halt was made for the night at the foot of Missionary Ridge. There were visible many traces of the November battle, bullets being picked up here and there, while fragments of shell were so frequent as to indicate that there had been a somewhat lavish use of iron on the part of the Union batteries in Chattanooga, both during the siege and in the battle. Those of the men not too weary with the march wandered along the slopes, halting at intervals to count the bullet holes in trees or stumps, or picking up relics of the sanguinary contest, until nightfall shut out the view, and the bugle warned them back to evening roll call.

Saturday, January 30, the command crossed the historic ridge, halting to rest upon its summit, and when the extreme strength of the Rebel position was seen, all admired, more than ever before, the valor which had driven a determined enemy from such a natural stronghold. At noon it began to



rain, making the roads very disagreeable ; but the march was not a long one, for before night the column halted and went into camp at Tyner Station, nine miles from Chattanooga, on the Knoxville railroad. A good camp was fixed up, and although Sunday brought a severe rain storm the men made themselves comfortable. Several Rebel deserters came to this camp, each telling a pitiful tale of short rations and general dissatisfaction in the Southern army, reports that subsequent events did not confirm. These deserters were sent under guard to Chattanooga and thence to Nashville or farther north. The railroad was being rapidly repaired toward Cleveland, and on Monday the first train passed Tyner. Mrs. B. G. Pierce, wife of Surgeon Pierce, came to the Regiment, remaining for some weeks.

Wednesday, February 3, the Regiment again broke camp, marching six or eight miles, and halting at Ooltewah. It was given out that this was to be a permanent camp, and much pains was taken in the erection of cabins, small, straight pine poles being used for the walls, and the canvas tents being spread over them for roofs. Inside were bunks, and fireplaces were improvised beside the doorways. Boards were not abundant, but cracker boxes made a partial supply of material for doors, and, where other material could not be obtained, blankets or pieces of tent were used to shut out the wind or rain. Guard duty was quite heavy, as Rebel cavalry hovered in the neighborhood and threatened the camps of the scattered troops. But the camp, which Thursday had seen so carefully erected, was abandoned on Friday, the Regiment marching eight miles, going in the direction of Cleveland. Colonel Champion, who had just returned from leave of absence, assumed command of the Brigade, and Adjutant Blodgett acted as Assistant Adjutant General.

Saturday, February 6, the command marched four miles in a rainstorm, camping at Blue Springs, not far from the railroad which runs from Cleveland to Dalton, connecting the Chattanooga and Knoxville with the Chattanooga and Atlanta railroad. The next day was spent in fixing up a camp in the grubs upon a side hill. There was not a little apprehension





at this time for the safety of this part of the line. Quite a large proportion of the members of many of the regiments organized in 1861, and who had served more than two years, had "veteranized," as the act of reënlisting was called, and were absent on furlough, so that the army was, for the time being, greatly weakened, and it was thought that the Rebels might take advantage of this fact and seek to break the lines in the vicinity of Cleveland. Several recent demonstrations on the part of their cavalry had tended to confirm this belief, and the troops at Blue Springs were kept well in hand and ready for any emergency that might arise. Revéille sounded early each morning, but the old practice of standing in line through the damp and chilly morning hours was not revived, although the men kept on their accoutrements and were instructed to have their canteens and haversacks filled, so that they could march at a moment's notice.

There were few measures during the war that gave evidence of greater wisdom and forethought than the originating and adopting of the act under which the reënlistment of the volunteers of 1861 was secured. Nor was there any event that gave more eloquent testimony to the devotion and courage of the American volunteer soldier. The men who reënlisted in Tennessee had experienced all the hardships incident to severe campaigning, and all the dangers of repeated and terrible battles. They had, during the autumn and early winter, fought three desperate engagements. For weeks they had been on short rations. Even at that time they were, at many points, subsisting on such provisions as could be obtained in the war-worn and not over-populous region about Knoxville and Loudon. The weather was desperately cold. Indeed, many of them were enduring hardships and severities such as were hardly equalled at Valley Forge. But in the face of these hardships, with the certainty that it meant more toilsome marches and terrible battles, these brave men, at the call of the President, responded,—in some Regiments almost unanimously,—and reënlisted for another three years. As promised, these veterans were given a thirty days' furlough to their homes, and at the time now written of only the non-veterans.—



as those who did not re-enlist were called.—and the troops that could not “go in again,” not having yet served two years, were at the front. Hence it was necessary that the utmost watchfulness should be observed. Consequently the country between Cleveland and Dalton was tramped over almost daily by reconnoitering parties.


Monday, February 8, the NINETY-SIXTH was ordered out to scout the country toward Dalton, and left their camp at Blue Springs about four o'clock P. M., marching eight miles and going into bivouac. Next morning the march was resumed, the command going four miles farther, and to within two miles of the Rebel lines, and then returning to camp. No organized force of Rebels was encountered, but there were evidences that they were not far away. It was remarked by soldiers that most of the citizens along the route were loyal, and at one point the ladies came out and sang patriotic songs. The weather was pleasant, and while the march was rapid and fatiguing, the men seemed to enjoy it rather than otherwise. On their return the camp at Blue Springs was nicely policed, and many cabins were erected during Wednesday and Thursday.

On Friday, February 12, the NINETY-SIXTH, the 84th Indiana and a Battery were again out on a scout, going to Red Clay, on the Georgia line, and halting for dinner on the very spot where the Rebels had breakfasted. That afternoon they returned to Blue Springs, and on the following Sunday Companies A, F, D, E and K were again out, going over nearly the same ground. The weather was rainy and their trip an unpleasant one. The troops now threw up some entrenchments at Blue Springs.

Tuesday, February 16, the Paymaster came to camp, and each of the men received a small handful of crisp greenbacks. A rain storm prevailed for a day or two, and was succeeded by severe cold weather.

On Saturday Companies B, C, G, H and I went out on a scout, under command of Captain James, marching about thirteen miles and returning the same night. The resignation





JOHN H. HOLDEN.

COMPANY A.



of Lieutenant Funk, of Company F, who had been disabled at Chickamauga, was accepted on the twentieth.

Sunday, February 21, there was a heavy snow squall, and the weather was very disagreeable, making the order to march the following morning a most unwelcome one. Three days' rations were issued, with orders next day to have them last four days. On Monday the camps were early astir, and the First Division, which was encamped about Blue Springs and Cleveland, took the roads leading southward, camping for the night near Red Clay Station. The NINETY-SIXTH did not leave camp until about nine o'clock A. M., and halted at three o'clock. The march was not directly to the destination mentioned, but in a roundabout way; the purpose being to scour the country and prevent any force of the enemy from getting in the rear of the marching column. The Regiment was on picket at night. Simultaneously with this forward movement of the First Division of the Fourth Corps, the Fourteenth Corps moved forward farther to the right, going by way of Ringgold. At this time Gen. Sherman was on his famous Meridian expedition, and this movement on the part of these four Divisions from the Army of the Cumberland was intended as a diversion in his favor. It had been reported by deserters and captured Rebels that Gen. Johnston, who had relieved Gen. Bragg in command of the forces in Northern Georgia, had dispatched two Divisions from Dalton to reinforce Gen. Polk, at or near Meridian, and it was the purpose of Gen. Thomas to either capture Dalton or compel Gen. Johnston to recall these forces.

Tuesday, February 23, the command began fixing up a camp, but were shortly ordered forward, and at two o'clock P. M. again took the road, marching until nine o'clock in the evening and making nearly fifteen miles. The cavalry had some brisk skirmishing at the front, and the Fourteenth Corps met with some resistance farther to the right. The Union citizens were quite demonstrative, some of them even bringing out flags, which had doubtless been hidden for at least three years. Women swung their bonnets and men hurrahed for the Yankees and the Union, manifesting great delight.





One man, who claimed to be ninety-eight years old and to have been a Captain in the war of 1812, was almost frantic in his ejaculations when the Old Flag came in sight.

Wednesday, February 24, rumors were abundant, and every one seemed anxious, for it was reported that the enemy was in heavy force near at hand, and partially in their rear, while the Union forces were apparently scattered. The Brigade, under command of Colonel Champion, retraced its steps, leaving their advanced position at ten o'clock A. M., marching three miles and halting near Lee's Cross-roads for a short time, and then, with other portions of the Division, pressing off toward Tunnel Hill, nearly four miles. Heavy skirmishing on the part of the Fourteenth Corps was heard, but when the column arrived in sight of the fortifications the Rebels fled. During the afternoon the Brigade counter-marched to Lee's, and went into camp at dusk, having marched about twelve miles.

Thursday, February 25, réveille sounded at two o'clock A. M., and at four o'clock the troops were on the road. Crossing a long ridge the column turned southward, marching toward Dalton, at first in column, and then in line-of-battle. The Division of Gen. Baird and other Union troops were passed, and as soon as the formation was complete the entire army pressed forward. The lines began to move about nine o'clock A. M., the NINETY-SIXTH at first having position on the left of the second line of the Brigade. The advance was very rapid for a mile or more, the ground passed over being a series of low hills, most of them heavily timbered. The Rebels were soon encountered, but the skirmishers pushed them back in an admirable manner, keeping up a rapid fire and hardly halting at all. While the lines were thus advancing, Josiah Moulton, of Company G, was wounded in the face. Francis T. Robinson, of Company A, was wounded in the foot. Henson Moore, of Company H, was wounded in the hand. It became apparent that the Rebel main line was nearly reached, and the troops halted at the crest of a wooded ridge, the skirmishers keeping up a rapid fire. This position was occupied throughout the entire day, and at no time for



ten hours did the firing cease. The Rebel skirmishers at intervals would tauntingly call from their pits: "Chickamauga!" or "Here's your Dalton! Come and take it!" The Union skirmishers would shout in reply: "Here's your Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge." From behind trees and logs they continued to send their leaden compliments back and forth. The soldiers in the main line lay upon the ground, just enough at the rear of the ridge to be protected. It is all very pleasant to lie upon the grass in the shade for an hour or two if the surroundings are agreeable and the weather pleasant, but when the ground is bare and damp, the weather chilly, the danger considerable and the time prolongs itself into many hours, a prostrate position becomes monotonous; and so it proved on this occasion, for the day seemed interminable.

While Lieutenant Pepoon, of the Brigade Staff, was reconnoitering directly in front of the Regiment he drew the fire of the Rebel skirmishers, but escaped injury. One of the bullets, however, sped past its mark, striking Sergeant Henry J. Harriman, of Company K, in the head and causing his instant death. The Sergeant was a gallant soldier and worthy to command a Company or even a Regiment, and his death caused great sadness in the command. Toward night light lines of breastworks were thrown up, the men using fence rails, stones and logs. These works were not to be used, however, for at eleven o'clock that night, it was determined that Dalton should not be attacked with the force then under Gen. Thomas. The army marched back ten miles, bivouacking at four o'clock near Lee's house, after a continuous march of about twenty-four hours, nearly one-half of the time under fire. The distance traveled during the time had been about twenty miles. When the line left its position at Dalton, Charles C. and Harry Menzimer, of Company A, were asleep behind a log a little in the rear of the pickets, and were not missed until daylight. Neither happening to hear the column move they slept on, unconscious of danger, until daylight, when they were awakened by the Rebel cavalry and made



prisoners. Charles subsequently died in prison, and Harry escaped after enduring many terrible experiences.

Friday, February 26, camp was broken at about noon, the Brigade to which the NINETY-SIXTH was attached marching in the direction of Tunnel Hill, and forming line where the halt was made on Wednesday. This position was maintained until nine o'clock P. M., when a retreat was again ordered. Fires were kindled along the road, by direction of the officers, to deceive the Rebels into the belief that the troops were going into camp. The march was a rapid one, the final halt being made on Chickamauga Creek about one o'clock A. M. The distance traveled was about eight miles.

Saturday, February 27, the troops remained in camp until afternoon, when they again moved, marching to within two miles of Ooltewah. The distance traveled was about ten miles, and the column did not halt until after dark. The Rebels followed closely, and near the Ringgold road considerable skirmishing could be seen and heard on the left across Chickamauga Creek. An attempt was made to decoy the enemy into an open field by sending a wagon train toward them, but without avail. A sad accident occurred during the afternoon, Lieutenant Havens, of Company G, being very seriously wounded by the accidental discharge of a musket in the hands of a soldier in Company B. The bullet passed through his shoulder, and it was at first feared that the wound would prove fatal. All regretted the occurrence, but none more sincerely than the non-commissioned officer who chanced to have the gun in his hands. The Lieutenant recovered, but was disabled for several months, and still suffers from the effect of the injury.

Sunday, February 28, the column marched to Blue Springs, reaching there at noon and occupying the old camp ground. The Rebels did not follow. The distance traveled was about twelve miles. The Regiment had now been out for a full week, and its service had been very trying. The marching, which had been rapid at times, had aggregated one hundred miles, and as there had been an unusual amount of night



work, the men were glad to be in camp again and given a little opportunity for rest.

Monday, February 29, a severe rain set in, and the day was a very disagreeable one, but most of the men were permitted to remain in camp and made themselves as comfortable as circumstances would permit. Quite a number of men, most of them having honorable scars, were arriving daily from the various hospitals. A leave of absence had arrived for Major Hicks just before the reconnoissance, but he pocketed it until the campaign closed, starting for home on the return to Bine Springs.

Tuesday, March 1, the NINETY-SIXTH left Blue Springs at nine o'clock A. M., and marched to Cleveland, a distance of about four miles, going into camp a little outside the village on a side hill close by the railroad track. For almost the first time in its experience the Regiment made a very fortunate move as regards a camp ground, finding the winter quarters recently vacated by the 84th Illinois in excellent condition. They had but to put their shelter tents on these buildings for roofs and clean up a little litter, and they were in excellent condition for living. If the 84th Illinois boys knew how thoroughly their comrades of the NINETY-SIXTH appreciated this unusual state of things, they must certainly have felt compensated for any loss of pleasure they might have enjoyed had they pursued the usual custom, and upon being ordered to leave camp burned up their lumber. The day was rainy and cold, and the men regarded themselves as extremely fortunate. From that time until the 23d of April the Regiment continued to occupy this camp. Every few days the heart of some one was made happy by the receipt of a twenty days' furlough. Generally these favored ones were men having families at home, but occasionally the rule was varied and single men were given leaves of absence. A heavy line of rifle pits were dug around camp, details of men being at work almost daily strengthening it. A number of recruits came to the Regiment from Lake and Jo Daviess Counties about this time.

On the 8th of March the members of the command were





made to rejoice by the receipt of the intelligence that Captain Rowan, of Company F, and Lieutenant Earle, of Company C, both of whom had been prisoners of war since the battle of Chickamauga, had escaped from prison and reached the Union lines. Both of these officers were very popular in the Regiment, and the news of their escape was enthusiastically received.

Gen. Whittaker having returned from Kentucky and assumed command of the Brigade, Colonel Champion took command of the Post, with headquarters at Cleveland. Adjutant Blodgett was assigned to duty as Post Adjutant. For some time before his injury, Lieutenant Havens had acted as Adjutant of the Regiment. He was succeeded by Lieutenant Dawson, and Lieutenant Earle took the position on returning, serving until the return of the Colonel and Adjutant.

The position of Post Commander at Cleveland was by no means an ornamental one. Many of the citizens in the vicinity were intensely loyal. The armies had taken all of their live stock and provisions, and in many instances left them absolutely destitute. If they remained outside the lines they were continually subjected to unpleasant experiences, as scouting parties from either army were raiding the country. As a consequence they flocked to the town and were assigned to the houses of absent Rebels. Upon the Post Commander devolved the delicate task of selecting the loyal and worthy and provisioning them. The disloyal were temporarily cared for, under guard, and either sent to Chattanooga, where they could be more carefully watched, or placed outside the lines where they could go to their Rebel friends. Almost the entire population of the three or four counties contiguous to Cleveland and Chattanooga were fed at Uncle Sam's expense for a number of months. Many were sick and had to be treated by the Post Surgeons. An aged citizen, who had been a soldier in the Black Hawk war, died at Cleveland in March, and was buried with military honors, Corporal Gage, of Company G, having charge of the funeral escort.

On the 11th of March the Regiment had its first dress parade for several months. Drill was resumed with consider-



able vigor, the Companies or the entire Battalion being out whenever the weather would permit. A general order from Division Headquarters required all of the troops to drill not less than three and one-half hours every day. The Regiment still retained the old habit of getting up before daylight, forming line, stacking arms and wearing accoutrements until seven o'clock.

On the 18th of March the Regiment marched through town and back. Gen. Whittaker being temporarily absent in Kentucky, Col. Price, of the 21st Kentucky, assumed command of the Brigade, and on the 20th had a grand review in the afternoon.

The 22d is memorable for a very severe snow storm, prevailing throughout the day and covering the ground to the depth of nearly a foot. Commands that chanced to be on the move at that time or that were merely in bivouac suffered greatly, but fortunately the NINETY-SIXTH was in comfortable quarters and not required to do very heavy guard duty, so that it enjoyed the storm rather than otherwise. The men indulged in some very vigorous snow-balling, and some of the officers improvised a sleigh and had a genuine sleigh ride.

About this time several reading clubs were made up, the men contributing a small sum each to a fund with which to pay the subscriptions to a large number of magazines and newspapers, and as a consequence reading matter was very abundant in camp. The leading dailies from New York, Chicago and Cincinnati were on the list, and as a result all were kept fully informed of the general news of the day. During the stay at Cleveland there was abundant time and opportunity for reading, but when the campaign which followed was fully begun, the papers were so irregular in reaching their destination and the time of the men so occupied, as to render the periodicals of less service; consequently most of the subscriptions were dropped at the end of three or six months. Captain Timothy D. Rose, of Company K, resigned March 21. First Lieutenant E. E. Townsend was promoted to Captain, and Second Lieutenant George W. Pepon to First Lieutenant.

March 23d, Lieutenant Earle arrived in camp and was



given quite an ovation, and for many days he was compelled to tell over and over the story of his escape from Libby Prison. Captain Rowan rejoined the Regiment a week later and was most cordially greeted. An elegant banquet was given at Post Headquarters in honor of their return.

There had been more or less small pox in the army for some weeks, and as a precautionary measure every man in the Regiment who could not exhibit a satisfactory scar to the Surgeon was vaccinated.

On the eleventh of April the Eleventh and Twelfth Corps were consolidated as the Twentieth Corps under command of Major-General Joseph Hooker. Gen. Gordon Granger was relieved from the command of the Fourth Corps and succeeded by Major-General Howard. On the whole the change was well received by officers and men, for Gen. Granger had not been wholly popular, many feeling that his punishment of soldiers for trivial offences was unnecessarily severe. There was at first a little prejudice against Gen. Howard, but this was speedily overcome, and he was afterward extremely popular with the officers and men of the entire Corps. His first order was to stop Sunday inspections and reviews, and direct that camp duties on the Sabbath should be as light as was consistent with safety and cleanliness.

Wednesday, April 13. Sergeant Frank Wier, who had been acting Sergeant-Major for about five months, was promoted to First Sergeant of Company A, and Sergeant C. A. Partridge of Company C was detailed as acting Sergeant-Major, and subsequently appointed to the position which had been made vacant by the death of Sergeant-Major Quinn. The same day the Regiment marched to the railroad track and presented arms in honor of their late commander, Gen. Granger, as he passed on the train bound for Nashville. Gen. Howard visited the Regiment in the evening, making personal inspection of the camp.

Although there was little known of the matter in the Regiment, quite a spirited contest was going on to determine who should be appointed to the position made vacant by the promotion of the Quarter-Master, Stephen Jeffers, to be a Quar-



ter-Master in the regular army. A majority of the line officers signed a petition to Governor Yates asking that Lieutenant Blowney, of Company G, be given the place. Colonel Champion requested that his brother, Myron B. Champion, who had recently enlisted in Company K, be appointed. Lieutenant-Colonel Smith, then in command of the Regiment, asked that Lieutenant Moore, of Company I, who was temporarily filling the position, be regularly commissioned. Influential friends in Illinois asked that Hospital Steward Ferguson be promoted. Numerous papers endorsing the several aspirants were filed with the Governor, and after some delay the commission was issued to Hospital Steward Ferguson. Lieutenant-Colonel Smith appealed the case, and the Department Commander, Gen. George H. Thomas, decided that the commander of a regiment had the right to name his staff officers, and accordingly declared Lieutenant Moore to be the Quarter-Master of the Regiment. At the same time he recommended that Hospital Steward Ferguson be assigned to duty, with the rank of First Lieutenant, in any existing vacancy. The only vacancy existing when the decision came was in Company H, and to this Company he was assigned. So much time was consumed by the correspondence that Lieutenant Ferguson was not mustered until the following October, although his commission dated from the death of Lieutenant Barnes, October 2, 1863. Lieutenant Moore's appointment as Quarter-Master was dated April 16, 1864. Quarter-Master Sergeant George Jeffers, who had been appointed to the position upon the death of the gallant Bean at Chickamauga, voluntarily relinquished the position to accept a detail with his father, the late Quarter-Master. He was succeeded by Sergeant B. F. Shepard, of Company G, who, although still suffering from wounds received at Chickamauga, had recently rejoined the command. Corporal Swabrough, who had so gallantly carried the Regimental colors at Chickamauga and Lookout Mountain, was made a Sergeant to fill the vacancy caused by Shepard's promotion.

There had been more or less scurvy among the men all through the late winter months, there being not less than





fifty well defined cases in the Regiment at one time toward the close of April. But by united efforts on the part of the officers, enough vegetables were secured, as a part of the rations of the men, to relieve this trouble somewhat; but still there was considerable sickness, and one or two men from every Company had to be sent to the hospital, while others were hardly fit for active service. The vegetables received were generally potatoes and sour-kraut. The limbs of the men were swollen and became very sore, their gums would be swollen, their teeth loose, and they would suffer from general languor and depression. The Surgeons had what was known as a "potato squad," composed of men who were kept almost exclusively on a vegetable diet.

During the stay at Cleveland there was quite a religious interest in the Regiment, and also in the 40th Ohio, whose camp was near that of the NINETY-SIXTH. Preaching was held almost nightly in the camp of the 40th. These meetings were continued until the advance of the army, and were renewed whenever opportunity permitted all through the memorable battle summer that followed.

About this time a petition, asking the Governor of Illinois to again commission Rev. Horace G. Woodworth as Chaplain of the Regiment, was endorsed by nearly all of the officers of the command; but through some delay or misunderstanding the appointment was not announced until May 20, by which time he had made other engagements and could not accept the place.

Saturday, April 23, in obedience to orders from Gen. Whittaker, the NINETY-SIXTH joined the Brigade at Blue Springs. Just before this move, Lieut.-Col. Smith was called to Chattanooga to serve upon a Board to examine the claims of citizens against the Government for property destroyed by the army. The command of the Regiment devolved upon Major Hicks for a few days and until Colonel Champion was relieved from duty as Post Commander, which occurred April 28. Colonel Smith remained on this duty only about a fortnight and rejoined the Regiment as it neared Resaca.

The camp at Blue Springs was in a plat of heavy timber



where there was but little material for building, and the camp was quite in contrast with the recently vacated quarters at Cleveland. The men knew, however, that it was but for a little while that they were to be in camp. For some time past applications for furloughs had come back disapproved, and the entire Fourth Corps had been concentrating about Cleveland. The Regiments that had been home on veteran furlough were coming to the front again, many of them recruited to the maximum number, the 35th Indiana of the Second Brigade having returned with about 1100 men. The Fourth Corps occupied the left center of the grand army now concentrating for the forward movement. Up to this time it had been undecided as to the campaign, it being expected that Gen. Johnston, who was in command of the Confederate forces about Dalton, would take advantage of the absence of the Regiments on furlough, and of the widely scattered condition of the Union army, and assume the offensive. Cleveland was known to be the weak point in the Union line, and it was thought by the Generals in authority that an attack might be made at that point at any time. But now this danger was passed; the army was reunited and strengthened until there were within supporting distance almost 100,000 men. It was stripping for its grand advance. All baggage that could possibly be dispensed with was ordered to the rear. Even the Company desks, which had always hitherto been kept within reach so that whenever a camp was made they could be brought up, were ordered stored, the officers being directed to carry blanks with them sufficient for all needs for some weeks to come. Four wagons were allowed to each Regiment for a time, but even these wagons were frequently unloaded, their contents being piled some where in the woods, and they sent to the rear for Quartermaster's stores for the supply of the army. On their return the teamsters would be sent to hunt up their original baggage, load it again and take it as near to the front as possible. The Soldiers knew that the enemy had an immense army in their front and were now certain that they were to be the attacking party, instead of being called upon to occupy the defensive, as had been



thought would be the case a month before. Drilling was kept up daily and camp regulations were very strict during the stay at Blue Springs.

Sunday, May 1, the Brigade was called out and formed in a hollow square. In the center of the square was a little group of men, two of whom were evidently prisoners. They were not Confederate prisoners, however, but men who had deserted from the Union army. One of these men was mounted on a box in view of the entire Brigade, when a soldier, detailed for the purpose, stepped up to him and shaved his head. The sentence of the other deserter was read, after which they were both marched around the lines bare headed and with cards pinned on their backs marked "deserter," the band accompanying them and playing the "Rogue's March." There could have been little fear at that time of desertions from among the veterans of the army, for the men who had fought at Stone's River, Chickamauga, Lookout Mountain and Mission Ridge were not likely to desert at this time. But there were in many of the Federal Regiments a large number of newly enlisted men, of whom a small percentage had been influenced as much by the generous bounties, then offered for recruits, as by patriotic motives, and this episode was intended to serve as a warning for all who might want to leave the ranks and return home, to first obtain permission. One of the men who was obliged to submit to the indignity of being drummed around the lines was a member of the 40th Ohio. He fully redeemed himself in the estimation of his comrades by his bravery in subsequent battles, and lost his life at Kenesaw Mountain.

Up to this time there had been no organized detail of stretcher bearers, but before entering upon the campaign men were selected from each Regiment to act with what was known as the "Ambulance Corps," being provided with canvas stretchers, and instructed how to care for and remove wounded men from the battlefield.

Michael Merez, of Company I, died at Bridgeport, Ala., Feb. 15, and Louis C. G. Goatlea, of Company A, died at Cleveland, April 12. John Baker, a recruit who had enlisted February 24, died at Camp Butler, Chicago, Ill., March 20.



1864; and Wesley D. Manlon, also a recruit, who enlisted about the same time, died at Camp Yates, Springfield, Ill., March 2.

The Armies of the Union, East and West, were now marshaling for a grand advance. Gen. Grant had taken personal command of the troops in Virginia, and had assigned Gen. W. T. Sherman to the command of the Military Division of the Mississippi. The latter had, near the northern line of Georgia, the Army of the Cumberland, comprising the Fourth, Fourteenth and Twentieth Corps, under the immediate command of Gen. George H. Thomas, and numbering about 60,000 men. The Army of the Tennessee, comprising portions of the Fifteenth, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Corps, under Gen. J. B. McPherson, and numbering 24,000, was approaching from the West; and the Army of the Ohio, comprising the Twenty-third Corps, under Gen. John M. Schofield, and numbering about 13,500 men, was marching from the vicinity of Knoxville. Guards were disposed to protect the long lines of communication in the rear against the depredations of local guerillas and bushwhackers or the raids of the enemy's cavalry. Gen. Sherman had been so fortunate as to obtain the plans and specifications of the railroad bridges between Chattanooga and Atlanta, and pioneers and engineers had about completed duplicates of every piece of timber in every structure. These were piled beside the track, ready to be loaded upon the trains and run to any point as soon as an advance was made and a bridge found to be destroyed. Immense supplies of food and ammunition were being piled up in the rudely constructed warehouses at Chattanooga. The preparations were stupendous. The vast army was possessed of a quiet confidence in the leaders whose master minds had planned the preliminaries so wisely and on so grand a scale, and calmly waited the order to advance.





## CHAPTER XV.

The Army Concentrating—The Atlanta Campaign Inaugurated—From Blue Springs to Catoosa Springs—Obstructions in the Highway—Two Partial Sunstrokes—Advance on Tunnel Hill—The Strong Fortifications Found Empty—Looking Across the Valley—Early Réveille—Brass Guns *vs.* Brass Bands—The Demonstration Against Rocky Face Ridge—The NINETY-SIXTH Unslings Knapsacks and Takes the Skirmish Line—Moving Against the Palisades—To the Right and into Buzzard Roost Gap—A Gallant Advance—The Enemy Mistakes the Regiment for an Army—Almost out of Ammunition—A Bloody Sunset—Night Permits Retreat and Rest—Nearly a Half Hundred Casualties—Deserved Compliments—Shelled out of Camp—The Rebels Evacuate the Dalton Line.

MAY 5 had been fixed upon as the day for the inauguration of the active summer campaign of 1864, for the armies, both East and West. Gen. Grant had assumed command of all the military forces of the United States, but chose to personally operate with the larger army, then between Washington and Richmond. Gen. W. T. Sherman, by personal consultation and through correspondence with his chief, had discussed and formulated plans for the forward movement from Chattanooga, agreeing to keep the enemy in his immediate front so occupied as to prevent the sending of Rebel reinforcements from Georgia to Virginia. On the other hand, Gen. Grant had given assurance that the army under Gen. Lee should be given ample occupation in Virginia, so that they should have no troops to spare for the use of Gen. Johnston.

As the plans neared completion for what has gone into history as the Atlanta Campaign, and the day approached for its inception, all was activity along the line of the Tennessee River. That portion of the Army of the Tennessee which had been in the vicinity of Huntsville, Ala., moved, partly by rail and partly by marching, to Chattanooga, and thence, via Rossville, to Lee & Gordon's Mills, or a little farther south.



arriving in position as the right wing of Gen. Sherman's command during the early days of the month. The Army of the Ohio marched from the neighborhood of Knoxville, by way of Cleveland, to Red Clay, and became the left wing of the vast army simultaneously with the movement of Gen. McPherson's forces. At the same time the three large Corps comprising the Army of the Cumberland moved out to their assigned position as the centre of the mighty force.

On the part of the NINETY-SIXTH the movement began at noon of Tuesday, May 3, when, with other troops, it left its camp at Blue Springs and marched over the ground made so familiar by the numerous scouting expeditions of the previous February, halting for the night a mile south of Red Clay, on the Georgia line. The Regiment numbered a little more than four hundred men as it set out upon this memorable campaign. The route taken was the one known to the command as the "long" road, and the distance marched during the afternoon was twelve miles.

Wednesday May 4, the march was resumed shortly after sunrise, but the command being in the rear of an immense wagon train and the road obstructed by timber that had been felled by the Rebels, progress was slow, only ten miles being traveled, although nearly the entire day was consumed. The weather was excessively warm, and two of the soldiers—George A. Bangs, of Company B, and William S. Nash, of Company F—were partially sunstruck, but fortunately neither of them were so prostrated as to be disabled for more than a week or two. Throughout the day skirmishers or flankers were kept out, but there was no fighting, although Rebels were seen in the distance. That night the Regiment took its place in the long line-of-battle, its position being near Catoosa Springs. The next day there was no movement of the centre save a slight shifting of position along the general line occupied on Wednesday evening. Rebels were seen hovering at the front, and a few harmless shots were exchanged by the pickets. Toward night the enemy made a vigorous demonstration, forcing back the advanced line on the left. A barricade of rails was constructed, behind which the troops lay in line.



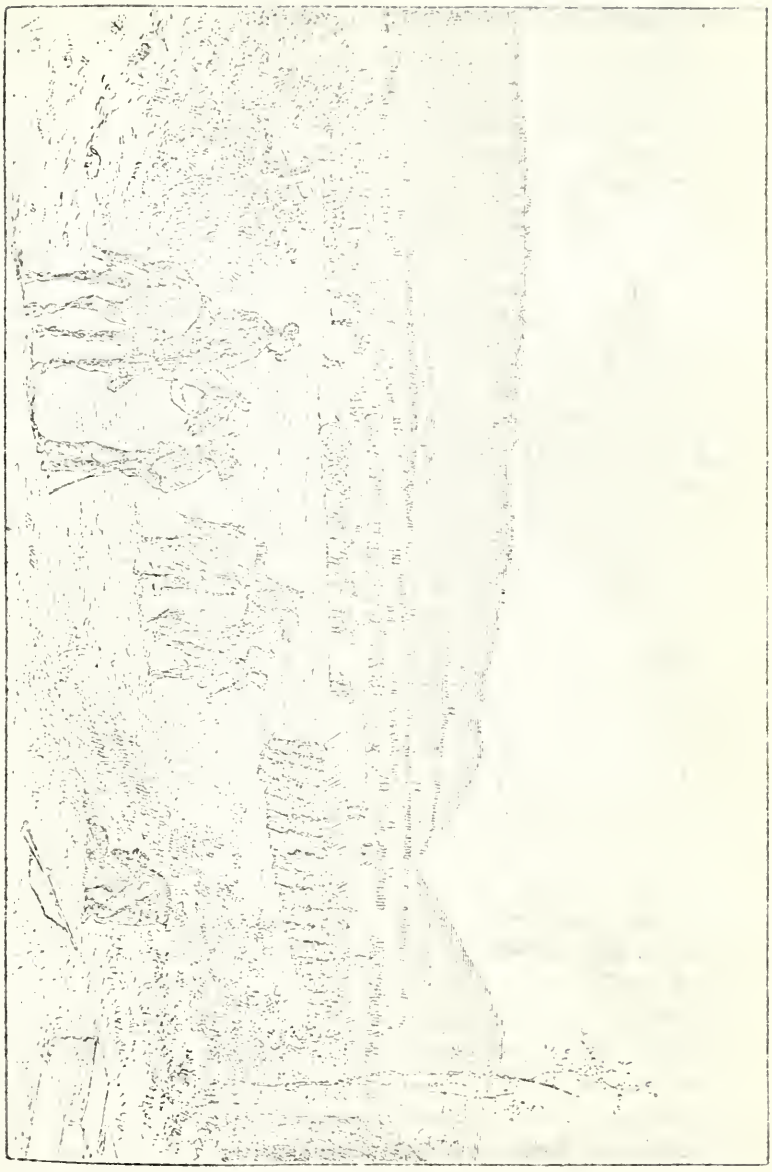
Each Company was required to have a roll call every hour or so, but despite this fact many of the curiously inclined ventured to make brief visits to the hotels and other buildings of the famous watering place a half mile distant from the position of the Regiment.

Friday, May 6, the NINETY-SIXTH was detailed as a picket reserve. The day passed without especial incident of note, although the enemy were several times in plain view. By night all of the forces were in line, and the grand army of Gen. Sherman ready to move toward Dalton and Gen. Johnston's veteran army. All knew that an advance meant a battle. True, the Union army largely outnumbered the Rebel forces, but the position at Dalton was an exceedingly strong one for defense; and, in a country where almost every citizen was an active scout or spy, and with the enemy's shorter lines of communication, the advantage of preponderating numbers was not so great as it would have been in a more level and less hostile country.

Saturday, May 7, the army moved forward in force. Réveille sounded at half past three o'clock, and before sunrise the troops were on the march. Very soon skirmishing began, the first gun being fired just as the sun was climbing over the eastern hills. The Rebels fell back and their fires were still burning as the Union forces passed their camps of the night before. Innumerable trees had been felled across the road, but men with axes and levers and teams cleared the way with a rapidity that was surprising. Company A was on the skirmish line, and expended considerable ammunition in forcing the Rebel rear guard back. At a little past nine o'clock line-of-battle was formed, the troops moving in this order to the top of a ridge, where a brief halt was made. The NINETY-SIXTH, which had been in the second line, now took the front line on the right of the Brigade, and again advanced. The formidable works of the enemy were soon in view, and the stubbornness of their skirmishers a little before created the impression that a stand would be made. It was therefore with some trepidation that the command left the timber and marched across the open field toward a line of heavy rifle pits



RAILS OF GOLD AND SILVER







that all knew might be full of armed men merely awaiting the signal to pour a destructive volley, at short range, from behind their heavy intrenchments. But the suspense was not long, for as the skirmishers neared the works it became apparent that the enemy had fallen back toward Dalton. General and Staff Officers rode to the front, the line-of-battle following and occupying the abandoned works at eleven o'clock, the NINETY-SIXTH being the first to cross the parapet. A line of breast-works facing southward was at once begun, the men working industriously notwithstanding that the weather was excessively warm. Heavy timber was cut and the works became very formidable as the day wore away. The line was occupied throughout the afternoon and the succeeding night. Skirmishers covered the front, but were not seriously engaged, although musketry and artillery firing could be heard in the distance. The flags of the Signal Corps of either army were fluttering from the hill tops, and to right and left extended the long lines of blue, in plain view until nightfall, and easily traced by the gleaming camp fires as darkness closed in.

Sunday, May 8, had not dawned until the army was awake and standing to arms, for at three o'clock the réveille sounded. At eight o'clock the troops were marching toward the valley that lay between Tunnel Hill and Rocky Face Ridge, the latter being a long range of hills or mountains, whose name indicates the character of the side which faced toward the veteran Army of the Cumberland. Near the railroad the line halted, the Division to which the Regiment belonged remaining idle most of the day. Looking along the stony ridge, and to the right, a gorge could be discerned, through which the railroad wound its way and back of which was Dalton, where were Gen. Johnston's headquarters. The ridge itself was fortified, and along its crest and through the gorge lay the Rebel line-of-battle. The skirmishers of the enemy and several batteries of artillery were thrown out in advance of this narrow pass,—known as Buzzard Roost Gap,—and a lively skirmish fire, with frequent salutes from the Rebel artillery, gave evidence that it would be no easy task to drive the occupants of this strong line from their position by direct



assault. There was some manœuvering but no general forward movement on that part of the line until the afternoon was well advanced. At four o'clock Gen. Howard, commanding the Fourth Corps, rode along to view the position of his forces, and shortly afterward ordered a band to come out from the timber in the rear and play a few selections. The opening of this musical programme was "The Bonnie Blue Flag," which was followed by "Dixie,"—selections claimed at the time as the exclusive property of the alleged Confederacy, but rendered national when, with numerous other trophies, they fell into Union hands at Appomattox a year later. The men in gray, as if to manifest their appreciation of the opening numbers, swarmed from the groves that dotted the valley and from the heavy timber along the base of the ridge, and gave a vigorous vocal response. Then followed "Hail Columbia" and "Yankee Doodle," to which the lines of blue made answer with a cheer that ran for miles to left and right. The latter tune was repeated in double time, which proved to be Gen. Howard's signal for a vigorous shelling from the batteries, continued for some moments. Then the infantry advanced down the valley, in magnificent order, the long lines sweeping forward toward the enemy. The occasional shots of the skirmishers grew into an almost constant clangor, and the Rebels were pressed back along the entire front for a mile or more. The artillery firing was by no means all upon one side, for shot and shell came plunging through the groves and along the fields with fearful sounds, but fortunately with little damage to the men toward whom they were hurled. For a time the band seemed to be the target, but the concert ended very abruptly when "the diapason of the cannonade" was so forcibly interjected, and the musicians betook themselves to the timber before the range had been secured by the artillerists from Dixie. But the forward movement was intended merely as a reconnoissance and not as an attack, and as the position of the troops was most uncomfortable, owing to the continuous and close firing of the Rebel artillery, a halt was soon ordered, and at dusk the main line drew back nearly to the works left in the morning. Throughout the night an



incessant skirmish fire was kept up, and there was little sleeping at the reserve posts.

Monday, May 9, was a most trying one to the NINETY-SIXTH. At three o'clock the men were again in line. Shortly after daylight the Division moved into the valley, sweeping forward to the position reached the night before. There was some moving to right and left, but at about eight o'clock the Regiment was taken from the line and ordered to pile its knapsacks. Companies A and B were deployed as skirmishers, and the others moved near them as a skirmish reserve. Soon Companies G and K were deployed, and moved to their assistance. From their elevated position the Rebels could plainly see every movement and they resolutely resisted this advance. But there was no wavering, the skirmishers going at a run to the timber at the foot of the ridge. A rail fence was encountered, the reserves throwing it to the ground; this passed, the timber offered some protection. Up the steep slope, running from tree to tree, halting a moment behind rocks and then pressing on, the skirmish line made its way until quite near the rocky palisades, which were readily seen to be wholly inaccessible. The main line kept near them, advancing as ordered, sometimes boldly and in line, and again crawling up the steep incline or moving to right or left a few rods to avoid the more exposed positions. From their sheltered position the Rebels could take deliberate aim at the men in blue below them, and the exposure of a head or foot from behind a tree or rock was the signal for a volley. But resolutely the line held its exposed place, giving shot for shot. Fred Brainerd, of Company B, and James Vaughn, of Company K, were killed in their places. Beri Serviss, of Company K, had a limb shattered, necessitating amputation. Every few moments some one was hit, but there was no faltering, and the Regiment did all and more than it had been ordered to do. Between four and five o'clock in the afternoon orders came to move by the right flank. The march was promptly begun, the right bearing down the hill, as Buzzard Roost Gap was neared. When they had advanced so far that the left was fairly past the southern end of the northern ridge the line



halted and came to a front. Company K, being out of ammunition, was recalled and took place beside the colors. Other Companies were deployed and an advance ordered. Into the gap they pressed, additional men being sent out until only the single Company mentioned was in reserve. The line of the Regiment extended from near the foot of the ridge on the right almost to the upright crags upon the left. From the moment the advance was ordered the firing became rapid. Major Hicks had immediate command of the advanced line, with orders to make a strong demonstration, pressing the enemy back into their main line and ascertaining the character of their works. The effort was to deceive the Rebels into the belief that an assault was to be made at this point, while the main army, moving rapidly by the right flank, should force its way through Snake Creek Gap, a dozen miles to the southward, and secure, if possible, a foothold upon the railroad between Dalton and Resaca. Hence this movement on the part of the Regiment was a most important one. Nor could it have been entrusted to better hands. With rare nerve and skill the line forced its way to the front. Along the corrugated sides of that wooded ridge they resolutely moved forward, taking such shelter as they could, until the fresh clay of the Rebel breastworks was so near that there could be no farther movement except at a charge. How spitefully the muskets spoke from the front! With what vicious speed the bullets sped across the rugged battle-field! The works in front seemed to be crowded with men. The deadly fire was incessant from either side. Exposing themselves as little as possible the men of the Regiment fired from behind trees and rocks or over the natural embankments along the line. The air grew thick with smoke as the rapid and repeated discharges of the muskets sounded through the gorge. At the right and across the gorge the Rebels could be plainly seen, and a portion of the line turned their fire in that direction, compelling a precipitate retreat. For the time being the enemy seemed disconcerted. A stream through the narrow gorge had been dammed by them, so filling the ravine with water as to prevent a passage on lower ground. This labor proved to have





been expended in vain, for now the Rebels were being threatened from an unexpected point. At that very hour Gen. McPherson was threatening Resaca with a considerable force. Thus far Gen. Sherman's plans were being admirably carried out, but unfortunately the advance at the right was not pushed and the opportunity for a decisive battle was lost.

The afternoon was wearing away, and there was no cessation in the firing. Casualties became frequent. Sergeant Taylor, of Company C, was assisted to the rear with his good right arm so shattered that it could not be saved. Sergeant De Graff, of Company E, who, as one of the Color Guard, had been seriously wounded at Chickamauga, was taken back, mortally hurt. Sergeant Fowler, of Company F, was also mortally wounded. Corporal Powers, of Company B, had an arm useless. William B. Seace, of Company E, was likewise shot in the arm and permanently disabled. Companies E and F suffered most severely, among those wounded in the latter command being Joseph Shannon, the tallest man in the Regiment, who had a hand badly crippled.

Gen. Stanley, the Division commander, who had come up to the position occupied by the reserve, a few rods in rear of the skirmishers, sent word to the line that the 84th Illinois would be ordered at once to the assistance of the NINETY-SIXTH. But there was a long delay. The firing was kept up for a time, but soon the ammunition run low. To add to their anxiety—for the men knew that their position was one of extreme peril—there soon came enfilading shots to indicate that the Rebels were pushing out to see what this semblance of an attack could mean. On either flank they pressed. The men glanced over their shoulders at the sun. It had never seemed to move so lazily since that dread Sunday at Chickamauga; but it was now just going out of sight. "We are almost out of ammunition," was the word repeatedly sent back from the skirmish line. "Maintain your fire as long as possible, but keep one charge, to be used in case of an assault," was Gen. Stanley's reply, sent from the color line. This order was complied with, but of necessity the firing was greatly slackened toward the last. As the twilight was deepening into night



the Regiment ordered from the rear made its way along the slope near the reserves. The skirmishers quickly fell back through their lines and halted in support, forming upon the colors. Soon the Rebels sallied out and made some demonstration at the front. "Fix Bayonets!" was the order of Colonel Champion, as he prepared to aid the troops that had just taken position. But the enemy contented themselves with a slight advance, and soon the musketry slackened to a desultory skirmish fire. Then the NINETY-SIXTH marched to the valley and slung the knapsacks left when the advance was begun, moved a short distance to the right and rear, and bivouacked for the remnant of a night.

The men were well nigh exhausted. From before daylight until nine o'clock at night they had been clutching their muskets, with no opportunity to eat except as they munched a hard tack on the skirmish line. Even water was obtained with the utmost difficulty, and when secured it soon became so warm in the canteens as to be unpalatable. Nearly every man had fired from forty to one hundred rounds of ammunition. Their faces were powder-grimed and their clothing stained with the soil where they had hugged the hillside throughout the weary, weary day. And back in the field hospital a score or more were lying, while attendants bathed the pale faces and bound up the ragged wounds. In the camp almost an equal number resolutely cared for slighter wounds—some of them severe enough to have fully justified their recipients in going to the rear—bravely retaining their places in the ranks.

There was little fighting done by the First Division of the Fourth Corps on the ninth of May, save that of the NINETY-SIXTH. Farther to the left Harker's Brigade of the Second Division made a strong demonstration directly along the narrow crest of Rocky Face, meeting with considerable loss, and to the southward a portion of the Second Division of the Twentieth Corps made an attack upon a gap, but could do no more than keep the enemy occupied. The work accomplished by these demonstrations was important, for so completely were the Rebels deceived into the belief that the attacks were



preliminary to intended assaults, and not mere feints, that they made no move to protect their rear. Meanwhile Gen. McPherson had moved his command far to the right, through Snake Creek Gap, and was gaining a position close to the railroad running southward, at a point not far from Resaca. Gen. Stanley was profuse in his praise of the NINETY-SIXTH for the resolute manner in which they had made the advance against the frowning sides of Rocky Face and subsequently into the strongly defended position at Buzzard Roost Gap, and all who knew the difficult nature of the ground passed over and the nearness to the Rebel main line of the position maintained for an hour and a half before sundown, fully concurred in the opinion that the praise of the intrepid and experienced Division Commander was fairly earned and fittingly bestowed.

The following were the Regiment's

#### CASUALTIES:

##### Company A.

WOUNDED.—Joseph E. Consolus, face; Sergeant C. H. Berg, left leg; Sergeant Jason B. Isbell, right hand.

##### Company B.

KILLED.—Fred Brainerd.

WOUNDED.—Corporal Warren E. Powers, right arm; Erastus T. Cleveland, left ankle.

##### Company C.

WOUNDED.—Sergeant James M. Taylor, right arm shattered, necessitating amputation; Corporal Martin Efinger, hip; Franc Millheiser, arm.

##### Company D.

WOUNDED.—Frank Rahling, knee.

##### Company E.

WOUNDED.—Sergeant Wm. F. De Graff, mortally, dying five days later; William B. Scace, right arm, permanently disabling him; Geo. W. Jennings, right arm; George Teal, right leg; Joshua B. Going, left foot, losing a toe; Solomon Bixby, left hand; Sergeant George C. Bennett, slight wound; W. W. Jellison, temple, knocked down but not long disabled.

##### Company F.

WOUNDED.—Sergeant Robert J. Fowler, mortally, dying two days later; Corporal John Kneebone, back; Corporal Thomas Trevarthan, hip; Joseph Shannon, hand; Erhard Dittmar, left side; Andrew Hind-



man, right leg; John Miller, breast; James Stewart, right hand; John Stahl, shoulder and head; Anton Shaj, right leg.

Company G.

WOUNDED.—Sergeant Charles J. Miller, right shoulder; William Joyce, face.

Company H.

WOUNDED.—Sergeant Chester J. Rees, right arm; Wallace Andrews, right arm; Oscar Robbins, breast.

Company I.

WOUNDED.—George Topping, face.

Company K.

KILLED.—James Vaughn.

WOUNDED.—Beri Serviss, left leg amputated; Edward Graham.

Tuesday, May 10, although the other troops were early called in line the commanders were so considerate as to allow the NINETY-SIXTH to lay quietly, the word passing around as the bugle sounded to lay down and sleep a little longer, a favor that was fully appreciated, although it was by no means late when the last soldier was up. The position was in the valley and greatly exposed, as was soon learned, for when the Rebel artillery began to play upon the line, during the early afternoon, an orderly but somewhat hurried movement to the timber a little farther to the rear was found necessary, the entire Brigade participating. The new line was partially fortified and the men at once set about strengthening the works. The skirmishers kept up a constant firing throughout the night, but the Regiment was not disturbed. The night was rainy and uncomfortable, but the soldiers in reserve slept quietly. A detail of about eighty men, embracing three or four from each Regiment in the Division, was sent out late in the evening to build some works and set a battery as near as possible to the Gap. A torrent of rain was falling, and in the storm and darkness the trip was undertaken. A creek, swollen to unusual proportions, had to be crossed, and many of the men turned back,—in fact, when the single officer in charge of them reached the point where the work was to begin, but sixteen remained. One of those whose fidelity to duty kept him in place was Dighton Granger, of Company B.





The work was not only dangerous but laborious, especially on such a night; but the little band worked like heroes and succeeded in putting up a strong fortification, leaving the works after daylight next morning, at great peril from the fire of the enemy. Many of the horses of the battery had been shot and the guns were finally drawn into position by the men, long ropes being attached so that they could pull them while partially protected by the works.

Wednesday, May 11, a severe rainstorm prevailed, and the weather was unseasonably cold. The Regiment retained its position nearly opposite the gap until eight o'clock in the evening, when, under cover of the gathering darkness, they moved to the right and front. In this movement it seemed as if the guide was uncertain as to the route or intended destination, for there was much marching and countermarching, with protracted halts in which all were thoroughly chilled. After a long tramp, in which but two or three miles were accomplished, the Brigade halted, relieving portions of the Fourteenth Corps, the latter troops moving to the southward. Heavy details were sent to the picket lines, where they shivered until morning. It was midnight when the reserves finally settled down for a brief rest.

Thursday, May 12, heavy details were kept at the front, the main line building breastworks nearly the entire day. There was considerable skirmishing and artillery was frequently brought into use. The advance line constructed heavy skirmish pits, and thus avoided casualties. During the period from the ninth to the twelfth all of the infantry forces except the Fourth Corps had been concentrating on the right. It subsequently became known that Gen. Sherman was greatly disappointed that a vigorous attack was not made at that point as early as the tenth or twelfth, with the view of destroying the railroad and compelling Gen. Johnston to abandon the line of the road and march eastward or come out and fight in the open field. Military writers unanimously agree that a like favorable opportunity did not again present itself to the Union forces during the campaign. The movement, however, compelled the enemy to abandon his strong position at Dalton.



At midnight of the twelfth lights were seen moving about upon the ridge where the batteries had been posted, and shortly afterward it became evident that the force had gone.

Friday, May 13, the Union skirmishers moved forward at daylight and occupied the abandoned works. Soon afterward the main part of the Fourth Corps was moving through Buzard Roost Gap. The Rebel works were seen to be of great strength, and the wonder was that even a small force was not left to defend them. Still Gen. Sherman's flanking proclivities were well known, and the only safety for the Rebels was in concentration. At Dalton a brief halt was made, during which the men visited numerous stores, whose owners had fled without taking their stocks of goods. There was little of use to the soldiers, however, for the eatables had generally been removed, and few cared to add to their loads by taking with them articles of dry goods. Newspapers of the day before were found, in which were extravagant accounts of the battles of the ninth; the claim being that Gen. Sherman's forces had made five desperate assaults, in each of which they had been repulsed, with frightful loss. The statements were not warranted by the facts, but in this and many other instances the attempt was evidently made to bolster up the hopes of the people of the South by exaggerating Rebel successes and belittling Union victories. The march was soon resumed, with skirmishers in front, and continued until dusk, the halt for the night being near an old mill eight miles south of Dalton, and not far from Tilton. There was some skirmishing just at dusk, a few bullets flying harmlessly over the heads of the men as they took position, when the final halt was ordered. Immediately a line of breastworks was begun, rails being piled and shovels brought into use, so that a strong fortification was well advanced by nine o'clock. There was more or less picket firing all through the night, but no casualties resulted. The Rebels were concentrating at Resaca, and the morrow was to see another eventful day in the Regiment's history.



## CHAPTER XVI.

Approaching Resaca—Passing the Cavalry—Another Line of Breastworks Built—Closing in Upon the Enemy—Gallant Advance of the Skirmishers—Fix Bayonets!—A Charge Proposed; but Never Made—The Enemy Massing on the Left—Their Lines Advance—Outflanked, the Regiment Retreats—Routed!—Fighting in Retreat—At the Battery—Hooker's Troops to the Rescue—Terrible Slaughter of the Enemy—Counting up the Losses—Hooker's Troops Charge—Partial Success of Their Assaults—Two Memorable Days—Successful Flanking Movements—The Enemy in Retreat—The Casualty List.

FIVE days following the bloody encounters at Rocky Face Ridge and Buzzard Roost Gap, the NINETY-SIXTH was again in the furnace of battle, Saturday, May 14, being the opening day, so far as the Fourth Corps was concerned, of the engagement at Resaca. The preceding chapter narrates the doings of the Regiment up to the evening of the thirteenth. Next morning the forces were in motion at six o'clock, Stoneman's cavalry being on the left of the infantry and McCook's troopers on the right. Even before the hour named the cavalry had reconnoitered the front and developed the fact that the Rebels were in force not far away, and heavy skirmishing began almost as soon as the camps were left. This skirmishing was at first wholly on the part of Gen. Stoneman's forces, the infantry, each Division in column, moving slowly forward in support. Halts were frequent, and after one of a little more length than usual the bugle sounded for the infantry to advance. A brief but rapid march brought them to where the cavalry horses stood in line or in groups. Every fourth man of the cavalry was holding the horses of his file, while his comrades were in advance on foot. The infantry soon reached a ridge along which the dismounted cavalry were deployed. The column broke to right and left, forming in the order of battle on either side of the highway. The officers of the different commands consulted as to the positions of their



respective forces and of the enemy, and two or three men from each Company ran to a creek or spring near by to fill their own and their comrades' canteens. Belts were buckled a little tighter, and the men peered forward to see what awaited them. The cracking of the carbines had nearly ceased, and the occasional bullets from the front had the peculiar humming sound which indicated that they had come a long distance. At this discovery there was some good-natured chaffing between the two arms of the service, the infantry ridiculing the cavalry for firing at such long range. This was soon terminated, for the troopers were ordered back to their horses and sent to watch the left flank. The NINETY-SIXTH, with other forces in the front line, advanced for a short distance and halted near the edge of an open field, a quarter of a mile in width. Skirmishers were thrown out into this field, and the main line immediately began to fortify its position. The Fourth Corps was on the extreme left of the general army, the First Division, to which the NINETY-SIXTH was attached, was the left of the Corps, and for the time being Whittaker's was the left Brigade of the Division. It required most of the forenoon to move the Corps into place and connect the lines with those of the Twenty-third Corps, on the right. During this period comparative quiet reigned upon the extreme left, but farther to the right, where the troops were swinging forward to develop the enemy's position, there was a volume of firing whose magnitude indicated that a battle was in progress.

At a little after two o'clock the left was ordered forward. Promptly the line moved out, Companies A and B deployed as skirmishers. Beyond the open field mentioned was a wooded ridge, from which came shots to indicate that it was held by the enemy. The advance to this ridge was resisted, but not with such force as to compel a charge. As the skirmishers neared its top they were greeted with a hot fire, indicating that the enemy were in heavy force a little farther on. As it proved the advancing line was not parallel to the enemy's works, the left of Company B being much nearer than the right of Company A. This fact was not at once appreciated.





and Captain Vincent, the ranking officer and hence the commanding officer of the line, repeatedly called out, as the men halted, "Forward on the left!" "Forward on the left!" Captain Gilmore repeated the order to his men, and most gallantly they responded, going at a charge, driving the enemy's skirmishers from their positions and halting only when the main works of the Rebels were in plain view and a volley warned them that to go farther would be extremely perilous. In this advance Herman Hoogstraet, of Company B, was killed by one of the Rebel skirmishers, the latter quickly paying the penalty, for before the smoke from his musket had cleared away, "Mack" McMillen's trusty rifle rang out its response, and when the line advanced the Rebel was found dead where he had fallen. John Bininger, of Company A, was the target of the Rebels for a time, they getting range of the old stump behind which he had taken shelter and filling it full of holes. A bad bruise to his shoulder, a severely scratched face and a considerable amount of bark and dirt in his eyes constituted his inventory of physical damages. It being demonstrated that the left was as far advanced as was practicable, the right was swung around to conform and the reserves moved up until they stood confronting a field, a half mile in width. This field was broken with hills and seamed with gullies, with a timbered ridge at the left. Its farther side was fringed with timber, against which the fresh clay of a heavy line of breastworks could be plainly seen. The works were full of men, except at one point where a fort projected, which was readily guessed to be occupied by a battery of artillery. Instantly the Brigade Commander coveted that battery, and began to make plans for its capture. The NINETY-SIXTH, with two other regiments, were ordered to pile knapsacks and fix bayonets, preparatory to a charge. Officers and men looked at each other in amazement, and wondered if it was possible that this little force was to be asked to make an assault across such a field and against such formidable entrenchments with no support at hand? Colonel Champion, who was always careful of criticising his superiors, quietly spoke his disapproval to those immediately about him,



but added that if the order was made there should be no faltering. O'Connor, of Company K, peering from behind the thin screen of bushes that sheltered the Regiment, remarked: "If Gen. Whittaker will wait until next pay-day I will chip in a part of me wages and buy him a better battery than the one fernist him on the hill."

The General seemed in high glee over the anticipated victory, his expressions being in marked contrast with the feelings of the officers and men assigned to the task laid out by him, as afterward ascertained, although at the time but little was said. Preparations were nearly completed, and in a few moments the order would have been given had not the Division Commander come from the right just at this time. A look to right and left, and he fully comprehended the situation. Masked batteries on either flank, silent as yet, but so posted as to be able to throw a converging fire upon every acre of that barren field, were detected by his eagle eye. He quickly decided that the charge would be unwise. The men fully concurred in the judgment of the senior officer as to the unwisdom of a charge on the part of three small regiments, with no supports in sight, against strong earthworks, with the certainty of a flanking fire from the moment an advance began. At Chickamauga they had obeyed Gen. Whittaker's order and hurled themselves against a mass of Rebels outnumbering them three to one, and achieved success. At Lookout Mountain they had climbed into the very clouds, and won a victory where defeat seemed almost certain. At Rocky Face, five days before the date here written of, they had moved—although but a mere skirmish line—against an army and accomplished all that they were asked to do. So now, had the order been given, they would have gone against that frowning line, and, if possible, wrested a victory from the very jaws of defeat. But it is not too much to say that as the men stood in line that afternoon, and, peering from behind their thin screen of bushes, measured their chances in the proposed charge across that rugged field, the feeling was all but universal that before them lay the most difficult and desperate undertaking that had ever been assigned to them. It was therefore with a feeling



of infinite relief that the order was received to unfix bayonets. A hurried consultation of officers followed. A Brigade was moved into the woods at the left, and shortly afterward the NINETY-SIXTH, with two other regiments, moved quietly but quickly to the rear, and then, by diverging columns, across an obscure road and along a depression between two irregular ridges or hills, to the left of where the Brigade mentioned was going into position. Company B was sent in detachments on the left flank and to the front, with instructions to report any movement of the enemy that might be discovered. Company G was deployed to skirmish along the immediate front of the Regiment. The movement was through a tangle of underbrush for a hundred rods or more. When a halt was made the Regiment was in line almost at right angles to its former position, and practically isolated from any other troops, a gap several rods in extent separating it from the Brigade which had hastily moved on its right and slightly to the front, while a like opening lay between its left and the 51st Ohio. The 99th Ohio was halted some distance in the rear, and not far from the road. None in the ranks, and but few even among the field officers, knew the need that had called for this movement, the anxiety with which Gen. Stanley watched as they entered the jungle into which his order had sent them, or with what urgency he was asking Gen. Thomas for reinforcements for his left wing. His scouts had brought him word that the enemy was massing a Division or more for one of those desperate charges upon the flank for which the Confederates were noted.

The skirmishers upon the immediate front of the NINETY-SIXTH soon became aware of the purpose of the enemy, for as they halted at a low rail fence at the edge of the thicket and looked across an old field with its girdled trees, a sight in one sense grand came full upon their gaze. Stevenson's Division was just emerging from the timber and forming its lines in plain view, preparatory to a desperate assault. The enemy were in two lines, and formed in admirable order, their flags floating gaily, many of their officers mounted, and a light line of cavalry riding in rear and upon either flank. At a given



command two or three men stepped out from each Company and took position as skirmishers. The long lines extended far to right and left, and it was evident that the movement was one of no mean proportions. Captain James promptly reported from the skirmish line what had been seen, and was ordered to call in his men and form them with the main line. This proved a difficult task, for they were busily engaged in firing into the now advancing Rebels, and could hear the command with difficulty; indeed many of them did not hear the order, running back on their own judgment when they saw that to remain longer meant capture. A few did not leave the line at all, being so absorbed in their work of loading and firing as to fail to take thought for their own safety until too late, and when they were fairly run over by the cloud of skirmishers that covered the front of the moving lines.

The charging column, as it came over the higher ground, struck the Brigade at the right with fearful velocity. These troops were engaged in throwing up a barricade of rails and logs when the charge began. Seizing their muskets they made a brave fight for a few moments, but upon discovering that their flank was passed broke for the rear in wild confusion. The moments were of fearful import to the members of the NINETY-SIXTH. How anxiously they awaited the result of that onset. They could see little, but they could hear everything. It was but a moment and their worst fears were realized, for the firing slackened at the right, while the Rebel yell grew more exultant as the line of blue was rolled back from left to right. In a moment the storm had struck the Regiment. Hardly a shot had been fired at them as yet, and owing to the dense thicket not a Rebel could be seen. But they could be plainly heard as they threw aside the fence in front. The men were generally kneeling or lying prostrate on the ground, every one ready for his work. The voice of Colonel Champion rang out: "Steady, men! Hold your fire until I give the word!" Then, as the bushes began to weave to and fro, almost in their faces, he gave the command: "Fire!" A terribly destructive volley poured into the oncoming lines, and a great winnow of dead was afterward







WILLIAM B. SCACE.

Company E.



found at this point. The front line of the charging column was halted and turned back for a regiment's length. Many of the Regiment began to reload their muskets, having no thought of leaving the line. Those at the right could see at once that the position was untenable, for the Rebels were rushing past their flank in solid ranks. A moment later the left was also flanked and a wicked fire was poured lengthwise of the line. A formal order to retreat was given by Colonel Champion, with directions to rally at the breastworks, but in the confusion and noise could not be heard by all. But the instinct of self preservation was strong enough to tell the experienced soldier what to do, and the movement to the rear was begun almost simultaneously along the entire line. In a moment the retreat had become a rout. The Rebels were past both the flanks, and yelling and firing with all their might. For the first and last time in its experience the Regiment was in utter confusion, and little or no effort was made to preserve order; indeed no effort was practicable from the start. For a time it was a race between the men in blue and those in gray to see which should first gain the open field. Fortunately the Regiment's course lay through a hollow or depression, and while the pines somewhat retarded the retreat it likewise delayed the Rebels and served an admirable purpose as a covering or screen. A majority of the command followed the natural depression, which took them a little to the left of Simonson's 5th Indiana Battery, making their way to the breastworks built in the morning, and when the enemy came in view doing admirable service. Others bore to the right, and as they emerged from the timber found themselves in an open field nearly in front of the Battery as it then faced. As soon as the infantry had moved to right and left, so that the cannon could be fired without endangering the lives of their friends, Capt. Simonson gave the word, and his six pieces of artillery began to play upon the timber. The Rebels had evidently slackened their pace somewhat, probably to reform that portion of their line shattered by the volleys from the NINETY-SIXTH and other Regiments, and to change direction so as to swing a little farther to the Union rear. On either



side of the Battery the most strenuous efforts were making to organize the men who had been borne backward in the terrific storm. Officers of every rank were shouting out their orders, and men of a dozen regiments were trying to form some semblance of a line, regardless of what flag they fought beneath so that it was the stars and stripes. Others, timid and uncertain as to duty, were hunting for their own commands. An irregular line was formed on either flank of the cannon, and the men stood there awaiting the coming of the Rebels and resolved to check and send them back if the valor of a few could avail. But all at that point felt that the result was doubtful, for what could two or three hundred do against the vast host soon to emerge from the cover of the timber?

It was marvelous to witness the rapidity with which the artillery was fired as the danger of capture became apparent to the cannoneers. Perhaps never were six guns made to do more rapid or destructive work. They were filled again and again, almost to the muzzle, and fired so rapidly that Rebel prisoners captured soon after refused to believe that but a single battery had played upon them.

It was said that five wagon loads of ammunition were expended within a half hour or less, and that 268 dead Rebels were buried from the front of the battery. A staff officer came riding down to where the scattered infantrymen were resolutely reforming, and begged them to hold the line for five minutes more, assuring them that a Division of the Twentieth Corps was close at hand, coming to the rescue at double quick. The promise was reassuring, although many did not need it, having determined to fight to the death beside the Battery. The Rebels had now emerged from the woods, and under orders not to shout or fire, but to keep their advance concealed if possible, were moving for the coveted artillery, hoping to gain it by stealth. So silent was their movement that some of the Federal forces almost believed them friends, and hesitated about firing upon them. "Why don't you return our fire?" was shouted towards them. "We don't care anything about you; we are after that Battery!" was shouted back. "If you want the Battery come and get it!" was answered in



chorus, and the firing grew more fierce and deadly, the muskets playing upon them and the cannon emptying grape and canister into their ranks. They were but a few rods away when a Brigade of Hooker's Corps, moving at double-quick, came up from the right and took place beside the guns. At the same time a portion of the NINETY-SIXTH was firing upon them at short range from the breastworks. The movements of the reinforcing column were admirably made, and they swept forward across the field, driving the Rebels back into the shelter of the forest. And with them, forming wherever they could, in the front line, moved many of the NINETY-SIXTH, halting only when the enemy had disappeared in rapid flight, and darkness had begun to settle over the terrible scene. The discomfiture of the Rebels was complete, their ranks being shattered and their rout even more marked than had been that of the most exposed Union forces. Numerous prisoners were captured, and the ground was strewn with arms and equipments. All of their dead and many of their wounded were left upon the field, and it only needed a few moments more of daylight to have made probable the capture of nearly the entire force. But even before the reinforcements had arrived darkness had begun to shut out the view, and the Union forces halted soon after entering the woods. Meanwhile word had passed along the line for the members of the NINETY-SIXTH, who were with Gen. Hooker's command, to return to the Battery and go from there to the breastworks, where the Field Officers, the colors and many of the men were awaiting them. At this gathering there was many a hearty hand-shake as comrades greeted those whom they feared had been killed or captured, and many an anxious inquiry for those not yet in line. The Regiment then moved to a position in the main line-of-battle, behind some heavy breastworks, and bivouacked, long after dark. At intervals throughout the night the missing ones arrived, and tired men from other commands were anxiously inquiring as they passed along the line, "What regiment?"

There were many exciting incidents during the retreat. Soon after leaving the line Sergeant Swanbrough found his





task of carrying the flag a most difficult one, for it would catch on the bushes and delay him. Once he fell down, and as the cord and tassels wound around a sapling was compelled to stop and untwist them. Those who were near him as he fell thought certainly that the Sergeant was killed or wounded, and the flag captured. Happily this proved incorrect, for he was unharmed, and by taking the colors in his hands and dragging the staff after him he managed to escape. The stretcher bearers had a hard task in carrying back Aralzeman Stanley, of Company D, who had been disabled by a wound, but succeeded, although narrowly escaping. Simeon Spencer, of Company F, remained with his brother Richard, when the latter was wounded, as long as he could safely, and then reluctantly left him to become a prisoner, knowing that if he remained they would be quickly separated. Richard was recaptured two days later. Lewis Miller, of Company G, might have escaped had he been willing to run with a loaded gun, but stopping to cap and fire his piece, was himself shot and became a prisoner. His right leg was shattered, rendering amputation necessary. When the Rebel surgeons examined him he asked if the leg could be saved. Receiving a negative reply he quickly said: "Cut it off then." The operation was skillfully performed. Two days afterward he was recaptured, and for a time seemed to be doing admirably, but later some complication set in and he died in thirteen days from the time of receiving his wound. First Sergeant Thomas J. Smith, of Company I, a brother of the Lieutenant Colonel, was shot through both legs, and, with Spencer and Miller, fell into the enemy's hands. At his earnest solicitation the Rebel surgeons consented that the three be left at a private house when the army fell back. A little later a letter came to his address bearing his commission as First Lieutenant of his Company, to succeed Lieutenant Moore, who had been assigned to duty as Quarter-Master, but it was too late, as his death occurred June 9. Three men in Company K.—Sergeant Leland, Charles Courter and John J. Vrowman.—fell dead near together in the thicket. First Sergeant Joseph B. Leekley, of Company F, and Corporal William B. Lewis



and Orange M. Ayers, of Company C, took a slightly wrong direction in the retreat, and emerging upon a road found themselves prisoners. Leekley and Ayers afterward died in prison, and Lewin reached home only at the close of the war. Those on the skirmish line had a most trying experience. Many of them, not hearing the command to fall back to the main line, remained near the fence until the enemy were within a few feet of them, and some of them were between the fire of both friend and foe. The fate of Edward Darby, of Company G, was never fully known. As his body was not found when the lines again advanced over the ground where he was last seen, it was believed that he was a prisoner, but no tidings ever came of him. It is probable that he was either killed, or, being mortally wounded, was taken to the rear, dying and being buried in an unknown grave. Corporal Rose and Myron J. Brown, of Company G, remained too long and were captured. Rose died in prison, and Brown, when he finally escaped, was too badly emaciated to permit of his return to the Regiment. William Flagler, of Company G, was sometimes laughed at for carrying a big knapsack, but on this occasion it served him a good purpose. A Rebel bullet, fired at short range, struck it fairly in the centre, passed through and cut numerous holes in his surplus clothing, and spoiled a quantity of letter paper and stamped envelopes, but came to a stop just before reaching his person. He was knocked down and his comrades thought him killed, but he quickly gathered and made good time to the rear. Lieutenant Hastings was so severely wounded in the foot as to make his escape most difficult, but with the assistance of some of the members of his Company he succeeded in getting safely back. James Litwiler, of Company B, was instantly killed in this retrograde movement. Lieutenant Colonel Smith, who had been on detached service at Chattanooga for two or three weeks, came on the field just in time to be caught in the panic, being in search of the Regiment when it was swept backward, and joining it that evening. In the advance S. F. Vose, of Company G, threw his arm out of joint, but as the same accident had happened before, it did not pain him.



severely. Stripping off all of his clothing but his pants, the surgeon had just succeeded in pulling the dislocated arm in place when the stampede began. Vose ran back "without many clothes on," an object at once pitiable and laughable, as he made his way to the rear. Adjutant Blodgett picked up a set of accoutrements that had been discarded by some wounded man, but when a bullet spatted against the cartridge box concluded to drop them. James Beck, of Company B, had a bullet through both trouser legs, and his musket was struck by a ball as he was capping it, but he escaped wounds. Henry Montgomery, of Company B, had a bullet through his coat; George Bowman, of Company A, had a bullet through his knapsack and another through his boot heel. Nicholas Wearmouth, of Company A, had a bullet through the rim of his hat. Many others had bullets through their clothing or equipments, and the marvel is that the actual casualties were so few. A large number of knapsacks, haversacks and hats were lost in the retreat, the bushes catching and tearing them off, and not all caring to risk their lives by stopping to pick them up with the yelling pursuers so close at hand. A very few—possibly a half dozen—became so demoralized as to drop their guns.

While retreat, as a rule, is supposed to reflect discredit upon a command, the retrograde movement at Resaca was wisely made, for to have stood longer must have resulted in the capture of the command. As it was, the Regiment was able to render an important service at the Battery and in the breastworks in checking the Rebel advance, and also in giving direction and encouragement to the reinforcing column.

Sunday, May 15, found the two armies still confronting each other along the rugged hills and narrow valleys about Resaca. General Sherman continued the work of pushing his right wing down the Oostenaula River, begun the day before, and succeeded in laying two pontoon bridges not far from Calhoun, and in such a position as to again threaten Johnston's rear. On the left there was some shifting of position, but no general movement on the part of the Fourth Corps. Skirmish firing, which had been kept up through the night, increased in



volume, and the artillery played upon the lines from either side. During the forenoon the three Divisions of the Twentieth Corps were moved to a position in the rear of the Fourth Corps, and it was whispered that they were to assault the works in front. The NINETY-SIXTH left its works and moved to the front, halting in line-of-battle at the right of the Dalton and Resaca road. Just in rear of this position two Brigades of General Butterfield's Division of the Twentieth Corps were massed, and a number of dispatches, detailing the advantages gained by the Army of the Potomac in their campaign, were read at the head of the lines. The good news was received with hearty cheering. It soon transpired that one purpose in having these dispatches read was to encourage the troops in the difficult work before them, for at a little after one o'clock they were ordered forward for an attack. One Brigade, commanded by Gen. Ward, moved diagonally across the wagon road, passing directly through, or over, the NINETY-SIXTH. Another Brigade advanced farther at the left. The NINETY-SIXTH soon found its position in support a most uncomfortable one. From the moment it occupied the line a heavy artillery fire had been showered down the road, and when the charging column began its advance the musketry firing instantly increased. For a time this force could be plainly seen climbing the ridge on the left, but soon the foliage of the trees and bushes hid it from view. A cheer burst from the lines; then a volley was given by them and returned by the enemy. A moment more and the musketry had become continuous, its roar deepening as it was echoed from hill to hill. Musket balls came pattering down to the Regiment's position in great numbers, pelting the ground, striking logs and trees, or cutting off the leaves overhead. Wounded men began to limp or stagger past; then groups of stragglers, the latter being halted and turned back or sent to where some officers were stationed to take charge of them. The stretcher bearers, who had gone to the front close behind the lines, soon returned with their ghastly loads: the canvas, so clean and white as they advanced, now crimsoned with the life-blood of those who had fallen. And still the dread





work went on. The troops in reserve had little to do except to stop the stragglers, but with the left of the NINETY-SIXTH this duty was not altogether light. But even doing nothing was trying work at such a time, for the pitiless shots struck all around and kept the men anxious for their own safety. The volume of sound lessened for an instant and then the Rebel yell broke out anew. The charge had only partially succeeded. The men fell back at many points, but rallied a little at the left of the road and again went forward. Farther over the ridge a terrible blunder occurred. Changing direction slightly, one column moved so as to partly come in rear of another. The woods were full of smoke so that they could not see what was before them, and as the bullets were coming from the front they fired into their friends. The effect was to disorganize both Brigades to some extent and make complete success impossible. Only a partial volley was fired, but not a few fell before it. Some of the officers knew the situation and soon made the men aware of their mistake. A portion of one Brigade made their way up to the Rebel works, and lay down outside, clubbing muskets with the foe. The bayonet was used in a few cases, and the enemy forced to abandon four pieces of artillery. These guns could not be drawn out until nightfall, but through that long afternoon the brave men lay at the embrasures and prevented the foe from getting any use of them. The results of the charges were not all that had been hoped, for the Rebels still held a continuous line about Resaca, but there were substantial gains in position, and it was expected that should the enemy remain until morning their main line would be forced. The firing was heavy and continuous until evening. The NINETY-SIXTH held its position beside the road for several hours. At one time Gen. Hooker, with his Staff and a bevy of orderlies, rode to the centre of the Regiment, and from their horses watched a charge. Bullets flew all about them, and two or three of the party were wounded, but the veteran Commander never moved a muscle to indicate that he had the slightest fear. A straggler came rushing back near their position. The General said, reproachfully perhaps, but with no trace of passion :



“Young man, isn't it a little cowardly to leave your comrades fighting at the front while you go to the rear? Go back to your command and show that you are willing to do your part.” The soldier turned about, almost before the General had ceased speaking, and, deliberately facing the storm, went back into the battle. The effect of Gen. Hooker's coolness upon the men lying in reserve was excellent. His reputation was that of a fiery, impulsive, passionate man; but here, under most trying circumstances, he was as cool as though the surroundings were of the most common-place character. During the afternoon Gen. Ward, commanding one of Gen. Butterfield's Brigades, who had ridden through the Regiment on his way to the front, was brought back wounded. Gen. Knipe, another Brigade commander, was also severely wounded; and the total of casualties in these afternoon charges was not less than two thousand. Four pieces of artillery and two battle flags were among the trophies.

The NINETY-SIXTH, notwithstanding the heavy firing all about it, had but two men wounded. Andrew Hindman, of Company F, had a wound in the shoulder, and Nahum Lamb, of Company G, in the right hand, disabling him for further service. Several others were hit by spent balls or had bullets through their clothing, but were not disabled.

At three o'clock in the afternoon a detail from the Regiment, under Lieutenant Earle, was sent to the right to construct some breastworks on a high ridge. At dusk the Regiment moved to these works and formed line under an annoying artillery fire. Soon afterward all was quiet for a time, the armies, as if by mutual consent, discontinuing their firing; but when some members of the Regiment built a fire just behind the works bullets began to zip uncomfortably close, and even a battery threw a shot which, passing close to the fire, went back into the timber in rear. Thus warned, all fires were extinguished and grim darkness reigned over the scene. The men soon settled down to such sleep as could be obtained, but were once routed out and fell in line, some unusual noise at the front indicating a move on the part of



the enemy that might mean a night assault. It proved to be a false alarm, however, for instead of making an assault the Rebels were retreating under cover of the darkness, and by morning all were gone. During the two days the Regiment sustained the following

#### CASUALTIES:

##### Company A.

WOUNDED.—John Binninger, face; Gottlieb Weber, face.

##### Company B.

KILLED.—Herman Hoogstraat, James Litwiler.

##### Company C.

CAPTURED.—Corporal William B. Lewin; Orange M. Ayers, the latter dying in prison.

##### Company D.

WOUNDED.—First Lieutenant Walter W. Hastings, foot, disabling him for further field service; Corporal Charles Peppard, left hand; William Fleming, breast; Aralzeman Stanley, right thigh, disabling him for further active service.

##### Company F.

WOUNDED.—Corporal Thomas Trevarthan, face; Hugh Williams, left hand, losing a finger; Andrew Hindman, shoulder, wounded and captured; Richard Spencer, shot in breast, disabled for further service.

CAPTURED.—First Sergeant Joseph B. Leckley, who subsequently died in prison.

##### Company G.

KILLED.—Edward Darby.

WOUNDED AND CAPTURED.—Lewis Miller, right leg shattered above the knee, necessitating amputation and causing his death two weeks afterward.

CAPTURED.—Corporal Delos Rose; Myron J. Brown. Rose dying in prison.

WOUNDED.—Nahum Lamb, right hand, necessitating amputation of second finger, and disabling him for further service.

##### Company I.

WOUNDED AND CAPTURED.—First Sergeant Thomas J. Smith, shot through both legs, causing his death June 9.

##### Company K.

KILLED.—Sergeant Thomas Leland; Charles Courter; John J. Vrowman.



## CHAPTER XVII.

After the Battle—Resaca Abandoned—"Drawing Sherman On"—Looking for Missing Comrades—Forward Again—A trio of Wounded—Crossing the Costenaula—Pressing the Enemy—Daily under Fire—Calhoun and Adairsville Passed—From Kingston to Cassville—Many Miles upon the Skirmish Line—The Enemy Pressed backward—An Army in Full Sight—More Breastworks—A Battle Impending—Artillery Duel—Corporal Gage's Capture—Again they Retreat—Wearied Soldiers—Three Days of Rest—Odd Fellows Outfit Preserved—Visit to the Seminary—The Boys and the Books—Sunday's Experience at Cassville.

THE dawn of Monday, May 16, found the Rebel breastworks at Resaca deserted. The gain in position made by the Union forces during the two days of fighting and maneuvering, coupled with the fact that part of Gen. McPherson's army had succeeded in laying pontoon bridges some distance below, and thereby gained a foothold upon the south bank of the river, from which a considerable force of the enemy had tried in vain to dislodge them, had decided Gen. Johnston that his only safety lay in immediate retreat. He took hope in the thought that Gen. Sherman's army was dependent upon a single line of railroad for the immense supplies upon which it must subsist, and that while his own army was gaining in numbers as it fell back by the gathering in of conscripts and the addition of the detachments heretofore required to garrison the posts past which he retreated, the Union forces suffered a corresponding loss as Regiments or Brigades were dropped out by the way to guard towns and bridges. Then, too, he was well aware of the fact that the time of the non-veterans from many of the Regiments recruited in 1861 would soon expire, and that with their retirement the Union army would suffer serious loss. Doubtless it was with regret that he abandoned the strong positions at Dalton and Resaca: but hope was strong that when the forces of Gen. Sherman had been drawn far from their base





of supplies and become weakened by losses from sickness and the other causes mentioned, he would be able, by a bold flank movement, or a cavalry raid which should successfully cut the railroad toward Chattanooga, to compel the army confronting him to abandon offensive operations and fall back to the line of the Tennessee river for their own protection. The rank and file of the Rebel army were made to believe that Gen. Johnston was merely drawing Gen. Sherman on, and that when he "got him where he wanted him" he would drive off, in dire confusion, such of his army as he did not capture or destroy. But in this hope they were doomed to bitter disappointment, as their bold movement,—which was only to be made after Atlanta had fallen, and under another leader than Gen. Johnston,—was to be as disastrous as it was brilliant.

On the morning named the troops were "bugled" out at an early hour, and speedily learned from the pickets that there had been no response to their occasional firing for some hours. Many of the Regiment at once started out to reconnoitre the immediate vicinity, especially desiring to go through the thicket where they had met the enemy on Saturday evening, and from which they had been forced to beat so hasty a retreat, their main purpose being to obtain some trace of missing comrades. The bodies of a portion of the dead were found, and from a few Rebels who had been left on picket or who had overslept and were made prisoners by these adventurous men, it was definitely ascertained that Rose, Lewin and Ayers had been captured unharmed. Corporal Rose was at the time wearing a light blue jacket, made from an overcoat, and his chevrons were of a darker material. This peculiarity of dress, together with his heavy, sandy moustache, made his identification complete, while that of the others mentioned was hardly less so. There were others captured, they said, but they could not describe them so as to make it certain that they were from the Regiment.

The Régimental Pioneers, under Lieutenant Burnett, of Company B, were detailed to bury the dead left upon the battle-field, and spent the greater part of two days at this



sad labor. Details from other commands assisted in the work.

At eight o'clock the dispositions for pursuit were completed and the command moved out. The route of the Regiment lay near the ground over which the charges of the day before had been made, and revealed many interesting scenes. The Rebel earthworks were found to be of great strength, and two or more lines deep, so that should one be lost the troops would have to fall back but a few rods before they could again have protection. The trees and bushes were barked and slivered in a manner to indicate that the Federal fire had been terrific, especially at the point where the four pieces of artillery had been captured.

In the forward movement the Fourth Corps led the way to the little hamlet of Resaca, nearly three miles from the left of the main battle-field. The Fourteenth Corps,—except one Division which had been sent toward Rome in support of Garrard's cavalry,—followed. The Twentieth and Twenty-third Corps crossed the river at the left, and Gen. McPherson's forces at Lay's Ferry, at the right: Arrived at Resaca, some hours were occupied in repairing the partially destroyed bridge, those of the troops not actively engaged in this work resting in the shade of the timber beside the road. While in this position a scout rode along and, enquiring for the NINETY-SIXTH, reported that three of their men, all wounded, were in a building a short distance away. An ambulance was secured, and Lieutenant-Colonel Smith, accompanied by a few men, went in the direction indicated and soon returned with First Sergeant Thomas J. Smith, of Company I; Richard Spencer, of Company F; and Lewis Miller, of Company G; all of whom were wounded and captured two days before. They were halted at the Regiment for a little time, and then taken to the village and placed in hospitals that were just being established. Smith and Miller did not long survive, but Spencer recovered after some months. Their captors had taken their watches and blankets, but they reported having received every possible kindness from the ladies at whose



house they had been left, notwithstanding the fact that their sympathies were wholly with the South.

In the haste of leaving, the Rebels abandoned a large amount of meal, a quantity of muskets and other material. It may be said, however, that the retreat was well managed, for the trophies were not numerous considering the amount of material that had to be removed. A few prisoners were captured at the crossings of the river, but no more than are to be found in rear of any hurriedly moved army where retreat is made at night.

Between four and five o'clock in the afternoon the Fourth Corps crossed the Oostenaula and marched southward on roads nearly parallel to the railroad, camping for the night not far from Calhoun. The 115th Illinois, which had been brigaded with the NINETY-SIXTH almost from its organization, was temporarily detached and left to guard Resaca and other points near by, and did not again join the Brigade until October.

Tuesday, May 17, the bugles sounded réveille at three o'clock A. M., and as soon as breakfasts were dispatched the advance began. Calhoun was passed early in the forenoon, the troops of the First Division marching in column of companies, with drums beating and flags waving. The Second Division had the advance. The skirmishing, which had been lively all day, grew in volume as the afternoon wore away. The First Division moved up to the support of the Second under a heavy artillery fire, and became engaged just as night came on. The Regiment found a strong line of entrenchments in its immediate front, filled with resolute foes, but no move was made looking to their dislodgement that night. Notwithstanding the heavy firing and the frequent casualties all along the line, the Regiment was so fortunate as to suffer no loss. A heavy line of works was built, the command working far into the night in making its position secure against assault. Some houses in front of the line, which had afforded protection to the sharpshooters of the enemy, were set on fire and burned to the ground, the flames lighting up the camps during the early evening. The Rebel position was



a strong one, but as Gen. McPherson was pressing on their left flank, and Gen. Schofield on their right, they again retreated under cover of the darkness.

Wednesday, May 18, there was the usual early réveille and the orders were renewed to "press the enemy." The officers of the command were in trouble about the matter of rations for themselves, but the enlisted men had a supply and offered to divide. The troops moved forward in column, with skirmishers in front, the enemy harassing them to the utmost of their ability. The First Division being in rear made a slow march until toward night, passing Adairsville during the afternoon, and was then hurried past the other troops of the Corps to the extreme front, going into bivouac in the immediate vicinity of the enemy at eight o'clock, with a strong picket line in advance. There was some skirmishing as the position was reached but nothing serious resulted. Southern newspapers were found at some of the houses in the vicinity, in which were violent criticisms of Gen. Johnston for his course in falling back, and also strong arguments in favor of his plans. It was asserted that there would be a decisive battle near Cassville, toward which Gen. Sherman was moving, and leading officers on either side confidently expected, as they lay down to rest that night, that the next day would see the engagement inaugurated.

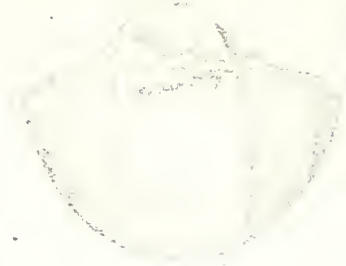
Thursday, May 19, found the army in motion at sunrise, Gen. Sherman directing that the enemy be pushed at all points, and forced to give battle north of the Etowah River if possible. The Second Brigade had the lead, and the NINETY-SIXTH was in the advance of the column which had marched most directly along the railroad. In less than half an hour after the start was made the Rebels were encountered. One company after another was sent upon the skirmish line until a considerable part of the command was deployed. At Kingston—the junction of the Rome branch with the main line of railroad from Chattanooga—the Rebels opened on the advance, with a battery, but the skirmishers, after strongly pushing at the front, pressed past it on the flank, compelling it to withdraw. The skirmishing was so severe as to approach





the dignity of a battle. The order being to follow near the railroad, the line swung to the left and pressed rapidly forward. The Rebels halted at every ridge and road, making strong resistance and compelling the Regiment to keep up a heavy fire. The bullets cut wickedly through the line, but the men responded gallantly to every call to advance, sometimes charging at a run and driving the enemy from their hiding places behind the trees and fences, and again moving through hollows or ravines and flanking them out. The day was an exceedingly hot one, and all suffered greatly; William Marble, of Company B, sustained a partial sunstroke. Mile after mile the chase continued. With a stubbornness that betokened heavy work ahead, the men in gray took their places behind every obstacle that afforded protection, only to be compelled to retire by the ever pressing line of blue. At last, heated almost to the melting point, and so thoroughly exhausted that all felt that they could not much longer keep up the severe work demanded of them, the Regiment emerged from the timber upon an eminence overlooking a beautiful, open field. The enemy's skirmishers had mainly made their way to right and left through the timber, and for an instant the impression prevailed that there was no obstruction in front save a few badly demoralized skirmishers who were running as rapidly as possible across the field, their speed accelerated by the bullets sent after them by their weary followers. But no! A second glance confirmed every man in the belief that the predicted decisive battle was at hand. Away off across the comparatively level field stretched long lines of moving men. The first thought was that it might be Gen. Schofield or Gen. Hooker, as they were known to have been nearer that point the day before than Gen. Howard. Officers raised their field glasses and looked at the mighty host and announced that the men were dressed in gray. It was the Rebel army, and at least a full Corps were in plain sight, marching directly toward the Union lines. A cloud of skirmishers covered their front, and batteries of artillery distributed along the line indicated the termination of each brigade. Mounted officers rode in front of each battalion, and groups of horsemen dis-





WAS DAVIS,  
MILLER.

DENNIS SHUDE,  
CAPT. DAVID JAMES,  
ESQ. DUNN.

JOHN A. CORBIN,  
WILLIAM H. WHIPPLE.



nated the positions of the Generals and their Staffs. Regimental colors could be dimly seen, and the lines seemed as perfectly formed and as evenly marched as though they were out for a holiday parade. Never, except when they stood upon Lookout Mountain on that clear November day in 1863, and watched the battle of Missionary Ridge, had the men of the NINETY-SIXTH seen a panorama so magnificent; and even then the distance was so great as to make objects much less distinct than at this time. Indeed, it is doubtful if anywhere during the war except when Pickett's Division made their brilliant but fatal charge at Gettysburg, or when Gen. Hood moved across the level plain at Franklin, were there so many of the Rebel army so magnificently marshalled in plain view of their opponents as in what military writers denominate "The Affair at Cassville."

The men of the NINETY-SIXTH, with others along the line, stood for a moment as if entranced. True the advancing lines were a long distance off—probably a mile and a half—but the space could be quickly passed by fresh men in the desperate energy of a charge; and that was what the movement seemed to mean.

It was not long that the men of the Regiment stood and watched the maneuvering of the foe. Gen. Stanley coming upon the scene, looked through his field-glass for a moment, and then the members of his Staff went galloping back to report the situation and to form the Division in line. The skirmishers were ordered forward to a fence, some rods out in the field, and the reserves were directed to begin a line of works, using rails and logs. Notwithstanding the excessive heat and the great fatigue to which they had been subjected, the men plied themselves to the utmost to make some slight protection for the expected assault. But when about a mile distant, the Rebels also halted, and were soon equally busy in erecting a barricade of rails. Gen. Stanley and a few officers and orderlies were standing just at the verge of the timber, in plain view, when a Rebel battery limbered to the rear and began to throw their iron missiles toward them. For prudential reasons these horsemen soon withdrew to the



shelter of the timber. A Union battery answered its opponent and quickly sent it to the rear. The skirmishers were directed to raise their sights and fire at the line, but the distance was too great for marked results. The entire Fourth Corps was soon in line and several batteries of artillery opened upon the Rebels, the shots striking the field and tearing up the sod and dust, and occasionally seeming to pass through their ranks. It was not long before their front line moved back, in some confusion, halting in rear of what had been their second line. The skirmishers from the Regiment were at one time ordered to advance, and upon climbing the fence from behind which they had been firing, were a little startled by a volley from some Rebels who had been lying in the field a short distance in front,—a light barricade with some clover spread over it completely hiding them from view. Their fire was returned, and for a short distance there was a lively chase.

By the time that the lines of the several Corps of Gen. Sherman's army had been so joined that a safe forward movement could be made, the Rebels retreated, disappearing in the timber. At four o'clock the Fourth Corps pushed out in the centre, the Twentieth Corps at the left, and the Fourteenth Corps at the right. Farther in rear, on right and left, were Gen. McPherson's and Gen. Schofield's forces. There was heavy firing at intervals until nightfall, by which time the Union lines had reached Cassville.

In the day's advance the skirmishers did much execution, of which there was abundant evidence all along the way. An amusing incident occurred as they reached the vicinity of a large white house near the outskirts of the village, which proved to be the residence of Rev. Mr. Best. The Rebels had been very stubborn at this point, and when the skirmishers finally charged and routed them, it was with such gallantry that all could not escape, and a few prisoners were taken. Still pressing on, through a garden, Corporal Gage spied the crown of an ancient hat rising just above a large rock beyond the paling. Supposing it to be a Rebel, and willing to give him an even chance, Gage sprang behind a tree and demanded that he "come in out of the wet;" when up jumped an old





colored man, trembling in every nerve, and implored him ; " For de lub of de Lawd, don't shoot. I aint got nuffin agin you'uns ! " The Corporal didn't shoot the colored man, but several times afterward he felt very much like shooting some of his comrades when they asked him, as they did occasionally, if he had made any captures since the one at Cassville. The house mentioned was unoccupied, and from the colored man it was learned that its owner had two sons in the Rebel army, one of them being a Colonel, who had left the house that forenoon. As soon as the lines halted, a few of the skirmishers returned to the abandoned house and helped themselves to numerous articles of diet not provided by the army quartermaster. Rations had been short for a time and the articles issued were of the plainest character ; but on this occasion these men had cake, jelly, honey and maple sugar. In addition to these sweets, meat, tobacco, meal and flour were found and used.

About one mile southeast of Cassville, on a high ridge, was the main line of works, to which Gen. Johnston's army had retired. They were carefully laid out and strongly built, but on their right, from some hills, the Federal cannon played upon them so heavily as to make their occupants very uneasy. And yet the position was a strong one. Gen. Johnston had just received a considerable reinforcement from Mississippi, while Gen. Sherman's army had been greatly weakened ; a Division being sent to Rome, smaller forces left at various bridges and stations passed, and thousands giving out because of sickness and fatigue. On the whole the conditions for a battle were rather favorable to the Rebels, and they undoubtedly expected to fight at that point. But Generals Johnston, Hood and Polk seem to have had some difference of opinion as to the merits of the line of works laid out and fortified by them ; and so, while the Union forces were busy fortifying their front and preparing for the expected battle, Gen. Johnston issued orders for his forces to again fall back, and at midnight they were retreating to the Allatoona hills, south of the Etowah River. The casualties upon the nineteenth were,



Francis J. Robinson, of Company A, wounded in the neck; and John E. Evans, of Company I, wounded in the foot.

Friday, May 20, the army of Gen. Sherman was early in line, but the "Johnnies" were gone. Gen. Sherman at once decided upon a three days' halt. The troops had been actively campaigning for two weeks, during which there had been but little opportunity for rest. With frequent night movements, with réveille at three o'clock on such of the mornings as that hour did not find the troops already on the move, with a line of breastworks to build as often as each alternate night, with bridges and roads to repair, with heavy guard duty nightly, and marching or fighting daily, the troops were so worn as to greatly need rest. It is not to be supposed that the enemy had suffered equally from fatigue, for while most of their retreats had been at night, they had marched by direct roads and occupied lines of breastworks built for their use by plantation hands, the main part of their force having a long rest, at least in the early part of each day following a night retreat, while their pursuers were moving up to confront the new lines. At all events the three days of rest given the Federals at Cassville were most welcome, and the men made good use of their opportunity. The first thing with most of them was a bath: the next a thorough washing of their clothing. This done, when they had slept all they cared to they wandered through the pretty, deserted village. On going to the town one day Lieutenant-Colonel Smith discovered some soldiers arrayed in Odd Fellows' regalia. In a moment he called the soldiers to him and quietly but firmly demanded the return of their trophies. Summoning some brothers of the craft he repaired to the lodge room, restored order and secured the return of all or nearly all of the regalia of the organization.

Near the camp of the NINETY-SIXTH was a Seminary in which was a large library. True the librarian was absent, but as a large proportion of the command was of a literary turn of mind, all formality was waived and each of those who wished read books. It was a strange spectacle to see hundreds of men in uniform sitting at the desks in the college.



each absorbed in some scientific book or in some work of fiction, or to go outside and see men similarly engaged, sitting with their backs against the mammoth shade trees, for hours together. They were hungry for just such an opportunity as was here offered, and thoroughly did they improve it. There was also much visiting between the men of the various regiments in that vicinity, many of the Jo Daviess County boys taking a long tramp to Kingston to call upon acquaintances in the 12th Illinois.

Friday, Saturday and Sunday sped rapidly by. The railroad was repaired by Saturday, and trains brought forward large amounts of rations. On Sunday four days rations were issued to each man, and twenty days rations for the army loaded upon the wagons. The soldiers knew that this meant a long march away from the railroad, and were curious as to the plans of their commander, but content and confident.

Religious services were held in many of the camps both afternoon and evening. It was a spectacle upon which no thinking man, however skeptical, could look unmoved, to see the soldiers gather around the place designated for religious meetings. The attendance was often large, and embraced a few commissioned officers. Nor was it alone or mainly timid soldiers who were present, but often the most devout were those whose presence in the charge or upon the skirmish line was an inspiration. A soldier would lead in some stirring hymn, and soon a hundred voices, blending beautifully, would make the leafy tabernacle ring with their grand music. Prayer would be offered, sometimes in a loud tone, and again with subdued voice: some with crude imagery and weird petition for the overthrow of the enemies of the country and of righteousness: others eloquent in their very simplicity, breathing a request that the great "Father of us all" would lead the way through all the darkness of the present to the day when peace should brood above the land, and war and turmoil cease—when soldiers should be permitted to forget the camp and battle and yet remember that they were soldiers in the army of the great Immanuel, whose victories were bloodless and whose captives were the prisoners of hope.



Scripture would be read or repeated by the leader; a brief discourse would follow: experiences would be related, and then, as the flickering camp fires burned low and the distant bugles warned the worshipers back to camp, the grand melody of Old Hundred would go up like incense to the stars, the soldiers would separate and in a few moments quiet brood above the sleeping hosts. Who shall say they were not strengthened by these services, crudely arranged and conducted though they often were, or that the God of Battles did not watch above them and frame the answer to their varied petitions while they prayed, leading them, as individuals, and the Nation beneath whose banner they assembled, into a larger liberty than that of which they then conceived? Certain it must be that many a weary, home-sick, heart-sick boy, took courage in such gatherings as these and went thence to the battle nerved for deeds more daring than the past had seen, and felt himself sustained by the hope and faith not elsewhere so certainly obtained. Not a few date their first strong religious convictions from those gatherings in the forests of Georgia, and many still cling to the Faith that sustained them there, where they learned to sing:

“Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;  
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;  
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword;  
His truth is marching on.

“I have seen Him in the watch-fires of an hundred circling camps,  
They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and damps,  
I can read His righteous sentence by the dim and flaring lamps,  
His day is marching on.

“I have read a fiery gospel writ in burnished rows of steel;  
‘As ye deal with my contemners, so with you my grace shall deal;’  
Let the Hero born of woman crush the serpent with his heel,  
Since God is marching on.

“He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat;  
He is sifting out the hearts of men before his judgment seat;  
Oh, be swift, my soul, to answer Him! be jubilant, my feet!  
Our God is marching on.

“In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,  
With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me;  
As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,  
While God is marching on.”





## CHAPTER XVIII.

A Bold Flank Movement—Across the Etowah—Gen. Johnston anticipates Gen. Sherman's Plans—Pumpkin Vine Creek—Late Marches—In Reserve—Moving to the Front Line Under Fire—Strong Breastworks—Terrific Artillery Fire—New Hope Church—Ten Days in the Trenches—Sleeping and Eating to the Music of Musketry—Casualties Almost Daily—Miserably Monotonous—The Skirmishers Better Natured—Trading Between the Lines—Short Rations—The Enemy again Outflanked—The Union Forces reach the Railroad—In Camp at Ackworth—The Boon of a Three Day's Rest—The Railroad Repaired—Rations and Mails brought up—Getting Rid of the Greybacks—Ready for Kenesaw Mountain.

TWENTY years before the events here narrated, and while bearing the rank of Lieutenant, Gen. Sherman had accompanied an Inspector-General in the army to Marietta, Ga., on an official tour, and going thence on horseback to the Etowah River, had become somewhat familiar with the region of Kenesaw Mountain and Allatoona. He now remembered them as well adapted for defensive operations, and concluded not to risk a direct movement against Allatoona. Fortunately, by a rapid movement made as soon as Cassville was reached, the cavalry had succeeded in gaining possession of some wagon bridges across the Etowah, and Gen. Sherman resolved to move his army across these and push out toward Marietta and the Chattahoochie river. His hope was that this movement might be well advanced before the enemy should discover his plans. Gen. Johnston was on the watch, however, and anticipating the very movement that would be made, interposed his army between the Union forces and Marietta, ultimately abandoning the strong position at Allatoona but preventing the immediate flanking of Kenesaw Mountain.

Monday, May 23, the Union army moved by the right flank, crossing the Etowah River by the bridges that had been wrested from the enemy and by others that had been improvised. As the Fourth Corps had been directed to move partly in rear of other troops, the Regiment spent the forenoon in



camp. A general order was issued requiring every soldier to wear shoes, and in all cases where those then in use were not in good repair to draw new ones. Many of the men, particularly those who had been home on furlough during the winter and spring, had boots but partially worn, and the order to throw them away was not received with the utmost good nature. However, they had long since learned that there was no appeal from General Orders and all complied, though not without availing themselves of the soldier's inalienable right to grumble,—the one right they always declared they did not sign away when they enlisted.

At noon the Regiment filed out of camp, going in a south-westerly direction and crossing the Etowah River at Gillem's bridge, near a little place which took its name from the stream. The bridge gave evidence of an attempt to destroy it, for the planks were charred in one or two places, but the cavalry had moved too rapidly to allow the work of destruction to gain much headway, and but trifling repairs were necessary. The march was at a good pace, the weather extremely hot, and water suitable for drinking purposes unusually scarce, so that when the column finally went into camp at ten o'clock at night, in a large wheat field a little south of Euharlie, the men were thoroughly tired. The cavalry, which had led in the advance, encountered the enemy at Stilesboro and a prolonged skirmish ensued, but the infantry forces were not seriously involved. Meanwhile Gen. Schofield had effected a crossing farther to the left and nearer Allatoona, while Gen. McPherson had moved directly south from Kingston, on the right of Gen. Thomas, the several columns moving by nearly parallel roads.

Tuesday, May 24, the Regiment was called out at three o'clock and resumed the march at six o'clock, crossing Euharlie Creek and making slow progress, as the troops in front were compelled to move cautiously to avoid being ambushed. The country passed in the early part of the day was attractive and well cultivated, but toward night a hilly region was reached. A final halt was made late in the evening on a spur of the Allatoona Ridge, not far from Burnt Hickory. A



terrific thunder storm was raging at the time, thereby preventing any great degree of comfort, although the men put up their shelter tents, wrapped their blankets about them and were speedily asleep. The storm lasted a considerable part of the night, but at daylight next morning the sky was clear.

Wednesday, May 25, the Regiment started at ten o'clock, marching the rest of the day, most of the time by obscure roads. The Twentieth Corps, which was at the left of the Fourth, encountering the enemy in heavy force, pushed forward with the purpose of reaching the main wagon road leading from Dallas to Allatoona, at a point near New Hope Church. A severe engagement ensued and reinforcements being called for; a part of the Fourth Corps which had been marching directly toward Dallas, was ordered to the assistance of the Twentieth, and at four o'clock was hurried forward past the trains. At a little after five o'clock the NINETY-SIXTH crossed Pumpkin Vine Creek where the battle had begun, and advanced rapidly until dark, meeting large numbers of wounded returning from the battle field. At sundown it began to rain, thus increasing the difficulty of marching. The Regiment was shifted around from place to place and kept on the move until after nine o'clock when, weary and footsore, the men lay down to rest, first building a partial line of breastworks. The losses in Hooker's command were heavy, but owing to the difficulty of moving troops through the forest and over the hills, the Fourth Corps was so late in arriving that it had no opportunity to return the severe fire to which it was exposed in the battle of Pumpkin Vine Creek.

Thursday, May 26, there was heavy cannonading and much musketry throughout the entire day. The First Division of the Fourth Corps was held in reserve and the Regiment stood to arms most of the time, being repeatedly moved to right or left, with other troops, and at one time quite a distance toward the front, but was kept in a rear line nearly a half mile from where the more active work was going on. Night brought orders to still remain under arms and the men lay down with their accoutrements on but with their waist belts



unbuckled. There was more or less firing all night, but the Regiment was not called out.

Friday, May 27, orders came for the First Division to move to the left and relieve Gen. Wood's Division, and the Regiment took its place in the front line at an early hour. The troops thus relieved moved still farther to the left and attempted to get upon the right flank of the enemy. A heavy engagement followed, in which the Union losses were heavy. On the way, in passing the crest of a ridge, the Rebel skirmishers apparently caught sight of the moving column and sent a volley toward the NINETY-SIXTH, the bullets whistling all about, but without injuring any one. The Union lines now extended from the village of Dallas northeasterly for some miles and the position to which the Regiment was assigned was near the left centre. The men were gratified to find a partial line of breastworks constructed for their use, and reached their station without any casualties, by stooping low and partially crawling to their places. A detail from the Regiment relieved the skirmish line in front, under a trying fire, and found themselves in close proximity to the Rebel lines. The men relieved had built snug, crescent-shaped skirmish pits, most of which were provided with head-logs. From these pits an almost constant racket was kept up, the order being to fire at every moving object, near, or remote. Extra ammunition had to be sent to the skirmishers, although each man carried sixty rounds or more with him. Strange to say there were but two casualties on the line that day,—Corporal James Murrie, of Company C, being shot in the foot and losing a toe, and Oscar Rector, of the same Company, being slightly wounded in the arm. During much of the day the men in the main line steadily used the few shovels at hand. The inside of the works was built up with heavy logs and on the outside was an embankment from two to four feet broad. Much of the dirt comprising this bank was thrown from the inside, a broad ditch being excavated, its depth soon becoming such that the men could stand upright if called upon to fire. Heavy head-logs surmounted these works. Later an abatis was constructed in front, most of the work being done





at night. This was composed mainly of small trees cut for the purpose and staked to the ground, their limbs being sharpened and interwoven so as to make a pretty serious obstruction. Before the campaign closed the men became experts in this work and these obstructions were often as novel in material and construction as can well be imagined.

The position of the Regiment on this Dallas line was on the brow of a hill where a sharp angle in the works was found necessary, in order that the troops might control the ground in their front. The main lines of the two armies were a half mile or a little more from each other, but the skirmish lines were much nearer. Toward evening on the twenty-seventh the Rebels opened with musketry and artillery, enfilading the works to some extent. The batteries devoted themselves to the exposed position occupied by the NINETY-SIXTH and sent shot and shell with great rapidity across the fields which separated the armies. For an hour or more this terrible tempest of iron was continued, shells exploding all about that little elevation. Dirt was thrown from the side-hill in the faces of the men, and showers of leaves and limbs dropped from the trees above. Pieces of jagged iron were thrown in all directions. Solid shot tore through the tree-tops or, striking in the hill-side, ricocheted across the works, going with fearful energy and frightful sound back through the timber. The exploding of shells at times was almost constant, so rapidly did they come, but fortunately none burst at the exact point to do great harm and none struck with full force upon the as yet light embankments. Still the range was close and the ordeal a most trying one. Meanwhile the Union batteries had opened upon the Rebel lines and the air reverberated with the constant roar as piece after piece of artillery sent forth its deadly messenger. The men clutched their muskets and crouched close beside the earthworks, confidently believing that such a fearful cannonading was but the prelude to an infantry charge. Every nerve was strained and each man seemed resolved to do his full duty to repel the expected assault. But no charge came,—at least none came to that portion of the line,—and at dusk the firing lessened. As soon



as the artillery ceased to fire, a portion of the men were again set at work to strengthen the embankment. Additional shovels were procured and the bank was soon from six to ten feet across, the ditch inside being widened and much earth being thrown from the outside. Heavy transverses were constructed from logs and earth at frequent intervals to protect the command from enfilading shots. So the work went on far into the night. The artillery on either side continued to send occasional noisy salutations to and fro, and the skirmishers fired almost constantly. To such music as this the men laid down upon the bank just back of the works and slept, in reliefs, one third standing to arms all through the darkness; and those who had opportunity did not fail to sleep. Two or three times during the night the picket firing increased in volume to such an extent that the entire main line was aroused, the men being kept up for a half hour or so; then, when it became evident that the alarms were false, they would again resume their places on the bank, and fall asleep in a moment.

Saturday, May 28, was another most trying day. Early in the forenoon the Rebels again opened with artillery upon the angle where the Regiment lay in line; and again for an hour or two their iron missiles struck all about, but with little damage. At night there was but little sleep. The skirmishers were required to advance their line slightly, and construct new skirmish pits, and the main line was kept awake much of the night in order to be ready to assist them should the Rebels discover what was going on. Francis Johnson, of Company A, was wounded in the foot. A heavy column of Rebel infantry and artillery had been seen marching toward Dallas during the day, and this fact added to the anxiety, as a night attack was deemed probable.

Sunday, May 29, was a beautiful day overhead, but about Dallas and New Hope Church it brought no rest. The two armies still confronted each other at close range, and musketry and artillery firing were the only music. Toward night this deepened into an almost continuous roar all along the line, but at dark lulled into an almost ominous quiet. At ten o'clock it was revived, and grew into a terrific night fight far-



ther toward the right, where the Rebels assaulted Gen. Newton's Division and Gen. McPherson's forces, but were beaten back with heavy slaughter. Again the weary men were kept in line much of the night. During the day Edgar C. Langdon, of Company I, was severely wounded in the hand.

Monday, May 30, brought little change, except that the Rebels opened two batteries upon the "angle" from new positions, and kept up a fire even hotter than usual all through the day. The members of the Regiment in the main line hugged the ground closely, and felt pretty secure in their strong line of works. The skirmishers had little rest, but kept up a heavy fire all day. Albert E. Benton, of Company K, was killed upon the skirmish line.

Tuesday, May 31, brought little change except the addition of another battery on the Rebel side. In the morning three batteries opened simultaneously upon the devoted "angle," but in vain, though the firing was very close; and once a portion of Companies A and F were almost buried in earth thrown from their own breastworks by a Rebel shell. The artillery firing was renewed toward evening, and a solid shot penetrated the embankment in front of Company A, striking a log and breaking it, severely jarring Sergeant Berg, Andrew Disch, and George Bowman, who were sitting with their backs against it. Berg and Disch were struck on the head and considerably bruised. On the skirmish line there was hot work much of the day. First Sergeant Scott, of Company G, was wounded in the face, receiving a hard blow from a bullet whose force had been mainly spent against a head-log. Corporal Henry H. Gage, of the same Company, was slightly wounded in the face, the bullet passing through his hat-rim. William Noble, also of Company G, was severely wounded in the head, and taken to hospital at Nashville, where he died from his injuries, July 21.

When Sergeant Scott was struck he was rendered partially insensible for a moment. The blood started from the wound, and in his confused condition he first put up a hand to feel the cut and remarked, "Here is where the ball went in;" and then raising the other to the back of his head, asked, "Now,



where did it come out?" His companions in the skirmish pits were greatly amused, and in a moment he was laughing heartily with the rest at the ridiculousness of the inquiry, knowing full well that if the bullet had gone through he would hardly have been left in condition to make inquiries about it. The bullet struck a hard, glancing blow, but did not penetrate, and he did not leave the command, although his face was very sore for a time.

Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, June 1, 2 and 3, were but repetitions of the days immediately preceding. The position of the Regiment was unchanged; the firing was perhaps less constant and severe, and the skirmishers a little better natured, venturing to talk to each other back and forth at night, and even going out between the lines and exchanging newspapers, "swapping" coffee for tobacco, and trading jack-knives. The weather was rainy and disagreeable, and the clothing of the men, from constant contact with the red clay soil, came to bear a close resemblance to the uniform of their opponents. Rations became scarce—three days' rations having to do for four or five days—and many of the men actually suffered from hunger. There was no opportunity to forage, for every man was kept right at the works or in the skirmish pits. On the third, Sergeant Franklin Pierce, of Company F, received a wound in the right shoulder, but was not long disabled. The skirmishers kept up a heavy fire much of the day. At one time Gen. Stanley ordered them to fall back to the main line, hoping to give the Rebels the impression that the army was falling back, and thus induce them to come out from their works; but the Rebels failed to fall into the trap set for them.

While the NINETY-SIXTH, with other troops near the original left-centre of the line, had been hugging their works so closely, and keeping up so constant a clangor with musket and cannon, other portions of the army had been on the move. Gen. Sherman, upon finding that Gen. Johnston had anticipated his movement and thrown the Rebel army between him and Marietta, began moving troops from right to left, at first attempting to pass the Rebel right and break it back,—which





movement was not successful,—and then reaching out toward the railroad in the neighborhood of Ackworth. Severe engagements resulted on either flank, with heavy loss to the Divisions engaged. In moving to this line and in the shifting of positions, the engagements were so frequent and so near together, that it is difficult to say where one battle left off and another began; and the historian finds it impossible to separate Burnt Hickory, Pumpkin Vine Creek, New Hope Church, Pickett's Mills and Dallas. The action participated in by the First and Second Divisions of the Fourth Corps, is generally known as the battle of New Hope Church.

Saturday, June 4, at three o'clock A. M., the movement to the left had so far progressed that the NINETY-SIXTH was ordered to leave its works. Marching about a half mile to the left a halt was made, and the men told that they could put up their tents, a privilege of which they gladly availed themselves. During the day there was considerable skirmishing near by, and the Regiment was held in readiness for an anticipated assault from the Rebels, who, it was believed, would attempt to break back the Union right, but nothing serious resulted.

Sunday, June 5, the Regiment was in line at three A. M., and shortly afterward learned, to their great joy, that the Rebel breastworks were empty, the enemy having moved to the rear and right during the night. The skirmish line was immediately advanced, and soon came in contact with a light line of Rebels, indicating that they were still near enough to compel vigilance. They were not pressed, but the Regiment, with other troops, remained in the trenches,—this making the tenth day in which they had been constantly under arms. The weather was rainy and unpleasant. The wounded who had occupied tents just in rear of the army were placed in ambulances and taken to Ackworth; a most difficult matter, as many of them were terribly lacerated, and the trip occupied an entire day and a portion of a night.

Monday, June 6, an early réveille sounded, the Regiment drew three days' rations, with the order that it must last four days, and at sunrise was marching toward the left. A halt was made at one o'clock P. M. The weather was sultry, and



the men so worn out with their long vigil and the rather rapid march, that many gave out. Arrived at Ackworth, orders were given to clean up the camps and take a brief rest. There was considerable produce in the neighborhood, and owing to the fact that rations were short, the men foraged to some extent, but those caught at it were made to carry a rail at headquarters. In view of the hard service of the past month, and the fact that this was most decidedly an enemy's country, it is difficult to conceive why men were punished for piecing out their rations in that region, and at that time in the war; but such was the case. The men felt outraged, and made threats to take revenge, unless their comrades were speedily released.—threats which availed, it may be noted here.

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, June 7, 8 and 9, were in the main days of rest. And the rest was greatly needed, for the month's campaign had been a most trying one. The casualties in the Regiment since leaving Blue Springs had numbered nearly 80, of which thirteen had been fatal, and fifty so severe as to take the men to hospitals. In addition, fully one hundred more had been prostrated by sickness and over exertion, and had been sent to hospital, so that the Regiment now numbered but a few more than two hundred present for duty. True many other portions of the army had suffered less in action, and had been less constantly in the trenches and under fire, but Gen. Sherman had lost many more men by the campaign than he had gained by the arrival of two Divisions from the West; while Gen. Johnston's army had received large reinforcements, and had lost fewer in proportion from sickness, as his troops were thoroughly acclimated, built fewer breastworks,—as they had negroes at their call,—and marched on shorter lines, thereby wearing out fewer men with fatigue. The railroad bridge across the Etowah was speedily repaired, and by the ninth some train loads of rations and ammunition were unloaded at Ackworth, and most of the sick and wounded taken back to Chattanooga or farther north.

To insure the presence of the soldiers and keep the army well in hand, dress parades were indulged in twice daily.





W. BESLEY.  
WHITNEY.

CAPT. SAMUEL CLARK.  
CAPT. WILLIAM B. LEWIN.  
HENRY BATER.

CAPT. GEORGE L. STEWART.  
WILLIAM F. RIDER.



The men cleaned up their clothing as far as opportunity offered, killed off the vermin by boiling their shirts, or by the old plan of "skirmishing," and prepared for a renewal of the campaign. Thousands of letters were received and answered, the newspapers brought by the mails were read until literally worn out, the progress made by the army at the East was commented on, and the question as to who was to be elected President discussed with as much interest and animation as though the Illinois soldiers in the field were not disfranchised.

In the engagements on the Dallas line the following were

#### THE CASUALTIES.

KILLED OR MORTALLY WOUNDED.—William Noble, Company G; Albert E. Benton, Company K.

WOUNDED.—Francis Johnson, Company A, foot; Corporal James Murrie, Company C, foot; Oscar Rector, Company C, arm; William Faith, Company E, neck and head; Sergeant Franklin Pierce, Company F, shoulder; First Sergeant Aaron Scott, Company G, face; Corporal Henry H. Gage, Company G, face; Edgar C. Langdon, Company I, hand; Edward Graham, Company K, leg; Sergeant Daniel Sullivan, Company K, hip.





## CHAPTER XIX.

The Advance from Ackworth—The Country Full of Breastworks—How the Army was Fed—Opposite Pine Mountain—Killed by a Falling Tree—Bishop Polk's Death—Frequent Rain Storms—Losses by Capture—Approaching Little Kenesaw—A Gallant Charge—What Civil War Means—Terrific Night Fight—Heavy Losses of Officers and Men—A Trying Position—In Close Quarters—A Multitude of Engagements—Moving to the Right—Disastrous Change of Tactics—A Flag of Truce—Skirmishers' Experiences—The Flanking Movement Resumed—Kenesaw Mountain in Union Hands.

THE troops having become partially rested after the severe experience at New Hope Church and Dallas, Gen. Sherman ordered another forward movement. The railroad bridge at Etowah was nearly completed, and as the march was to be directly to the front and along the line of the road, the arrival of the railway trains was not waited for. Bread, coffee, salt, and salt meats had been brought forward in wagons, and beef cattle were driven up to the camp nightly, men being detailed from the ranks to keep them bunched, drive them when the army moved, and give them opportunities for feeding. There was little grass in that region, but grain fields were sufficiently numerous so that the stock fared tolerably well; but the weather was hot and rainy, and the flies so troublesome, that many of the animals became poor before their turn for slaughter. Soldiers detailed for the purpose slaughtered and cut up the meat, which was issued to the men every second or third day. All through the summer months there was but an occasional and meagre ration of beans, rice, or other articles in the vegetable line, and as the men were marching much of the time, and subjected to an unusual amount of night work, they were continually hungry. Many times rations were issued for three days, with orders for them to last four, and, on a few occasions, five days. When this occurred two or three times in succession, as it did in May and June, there was some actual suffering.



The Rebel cavalry were active, and on several occasions tore up the railroad and destroyed small bridges, thus delaying trains and making the work of supplying the immense army a task of great magnitude. Some of the men grumbled a little, but most of them took the rations good-naturedly, fully satisfied to bear hunger as well as danger and fatigue, if only progress was made in crushing the Rebellion. There was the utmost frugality on the part of nearly all. Even the tails of the slaughtered cattle were skinned and every piece of bone was carefully saved, soups being made from them. Occasionally, as at Ackworth, some foraging was done, but as a rule the Rebel army had so thoroughly used up the supplies that but little could be obtained, especially by the troops in the centre, where the Fourth Corps usually marched in each advance.

Friday, June 10, the general forward movement from Ackworth began, Gen. McPherson being on the left, Gen. Thomas in the centre, and Gen. Schofield on the right. The Fourth Corps went pretty directly toward Pine Mountain, keeping to the right of Big Shanty and the railroad. The day was rainy, the roads obscure, and the country broken and timbered; as a consequence the march was a slow one. The NINETY-SIXTH furnished flankers or skirmishers, but encountered no serious resistance, although the firing was lively most of the day. When a final halt was made the Rebel tents and breastworks were in plain view, at a distance of about two miles. Their lines were found to be heavily fortified, and extended from Brush Mountains, across Pine Mountain, and past Gilgal Church to Lost Mountain, a distance of nearly ten miles. The weather continued rainy, and the moving of troops was a most difficult matter. Batteries of artillery, wagons and ambulances were mired everywhere, and details of men were made from the infantry to help them out of the mud, cut new roads through the timber, and corduroy the low ground.

For several days the Regiment occupied substantially the position taken on the tenth. Heavy works were constructed, although the enemy's lines were at a greater distance than at New Hope Church, and the firing at longer range and much



less trying. On Saturday a portion of the Regiment was sent to reconnoitre the front, and advanced a long distance, having a severe skirmish but sustaining no casualties.

Throughout Sunday, June 12, there was heavy firing at the left, and an attack was expected. The men slept with shoes and accoutrements on, but had their shelter tents up to protect them from the severe storm. Monday, the batteries all along the line kept up a heavy firing, and the skirmishers indulged in more or less musketry. During a violent rain storm a large, girdled tree, which stood upon the skirmish line, was loosened, the ground about its roots having become so saturated as to no longer support it, and without warning it toppled over and fell across a log where some of the skirmishers were sitting beneath their dripping ponchos. One of their number was Carlisle Druse, of Company B. The ponderous tree fell partially upon him, and his bayonet was driven through his body, causing almost instant death; and thus while watching for the enemy, and under their fire, he was killed by an accident. He was a young man, a favorite in the Regiment, and his sudden taking off seemed doubly sad because of the unusual circumstances attending it.

Tuesday morning dawned clear, but disagreeably cold, and the men were much surprised at such a severe change in the "Sunny South." The first sound to greet the ear was the muttering of cannon, but it proved to be mainly Union guns playing upon the Rebel lines. The day must have been an exceedingly unpleasant one for the enemy, as a heavy fire was maintained by the Union artillerists. General Sherman rode along the lines on a tour of observation and halting near the Regiment directed Captain Simonson's 5th Indiana Battery to open fire upon Pine Mountain. A group of Rebel officers were reconnoitering the lines at the time, in plain view but at quite a distance. A well directed shot created a commotion among them and caused them to scatter. In a few moments it was known by the Signal officers, who had learned to interpret the Rebel signals, that a no less distinguished personage than Bishop Polk, then a Lieutenant-General in the Confederate army, had been struck by an unexploded shell and instantly



killed. There was heavy fighting at many points on the line during the day, and once the Regiment, with other troops, moved some distance to the left to take part in a charge that it was proposed to make upon the Rebel works. There was a vigorous reconnoissance, but the Rebel lines were found to be so strongly fortified that an assault was deemed unwise and the troops returned to their former position. The lines of the Twentieth Corps, as well as those of Gen. McPherson, were crowded forward, and some gains made in position. The whistle of the locomotive at Big Shanty gave evidence that the Etowah had been bridged, and promised more abundant rations. When it sounded a cheer ran along the lines for many a mile.

Wednesday, June 15, a general advance was ordered to take place at daylight, with the intention of "going in" at any weak point that might be discovered, but it was found that the enemy had again retreated. The Regiment moved forward, passing over the Rebel works and gaining about two miles of difficult ground. Toward night the greater part of the Fourth Corps was massed at the left of Pine Mountain, and the men anticipated an assault. An advance was made, the Second Division leading and capturing the enemy's front line of works. There was also severe skirmishing and some heavy fighting on either flank. Later in the day the Corps was partially deployed.

Thursday, June 16, the Regiment lay near the enemy and was severely shelled. During a heavy artillery duel Capt. Simonson, of the 5th Indiana Battery, and Chief of Artillery for the Division, was killed. Toward evening heavy breast-works were again built, it being evident that the Rebels were strongly entrenched in front. Sergeant John B. Reynolds, of Company I, was severely wounded in the breast and shoulder.

Friday, June 17, there was another advance in the centre, across the entrenched lines abandoned by the enemy. The cannonading was unusually severe, and heavy musketry was heard, not alone in the distance, but near at hand, the Rebels stubbornly resisting the advance. At dark they withdrew across Mud Creek, and the army again fortified in their front.





After dark the Regiment moved to the front line, relieving the 3d Wisconsin. The heavy rains were again resumed, to the great discomfort of the men, as the lines were so close that no fires could be built, no tents erected and no clothing or accoutrements removed.

Saturday, June 18, the enemy having again fallen back, the advance was renewed, the Regiment being on the move in one direction or another most of the day. The First Division was in reserve until evening, when it moved to the front line. The NINETY-SIXTH was ordered to take the skirmish line just after dark, which it did under a heavy fire. William Bell, of Company I, was wounded in the left hand. There was much uncertainty as to the situation, and as the troops to be relieved had moved out before the new line reached them, the Regiment was in doubt as to its position. The firing having slackened, Sergeant Michael Devlin and Albert Barney, of Company D, set out to reconnoitre the front. Hearing voices and seeing the outline of an earthwork a few rods ahead, they went up to it, but to their surprise and consternation found themselves covered by a dozen muskets, and were told, in a low tone, to surrender. There was no alternative, save almost certain death, and reluctantly they laid down their muskets and consented to be taken to the Rebel rear. Both endured a long imprisonment, some details of which will be found elsewhere in this volume. But while their capture had been made with unusual quiet, some of the men in the line heard enough to know what had happened, and whispered the facts to the officers. Without immediately advancing farther, skirmishers were deployed, and steps taken to prevent further losses. A deep, sluggish stream was near at hand, and as one of the men undertook to cross it on a log he fell, with a loud splash, into the water, whence he was rescued by his comrades. His musket went to the bottom and was not recovered. Strange to say, for a time neither line ventured to fire, although but a few yards apart. The night was a most anxious one, the troops getting little or no sleep. Gen. Thomas ordered that an assault should be made in the morning, should the enemy still hold this line.



Sunday, June 19, found the Rebels again on the retreat, the skirmishers of the NINETY-SIXTH occupying their vacated lines before the day had fairly dawned, and capturing a few prisoners. These skirmishers were soon recalled, and in a dreary rain storm the Division moved to the left and front, going in the direction of Marietta, the 21st Kentucky having the skirmish line. The enemy was encountered near Wallace's house, and the skirmishing became very spirited in front. The main line was in some timber, confronting an open field, which the skirmishers attempted to cross, but in vain, as the enemy was in strong force in the woods just beyond, where they were attempting to tear up a corduroy road or bridge across a sluggish stream or swamp known as Nose's Creek. Word being sent to the reserves, the NINETY-SIXTH was ordered forward and rapidly crossed the field, the enemy leaving their work and retreating into the timber. The Regiment hastily crossed the stream, some of them wading knee deep in the mud and water, and formed a semi-circle just beyond. A detail of two men from each Company, under command of Lieutenant Dawson, of Company F, was immediately deployed and ordered to advance. The line was now confronting one of the foot-hills adjacent to the eminence known as Little Kenesaw. The sides of this hill were densely wooded, and the skirmishers could see but little of what was in their front. At the command they moved forward for several rods. It was dusk, and in the timber but little could be seen. William H. Ehlers, of Company C, passed near some bushes when a big Rebel suddenly sprang up and demanded that he throw down his gun, which he very promptly did. Peter Mowers, who was but a few yards distant, shot the Rebel through the leg and called to Ehlers to run, but the latter saw a dozen men spring up, each with his musket aimed, and knowing that escape was impossible, ran quickly to the Rebel rear and remained a prisoner for many months. Sergeant Berg, of Company A, S. F. Vose, of Company G, and others on the line, were ordered to surrender, but declined, although made the target of many guns fired at short range. The line fell back a few rods, each man covering himself as best he could, and in a few moments darkness closed



the scene. Reuben Smith, of Company G, was mortally wounded, being shot through the left shoulder and dying July 13. Orskine Ferrand, of Company B, was wounded in the left hand, and Corporal Harrison Gage, of Company I, was severely injured by a spent ball which struck him in the back. The position was precarious at best, and as the bullets were cutting wickedly through the bushes, a line of rifle pits was constructed, work continuing throughout the night. There was but little sleep, and all expected that at daylight the Rebels would attempt to drive them back across the swamp.

Monday, June 20, was a memorable day in the Regiment's history. There had been little opportunity for sleep for two nights, and the early dawn found the men in line and ready to repel an expected assault. But the Rebels did not come, although keeping up a most annoying fire. The skirmish line was ordered forward with Company D, Lieutenant Earle commanding, in support. It was hoped that they might be able to take and hold the higher ground in front, but the fire proved too heavy and they were recalled, Company D taking the front line. The contest raged at the right and left throughout the day. Gen. Stanley, the Division commander, and Gen. Whitaker, the Brigade commander, reconnoitered the position, going on foot along the line of works behind which the Regiment was lying and looking through the woods to learn the nature of the ground in front. A reconnoissance was determined on, and the skirmishers pushed forward until within a few rods of the Rebel skirmish pits, which were seen to be very near together and full of men. The position learned, the line fell back to its old place. This reconnoissance was a costly one to Company D, for two of their number—Louis Brochon and Philip R. Clawson—were killed, and four were wounded, Abner L. Chandler being shot in the abdomen, and Corporal A. R. Thain, P. P. Melindy and James McCann, each in the leg. Chandler's wound was at first thought to be fatal, but fortunately the bullet did not penetrate far, and in a few weeks he was at his post again.

The skirmish officer reported the position of the enemy, and a charge was planned at Brigade headquarters. The 21st



Kentucky was ordered to pile knapsacks, take position in front of the NINETY-SIXTH and lay down until the signal for the charge. The 51st Ohio, which was to move in support, was directed to lie down in rear of the NINETY-SIXTH. Meanwhile, similar preparations were made in front of Bald Knob, an elevation at the right, opposite the position held by the First Brigade, commanded by Col. Kirby. Col. Price, commanding the 21st Kentucky, called for the skirmish officer, and just as the preparations were complete was making inquiry as to the direction to be taken to keep his line parallel with the Rebel skirmish line. The bugle sounding for the advance, he gave the necessary commands, Lieutenant Earle volunteering to guide his right. Hardly had the advance begun when the Colonel fell, severely wounded. But there was no faltering, and at a run the gallant Kentuckians dashed up to and over the Rebel skirmishers, capturing many of them. The 51st Ohio moved immediately to the captured line, and shortly afterward other troops were ordered to their support. In their enthusiasm a part of the 21st Kentucky ran beyond the skirmish pits and attempted to charge across a ravine and to the ridge beyond, where was the enemy's main line, but the movement was not contemplated by the commander and proved disastrous to the brave men who undertook it, for a number were killed and wounded, their losses being more than in the charge upon the skirmish line. They were speedily recalled, and in accordance with a promise made by Gen. Whittaker, were marched back to their knapsacks and given a comparatively safe position in a rear line during the remainder of the time the Brigade confronted Little Kenesaw. Meanwhile, some sixty or eighty Rebels were brought back under guard. Most of them were from the 7th Kentucky, and as they crossed the works of the NINETY-SIXTH, they were chatting earnestly with their captors and asking numerous questions as to mutual acquaintances. One of the Regiment remarked to a guard: "You seem to know some of these fellows." "Know them?" was the reply. "Yes, every one of them. I used to play foot-ball with them in Lexington. Got my own brother here." "You didn't get me until I gave you





200 rounds of cartridges to-day, anyhow!" was the reply of the captured brother. Thus they talked as they passed to the rear. And this was civil war—neighbor fighting against neighbor, brother against brother.

The troops in front speedily began the construction of a line of works, using the material in the captured skirmish pits. A few small trees were felled and rolled into position, and the line was attaining a height that would give some protection, when the skirmishers, who had been deployed a few rods in front, shouted to the main line that the Rebels were coming. Instantly the men dropped their axes and shovels, seized their muskets, and formed in line behind their hastily constructed works. With a yell the enemy dashed against them, but not in such numbers or with such velocity as to make their charge successful, and the brave soldiers soon had the satisfaction of seeing them hurled back across the ravine. As soon as it became known that the Rebels were to make a charge, Colonel Champion, whose orders were to support the front line, ordered the NINETY-SIXTH forward, and they arrived in time to assist in repelling the assault. The 35th Indiana was moved upon the left. The regiments partially overlapped each other, and, the NINETY-SIXTH coming up behind them, made a double line at the point of assault, and for a short distance three lines of men lay in position. Presently the Rebels charged again, with a determination that did credit to their bravery. The guns of the men in rear were loaded and passed to those in front, and a most withering fire was poured upon the advancing hosts. The dense underbrush in front was swept down by bullets as though a scythe had been used. The Rebels came across the ravine and up the slope almost to the works, but their ranks were so thinned and broken that again they retreated. It was now growing so dark as to make it difficult to discern between friend and foe, except by the direction of the flash of the muskets. Soon there was a third advance, but with the intention of deceiving their opponents the Rebels marched backward up the hill, firing blank cartridges toward their own works, and calling to the Federals not to shoot their friends. A re-



connoitering party had been sent out when the enemy retired after their second charge, but had passed to the right and returned to the line. Many did not know of their return, and, supposing the advancing line to be these men, not a few at first refused to fire, believing that it was friends and not foes approaching. All were undeceived, however, and again the Rebels were driven back with fearful slaughter. But the position gained was deemed an important one, and the Rebels determined to re-take it at whatever cost. The fact that Bald Knob, which was carried by Col. Kirby, had been re-taken by the forces at their left, stimulated the Rebels in front of the NINETY-SIXTH to an almost frantic effort. A fourth time they came against that bloody hill, but a constant stream of fire poured from the breastworks and beat them back. Meanwhile, casualties had been frequent along the line, among those disabled being Colonel Champion, who was severely wounded in the face. The wound was exceedingly painful, and he was compelled to go immediately to the rear. Sergeant Weir, of Company A, accompanied him to the field hospital, returning within an hour or two.

After the fourth repulse the Rebels maintained quiet for a time. Lieutenant Colonel Smith, who had assumed command of the line when Colonel Champion was wounded, fearing that his flank might be turned, moved the NINETY-SIXTH to the right of the 51st Ohio, extending his men so as to cover the ground between that regiment and Nose's Creek. The bullets were flying through the bushes, and as soon as the position was gained Colonel Smith began to reconnoitre his front in person. A moment later a bullet tore through his shoulder, and he was carried to the rear, dangerously wounded. Major Hicks being temporarily absent because of sickness, Captain Pollock, of Company C, took command of the Regiment, and immediately associated with him Captain Rowan, of Company F. The two looked along the line, and determining where breastworks should be built, sent for the regimental pioneers. But the Rebels were not yet satisfied, and were preparing for their fifth charge. This time they struck the Union line a little farther to their right.



Moving silently until near the breastworks, they made a rush upon the 35th Indiana, killing its commander—Maj. Duffey—and shooting and bayoneting many of the men before they could make any organized resistance. The 35th abandoned their works, some of the men being captured and others running back into the timber. Major D. W. Marshall, of the 51st Ohio, immediately called for the NINETY-SIXTH to go and retake the works, but upon consultation it was agreed that their position was too important to be abandoned. Captain Pollock accordingly sent the three left Companies—B, G and K—under Captain Rowan. These Companies moved in rear of the main line, and before they were aware that they had reached the spot, were fired upon by the Rebels just across the breastworks. Several fell at the first volley, others ran back for shelter, but many remained, loading and firing as rapidly as possible, a few using the bayonet. At this critical juncture the 40th Ohio came up in line and re-took the works, sustaining and inflicting considerable loss. Lieut.-Col. Watson, of the 40th, who was Brigade Officer of the Day, in reconnoitering the position a few moments before, was captured, a Rebel reaching over and fairly dragging him across the earthwork.

In the movement of the three Companies to the left, the loss sustained was terrific. Captain Gilmore, of Company B, was mortally wounded, being struck three times. One shot penetrated his skull, another his body, and a third passed through his thigh. He never regained consciousness, and died five days later. Sergeant Whitmore, of the same Company, was almost instantly killed; David Wells was shot in the hand and arm and permanently disabled, never again joining the command. Erastus T. Cleveland lost a part of his hand, and was disabled. In Company G, Captain James was shot through the shoulder, and died a month later. Dennis Shupe was struck two or three times and killed almost instantly. Christopher Booetcher was mortally wounded, being hit seven times and dying on the twenty-third. Sergeant Walter Drew had his left arm shattered and suffered amputation, and Christian Knopf was permanently disabled by a shot through the foot. In Company K, Corporal Wallace W. Hoover was severely



wounded through the left shoulder, and James Hicks had a serious wound in the right hand.

The other casualties of the day were: Corporal Henry P. Barnum, of Company C, who was permanently disabled, a bullet striking his left cheek, passing directly through and coming out of his right cheek close beside the deep scar of his Chickamauga wound; Corporal John H. Pooley, of Company E, who was shot through the left thigh, and permanently disabled, his wound being a close mate to one in his right thigh received at Chickamauga; James L. Knox, of Company G, who was shot in the left arm and side, and died nine days later; Corporal Marcus J. Penwell, of Company H, shot in the left hand; Edward Hancock, of Company F, and George E. Smith, of Company D, both stretcher bearers, and each shot in the ankle. Hancock was disabled for five weeks, but Smith was able to remain on duty.

After the re-taking of the works the three Companies returned to the Regiment. The firing was continuous all night, but there were no further assaults. By morning, a good line of breastworks was well advanced, but the men were entirely worn out by their long and constant vigil. It was said that seventy thousand rounds of ammunition were expended by Gen. Whittaker's Brigade alone on the twentieth. The Regiment had added to its laurels, but at heavy cost.\*

Tuesday, June 21, brought little respite. Daylight revealed the fact that the Rebel main line was frightfully near. The Regiment was upon a hillside sloping toward the enemy, and almost at the verge of the timber. In its front was a straggling cornfield, dotted with girdled trees. Its works were partially entiled from Bald Hill. So close was the enemy that a hat or a hand raised above the head logs was sure to bring a volley of musket balls. Skirmishers were posted in hastily constructed rifle pits, or behind trees, but

\*The Historian of the 49th Ohio declares the night fight of June 20, at Kenesaw, the severest, next to Chickamauga, in the experience of that Regiment. With the NINETY-SIXTH there were fewer slight wounds than in several other engagements, but more fatalities than in any other one day's experience, except at Chickamauga, and, considering the smallness of the Regiment, the number of casualties was very large. Eight were killed or mortally wounded. A singular fact is that all of these were from the Lake County Companies. A number of those wounded were permanently disabled.





thirty or forty yards in advance. To add to the discomfort, the day was rainy, and as the men were obliged to lay in the muddy trenches their situation was most disagreeable.\* Coffee could not be made on the line, nor brought from the rear, except at night. Hard tack and raw salt meat was the only diet. Major Hicks, who had been worn out in the campaign, and sent to the field hospital to recuperate a day or two before, came up early in the day, and took command of the Regiment. The musketry was spirited all day, and casualties numerous on either side. About ten o'clock two batteries opened upon the Regiment with fearful energy, and for an hour it seemed as if the position must be vacated. The distance was so short, and the range so close, that destruction to the entire command seemed inevitable. Shells screeched and screamed and exploded in the treetops, and upon the ground. Girdled trees were struck, and their dried branches broken off by the shock and hurled backward toward the line. At times it seemed as if retreat must inevitably result. After a time the men concluded to change their tactics, and opened fire upon the batteries with musketry from the main line. The effect was soon manifest, for one after another the cannon ceased firing, the showers of Minie balls driving the artillerists from their positions. Toward noon the First Brigade charged the hill at the right of the NINETY-SIXTH, which they had taken and lost the night before. The Union batteries played upon this hill for a half hour before the advance. The Rebels had a line of works, but so gallant was the assault that it proved irresistible. The charge was in plain view, and so near at hand that the members of the Regiment were able to give material assistance by firing obliquely toward the Rebels, both before they left their works and after they began their retreat. This movement partially stopped the enfilading fire, which had been so severe, especially upon the skirmishers of the NINETY-SIXTH, during the early part of the day. The casualties, which were mainly sustained by the skirmishers.

\* Gen. Sherman telegraphed Washington on the 21st: "This is the nineteenth day of rain, and the prospect of clear weather is as far off as ever. The roads are impassable, and fields and woods become quagmires after a few wagons have crossed, yet we are at work all of the time."



were as follows: First Sergeant F. A. Weir, face; Sergeant C. H. Berg, right arm; F. J. Robinson, left leg, by three bullets; Theodore Hopp, left hand,—all of the foregoing in Company A,—Sergeant Samuel B. Payne, Company C, shot through, and died a month later; Henry Sneesby, Company C, face; Charles Spaulding, Company D, thigh; Dominick Burke, Company D, face; Wm. R. Buchanan, Company F, mortally; Sergeant George Dawson, Company I, head; Peter Damphouse, Company I, arm; Wm. W. Hughes, Company K, hip.

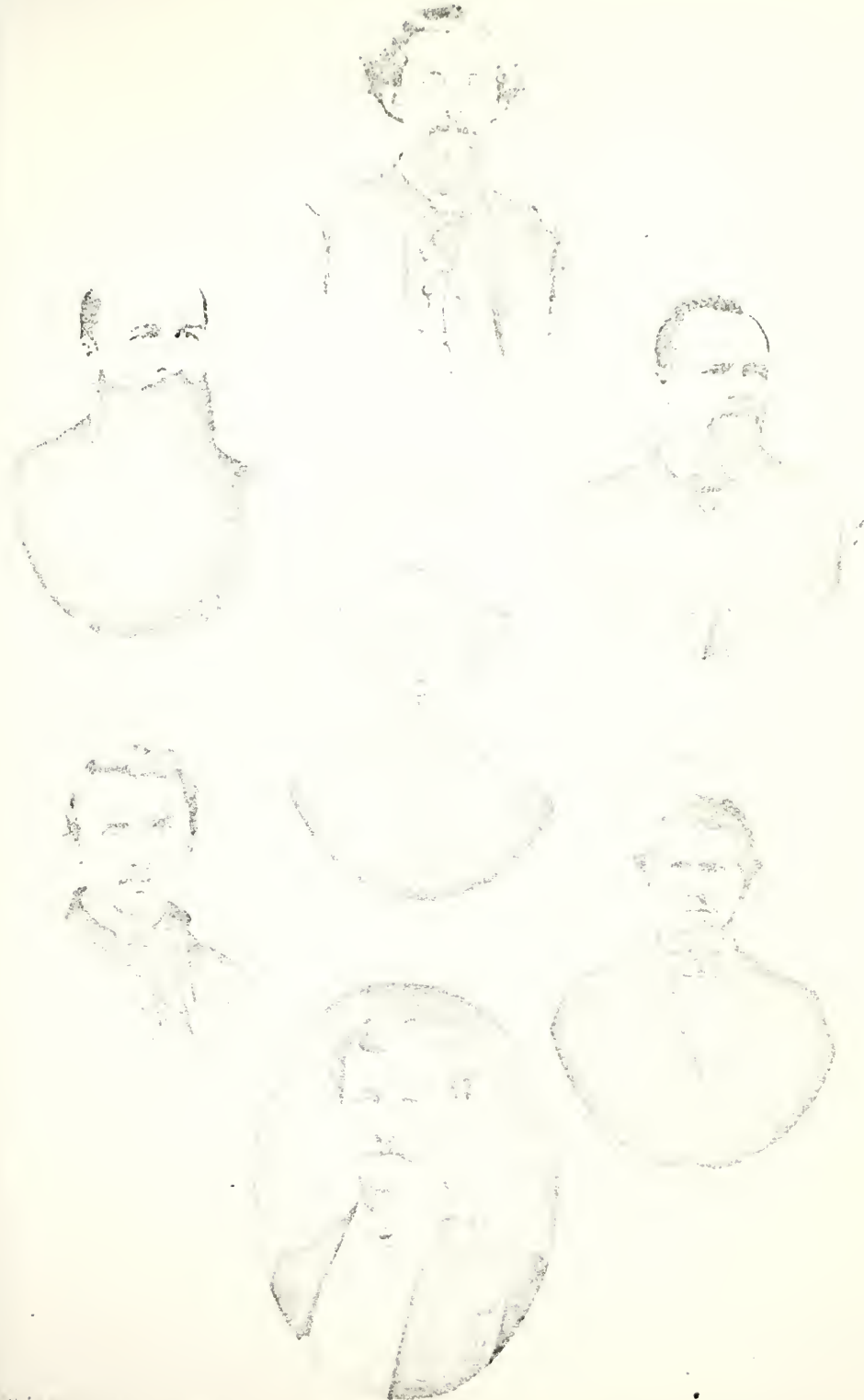
Wednesday, June 22, the positions were unchanged. The Rebels again gave the Regiment a terrific shelling, but could not drive it out. The main works and the skirmish line had both been strengthened, and as the men kept out of sight, firing under their head logs, and exposing themselves but little, the casualties were less numerous. Orlando Phippin, of Company E, was wounded in the head; Corporal James Junken, of Company E, was wounded in the neck, and died next day; William Joyce, of Company G, was wounded in the head. After dark the Regiment, with the rest of the Brigade, was relieved and moved to the rear and right, marching nearly the entire night, and relieving portions of the Twentieth Corps, on Culp's Farm, early on the morning of Thursday, June 23. A heavy engagement had taken place on this ground the previous day. The enemy's fire was severe throughout the day, but at longer range than that to which the Regiment had been so recently exposed. Toward night, after a terrific artillery fire of an hour's duration, a charge was made by the Brigade, and the Rebel skirmishers were driven in, about one hundred of them being captured, many of them by the NINETY-SIXTH. The 84th Indiana captured an eminence somewhat in advance of the rest of the Brigade, but soon exhausted its ammunition, and was withdrawn. The advance on the part of the NINETY-SIXTH was most gallantly made. Frank Redford, of Company E; Robert Burbridge, of Company H; and Ross P. Rayne, of Company K, were mortally wounded, all dying within a few hours. James Donehue, of Company G, on duty at Brigade Headquarters.



as an Orderly, was wounded in the leg. The main lines were now about one-third of a mile apart.

Friday, Saturday and Sunday the Regiment did not move. Heavy firing occurred at intervals, but only the skirmishers were engaged upon that part of the line. The men shielded themselves as best they could, and, as the weather had improved, and the ground become partially dry, they were far more comfortable than on the line occupied earlier in the week. Occasionally during the early part of the night the skirmishers of the two armies talked back and forth across the brief space separating them, or met midway between the lines. One evening, after the Rebels had assaulted at a point where some Union regiments which they supposed were made up largely of recruits, were located, and had been driven back with severe loss, a big Confederate called out: "Oh, Yank! what troops were those that repulsed us?" "Do you really want to know?" was answered back. "Yes, of course." came in reply. "Well, it was a brigade of niggers," called out the Yankee. The Rebels were angry, and fired a volley to show their indignation, following the volley with a torrent of oaths. Quiet was soon restored, when a Yankee called out: "Oh, Johnny! I forgot to say that the niggers were supported by hundred-day men." In came more bullets and profanity, and then another period of quiet, which was broken by another call from the Yankee: "Honest, boys, it was the Invalid Corps that you charged." There was no more talking that night, but lots of ammunition was wasted. In these occasional conversations a favorite question was to ask the Rebels how far it was to Atlanta, and the replies were as varied as can well be imagined. The General Officers in either army frowned upon these interviews, but could not wholly prevent them, as the soldiers in the ranks felt that it was their war rather than a contest between high officials. The fatigue of laying in the skirmish pits for twelve or twenty-four hours was terrible, and either side was usually willing to declare a truce for a few hours during the night, especially if the lines had been confronting each other for a succession of days, with no prospect of an immediate movement. Usually





ROLLIN H. TRUMBULL.  
A. BANGS.

CAPT. GEORGE H. BURNETT.  
CAPT. EVANGELIST J. GILMORE.  
HENRY R. MONTGOMERY.

MYRON GILMORE.  
SERGEANT WILLIAM D. WHITMORE.





one side or the other would call out: "Oh, say! Stop firing a little while!" If the proposition was favorably received the musketry would soon cease for quite a distance along the line, and the men would crawl out from their pits and sit upon the grass or on the head logs of their little fortifications. At times there would be little or no talking. When the officer or non-commissioned officer in charge thought the truce had lasted a sufficient time he would so indicate to his men, and some one would call out: "Oh, Johnny! hunt your holes, now; we're going to shoot!" and in two minutes the desultory firing would be renewed. These affairs were honorably conducted, and seldom was a shot fired until warning had been given. In trading between the lines the men went unarmed. The Rebels were always anxious to get coffee, but it is to be feared that they sometimes found the quality poor, as the Yankees not unfrequently boiled their coffee whole, extracting what strength they could without grinding, and then drying it for trading purposes. Tobacco was much sought after by the Yankees. In exchanging newspapers it was the custom to part with those of the most remote date possible.

The men almost insisted that these amnesties were a necessity, so severe had become the physical strain, and as the officers of lower rank were as much in need of the respite as were their men these truces were repeated nightly until the twenty-seventh.

Gen. Sherman at last tired of his tactics, and resolved to make a change of plans. Keeping up a show of moving to the right, he concentrated a portion of the army near the centre, and prepared to assault the enemy's fortifications. Preliminary to the charge, on the morning of Monday, June 27, the NINETY-SIXTH, with the other troops of the Brigade, moved three-quarters of a mile to the left and formed in column just in rear of the Union works, with orders to support the Second Division. The experience was a trying one. Almost before the reserves were in position, the bugle sounded for the charging columns to advance. The response was prompt and gallant, two Brigades of Gen. Newton's Division rushing forward from the immediate front of the NINETY-



SIXTH, and attempting to push through the tangled abatis which covered the Rebel front; but in vain, for the barriers were so formidable that they could not be passed. The Rebels, standing behind their strong earth-works, and peering underneath their head logs, gloated over their victims, mowing them down by hundreds as they came up to the line where the tangled bushes were so interwoven as to absolutely fence out the storming party. Again and again the veteran troops attempted to go forward, and for nearly two hours the musketry and artillery gave forth a continuous roar. Farther 'o the right Gen. Davis' Division made a similar attempt, starting from the works where the NINETY-SIXTH had lain for three days, but they, too, were driven back. At length Gen. Sherman became satisfied that success could not result, and ordered the troops to return. Many could not leave their advanced position, but lay there until nightfall, while some who attempted to run back were shot before reaching the works. The losses were frightful, and the gains of little moment. It was calculated that fully 2,500 were killed and wounded, among the former being Gen. Charles Harker and Col. Daniel McCook, the officers in command of the Brigades which led one of the assaults.

The part taken by the Regiment in the day's fight was not conspicuous. It lay in reserve all through the charge, moving to front or rear, or to right or left, under a pitiless fire, as ordered, prepared to rush forward at the signal to be given when the advance had broken the Rebel lines—a signal that was not to be made. Men fell all about; artillery horses, standing near at hand, were wounded, and, mad with pain, dashed toward the lines; but strangely enough not a man of the Regiment was disabled. During the afternoon the Regiment was moved a short distance to the rear, and allowed to rest where there was but little danger, an experience so rare at that time as to be most welcome.

Tuesday, June 23, the Regiment remained in the wood- until dusk, when it moved to the scene of the terrible fighting of the day before. For some reason difficult of comprehension, the troops were ordered to retain a position across the



depression between the two lines of works, so close to the enemy as to be exceedingly dangerous. To this exposed line the Regiment marched, under cover of the darkness. The orders were given in a whisper, and every man was charged to maintain silence. The night was comparatively quiet, but there was no talking or trafficking between the lines. Many of the dead still lay along the hillside, but the wounded had been gathered in by daring men during the previous night. Skirmish pits were constructed, a greater part of the Regiment working all night.

Wednesday, June 29, the early hours were full of the noise of musketry, but ere long there came a hush, for near at hand a white flag fluttered in the breeze. It soon became known that Gen. Sherman had asked a truce, and that permission be granted him to bear off and bury the dead from Monday's fight. The flag was received, and four hours' time granted for this humane work. It becoming apparent that the task could not be completed within the period named, an extension was granted and the truce continued until five o'clock. During this time the men of either army flocked between the lines by hundreds, but neither side ventured, or was allowed, to pass a designated point. The enlisted men talked freely with each other, exchanged newspapers and other commodities, and at parting shook hands, wishing personal good luck, but pronouncing anathemas against the cause to which they were respectively opposed. Many distinguished officers from either side met on the neutral ground, several of them renewing acquaintances formed at West Point.

At five o'clock the details whose duty it had been to gather and bear away the bodies of those who fell in the disastrous charge announced that their task was completed, the men in grey retired beyond their heavy fortifications, the men in blue withdrew to their works, each side called to the other the ominous words, "Are you ready?" and the duel of the morning was resumed. At dark the NINETY-SIXTH was relieved, and marched back to the timber in rear of the main line, and bivouacked. During the night a terrific musketry broke out almost immediately in front, and bullets flew around the camp,



but without injury to any one in the command. All sprang to arms, but in a few moments the firing lessened and all was usually quiet.

Thursday and Friday passed without any especial event on that part of the line. Gen. Sherman continued to shift his forces from left to right, and was preparing to cut loose from the railroad and swing to the rear of the Rebels, closing down to the Chattahoochie, and striking them on the move if possible. But his movements were divined by the wary Johnston, and the expected opportunity for an open field fight was never given.

During the evening of Friday, July 1, the NINETY-SIXTH again took the extreme front line, relieving the 45th Ohio, and occupying the position held during the previous Wednesday. The night was uneventful, but next day, to cover his movement to the right, Gen. Sherman directed that an incessant skirmish fire be kept up, and all through the hours the roar of musketry resounded in front and to right and left of the position. The enemy was compelled to keep out of sight, and but few shots were returned. At dark the Regiment was marched to the left, relieving other troops in their trenches. Many had lame arms and shoulders from firing their muskets so constantly, and all felt that important events were at hand. Gen. Whittaker, who had been relieved from the command of the Brigade, was succeeded by Col. Taylor, of the 40th Ohio. The two men were strikingly different in their characteristics. The General was fiery, impulsive, passionate, fond of display, scrupulously neat in his attire, and accustomed to maintain a headquarters superior in its furnishings to most of the Division and Corps commanders. Col. Taylor was quiet in language and demeanor, simple in his habits, familiar with his men, careless of dress and satisfied with a shelter tent if no better could be conveniently provided. He was not disposed to trust the details of his camp or picket lines to subordinates, but attended to everything possible in person. Often he would walk along the lines, dressed in a soldier's uniform and leading his old gray mare, while his staff officers and orderlies, mounted in superb style, would





follow behind, their faces betraying their feelings, which were clearly that they were a useless appendage. But the Colonel's bravery and coolness were well known, and the men had entire confidence in his judgment. He issued few orders, and usually saw, in person, that they were obeyed. The Brigade was well handled by him, but it is understood that he never enjoyed his promotion or learned how to make his staff officers as useful as the average brigade commander. Certain it is that he has never ceased to have the best wishes of the men of the old "Iron Brigade."

Sunday, July 3, found Kenesaw Mountain and the long line of Rebel entrenchments abandoned. There was great rejoicing, for the three weeks, from Ackworth to this point, had been full of hard and dangerous work. The Regiment numbered less than two hundred effective men, although a few others were present as pioneers, musicians, etc. But little clothing had been issued, and nearly all were ragged. The men had grown thin and haggard, and very many then on duty were in reality fit subjects for the hospital. But it was necessary that all who could should keep in place, for the casualties in Gen. Sherman's command during the two months preceding had aggregated, by the conservative figures of army reports, 7,530, while at least an equal number had been sent to hospitals because of sickness. The NINETY-SIXTH had shrunk almost one-half, indicating that its casualties exceeded that of the average regiment, and confirming the belief that the figures given for the army were entirely too low.

Pursuit of the Rebel army began at once, even though the day was the Sabbath, the heat excessive, and the army in great need of rest. The Regiment, with other troops, pushed out across the heavy breastworks, marching through the outskirts of the pretty village of Marietta, and following the railroad. The day's march was about six miles, and the camp for the night in a corn field.

Monday, July 4, the pursuit continued, the army hammering away at the heels of the retreating foe, and pressing them to a line of works at Smyrna Camp Ground. The Brigade to which the NINETY-SIXTH was attached led in a charge upon



these works, and drove the enemy in considerable confusion, capturing a few prisoners. The losses in the Division aggregated fully one hundred. The day had been a genuine Fourth of July in its noise, but the firing was of shotted cannon, and in place of the harmless cracker, had been the hurtling Minie ball. At night the Regiment took a front line, under fire, the men working like beavers until morning, in constructing fortifications, only to find that the enemy had again retreated to another line of works. Gen. Sherman, in his Memoirs, confesses that he was greatly surprised to find the Rebels again entrenched north of the Chattahoochie, and says of their line, it "proved to be one of the strongest pieces of field fortification I ever saw." A thousand slaves had been at work a month or more on these lines, the inner one of which was about five or six miles in length.

Tuesday, July 5, the Regiment again pushed forward, reaching the Chattahoochie river, where a pontoon bridge, some wagons and a few prisoners were captured. The position occupied was out of the reach of musketry, and the men enjoyed the opportunity of washing their clothing and putting up tents, which was possible on Wednesday.

The remainder of the week was spent in camp. At intervals the batteries played upon the Rebel lines, with great vigor, their fire being responded to with corresponding earnestness. Friday evening a terrific artillery duel was indulged in. During Saturday night the last of the enemy crossed to the south side of the river. Many of the men visited the signal hill at Vining's Station, and took their first look at Atlanta, nine miles distant. It seemed quite near, but two long months were to elapse before the Union Flag should float from its spires.

The operations about Kenesaw Mountain had been attended by the following

#### CASUALTIES.

Field and Staff.

WOUNDED.—Colonel Thos. E. Champion, face; Lieutenant Colonel John C. Smith, shoulder; both being practically disabled for further field service.



## Company A.

WOUNDED.—First Sergeant P. A. Weir, face ; Sergeant C. H. Berg, right arm ; Francis J. Robinson, left leg ; Theodore Hopp, left hand.

## Company B.

KILLED OR MORTALLY WOUNDED.—Captain E. J. Gillmore ; Sergeant William D. Whitmore.

WOUNDED.—Erastus T. Cleveland, left hand ; Orskine L. Ferrand, left hand ; David Wells, left hand.

## Company C.

MORTALLY WOUNDED.—Sergeant Samuel B. Payne.

WOUNDED.—Corporal Henry P. Barnum, face, disabled for further service ; Henry Sneesby, face.

CAPTURED.—William H. Ehlers.

## Company D.

KILLED.—Louis Brochon, Philip R. Clawson.

WOUNDED.—Corporal Alex. R. Thain, leg ; Abner L. Chandler, abdomen ; P. P. Melindy, leg ; James McCann, leg ; Dominick Burke, face ; Charles Spaulding, right thigh.

CAPTURED.—Sergeant Michael Devlin, Albert Barney.

## Company E.

MORTALLY WOUNDED.—Corporal James Junken, Frank Redford.

WOUNDED.—Corporal John H. Pooley, left leg ; Orlando Phippin, head ; Wm. G. Oberlin, face and eye.

## Company F.

MORTALLY WOUNDED.—Wm. R. Buchanan.

WOUNDED.—Edward Hancock, ankle.

## Company G.

KILLED OR MORTALLY WOUNDED.—Captain David L. James, Christopher Booatcher, James L. Knox, Dennis Shupe, Reuben Smith.

WOUNDED.—Corporal Walter Drew, left arm, amputated ; Christian Knopf, right foot, disabled for further service ; William Joyce, head ; James Donohue, leg.

## Company H.

KILLED.—Robert Burbridge.

WOUNDED.—Corporal M. J. Penwell, left hand.

## Company I.

WOUNDED.—Sergeant John B. Reynolds, neck ; Sergeant George Dawson, head ; Corporal Harrison Gage, back ; William Bell, left hand ; Peter Danphouse, right arm.

## Company K.

MORTALLY WOUNDED.—Ross P. Rayne.

WOUNDED.—Corporal W. W. Hoover, left shoulder ; James Hicks, right hand ; W. W. Hughes, right hip ; Wm. J. Edwards, left leg ; Harmon Dean, head ; George C. Morse, head.



## INCIDENTS ABOUT KENESAW MOUNTAIN.

The casualties in the 46th Georgia, one of the regiments that charged the position held by the NINETY-SIXTH and other troops in Whittaker's Brigade during the fight of June 20, must have been very numerous, as many bodies were left between the lines. Indeed, nearly a month afterward, Corporal Henry Gage, of Company G, visited that region to call upon friends in the 15th and 45th Illinois, and wrote home that from thirty to fifty bodies were still unburied. The stench from that part of the battle-field was terrible during the two weeks in which the armies confronted each other, but the lines were too close to permit of any work being done by burial parties except under a flag of truce, which was never sent out at that point.

Several men used the bayonet during the night fight of June 20,—more, probably, than at any other engagement in which the Regiment participated.

Old letters report but nine or ten men able to carry muskets in some of the Companies of the NINETY-SIXTH, about the time the line was abandoned by the enemy. Indeed, the entire Regiment, counting only effective men, was then but little larger than a full Company at muster-in. Every man was a soldier, however, and the command was equal to any emergency likely to arise.

Dighton Granger, of Company B, who had recently been detailed as teamster, drove a wagon load of artillery ammunition up to a battery on the front line during an artillery duel and held his team in place for some time when the officers considered it too dangerous to permit their men to unload the wagon, but fortunately the outfit escaped damage.

George Barth had a bullet through his coat, Fred Worth one through his blanket, Joseph Roth one through his pants and poncho, Edward Rix had his clothing cut, Frank Rahling had his hat shot through, Corporal W. H. Richards had one bullet strike his knapsack and another spoil the lock of his gun. George Bowman had a ball through his cartridge box and





Milton Glover one through his haversack. Samuel Buser, on duty at Brigade headquarters, stepped out of his tent just in time to avoid a cannon ball which destroyed the frail edifice.

Charles Spaulding and Dominick Burke, of Company D, were each wounded while asleep. Worn out with several nights and days of hard work, with little opportunity for rest, they crawled out of the trenches and tried to make themselves a little more comfortable upon the bank, and were sleeping soundly, although there was continuous firing all about them, when an over-shot bullet wounded both of them.

The field hospital was not so far away from the line, but that it was under fire, shot or shell passing over it frequently, and occasionally dropping among the tents, in a few instances with fatal results. Most of the wounded were placed upon the cars and taken to Chattanooga, or points farther north. As fast as they recovered they were again sent to the front, many being detailed to drive cattle from Chattanooga, and in some instances having stirring adventures with Rebel cavalry.

On the night of June 20 a Rebel officer was shot just over the breastworks in front of Company B. William Joyce immediately jumped over the works and, taking off the officer's sword and belt returned safely with the trophies, although repeatedly fired at by the Rebels.

Lieutenant Blowney was sick in the field hospital for a few days, but when Captain James was brought back wounded, immediately made his way to the front line and took command of his Company, although so weak as to hardly be able to walk.

John Greenwald, who had been discharged for disability from Company A, and reënlisted in Company F, 12th Illinois, was wounded no less than seven times in one of the engagements about Kenesaw.

While carrying a box of ammunition to the front line John Golden, one of the band, was severely injured by a fall.

Thomas J. Moore, of Company E, had his cap box exploded by a bullet.

A not unusual occurrence was for a man to lose his voice, as a result of sickness. One of those thus afflicted was



William R. Buchanan, of Company F, who had not spoken aloud for many months until struck by a bullet while on the skirmish line, June 21, when, the cords being loosened by the shock, he turned to Sergeant Campbell and spoke in a loud tone, saying, "Andy, I'm shot." He lived but a few hours, but was able to converse until the last.

An old letter, written on this line, says: "I hardly know whether to say that the boys now with the Regiment are well or not. There are not a great many sick, but there seems to be some disease with which almost everyone is afflicted. Some call it "hives," others scurvy. It is doubtless caused by heat, body lice, going day after day and night after night without an opportunity to change or even take off clothing, dirt and want of vegetable diet."

During the fight of June 20, Colonel Smith was watching the Rebels from a small aperture in the hastily built works, but being unable to see as clearly as he desired stepped upon the works. As he did so an officer in the 51st Ohio took the place the Colonel had vacated, but had no sooner placed his eye to the opening than a bullet struck him in the head, killing him instantly.



## CHAPTER XX.

Across the Chattahoochie—The Rest on the Ridge—Peach Tree Creek—The General Forward Movement—Within Two Miles of Atlanta—The Battle on the Left—A Visit Interrupted—Killed in Camp—Four Men Captured—Colonel Opdyke's Reconnoissance—Regimental Politics—Strong Breastworks and How They were Built—Promotions Among the Officers—Frequent Demonstrations, One of Them Attended by Heavy Losses—An Ominous Quiet—Mysterious Movements on Foot—What will Gen. Sherman do?—Casualties about Atlanta.

GEN. SHERMAN'S great ability as a strategist was well displayed along the line of the Chattahoochie. Feigning to the right he deceived the enemy, and soon had control of several fords and ferries at the left, with his army in good positions for crossing. Some infantry forces, with Garrard's Division of Cavalry, pushed northeastward to Roswell, where were numerous and extensive cotton, wool and paper mills, turning out goods for the Southern armies. These were destroyed. As early as July 8, a portion of the Twenty-Third Corps effected a crossing, by means of pontoon boats, near the mouth of Soap Creek, and having laid their bridge were soon strongly intrenched. Gen. Johnston withdrew his army from the north bank of the river on the night of July 9. Gen. Sherman, still feigning to the right as if intending to move to the rear of Atlanta from the westward, ordered Gen. McPherson's and Gen. Schofield's forces far to the left, and then wheeled them toward Atlanta from the neighborhood of Decatur.

Sunday, July 10, the NINETY-SIXTH, with other troops, was enjoying the unusual quiet and idling away the time in any manner that suited the individual taste. The day was an excessively hot one. At noon a detail of men was sent to draw rations and bring them to the camp. This work was about completed and the Commissary Sergeant was dividing the rations of hard-tack, coffee and sugar, according to the size of the Companies, when suddenly the "general" call was



sounded by the Brigade bugler. A moment later the assembly sounded and then the forward. The men who were awaiting the division of the rations gathered up the four corners of the blankets upon which the supplies had been laid and ran with all speed to their comrades, who were buckling on their accoutrements. Soldiers ran to meet them, each eager to at least secure some crackers, which they crammed into their haversacks. To say the least the division was neither uniform nor formal, but nearly all obtained something. Instantly the straggling column began to move at a rapid walk. The Companies were scarcely half formed and the tardy ones came up at double quick. The direction was up the river, the destination being Power's Ferry, where the enemy was making a demonstration as if intending to attack the troops already arrived. The march was one of the most severe ever participated in by the command, and the Brigade was but a small battalion in size when a final halt was made. At one time but about thirty men were with the colors of the NINETY-SIXTH, and an old letter states that but a single commissioned officer was present. A half dozen or more sustained partial sunstrokes, among the number being Adjutant Blodgett, who was so disabled as to be compelled to go to the hospital and remain for several weeks. He had but partially recovered from an illness of a fortnight's duration and was not in condition to endure the terrific heat of that tropical Sunday afternoon. A little before the destination was reached, it being ascertained that the danger which threatened the troops at the Ferry had passed, a halt was made and the more resolute and robust of those who had fallen out came up so that about seventy muskets were stacked at camp. Others continued to come up, and by night nearly all were present. Several fatal sunstrokes were said to have occurred in the Brigade. Shortly after the destination was reached, and before any considerable number of the exhausted men had put up their shelter tents, a sudden and terrific thunder storm broke upon the camp. The lightning played most vividly and several trees were struck in the immediate vicinity, a number of men being killed in another regiment. The storm, which was not of long duration,





cleared the air to some extent, but the troops were badly used up and glad of the opportunity of a quiet night's rest.

Monday, July 11, was given to rest. Tuesday morning the Regiment took up its line of march at daylight, crossing the Chattahoochee on a pontoon bridge and taking its place in line on the right of the Twenty-third Corps, along a ridge near the river, and establishing a good camp. The remainder of the week was spent at this place, the men greatly enjoying the rest afforded. The river presented an animated appearance at times, from the great number who went in bathing. Some desks and blanks were brought to camp, and officers and non-commissioned officers were kept busy in making out reports, so long neglected during the campaign. Thursday night brought a terrific storm, with high wind and sharp lightning. All were wet, the shelter tents not blown down affording but little protection.

At this time a special effort was made to fill up the thinned ranks of the army before its concerted move toward Atlanta. Convalescents, teamsters, clerks, detached men, all who could be spared from other duties, were sent forward; and in this way every Regiment received a very substantial reinforcement, the NINETY-SIXTH being increased to nearly three hundred effective men.

Sunday, July 17, brought Company inspection, and at two o'clock P. M. orders to fall in and change position, the new line being the one vacated by Gen. Wood's Division. There was considerable firing at the front and on either flank, indicating that the brief respite was at an end and the grand forward movement toward Atlanta begun.

Monday, July 18, brought the old-time three o'clock réveille, and at six o'clock the Regiment was moving toward the city, the cannon knocking for admission at its gateways. There was some skirmishing by the advance and but slow progress was made. After moving to the left and front about five or six miles the lines halted, the Regiment being near Buck Head.

Tuesday, July 19, the Third Division took the front line, and the NINETY-SIXTH lay in camp until four o'clock P. M.,



when it moved to the left and front, crossing the north fork of Peach Tree Creek, taking position under fire and constructing a heavy line of works. John Hay, of Company K, was severely wounded, having his right thigh fractured. He was taken to Chattanooga, where he died a fortnight later.

Wednesday, July 20, occurred the battle of Peach Tree Creek. There was now a new commander of the Confederate forces about Atlanta. Gen. Johnston was succeeded by Gen. Hood, the recommendation of the latter being that he was a great fighter. The Confederate cause was indeed growing desperate, and a change of tactics was demanded. That change was inaugurated on the day above mentioned. It was known in the Union lines almost as soon as among the Confederates that there had been a change of commanders, and all were warned that an attack might be expected. Gen. Sherman had separated his forces somewhat. Gen. McPherson was on the left, Gen. Schofield next, and Gen. Thomas on the right, with a gap between the forces of the last named commanders. These forces were all feeling their way cautiously toward the front, while the First Division of the Fourth Corps was also bearing to the left in order to connect with and support the Twenty-third Corps. Some delay occurred at the crossing of the south fork of Peach Tree Creek, as it became necessary to build a bridge to take the place of one destroyed by the enemy. Skirmishing was heavy all along the front, and at the right a heavy battle raged during the later hours of the afternoon. At one time the Regiment was halted near some farm buildings on a sloping highway commanded by Rebel artillery. Cannon balls struck the ground in front and ricocheted across the lines. One shot struck a fence on which some men were sitting, carrying away the rails and dropping the soldiers, somewhat frightened but entirely unharmed. Another tore its way corner-wise through a building around which a few were standing. It was not always a pleasure at such times to hear the bugle sound the "forward," but on this occasion all were rejoiced to be speedily sent at double quick across the hollow and upon the front line, even though the skirmishing was brisk and continuous, and bullets came pat-



tering through the ranks. Filing to the left, line-of-battle was formed under the brow of the hill, and soon the Regiment moved forward to the ridge. A line of works was constructed and a charge was looked for, but the main Rebel column did not extend so far to the Union left as to lap the command, although their skirmish line pushed close up to the Regiment. During the engagement Thomas Kimmons, of Company F, was wounded in the leg; Peter Davidson, of Company H, in the right wrist; and George Deedrich, of Company D, in the leg. At night the Regiment had the skirmish line and kept up a continuous firing. The battle was a victory for the Union forces, the assaults of the Rebels being repulsed with heavy loss. The fighting was mainly on the part of the Fourth and Twentieth Corps. The NINETY-SIXTH fired about ten thousand rounds of ammunition during the twentieth and the night succeeding.

Thursday, July 21, the Regiment was relieved on the skirmish line by the 84th Indiana, and occupied a position behind the breastworks. The general movement was a right wheel of the army, and as the advance was slow little change of position was made on the right. The Regiment was under fire from both infantry and artillery, but sustained no losses.

Friday, July 22, found the works in front of the right evacuated, and most of Gen. Thomas' command was able to advance to within a mile and a half of the city. This movement was made at daylight, the troops marching in column until the skirmishers found the enemy, when the columns deployed and pressed forward to the neighborhood of the White House. At the final halt the NINETY-SIXTH was the extreme left Regiment of the Corps. Adjoining was a Brigade of the Twenty-third Corps, in which was the 65th Illinois, containing a company from Lake County. Captain James S. Putnam, of Company F, of that command, being on staff duty, arranged to have the 65th transferred to the right of his Brigade, and the Lake County men of the two regiments were enjoying themselves in a general visit, when with little warning a portion of the Twenty-third Corps was hurried off to the left. As the 65th was included in the order the visit terminated

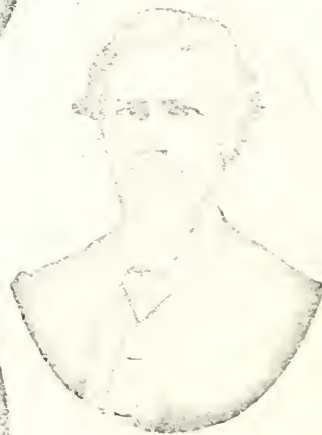


very suddenly. It transpired that Gen. Hood had sent a portion of his army far out to his right and over-lapped the Union left, making repeated assaults, and for a time disconcerting the Army of the Tennessee, whose commander, Gen. McPherson, had fallen early in the battle. The NINETY-SIXTH had no active part in this heavy engagement, but lay in line anxiously awaiting the outcome of the terrible struggle, the sounds of which indicated that the fighting was approaching so near as to make it probable that all of the troops would soon be involved. The skirmishers, under Captain Rowan, advanced nearly to the city, and sent word that there was so light a line in front that the main works at the north of Atlanta could be readily taken. However, those higher in authority, being apprehensive of disaster at the left, refused to make a forward movement, and the opportunity to take Atlanta passed with the coming of night. During the day a heavy line of earthworks was constructed about one and one-half miles out from the city. During Saturday, Sunday and Monday the Regiment did not change position, but Monday night the Army of the Tennessee was moved by Gen. Sherman from left to right in the endeavor to reach Atlanta from the southwest. There was heavy artillery firing on either side, the Union batteries being able to throw shot and shell into the city.

Tuesday, July 26, the Regiment moved a short distance to the left and rear, and occupied some abandoned Rebel works. There was considerable shifting of position and but little opportunity for sleep. Wednesday the troops closed to the right, thinning the line somewhat and protecting the front by constructing a heavy abatis. This line was occupied for several days. Thursday, orders were read announcing that Gen. O. O. Howard had been relieved from the command of the Fourth Corps and assigned to the command of the Army of the Tennessee; that Gen. D. S. Stanley had succeeded Gen. Howard; and that Colonel Gross had succeeded Gen. Stanley in the command of the Division. Gen. Howard had steadily grown in the affections of the men, and there was general regret at his loss, although all in the First Division knew that in Gen. Stanley they had an able and worthy Corps com-







First Lieut. JAMES O. HAVENS,  
Company D, 1st Regt. Ill. Cav.

CORP'L HENRY H. GALE,  
First Serg't AARON SCOTT,  
Company D, 1st Regt. Ill. Cav.

CAPT. JAMES H. CLARK,  
Nathan Lane



mander. A heavy fight took place on the right but did not seriously involve the Fourth Corps, although there was continuous skirmishing and heavy artillery firing, not on that day alone but every day. The engagement was the third one precipitated by Gen. Hood, and proved of decided advantage to the Union cause. The enemy occasionally sent sixty-four pound shells from their large siege guns, but none did serious damage.

Sunday, July 31, hostilities were almost entirely suspended for several hours, as if by mutual consent, but about noon the huge shells came from the Rebel lines at frequent intervals. One of these monsters exploded in camp but did no damage. The Union batteries responded, and in the evening the sky above the city was illumined by the bright blaze from buildings set on fire by exploding shells.

Monday, August 1, the Brigade extended its lines to cover the ground previously occupied by the First Brigade, and at night moved again, this time to the position of the Twenty-Third Corps, the Army of the Ohio being sent to the extreme right. The Regiment was on the move until about ten o'clock. Captain A. Z. Blodgett, of Company D, who had been able to do but little duty for some months, owing to injuries received at Chickamauga, resigned. First Lieutenant Hastings succeeded him as Captain, and Second Lieutenant Clarkson was promoted to First Lieutenant.

Tuesday, August 2, tents were put up, and the men prepared to make their stay comfortable. The enemy was at such a distance that all in the main line felt comparatively safe, although the skirmishers kept up a desultory fire. Occasionally bullets reached the camp, and one of them with fatal effect,—First Sergeant Aaron Scott, of Company G, being struck in the body and mortally wounded. He had assisted in building a bunk, and when struck was lying upon it engaged in reading his bible. He suffered greatly for a few moments. An officer standing near offered him some stimulants, which he declined, remarking that he at all events wished to die sober. The end soon came, and he died as he had lived, an exemplary Christian soldier, expressing, with his latest breath, his



gratitude at having been able to do something for his country. A hush fell upon the camp, and strong men were moved to tears when they saw the manly courage of their gallant comrade as he gave his last messages to those about him.

The same day four members of the Regiment, who had gone to the rear with a forage train, were captured by Rebel cavalry. They were: Henry M. Williams, of Company D; Hugh Williams, of Company I; and William W. Jellison and Wallace W. Montgomery, of Company E. Hugh Williams died at Florence, S. C.

Wednesday, August 3, the skirmishers of the Regiment made a vigorous demonstration against the Rebel lines, in which Myron Gillmore, of Company B, was severely wounded in the left leg. He had but recently returned to the Regiment after a trip to his home in Lake County, where he had accompanied the remains of his brother, Captain E. J. Gillmore, who had died from wounds received at Kenesaw Mountain. Myron was disabled for farther service, and was discharged the following January. During the day the camp was subjected to a severe shelling.

Thursday and Friday passed without any change of position. Saturday brought orders for another strong demonstration on the part of the skirmishers, which were obeyed without loss to the Regiment. These demonstrations were repeated on Sunday and Monday, the enemy being found in force each time. Some of the officers' valises coming up there were many official reports made out and forwarded to headquarters.

Friday, August 12, the NINETY-SIXTH, with the 35th and 74th Illinois, made a reconnoissance under Col. Opdyke, going out on the left beyond the Augusta Railroad, and encountering a strong force of the enemy, who undertook to ambush the advance, at the same time moving a column with the design of reaching the Union rear and cutting off the retreat of the three regiments. The Union commander was too wary to be thus entrapped, and, after driving the Rebel skirmishers into their main line, he withdrew his forces. The movement was over the ground where the severe fighting of July 22



occurred. The same day a strong reconnoissance was made on the right of the Union lines. In fact, every day brought movements and demonstrations on some part of the line, Gen. Sherman seeking to find some weak point for an assault, while still clinging to the hope that he would be able to so far envelope the city as to cut the Macon Railroad at the south. Rations were more abundant than on the Dallas line or at Kenesaw Mountain, and the weather was less trying, although showers were frequent. The lines, too, were more widely separated, but the danger was constant, as bullets and shell passed through or over the camp at all hours, and more than once men were wounded while asleep in their bunks, close beside the breastworks. The skirmishers were considerably exposed, but long ere this had learned how to protect themselves, and casualties were not very numerous. About one-third of the command was daily detailed for picket duty, and from three thousand to five thousand rounds of ammunition were used up by the Regiment every twenty-four hours.

About this time there was great interest at the North over the approaching Presidential election. The soldiers shared in the anxiety as to the political situation, and in many commands there was a formal canvass to know their preferences. In the NINETY-SIXTH the Sergeant Major and Sergeant Cooper, of Company E, made a canvass, with the following result : Gen. Fremont, 1 ; Gen. Butler, 1 ; Gen. McClellan, 2 ; Abraham Lincoln, 288 ; not voting, 20.

“Practice makes perfect,” and the Regiment had by this time acquired great proficiency in building breastworks. Those built on the Atlanta line were greatly superior to the earthworks constructed in the early part of the campaign.\*

\* A letter written from the Atlanta line, says : “Let me tell you how our works are built : We fell trees and put the logs up two or three high, digging a ditch inside, and throwing the dirt outside against the logs. A ditch is also dug on the outside. We have to throw about ten or twelve feet of earth against the logs to make the works so that they will be proof against heavy artillery. Then we put what is called a head log on top of the works, raising it up three or four inches, so that the men can fire without exposing their heads a great deal. The headlog rests on skids, so that if struck by a shot or shell it will roll off without falling upon the men in the works. When building the works we sharpen long stakes and place them six inches apart, throwing the earth around them. A few feet in front of the works is another row of sharp sticks, four or five feet long, and three or four inches apart, set at an angle of ninety degrees. These are held in place





Monday, August 15, Corporal Peter Mowers, of Company G, was slightly wounded while on the skirmish line.

Tuesday, August 16, the 84th Indiana, which had been with the NINETY-SIXTH for about a year and a half, was transferred to the Third Brigade. Gen. Nathan Kimball was assigned to the command of the Division, relieving Colonel Gross.

First Lieutenant Wm. M. Loughlin, of Company C, who had been on detached duty for sixteen months, was transferred to the First U. S. V. V. Engineer Regiment, and Second Lieutenant Charles W. Earle was promoted to fill the vacancy. Prior to this date First Lieutenant George H. Burnett was promoted to the Captaincy of Company B, vice Gillmore, killed, and a commission as First Lieutenant awaited the return of First Sergeant Ambrose A. Bangs, then a prisoner of war. First Lieutenant B. G. Blowney, of Company G, was promoted to Captain, vice James, died of wounds, and Second Lieutenant James O. Havens was commissioned First Lieutenant.

Wednesday, August 17, at a little past midnight the Regiment moved a short distance to the right, where it built good shades over the tents. At night a detail of ten men was sent out from each regiment to build fires in rear and on the left, and in the morning some regiments and a battery marched several times around a hill in rear of camp. All of this work was with the intention of deceiving the Rebels into the belief that the Union Army was massing on the left, but seems to have been in vain, as no important advantages resulted.

Thursday, August 18, the sick were sent to the rear and the troops ordered to be in constant readiness to march. No move was made, however, but heavy firing took place on various parts of the line on that and the following day.

by logs, dirt being thrown in the spaces. Outside of these is a tier of heavy limbs, or tree tops, sharpened and turned outward, which are piled thick and staked down. If there be timber in front—and there is generally timber everywhere at the South—we fell it, also lopping over the underbrush. So you can guess that it is no easy thing to charge and take breastworks. It would take a line-of-battle several minutes to climb over or crawl through an abatis, by which time most of them would be hit. You may think that it takes a good deal of time to build such works, but many hands make light work, and if tools and timber are plenty it does not take many hours to fortify a position."



Saturday, August 20, the Regiment made a strong demonstration in front of the Second Brigade. The command was moved to the skirmish line at four o'clock, leaving camp in a shower, and passing along a ravine that served to conceal it from observation. Six companies were detailed from the left and deployed as skirmishers, the four right Companies.—A, F, D, and I,—being left in reserve. The regular skirmish detail, embracing men from every regiment in the Brigade, was ordered to advance with the six left companies, all under command of Major Hicks. The orders were to conform the movement to that of the troops of the Brigade on the right, advancing with them and charging the Rebel skirmish pits. The line moved out across an opening and to the timber beyond, in which was the line to be charged. At first the Rebels seemed to be off their guard,—probably owing to the rain which was falling when the movement was inaugurated,—and the timber was gained without loss. The troops at the right were noisy in their movement, cheering as they ran and drawing a heavy fire. Midway in their course was a rail fence, where they halted, and beyond which only a few of the more daring ventured. Their officers urged them forward, but in vain, and there they remained until ordered back to the works from which they had started.

Meanwhile the NINETY-SIXTH, in heavy skirmish order, had penetrated much farther than the line on which they were to guide, and were ready to make the final rush upon the enemy whenever the others should come forward. A terrific fire now raged along the line, the men lying behind trees or logs, and giving shot for shot to the enemy behind their strong rifle pits. Major Hicks was in a quandary what to do. The orders received by him had been explicit enough, but events had not occurred as contemplated. To add to the anxiety, a portion of the line had misunderstood his command to "guide right," and had borne to the left, thus opening a gap near his centre. Word was sent to those on the left to correct the error, and after a time the line was united. At length, it being evident that the troops on the right would not come forward, and the casualties in the Regiment becoming numer-



ons, the Major determined to withdraw his brave men before the enemy could move to his rear and subject him to the added danger of capture. The retreat was a most difficult one, for the men were within a few rods of the enemy's skirmish pits, and no movement could be made without drawing the fire of the skirmishers. There were wounded men to be assisted to the rear, and the muskets of the killed and wounded to be cared for. Orders for the retreat were issued, and the men crawled or ran, as their positions permitted, to the reserve line. By some means, however, a portion of the right of the line, including the color guard, failed to hear the order, and as the underbrush was so thick as to partially conceal the movement, did not see their comrades leave. It was not long, however, before they discovered their peril, and made their way to the rear, just as a volunteer party was being organized to go to their rescue. At dusk the Regiment moved to the main line, and the demonstration was at an end. The results seemed of little moment, although the losses had been severe. The men of the Regiment understood what was expected of them, and would most surely have carried the skirmish pits in their front had the troops on the right moved forward as expected. As it was they made no attempt to charge the works.

In this demonstration William A. Lewis, of Company A, who happened to be on picket duty for the day, and was therefore with the skirmishers, instead of with his Company in reserve, was killed; also Fred Blackman, of Company K. Those wounded were First Sergeant F. A. Weir, of Company A, right arm; Ebenezer Tate, Company A, head; Wm. W. Tower, of Company B, who was wounded in the neck, and died six days later; John McGill, Company C, slightly, in neck; Corporal Frank Peppard, of Company D, hand; Sergeant R. J. Cooper, Company E, shoulder; Corporal Edward Malone, Company G, leg; William Joyce, Company G, arm and leg, disabling him for further service; Corporal Robert D. Tarpley, Company I, arm; Corporal Charles Shaw, Company I, side.

Sunday, August 21, the command moved to the support of



the Third Brigade, which made a feint upon the enemy's lines, and was subjected to some annoying artillery and infantry fire. Returning to their works the Regiment enjoyed comparative quiet for a few days, although a glancing ball on Wednesday seriously wounded John McGill, of Company C, in the shoulder, disabling him for further service. It was now apparent that a change of plans was to be made by Gen. Sherman, but what the movement contemplated could be no one seemed to know. The sick and those not able to make a hard march were sent to the rear, and an air of mystery seemed to envelope all in authority. All efforts to take Atlanta, or to reach and cut the Macon Railroad, had failed, and soldiers and officers wondered if the effort was to be abandoned. The Rebel cavalry had cut the railroad toward Chattanooga, and many feared that the army was to retire to the line of the Chattahoochie, and act on the defensive; others, with implicit confidence in their able and gallant commander, insisted that the movement was to be an aggressive one, and so it proved.

In the operations along the Chattahoochie and about Atlanta the Regiment had sustained the following

#### CASUALTIES.

##### Company A.

KILLED.—William A. Lewis.

WOUNDED.—First Sergeant F. A. Weir, arm; Joseph D. Young, left leg; Ebenezer Tate, head.

##### Company B.

WOUNDED.—Myron Gillmore, left leg; W. W. Tower, mortally.

##### Company C.

WOUNDED.—John McGill, neck and shoulder.

##### Company D.

WOUNDED.—Corporal Frank Peppard, hand; George Deedrick, leg.

CAPTURED.—Henry M. Williams.

##### Company E.

WOUNDED.—Sergeant R. J. Cooper, shoulder.

CAPTURED.—Wm. W. Jellison, Wallace W. Montgomery.

##### Company F.

WOUNDED.—Thomas Kimmons.





## Company G.

KILLED.—First Sergeant Aaron Scott.

WOUNDED.—Corporal Edward Malone, leg ; William Joyce, arm and thigh ; Corporal Peter Mowers.

## Company H.

WOUNDED.—Peter Davidson, right wrist.

## Company I.

WOUNDED.—Corporal Robert D. Tarpley, arm ; Corporal Charles Shaw, side.

CAPTURED.—Hugh Williams, died while prisoner of war.

## Company K.

KILLED OR MORTALLY WOUNDED.—John Hay, Fred Blackman.



## CHAPTER XXI.

Preparations for a Grand Movement—A Night March—Building Breastworks again—Destroying the Railroad—Fairly in Rear of the "Gate City"—Guarding a Wagon Train—Hurried to the Front—The Battle of Jonesboro—The Fight at Lovejoy's Station—Four Fatalities—Anniversary of the Regiment's Muster-in—"Atlanta is Ours, and Fairly Won"—Withdrawal of the Forces—Burning Cotton—In Camp near the City.

THURSDAY evening, August 25, saw the grand movement to the rear of Atlanta inaugurated. The pickets or skirmishers detailed the previous morning had been instructed to take their tents and blankets with them, and everything indicated an important movement. The men amused themselves by writing letters to the Rebels, which they tacked to trees or tucked in the breastworks. If these letters could be reproduced they would be most interesting reading; but this is impossible. Some were poetical, some defiant. Advice of all kinds was offered, and exaggerations generously indulged in. A dozen outlines of the coming campaign were written, the soldiers drawing upon their imaginations, and no two suggesting the same destination. The Rebels who were so fortunate as to gather up the missives left by the NINETY-SIXTH must have been highly entertained, for this freak of letter writing seemingly took hold upon a majority of the members of every Company.

At dusk the troops moved out upon the left and marched westward until two o'clock in the morning, bivouacking in rear of the Twentieth Corps. A part of the march was extremely disagreeable, being along a road newly cut out through heavy young timber, the stumps of which caused much stumbling and barked many shins. The Twentieth Corps moved directly to the rear and occupied works covering the crossing of the Chattahoochie, remaining until Atlanta was evacuated.

Daylight of Friday, August 26, found the Fourth Corps closely massed on a hill near Utoy Creek. At eight or nine



o'clock the march was resumed. The Brigade was directed to guard the wagon train. The Rebels shelled the hill from Atlanta, but the morning was foggy and the artillery did but little damage. The march was not rapid, which was fortunate, as the day was hot and rainy. The Regiment halted at five o'clock and formed its camp for the night between Utoy and Sandtown. During the day the Fourth Corps had passed a portion of the Fourteenth Corps, and had learned that only the Twenty-third Corps held its former position confronting Atlanta.

Saturday, August 27, the march was continued to Mount Gilead Church, near which occurred some heavy skirmishing. A line of works was built by the Regiment in a surprisingly short time, but the enemy soon retired and a further advance was made to Camp Creek. The skirmishing continued until after dark and was renewed in the morning. The Army of the Tennessee had moved still farther to the right, and the entire movement of Gen. Sherman's command took the form of a grand left-wheel.

Sunday, August 28, there were orders for an early start, but the Fourteenth Corps occupied the roads, and the Regiment was idle until late in the afternoon, when it marched four or five miles and halted for the night near Red Oak. The Atlanta and West Point Railroad being reached other troops spent the night in destroying the rails and ties, and blowing up the masonry.

Monday, August 29, the Fourth Corps again advanced and took its turn in the work of destroying the railroad. The work was thoroughly done. A regiment would halt and stack arms beside the road, and with a few iron bars and wooden levers loosen the ties, when all would lift the track, turning it upside down for a long distance. The ties were then loosened and piled up, the rails laid across them and fires kindled. In a short time the rails would be red hot in the centre, and the men would twist them about trees or stumps, completely ruining them. In this way many miles of road were destroyed during the movement. There was some skirmishing but no heavy force was encountered.



Tuesday, August 30, the command pushed forward to the Fayetteville road. The skirmishing continued and at the right there were indications of a battle. The march was a leisurely one,—the start being late and the halt at dusk. Some forage was secured, including green corn and sweet potatoes.

Wednesday, August 31, the advance was resumed,—the enemy, with both infantry and cavalry, resisting and forcing the Regiment to do considerable skirmishing. Three times the resistance was so vigorous that halts were made and breastworks begun. The enemy had good earthworks, but were driven out. After resting a while on the Rebel works the Regiment moved to the Atlanta and Macon Railroad and halted, the pioneers cutting the telegraph wires and destroying the track, working the entire night.

Thursday, September 1, the Regiment was detailed to guard a wagon train and marched southward close beside the railroad track, which was being torn up by other troops. The air was full of smoke from the fires, and the skirmishing increased as the day wore on. Toward night the wagons halted, and the NINETY-SIXTH, relieved from its duty as train guard, was hurried forward toward Jonesboro, passing close up to the skirmishers before swinging into line-of-battle, beside the railroad track. This exposed position was reached under a galling fire just before night, and about the time of the assault on the part of the Fourteenth Corps on the right of the railroad. That assault was perhaps the most successful one of the Atlanta campaign, for the Union forces swept entirely over the Rebel earthworks, capturing a thousand prisoners and several cannon and stands of colors. The NINETY-SIXTH was probably the first regiment of Gen. Stanley's command in position; and before other troops of the Fourth Corps were able to swing around upon the left and join in a general assault, night closed in and the lines halted. The Regiment had occupied an exposed position, close to the enemy's entrenchments, and been under a heavy fire, but sustained no casualties. The troops slept on their arms, and were startled during the night by what appeared to be terrific artillery firing in the direction of Atlanta. They supposed that there had been a night assault





by the Twentieth Corps, but learned next day that the sounds had proceeded from the explosion of ammunition which the Rebels wished to destroy before evacuating the city. The Twentieth Corps moved forward at daylight, occupying the city and taking in charge the few stores not destroyed. Before retreating the Rebels had set fire to many supplies and had wrecked or burned a number of locomotives and many cars. A few prisoners were captured. The captures at Jonesboro numbered nearly two thousand, about one-half of them being wounded. Three hundred Rebel dead were buried by the Union forces. The losses on the part of the Federal forces engaged were about one thousand, mostly in the Fourteenth Corps. The NINETY-SIXTH was separated from the rest of the Brigade in the movement against Jonesboro, having no time to go to its regular command after being relieved from the care of the wagon train, but being pushed forward to support the charge in which the 17th New York played so conspicuous a part, and halted not far from where the bright uniforms of the gallant Zouaves dotted the ground so thickly when the battle closed.

Friday, September 2, found the army jubilant over the news which reached them early in the day that Atlanta was occupied by Union troops, and there was lusty cheering all along the lines. The Rebels had retreated from Jonesboro, and the soldiers from all commands flocked to see the captured cannon and the scene of the successful assaults of Thursday night. Early in the day another advance was made, the Rebels being overtaken and crowded rapidly southward. The NINETY-SIXTH was near the left in the general advance and skirmished briskly, covering the front of the Brigade, and advancing vigorously two or three miles, when they came in sight of a long line of Rebel entrenchments. One Company after another was thrown upon the skirmish line, until nearly the entire Regiment was deployed. By a bold charge the skirmish pits near Lovejoy's Station were captured by the Regiment and a position gained close up to the enemy's main line. This advance, which was made under the personal direction of Major Hicks, was a most gallant one, the men evincing an



enthusiasm which called forth high encomiums from the Brigade and Division Commander. It was attended by four fatalities, Andrew Disch, of Company A, and Patrick Hewitt, of Company I, being killed and William Calvert and Andrew Jelly, of Company F, mortally wounded. Calvert died two days later and Jelly was conveyed to Chattanooga, where he died September 10. John Lister, of Company F, lost a finger, and Charles Hawkins, of Company D, was wounded in the hand. The firing was very heavy until long after nightfall and so close was the range that the men on either side were compelled to hug the ground closely to prevent heavy loss. As soon as it was dark, a line of works was constructed, a heavy line of skirmishers firing incessantly to keep the enemy down and allow the work to proceed. So hot was this fire that the Rebels actually abandoned their front line before daylight, their forces moving a hundred yards or more to a second line of works.

Saturday, September 3, brought no forward movement, but a continuous firing was maintained by both infantry and artillery on either side. Large supplies of ammunition were required, and the men cheered loudly at frequent intervals, at times shouting questions and answers toward the still defiant but evidently disconcerted men in grey. The day passed without serious casualties.

Sunday, September 4, was a repetition of the previous day. Corporal Peter Fleming, of Company E, was wounded in the left shoulder. At night a band came out in the rear of the Union lines and played several patriotic airs, but their music came to a sudden termination when a Rebel battery let off a half dozen shells in quick succession.

Monday, September 5, the second anniversary of the organization of the Regiment, found the command still under a heavy fire, and the men still responding, resolutely and enthusiastically, to the shots of the enemy they had so long confronted. From the first it had been evident that the entire Rebel army had successfully eluded Gen. Sherman in their retreat from Atlanta, and that all were gathered at Lovejoy's Station. But ten days rations had been taken when the move-



ment began, August 25, and these were about exhausted. The weather was rainy, the roads bad, and the thirty miles which separated the Army from the city precluded the possibility of an immediate supply by wagon trains. For four long months the men had been actively at work, and were now in much need of rest. Gen. Sherman therefore determined to bring the long campaign to a close, and on the evening of September 5, began the movement back to the city of Atlanta, which had been one of the objectives of the campaign. The night was dark and rainy and the troops tired, but there was no murmuring and few if any left the ranks. Jonesboro, which was passed about one o'clock in the morning, presented a weird sight, for hundreds of bales of captured cotton were burning in the streets, details of soldiers being made to see that it was destroyed, and thus prevent it from falling into the hands of the enemy. A halt was made at two o'clock in the morning, the Regiment, with other troops, laying in bivouac all of Tuesday and Tuesday night, and until other portions of the army had passed on toward the city.

Wednesday, September 8, the Regiment marched back to Rough and Ready, and on Thursday, September 9, to Atlanta, going into camp some two or three miles from the city, near the Augusta railroad, and pitching its tents near the graves of the brave men who fell with the gallant McPherson, July 22. The Army of the Cumberland encamped in and about the city, the Army of the Tennessee at East Point, and the Army of the Ohio at Decatur.

The Atlanta campaign had ended ; a campaign destined to live in history as one of the most remarkable of any clime or time. And well had the NINETY-SIXTH borne its part, and sustained the record for heroism and gallantry won at Chickamauga and indorsed at Lookout Mountain. The army hailed the needed rest with pleasure. The President, Congress, the press and the loyal people of the land showered encomiums upon Gen. Sherman and the gallant officers and soldiers who had forced their way over mountains and across rivers from Chattanooga to the "Gate City," and saw in the successes of the four months, a hope arising that the long and bloody strug-



gle would soon terminate in a victory that should be final and complete. But there were to be other arduous campaigns and bloody battles, and in them the NINETY-SIXTH was to have a conspicuous part.





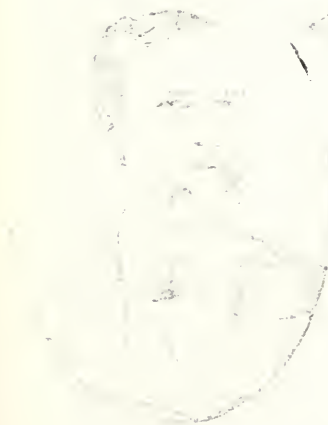
## CHAPTER XXII.

The Gains and the Losses of the Campaign—Plans for the Future—A Skirmish near Stone Mountain—Deaths by Disease—Gen. Hood takes the Initiative—A Race to the Rear—Passing Familiar Ground—In Sight of the Rebel Army—Allatoona—The March to Rome—Delays for want of a Little Bridge—Calhoun, Resaca and Dalton—On the Flank of the Enemy—Alternate Brief Rests and Heavy Marches—Southward to Gaylesville—A week in Camp with Abundant Rations—Last Days with Gen. Sherman.

THE stay at Atlanta continued for nearly a month, and was comparatively uneventful to the NINETY-SIXTH. A few men were daily permitted to visit the city, and in time all who cared to do so had made the circuit of the breastworks, and gone over the numerous and now historic battlefields about the town. The official reports brought out the fact that in the campaign more than three thousand officers and soldiers in the Federal army had been killed, about sixteen thousand wounded, and two thousand seven hundred captured. Four cannon had been captured at Resaca, ten at Rome, twenty at Atlanta and eight at Jonesboro. The Federal army had expended 86,611 rounds of artillery ammunition and 11,815,299 rounds of infantry ammunition. More than 8,000 prisoners had been taken, and 2,162 deserters had come within the lines. But the Rebel army was not destroyed, and while Gen. Sherman was planning for a new and aggressive campaign Gen. Hood was also arranging to assume the offensive, and startle the world by a campaign bold in its conception, but destined to be disastrous to the brave men in his command.

Meanwhile a spirited correspondence sprung up between the two commanders, growing out of the question as to what should become of the citizens in Atlanta, and resulting in the sending of nearly all non-combatants north or south, whichever way they chose to go. A heavy inner line of works was constructed, so that a small force might hold the city against assault. The terms of many of the troops enlisted in 1861





GEORGE M. FARNSWORTH.  
CAPT JUDSON A. MASON.

CORP'L JAMES HICKSON.  
SECOND LIEUT. HIRAN W. FARNSWORTH.  
JOSIAH H. WRIGHT.

JOSEPH PALMER.  
JOHN K. BECK.



were expiring, and these men were sent north by rail. Gen. Thomas was sent to the rear to look after the defence of the long line of communications, and to gather troops to resist the raids of the enemy. Gen. Sherman and Gen. Grant were in constant communication, and before the close of September the march to the sea had been proposed. It was expected that Gen. Hood would follow, or march upon parallel lines, seeking to harass or annoy the Union forces, but instead he assumed the initiative and threw his entire army northward, crossing the Chattahoochee a few miles west of Atlanta. Early in October the enemy began the work of destroying the long lines of railroad between Atlanta and Chattanooga, thus attempting to do to Gen. Sherman's army precisely what the latter was purposing to do to Gen. Hood's.

During the month of September the health of the Regiment was good, and its numbers were increased by the return of many of those who had dropped out because of sickness or wounds during the campaign. Lieutenant Earle, who had been acting as Adjutant of the Regiment for a few weeks, was detailed as Aide-de-Camp on Brigade staff, and entered upon his duties September 23, serving as Aide and Inspector until the close of the war. Hospital Steward Ferguson was mustered as First Lieutenant of Company H. Colonel Champion returned to the Regiment, and toward the close of the month was assigned to the command of the Brigade. His wound had healed but his health was poor, and he looked many years older than when he left the front in June.

The number of deaths from disease, aside from those occurring among prisoners of war, was much smaller than during the previous summer. A. C. Tarpley, of Company I, a brother of Capt. Tarpley, died at Bridgeport May 11. John R. Dunmore, a recruit to Company D, died at Chattanooga July 1. Thomas Kinreid, of Company G, died at Nashville June 27. William H. Bevard, of Company I, died at Nashville, August 6. Corporal John Hill, of Company I, died at Atlanta September 23.

On the eleventh the Regiment went out about thirteen miles with a forage train, loading the wagons south of Deca-



tur. The start was at daylight and the return at dark, making a hard day's march.

Monday, September 26, the Brigade went out with a forage train, leaving camp about noon and going into bivouac at sundown in an orchard near Stone Mountain. Next day the march was continued for two or three miles, when a halt was made. While the wagons were being loaded Rebel cavalry made their appearance, and a lively skirmish ensued in which the 21st Kentucky had several men wounded. The enemy were driven into the timber and then, the train being loaded, the return march was safely made, camp being reached a little before sundown.

Dress parades were held daily for a fortnight, and on Friday, September 30, there was a Division review and consequently a day of hard work. A few officers and men in each regiment received twenty or twenty-five-day furloughs. Gen. Whittaker returned and was for a few weeks in command of the Division. There had been rumors of a raid in the rear for two or three days, and on Sunday, October 2, it was learned that the entire Rebel army had crossed the Chattahoochie. Orders were issued by Gen. Sherman to move at midnight, the Twentieth Corps to remain and garrison Atlanta. A heavy rain storm prevailed during the night, and the start on the part of the command, to which the NINETY-SIXTH was attached, was delayed until daylight of Monday, October 3. The column passed through Atlanta and out on Marietta street, marching all day in the rain and mud, crossing the Chattahoochie and camping for the night, behind the breastworks which the Regiment had confronted three months before at Smyrna Camp Ground. The distance traveled was about twenty miles.

Tuesday, October 4, the command remained in camp until noon, and then marched about nine miles northward past Marietta, camping behind the Rebel breastworks west of Kenesaw Mountain, almost directly opposite the point where the Regiment had its night fight June 20. It was there learned that the Rebels had possession of the railroad from near Kenesaw to Allatoona and had captured the garrisons at Big Shanty





and Ackworth, among the prisoners being Jared Blodgett, of Company G, who had taken advantage of a brief furlough to visit a brother in the 15th Illinois, then on duty at Ackworth, and who remained a prisoner until near the close of the war.

Wednesday, October 5, the Regiment moved northward about eight o'clock, passing through the breastworks it had defended from June 20 to June 23. It was evident that there was trouble ahead, for the march was a slow and cautious one and the troops were kept well in hand. The column finally halted and the lines were formed, the NINETY-SIXTH camping on the east slope of Pine Mountain, behind the old Rebel works. Gen. Sherman was near at hand, watching with anxiety the outcome of the engagement in progress at Allatoona Pass, and from a position near the Regiment, it is understood, caused to be signalled to Gen. Corse the historic message: "Hold the Fort for I am coming!" The smoke from camp fires and from the burning of railroad ties and fences, and the more distant smoke from the battle raging about Allatoona from ten o'clock A. M. until nearly two o'clock P. M., gave evidence, were any wanting, that the entire Rebel army was in front. Gen. Sherman directed the Twenty-third Corps to advance on the left, hoping to cut off the retreat of the enemy, meanwhile holding the other troops in readiness to move in such direction as circumstances might require.

The battle at Allatoona resulted disastrously to the enemy, the garrison repulsing every attack and compelling them to retreat. Eventually they took up their line of march and moved northwesterly, going toward Rome. They had done their work upon the railroad well, for 35,000 new ties and six miles of iron were required to put it in repair; but ten thousand men were set at work, and in one week the break was closed. About this time four companies of the 40th Ohio were mustered out, their term of service having expired.

Thursday and Friday the main army still waited. Saturday, October 8, late in the afternoon, the bugles sounded the order to move forward, and the columns marched out, camping late in the evening near Ackworth. Gen. Whittaker was on Kenesaw Mountain when the movement began, and for a



time Colonel Champion commanded the Division. The night was unseasonably cold and the troops had a foretaste of winter.

Sunday, October 9, there was but a short march, and it being given out that the command would perhaps remain some time, a good camp was laid out and fixed up during that afternoon and the next day. Monday, at half past three, the order was given to march immediately, and before night the Regiment had passed Ackworth and Allatoona, going over the bloody battle field of five days before. There was still abundant evidence of the fierceness of the struggle. Many of the Regiment met and talked with acquaintances from the 12th Illinois, who had shared in the engagement, and from them learned some particulars of the fight. Gen. George C. Rogers, then Colonel of the 15th Illinois, who had many acquaintances among the Lake County boys, stood by the roadside near the huge buildings where were stored a million rations, and to capture which the Rebels had made the desperate and repeated assaults. As soon as he recognized his former neighbors and friends he ordered a barrel of whisky from the Post Commissary, had the head knocked in, and gave every one from Lake County an invitation to join in celebrating the victory and the unexpected meeting. The men halted for but a moment, but somehow the word spread backward along the column, and it is understood that every officer and soldier who passed Allatoona that night,—and there were two or three entire Corps,—claimed to hail from Lake County and to have a personal acquaintance with the General.

The Regiment crossed the Etowah river on the railroad bridge about dusk, and some time after dark camped near Cartersville, having marched thirteen miles. Rations were issued a little after midnight, and but little opportunity given the "government people" for sleep.

Tuesday, October 11, the command started at daylight, passing near Cassville, halting at Kingston at noon, and in the afternoon marching through town and out a short distance on the road toward Rome. Colonel Champion was here so unwell that he could no longer continue with his command, but went north by train; Lieutenant Colonel Evans, of the 21st



Kentucky, taking command of the Brigade. An immense mail was distributed, the first for a fortnight, and the camp rang with cheers.

Wednesday, October 12, brought one of the longest continuous marches in the Regiment's experience. The column moved at seven o'clock, but was greatly delayed by the wagon trains which crowded the road. After most of the wagons had passed, the infantry was ordered to the front, and through thickets and over rocks and hills at the roadside made their way past the teams, marching rapidly for some time. Then came one of those annoying experiences so common when large bodies of troops were marching on a single road. As it transpired, a broad, unbridged creek made its way across the road. The advance, instead of bridging the stream, broke into single file and crossed on a log. This interrupted the march, the troops in rear halting a moment and then moving forward a rod or two, only to be halted again, and again moved forward. This was continued for hours, and the NINETY-SIXTH, being near the rear of the column, was thoroughly tired out with this annoying method of marching when they neared the stream. The disgust of the men when they found what a trivial thing had caused so provoking a delay, found expression in language not entirely elegant. The command was marching left in front, as the enemy was supposed to be on the right of the road, and when the stream was reached, Company B never broke ranks, but waded through in solid column. The other companies followed, and the Regiment was the first to keep closed up in passing the watery obstacle. Those ahead were either running or walking rapidly to close up the long column, which had strung out for miles. Everyone was angry, and the NINETY-SIXTH, by a common impulse and without orders, resolved to keep in ranks. It was nearly sundown when the stream was crossed, and the heavy firing in the direction of Rome, toward which the column was marching, indicated heavy work ahead. At a rapid walk, occasionally breaking into a double quick, the resolute men pressed on, passing many stragglers, and subsequently the



remnants of several regiments, until from being the rear it was the front of the Brigade. For some miles the fences on one side of the road were on fire, and tired men were resting and warming themselves, the night being cool. At nine o'clock the broad field of light in front indicated that the troops in advance had gone into camp. The rapid march had continued up to this time, although the firing in front had ceased as darkness came on. Gen. Stanley, commanding the Corps, stood at the roadside as the command neared its designated camping ground two miles from Rome, and asked: "What brigade is this?" "This is no brigade; this is only a regiment," was answered by one of the men. "What regiment, then?" he asked; and on being told, he remarked: "Well, that NINETY-SIXTH must be a good one, for it numbers more men present than any Brigade that has come in tonight." With scarcely a halt, except the brief and annoying ones occasioned by the wagon train and the unbridged stream, the Regiment had made twenty-eight miles, and almost every man was in his place. They were a tired lot, however, and glad of an opportunity to rest.

The Rebels had made a strong demonstration toward Rome, while their main army moved to Resaca, as was afterward learned, and at two p. m. of Thursday, October 13, the Federals moved eastward, retracing their steps for a few miles and then turning northward and marching until midnight, making about thirteen miles, and camping south of Calhoun.

Friday, October 14, the Regiment marched seventeen miles, passing Calhoun and Resaca, and camping for the night at the breastworks it had constructed at the opening of the battle of May 14,—exactly five months before. The Rebels had demanded the surrender of the garrison at Resaca, and, upon its being refused, had destroyed such of the railroad as they could reach, and then moved around the village, going northward and occupying Snake Creek Gap. At the same time a force was sent against Dalton, where were some large hospitals. Some slight defense was attempted, but eventually the garrison surrendered, about one thousand





number was Edwin [redacted] in a hospital for several weeks. He remained at Dalton, the Rebels not even requiring a parole.

Saturday, October 15, an important mission was assigned to the NINETY-SIXTH and the other Regiments comprising the Corps of which it was a part. Moving to the right, it marched rapidly up the railroad to the vicinity of Tilton, where occurred a halt of two or three hours, while a reconnoissance was made. Then the troops turned sharply to the left and crossed Rocky Face and another ridge, gaining the flank of the Rebels in Snake Creek Gap about sundown. As the Regiment reached the top of the second ridge the sight was one to stir them with peculiar emotion. In the valley below were long columns of the enemy, marching rapidly northward, thousands of men being almost in rifle range. The Regiment, with other troops, raised a shout and dashed part way down the hill, but the officers in command, fearing the small force might be captured if they ventured too far, checked the advance. Twilight was rapidly deepening, and the rear of the Rebel column soon passed and disappeared in the darkness. The Regiment then descended into the valley and made its camp for the night beside the rocky creek. The distance traveled was about twelve miles.

Sunday, October 16, the Regiment marched six or eight miles, overtaking the Rebel rear guard, capturing a few prisoners and camping near Ship's Gap, about one mile from Villanow. The command lay in camp all of the next day, other portions of the army making reconnoissances. Orders were issued for all men and animals not fit for severe service to be sent to Chattanooga. Forage was abundant, and everyone had fresh meat and sweet potatoes.

Tuesday, October 18, the Regiment marched twenty-four miles between daylight and dark, crossing Taylor's Ridge and camping near Summerville. The men stood the long march remarkably well, and there were but few stragglers.

Wednesday, October 19, the command remained in camp



until late and then marched five or six miles, passing Summerville.

Thursday, October 20, twenty miles was accomplished, and the camp of the Regiment was made at four o'clock, two miles from Gaylesville, Alabama. Here the Army rested for nearly a week. Three days' rations of bread, meat and coffee were issued, with orders that they must last five. This was no hardship, however, as forage was abundant in the rich valleys of that pleasant region. Details of from twenty to twenty-five men, under competent officers, were sent out from each regiment to procure supplies, and returned with an abundance of sweet potatoes, meat, molasses and honey. Strict orders were issued prohibiting the pillaging of houses or the wanton destruction of property not of value to the armies. The guard duty was light, as the troops were well massed, and all who spent that delightful October week at Gaylesville will ever cherish pleasant memories of the last days in which the Fourth Corps was under the immediate command of General Sherman.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

Parting with Gen. Sherman—Abundance of Forage—A Rapid March Northward—Crossing the Chickamauga Battle Field—At Rossville and Chattanooga—Westward by Cars—The Trip to Athens—Anxiety as to the Situation—The Rebels Near—Fording Elk River—The March to Pulaski—Ragged but Resolute—Entrenching Again—Paid Off.

ALTHOUGH the stay at Gaylesville was one of comparative rest to the rank and file of the army, to their commander, Gen. Sherman, it was a period of great activity, for he was completing plans for his March to the Sea. His purpose was to leave only the Fourth Corps, with such detachments as were at Chattanooga or points farther north and west, for the defense of Tennessee. He fully believed that Gen. Hood would be compelled to turn southward and follow him through Georgia.

In pursuance of his plans Gen. Sherman caused the railroad to be repaired from Atlanta to Chattanooga, and ordered all sick and wounded soldiers to be sent back. Surplus artillery, wagons and animals were also hurried to Chattanooga, and the army was put in light marching order. The wagons retained at the front contained little except ammunition and the more necessary rations, the latter not in large supply, as it was determined that the soldiers should live mainly upon such provisions as it was known must be abundant in the country to be passed. The main body of his forces left Gaylesville toward the last of October, the Fourth Corps going northward, the others via Rome toward Atlanta. The Second Division of the Fourth Corps, which had been sent by rail to Chattanooga shortly after the fall of Atlanta, was marched southward to Alpine and then, meeting the other Divisions of the Corps, retraced its steps. Meanwhile the Army was living better than ever before, for the country was full of produce, and all were instructed to "forage liberally." Certain



it is that the NINETY-SIXTH never lived so well as during their stay about Gaylesville, and the Surgeons declared that a complete change of diet had done more for the health of the Regiment than they had deemed possible.

After Gen. Sherman had started southward it became certain that Gen. Hood was still determined upon an aggressive campaign into Tennessee and was not likely to follow the Federal forces through Georgia. Upon arriving at Rome, at the earnest solicitation of Gen. Thomas, who had been sent to Nashville to look after the defenses of that region, the Twenty-third Corps was diverted from the main column, marched to the neighborhood of Resaca and Dalton, and taken thence by rail to Nashville and out toward Columbia and Pulaski.

At Atlanta Gen. Sherman reorganized his Corps to some extent, burned everything in the city that could make it valuable to the enemy as a military point, destroyed the railroad to Chattanooga, and, November 16, set out on his march to Savannah. It was a brilliant movement, and one destined to live in song and story to the end of time. But the troops left in rear, to battle with Gen. Hood, were fated to endure harder marching, shorter rations and more severe fighting during the two months immediately succeeding the separation at Gaylesville than were the soldiers under the immediate command of Gen. Sherman. Indeed the two Corps, with a comparatively slight reinforcement, were to meet, in two desperate engagements, almost the identical forces that for four long months had resisted Gen. Sherman, with seven Corps, in his movement upon Atlanta. Not only were they to race with them upon the march and meet them in battle, but they were to overthrow and send them, routed and hopeless, to the far South.

But to return to the Regiment. Thursday, October 27, the NINETY-SIXTH, with the other troops comprising the Fourth Corps, left camp at Gaylesville about 8 o'clock A. M., and marched to a point a little south of Alpine, a distance of fifteen miles. The night preceding was rainy and the roads were consequently in bad condition. Capt. Burnett, of Company B, who with fifty men had been guarding a bridge seven





miles from camp, joined the main column that night, after a hard march across the unfamiliar country. Fortunately their orders and directions were so explicit that they had no trouble in finding the way. Capt. Rowan, of Company F, who had been out for a day or two with a foraging party, and whose absence had been so prolonged as to cause some apprehension lest he and his associates had fallen into Rebel hands, came into camp, late at night, with an immense amount of forage, including nearly a barrel of honey. His men being overloaded, a pair of oxen had been impressed, and the wagon to which they were attached was loaded down with bacon, sweet potatoes and other palatable articles.

Friday, October 28, the Corps made a march of twenty-four miles, passing through and across several rich valleys and camping near La Fayette.

Saturday, October 29, the command marched at daylight and made twenty-three miles, passing along the La Fayette road across the Chickamauga battle field, and camping at Rossville. It was familiar and historic ground, but the march was so rapid and the men so fatigued that but few ventured to leave the ranks and go over that portion of the field where the NINETY-SIXTH met its bloody baptism a little more than a year before, and where so many of its members were sleeping their last long sleep in unknown graves.

There were many marks of the terrific struggle all along the way from the crossing of Chickamauga Creek, at Lee & Gordon's Mills, nearly to Rossville. The shattered trees, the prostrate or burned fences, the mounds where were interred the bodies of the Blue and the Gray, the skeletons of horses, the broken muskets, the disabled gun carriages, were much as when the armies had left the field, except that a year and more had brought decay and partially dimmed the ghastliness of the scene. Strange and exciting memories were revived as the column hurried on. But the soldiers were too practical to lapse into sentiment while hurrying toward new dangers that seemed imminent, for while all was uncertainty as to what the present movement meant, somehow every one seemed



to feel that they were to be sent from Chattanooga on some perilous mission.

Sunday, October 30, the command left its camp at Rossville and marched to Chattanooga, halted for a time, and then bivouacked near the base of Lookout Mountain. A few recruits joined the Regiment at this point. Capt. Stephen Jeffers, the former Quarter-Master, who was then stationed in the city, bestowed numerous favors upon the Regiment. The Third Division was ordered to take the train going west, and reached Pulaski November 1.

Monday, October 31, the train having returned, the NINETY-SIXTH, with other troops, was loaded upon the cars about noon and rode through Bridgeport and Stevenson to a point near Paint Rock without incident worthy of note. It had been reported that there was heavy fighting near Florence and Decatur, and that the entire Rebel Army was attempting to cross the Tennessee River. This made the trainmen somewhat timid, and upon the first indication that the cavalry had been upon the railroad track the train came to a standstill. The officers consulted briefly and then ordered a Company out to reconnoitre the front. A partially destroyed culvert indicated that the enemy had been frightened off without completing their work. The skirmishers were ordered forward at a rapid walk, sometimes breaking into a double quick, and the train followed them. Soon another halt was made and a fresh detachment sent out, the tired men coming back to the train. In this way a few miles were made. The danger being passed, the skirmishers were called in and the train proceeded to the junction, and thence northward to Athens, which point was reached about seven o'clock A. M. of Tuesday, November 1. There was no one to receive the troops or give directions what to do or where to go, for the small detachment of Union forces had evacuated the town the day before. Pickets were posted and the arrival of other regiments awaited. There was much anxiety lest the Rebels should arrive first, but fortunately they did not come. Tuesday night was cold and rainy.

Wednesday, November 2, the column marched at six



o'clock through the rain and mud to Elkton, making twenty miles. The last act in the day's drama was to ford Elk River, a rapid stream, so swollen by the rains as to bring the water nearly to the armpits of the shorter men. Most of the command stripped off their clothing, and all carried their ammunition and watches in their hands. There was much discomfort, not unmingled with merriment, in the crossing. A colored man, who, being a cook for some of the officers, was loaded down with camp-kettles and other commodities, was tripped up near the middle of the stream and so badly frightened that some of the boys declared that he actually turned white. The night was an exceedingly stormy one.

Thursday, November 3, camp was broken in a terrific rainstorm, and the blankets and shelter-tents were so saturated with water, notwithstanding the persistent wringing given them, as to be exceedingly heavy. The road was muddy, and when the command reached Pulaski, seventy-five miles south of Nashville, in the middle of the afternoon, all were thoroughly tired out. The column passed the town on the right and wearily made its way to a long range of hills north of the village. Here the NINETY-SIXTH remained until the 23d. But little clothing had been issued for nearly six months and the men were absolutely ragged. Very many were barefoot, and comparatively few had clothing at all suitable for picket duty in the severe cold, rainy weather that ensued. Cabins were put up and they could get along fairly well in camp. This was not enough, however, for the officers were apprehensive of an attack, and, as a consequence, heavy picket lines were maintained. Eighty-four men were actually excused from duty at one time because of having insufficient clothing to properly fit them for the exposure inseparable from the picket line. This was in a measure overcome in a few days. Heavy lines of breastworks were built, and for two or three days the right and left wings alternated, working continuously in the trenches night and day. The baggage which had been stored at Bridgeport came up on the 14th and the officers busied themselves with their long-neglected ordnance reports and other blanks. The paymaster,



who had not been seen for about six months, came to camp and paid off the several regiments.

Friday, November 18, the NINETY-SIXTH, together with the 45th Ohio, went out with fifty wagons after forage, returning without accident or adventure.

During the stay at Pulaski there was much speculation as to Gen. Hood's intentions. Bad weather and want of transportation and supplies had detained him, but about the 20th it became apparent that he was to push northward into Tennessee. The main body of the Twenty-third Corps had reached Pulaski by this time, but the entire force then numbered but about twenty-five thousand men, while the rebels in their front numbered more than fifty thousand. Gen. Thomas was receiving considerable reinforcements at Nashville, many of them, however, being new recruits, and toward that city he ordered Gen. Schofield, then in command at Pulaski, to retreat if it became necessary in order to avoid a battle.





## CHAPTER XXIV.

The Rebels Advance — Pulaski Evacuated — A Short Sleep — Refugees on the Road — A Trying Night March — A Sombre Thanksgiving — Columbia Reached — Again Outflanked — Spring Hill — Close Proximity of the Enemy — A Halt on the Ridge — The Battle of Franklin — Another Night March — Arrival at Nashville — Two Nights on the Front Line — The Army Reinforced — Waiting for the Battle.

THE situation of affairs in Tennessee and Georgia was now a most peculiar one. Gen. Sherman had hardly more than fairly started from Atlanta when Gen. Hood left the line of the Tennessee River, and the strange spectacle was presented of two armies that had long confronted each other, and often met in battle, marching in opposite directions, each intent upon invasion. Opposed to Gen. Sherman were a few cavalrymen and state troops. Gen. Hood was confronted by two Corps of Infantry, a small force of cavalry and a few detached regiments that had been doing garrison duty at various points between Nashville and Decatur.

By November 20 the Rebel infantry had crossed the Tennessee River and were pushing rapidly northward, aiming to go by way of Lawrenceburg and interpose themselves between Pulaski and Columbia, in the neighborhood of Lynnville. The Union cavalry was active and vigilant, and reported to Gen. Schofield, then in command at Pulaski, and arrangements were speedily made for a retreat. Tuesday, November 22, a part of the Twenty-third Corps and the Second Division of the Fourth Corps marched to Lynnville, thus preventing the Rebel forces from reaching that point. Gen. Hood then directed his columns toward Columbia, going by way of Mount Pleasant, whereupon the Union forces at Lynnville resumed their march on the morning of the 23d. The weather, which had been rainy much of the time for a fortnight, turned bitter cold, the ground freezing and ice forming upon the smaller streams.



While the campaign had been thus inaugurated, a portion of the Fourth Corps still remained in Pulaski. Wednesday, November 23, the Regiment was busily engaged in strengthening its already strong intrenchments when orders were received to march in an hour. At noon the column filed out and marched to the pike, where the entire Division remained until nearly dark, the road being thronged with wagons, troops and refugees, hurrying northward. All of the refugees were colored people, most of whom had been quartered on some abandoned plantations not far from Huntsville, the Government having encouraged them to remain there and raise a crop. The advance of the Rebel Army had alarmed them, and, gathering up such effects in the way of clothing and bedding as they could carry, they sought to escape from a return to slavery, which they imagined would surely follow if they allowed the Confederates to overtake them.

Pulaski was evacuated early in the evening, considerable amounts of clothing and provisions being burned to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy. A few buildings were destroyed. The teams and artillery, which had come from Chattanooga by way of Dechard and Fayetteville, were loaded to their utmost capacity, but the transportation was inadequate to meet the emergency then arising, and an immense bonfire was made necessary. A little before dark the NINETY-SIXTH was on the road and marched back to Lynnville, being delayed by the troops and trains that had preceded. There was more or less firing on the left, not a great distance from the pike. At a late hour the Division halted and went into camp. Hardly had the tired men fallen asleep when the bugle sounded and they were again hurried out upon the pike. It was reported that the Rebels had not halted, but were making a night march, hoping to reach Columbia before Gen. Schofield could get his troops into position, and all understood that it was a race between the two armies. The Regiment hurried along the road, until the rear of the main column was overtaken, when the march was slower. The poor refugees were overtaken and passed. They were most pitiable objects, having marched for many hours with little to eat and without





Corp'l PETER MOWERS,  
JAMES DONAHUE.

Corp'l JARED O. BLODGETT,  
Second Lieut. JOHN W. SWANBROUGH,  
LOYAL CADWELL.

REUBEN MILLEE  
SAMUEL F. VOSE



daring to stop for rest. There were hundreds of women and children, the latter crying piteously from hunger and cold. But the soldiers could give them no assistance, and they were compelled to halt beside the road and let the column pass. Fires were kindled in the fence corners, and many of them gave up the march in despair, although others kept on to Nashville. The troops were given to understand that an attack might be expected any moment, and none were allowed to straggle.

The dawn of Thursday, November 24, found the long columns still toiling on, the one in grey hoping to reach Columbia while their opponents were far away, the one in blue resolute in its purpose to head off their wary rivals, if hard and continuous marching could effect so desirable a result. It was the National Thanksgiving Day, and throughout the loyal States the people were returning grateful thanks to the Providence that had smiled upon the Union armies, East and West, and were hopeful that peace and final victory were near. But to the soldiers of the little army under Gen. Schofield the day was filled with forebodings, for they were retreating over ground reclaimed more than a year before, and the haste of the movement, the evident anxiety of their commanders, and the occasional sounds of cannon and musketry that came from the flank, where the cavalry was watching the enemy, made them feel apprehensive that all was not going well. At noon the tired troops ahead left the pike and moved into a large field for a brief rest, and the members of the NINETY-SIXTH were discussing the expected Thanksgiving dinner and making up impossible bills-of-fare as they neared the halting place. Considering their questionable surroundings they were certainly a very jolly lot. But as they were about to halt, a staff officer rode up and ordered Major Hicks to march the Regiment to a high ridge on the flank, nearly a half mile from the pike, and keep a sharp lookout for Rebels, returning when the column began to move. The order was by no means a welcome one after being on the move so long, but, knowing that it was their turn for duty, the men cheerfully complied. It was a long, hard climb. Just as the head of the Regiment





was nearing the summit some shots were heard, and a moment later a little squad of cavalry dashed out of the woods, many of them hatless and all greatly excited. Reaching the infantry they reported that they had been ambushed and had lost several men, killed or captured by a large body of the enemy near at hand. This information set the men on their mettle and a sharp lookout was maintained. In a few minutes the teams had passed on toward Columbia, and the troops in the valley had finished their hurried dinners. The NINETY-SIXTH soon took up the line of march, at the rear of the column. The march was kept up till almost night, the firing increasing toward Columbia, on the Mount Pleasant road. At length the village was reached and the race for that day was at an end. The heads of the opposing armies had reached the outskirts of the town almost simultaneously, but the small force then acting as a garrison to the town met and delayed the Rebel advance, thus giving the Union forces time to partially deploy their lines. A portion of the Twenty-third Corps reached the town about noon. There was a sharp contest, resulting in a few casualties on either side; but Gen. Hood found himself checkmated, and night shutting down the two armies moved into position and halted. The NINETY-SIXTH was sent to a position in the front line, and at once threw up breastworks, the men working diligently, in reliefs, all night, notwithstanding their fatigue. They had marched about thirty miles, with many halts and interruptions, but with little rest, and only the necessity of the hour inclined them to the hard labor of entrenching.

Columbia was situated on high ground in a deep bend of Duck River, and here Gen. Thomas, who still remained at Nashville, hoped his army would make a final stand and fight a decisive battle with Gen. Hood. He was expecting three Divisions of the Sixteenth Corps, under Gen. A. J. Smith, from the Mississippi, and also other reinforcements, but unexpected delays occurred. Two or three regiments and a goodly number of recruits came to the department and were hurried forward by rail. But Gen. Hood remembered his experiences at Atlanta and Allatoona, and decided to postpone any charges upon the Yankee breastworks. Instead, while keeping up a



feint of assaulting the lines at Columbia, he rested his army for a day or two, and then, moving by the right flank, made a bold push for the Union rear, determined to interpose his Army between Gen. Schofield and Franklin. The movement was admirably conceived and well-nigh successful.

Meanwhile the Union forces had been disposed for defensive operations. The cavalry was watching the fords of Duck River and attempting to hold the Rebels in check. A part of the Fourth Corps moved slightly to the rear Friday evening, and occupied a shorter and stronger line than the one so hastily formed on Thursday. Saturday brought heavy skirmishing, but no casualties occurred in the Regiment. At dark the troops were ready to move, but after a delay of some hours it was learned that the pontoon bridge had broken, a portion of the troops having crossed. The lines were thinned out so as to occupy the works vacated by that portion of the army which had crossed; a work of great difficulty, as the night was intensely dark and the rain pouring down in torrents.

Sunday, November 27, was spent in the lines about the little city, but when darkness came, the troops, except a small force which remained until daylight to cover the retreat, silently moved to the rear, waded through the mud to the pontoon bridge, and then halted and fortified, the NINETY-SIXTH marching eastward up the river two or three miles. The men were on the move almost the entire night, and when they halted, near daylight, were called upon to fortify their position. Captain Pollock was sent out with a small force to reconnoitre the front, and meeting a detachment of cavalry falling back before the Rebel advance, had a lively skirmish. During all of Monday the Brigade lay near Duck River, and Monday night moved to Rutherford's Creek, partially fortifying another line, where it remained for nearly twenty-four hours, guarding the crossing while troops and trains passed to the rear.

Tuesday, November 29, was a critical day with the army. General Kimball having come up and assumed command of the Division, General Whittaker took command of the Brigade. There was ample evidence that Rebel infantry was



marching past the position held by the NINETY-SIXTH and other portions of the Division, for the pickets were constantly reporting moving troops in sight, and were frequently fired upon. The wagon trains had been ordered to Franklin under escort of the Second Division of the Fourth Corps, the infantry taking the lead. Their march was begun about eight o'clock A. M. Twelve miles north of Columbia was Spring Hill, a small village, where was stationed a company or two of cavalry. As the infantry approached the village firing was heard, indicating that the Rebels had outmarched them and were fighting for the possession of the village and pike. It proved to be only a cavalry fight, at first, and when the head of the Second Division reached the scene the enemy retired. A brisk skirmish followed, for the Rebel infantry was close at hand and made a vigorous attempt to gain a position on the highway and cut off the troops that had not yet arrived from Columbia. The Second Division was repeatedly attacked, and on the right and a little south of the village was forced to retreat for some distance. Most of the artillery was at hand and aided in repelling the charges. Fortunately the Rebels lacked the nerve to take advantage of the situation, and the day closed without serious losses. Most of the teams closed up at a run when the skirmishing began, and were parked at the village. A few went forward and were captured and burned by the cavalry near Thompson's Station. Gen. Hood seems to have realized his opportunity and to have made an earnest effort to take advantage of it, but Gen. Cheatham, in command of his advance, with a corps at hand and another rapidly approaching, delayed, through fear that he was outnumbered, the amount of artillery and the vigor with which General Stanley resisted disconcerting him and rendering him timid. The Union loss was about two hundred; the Rebel loss fully five hundred.

Meanwhile the NINETY-SIXTH, with the other troops of the Brigade, had been comparatively idle at Rutherford's Creek, but just before night took up the line of march. The Regiment had the lead and marched left in front. An advance guard was put out, and after a time flankers were sent upon



the right, marching through the fields parallel with the main column. The utmost silence prevailed, and all commands were given in low tones. There were frequent halts, and more than once men were seen or heard leaving the pike. A light barricade was found at one point, the enemy disappearing in the darkness. Nearing Spring Hill some horsemen were met, and a brief parley ensued, each party being afraid the others were Rebels. Everything was soon explained, however, for some one soon recognized Gen. Whittaker's peculiar voice and made known the fact that fears had been entertained that the command had been cut off and possibly dispersed or captured. The march was then continued to Spring Hill, where the NINETY-SIXTH was moved into a cornfield on the north side of the pike and directed to build a line of works. All were cautioned to maintain silence, and hardly a cornstalk rustled, so careful were the men. The Rebel camp fires were but a hundred rods distant, and the men could be plainly seen standing or walking around them. Orders were given not to fire a gun unless the enemy should be seen advancing in force directly toward the pike. It was stated as a fact that some members of the Regiment, going for rails, a short distance in front, found the Rebels taking rails from the same fence, and Sergeant Murrie and Corporal Swazey, of Company C, going out to reconnoitre, actually passed between the pickets of the enemy, going nearly to the camp-fires and returning without being fired upon. For hours the flankers of the two armies were within a few yards of each other, but each apparently under orders not to bring on an engagement. It was probably eleven o'clock or after when the Regiment was halted in the cornfield. A light barricade was soon completed, and then the men stood or laid in line, chilled to the marrow, and anxiously awaiting orders to leave the perilous position.

Toward morning, the last wagon having got in line, the Regiment moved to the road and pushed northward, being almost the rear of the army. With the first glimmer of daylight the firing, which had been confined to an occasional shot, increased somewhat, and before sunrise was quite lively.





The NINETY-SIXTH marched in the fields much of the way. Apparently there was great confusion, for detached regiments from several brigades, groups of men who had tired out and left their commands, a few ambulances, a part of a battery, and a group of citizens and railroad men were all crowding for the pike at the same time. By good management on the part of Gen. Stanley, and because of timidity on the part of the Rebels, only a few of the eight hundred wagons in the train were lost, and before daylight Gen. Schofield's advance was crossing the Harpeth River at Franklin. His rear, however, had still about eight miles to march.

That night had been one of extremest peril, and it was a relief to the rear-guard when, at a little after sunrise, it became apparent that the Rebel infantry had not marched during the night, and that its advance was barely abreast with the Union rear guard.

The skirmishing grew lively as the hours wore on, but the danger of attack in flank was over. The Twenty-third Corps had reached Franklin before daylight, and a portion of the Fourth Corps soon followed, forming a line about the village, the flanks resting on the river. The wagons were parked on the north side of the river, Gen. Wood's Division forming as a guard near the ground where the NINETY-SIXTH had encamped for several weeks in the spring of 1863. The crossing of the river was a difficult matter, but enough planks were found to convert the railroad bridge into a wagon bridge, and also to construct a crossing above.

But the troops in rear were still toiling on, with the Rebel rear-guard closely following. Once at least, a little north of Thompson's Station, they pressed so hard that the NINETY-SIXTH formed in line, faced to the rear, and showed so bold a front as to compel them to halt and deploy their lines, thus saving valuable time to the retreating forces. The soldiers of either army shouted in defiant tones and were repeatedly so near as to be readily understood.

Not far from eleven o'clock in the forenoon of Monday, November 30, the Regiment halted beside the pike, two miles south of the village, and prepared a hasty breakfast from



the well nigh empty haversacks. Before all had succeeded in boiling coffee, an order came to move to a high knob some distance west of the road, and prepare to resist the enemy. In a moment the column moved for its position, where a grand panorama spread out before them. Approaching a stone wall at the foot of the ridge were the skirmishers of the enemy, in so close range that a musket ball fired by one of them buried itself in the shoulder of Sergeant Ellinger, of Company C, inflicting a painful and dangerous wound. Farther out to right and left the long columns of infantry were rapidly deploying, with squadrons of cavalry on either flank, and all advancing steadily toward the ridge. Beyond, the covered wagons were going into park in a meadow close beside the road. Ambulances and artillery followed the infantry, and everything indicated that a battle was near at hand. However severely historians may criticise Gen. Hood, no one who witnessed the marshalling of that vast army outside of Franklin can fail to give him high praise for the skill and rapidity with which he formed his lines on that eventful day.

The Regiment hastily threw up a light barricade of rails and rocks along the summit of the ridge, the skirmishers responding to the fire of the enemy. As soon as the lines in the rear, just at the outskirts of the town, were well formed, the Regiment was ordered to retire and was speedily marching at a swinging gait along the old familiar pike, past its picket and reserve posts of 1863, and through the village to the right of the line, being probably the last command to pass the breast works on the Columbia pike.\*

\* Most writers give to Col. Opdyke's Brigade the credit of being the rear guard from Spring Hill to Franklin, and the last troops to reach the village. The editor finds some conflict of testimony among the records at command, but while not claiming for the NINETY-SIXTH that it acted as rear guard the entire distance, is certain that it did a part of the time. It was left in its position in the cornfield east of Spring Hill until all of the wagons were in line, and passed the range of hills east of Thompson's Station after daylight. The battalion of the 40th Ohio, embracing its non-veterans and those whose terms of service had not expired, and also the 45th Ohio, having been on the skirmish line at Rutherford's Creek, were brought back by Lieutenant Earle, Brigade Inspector, and were among the last troops to reach Spring Hill, remaining with the NINETY-SIXTH for a time. On the ridge, outside of Franklin, the NINETY-SIXTH had the right of the line facing south, and from there in was certainly the rear guard. There is little doubt that the Regiment was the last organized command to pass the breastworks near the Carter residence. The brigades of Lane and Conrad were constructing the works from



In leaving the ridge, Albert Paddock, of Company D, who, fired out with the long march, had thrown himself down beside a log and gone to sleep where the Regiment halted to make coffee, was not missed, but slept on until rudely awakened by the Rebels to find himself a prisoner of war.

Arrived at the right, after passing through the village, the Regiment found itself crowded out of the front line, and bivouacked on a little hill near the cemetery close beside the river, and not far from the ford. Here the men rested, most of them cooking, a few sleeping, and others speculating as to what the coming hours would bring.

For some hours before the Regiment arrived, the troops of the Twenty-third Corps occupied the main line from the river on the left, two-thirds of the distance around the town, crossing the Lewisburg and Columbia pikes. The First Division of the Fourth Corps was at their right, completing the line to the river above, and nearly all on ground favorable for defense.

These troops had lost no time in rendering their position defensible by the construction of breastworks, and the semi-circle a mile and a half in length, was speedily so strong as to afford protection from bullets. In the construction of these works, there being but little timber accessible, fences of every description were utilized and a few barns and abandoned houses were torn down, the boards being used as a barricade to hold the earth in place, while the sills served an admirable purpose as head logs. Near the Columbia pike an old cotton press was torn down and made to do service. A locust grove was partially cut and used as an abatis at the right of the road, and in the vicinity of the Lewisburg pike an osage orange

which they were subsequently driven when the NINETY-SIXTH passed. A brigade, which the editor believes to have been Col. Opdyke's, was bivouacked near the roadside in some vacant lots a short distance in rear of the works. Before its arrival in Franklin, the lines were formed and the works were well advanced, most of the Division having been there several hours. The battle began within a few moments—from a half hour to an hour—after the Regiment reached the right. Sergeant Ellinger declares it to have been two o'clock when he was wounded, two miles outside of Franklin, but letters and diaries say: "About noon." Sergeant Berg's diary, written at the time, says: "We arrived at Franklin about 2 p. m. Sergeant Ellinger, of Company C, was wounded severely at noon. Our Division covered the retreat of the Army all day."



hedge was lopped and converted into an effectual protection against the charging columns.

On the right and in the immediate front of the position held by the First Division of the Fourth Corps were a few houses, with lawns and gardens enclosed, and farms stretching out beyond. In rear and near the extreme right of the line was a deep ford, through which many citizens made their way as the day wore on. In rear of the extreme left of the line, upon the north bank of the Harpeth, stood Fort Granger, on which the men of the NINETY-SIXTH had spent so many days of hard labor in the spring of 1863. It was now well filled with artillery, and commanded the open plain between the Lewisburg and Columbia pikes. Gen. Schofield was in the fort awaiting the movements of the enemy. The rank and file of the Army expected a battle, but the Commander and many of his subordinates apparently thought that there would be a repetition of the tactics pursued at other points, the enemy, after a strong demonstration in front, seeking to gain the rear of the line by fording the river east of town and making a race for Nashville. With this expectation Gen. Wilson's cavalry was sent to the north side of the Harpeth and pushed well to the front, the teams were massed to await the coming of night and the Third Division of the Fourth Corps was held near Fort Granger, in readiness to move to support the cavalry and protect the train. The troops were ordered to be ready to march at six o'clock.

It proved that the men in the ranks were right, and that a bloody battle was impending. For a little time there was quiet along the lines, and the air seemed humid with the great agony and sorrow now so near. During the early afternoon the enemy swarmed across the hills from which the NINETY-SIXTH had retired after the inner lines had been formed, and at four o'clock attained the position from which a most desperate assault was to be made.

It was a splendid spectacle as their lines of infantry, a mile in length, came out from the timber which had partially concealed them, and swept across the open plain in full view of the Union forces. More than twenty thousand of the enemy





could be seen at one time by the troops upon the higher ground. Slowly at first, and then more rapidly, they swept forward, at length breaking into a run and rushing toward the Union lines in a broad torrent that it seemed could not prove otherwise than irresistible.

By some strangely interpreted order two Brigades of the Second Division of the Fourth Corps had been left outside the continuous line about the village, across the field from the Carter residence, one at the right, the other at the left of the Columbia pike. They had built a light breastwork but both flanks were in air. As the long line came sweeping toward them they poured a volley into the troops in their front, checking them for a moment. But the enemy was passing them on either flank and their only safety lay in flight. Several hundred surrendered at this point. The others ran to the rear, those not killed or wounded in the movement falling breathless on the outside of the works or, leaping over the line, turning and joining in the attempt to hold in check the oncoming foe. In this wild race the Blue and the Grey were so mingled that for a time the troops in the main line feared to fire lest they should kill or wound their friends. At the pike the advance of the enemy reached and crossed the works simultaneously with the fugitives, and the line was borne backward, the breastworks falling into the hands of the enemy for a distance of three hundred yards. But if the leaving of Lane's and Conrad's Brigades in front had been a great misfortune, it happened that Col. Opdyke's Brigade of the same Division had been most fortunately placed in some vacant lots a hundred yards in rear of the works, and were quickly hurried to the front under the personal leadership of Col. Opdyke and of the Corps Commander, General Stanley, who remained with them even after being severely wounded in the neck and shoulder. These troops charged gallantly forward and retook a portion of the works, battering the edge of the entering wedge that had come so near hopelessly severing the Union line, and holding in check the Rebel columns as they sought, again and again, to take advantage of the slight break and compel the Union forces to retreat.



The main body of Rebels retired after a vain struggle to maintain their advantage, but a few still clung to the breastworks at the right of the pike with a tenacity that bespoke their desperate valor. Soon the columns formed again and moved in another charge upon the works. There were a few pattering shots, and the artillery upon the line and in Fort Grainger opened upon the level plain. A volley was heard, and then the deafening and continuous roar as thousands of muskets belched forth their deadly fire. The moments lengthened, and the smoke hung suspended in the quivering Autumn air as if to shut out the dreadful carnage. Rebel officers rode to the very breastworks, seeking to inspire their men with the idea expressed by Gen. Hood before the charge began: "Break that line and there is nothing between you and the Ohio river." But even such reckless valor could not avail. The leaders went down until twelve Generals had been killed or wounded, and one, who rode straight across the works, had been captured. One of the officers mortally wounded was Brigadier General Carter, whose father owned the brick house just in rear of the works. He fell close to the works, and upon the very farm where he had spent the early years of his life. Gen. Clebourne was killed near the cotton press and almost upon the Union works. The firing slackened and a cheer arose, which was taken up and carried around the lines. Darkness was now settling down upon the scene, but the enemy still pressed upon the Union lines, seeking to penetrate with hundreds where thousands had failed. Acres of the level field, at the right and left of the Columbia pike, were almost covered with the dead and dying. The muskets, so fouled that it was almost impossible to load them, belched out their red fire long after darkness came. A hundred wagon loads of ammunition were expended during that single afternoon and evening.

The position of the NINETY-SIXTH, at the opening of the battle, has already been described. A few moments previously a staff officer had called for a detail to take the skirmish line. Thirty men were furnished, and reporting near the right of the line were counted off and deployed. Thomas Craig, of



Company I, was among the number, and chancing to be in the file with some men from another regiment, went forward through a door-yard and past a group of cedars where were clustered a few of the enemy's dismounted cavalry. He had not been absent from the line five minutes before he was told to lay down his gun, and finding himself completely at the mercy of the Rebels he, with a few others, surrendered and was hurried off across the field. Craig had been with the Regiment but a month, having come to it as a recruit at Chattanooga, after a three years' service with the 19th Illinois.

Edwin Potter, of Company B, shot a Rebel from his horse in front of the skirmish line. The horse kept right on and was secured by the Union forces. After dark the skirmishers were repeatedly fired on by the pickets of the Third Division, from across the river.

Simultaneously with the opening of the battle on the left a vigorous demonstration was made upon the right, in front of the First Division, by a body of dismounted cavalry. The NINETY SIXTH instantly fell in and moved through a depression, and up to the spot toward which the attack was apparently to be directed. The bullets flew thick and fast, and John H. Holden, of Company A, was wounded in the head, quite seriously but not so badly but that he insisted on remaining with the command. The Regiment was halted in reserve, just back of the main line, near the left of the Brigade, until about twelve o'clock, being called up once or twice with the expectation of going to the left, the movement never becoming necessary, however. The fire of the Rebel left was annoying at times, but did not prove especially severe. Occasionally overshot bullets from the neighborhood of the Carter residence, nearly a mile distant, and others from near the Carter's Creek pike, struck uncomfortably near, and it was a continual wonder that casualties were not more numerous.

When the first charge occurred the view from the elevated position of the cemetery was a grand one. Looking across the village the field was in plain sight and the long lines of Rebels could be distinctly seen as they emerged from the woods and pressed back the brigades occupying the advanced position. A



volley came, but before the sounds reached the ear the smoke obscured the view. Then the cloud lifted and the lines could be seen, partially disorganized but rapidly pressing forward with a wild yell. Other volleys followed, and then the constant, deafening roar, increasing in volume until it reached proportions such as are seldom attained in any battle. The smoke now totally obscured the scene, and for a time it was doubtful which side had won, but soon there arose the unmistakable Union cheer which, sweeping around the lines, was caught up by brigade after brigade until every man seemed to be participating.

A crowd of fugitives, mainly citizens, white and black, ran back from the town when the battle opened, many crossing the ford near the cemetery. Among the number were two gentlemen, in a buggy, with a little girl between them. They had reached the middle of the stream when a dull, sickening thud was heard and the innocent child sunk down, doubtless killed outright. Apparently the bullet which struck her came from where the main charge was taking place, almost a mile away. Other casualties occurred momentarily, but none seemed so terrible as the one by which that little child was struck down.

The charges made after dark were with less vigor than those which at first proved so nearly fatal to the Union forces, and by nine o'clock there was comparative quiet along the line, although the firing was continued at intervals until eleven o'clock. Most of the wounded Federals were placed in ambulances or in the empty ammunition wagons, but a few had to be left, some in houses, and others where they had fallen.

The scene in front of the works, where the main fighting occurred, begged description. Wounded men begged for water or assistance, and in many instances their wants were supplied, brave men, at great peril, going between the lines with canteens of the fluid always so precious at such times.

Shortly after nine o'clock, orders were issued to leave the lines at midnight. Long before this the trains had been started for Nashville. The flanks were first retired, and after





that the centre. A building was set on fire and threatened to so light up the town as to make the movement visible to the watchful enemy, but an old fire engine was found and the flames were soon extinguished. Both of the bridges were piled with kindling early in the evening and made ready for burning. Little time was occupied in the movement to the north side of the river, the skirmishers in front retiring to the breastworks as soon as they were vacated, and in a few moments moving silently across the bridges. The NINETEEN SIXTH, with the other troops comprising the First Division, crossed by the wagon bridge. Most of the Twenty-third Corps passed over on the railroad bridge. Even before the last of the skirmishers were across, the bridges were set on fire. The Rebels were not long in discovering the movement, and hurried through the town, but attained no advantage, as the Third Division still defended the crossings and gave them a noisy reception. Two hundred Federal wounded were left in the village.

The retreat from Franklin to Nashville, a distance of eighteen miles, was a most tedious march. It should be remembered that for a full week the troops had been almost constantly on the road, or building breastworks and fighting. For a night or two at Columbia there was some brief opportunity for sleeping, but very little afterward. All were thoroughly tired out and greatly in need of rest. But there was no alternative, and wearily the long column moved forward along the only pike leading northward. The usual vexatious delays occurred, an unbridged stream being the principal cause. This was some distance out, and as every team had to be whipped into it, the column was continually stopping and starting. Knowing that if an attack was made it would be from the east, the battalions marched left in front. These annoying delays occurred frequently for two or three hours, and so exhausted were the men that at each brief halt nearly all would drop down in the road and instantly fall asleep. A whispered, "Fall in, boys!" would as quickly rouse them, and, more asleep than awake, they staggered rather than marched forward. Indeed, many of them slept



soundly as they walked along, and at each halt would bump against the man next ahead of them. Field and staff officers slept for miles in their saddles, and even the horses staggered as they walked along.

Stragglers were numerous, many being so tired and lame that they could not walk. Some of them lay in the fence corners, sound asleep. On one occasion, toward morning, occurred a halt somewhat longer than usual and several of these sleepers were awakened, partly for sport. One of them could not be aroused, so soundly was he sleeping, and members of the NINETY-SIXTH actually picked him up, lifted him over the fence and placed him on the ground again without awakening him. The rear-guard must have had many trying experiences in forcing the multitude of worn out men to fall in and move forward. Captains Pollock and Blowney became so exhausted that they determined to sit still for a five-minutes' rest after the column moved on, and speedily fell asleep, to be awakened only when the rear guard shook them and ordered them to move on.

Daylight came at last and a little later all halted at Brentwood, when the inevitable coffee pot was brought out and breakfast prepared. Then the troops again took the road, marching leisurely and reaching the outskirts of the city about noon.

It was a thoroughly tired out lot of men that reached Nashville that Thursday. But it was a relief to know that the Rebels had not followed closely, having so many dead to bury and so many wounded to care for that the day was consumed at Franklin. Most of the NINETY-SIXTH busied themselves with cooking, some rested and slept and others cared for their lacerated feet. Major Hicks and Adjutant Blodgett rode to town and all were hoping for a good night's rest when a staff officer rode up and announced that the Regiment must go upon the skirmish line and picket the front of the Brigade. Captain Pollock took command and marched the tired men out a few hundred yards, established a few picket posts as was deemed safe, and began to fortify a line on either side of the pike. The Major and Adjutant soon returned and joined



the command. That night on picket was a trying one and only by constant vigilance on the part of a few could the men be kept awake. Relief guards were sent out with more than ordinary frequency and would even then find the pickets sleeping.

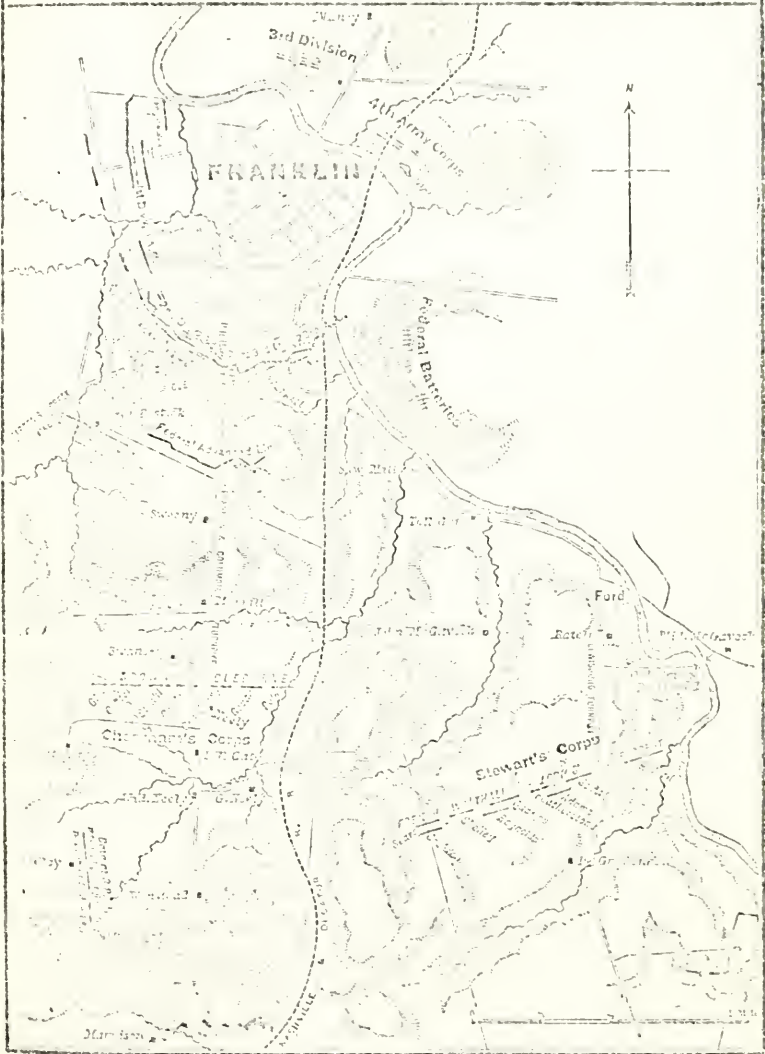
The forenoon of Friday, December 2, passed, and no relief having been offered, the Major sent word that his men must be taken from the line and given an opportunity for rest. The message served its purpose, and the Regiment soon marched back to the main line, where the men threw themselves down and in a moment were asleep. The afternoon was wearing away, when of a sudden firing began directly in the front. There was an immediate commotion all along the line, for it was evident that the Rebels had moved up from Franklin. Officers and men questioned whether Gen. Hood would repeat his tactics of two days before and assault the line of works which the Union army had thrown up about the city.

"Where's the NINETY-SIXTH?" shouted Gen. Whittaker, as he dashed along the line a moment later. "Here it is!" responded Major Hicks, as, hatless and coatless, he raised up and threw off the blanket under which he had been sleeping. "Fall in your Regiment and move to the skirmish line immediately!" was the order. "But," protested the Major, "we have just come from the skirmish line and my men need sleep!" "There will be no sleep for anyone to-night," shouted the General. "Take your men out there at once! The whole Rebel army is there, and I must send the best Regiment in the Brigade!" The Major knew that further protest was useless, and accepting the implied compliment, prepared as speedily as possible, and moved the men over the breastworks and out to the front, taking position at the right of the pike, about in line with the skirmish reserves. A new line of works was at once constructed, the Rebels meantime keeping up a skirmish fire, and pressing forward until seemingly satisfied that the Yankees would not retreat farther unless compelled to do so. Their lines were soon formed, extending far around to right and left, but they made no



# MAP OF THE Battlefield of Franklin, Tenn.

NOVEMBER 30th, 1864.







charge. The Regiment lay behind its barricade that night, every man with his musket clutched, but all sleeping soundly, except that a single guard was stationed, hourly, to wake the officers should there be an alarm from the pickets.

The night passed quietly, however, and the next day the Regiment was relieved and sent to the main line. The works having been filled while the command was absent, there seemed to be no place for it, and Gen. Whittaker directed, as a special favor, that it be camped in the beautiful grounds of the Acklin place, partially out of range of the picket firing, and, in view of its arduous services and its two nights on outpost duty, that no pickets should be called for from its ranks until further orders. Here, on the night of December 2, for the first time in nine successive days, the men felt at liberty to remove their accoutrements, build good camp fires, and take off such of their clothing as December weather and an outdoor camp would permit.

The battle of Franklin was of decided advantage to the Union forces. Gen. Hood had brought more than three-fourths of his entire army into action, and after assaults as desperate and determined as any of the war, had been repulsed with frightful loss. A thousand prisoners and the few flags captured from Lane's and Conrad's Brigades were meager compensation for the loss of thirteen general officers, thirty stands of colors, 1,750 men killed, 4,000 wounded and 700 captured. The Union losses, mainly in the Second Division of the Fourth Corps, were reported at 189 killed, 1,033 wounded and 1,104 missing. The Union Army had gained confidence, while the Confederates, appalled at their unexpected repulse and their almost unprecedented losses, were much dispirited, and approached Nashville with far less confidence than that felt as they neared Franklin.

Perhaps this chapter cannot be better closed than by the following extract from the official report of Gen. Stanley. In speaking of the breaking of the Union line on the Columbia pike, and the gallant charge of Col. Opdyke's Brigade, by which they were restored, he says: "The moment was critical beyond any I have known in any battle."



In describing the march from Franklin to Nashville, he says :

"Our men were more exhausted, physically, than I have ever seen on any other occasion. From November 23, when we left Pulaski, until arriving at Nashville, we had been constantly in the immediate presence of an enemy we knew to be vastly superior to us in numbers, closely watching to attack us at disadvantage. With us, both mind and body were kept at full stretch, and it was only by night marches and the constant use of intrenchments that we could hope to save ourselves. Many of our men were overtaxed and broke down, unable to travel any longer. They fell into the hands of the enemy. On two occasions the enemy was very near attaining the advantage he sought of us. The first was when Cox drove back his advance, just about entering Columbia. The second and greatest escape for us was at Spring Hill, when, with a whole corps in line of battle, the left of the line within six hundred yards of the road, they allowed all our army, except Wagner's Division, which had fought them during the day, to pass them with impunity during the night."



## CHAPTER XXV.

The Siege of Nashville — Reinforcements Arrive — Recruits Received — Citizens Building Breastworks — The Country Anxious — Reason of the Delay — An Ice Storm — The Weather Grows Milder — The Battle Begins — First Day's Work — Important Gains — Night on the Battlefield — The Second Day's Battle — A Charge on the Skirmish Line — Long Hours Under Fire — A Gallant Charge — Four Guns and Many Prisoners Taken — A Glorious Victory — Incidents of the Battle — The Gains and the Losses — The Casualty List.

THE position of the NINETY-SIXTH during the siege of Nashville — if siege it could be called — was a fairly comfortable one. The camp was pleasant, the guard duty light, and the position but little exposed to the enemy's fire. Rations were ample, and included many sanitary supplies sent from the North. Clothing was issued in abundance, and a few passes were given out daily, so that in time all who cared to do so were permitted to visit the city.

Gen. Thomas, having assumed the immediate command of the army, Gen. Schofield returned to the Twenty-third Corps. Gen. Stanley relinquished the command of the Fourth Corps, owing to the wound received at Franklin, and was succeeded by Gen. Wood, commander of the Third Division. The 115th Illinois, which had been doing garrison duty at Resaca and points near by, from the time of the battle at that place, rejoined the Brigade. The remaining six companies of the 40th Ohio, having completed their term of enlistment, were mustered out and left for home, their veterans and recruits being assigned to the 51st Ohio. A few other regiments whose terms of service had expired were sent northward, but there was not a large number of such, and, on the whole, the army at Nashville was very largely reinforced. Simultaneously with the arrival of the Fourth and Twenty-third Corps from the front, Gen. A. J. Smith came by river from the rear with three divisions of the Sixteenth Corps, and other detached troops. A considerable number of cav-



ally regiments also arrived, not all of them being mounted, however. Men from almost every regiment then with Gen. Sherman were sent from the various camps and hospitals, and with the recruits and detailed men, organized into a "Provisional Division," which was placed under command of Gen. J. B. Steedman. Sergeants were given command of the improvised companies, and line officers of the battalions thus formed. Several colored regiments also came up and took their place in the line. By December 10 the army under Gen. Thomas comprised about fifty-five thousand effective men of all arms.

Eighty-six recruits joined the NINETY-SIXTH on the 10th, most of them coming from Jo Daviess county, and being enlisted for one year. There was great anxiety in Galena and vicinity for a few days, owing to a report that all of these newly enlisted men had been captured between Louisville and Nashville, a report that happily proved untrue. The recruits were an excellent body of men, most of them being young, and all of them taking hold of their army duties with enthusiasm. Almost one third of them had brothers in the command, and nearly all acquaintances or near friends. A number of men who had been in hospital or on detached service came up, and the Regiment had four hundred men present for duty when the advance from Nashville finally took place. — a larger number than at any time for seven months. Among the recruits were Allen B. Whitney, formerly Captain of Company B; and Reuben L. Root, formerly Second Lieutenant of Company H: both of whom were now enlisted as privates.

A large number of recruits for the 45th Illinois came to the camp of the NINETY-SIXTH, their regiment being with Gen. Sherman. Having many acquaintances, they obtained permission to remain with the Regiment for two or three days, but were then attached to Gen. Steedman's command.

Gen. Hood completed the formation of his lines December 3, and made occasional demonstrations on the front, but almost immediately sent a portion of his cavalry with a few regiments of infantry to operate against Murfreesboro and





points in that vicinity. These detached Rebel forces met with heavy losses without achieving any marked results.

Many citizens from Nashville came out to visit the army and look over the lines, but none cared to repeat the visit, as all were put at work in the intrenchments; the officers arguing that of all persons in the world those resident in Nashville were interested in its defense, and ought to be willing to at least use so harmless an implement as a shovel. Some took the order good naturedly, while others complained, but there was no appeal, and all had to work for at least a few hours.

The weather, which was rainy during the early days of the month, turned extremely cold on the 8th, causing much discomfort. The men were fairly provided for in the way of blankets, and took what comfort they could out of the thought that the Rebels were not as well protected as they. Fuel soon became scarce in the camp, and rigid economy was necessary in its use. On one of the coldest days a loud cheer was heard in the Rebel lines, and the men sprang up in anticipation of an assault. A moment later a dog, with a tin pan attached to his tail, was seen coming with great speed toward the Federal lines, and then the Yankees cheered, while the frightened animal leaped the works and sped on toward Nashville.

Thursday, December 8, the Regiment was called in line and prepared to move to the front, the enemy having driven in the pickets on the left, but the skirmish pits were speedily retaken without any assistance from this command. Once or twice afterward there were alarms, which kept the men in line for a time. Colonel Smith, Captain Hastings, Captain Taylor, and other wounded officers, visited the camp repeatedly, and were warmly greeted. Captain Burnett was so fortunate as to secure leave of absence and went home for his first visit. Captain Blowney was taken seriously ill, and went to hospital, where, after a partial recovery, he also obtained a leave of absence. The three left companies,—B, G and K,—were commanded by Sergeants Wait, Swanbrough and Luke.

During the two weeks in which he confronted Nashville,



Gen. Hood was sparing of artillery ammunition. This was, no doubt, partially due to the fact that he had to bring it so far, and that his transportation was limited, for although he had repaired the railroad from Pulaski to Franklin, he had but two locomotives and a very few cars at his command, most of these having been captured at Spring Hill.

The country became exceedingly anxious over matters in Tennessee, even before the retreat from Franklin; and now, although the railroad was kept open from Louisville and boats were arriving frequently, coming up the Cumberland, the public generally seemed to regard Nashville as in a state of siege, and to anticipate that Gen. Hood would flank the forces out, and compel Gen. Thomas to make a race with him for the Ohio river. Gen. Grant shared in this anxiety, and telegraphed for a forward movement on the sixth; and as his orders were not obeyed, intimated that he should direct Gen. Schofield to take command. Subsequently he ordered Gen. Logan to proceed to Nashville and take charge of affairs in the Department, and that officer had proceeded as far as Louisville, when word came that an advance had been made. While Gen. Logan was on the road, Gen. Grant even left the Army of the Potomac, then confronting Petersburg, and had reached Washington, with the avowed purpose of going to Nashville and taking charge in person, when a telegram announced the exceedingly satisfactory result of the first day's battle.

But Gen. Thomas had been neither idle nor indifferent, and felt that his knowledge of affairs in the Department justified his delay. Many of the recruits were still unarmed. A large number of horses were arriving daily, and were greatly needed by his cavalry, almost one-half of whom were still dismounted. The newly arrived horses had to be shod, and saddles and bridles had to be taken from the depot to the camps. Preparations were so far completed that an advance was promised on the 9th, but a heavy rain storm, turning into sleet, left the roads and fields so icy that neither men nor horses could keep their feet. The cold continued for several days, but on the 14th, the weather having moderated and the



ice disappeared, orders were issued to move the following morning.

Up to this time Gen. A. J. Smith's command had occupied the right of the line, with the Fourth and Twenty-third Corps and Steedman's Division successively on its left, either flank resting on the Cumberland River. The Rebel line was somewhat shorter, but its flanks were guarded by cavalry and heavy earthworks, well supplied with artillery, and commanded the country to the river.

Thursday, December 15, réveille sounded at four o'clock, and before daylight the Union forces were moving out upon the right. The plan of the battle was a grand left wheel, the right of the line to be so extended as to overlap the enemy's left, and take it in flank and rear. The Twenty-third Corps early left its place in the line and was moved to the right, detachments from Gen. Steedman's command taking its place. Under cover of a dense fog the cavalry moved out upon the Harding and Hillsboro pikes, and as Gen. Smith advanced, extended the swinging column. The Fourth Corps moved out simultaneously and was soon engaged. The First Division had the centre of the Corps and was in double line,—the first deployed and the second in column. It happened that for the day the NINETY-SIXTH had the second line.

The plan of the battle was admirably carried out. Gen. Steedman made a strong demonstration on the left, deceiving the enemy into the belief that the main attack was to be made at that point, and causing him to weaken his left and centre. The fog served as an admirable shield, and when it began to lift, Gen. Hood was surprised to find great masses of soldiers in blue lapping his left and breaking across his front with rapid musketry and tumultuous shouts. The cavalry still bore to the right, and soon made way for the Twenty-third Corps. Meanwhile the First Division, marching forward between the Hillsboro and the Granny White pikes, pressed the enemy back to his main line, and shortly after was shouting and charging with the troops on the right. The NINETY-SIXTH followed on, sometimes under heavy fire from both musketry and artillery, but without an opportunity to



take position in the front line or to return the fire. There were protracted halts, the men hugging the ground to avoid the ever-present danger. Occasionally a fine opportunity was offered for those curiously inclined to watch the maneuvering of the long lines of battle from the elevations gained, the country being comparatively open.

The fog being dispelled, all could see that the Federals were achieving a grand success, the heavy breastworks, although guarded by formidable abatis, not being proof against the vigorous assaults of the resolute and confident soldiers. In front of the First Division a fortified hill, with artillery, was taken, and a long column of prisoners filed to the rear. The same scene was witnessed at other points, and by night the enemy had been forced to leave its original line and defend a new position, its right upon Overton's Hill, its left extending to some elevations known as the Harpeth Hills, but with heavy skirmish lines still in their front. The Hillsboro and Gramy White pikes were both clear, and when night closed upon the scene, and the brilliant successes of the day were telegraphed over the country,\* the Federals were noisy and exultant in their extended camps, while the Confederates, sullen and dispirited, were contracting their lines and building new earthworks.

All night the pickets could hear the sounds of preparation in their front. The skirmishers were bold, and kept up a vigorous response whenever they were pressed. Trees were being felled, and the orders shouted to the moving troops, as they massed for their last grand stand, could be plainly heard. While their defeat had been so marked the day before as to make the outcome of a second day's battle almost certain to be a victory for the Union forces, yet Gen. Hood seems to have conceived the idea that upon the shorter and stronger line he had now chosen he could resist all direct assaults.

\* President Lincoln telegraphed Gen. Thomas next morning: "Please accept for yourself, officers and men, the Nation's thanks for your work of yesterday. You made a magnificent beginning. A grand consummation is within your easy reach. Do not let it slip."

Gen. Grant telegraphed at midnight: "Your dispatch of this evening just received. I congratulate you and the army under your command for to-day's operations, and feel a conviction that to-morrow will add more fruits to your victory."





punish the Federals, as his forces had been punished at Franklin, and then, by a night movement to the left, gain the rear of the Union lines, as he had sought to do at Atlanta and Peach Tree Creek.

The Federals made only meagre preparations for defense, confident that the enemy would not attack. It was a sight to be remembered as the troops lay down to sleep that night, scattered about and covering every level spot. Each kept on his clothing and accoutrements, ready at the order to fall in for work of any kind. None doubted that there would be a renewal of the battle on the morrow, or that the Regiment, having been with the reserves the day before, would lead in the advance next morning; but none seemed unhappy, or to delay the hour of retiring to indulge in gloomy forebodings.

Friday, December 16. Long before daylight the troops were ready for action, and the grand left-wheel of the main army was resumed. The Brigade to which the NINETY-SIXTH was attached, manuevered for a time, and when an advance was ordered was the left battalion of the Brigade, and in the front line. At its left, separated by a space of several rods, was the Third Brigade, Col. Grose commanding. But little time was lost in preparation, and then the line swept forward, past farm-buildings and through fields and openings, for a mile or more, the Division gradually swinging to the right, until the left of Grose's Brigade rested upon the Franklin pike. The enemy's batteries had begun playing long ere this, and their skirmish fire was growing uncomfortable, when the lines halted near the verge of some timber, and lay down directly in front of a battery, which fired rapidly over them. Across the open field in front could be seen a fringe of willows, marking the course of a creek, along which the Rebel skirmishers had taken refuge as the Union lines advanced, and beyond it their main works were visible. Soon word came to cross this open field and drive the skirmishers still farther back. Leaving the cover of the timber, the long line of blue pushed steadily but rapidly across a gently sloping ploughed field and meadow, the NINETY-SIXTH having no shelter and no support upon its left. How wickedly the bullets came



humming across the field! Occasionally a man raised his musket and fired, as a peculiarly tempting offer presented itself, but most of them went forward with their Enfields at a right shoulder shift; at first silently, and then with a rousing cheer. There was no hesitation anywhere, although the skirmishers on the left were soon firing almost lengthwise of the line and at short range. John Washburn, of Company B, was shot through the body, being among the first hit, and with a single exclamation staggered forward a few steps and fell dead, before one half the distance across the field had been traversed. Poor fellow! With a presentiment of what was to come he had handed his watch and pocketbook to Nile Wynkoop, of the same Company, that very morning, and requested him to forward it to his wife when the battle was over. His comrades laughed at his fears, but could not dissuade him from his purpose. Bravely he went forward and met a soldier's death. His brother, Volney Washburn, who had joined the command as a recruit but a few days before, went back with a comrade and bore the body from the field, giving it such burial as he could.

Sergeant Swanbrough, commanding Company G, turned to give some word of encouragement to his men, when a bullet disabled his left hand, giving him a wound that proved painful and compelled him to go almost immediately to the rear. Sergeant Miller at once ran bravely to the front and assumed command, the line moving forward without a break. A little further on, Corporal Hamilton, of Company C, who had been terribly wounded through the face at Chickamanga, was struck squarely in the forehead by a bullet, and fell dead without a groan. The bullet passed entirely through his head and entered the shoulder of Sergeant Vandervoort, of Company H, who chanced to be a step in his rear, inflicting a severe wound. Others were also wounded and compelled to go to the rear. As the creek was neared, the opposing line gave way, running back to another depression, and thence to some fences and buildings, where they secreted themselves and kept up a most annoying fire.

This charge was made about nine o'clock. The men were



ordered to halt at the creek, the bank affording some protection, although the position was uncomfortable, owing to the mud and water. A few rods in front of the stream, and on slightly higher ground, was a rail fence, separating the meadow from a cornfield in which the stalks were still standing, and to this fence the line soon made its way and began to fortify. Grose's Brigade moved up and took position, about on a line with the NINETY-SIXTH. Here the troops lay for several hours, a light breastwork being soon constructed. Looking across the cornfield, the Rebel breastworks could be plainly seen, the flags planted upon them being so numerous as to indicate a heavy line. A continuous but not a rapid fire was maintained. Soon there was a wild cheer, and a heavy musketry fire, a little beyond the Franklin pike, off to the left, where, as it proved, a brigade of colored troops, who had driven the enemy from the Nolensville pike, were assaulting the Rebel intrenchments at Overton's Hill. This assault, which was participated in by the Second Division of the Fourth Corps, failed, but was renewed and repeated several times, always without success. In these charges, Lieutenant Woodruff, formerly First Sergeant of Company I, but who had been commissioned in a colored regiment, bravely met his death, and Captain Collier, formerly First Sergeant of Company D, but who had been commissioned in the same brigade with Woodruff, was wounded.

Meanwhile the troops on the right had driven the enemy from several strong positions, not only gaining valuable ground, but making numerous captures of prisoners and artillery.

The position of the NINETY-SIXTH was not only under a severe fire from the front, but became most uncomfortable because of the firing of a battery in its rear, the artillerists cutting almost every fuse so short as to cause the shells to explode long before reaching the Rebel lines. One of these shells exploded near the right of the Regiment and wounded Sergeant Sullivan, of Company F, so severely as to cause his death three weeks later. To add to the discomfort, a cold



rain set in, making the ground upon which the men were lying extremely muddy.

The right having driven the enemy back upon his main line, orders were given to press at all points, and commanding positions in front of each corps, were selected to be assaulted. Major Hicks passed along the line, telling the men that they were expected to break the line in their front should a charge farther to the right, and then about to be made, prove successful. Instantly the men prepared for action. There soon came to their ears the rattle of musketry and all were on their feet. Some of the bolder ones jumped upon the breastworks to watch the result of the charge. An instant later, and without waiting for the order, all jumped the works, and with a loud and continuous cheer, began charging forward. For a hundred rods the route lay through a muddy cornfield; beyond was a deep creek, a farm house, with its yard and gardens, some outbuildings, a clump of cedars, a high rail fence,—partially thrown down at the right, but a formidable obstruction on the left;—then a raise of ground, with a network of abatis; then a ditch, deep and wide in many places; then a strong line of works, filled with armed men. Just at the left, upon a commanding eminence, stood a four-gun battery, which had been throwing shot and shell at intervals all day long.

At a brisk run the line pressed on, entirely outstripping every other regiment in the Brigade. The merciless bullets cut through the cornfield, each one striking many of the stalks, and giving the impression of a hailstorm of lead. Men fell out wounded here and there along the way. At the cedars a tempest of grape swept above them, mowing off the evergreen verdure, and dropping it in showers upon the gallant men below. The house and outbuildings were swarming with Rebel skirmishers when the charge began, some of whom kept up a fire as the line advanced, while others ran out and sought to escape to the main line. A few were shot, but a majority surrendered. A squad of the new men, whose softer muscles and heavier knapsacks had prevented them from keeping up with the main line, came upon these prisoners.





and when the latter began waving their hats and handkerchiefs, some of these men, not understanding that it was in token of surrender, but supposing that the Rebels were making fun of them because they were recruits, actually resented the supposed insult by firing upon them, but with such indifferent aim that only two or three were hit. At the fence the rails were splintered by the fire from the main line. "Boys, their guns are empty!" shouted an officer as the volley passed. Everyone seemed to catch the idea suggested, and to resolve to reach the works before they had time to reload. The abatis offered little resistance, and in a moment the foremost men were upon the works and shouting to the occupants of the long line to surrender. With rare exceptions the enemy threw down their guns and ran to the rear.

Sergeant John Vincent, of Company A, who, from the time of Color-Sergeant Swanbrough's promotion to First Sergeant, the previous August, had carried the stars and stripes, bravely mounted the works and ran along the parapet, only halting when the battery was reached, and then but for an instant, when he jumped over the heads of the Rebels in the works and joined his comrades, who had crossed the line farther to the right, swinging the flag to indicate to the troops in rear that the Rebel line had been broken. The flag was hit by bullets several times, but the gallant color-bearer escaped. The battery fired when the men were swarming almost up to the guns, and the commander was shot as he turned to strike one of his men because he would not again load his piece. Corporal Henry H. Cutler, of Company C, who was one of the foremost in the charge, after crossing the works, was mortally wounded, dying within a few hours. Corporal John McCusker, of Company B, was badly wounded near the battery and while shouting to his comrades to come on. William Kimball, of Company K, and Francis S. Bailey, of Company F, both recruits, were also mortally wounded. Lieutenant William Dawson, of Company F, who for some breach of discipline had been placed under arrest a few days before, went into action carrying a club. He was one of the most conspicuous for his bravery, and the sword



he had so gallantly won was returned to him at the close of the battle. William J. Fuller, of Company B, who had served in a battery for a time, stopped at the captured guns and called to some of his comrades to assist him in turning them upon the enemy, but most of the men were too eager in the pursuit to halt, and after one or two gun-stocks had been broken in the vain attempt to turn the heavy wheels about in the mud, the effort was abandoned. Most of the artillery horses, which had been standing in a depression at the rear of the battery, were disabled or captured, but a few were mounted by their postillions and ridden to the rear. It would be impossible to say who was first across the works. A dozen men mounted them almost simultaneously, most of them leaping over the heads of the foe and then rushing directly toward the battery. The guns proved to be four twelve-pound Napoleons, and all were hot and the smoke was still issuing from their muzzles when the men laid their hands upon them.

Notwithstanding the great fatigue incident to the long run and the climbing of numerous obstacles,—the men all carrying their knapsacks and considerable extra ammunition,—the Regiment pressed on, capturing scores of the enemy. The Rebels shook their hats and handkerchiefs from behind every log and tree, and were promptly invited to step out and run to the rear.

The Union battery in the rear seemed not to understand that the charge had proved successful, although the flag was displayed where they should have seen it, and continued to play upon the hill, fortunately without injuring any of the Regiment. A few of the NINETY-SIXTH ran toward the Franklin pike, directly in rear of the Rebel works, gathering in many prisoners, among them numerous officers, all of whom were directed to report at the battery. But little formality was observed, but a portion of the prisoners were grouped together and sent under guard to the rear. It is probable that the prisoners taken by the NINETY-SIXTH numbered nearly eight hundred. Lieutenant Pepoon secured a receipt for the captured battery, which he still retains among



his highly prized army relies. Two other batteries were captured by other regiments of the Brigade.

It happened that the formation of the Rebel works was such as to bring the NINETY-SIXTH nearer than other portions of the Brigade, and as they were the first to start in the charge they crossed the breastworks first, secured many more prisoners, and suffered heavier loss than the troops on their right. Col. Grose's Brigade came forward after the line was broken, but not with the impetuosity that had characterized the movements of Gen. Whittaker's command, and lost a grand opportunity to make large captures, for a brigade or more of Rebels were massed close beside the pike, for the purpose, it was said, of making a counter-charge upon the Union lines. These troops immediately retreated in considerable confusion, and had the brigade on the left moved forward simultaneously with the NINETY-SIXTH, most of the Confederates on the Franklin pike would have been captured. As it was, the NINETY-SIXTH spread out along their flanks, annoying them with a constant and telling fire, and dropping many of them as they ran back along the road. The lines opposite Overton's Hill, soon charged forward, capturing some artillery and prisoners.

Captain Rowan and Adjutant Blodgett pushed on to the right with a few men, pursuing a brigade and a battery nearly two miles, and when near the Brentwood hills captured a number of prisoners. Discovering a drove of beef cattle that the Rebels were attempting to drive off they succeeded in stampeding them toward the Union lines. Farther to the right the enemy was completely routed, and an attempt was made to push the Union cavalry forward to the pike near Brentwood so as to completely cut off their retreat. In this movement many guns, prisoners and colors were taken, numerous wagons and teams were captured, and the enemy was sent fleeing through the woods, toward Franklin, in wild dismay.

But the short December day was drawing to a close, and darkness came too soon to complete the flanking movement. When there could be no farther advance in safety the exult-



ant Federal army halted for the night, the NINETY-SIXTH being about one mile from Brentwood. It was a chilly, rainy, winter evening, and there were many vacant places in the ranks, but so complete had been the victory to the Union arms and so thorough the overthrow of the vast host that had exultantly pressed them back from the Tennessee river so short a time previously that the camps rang with shout and song, all rejoicing most heartily, and none more heartily than the recruits, who had all day vied with the old veterans in valor and zeal, and moved gallantly in the final charge.

At no other time did it happen in the four years of war that an army was so completely routed as at the battle of Nashville. Their line of retreat was lined with everything that could be thrown away, indicating precipitate haste and utter discouragement. One major-general, three brigadiers, two hundred and eighty officers of lower rank, more than four thousand enlisted men, fifty-three pieces of artillery, and twenty-five battle flags were captured during the two days. The Federal losses were stated at about three thousand. Few battles of the war were fought upon such open ground, or where the maneuvering of either army was so open to the observation of the other.

The losses in the NINETY-SIXTH were much less in number than might be supposed from the work accomplished, but were more than were sustained by a majority of the regiments engaged. The swiftness of the final charge, the fact that the last volley of the enemy in the breastworks was from higher ground than that on which the advancing line was moving, and consequently passed mainly over their heads, and the rush that followed so quickly that the line was upon them before they could reload, were the factors that conspired to make the aggregate loss so light. The following were

#### THE CASUALTIES.

Company A.

WOUNDED.—Eugene Langdon, thigh.

Company B.

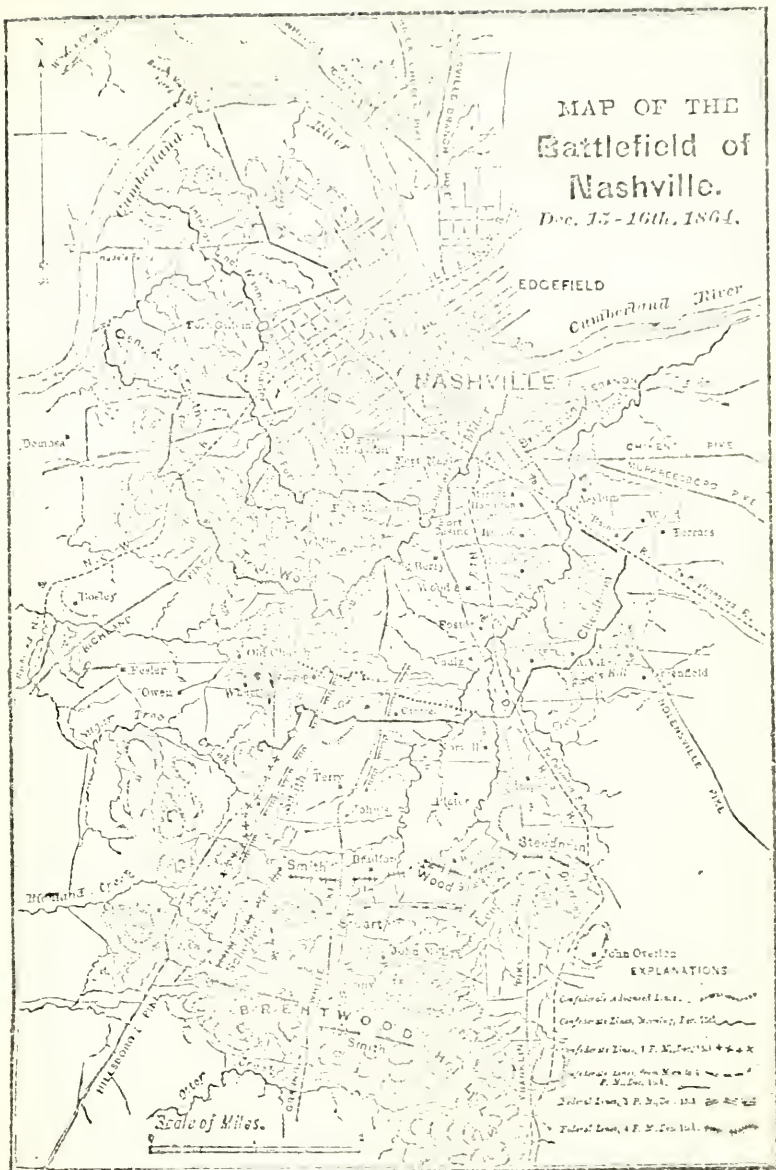
KILLED.—John Washburn.





# MAP OF THE Battlefield of Nashville.

Dec. 15-16th, 1864.





WOUNDED.—Corporal John McCusker, left ankle ; Orskine Ferrand, hand ; Joel Grove, left hand.

Company C.

KILLED OR MORTALLY WOUNDED.—Corporal Henry H. Cutler ; Corporal Norris Hamilton.

Company F.

MORTALLY WOUNDED.—Sergeant Michael Sullivan, Francis S. Bailey.

Company G.

WOUNDED.—First Sergeant John W. Swanbrough, left hand.

Company H.

WOUNDED.—Sergeant H. S. Vandervoort, shoulder ; R. L. Root, neck.

Company K.

MORTALLY WOUNDED.—William Kimball.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

The Pursuit of Hood — The Pontoon Train Missed — A Halt at Franklin — Condition of Affairs in the Village — A Stern Chase — Delay at Rutherford's Creek and Duck River — Last Volley at the Enemy — Plundering in the Mud — How Christmas passed — Waiting for Rations — Forward Again — The Enemy Escapes Across the Tennessee — Results Achieved in the Campaign — General Thomas' Congratulatory Order.

SATURDAY, December 17, the troops were early on the road and pursuing the flying enemy. All were in the best of spirits, notwithstanding that the rain continued. Wounded men were found in several houses about Brentwood, and numerous stragglers were picked up, most of them in a pitiable condition for want of shoes and clothing, and all professing to believe their cause now hopeless. Doubtless their punishment at Franklin, and their utter defeat at Nashville, made the outlook gloomy, and dreading the long march back to the Tennessee River and the possibility of other battles, these stragglers concluded to leave the service. The road was strewn with camp equipage for many miles. The cavalry in advance soon overtook the enemy's rear guard, and had a lively fight, capturing about four hundred prisoners and three stands of colors at Hollow Tree Gap. At Franklin there was another skirmish, but the enemy was soon in retreat. The NINETY-SIXTH reached the north bank of the Harpeth River shortly after noon. The cavalry was able to ford the stream and press on toward Spring Hill, but the water was too deep and cold for the infantry, and they were ordered to bivouac. By a mistaken order the pontoon train took the Murfreesboro pike, and had to be recalled, so that nearly a day was lost in the pursuit. The troops that crossed the river found a terrible condition of things in Franklin. All of the public buildings and many private residences had been turned into hospitals, and two or three thousand wounded were to be cared



for, although the resources at command were of the most limited character. The Federal wounded from the Franklin fight were quite numerous, but all were given such attention as was possible, regardless of the color of their uniforms, and many were removed to Nashville within a few days.

Sunday, December 18, a bridge having been laid during the night, the infantry again set out for the front. The approaches to the bridge were terribly muddy, and as a consequence the column was badly strung out. The NINETY-SIXTH was near the rear of the Division, and as soon as the bridge was crossed was obliged to make an exceedingly rapid march. The roads were soaked with rain, and the pike, cut through by the trains and troops that had passed over it, was in a terrible condition. Through the town, although marching almost at a double quick, the soldiers noted many marks of the recent battle. On the plain just outside the village the graves covered several acres, and the unburied carcasses of the horses killed in the engagement were very numerous, many of them lying close to the breastworks.

With occasional brief halts for rest, the column made its way southward over the familiar ground, many giving out because of the bad roads and the rapidity of the march. The recruits suffered most, but all were greatly fatigued, when a halt was made for the night in a muddy cornfield, about three miles south of Spring Hill. The Sixteenth and Twenty-third Corps followed, but were kept a day's march or more in the rear. During the night the camp was fairly inundated by the terrible storm.

Monday, December 19, the troops again moved out in the rain and mud, but only made about two miles, halting near Rutherford's Creek, where that day and a part of Tuesday were occupied in constructing a bridge; the troops succeeding in crossing Tuesday afternoon, marching to Duck River and camping behind their old works. The rains, which had been almost incessant, now gave way to a snow storm, followed by extreme cold weather. Much delay was experienced in bridging Duck River, and it was not until late in the evening of Thursday, December 22, that the Regiment reached the





south bank of the stream, and, after a march of two miles, went into camp a short distance south of Columbia.

Friday, December 23, Gen. Whittaker took leave of the Brigade and started northward on a leave of absence, Col. Moore, of the 115th Illinois, succeeding to the command. During the stay at Nashville, a fund was raised among the officers and men of the Regiment, amounting to one hundred and ten dollars, and an elegant gold-headed cane was purchased for presentation to Gen. Whittaker. There was a delay in having the proper inscription made, and the formal presentation did not occur until Christmas Day, when Colonel Smith met the General in a hotel at Nashville, and after a brief address handed him the testimonial,—as complete a surprise, perhaps, as the General ever experienced.

From Duck River south the chase was as vigorously pushed as the weather and roads would permit. The cavalry were compelled to take the pike, so deep was the mud upon the dirt road and in the fields. They pressed forward as rapidly as possible, but Gen. Hood had organized a strong rear guard of his best forces, and could readily delay the advance, for any movement in the fields was exceedingly difficult. The infantry did not break camp until noon, and within a few miles came in range of the enemy's artillery. The Rebels had halted, and were stubbornly resisting the advance, when the NINETY-SIXTH and the 115th Illinois were deployed, and pushed gallantly forward in line-of-battle. The enemy stood their ground for a time, and the firing became spirited on either side. The men of the Regiment never faltered for an instant, but swept across the open field and up the ridge, killing a Rebel captain and capturing five prisoners, when the opposing line gave way and fled precipitately through the woods in their rear. Here were fired the last shots at the enemy by the Regiment as an organization. The pursuit was continued until dark, the Regiment being kept in line until a guard detail could be organized, when it was relieved and went into bivouac for the night. Next day the march was resumed at noon, and was without incident.



Lynnville was passed and a halt made two or three miles south of the diminutive village, after dark.

Sunday, December 25, the Regiment left camp at eight o'clock. The enemy was pressed back rapidly through Pulaski. Here the Corps left the pike and marched south-westerly over terrible roads. By a quick movement on the part of the advance, the bridge over Richland Creek was secured and the troops thus saved from a long delay. The cavalry made a vigorous fight, and were once driven back with the loss of one piece of artillery, but quickly rallied and succeeded in capturing a few wagons and a considerable number of prisoners. The afternoon was rainy, and the roads were bottomless. Five or six miles southwest of Pulaski a halt was made, about nine o'clock at night, the Regiment going into camp on a hill-side, where the ground was so sloping and the stones so numerous that it was almost impossible to sleep. The Christmas had been strangely passed. Instead of the holiday feast there had been a positive shortage of food. The rations issued three days before were meagre at best, and active campaigning, then, as always, made the men extremely hungry. A few had absolutely nothing left, and were dependent upon the generosity of their comrades, who had been so prudent as to save a hard tack or two. The country had been stripped of every article of food for miles on either side of the road, and it being impossible for the army to proceed, the pursuit was practically abandoned at this point, although the cavalry followed the enemy to the Tennessee River.

Monday, December 26, the infantry lay idly in camp, awaiting the arrival of the supply train. A cornfield, which had been carefully harvested, was visited by hundreds of soldiers, and every nubbin secured. An ear of respectable size was regarded as a valuable prize, even though it might have been trodden in the ground, or besmeared with mud, for it could be washed and made "clean enough for a soldier." This corn was parched in the universal frying-pan or skillet, and served to partially appease the hunger which had taken possession of every man. The wagons did not arrive until



after dark, and the early hours of the night were occupied in issuing, dividing and consuming rations. The recruits had looked pretty doleful during the day, but cheered up as the coffee-pots began to boil and the pork to sputter over the ruddy camp fires, their happiness being increased by the arrival of a large mail.

Tuesday, December 27, the march was resumed at daylight, over the terrible roads, and in a pitiless rainstorm. The country was broken and timbered. At three o'clock p. m. the columns halted and went into camp, a mile south of Sugar Creek.

Wednesday, December 28, the command left camp at ten o'clock and halted at five, in the neighborhood of Lexington, where it was ascertained that the Rebels had succeeded in crossing the river. The Corps remained at Lexington until Saturday, December 31, when it marched nearly to Elk river, a distance of fourteen miles. This long delay—from Wednesday until Saturday—was necessary in order that rations might be brought up, the deeper streams made passable by the construction of bridges, and plans for the future partially perfected. The country was scoured for forage and considerable amounts secured.

The twenty-seventh saw the last organized force of the army under Gen. Hood cross the Tennessee river in discomfiture. With pleasant weather and better roads it is probable that the Federal Army would have captured or dispersed the greater part of them, but considering the conditions the pursuit had been as vigorous and as fruitful in results as could have been reasonably expected.\* Exclusive of stragglers who voluntarily left the command, Gen. Hood's Army had lost, in their final invasion of Tennessee, more than thirteen thousand men by capture alone, including seven general officers, sixteen

\* Major Sanders, of the Confederate Army, writing of this campaign in the *Southern Bi-monthly*, of September, 1863, said: "General Wood, commanding the Fourth Corps, pursued the rear-guard with indomitable resolution and untiring energy. He was incited to make his wonderful infantry march to Pula-ki by the indications of demoralization, distress, and the hopeless condition of the retreating army that abounded all along the line of Hood's retreat. \* \* \* \* His troops responded to the demands made on their endurance, and achieved for themselves a reputation that will live forever in the military annals of their country."



colonels and nearly one thousand officers of lower grade. Seventy stands of colors, seventy-two pieces of artillery and many wagons and other valuable material had been captured. There were also many deserters, and it is safe to conclude that fully one-half of the entire force that marched so hopefully northward in November were never again in line after their rear guard crossed the Tennessee at Bainbridge. The Union losses during the same period numbered about ten thousand, very many of whom were slightly wounded and soon returned to their commands.

Gen. Thomas announced, in General Orders, the termination and results of the campaign, as follows :

PLUASKA, December 29, 1864.

**SOLDIERS :**—The major-general commanding announces to you that the rear guard of the flying and dispirited enemy was driven across the Tennessee river, on the night of the 27th instant. The impassable state of the roads, and consequent impossibility to supply the army, compels a closing of the campaign for the present.

Although short, it has been brilliant in its achievements, and unsurpassed in its results by any other of this war, and is one of which all who participated therein may be justly proud. That veteran army which, though driven from position to position, opposed a stubborn resistance to such superior numbers during the whole of the Atlanta campaign, taking advantage of the absence of the largest portion of the army which had been opposed to it in Georgia, invaded Tennessee, buoyant with hope, expecting Nashville, Murfreesboro, and the whole of Tennessee and Kentucky to fall into its power, an easy prey, and scarcely fixing a limit to its conquests. After having received, at Franklin, the most terrible check that army has received during this war, and later, at Murfreesboro, in its attempt to capture that place, it was finally attacked at Nashville, and, although your forces were inferior to it in numbers, was hurled back from the coveted prize, on which it had been permitted to look from a distance, and finally sent flying, dismayed and disordered, whence it came, impelled by the instinct of self-preservation, and thinking only of how it could relieve itself for short intervals from your persistent and harassing pursuit, by burning the bridges over the swollen streams, as it passed them, until, finally, it had placed the broad waters of the Tennessee river between you and its shattered, diminished and discomfited columns, leaving its artillery and battle flags in your victorious hands—lasting trophies of your noble daring, and lasting monuments of the enemy's disgrace and defeat.

You have diminished the forces of the Rebel army since it crossed the Tennessee river to invade the State, at the least estimate, fifteen thousand men, among whom were killed, wounded, and captured eighteen general officers.

Your captures from the enemy, as far as reported,\* amount to sixty-eight pieces of artillery, ten thousand prisoners, as many stand of small arms—several thousand of which have been gathered in and the remainder strew the route of the enemy's retreat—and between thirty and forty flags, besides compelling him to destroy much ammunition and abandon many wagons ; and, nule-- he is mad, he must forever abandon all hope of bringing Tennessee again within the lines of the accursed rebellion.

A short time will now be given you to prepare to continue the work so nobly begun.

By Command of Major-General Thomas,

W. D. WHITTLE, Assistant Adjutant General.

\* Subsequent reports materially increased the number of prisoners, cannons and flags.





Subsequently the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America passed the following :

*Resolved*, That the thanks of Congress are due and are hereby tendered to Major General George H. Thomas, and the officers and soldiers under his command, for their skill and dauntless courage, by which the Rebel army under General Hood was signally defeated and driven from the State of Tennessee.

Similar resolutions were adopted by Congress on but two or three occasions during the war.



## CHAPTER XXVII.

New Year's Day Celebrated—The March to Huntsville—Going into Winter Quarters—The Army Dispersed—Incidents of the Stay at Huntsville—How Brick and Lumber were Obtained—Drill and Dress Parades Resumed—Changes and Promotions—Bollenbach's Capture and Escape—Music in Camp—A Sermon that was not Enjoyed—Winter Amusements—The Division Reviewed—Rumors of a Movement.

NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1865, found the army jubilant over the announcement of the result of the campaign, as detailed in the preceding chapter, and at daylight the men of the Iron Brigade began firing off their guns by way of introduction to the welcome anniversary, increasing the noise by cheering and shouting. The officers, apparently, did not approve of these demonstrations, and ordered them discontinued, but with only partial success, until the long column filed out upon the road. Once out of camp, the men were required to halt and "lay around" until afternoon, when they crossed the fields for a couple of miles, and halted for the night, remaining in camp during Monday, in order that a bridge might be constructed across Elk River.

Tuesday, January 3, the troops began crossing the river at eleven o'clock, and marched until four, halting at Athens. Next day the column started at daylight, and marched seventeen miles, camping seven miles from Huntsville.

Thursday, January 5, the march was resumed at daylight, and at nine o'clock the troops passed through the pretty village of Huntsville. Their camp was located about a mile from town, and the Regiment was not obliged to change its quarters until March 13.—being much the longest continuous stay in any one camp during its term of service.

When the Fourth Corps started in pursuit of Gen. Hood, on the morning following the close of the battle of Nashville, Gen. Steedman marched a portion of his command to Murfreesboro, going thence to Stevenson by rail; gathering up



such forces as he could at the latter place and marching to Decatur, hoping to intercept the enemy at the Tennessee River. In this he was disappointed, but pushing forward with his mounted forces, he captured many prisoners, destroyed a large number of wagons, and returned safely with his command.

The Twenty-third Corps, which had followed the Fourth Corps as far as Pulaski, directed its course to Clifton, Tennessee, where it embarked on transports, and was conveyed to the army then operating with Gen. Sherman, going by way of Washington, and thence to North Carolina. Portions of the "Provisional Division" were also sent to Gen. Sherman, and Gen. A. J. Smith's command was sent to Eastport, Mississippi, and thence to the gulf. The cavalry was dispersed to various points, the greater portion being again gathered in a few weeks for extended raids through Mississippi and Alabama, including in their work the capture of Jeff Davis. The Fourth Corps was, therefore, alone in that region, but the enemy had been so thoroughly whipped that the command was not seriously molested at any time. Portions of the Corps were camped at Athens, Decatur, and other points near by.

Upon the arrival of the First Division in Huntsville, a requisition was made for clothing and other necessary articles. The long march had worn out the shoes of the men, and one hundred and fifty pairs were required to meet the immediate needs of the Regiment. Four hundred pairs of socks, and other articles in proportion, were also needed. Provisions were scarce for some time, and for a week or more only half rations were issued, but in time the railroad bridges were rebuilt and the trains soon began to run; thereafter supplies were abundant. The first work was to lay out a camp and construct cabins for winter quarters. Abandoned houses and barns were torn down, the lumber being conveyed to camp on the shoulders of the men or by wagons. Usually four soldiers would unite and put up a "shbang" about eight by ten feet in size. The walls would be three or four feet in height, with boards for such part of the roof as was not cov-



ered by the shelter tents. The weather being cold, fire-places were a necessity, but material for their construction was at first by no means abundant. A large unfinished brick building, intended for a college, stood in sight, a half mile or so from the camp. This was eyed by the men for a day or two; then some one devised a battering ram, and knocked out a few bricks from one corner. Instantly the building was doomed, for the entire Division flocked to the scene and began to knock out brick. An officer finally took charge of this work, to prevent accidents, and soon the walls toppled over with a great crash. Everyone was after the brick, carrying them in blankets or on boards, and in a day or two hardly a piece the size of a biscuit remained. Mortar was made by wetting up the native soil, and in a short time excellent fire-places were constructed, those who were short of brick extending the tops of their chimneys with barrels or boxes procured from the Quarter-Master. Doors were improvised, bunks built and seats and tables made. The little houses were warm and comfortable, and presented a home-like appearance. The grounds were nicely cleaned, ditches dug, and an air of comfort prevailed in a very few days.

Water had to be carried quite a distance, and wood soon became so scarce that details of men with teams had to be sent out daily to supply the needs of the camp. After a time dress parade was resumed, and later the men were required to drill once or twice daily. Major Hicks having been detailed as Judge Advocate General on general court martial, the command of the Regiment devolved upon Captain Rowan for a time, Captain Pollock being absent, sick, at Pulaski, for a few weeks. Subsequently Captain Pollock came up and took command. A number of men were permitted to visit home during the winter.

Saturday, February 4, a man of the 51st Ohio had his head shaved and was drummed about camp with a placard on his back bearing the word "skulker." Washington's birthday was observed by an artillery salute. A review of the Division was ordered for the afternoon, and the troops were





forming when a rain storm sent them back to camp at a double quick.

The *Huntsville Union* was issued at the village, under charge of the military, Sergeant Berg and John Connor, of Company A, working a week or more at their old trade as compositors. A few recruits joined the Regiment, bringing two Companies up to the minimum number and permitting of some promotions. First Sergeant Franklin W. Pierce, of Company F, and First Sergeant John Long, of Company I, were commissioned and mustered as Second Lieutenants.

Occasionally foraging and scouting expeditions were sent into the country, and not unfrequently Rebels were seen. February 1, a small mounted party went out several miles, when some Rebels gave chase and captured Gustavus Bollenbach, of Company B, whose mule gave out, or refused to run with sufficient speed to carry its rider into camp. "Gus" was taken into the mountains, where were a squad of stragglers from Hood's army, but was able to make his escape in the night, after about a fortnight of alternate starving and freezing. His return to camp was heartily cheered, for he was always a favorite, and few believed that he had escaped the hanging promised by the Rebels to men who should indulge in foraging. Charles Sammons, of Company C, who had fallen out on the march southward from Nashville, and concluded to rest for a few days at a private house, was also captured by some strolling cavalry and threatened with hanging. His extreme youth probably saved him, for after a prolonged discussion of his case the Rebels permitted him to sign a lead-pencil parole and then turned him loose. He soon made his way to camp and was afterward cautious about leaving the command.

A glee club was organized, and many were the rehearsals, most of the songs being of a patriotic nature or relating to home. Religious services were held in town, and every Sabbath morning and evening a long procession filed out of camp and visited the various churches. On one occasion they returned greatly incensed, a local pastor having preached a sermon entirely too pro-slavery to receive the endorsement of



Union soldiers. They refrained from any disturbance of the service, but did not again honor the preacher with their presence.

Horse racing was one of the amusements indulged in, almost every pleasant day seeing a running race. Adjutant Blodgett's saddle horse was one of the favorites. Dr. Evans lost his favorite saddle mare from sickness, an animal that he had ridden for two years or more. Dinner parties were frequently given by the officers, and the men imitated their example to such extent as their limited quarters would permit.

The old members of the Regiment enjoyed excellent health, as a rule, but there was considerable sickness among the recruits. However, the deaths that winter were mainly among the veterans. Nelson Huson, of Company B, a member of the band, was left at Columbia, on the march southward, and died in hospital at that place January 4. James Telford, of Company F, died at Washington, D. C. Samuel Wilcox, of Company H, died at Huntsville, Jan. 28. William N. Bates, a recruit of Company K, died at Huntsville, February 16. William Saulsbury, of Company A, died at Chicago, Jan. 9.

March 5, there was an imposing review of the Division, and immediately following it came rumors of a movement.

The news from the East was of the most encouraging character during the last days of the long stay at Huntsville, and the troops were in the highest spirits. All were in doubt as to where they were to be sent, but knew that the long period of idleness must soon come to an end, and the Fourth Corps bear its part in bringing the Rebellion to a close.



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

Leaving Winter Quarters—By Rail to East Tennessee—A Glimpse of Parson Brownlow—Arrival at Strawberry Plains—Russelville—Visiting School—Dancing Parties—Scouting Experiences—Captain Sizemore and his Methods—Glad News from the East—Richmond is Taken—Lee and his Army Surrender—How the News was Received—The Celebration at Shields' Mills—A Rush on the Camp—The Appalling News of Lincoln's Assassination—Its Effect on the Soldiers.

EARLY in March it was determined to move the Fourth Corps into East Tennessee, and place it in position where it could readily march forward toward Richmond, the Rebel capital, from the West. In pursuance of this plan, the NINETY-SIXTH abandoned its winter quarters at Huntsville, on Monday, March 13, marched to the village, and at dark boarded the freight cars. From forty to fifty men were placed in each car. Captain Pollock continued to command the Regiment, Major Hicks being detained a few days, in order that he might complete his duties with the court-martial. Col. Moore commanded the Brigade. Whitesides was passed at daylight next morning, and Chattanooga reached at seven o'clock. After a delay of an hour or two at the latter place, the train moved forward, passing Cleveland and Loudon. The men were crowded, and many rode on top of the cars until driven inside by a cold rainstorm. At Concord the train came to a halt, which lasted almost twenty-four hours. The road was in a wretched condition, and several accidents occurred; fortunately none to the train bearing the NINETY-SIXTH.

Knoxville was reached Wednesday evening, March 15. After a two hours' delay at the depot,—during which the men had a glimpse of that sturdy old Unionist, Parson Brownlow, and other notables, who called upon Gen. Thomas, the latter having come by a special train,—the command was ordered forward. At eight o'clock that evening the train made a final



halt at Strawberry Plains, twenty miles east of Knoxville, the men clambering from the cars and making themselves as comfortable as possible on the bleak, wind-swept field, where was their temporary camp.

All along the route through East Tennessee the loyalty of the people was manifest by the waving of hats and handkerchiefs at every village and hamlet, the people of every age and color, and of either sex, manifesting a pleasure not often shown at the presence of Union soldiers in other portions of the South.

That first night in camp at Strawberry Plains was a most cheerless one. There was little or no fuel at hand, and when, after a long search for poles, the tents were put up, the wind blew them down again, so that by daylight all were thoroughly soaked by the cold rainstorm that prevailed for more than thirty hours. The command remained at Strawberry Plains until Saturday, March 25, changing its camp-ground on the 17th to a former battlefield. On the 25th it marched thirteen miles along the railroad, passing New Market, whither the Third Division had preceded it, and camping at Mossy Creek.

Sunday, March 26, the command marched twenty miles to Russellville. Next morning the other regiments of the Brigade went forward to Bull's Gap, the NINETY-SIXTH remaining to guard a railroad bridge. The camp was on a beautiful slope, just at the outskirts of the village, and the fortnight's halt in that pretty and loyal town a pleasant episode in the Regiment's history. The farmers brought many articles of produce to the camp, selling them at prices regarded as low at that time, although butter was fifty cents a pound, eggs twenty-five cents a dozen, chickens a half dollar each, and other articles in proportion. Many arranged with families to cook for them, and enjoyed the luxury of sitting in boughten chairs, at tables spread with linen, and eating their meals from earthen plates. The citizens were glad of the opportunity to take boarders, especially as the boarders furnished the provisions and paid good prices for the work.

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