

National Quiver

"To care for him who has borne the battle, and for his widow and orphans."

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THE BATTLE OF SHILOH.

General James C. Veatch Replies to General Hovey.

WAS THERE A SURPRISE?

His Reasons for Thinking there Was None.

STORY OF THE FIGHT.

An Interesting Description of the Two Days' Struggle.

Farragut Post, G. A. R., of Evansville, Ind., held a brilliant Camp-fire on the evening of last Thursday, the 5th inst., and the occasion was made notable by the delivery of an address by General James C. Veatch on the battle of Shiloh, in reply to General Hovey.

The Camp-fire, says the *Evansville Journal*, was held at Evans Hall, and the stage was handsomely decorated with two standards of the national colors, and stacks of arms lent an appropriate aspect to the occasion. General Shackelford, Colonel Charles Denby, Major H. A. Mattison, and Captain W. H. Keller, of Farragut Post, occupied seats on the stage with the speaker of the evening.

The musical features of the evening were a patriotic quartette sung by Mrs. Elwood Baker, Miss Durham, and Messrs. Ewing and Paine, and two patriotic songs by Mrs. J. N. Silverthorne. Mrs. Silverthorne first sang "The Red, White, and Blue," and then, in response to cheering and applause, kindly appeared and gave "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp," which was also received with great favor.

General Veatch was introduced by Major Mattison, and illustrated his remarks by a map of the scene of the battle. He spoke deliberately and distinctly, and with fine effect, and was listened to with the profound attention.

After briefly describing the events which led up to Shiloh, General Veatch proceeded as follows:

General Halleck, who was in chief command of the armies in the West, with headquarters at St. Louis, about the 1st of March ordered General Grant to move his army from the Cumberland back to the Tennessee River and embark on steamers for an expedition up that river.

This order was executed with great rapidity, some of the troops moving on transports down the Cumberland and up the Tennessee, and others marching through mud, ice, and snow from Fort Donelson to Fort Henry and taking transports there.

About the 5th of March an angry dispatch came from General Halleck to General Grant asking: "Why don't you obey my orders? Why don't you answer my dispatches? Turn over the command of the Tennessee expedition to General F. Smith, and remain yourself at Fort Henry." This was the reward meted out to the general who had won the first great victory of the war at that time, the greatest victory ever achieved on the American continent. But the expedition was not delayed. General Smith moved his army on an immense fleet of steamers up the Tennessee River to Savannah, where he made his headquarters, about the 13th of March.

From this point he sent General Hurlbut with two brigades up to

PITTSBURG LANDING, ten miles above, and General Sherman with his division further up the river to break the Memphis and Charleston Railroad at or near Hartselle, Mississippi. Incessant rains and swollen streams rendered the roads impassable, and hindered General Sherman from reaching the objective point of his expedition. On his return down the river he examined Pittsburg Landing, and finding it the best point from which the railroad might be reached, he reported the facts to General Smith, who then ordered the divisions of Hurlbut and Sherman to go into camp at that place.

Hurlbut took position on the 18th of March a mile from the landing, and Sherman moved about the 19th about three miles, and occupied the Purdy road, placing his right near the crossing of Owl Creek, and extending his line near Shiloh Meeting-house, with his left across the main Corinth road. This was the position occupied by three brigades of his command, while a fourth, under Colonel Stuart, was posted at the crossing of Lick Creek, on the Hamburg road, and more than a mile from his other troops.

General Prentiss soon after came in and filled a part of the space between Colonel Stuart and General Sherman. General McClernand was placed to the left and rear of General Sherman, and General W. H. L. Wallace on the right of General Hurlbut, and about the same distance from the landing.

General Lew Wallace was at Crump's Landing, about six miles below. We now have before us the six divisions of the Army of the Tennessee, in camp on the west side of that river, under the command of General Charles F. Smith, and it is my recollection that each division was directed to its position by the engineer on his staff, Lieutenant-Colonel McPherson.

General Smith's failing health rendered him incapable of active command, and on the 17th of March, General Halleck placed General Grant again in command of the Army of the Tennessee, but according to General Rawlins, he did not assume command until the 21st of March, six days before the battle. He established headquarters at Pittsburg Landing, where some of his staff remained, but his principal headquarters were still at Savannah, ten miles below.

The camp at Pittsburg Landing was located on high rolling land between Snake Creek on the north and Lick Creek on the south. These streams, at the time the camp was formed, were filled with back water, and afforded complete protection from any attack on the right or left. The field was intersected by deep ravines and hollows, which ran off and emptied into the creeks on our right and left. They were lined with thickets of laurel and azalea, and their bottoms were spongy and miry, and often impassable. The ridges were covered with thick forest of oak and hickory, and filled in many places with dense thickets of undergrowth. There were here and there

small fields of cleared land. All besides was nature formed it.

Roads leading to Purdy, Corinth, and Hamburg traversed this encampment, and teamsters had cut numerous tracks, along which it was possible to move army wagons to and fro from the camps.

Our front was over three miles long, extending from Owl Creek on the right to Lick Creek on the left, and was guarded by the divisions of Sherman and Prentiss.

There was no field works or defenses of any kind. The roads were open and as free for the rebels as to ourselves, if they chose to take the chances. But why wait to be attacked? With Grant at the head of the army why not move on the enemy?

There were two reasons. The heavy rains of March had rendered the roads impassable, and General Halleck, by whose orders every movement was made, had directed General Buell to move the Army of the Ohio from Nashville and join General Grant, and the two armies were to make

A COMBINED MOVEMENT ON THE ENEMY.

Buell was at Columbia, ninety miles away, on the 20th of March. Ten days of very easy marching on fair roads ought to have brought him to the front. But the heavy rains and wretched roads delayed him till the 6th of April, and he reached there only in time to join in the battle on the 7th.

But while Grant's army was waiting for Buell, the rebels were not idle. Beauregard was in command at Corinth, only twenty miles from us. He had called to his support the forces under Hardee, Bragg, Polk and Breckenridge. He had determined that as we were slow in going to him he would come to us. He had about forty-five thousand men, and with this force he determined to strike Grant before Buell came up. He moved from Corinth on the 3d of April. Albert Sidney Johnson, the ablest general in the Southern Army, joined him and took command of the movement.

It was the intention to make the attack on the 5th, but the rain storm delayed some of their troops, and they rested on their arms that night as near our lines as they could approach without creating an alarm. It was well understood in our camp that the rebel forces were near us. It was generally known that they were in strong force at Corinth. The skirmishing with our pickets for several days past had indicated that they were on all the roads, and the attack on an out-post on Friday evening, in which several cannon shots were fired, aroused the whole camp.

But our generals did not believe they intended to attack us, and we confidently expected to attack them as soon as Buell arrived. We had the advantage in position, but in nearly every other respect the advantage was on their side. They had 45,000 men; we had 32,000. They had three corps commanders, a commander-in-chief, and a second in command under him. They had a well arranged plan of attack, understood by all their officers. We had no plan of defense, for an attack was not anticipated.

BUT THE ATTACK CAME!

The first fighting is reported to have taken place in front of Prentiss' division. Three companies of the Twenty-fifth Missouri had moved out on the road as early as three o'clock on Sunday morning. They soon struck the advanced guard of Hardee's corps, and the fight began. The alarm spread along our lines, and Beauregard, seeing that his movement was discovered, advised that the attack should be abandoned. But Sidney Johnson ordered the advance to push rapidly on our front. The pickets and advanced guards were soon driven in on all the roads and

THE BATTLE OF SHILOH WAS ON.

Hardee's right struck Prentiss' division, and his left and center were thrown against General Sherman. Bragg's corps followed close after, filling any gaps that were made in the line, and Polk and Breckenridge re-enforced the others when needed.

Our troops must have been engaged in sharp fighting on our left by seven o'clock, and yet not a sound of the battle had reached the center of the camp. A strong breeze from the river bore the sounds from us, and the rattle and noise of army wagons going to and from the landing deadened and obscured the distant roar of battle.

My command was the Second brigade of Hurlbut's division. The troops had been in line at daylight, and stacked arms in company quarters. Sunday morning inspection was to follow after breakfast. Many were at breakfast when Lieutenant Long, of Hurlbut's staff, was seen riding at full speed toward my headquarters. It could be seen by his manner before he reached us that he bore important orders. His brief message was: "We are attacked by a heavy force. General Hurlbut directs that you move to the support of General Sherman's left!" The long roll was sounded, and in an instant every regiment was forming in line. General Hurlbut says in his report that his brigade was moving out in ten minutes after the order reached me. As we passed near his headquarters he was moving the rest of his division in the direction of General Prentiss' line. Our march to the front was as rapid as possible, and we struck the line of battle on General McClernand's left. The regiments of my brigade were the Fourteenth Illinois, Colonel Hall; the Fifteenth Illinois, Lieutenant-Colonel Ellis; the Forty-sixth Illinois, Colonel J. A. Davis; and the Twenty-fifth Indiana, Lieutenant-Colonel Morgan. It is no disparagement to others to say that no better or braver command went into battle that day.

The battle was raging furiously on the right and left of us and heavy columns were seen moving directly on the point we occupied. Captain Barrows' Fourteenth Ohio battery was near us. He opened fire on their advance, and plowed great furrows through their ranks, but without checking their progress. His shots drew the fire from their batteries on our position, and soon shell and grape fell around us with deadly accuracy.

The Fifteenth Illinois was now in range and sent its fire into the ranks with great precision and effect. Its example was followed by all the other regiments. Their volleys mowed down the front ranks, but these were filled by the reserves. Suddenly, as if in the execution of a long-delayed purpose, they opened a converging fire on our position from right, left and center. The Fifteenth Illinois was driven from its position, leaving its field officers and their company commanders dead on the field. Lieutenant-Colonel Ellis and Major Goddard, of that regiment, fell in their places, yielding their lives rather than retire.

our right and left had given way, the battery had been silenced and our position could no longer be held. I gave the order to fall back and form a new line.

The Twenty-fifth Indiana and the Fourteenth Illinois had been slightly protected in their first position and had suffered less than the others; but they had hardly formed on the new line when they fell under a very heavy fire. Lieutenant-Colonel Morgan was wounded and carried from the field, and the command of the regiment fell to me.

MAJOR JOHN W. PORTER, who gallantly and skillfully conducted it during the two days' battle.

We had now formed on a line with General McClernand, extending his left, and as our position was strong, we held it until McClernand's division was forced to fall back again.

While in this position I had time to note how the battle progressed. It was evident that our whole line was being driven back. The ground was contested most stubbornly, but in every case it had finally to be given up. Their plan of battle appeared to be to assault the right, left and center alternately with such overwhelming force as to compel it to give way.

The battle would rage at one point or other with the most intense fury, while all the rest seemed to pause and await the result. Then suddenly it would cease and soon open at another point, with all the vigor and energy of a first onset; and so the tide of battle ran from seven in the morning to five in the afternoon. At the beginning it was a fight by division commanders, each one calling for help, when needed, from the one nearest to him, and each giving aid without question, wherever most needed. When the battle opened McClernand's division and one brigade of Hurlbut's went to aid General Sherman, and the division of W. H. L. Wallace and the remainder of Hurlbut's division went to the assistance of General Prentiss.

There was no commander-in-chief on the field. General Grant, as you know, was at Savannah, and did not arrive there till eight o'clock. After that time the battle was fought under his personal direction; but there was little opportunity for the display of generalship. It was a battle in which pluck and courage were of the very highest value, and he was the best general who could, in the greatest degree, inspire his men with these qualities. No one can doubt that the presence of General Grant had this effect on all parts of the field.

But to return from this digression to the battle line: Sherman and McClernand had held a solid line from Sherman's right to McClernand's left, which all the assaults made against it could not break. They had been driven back repeatedly, but the line had not been broken.

In falling back a wide gap had occurred beyond McClernand's left, but the rebels did not seem anxious to enter this open door to the landing. They appeared more intent on crushing our left, or getting between it and the river.

It was my impression then, as it is now, that any time after two o'clock, while they were making such tremendous attacks on the right and left, a division of six or eight thousand men might have forced its way through the gap and reached the landing in spite of us. About four o'clock they did take advantage of it, and passing to the rear of Prentiss' command, they rested on McClernand's left, and my left bank was near the Corinth road, and not far west of General Hurlbut's headquarters. We heard the yell of exultation when Prentiss surrendered, and the ominous silence that followed on that part of the field caused us to fear that we had suffered a serious disaster. Suddenly a confused mass of mule teams, artillery wagons and caissons, and a swarm of stragglers came pouring down the Hamburg and Corinth roads. They were closely followed by the rebels dragging a six-pounder gun by hand down the road, and firing charges of grape and canister into the fleeing fugitives every few rods.

It was impossible to fire on this advancing force without shooting our own men, and before we could extricate ourselves from this confused mass the rebels were within sixty yards of our rear. We had to get out of this position quickly; and we did so by falling back on our last line on the road leading from the landing.

Our whole left wing fell back after the capture of Prentiss, and was now re-formed on the new line, which extended directly back from the river about a mile and a half, and then turned to the right and rear, to cover Snake Creek bridge. It was on this new line that the famous battery of artillery, composed of fifty pieces, was placed by General Webster.

Soon after we were in position, the last attacks of the day took place. But the fire of this artillery was more than any force could stand, and they recoiled, and then fell back, and the first day's battle was ended.

About six o'clock the advance of Buell's army crossed the river. It was Ammon's brigade of Nelson's division. Soon after landing, it had a sharp skirmish of a few minutes with the rebel advances, then all was still.

BUT WHERE WAS LEW WALLACE?

Many times that day the question was asked. Every time we fell back, we looked for him on that line. With the re-enforcement of his division we expected to drive them back and defeat them. They had been held in check for eight weary hours and five divisions. "Give us one more hour and we will whip them." Such were the thoughts expressed a thousand times that day.

General Hovey, in his very valuable paper read before this Post, has explained fully how Wallace consumed the day in a fruitless march, not through any fault of his, and I accept his view as a satisfactory answer to the question. Wallace was on the field a little before dark that day, and his division got into position on the right about one o'clock that night.

The divisions of Nelson, Crittenden, and McCook, of Buell's army, arrived during the night and took position on the left. My brigade formed line about one hundred yards in advance of the heavy siege guns, where they lay on their arms during the night. The rain poured down in torrents upon us. The exhausted men rested on the wet ground, with tiny streams of water coursing under and around them. No dry places could be found, and the efforts of the men were not to keep dry themselves, but to keep their arms and ammunition dry. Many of them had gone into the battle in the morning without breakfast, fought all day without dinner, gone supperless to bed, and slept in a rain storm with the music of the gunboats for their lullaby.

The gunboats Tyler and Lexington lay in the stream just above the landing, and had given valuable aid in the afternoon when our forces fell back to their last line. During the night they threw shells every ten minutes, dropping

them all through our camps, now occupied by the rebels.

SO PASSED THE NIGHT.

Our fresh troops at early dawn pushed forward in line and soon drew the fire of the rebels. The battle began early, and at once bid fair to equal in interest the first day. General Hurlbut ordered my brigade to get their breakfast and then be ready to move out to support the right. About ten o'clock we were called out and moved up in close supporting distance of the advance line. About noon General McCook sent a request that I should move to the left and close a part of the line left exposed by the forward movement. We occupied this position all the afternoon. General Grant came up at this time, and in person gave me an order to charge the line in front. Soon we were in motion. At the first dash the rebels broke and fled, and we pursued them on the double quick through our deserted camps and to the thick woods beyond, still pushing them till we were in advance of General Buell's line and ordered to fall by him. The rebels gave a retreating fire, but never stopped to repeat it.

They were everywhere now in retreat, and our commanding generals having decided that enough had been accomplished no pursuit was made, and the great battle was ended.

I have given a brief but imperfect sketch of the fighting of these two days. I will not attempt a description of the battle. No painter ever depicted correctly a battle scene. No tongue or pen ever really described one. A sketch must be seen to be appreciated. It must be entered into to be understood. It is a fearful sight to see two men engaged in deadly combat, each intent on taking the life of the other; but increase this number to eighty thousand, with all the modern appliances of warfare, and we feel at once the poverty of language to describe the thrilling scene.

My position near the center on both days gave me a fair opportunity to form an opinion of the fighting on each day. The first day was a fierce onset of an army full of vigor and confidence of victory. The second day was the stubborn resistance of an army badly shattered in the first day's fight, unwilling to yield the ground, but hopeless of retaining it. The rebels knew they were

FIGHTING A LOSING BATTLE.

There were sudden bursts of battle as furious and intense as any that occurred on the first day, but they were less frequent, and of shorter duration. This view is confirmed by the official reports of the killed and wounded.

Take Nelson's division. No one can doubt, who reads the account of the battle, that Nelson was in the hot of the fighting on the second day. That he pushed the enemy steadily from the beginning. His official report shows a loss of 90 killed and 500 wounded out of a division of 4,500 strong. Turn to Hurlbut's division. His second brigade had less than 2,000, and the loss is 124 killed and 530 wounded. A comparison of these two commands is made because I chance to have the official reports before me; but the same proportions will hold good with all the others. And yet it is often claimed that Buell's army did the fighting at Shiloh.

I must now turn to two points about which differences of opinion are still entertained.

1. Was the army surprised on the morning of the 6th of April?

2. Was General Sherman in command at that time, and responsible for what took place?

General Hovey, in his very interesting and valuable paper read before this Post, on the 20th of January, says: "Such was Sherman's position on Saturday night, when he, and not Grant, was in full command of the field."

I understand this to mean that General Sherman was in command of all the troops at Pittsburg Landing. If such was really the case, there ought to be some official evidence of that fact. What general or special order placed him in command? What order of his ever announced that he had assumed command? What officer or man of the Army of the Tennessee outside of Sherman's own division ever received an order or command from him? These inquiries must all be answered in the negative for the simple reason that General Sherman was not in command.

But did I ever claim that he was in command. In his report of the battle he signs himself as commander of the Fifth division, and he nowhere claims to have had any larger command. Did the other division commanders understand that he exercised any larger command? They most certainly did not. McClernand says that he was "requested" by Sherman to support his left. Hurlbut speaks of a "message" and "request" from Sherman, but neither he nor McClernand mentioned any command or order from Sherman.

These are the points to settle, and beyond any further controversy. But here is one more. General Sherman at that time stood third in the rank of division commanders in the Army of the Tennessee. Their rank was in the following order: McClernand, Lew Wallace, Sherman, Hurlbut, Prentiss, and General W. H. L. Wallace. McClernand and Lew Wallace were major-generals. All the others were brigadiers. General Sherman was not in command, and without a violation of military law and usage could not have taken command without a general order.

Having disposed of this question, the charge of General Sherman's responsibility for the condition of affairs at the opening of the battle needs no answer.

Was the army surprised? On this much-discussed subject there has been a flood of charges and defenses for a period of twenty years, and the end is not yet. I have often thought that this was a dispute more about words than about facts.

Is the fact that the army met in the open field (or rather forest) under defensive works of any kind evidence of a surprise? If so, then most of the great battles of history were surprises. Is the fact that our commanders, knowing the enemy was near us in large force, did not believe he would attack us, evidence of a surprise? If so, then a surprise happens on one side or another in most battles. You often think your enemy will fight when he does not, and he often turns and fights when you think he will not. But neither of these state of facts would constitute a surprise.

Without attempting to give in precise words what would constitute a surprise in a military sense, I will read an extract from a popular work, and will admit, if the facts agree with this statement, the army was surprised:

"As day broke, our pickets on Prentiss' front came running into camp tired in advance of the pursuing rebels, whose shells were tearing through our tents a moment afterward. Some of our men were dressing, others were eating, a few were eating their breakfast, while, especially officers, had not risen. The next instant rumbled lines of battle poured out of the woods in front of our camps, and at a double-quick rushed in upon our bewildered, half-dressed and not yet half-armed men, firing deadly volleys at close range, then

springing on our helpless, countless, musketeer mob, with the bayonets some fell as they ran, others as they emerged from their tents, or as they strove to buckle on their accoutrements; some tried to take prisoners. Some of these were found, though disabled, still alive, when we recovered these tents next evening."—*American Conductor*, Vol. 2, 61.

Was this account taken from the official reports of that battle? Did any officer who took part in that battle make such a report? I think not. The statements agree almost to the very words with the first newspaper accounts written from Paducah and Cairo, by persons who were not on the battle-field.

In attempting to get at the facts in the case I have placed all the accounts I have seen in two classes.

First, those who were there; and, second, those who were not there.

I propose to examine the testimony of those who were there, and, if not satisfied, I will then hear the testimony of those who were not there.

No one has ever charged that the divisions of McClernand, Hurlbut, or W. H. L. Wallace were surprised. They were in the interior of the camp and marched out in perfect order to battle. The surprise, if it occurred, must have taken place on the lines of Sherman or Prentiss.

Let us begin with General Sherman. He was on the right and his brigades were commanded by McDowell, Buckland and Hildebrand. General Sherman says: "On Sunday morning early, (the 6th), the enemy drove our pickets back on the main body, when I ordered under arms my division. Shortly after 7 a. m., with my entire staff, I rode along a portion of our front, and when in front of Apple's regiment was fired upon by the rebel pickets." He further says that at 8 o'clock he saw large masses of the enemy moving to his left and front, and at this time all his regiments were in line of battle in their proper places.

Who will claim that Sherman was surprised when he had more than an hour in which to prepare for battle?

Were any of his brigade commanders surprised? McDowell, commanding the right brigade, says: "On Sunday morning, the 6th, at the first alarm, my line was formed, as per previous orders. At eight o'clock the line was thrown forward on the brow of the hill." Here again is ample preparation for battle.

Buckland, who is next on the line, says that while the first alarm his brigade was in line, and "being informed that the pickets were being driven in, he ordered Colonel Sullivan, of the Forty-eighth Ohio, to advance and support the pickets, which he did." Has not every report here proceeded with as perfect order as you ever saw at the opening of a battle?

Hildebrand is the next in line. He says: "Early on Sunday morning, the 6th, our pickets were fired on, and shortly after seven o'clock the enemy appeared in force in columns of regiments at least four deep. Having formed my brigade in line of battle, I ordered an advance."

Now here was the point on Sherman's line that first gave way. General Sherman says: "My Third brigade did break much too soon." But it was not because it was surprised, for, you see, they were in line and moving out for battle.

You are now convinced that no surprise occurred on Sherman's line. Whereshall we find it? In Prentiss' division? General Prentiss was surrounded and captured while most heroically holding his position. He did not make a report immediately after the battle, as he was a prisoner. I understand he did make his report afterwards, but I have never seen it, and cannot tell what he said about a surprise. But Lieutenant-Colonel Quinn, of the Twelfth Michigan, and acting commander of Prentiss' division after his capture, made a report, and says that several companies were sent out from that division at three o'clock on Sunday morning; that they advanced three miles, struck the enemy, and were driven back; that they were re-enclosed, and that General Prentiss ordered his division to line up and advanced a quarter of a mile, where he met the enemy, but in such heavy force that he was driven back.

The report of Colonel David Moore, of the Twenty-first Missouri, who went out with his regiment to support the pickets that morning, is to the same effect.

We have only one more point on this line to examine, and that is the position held by Colonel David Stuart, commanding the last brigade of General Sherman's division. He was on the line some miles to the rear of the main body. He is notified both by his own pickets and by General Prentiss that the enemy was advancing, and posts his command.

IN POSITION TO RESIST THE ATTACK.

We have now examined every part of the line to find who was really surprised, and have not found any one.

But, it is asked, was it not published at the time in many papers at the North, and very generally believed, that the army was surprised? No doubt this is true.

The newspaper accounts were highly colored and in many cases greatly exaggerated. These came back to the camps and many a soldier believed that a surprise was the cause of our hard fighting. Each one knew he had not been surprised, but he thought somebody else must have been.

The official reports in detail did not appear till June, 1862, when they were called for by a resolution of the United States Senate and were published in Senate document No. 68. Any one who will take the trouble to examine these reports will find the facts here given fully sustained.

I might rest the case here and ask the advocates of the surprise theory to offer some better evidence than the opinion of persons who did not see the battle open. But I will add a fact or two coming under my own observation.

Within ten days after the battle a board of officers was convened to examine charges that might be preferred against officers for misconduct in the battle of the 6th and 7th. The board was General John A. Logan and Colonels Smith, Leggett, Stuart and Veatch. They examined the charges against several officers and heard their defense.

The whole story of how the battle began, with all its details, was repeated again and again, but no officer pretended that he had been surprised. The surprise theory had not then reached the ears of the newspapers. It was first introduced at Memphis in August, 1862, an officer of General Sherman's command was tried by court-martial. I was made a member of that court in his defense, and in that court, in discussing the whole battle of Shiloh. But instead of claiming a surprise, he insisted that he and many other officers knew the rebels were near, and meant to attack.

THE WAR IN THE WEST.

Sketch of the Early Career of General Nelson.

GAY LIFE IN CHILLI.

Recruiting Soldiers for the Union Army.

ORGANIZING THE CAMP.

The Mountaineers Rally to the Standard of the Union.

CHAPTER III.

Lieutenant William Nelson, U. S. N., the officer chosen to perform the delicate and difficult task of establishing a camp and organizing a brigade of Union soldiers on Kentucky soil in opposition to the judgment of avowed Union men, was a man eminently fitted for the undertaking. The times were turbulent—murder, unwhipped justice, stalked through the land. The State guard, 10,000 strong, under the leadership of General Simon Bolivar Buckner, was under a high state of discipline, thoroughly equipped, and ably commanded. Many of the companies comprised in the organization would have responded to the call of the commander to disperse the newly-organized camp. This order would doubtless have been issued if troops from the Northern States had joined the camp.

NELSON'S EARLY LIFE IN THE NAVY.

Lieutenant Nelson, the third son of Dr. Thos. Nelson, of Maysville, Ky., was born in that city September 27th, 1824, and was, consequently, thirty-seven years of age when entrusted with the responsibility of organizing the first camp of Union soldiers on the soil of his native State.

At fifteen years of age he entered the Naval Academy at Annapolis, and the next year sailed as midshipman on the Yorktown to the Pacific Ocean, where he spent two years practically studying the duties of the service. In 1843 he returned to Annapolis, where he was examined and promoted to the rank of passed midshipman, and was assigned to the ship *Barian*, which at once sailed to the Pacific. He continued in the naval service until the war with Mexico, when, at the siege of Vera Cruz, he had command of a gun on the steamer *Sourge*, where he greatly distinguished himself, continuing to work the gun himself with undaunted courage after most of his men had been killed. For gallantry on that occasion he was voted a sword by Congress and promoted. Soon after the close of the Mexican war he was sent to the naval station on the Mediterranean, where he remained two years. Here he laid the foundation of the wonderful proficiency that subsequently distinguished him as a linguist.

He returned to the United States on the steamer *Mississippi*, which brought the illustrious Kosciuszko to our shores. Young Nelson, who was extremely enthusiastic and kind in manner, won the regard of the ex-Dictator of Hungary, and accompanied him in most of his travels through the United States. After a brief leave of absence Lieut. Nelson was assigned, at the close of the year 1854, to the command of the store-ship *Fridonia*, anchored in the Bay of Valparaiso, as a depot of stores for the American squadron.

WHAT THE CHILLIANS SAID OF HIM.

La Voz de Chile, a paper published at Santiago de Chile, in a highly-enthusiastic sketch of the career of Major-General Nelson on November 29, 1862, shortly after his death, refers as follows to his residence in that country: "To this circumstance do we owe the residence among us for nearly three years of Lieutenant Nelson, leaving at his departure imperishable memories among his friends. He was as jovial, as kind, as frank in manner, as distinguished in bearing, as cultivated a gentleman as he was a loyal and courteous comrade. He possessed, moreover, many social attractions, speaking perfectly five or six languages, delighting in the dance (even rendering himself famous in the national waltz), and was deemed a decided amateur in music. His finer qualities were, however, dimmed by an extreme impetuosity of temper, manifested at times by strange acts, such as in an evil hour cost him his life."

"Many are the incidents illustrative of the character and spirit of Nelson treasured among the many friends he left in Chili, and we cannot refrain from here recording one incident which testified his extraordinary presence of mind no less than his herculean strength. During his residence at Valparaiso Nelson was accustomed to take part in the fox hunts then greatly in fashion among the English at that time. Upon one of these occasions the horse upon which an estimable young Chilian was mounted fell in attempting to leap a ditch, crushing beneath him the body of his rider."

A FEAT OF HERCULEAN STRENGTH.

All supposed him killed, and in order to obtain his object, stating that the dying throes of the animal might extinguish the latent spark of life remaining in his rider, and proceeded at once to the horse. Then, making an almost superhuman effort, he lifted the animal sufficiently to enable the others to draw out the scarcely living rider, whose life was thus miraculously preserved. It will be conceived that Nelson was capable of performing this prodigy of strength when it is remembered that he was at that time, although only thirty-three years of age, over six feet in stature, weighing two hundred and fifty pounds.

"Notwithstanding his stature, he was neither obese nor wanting in agility or grace of an athlete. It is true that, like Henry the VIII., he broke down three or four horses in a day's ride, but after a gallop at Ancone or the fig groves of Catrace he frequently found him an elegant and tasteful gentleman in the salons, where more than once, carried away by the spontaneity of his disposition, he was seen to kneel before some lovely Chilian, to whom the dashing sailor swore a love as inconstant as the billows of the sea. His fun was irresistible. On one occasion he removed the tail of a servant in a pistol gallery at Valparaiso by a well-directed ball, paying him on the spot for the damage and fight with a handful of coin, for he was as accurate a shot as he was a dished gentleman."

Lieutenant Nelson returned to the United States in 1857, and was placed on waiting