

HOW ATLANTA FELL.

Gen. R. W. Johnson's Reminiscence of a Ceaseless Struggle.

Hood's Nerve Apply Characterized by Col. Mackay - General Sherman's Plunges into the Thicket of the Fighting - Rebel Leader's Desperate Sortie - Howard Takes McPherson's Command - Sherman's Eagle-like Swoop.

EDITOR NATIONAL TRIBUNE: The march from Chattanooga to Atlanta was one continuous battle. It might almost be said that during those long months of combat which culminated in the capture of Atlanta and northern Georgia, like the Israelites of old, we followed a cloud by day and a pillar of flame by night.

For in that time Dalton, Resaca, Kenesaw, New Hope Church, Pickett's Mills, Peach Tree Creek, Jonesboro, Atlanta, and all those other crimson names of battle, had been traced bloodily into the history of our devoted army. Every day had the smoke-cloud of battle kissed the heavens, and each night had flamed and flashed with the lambent lights of our blazing guns, and we had followed that smoke-cloud and those blazing guns over a hundred fields of strife, until the old flag floated in exultation over the great "Gate City" of the South.

I will begin my reminiscence on July 20, 1864, when our army was in position on Peach Tree Creek. The morning was a beautiful one, the sun rising in a cloudless sky. While riding along my lines I met Col. Mackay, of Gen. Sherman's staff. I had known him in Texas, years before, and he was well acquainted with Hood. He said to me:

"We are going to have a hard battle to-day." I asked him why he thought so, and he replied: "I have just seen an Atlanta paper which contains an order placing Hood in command; and," said Mackay, "a man who will beat a thousand dollars without having a pair in his hand will fight when he has the troops with which to do it."

Sure enough, about 3 o'clock that same afternoon Hood moved his army out, as if forming on parade, and he was in readiness to lose his "dogs of war." The main portion of his army was thrown against our left, his extreme right being opposite to my left brigade, commanded by that brave and gallant soldier, Col. A. G. McCook, of the 2d Ohio. My other brigades and the two other divisions of the Fourteenth Corps—Davis's and Baird's—were not engaged.

The assault was a desperate one, and the casualties great on both sides. Hooker's Corps, immediately on my left, suffered most heavily. Hood was finally repulsed and fell back on his intrenchments. When the smoke of battle had lifted, I went over to see Hooker, and he said:

"They put me in a place where they supposed I would have no fighting, but Joe Hooker cannot be kept out when fighting is going on."

His loss was about fifteen hundred. In this battle my loss was light, but my Adjutant-General, Capt. E. T. Wells, was dangerously wounded. I had attached to my division an Illinois battery, commanded by Capt. Dilger, an officer of the Prussian army. It was said that he, in company with another young Prussian officer, came to this country to witness the war, and that they might see both sides cast lots for choice. Dilger chose the Federal side and his friend joined the Confederates.

Through certain influence he secured the command of Battery C of Illinois artillery. Dilger dressed in buckskin, and was known throughout the army as "Leather Breches." He was a gallant fellow, and when an engagement took place generally rushed his battery out to the skirmish-line. I was in constant fear that through his rashness the battery might be captured, so I had him instructed not to go in front of the main line unless ordered.

In the battle of the 20th, regardless of my orders, he moved forward to the front line, and had several of his cannoneers killed by the enemy's sharpshooters. After the battle I sent for him, and said:

"Capt. Dilger, you violated my orders in going too far to the front, and in doing so you have lost some of your men." To this he replied: "No, no, General, I did not lose any men."

I told him it had been reported to me that several of his men had been picked off by the enemy's sharpshooters.

"Oh, yes," said he, "with me leather balls." Belonging to the artillery, he did not count a man killed unless by a cannon-ball or shell. He did not again return to his own country, but remained in the United States. While Gen. Palmer was Governor of Illinois "Leather Breches" was his Adjutant-General.

On July 22 Hood made another sortie, this time striking our extreme left. Again the losses were heavy. It was on this occasion that McPherson fell. As soon as his death was known Gen. John A. Logan took command, and by his good judgment showed himself to be a splendid soldier and an able commander. A few days after this battle Gen. O. O. Howard was assigned to the command of McPherson's Army.

Sherman decided on the movement of his army to the right, and to effect this he ordered Howard to move in rear of our lines and take position on the right. It seems that this movement was not known to Hood. On July 28 he moved out on the Chick-Skillet road to attack our right. Here he encountered the same old foe who had fought on the 22d, and with about the same result.

This was Howard's first battle with his new command, and so well did he manage it that his army was convinced that the brave McPherson fell. As soon as his death was known Gen. John A. Logan took command, and by his good judgment showed himself to be a splendid soldier and an able commander. A few days after this battle Gen. O. O. Howard was assigned to the command of McPherson's Army.

"I have fought a bloody battle on the Lick-Skillet road, but I still hold the road." True, he held the road, but it was the end of it which was lost in the streets of Atlanta. This was a bloody engagement. I passed over the field before the dead were buried, and could easily trace the line-of-battle of the Louisiana Tigers by the dead of that organization who fell in the line.

The losses did not seem so great at any other points of the battlefield. It was here that it was said a Federal officer called out: "Johnny, how many more men have you?"

The answer came back: "Enough for one more killing!" To pass over a field after a battle and then visit the hospitals will convince anyone that, refine war as much as possible, still it is a bloody war. After a few more unimportant engagements Hood evacuated Atlanta, and our victorious army entered the city. Here, after a brief breathing spell, our legions separated, many of them dark to meet again this side of the dim, dark waters of death.

Sherman, with the Fourteenth and Twentieth Corps, with most of the cavalry of the command, started on that eagle-swoop of his which served in so great a measure to stamp out the expiring embers of the rebellion, and participated in that storied "march down to the sea."

TRICKS OF THE COLORED SOLDIERS.

A Suttler's Clerk Tells of His Experiences in the Army of the James.

EDITOR NATIONAL TRIBUNE: In September, 1864, I was in the Army of the James, at Deep Bottom, Va., and the sutler was H. P. Elias, a man from Cincinnati.

I think the men were in Draper's Brigade, and the General had established a price-list for the sutler's goods. At this time the 4th U. S. C. T. was at Dutch Gap Canal, and I was then clerking for Cooper, the sutler of the 4th. He established his own prices.

A move was made towards Richmond, Sept. 28, 1864, which resulted in the battle of Fort Harrison, or Chapin's Farm. The 4th and 5th U. S. C. T. both participated, and after the lines were established and things quieted down the sutlers moved to their tents.

After Elias moved he discarded the price-list and substituted one of his own. In a few days Gen. Draper discovered that his price-list was ignored, and Elias was ordered to leave the army in three days.

He disposed of his team and most of his stock, but the three days were fast going, and he sold out his tent and the remainder of his stock to his clerk, Robert D. Kuhn, who was directly elected or appointed sutler of the regiment.

Kuhn acted as clerk. I left Cooper and the 4th and agreed to go with Kuhn. I reached Bermuda Hundred and found Kuhn. He had just bought a four-mule team and a wagon with no cover, and had no driver. He had a tent at the front with the regiment, and a boy there with it, named Henry Pennington, from Mount Vernon, O., but no stock of goods of any amount.

He had bought goods and had the wagon loaded, and wanted me to commence by driving the team to the front. I knew no more about driving mules than a mule does about driving men, but I started.

I got stuck in the mud-holes twice, having to unload an awful conglomeration of goods, had some of my stock made away with by the "boys," and arrived at my destination after having been 24 hours on the road, driving less than 10 miles.

The sutler was always regarded by the soldiers as a robber, and they looked upon him as lawful prey. There may have been exceptions. If they could get the best of him any way, that was all right. Their conscience never troubled them about that.

Many of them were always studying some plan to "beat" the sutler, and a regiment of men would be seen in the evening schemes. The colored troops would often come back with complaints about wrong change.

"Look a-heah, boss, I giv you a half-dollar for 10 cents' wuff tobacco, and you only giv me back 20 cents, was a sample." Some would get into the sutler's tent, and perhaps buy a few cents' worth of something and see how things lay inside the tent; then in the night, when everyone was asleep, they would creep up to the tent, cut a hole through, reach in and take everything they could reach. After having our tent cut twice we used to pile brush around it, so that one could not get to it without making a lot of noise.

Another scheme was to come after dark and want 25 or 50 cents' worth of something in their haversack, and when it was handed to them they would run with it and disappear in the darkness. After that had been played once or twice I wouldn't let go the haversack until the money was put into my hand.

One evening the money was in my hand and I turned around to the candle to look at it and a piece of rag instead of a scrip, and that fellow was out of sight. After that the haversack didn't go out until I had the money and had looked at it. Then it was "Where's your money?"

After a search in his pockets, "I clar, Boss, I done left it in my tent. I'll bring it down in the morning." Back into the barrel went the cakes.

Coffee was high at that time, and some of the men who didn't care for it used to save their rations of coffee and sell it to the sutler for about half price and take their pay in his goods. They used to take the coffee-ground and mix it with a little new coffee and go down and sell it to the sutler. We soon caught on to that.

Some new scheme was coming up most every day, and if the sutler was a robber, the robbery business was not confined exclusively to the sutler. The sutler's life was not all "sweet milk."

I went with another sutler on Feb. 14, 1865, and remained until the close of the war. I close with a rather amusing parody: "Breathes there a man with soul so dead That he never curst his sutler's name? And still you'd look with more surprise On one who'd curse the sutler's name! And chide shall reign on earth and seas, Ere they will curse the sutler's name."—C. H. OSGOOD, Manchester, N. H.

THAT FAMOUS "APPLE TREE."

Comrade J. B. Work Corroborates the Statements of Surg. Kitchen.

EDITOR NATIONAL TRIBUNE: Comrade E. C. Kitchen's description of the location of the famous "Appomattox apple tree" is incorrect. When I rode up to the tree I found three or four of our boys engaged in conversation with the sutler about the number of rebels. They were explaining to me the legend surrounding the apple tree.

Lee surrendered under the apple tree, and around which we were grouped. Their statement was that Gen. Lee was resting and waiting under the apple tree when the Union officer rode up delivering a message from Gen. Grant, stating that he would wait his army for the purpose of a conference, and that the road was blocked by artillery and wagon-trains. While we stood there I remember seeing an officer with a Surgeon's straps on his shoulders ride up to the apple tree and break off a switch. This, I believe, was the first shot fired from the apple tree.

Immediately another officer, also mounted, but a Lieutenant, I think, of infantry, took out his knife and cut out one of the limbs a piece of bark, at the same time taking a riding-switch from one of the limbs. A Union Sergeant helped himself to a good-sized limb as a memorandum.

At the time I got the impression that the Surgeon belonged to an Illinois regiment, but from your description of the occurrences and surroundings, I am convinced that it was none other than Surg. E. C. Kitchen, of the 55th Pa., who got the first memo of the apple tree.

Seeing that we were in a "pocket," as it were, Gen Taylor gave the command, "Right about-face!" Although falling back under heavy fire the line remained intact, and the cavalry of the enemy made no hostile demonstrations.

Lieut. Vanoy, of Co. B, 2d N. J., was wounded. The Sergeant-Major of the 2d N. J. was relieved of his head by a cannon-ball. Gen. Taylor was wounded, and in two or three days died.

We were informed at the time that the troops in our front were Jackson's Corps; that they had made a forced march and got in position about 10 o'clock the previous night. In a day or two the Jerseys regained their composure, and a little later had the pleasure of driving the enemy pell-mell before them over in Maryland.—J. S. JONES, Co. B, 2d N. J., Parsons, Kan.

"Gay and Happy." Matt F. Kippax, 17th U. S. Columbia Arsenal, Columbia, Tenn., wishes to procure the words to a song entitled "Gay and Happy," which was sung at the beginning of the war. It began: "I'm the girl that's gay and happy."

IS YOUR BRAIN TIRED. Use Mott's Acid Phosphate.

AS THEY VIEW IT.

Veterans' Opinions on the Pension Question.

Many comrades write to THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE what they think about pensions. Below we give some of the views expressed:

I do not like to see the comrades wrangling over Service Pensions. I enlisted in August, 1862, and served three years, but I should be the last man to say, "Give the other man \$3 a month and me \$12, because I served longer." If the Government pass a Service Pension Bill it should be for \$3 a month for a retired soldier, and not ask the Government to support him if he has means to support himself.—O. C. Olson, Hatton, Mich.

Comrades, stop bethering about long and short time, but urge that we get the maximum rate of service pension.—Garrison Bowen.

I am in favor of a Per Diem Bill, for I do not think it would be treating the long-service veterans just right to put them on a footing with the short-time men.—C. W. Sanders, Florida, N. Y.

Ret. Post, 64, Williamsport, Pa., recently endorsed the G. A. R. Service Pension Bill now before Congress.—J. F. J. Burrows, Adjutant.

I most emphatically recommend a Service Pension. Let us throw all selfishness to one side and pull for each other's interests. We have done so before, so let the brotherly feeling with which we fought so hard sustain us in this new enterprise.—Charles Schenk, New York City.

My pension all honorably-discharged soldiers first, then equalize according to merit or demerit of a case. Thousands of old soldiers are dying in poverty for want of help justly due them from the Government. Next, give bounties to those who were promised bounties.—W. S. Keller, West Mansfield, O.

I think trying to get everyone an \$8 Service Pension will take a great deal more money than a Per Diem Bill.—John Valentine.

My choice is the Per Diem Bill. Short-term enlisted men have had enough favor, give the long-term men a chance.—B. F. Culbertson, Cleveland, Tenn.

I am much interested in the various comments of our comrades in relation to the pension question, while I am fortunate in having escaped all serious disabilities through two years and six months with my regiment, and never ran away from the colors, I nevertheless feel entitled to a recognition by this Government for his services from 1861 to '65. While the Per Diem Idea would net me more money personally, I believe that a realization of the Service Pension of \$8 secured first would ultimately result in better satisfaction to all concerned than any other plan.

I trust the matter will be adjusted, though, in good shape when Congress gets fairly settled down to work after the tariff Bill is disposed of.—J. C. Blackwood, Camden, N. J.

I cannot but feel that there is a great deal of selfishness in this struggle between the long and short term men, and if it continues we shall get no bill at all. I served continuously from 1861 to 1865, and have the right to consider myself a long-service man. I appeal to all comrades to stop and think if they considered the length of service of the men who stood beside them in the long and short term men, and if it continues we shall get no bill at all. I served continuously from 1861 to 1865, and have the right to consider myself a long-service man. I appeal to all comrades to stop and think if they considered the length of service of the men who stood beside them in the long and short term men, and if it continues we shall get no bill at all. I served continuously from 1861 to 1865, and have the right to consider myself a long-service man. 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