WAGON-BOSS AND MULE-MECHANIC

Incidents of My Experience and Observation in the Late Civil War.

By R. M. PECK.

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As the rebels from the other side of the Arkansas, commanded by Gens. Cooper and Stand Waitie, had been threatening our communications with Fort Scott—having lately made a raid into the road and captured our mail from the North—it was found advisable to reinforce the escorts sent from Scott with the large supply trains to us; and for that purpose Col. Phillips usually sent about 500 Indians up the road to meet the trains whenever he was notified of one starting from Fort Scott, of which he was kept informed by messengers. The distance from Fort Scott to Fort Gibson was called 160 miles by the old military road.

On one of these trips in the latter part of June, '63, a detachment of the 3d Indian regiment, under command of Maj. John Foreman, had been sent up the road to meet a train and strengthen its escort. The rebels had sent a force up the road also, just behind Foreman's, to lay in wait at Cabin Creek, 150 miles from Gibson, for the train, and take it in.

As the big outfit was nearing the enemy's position, on June 30, a small reconnoitering party of rebels had been sent out beyond Cabin Creek as far as Timbered Hill, about 10 miles, to ascertain the force of the train's escort, the number of wagons, order of travel, time they were making, etc. When the rebel party reached the top of Timbered Hill they saw the long string of wagons, quite near, crawling along through the open prairie on the other side.

Fearing that they had been seen by some of our men, the rebels then rode back down the road towards Cabin Creek till clear of the hills and out of sight of the train men, and then turning off the road took a circuitous route through the prairie grass around to the rear of the Timbered Hill; then dismounted, and leaving their horses in charge of one man, they crept up to the top of the hill overlooking the road, and there, secreted in the timber, they had an excellent and near view of the train and escort as it moved along the road past, and just below them.

The spies thought themselves so securely hidden, and being anxious to get all the information they could, concluded to remain and watch the train until the entire outfit had passed; and they then intended to cut across to the timber of Cabin Creek—only a little way west of them—cross the creek, and, with their valuable information, hurry down the creek to their own command, which was lying in wait in the timber at the further side of the crossing of Cabin Creek where they intended to make the attack.

This party of rebel spies, though composed of half-breed Cherokees, did not display the usual shrewdness of the Indian in concealing their own trail, else they would have kept clear of the road which our men were to travel. I never heard any explanation or excuse for their utter want of caution. They probably knew better next time. It was a repetition of the old, old story—they saw their blunder when too late.

Maj. Foreman, with his Indians, was acting as advance guard to the train, and when they came over the hill and saw the tracks of the rebels' horses, they took up the trail and kept close watch of the tracks, which they knew were made by rebels, because, on account of the scarcity of horse-shoe nails in the Confederacy, they only used three nails on a side in shoeing, where our horses were always shod with four nails on each side of the shoe.

OUTSPYING THE SPIES.

When Foreman's advance guard had reached the point where the rebel party had turned out of the road, they were out of the range of observation of the spies, where they were secreted on top of the Timbered Hill, watching the train; and therefore the rebels did not see that Foreman halted for a few minutes, detailed a party to drop out of the column and continue following that trail—which was very plain as it turned off the road onto the dewy grass—and then the advance moved on as before.

This party trailed the rebels around to the foot of the hill, just in rear of their snug-lookout station, where they had left their horses. The man in charge of the horses, on seeing our Indians approaching, fired a shot to warn his comrades of their danger, and abandoning the horses he was holding, made a run for the Cabin Creek timber, and succeeded in making his escape. The spies, on the hill, hearing the alarm, ran toward their horses, but found themselves cut off by our men, and had to surrender as prisoners.

Maj. Lipe the was a private soldier in the rebel service—Major being his Christian name, not his title), was one of these prisoners taken. (He and his wife were afterward next-door neighbors and intimate friends of my wife and me at Fort Gibson.) Mage, as we called him, told me about this affair afterward.

Lieut. Parsons, of the 3d Indian, who was in command of our Indian party who trailed and captured the rebels, also gave me an account of it, and mentioned the fact that it was with great difficulty that he prevented his men from killing Mage Lipe and the other rebel prisoners, after they had surrendered, although the Cherokees of the two parties were mostly old acquaintances. It seems impossible for one of these Indians to forgive even one of his own people when once they are arrayed on opposite sides in war.

Mage Lipe was shortly afterward released, but preferred to unite with the Union army rather than go back to the rebels, and therefore took the oath of allegiance to Uncle Sam. Fearing the vindictiveness of the Indians, being a half-breed himself, and knowing well their unforgiving disposition, he prudently declined to trust himself among his own tribesmen, and instead of enlisting in one of the Indion regiments he took service in the 14th Kans. Cav., where he served till the end of the war.

After the capture of the party of rebel scouts by Maj. Foreman's men, as above stated, the train, on the morning of July 1, '63, moved on to Cabin Creek, where our men encountered the rebels in the timber at the crossing and after a sharp little fight, in which the rebels were whipped and driven off the train then proceeded on its way to Fort Gibson, which they reached without further trouble. This was called the "first battle of Cabin Creek," to distinguish it from another engagement ('64) at same place.

The month of July, '63, was probably one of the liveliest months of the war. We didn't fool away much time or ammunition shooting off firecrackers or blank cartridges, or listening to spread-eagle speeches those 4th of July days during the war, that I remember; though more patriotic men never lived than our boys in blue of that period. Guns that were fired on that day in war times were generally "loaded for b'ar," and aimed where they would do the most good in knocking out rebels.

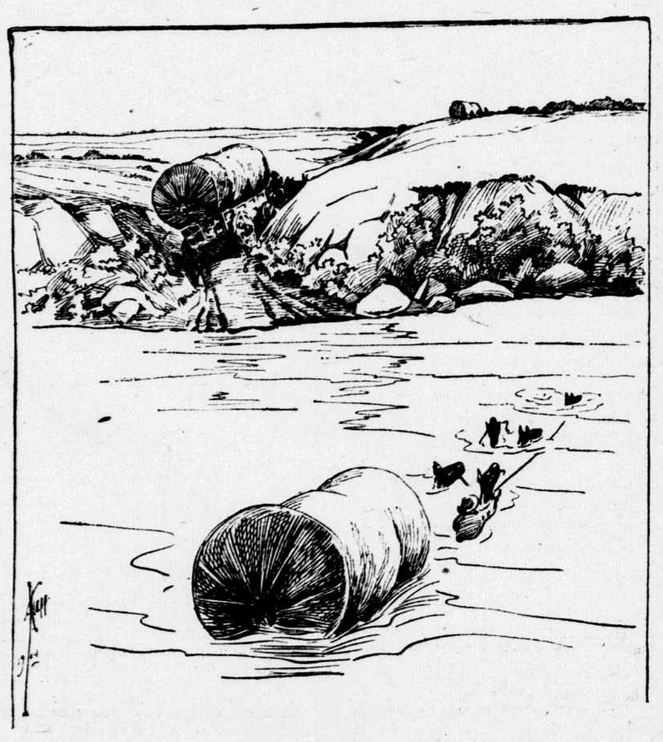
I don't remember that any particular demonstration was made on the 4th of July in '63 at Fort Gibson; but about that day the Army of the Potomac, under Gen. Meade, at Gettysburg, and Grant's army at Vicksburg were making history; though we, at Fort Gibson, did not hear of those momentous events till some days later.

About the 1st of July, '63, Maj.-Gen. James G. Blunt—commanding all the Union troops in our part of the country, called the Army of the Frontier—came to Fort Gibson from Fort Smith, bringing several regiments of white soldiers and a couple of regiments of negroes. From the fact of his gathering men and material at Fort Gibson it was evident that he was contemplating a move against the rebels somewhere; and as the enemy's forces under Gens. Cooper and Stand Waitie at Honey Springs (22 miles south) were the only considerable collection of rebels in our vicinity, it didn't take a Down East Yankee to guess which way we would move.

I was still busy hauling hay from the prairie near the Mosely place into Fort Gibson when, on the 15th of July, I received orders to rig up half my train for field service, leaving the other half under my assistant, hauling hay, and report at Capt. Thomas's office on the morning of the 16th, which I did.

Everything was as quiet as usual about Gen. Blunt's camp, just outside the town of Fort Gibson, and a casual observer would not have suspected that an important expedition was about to begin; but Blunt—or Col. Tom Moonlight, Blunt's Chief of Staff, rather—had been quietly making all necessary preparations for some days, and there was no rush or uproar about it.

It was generally well understood by the old members of the Army of the Frontier, that Col. Moonlight, Blunt's Chief of Staff—whom I had known when he was a First Sergeant in the 4th U. S. Art. (Regular Army), before the war—furnished the brains for the Army of the Frontier. Tom Moonlight was a gallant, brave and efficient officer—a little too fond of liquor (in which respect Blunt himself set the pace at his headquarters), but nevertheless a good soldier; and Blunt's successes and fame were undoubtedly attributable to Moonlight's management. Blunt was one of those political appointees whose only qualification for the position of a Commanding General was his political "pull," backed by a bulldog pertinacity that would "fight a buzz-saw." He had no military talents, to begin with, and never seemed to acquire such qualities during the four years of war. Before the war he was a country doctor, living on his "claim" on Pottawatomie Creek in Kansas, and through Senator Jim Lane's influence, got an appointment as a Brigadier-General in the early part of the war; and for his success in dropping in just in the nick of time at the battle of Prairie Grove, Ark., and saving Gen. Herron from a probable defeat, Blunt was advanced to the rank of Major-General; though it has been claimed by some military critics that Blunt blundered into that fight and blundered through it, and the fact of the rebel Gen. Hindman taking a scare and withdrawing in the night, after a drawn battle, eventuated in Blunt's being left in possession of the field.



"AS HE SANK HE WAS STILL JERKING THE LEAD LINES."

PREPARING FOR ACTUAL SERVICE.

The material that my teams were loaded with—hospital stores and ammunition—gave a hint of the service before us; but not a word was given out from any source of authority as to when or where we were to go. A lot of ambulances were assembled and placed under my charge also. After loading and getting everything ready for a trip somewhere I had the mules unhitched, watered, and tied back to the feed troughs, with the harness on, and fed grain; and thus we stood nearly all day awaiting orders.

About the middle of the afternoon I was ordered to take a detail of Indians and drop down the ferryboat—an open flatboat, pulled back and forth by a rope stretched across the river—to the mouth of Grand River, and stretch the rope across the Arkansas just below the mouth of Grand. This was certainly a pointer. Blunt had waited till nearly night to begin the movement, so that any possible rebel spies on the neighboring hills, beyond the Arkansas, would not see what we were doing.

If I had known what a variety of services I was going to be called on to do, I would have brought some extra hands along to act as assistants; but as it was, I borrowed Hugh Poland, Assistant Wagon Master of the 2d Indian train, to look after the six-mule teams and ambulances, while I took general charge, giving my particular attention to the ferrying.

A HARD RIVER TO CROSS.

By sundown I had everything ready and the little army began crossing the river. The Arkansas just above the mouth of Grand River was just barely fordable, but below, where the ferry was it was too deep. It was found that a narrow and difficult ford on Grand River just above the mouth could be used by the cavalry and some teams, and then an easy ford of the Arkansas above the mouth of Grand would expedite the crossing of both troops and teams.

While crossing at the Grand River ford a team belonging to the 1st Kans. (colored) was washed away down into deep water, and the six mules, with wagon, driver and two colored soldiers, who had crept into the wagon, were drowned. The black teamster never left his saddle-mule, and as he sunk out of sight was still jerking the lead-line to try to steer his team to the shore. The two men in the wagon were caught like rats in a trap—the cover being tied down all round—and drowned before they found out where they were "at."

At the ferry I had been carrying over both soldiers and teams as they came, but as the capacity of the boat was only about one company of men or one six-mule team at a trip, it was slow work. After the accident at the ford the balance of the teams were ordered to cross by the ferry, and as it was found practicable for the infantry to ford the rivers on the route where the team had been washed away, it was ordered that they should wade it at that place, so that the boat could be used for the teams.

With all the expedition I could use at the ferry, and being given a fresh detail of men from each regiment, it was slow work crossing the batteries and mule teams. The boat was an open flat with no railing around it, and some perverse mule would now and then get frightened at the water or something else, and go to backing away from the gunwale on one side and probably crowd some other mule or himself over the opposite gunwale into the water. When a mule once gets his ears full of water he loses heart and will easily drown unless his head is held above water by some one. I and several of the ferrymen were in the water up to our necks frequently during the night saving the contrary brutes—and I will here take occasion to remark that holding the head of a frightened, plunging mule above water in the dark is no fun.

At first we built fires on the banks to make light to see how to work, but as the light seemed to blind both us and the mules, we put the fires out and found it was not so dark but what we could see what we were doing.

We usually took the precaution to unhook the traces of the swing and lead mules as soon as the team came onto the boat, and if one fell overboard some man would get hold of his bridle and hold his head above water at the gunwale till we reached the shore; but occasionaly one would get overboard before we got his traces unhooked, and then we would have a time unhooking him or stripping the harness off in the water to keep him from dragging another mule over.

This work we kept up all night long—ferrying mule and battery horse teams. The batteries were not so much trouble; having a trained driver to each span of horses, they went along all right; but it all took time and much labor. I had crossed my train of six-mue teams and four-mule ambulances early in the evening, and sent them on ahead in charge of Hugh Poland. The regiments and batteries, with their wagons, pulled out on the road south as fast as they crossed.

Daylight was just beginning to appear in the east as I mounted my mule and rode onto the boat with the last team, tired, hungry and wet, but anxious to get to the head of the column, or at least to my train, for my outfit had been shoved ahead so that I knew it would be near the advance of all the teams.

NEARING THE ENEMY.

Leaving a guard to take care of the ferryboat, I struck out as fast as I could travel along the road, which was incumbered with straggling teams and their attendants, and by sunrise had reached the prairie outside the river bottom—about four miles from the river.

By 10 o'clock I had overtaken my train, just in rear of the main column, which was now moving slowly, halting occasionally to give the rear a chance to close up. Shorty after this time we heard a few scattering shots some distance ahead, which proved to be an exchange of compliments with the enemy's pickets as they were driven back to their command.

About noon, July 17, '63, we had reached a point some two miles from Honey Springs, where the rebels had been permanently camped for some time, but yet there was very little sign to indicate the near presence of an enemy, as the strip of timber along the creek (where, as we afterward found, they were drawn up in line of battle waiting for us) completely hid them from our view. Up to this time we had been in hilly prairie, and the rebels had probably not seen much of our force. Before exposing his command to their view Gen. Blunt—or Col. Tom Moonlight, rather—decided to pull up behind some hills—previous to coming out into the last stretch of open prairie—and wait for a final closing up of our rear.

Taking advantage of the halt, I ordered my teamsters to unrein their teams and let the mules nip a little grass without unhitching; and also to get out any available grub they could, and eat a snack, as I saw that the soldiers just in front of us were doing the same. We were all as hungry as wolves, and hard-tack, raw bacon and branch water tasted fine.

As the rear came up the troops who had been guarding the flanks and rear of the trains moved to the front, and were all massed in a body behind the hills that screened us from the observation of the rebs who were supposed to be waiting for us over behind the timber. So cool and unconcerned did Blunt and his officers take it, and as there was no sign yet of the enemy—except an occasional mounted man who would ride out of the timber onto some elevated ground and seem to be taking a look in our direction with a field-glass, and then ride back out of sight—I began to doubt that there was any rebel force of consequence in front of us at all; but I suppose Blunt knew they were there.

GOING IN TO BATTLE.

About 1 o'clock p. m., without any bugle calls, orders were quietly passed around by staff officers and orderlies to everybody to prepare to move out again. The cavalry and artillery mounted, the infantry shook themselves together, and in close column the little army of about 7,000 fighting men moved out by the road through a gap between the hills, that brought them out into an open plain of about a mile and a half across, through which they had to advance in face of the enemy, who was yet invisible in the strip of timber along the creek.

As soon as our column began to debouch onto the plain it was adroitly deployed to the right and left into line of battle. So quiet had everything been on the enemy's side up to this time that I felt sure there could be only a small force before us, if any remained probably only a rear guard left to cover their retreat, I thought—for we knew they had been established here in camp for some time.

I had received no orders to the contrary, and as the troops marched out I rolled out with my train, following them closely into the open prairie, but had not advanced far when an excited staff officer came galloping back to me and demanded,

"Where the devil are you going with those teams?"

"Trying to keep up with the command," I replied.

"Why, confound it, don't you know that the battle is about to begin? Wasn't you ordered to stay behind the hills where you were till further orders? Hell'll be turned loose here directly! Head 'em about and get back behind them hills as quick as you can send 'em! First thing you know the rebs'll be throwin' shells into your outfit an' you'll all be blowed into the middle of next week."

Without stopping to answer him, I quickly turned my teams and hurried them back to a safe place behind the hills again, where I found the regimental trains had remained. Then cautioning the skinners to stay close to their teams, and be ready to move at a moment's notice, Hugh and I struck out into the open ground following the advancing line of battle, determined to see the fight.

I knew that our teams were still in range of the enemy's artillery, but thought it was a safe guess that our line of battle would occupy their attention too closely to allow them time to throw away any shells at random trying to find our trains.

About the middle of the plain that lay between the hills where our command had halted and eaten our snack, and the timber, stood a farm house—the only one in sight. After our line had passed this house some distance it was halted, as the rebs had not opened fire on us yet, and our artillery—which was distributed a battery here and there along our line from right to left—came "into battery" within less than a half mile of the timber, and began shelling the woods, to draw their fire and find the rebel position.

OPENING THE FIGHT.

When our men halted I had looked for a good location where I could get a clear view of the fight, and found a knoll just in rear of the left center of our line, from the top of which we could overlook most of the field. Riding up to the top of this little hill, Hugh and I sat there on our mules looking on, and although the rebel balls knocked up the dust around us occasionally, the sight was too attractive and exciting to let such little things interfere with so grand an entertainment.

The prairie from where our line stood to the edge of the timber was covered here and there with patches of small sumac bushes from waist to shoulder high, which afforded our infantry some shelter. When our batteries opened, the rebels made their presence and location known by responding in like manner.

It was a very hot day, and our soldiers had stripped themselves of everything in the way of clothing and equipments that could be dispensed with, piling the surplus stuff in heaps in rear of their line. I noticed that the men of a battery near me (Hopkins's 2d Kans.) had stripped to their undershirts and pants, and the 1st Kans. (colored—Col. Williams's), about the center of the line, had even taken off their shirts, and their black skins glistened in the sun.

On the extreme left of our line, just over a rise and out of sight from us, was our Indian Brigade, and as usual they kept up an incessant gobbling and war-hooping at the enemy, who returned the compliment with like noise.

The battery near me (Hopkins's) chanced to be placed in line opposite a rebel battery in the edge of the timber, and a very animated fight took place between the two, each seeming determined to annihilate the other. Hopkins's battery seemed to be getting the worst of the duel, when some mounted troops (I think these were a part of the 2d Colo. Cav.) made a charge on the rebel battery and captured it, along with their colors.

This flag, which I saw at Blunt's headquarters after the battle, was of three stripes—red at top, white in the middle, red at bottom, with a blue corner covering the ends of the first two stripes, red and white, and containing 11 stars. This was the style of colors adopted by the rebels at the beginning of the war, but, as they found that at a distance they could scarcely tell their colors from our Stars and Stripes, and often mistook one for the other, they adopted the later style—a square red field with blue stripes running diagonally across from upper to lower corner, like a letter X. The blue stripes were edged with a narrow white border and contained the 11 white stars.

When the fight ended, wounded and dead men and horses, disabled guns and caissons were scattered over the ground.

After the artillery practice had developed the enemy's position, our line began crawling up slowly onto the rebels in the edge of the woods. I could not see clearly what was going on at our extreme right, on account of the powder smoke in that direction, but noticed a general advance all along the line. Our extreme left (the Indian brigade) also was out of sight just over a hill, but I could locate them by their gobbling and musketry.

"THE COLORED TROOPS FOUGHT NOBLY."

The 1st Kans. (colored) and one other regiment of negroes being near my stand, I was very much interested in watching their part of the fight. This was the first time I had seen any negro soldiers in action, and as I had often heard the white soldiers declare that they did not believe the "niggers would fight" when brought up against the real thing, I was anxious to note how they would behave.

Just after the last advance of our line began, Col. Williams, of the 1st Colored, was struck by a musket ball and fell; but knowing that if he left the field it would have a depressing effect on his men, although he could not sit on his horse or stand up, he had some of his men to prop him up on a pile of knapsacks in rear of their position, and from this seat directed their movements.

Although the rebels had all the advantage of position, and made it hot work, I could see that our men were slowly crawling up on the enemy's position, and it soon became evident that the rebels were falling back in some parts of their line; but, for fear of being drawn into an ambush in the timber, no rush was made by our men—only a gradual creeping up.

I was pleased to notice that the "—— niggers," as they were commonly called, stood up to the work as manfully as any troops in our line; and they had a hard fight to make, too, for directly opposite to them, in the rebel line, was a regiment of Texans (27th Tex., Col. Bass), who, as soon as they discovered that their antagonists were "—— niggers," did their level best to wipe that black spot off the field. The rebels were all well sheltered, this Texas regiment being placed partly in timber and part in a field of tall corn; and so intently were these latter ones engaged in killing negroes that when their Colonel, with the first battalion of their regiment, who were in the timber, withdrew, the other battalion in the corn field did not notice that a retreat had begun; and before they found it out some of our men had got in their rear and cut them off.

DRAWING THE COLOR LINE.

Seeing that they were corralled, and as a great many of them had been killed or wounded, the Texans hoisted a white flag in token of surrender; but when Col. Williams's negroes arose out of the sumac bushes with a shout of triumph and started forward to take the rebs in, the Texans could not bear the idea of surrendering to "niggers," and accordingly doused their white flag, shouting defiantly, "Go back, you —— —— —— ——!" and giving the rebel yell resumed their former occupation of killing negroes, while the black boys dropped into the bushes again and kept picking off the Texans. Again the men in gray raised the white flag; again the negroes arose to advance and receive the surrender; again the rebels dropped their flag-of-truce, and yelling defiance turned loose on the darkies. The white flag appeared for the third time, but the negroes, warned by previous experience, still laid low, although in obedience to their officers they ceased firing; just then the bearer of the white flag climbed up on the fence and called out, "If you'll send white men to take us we'll surrender, but never to a nigger!"

Gen. Blunt having been informed of the desperate fight going on between the negroes and Texans, had ridden up to that part of the field, and ordering a cessation of hostilities, sent a white regiment to receive the surrender of the game Sontherners, and was astonished to find only 60 men of the Texas battalion left standing, and no commissioned officer—they were surrendered by their Sergeant-Major—every officer being down, either killed or wounded. The corn rows were strung full of killed and wounded Texans.

Most of the particulars about this fight between the negroes and Texans I learned after the battle from the men engaged on either side. Before the surrender, when the rebels began giving way, Hugh Poland and I hurried back to our train, where, leaving Hugh to bring up the six-mule teams and establish camp near the farm buildings, where there was a little creek, I rushed up to the ambulances to go to gathering the wounded and hauling them to the hospital.

(To be continued.)

STARTLING STATISTICS.

From Moses Taylor to "Standard Oil."

"Fourteen years ago the National City Bank passed out of the legitimate management of old-fashioned business men of the Moses Taylor stamp and into the hands of 'Standard Oil,' the 'Private Thing,'" says Thomas W. Lawson, in Everybody's Magazine. "Then its capital was $1,000,000; it is to-day $25,000,000, and after having paid out millions in dividends and other profits, it has, in addition, a surplus of $16,000,000, and it has the absolute power to juggle with a total of $235,000,000, $36,000,000 of which belong to other national banks, $6,000,000 to State banks and bankers, $29,000,000 to trust companies and savings-banks, $82,000,000 to individual depositors, $10,000,000 to the holders of certified checks, $7,000,000 to the holders of cashiers' checks, $13,000,000 to the Government directly and $4,000,000 in Government bonds, to say nothing of scores of hundreds of millions more through its affiliated institutions."

Convincing.

An Irishman somewhat under the influence of liquor, ambling towards home on a recent evening, happened to pass a church, and, being attracted by the sound of music, paused for a while and then staggered towards the entrance.

With his natural bump of caution, however, he looked up at the spire to see that the proper kind of cross was on it, for to the mind of most good Catholics it would be almost a sacrilege to go into a Protestant church. He saw the cross, which apparently satisfied his scruples, and he went in, sitting down in a pew near the door.

The heat being somewhat oppressive, he fell asleep.

After the service had ended, the sexton began at the altar to turn out the lights.

Coming down the aisle, he tripped over the foot of the sleeping man in the pew, and, looking down, diagnosed the case in a moment.

He gave the sleeping man a shake and said, "See here, my good man, wake up and get out of here at once. You are in the wrong place, anyway—this is not your church."

The Irishman sat up, rubbed his eyes, and, developing an argumentive strain, said in a rather quick, guttural voice:

"It ain't my church? Whose church is it if it ain't mine?"

"This is the Protestant Episcopal Church——"

"It's no sich a thing!"

"I tell you it is, and you must get out of here."

He straightened himself up, and, pointing a wavering finger towards the altar, said:

"Isn't that the statue of St. Joseph up there on the right?"

The sexton was forced to reply in the affirmative.

"Ain't that the Virgin's statue on the left?"

"Yes," replied the sexton.

"What is that in the center?"

"That is the statue of our Saviour."

The Irishman, with a look of mingled triumph and contempt, said, looking the sexton as nearly in the eye as he could:

"For God's sake, whin did thim turn Protestants?"—Lippincott's.

New Use for the Auto.

(Milwaukee News.)

Mrs. Johnson—I wish I could think of something to keep my husband at home nights.

Mrs. Smithson—Give him an automobile.

Mrs. Johnson—He'd be out more than ever then.

Mrs. Smithson—No, indeed. My husband got one last week, and the doctor says he won't be out for six weeks.

FORT LARAMIE IN '67.

Wild Western Scenes and the Tragedy at Coffey's Ranch.

A bad state of affairs existed at famous old Fort Laramie in 1867. This was about one year prior to the meeting of the Taylor Commission, when the first treaty with the Sioux and other tribes was signed. About seven companies of cavalry and infantry composed the garrison, and outrages in the vicinity were frequent. Early in the season two civilians were killed in close proximity to the post, one of whom was shot not a half mile from the post on the Bridger's Ferry road, the Indians filling him so full of arrows that the body remained in an upright position. At Jim Lamary's ranche, seven miles northwest, five men, hardy frontersmen, fought a strong band of Ogallala Siouxs five days before succeeding in notifying the post commander of their predicament. Lamary kept a general store on the road to Little Cottonwood and the Ferry, and was a perfect specimen of a fearless frotiersman. Believing that trouble was approaching, and apprehending an attack, he had during the Spring months with the assistance of three companions, constructed a most ingenious subterranean passage leading to a chamber of good size, where he had cached a large amount of provisions, not overlooking, as he afterward related, four bottles of Hennessey's best, that happened to be in his stock. Time proved his good judgment, for not many days had passed ere a large band rushed down the bluffs, stampeded and drove off most of the herd, returning the following day to secure the rest and incidentally scalp "Jim" and his friends. The facts proved that this was largely a family quarrel, as some months previously Lamary had imprudently married an old chief's daughter, and for some unknown reason his father-in-law had become his bitter enemy. Retreating to the improvised cave, the white men, well armed and with plenty of ammunition, for four days successfully stood them off until help arrived from the post.

A remarkable case was that of an old hunter and trapper, who was found badly wounded on Little Laramie. Col. Alden, the post Surgeon, pronounced at once against his recovery, owing to his advanced age, while five balls had entered his body, each striking above the belt. In four months this hardy individual was hobbling around the hospital, declaring that the Indian bullet was yet to be moulded that could kill him.

That celebrated guide and frontiersman, Jim Bridger, was at the post during the Summer, together with other guides and interpreters less famous, and preparation was made during the season to secure the attendance of Red Cloud, Spotted Tail, Man-afraid-of-his-horses, and lesser Chiefs, at the treaty council the next year. A most singular character at that time was Joe Gebreau, a Spaniard of good appearance and some education, whose life was a mystery. For 10 years he had been accustomed to join the Indians near Wind River Valley and as far north even as Montana, and live with them until Spring, ostensibly a trader in robes and furs. This year, on account of the hostile attitude of the Indians, he was warned against a repetition of the journey, but persisted in leaving, even admitting that his return was unlikely. I well remember the singular circumstances of his departure, as, mounted on his magnificent bay horse, he left Bullock's store for the north, he was intercepted by an aged squaw from the squaw camp. She appeared to be a hundred years old at least, and with a colored cloth wrapped around her emaciated form, presented a singular appearance and showed surprising agility as she screamed her warning, imploring him to return, even throwing herself across his stirrup cover and seizing the bridle in her sorrow. Joe, impassive, hardly looked at the squaw, but motioning her one side, put spurs to his horse and rode off without saying farewell to any one, as he was accustomed to do; but he never returned, and the squaw's prophecy was fulfilled, as word came in the early months of the following year that he had been killed finally by a drunken buck, who was trying to prevent him from leaving their camp with his furs, after having survived the Winter.

But the most exciting occurrence of this year was the shooting of a popular member of the 2d U. S. Cavalry at Jules Coffey's ranch and the destruction of the latter by his own troop.

This ranch was situated four and a half miles east of the post. The Union Pacific Railroad was finished to Cheyenne, 90 miles south, and the region was infested by a band of gamblers and horse-thieves. A most notorious character was George Reptoe, who bore an unenviable reputation as a professional gambler, and at the ranch frequently expressed his contempt for Uncle Sam's servants. Cavalrymen frequently visited the store, the attraction being billiards and the brewery, and after indulging in a few glasses of the product of the last-named always returned in an orderly manner, and no trouble had thus far occurred. July 4 was a beautiful day, and the first man to saddle his horse was Serg't Joseph Terrill, Troop A, 2d U. S. Cav. In his best uniform, with horse and equipments scrupulously clean, he rode to the ranch, where he found Reptoe installed with some of his boon companions. Several soldiers passed in and out during the morning, who afterward testified under oath that Reptoe, with some slight excuse, endeavored to quarrel with Terrill, insulting him in the grossest manner, the Sergeant finally knocking him down. Quiet was restored, and others, believing the trouble to be over, sauntered to the brewery, leaving Reptoe and two other civilians alone with Terrill. At this moment he evidently decided to join the others, as, passing out of the main entrance, he turned to the left and was proceeding toward the corral, when Reptoe suddenly wheeled, reached quickly behind the door for a gun, which, bringing to his shoulder, he fired, the charge, evidently buckshot, striking Terrill in the left side above the hip, mortally wounding him. Reptoe then mounted his horse (a magnificent sorrel mare) and made toward the Platte, going up stream. The cavalrymen immediately mounted and rode to the fort, giving the alarm; an ambulance was hurried to the scene to bring in the body, and in the excitement many seized horses from the stables and rode to intercept Reptoe before he could pass, believing that he was making for Laramie City. Seen by some as they neared the river, and hard pushed, he turned down the river bank and headed across. In the lead of the pursuers, and riding one of the best horses in the regiment, was Enos M. Watson, of Troop H. Gaining on the fugitive, he reached for his revolver, only to discover that in his haste he had left both belt and pistol in the stable behind him, and he was forced to see Reptoe gain the shore and disappear in the cottonwood timber, where he remained a short time, having the temerity to return to the ranch and boldly declared his intention of remaining in the vicinity.

Deep mutterings were heard the next day, and some undeveloped scheme was evidently on foot in Troop A, which materialized in the afternoon at 2 o'clock, when nearly every enlisted man of the company fell in and started down the road at a trot in column of fours. Arriving at Coffey's, they began a work of destruction that did not end until the extensive place was a smouldering ruin. The main building was fired and destroyed first, together with the contents, a large and valuable stock of dry goods, canned fruit, tobacco and beer. Amid this lawlessness the store safe was landed in the road, broken open, the cash to the amount of $2,000 abstracted, no one but one man being concerned in this part of the "festivities," and he at once deserted. Strangely, this man was never arrested, while it was well known that he was in the vicinity of Cheyenne the following Autumn, and was recognized by his comrades on two different occasions on the public streets.

Reptoe, making a second break for the foothills, was captured and brought back. It was never clear who exercised any authority on this occasion, although responsibility for it at the subsequent court-martial fell upon the non-commissioned officers present; however, the prisoner was by a mounted squad taken to the foothills, one mile distant, and shot. The troop at night returned to Fort Laramie, and were nearly all arrested and confined at once, the non-coms. being subsequently paroled and temporarily set at liberty. Finally the court convened, and after a protracted trial the privates were released and cleared of responsibility, while the punishment fell upon two Sergeants and three Corporals. These men received sentences of from three to five years, with ball-and-chain, at hard labor, and dishonorably discharged, Stillwater penitentiary, Minn., being the place to which they were sent.

Coffey, on returning from Washington, was surprised at what he saw before him, and at once instituted proceedings, claiming indemnity from the Government for his loss, and two years later it was reported that a special act had been passed admitting the justice of his demand and sending him to the Court of Claims, which awarded him $75,000 indemnity.—F. W. MIXER.

Where Bullets Must Stop.

A series of interesting firing trials was recently undertaken by the Swedish Government. The purpose of these experiments was to examine the effect of shooting against pasteboard. The trials were conducted on the wharves of the Swedish Navy in Karlskrons, and the target used was a prepared one of mill-board, against which fire from revolvers, rifles, carbines and machine guns was directed. The pasteboard, which was three inches thick, resisted completely the bullets fired from the small arms, but was perforated by the projectiles from the machine guns. The experiments may be said to have given very interesting results. Bullets from the carbines used are able to penetrate wooden planks five inches in thickness, but they could not penetrate the paste-board, which was only three inches thick.

Three Mistakes About Pensions.

1st. It is a mistake for a pensioner to imagine that his interests, or his widow's interests, are prejudiced by giving up an old law pension and taking a pension under the act of June 27, 1890, commonly known as the new law. If the "Age" Order (see elsewhere) allows more pension than you are receiving under the old law, send to The National Tribune for a blank application. This will in no wise prejudice your application, either present or prospective, for a higher rate under the old law.

2d. So much has been written and printed recently about the "Age" Order that some comrades may be under the misapprehension that it is necessary for all to wait until they are 62 years of age before making application. For those who enjoy good health and whose ability to earn a support by manual labor is not impaired, this, indeed, is the case. But all others who have not reached 62, and who can show that present infirmities partly or wholly incapacitate them for earning a support by manual labor, should make application. Send to The National Tribune for a blank.

3d. It is a mistake for any man entitled to a pension not to apply for it. The pension roll is a roll of honor. In years to come a man's posterity will be gratified to find this record proof of his service to his country. A pension record is the best record of a man's service.

All About the "Age" Order.

THE LAW OF JUNE 27, 1890, AND THE NEW "AGE" ORDER.

The laws of June 27, 1890, and May 9, 1900, provide for a pension, according to degree of disability, from $6 to $12 per month for any soldier of the War of the Rebellion who served 90 days and was honorably discharged.

The new "AGE" Order simply says that any claimant who has arrived at the age of 62, or 65, or 68, or 70, is presumed without further proof (and, inferentially, without examination) to be suffering disability sufficient to warrant $6 a month pension at age of 62; $8 a month at age of 65; $10 a month at age of 68 and $12 a month at age of 70.

To Those Who Have Never Applied for Pension.

We urge upon these comrades that it is their duty to apply. If many are so well-to-do that they do not need it, they can apply the money to help those who do need it. Under this "AGE" Order an application can be made that, in most cases, does not involve examination, which probably removes a feature that was objectionable to many. Write to R. W. Shoppell, or The National Tribune, Washington, D. C., and a proper blank will be mailed you without cost.

TO GENERAL LAW PENSIONERS DRAWING LESS THAN $12.

If under the law of June 27, 1890, as construed by the New "AGE" Order, which is given elsewhere, a pensioner will receive an increase, he should write to R. W. Shoppell, or The National Tribune, Washington, D. C., and a proper blank will be mailed him without cost.

TO PENSIONERS UNDER THE ACT OF JUNE 27, 1890, WHO ARE RECEIVING LESS THAN $12 PER MONTH.

Read very carefully the new "AGE" Order given in another column. If it allows you more pension than you are now receiving, write to R. W. Shoppell, or The National Tribune, Washington, D. C., and a proper blank will be mailed you without cost.

TO THOSE WISHING TO ALLEGE MORE DISABILITY THAN IS PRESCRIBED BY THE "AGE" ORDER.

Under the "Age" Order it is assumed, if the contrary does not appear, and all other legal requirements are properly met, that a claimant is half disabled for manual labor at the age of 62; two-thirds disabled at the age of 65; five-sixths disabled at the age of 68, and wholly disabled at the age of 70. If the claimant can not show that he has greater disability at these respective ages than is recited above, it is of no use for him to describe his ailments. It is a disadvantage, in fact, because it will incur the expense and delay of medical examination. If a claimant is in fair health for his age, it is useless to apply for more than is allowed by the "age" order.

Any one, however, who is sure that he is more disabled than is allowed for by the "AGE" Order should write to R. W. Shoppell, or The National Tribune, Washington, D. C., and a proper blank will be mailed him without cost.

Widows.

Upon the death of your soldier husband, apply for pension promptly. It is one of the provisions he leaves for your maintenance. In most cases the pension will commence from date of application. Something is lost by delay. Write to R. W. Shoppell, or The National Tribune, Washington, D. C., and a proper blank will be mailed you without cost.