WILSON AND KAUTZ

Additional Details of the Operations of the Cavalry.

Marching, Countermarching, Skirmishing and Hard Fighting.

Destruction of Track, Depots, Supplies, Cotton and Tobacco.

Value of the Raid to the Union Army,

&c., &c., &c.

THE HERALD DESPATCHES.

Mr. Francis C. Long's Despatches.

HEADQUARTERS, THIRD DIVISION, CAVALRY CORPS, NEAR CITY POINT, VA., July 2, 1864.

During the forced march of this division, after the fight near Ream's station, we were unfortunate enough to lose all our personal property, in common with the rest of this command. My notebooks, containing full details of General Wilson's proceedings up to the 28th ultimo, were among the missing articles. The following essentially true account has therefore been hastily prepared from memory:—

WEDNESDAY, June 22, 1864.

THE START.

At two o'clock this morning this command was in the saddle and in motion, every arrangement having been made for departing on one of the most extensive cavalry raids that had been made since the war was inaugurated. Brigadier General Wilson was in command of the expedition. General Kautz's division had the advance. The brigade marched for Mount Zina church in the following order:—Spear's on the right, followed successively by West's and McIntosh's, while Chapman's brigade brought up the rear.

As I stated before, the column started from the vicinity of Mount Zina church, which is located a short distance from Prince Georges Court House.

PRINCE GEORGES COURT HOUSE

is an antique sort of fabric, small and irregular, looking sombre and gloomy as a prison house. The village, if it deserves the name, consists of three dwelling houses and a corresponding number of barns, the court house, office and jail. For two or three miles on each of the several roads leading into the town the manuscript leaves of ponderous books are scattered. When the army advanced towards Petersburg, on June 15, our boys, to use a common expression, "went through" the court house, and destroyed the huge registers, as well as large quantities of papers, probably of much value, the remnants of which are scattered for miles about the country.

THE MARCH—DESTRUCTION OF REAM'S STATION.

The column marched rapidly, as the cool morning air was quite invigorating. At daybreak we crossed the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad, and at about ten o'clock A. M. we reached Ream's station, on the Petersburg Railroad. At this point we saw plainly that the division is advance had been at work in earnest. The depot and freight house had been set on fire, and as we marched by the dense black smoke arising from the conflagration almost obscured the sun, while the red flames roared as they leaped in savage joy at the work of destruction.

WHAT COLONEL SPEAR'S BRIGADE ACCOMPLISHED.

Colonel Spear's brigade, which was in the advance of Kautz's division, captured a number of the enemy's pickets as he proceeded. Among the prisoners captured was the father of the celebrated Roger A. Pryor, a chaplain in A. P. Hill's corps. Mr. Pryor stated that he was visiting his family, and was not aware of the presence of a Yankee force in the neighborhood. He, however, managed to escape from us during the ensuing night. Had we been a day earlier in making our raid we might have had a little amusement at Dinwiddie Court House, as the county court had been in session, and we might have gobbled a few judges and attorneys.

THE ATTACK UPON OUR REAR—COLONEL CHAPMAN.

A brigade of rebel cavalry, which had been hovering on our rear, charged in upon Chapman's brigade at Ream's station. Colonel Chapman faced them valiantly and held them in check. As he had no object in driving them, he skirmished with them and kept them at a respectful distance, continuing his march at his leisure. The Second brigade of Wilson's division, with its gallant commander, can hold its own against all the cavalry the enemy possesses. The cavalry force harassing our rear was Dearing's brigade, composed principally of North Carolina regiments.

DINWIDDIE TO FORD'S STATION—OUR CAPTURES.

From Dinwiddie Court House the column marched to Ford's station, on the Lynchburg Railroad. A large steam sawmill, standing close to the railroad and about three miles from the station, and known as Ford's mill, was burned to the ground, and many thousand feet of lumber, shingles, lath, &c., destroyed.

At Ford's station we captured two trains of cars, one hundred and fifty sacks of salt, a number of bales of cotton and several barrels of flour. Several families were in the cars with bag and baggage, having left Petersburg for some place more remote from the Union army and more congenial to their patrician feelings.

The division bivouacked for the night at this place. The depot and other buildings belonging to the railroad company were set on fire, and our camp was illuminated with one of the grandest bonfires ever lighted in Secession. One of the locomotives got heated up by standing close to the depot, and, the escape valve being open, it kept up a melancholy moaning for several hours, until the supply of water in its boiler was exhausted. It resembled one of some huge monster groaning and writhing in the angry flames, or an expiring savage singing his own requiem.

BATTLE OF THE REBEL CHARGE UPON OUR REAR.

Late in the afternoon the rebels manifested unmistakable signs of charging upon our rear again, and every arrangement for giving them a hearty reception was made accordingly. Col. Browne, of the Twenty second New York, placed his regiment in squadrons upon either side of the road—one squadron on the right and one on the left of the road—and a short distance behind them he posted two more squadrons in the same manner—that is, running from the road at right angles on both sides. The men were hardly in position when down came the rebels yelling like a legion of infuriated devils, brandishing their sabres, and firing all manner of guns and pistols. When they came up within easy carbine range the advanced squadrons of the Twenty second New York gave them a volley, which cooled their valor perceptibly, and brought their charge to a speedy termination. The first two squadrons then marched into the road and fell back, leaving a position in the rear of the other two squadrons, showing the enemy the same front as before. The rebels, seeing the movement and not understanding it, essayed another charge, with about the same result as their former. The volley they received from our boys sent several tall cavaliers from their saddles, while their frightened and bewildered horses dashed madly away. This last charge seemed to satisfy the rebels, as they did not hazard another charge during the remainder of the day, but contented themselves with throwing a few shells at us from a long distance and with poor range, doing us no damage whatever. Our loss, strange to say, in Chapman's brigade, in but ten men wounded.

THURSDAY, June 23, 1864.

TEARING UP THE ROAD.

We were in the saddle at three o'clock this morning, and advancing, tearing up the railroad as we proceeded, burning culverts and bridges and doing the road every possible injury. It was really amusing to witness the enthusiastic manner in which our soldiers went to work demolishing the enemy's road mile after mile. They tore down the adjacent rail fences, and piled the rails in huge heaps upon the track, which they would set on fire, and the heat would so warp the rails as to render them utterly useless.

FROM FORD'S STATION TO "BLACK'S AND WHITE'S."

Between Ford's station and Wellville we burned a large rebel hospital to the ground. It was empty, however. At intervals along the road were found huge piles of cord wood. These we also fired.

We reached Black's and White's station at about eleven o'clock A. M., and found a considerable quantity of forage at the place. It will be remembered that Black's and White's station was burned on the 11th of May by Gen. Kautz, when he made his famous south side raid. We also found at this place a building, a little removed from the ruins of the old depot, literally filled with cotton bales, which were destroyed. In fact, we have found considerable quantities of cotton all along the route, and have burned all that has been found. Looking backward, the roads by which we came could be plainly discerned, as far as the eye could reach, by the dense black smoke which marked our path.

LIEUTENANT BRUTON, TWENTY-SECOND NEW YORK VOLUNTEERS.

A lieutenant, named Bruton, of Company C, Twenty-second New York, was sunstruck to day while commanding his company. Some of his men laid him under a shade, where he lay for some time, partially insensible. Presently he sprang up, bowed, and, mounting his horse and drawing his sabre, he called on his company to rally. He then striking wildly right and left with his sword, he rushed away in a state of temporary insanity. He has since recovered.

THE WEATHER—ADVANCE UPON BURKESVILLE.

The weather yesterday and to day has been intolerably warm, and both men and horses suffered extremely from the heat. A little rain would be a blessing, since it would cool the air and settle the dust. In some places the roads are so dusty that a single horseman moving along is entirely concealed from view, and looks at a distance like a long column in motion.

Kautz's division pushed forward with all possible haste towards Burkesville, to be at the point where the Lynchburg and Petersburg Railroad intersects the Richmond and Danville. His column was about four hours in the advance of General Wilson.

FIGHTING AT AND ON THE ROAD.

On the railroad between the Hardaway estate and Nottoway Court House Chapman's brigade suddenly encountered the enemy, and brisk skirmishing instantly ensued. There were two brigades of the enemy—one being mounted infantry—and two sections of artillery, which opened on us furiously. After skirmishing with the rebels in the thick woods for some time a charge, was made to dislodge them. Our men made the charge with commendable bravery, and, without doubt, would have put the enemy to utter rout had not their supply of ammunition become exhausted. Nothing but the want of ammunition prevented them from capturing a section of the enemy's artillery. Heavy skirmishing was kept up until dark between Colonel Chapman's command and the enemy. The Third Indiana, Eighteenth Vermont, Eighth New York, Twenty second New York and the First New Hampshire were principally engaged, and several other regiments were upon the skirmish line and engaged to a considerable extent.

The enemy was in a very strong position, having ten batteries, or sections of batteries, advantageously posted. Lieutenant Manadier, with Battery K, shelled them for a while, with poor effect, however, as the rebel cannon were placed in such a manner as to throw a cross fire a little in the rear of our lines. The angle where the missiles from rebel batteries crossed was within a few rods of Chapman's headquarters, and the solid shot and shell were bursting around him every moment. I remained on the spot a few moments; but my nerves soon began to be unsteady, and I concluded to leave. General Wilson was sitting on his horse, while the dust and sand thrown into the air by the passing shells covered them both. The General was talking very good humoredly to Chapman, who was coolly listening while he wiped the dusty glasses of his spectacles with his handkerchief, and both watched the progress of the fight as coolly as if it had been a cricket match. Captain Andrews, aid-de-camp to General Wilson, had his coat torn on the shoulder by a fragment of a shell. At dark information was received at division headquarters that Kautz had reached Burkesville and had burned the station and damaged the road to a considerable extent.

LEE'S ORDER RELATING TO TRAINS.

Lee issued an order on the 22d instant, ordering all trains to run into Richmond and Petersburg immediately. He probably had heard that Wilson and Kautz were on another raid, and wished to keep his locomotives and cars out of our hands, or he might have wanted the trains to transport an infantry force over the Danville road, to head us off, and prevent the road from being destroyed.

KAUTZ AT BURKESVILLE.

Gen. Kautz's command reached Burkesville Junction at three o'clock A. M., and took possession of the town without meeting with any resistance from the enemy. The Lynchburg and Petersburg Railroad crosses the Richmond and Danville Railroad at this town. There were an immense number of switches and side tracks at the crossing, which General Kautz set at work immediately to destroy. The rails were torn up, the ties burned and the station most effectually demolished. At three o'clock in the morning the citizens of Burkesville were entertained with as gorgeous a pyrotechnic pageant as ever was described by the pen of a romancer. The depot, freight houses, baggage houses, storehouse, and, in fine, all buildings belonging to the railroad company or the confederacy, were destroyed by fire.

The scene was awfully impressive in its wild and picturesque grandeur. The bright tongues of lurid flame shot upward, illuminating the scene for a long distance around with all the effulgence of the noonday sun. The glitter of arms in the glare of the flame, the moving about of officers and men, mounted and dismounted, the prancing and neighing of frightened horses, all tended to form one of the wildest pictures it has ever been my fortune to witness.

FROM BURKESVILLE TO MEHERRIN.

From Burkesville Kautz moved down the Danville road towards Meherrin station, destroying it effectually as he proceeded. He captured a despatch at the station from a rebel quartermaster to another quartermaster at Richmond, stating that he had sent all the grain in his possession (some four hundred bushels) to Richmond via the Danville Railroad, since the other was in the hands of the villanous Yankee invaders.

CAPTAIN WHITTAKER, A. D. C. TO GENERAL WILSON,

went through from our division headquarters to Burkesville, some ten or twelve miles distant, with an escort of ten men, with a despatch to Gen. Kautz. Pretty thoroughly invested by the enemy, the task of passing through was one somewhat difficult to accomplish. However, the Captain managed to get through in safety. I mention this single instance of Captain Whittaker's enterprise; but he is ever at work, and does so many brave and noble things it is utterly impossible to enumerate them.

FRIDAY, June 24.

At an early hour this morning the troops were again on the march, moving away to the left, and soon afterwards the pickets were called in, and we left the vicinity of the Hardaway estate, on the Little Nottoway. Since Kautz had already destroyed Burkesville station, General Wilson did not consider it essentially incumbent upon him to pass through Nottoway Court House to that point; but he moved off to the left, on the road to Meherrin station, where it was understood he was to connect with Kautz, leaving Fitzhugh Lee, with his baffled horde, to follow in our rear.

A SERGEANT ON A RAID.

Orderly Sergeant Moran, of Captain Fitzhugh's battery, went out with five of his own and eight of the Second Ohio, some eight miles in the rear of our lines, to take some horses and mules said to be hidden in the woods. He captured eight horses and twenty three mules, and two rebel cavalrymen. On his way back to the column, near an old church, some forty or fifty of the enemy's cavalry formed in line across the road to stop him. He charged them, however, with his little squad, going through them handsomely, and capturing another prisoner. He managed to save his horses and prisoners; but his mules would not charge, and had to be left.

CAPTURE OF A REBEL QUARTERMASTER.

Some of the ambulance corps captured a rebel quartermaster, named James J. Waggoner, and several wagons, in the woods. He said he had almost supplied Lee's army with forage and rations over the railroad. He was the agent for purchasing quartermaster's stores in this portion of the State. Eight regular trains have daily passed over this road and some specials.

JUNCTION OF WILSON AND KAUTZ—DESTRUCTION OF TRACK.

At Meherrin station we joined the rear of Kautz's column, who had burned the depot and other public building as they advanced. Two or three small private houses caught fire from the conflagration and were reduced to ashes. The destruction of this road is complete. The rails are the old-fashioned kind, two and one half inches in width and an inch in thickness. These are pierced with holes for spikes at every two feet, and firmly fastened upon heavy beams of pine. Rails, boards, dry wood and other combustible materials were piled along either side of the track and fired. The ties and sleepers, being dry and full of resinous matter, ignited readily, and in a few hours wholemiles of the track were destroyed, scarcely anything but the iron plating of the sleepers remaining. General Wilson and his staff superintend the work personally, fully resolved that no pains shall be spared to render the destruction complete.

ARRIVAL AT KEYSVILLE—OUR REAR HARASSED.

At seven o'clock P. M. we reached Keysville, a neat little town, standing on the railroad eight miles below Meherrin. The depot was fired and all its appurtenances, and the column bivouacked at this point for the night. The enemy's cavalry was hovering upon our rear all the afternoon, but gave us no serious trouble. They charged up towards our rear guard once, and succeeded in gobbling three or four dismounted stragglers, and during the night they fired a few shots at our pickets, without doing them any injury, however.

SATURDAY, June 25, 1864.

REBEL GOVERNMENT PROPERTY DESTROYED—TOBACCO.

Before leaving Keysville this morning everything appertaining to the railroad was destroyed. A building that had been used as post office and rebel warehouse was also fired. One of the upper rooms had been fitted up as a Masonic hall.

We then moved down to Drake's Branch, burning the railroad as we proceeded. At Drake's Branch some six or eight buildings were burned, as well as a large quantity of tobacco.

WE PROCEED TOWARDS ROANOKE STATION.

Kautz's command still being in the advance, Colonel McIntosh took command of the Third division to day, while General Wilson commands the expedition. It has been one of the warmest days the citizens say they ever experienced in Virginia. Our horses, even standing in the shade, pant for breath, literally reeking with perspiration. The roads have been worn into an almost impalpable powder by the trampling of many feet and wheels, and it rises on the heated air in immense clouds and floats lazily away. This dust is of a reddish color, and smells like the parings of slate pencils, and it keeps our horses almost constantly sneezing and coughing. It settles all over horse and equipments, making them appear as if they had been besmeared with tar and then been rolled in a bed of pulverized red ochre. The dust gives the trees and fences along the roads we march a singular look; it settles upon everything to a considerable depth, making the foliage of the trees look as if there had been a storm of Spanish brown and Scotch snuff.

From Drake's Branch we proceeded towards Roanoke station, on the Staunton river, destroying the road as we went. This road is Lee's only available line for transporting supplies to his army, and in cutting this road as Wilson has done he is wounded in his very vitals, since it will take weeks to repair the track and rebuild the bridges.

THE REBELS IN FORCE.

About a mile and a half from Roanoke station a rebel picket post was discovered. They fired at our advance and sullenly retired. A slight line of skirmishers was thrown forward, and we were not long in ascertaining that the enemy was in force and in strongly intrenched positions on each side of the river. They opened on our skirmish line with several pieces of cannon, and from their rifle pits near the bridge. A line of battle was at once formed. The First Brigade (Colonel Spear's) was dismounted and formed in line on the right of the railroad, while the Second brigade, commanded by Colonel West, formed a line on its left, and the batteries were put in position along the crests of the hills fronting the rebel works. For a while the enemy directed his principal fire towards our batteries, designing, no doubt, to silence them. About four o'clock in the afternoon Lieutenant Fitzhugh's battery (Companies C and E of the Fourth United States) went into the field and took a position on the hills immediately in front of the bridge.

STAUNTON BRIDGE—THE FIGHT.

Staunton bridge is a structure more than half a mile in length, a heavy wooden concern, supported on piers and trellises. It is a covered bridge, with a slate roof. On the opposite bank the rebels had redoubts—more properly fieldworks—thrown up on either side, in which they had six pieces of artillery placed in such a manner as to rake our side of the stream effectually.

Lieutenant Fitzhugh gave this battery his especial attention, and after he once succeeded in getting its exact range he silenced their guns in a short time. Nearly every shot and shell he threw at those batteries, after the first three or four, passed through the embrasures of their fortifications. Meanwhile the line of battle formed by West's and Spear's brigades had steadily advanced towards the bridge, through the immense wheat and oats fields intervening, notwithstanding a terrific fire from the enemy. Running to the right of the bridge, on our side of the river, the enemy had a line of rifle pits, some five or six hundred yards in length. They were driven from them, and took to their boats and crossed the river. The most terrific discharges of grape and canister I ever witnessed took place between four and five o'clock P. M. The way the shot whistled and rustled through the tall wheat and oats could not be listened to without a shudder. There is no sound more infernal than the peculiar screech of canist r. When heard even at a safe distance one cannot avoid a kind of billious sensation near the pit of the stomach.

At one time our line had advanced to within two hundred yards of the bridge, but, not being able to survive under so hard a fire, the line slowly receded again for one hundred yards or so, and took possession of an old canal or raceway running from the mill on the left to the river. This ditch was perfectly dry and about five feet in depth, and answered the purpose for which it was appropriated admirably, since they were safe from the enemy's missiles; but he was vigilant, and if a head appeared above the ground a dozen bullets would be sent towards it.

A MOVABLE FORTIFICATION—ARTILLERY.

To make the bridge still stronger the rebels had taken a hand car and nailed boards in front, making it quite impenetrable to bullets. They would run this quaint engine of war out upon our end of the bridge, and through the loopholes with which it was pierced their sharpshooters annoyed us seriously.

At five o'clock P. M. Battery K, of the First United States, commanded by Lieutenant Monacher, took a position on the hills to the left and rear of the line, and in the immediate vicinity of the old mill before mentioned. An artillery duel ensued between Monacher and the rebels, which lasted until dark. The rebels evidently wished to silence him. Consequently a very galling fire was concentrated on him. Ten of the battery horses were killed outright and six of the artillerymen wounded. One of the sergeants was just aiming a piece, when a three-inch shell struck about ten inches from his head, instantly exploding. It is somewhat strange to relate the sergeant was not killed, although the cheek of the cannon is much defaced and one of the trunions considerably bent.

THE BRIDGE CHARGED BY CAPT. REYNOLDS.

Towards night Captain Reynolds, of Company M, Eleventh Pennsylvania cavalry, was ordered to make an assault on the bridge with a squadron of men for the purpose of setting it on fire. He had scarcely advanced a single rod ere he was shot through the heart. All the commissioned officers in the squadron were either killed or wounded, and the men fell back into the ditch, as the assault could not be made without a leader. Capt. Jno. M. Moorehouse, of the First Connecticut cavalry, was next detailed to assault the bridge with a squadron of picked men. However, the order was countermanded, General Wilson feeling assured that an attack on the bridge such as was contemplated would result in a serious loss of life without our being in any way benefited.

At this juncture affairs began to look rather squally, our advance being brought to an abrupt termination. To proceed further seemed impossible, while a heavy rebel force of cavalry and mounted infantry was in our rear. The Third Indiana had been engaging them in skirmishes all of the afternoon.

We had no facilities for transporting our wounded, and it is understood that General Wilson was to avoid an encounter with the enemy on all possible occasions.

OUR ESCAPE—WYLESVILLE.

As soon as it grew dark the Third division was put in motion, for an attempt to escape from the toils the enemy were throwing around us. There was but one avenue of escape open to us, and that was by a road winding down the rough western slopes of the hills, in the vicinity of Roanoke station; from there it descends a steep declivity and runs across Drake's Branch, twists and winds about in all possible directions, and finally, about three miles from Oronoke station, it takes a direction due east. As soon as we reached the crest of the hills above the depot we were in easy range of the enemy's cannon, and when we had effected a passage of the Creek we had to march for about a quarter of a mile in a line parallel with the rebel intrenchments, and about three hundred yards from them. But, strange to say, he did not hear the heavy rumbling of our caissons and wagons over the sandy way. We marched all night without halting to let our horses breathe, and in the morning we found that we had marched a considerable distance on a wrong road, the head of the column being at Wylesville, twenty-two miles from Roanoke station. We halted at Wylesville for about two hours, to feed our horses and refresh ourselves with a cup of coffee.

As soon as our horses and mules had eaten their forage the wagon train was turned about, and we retraced our way back over the road.

SUNDAY, June 26, 1864.

THE RETURN.

A little after daylight, the Third division having got out of the way, Kautz's division left the canal in front of Staunton bridge, where they had been lying in line of battle all night, and fell back on the road McIntosh's command had already marched over. This movement was a signal for the enemy to open with his batteries, which he did the moment he perceived that our line was in motion.

He threw solid shot, shell, canister and grape indiscriminately, and made a fearful noise; but he fired too high, and, as far as I can ascertain, he did us no injury whatever. Lieutenant Manadier's battery remained in position until the last moment, and when he did vacate he did it under the fire of at least six pieces of the enemy's cannon.

CHRISTIANSVILLE—A FIGHT.

The Third division marched through Christiansville at two o'clock in the afternoon. At this place they found a considerable quantity of rebel corn stored. We found a large number of sacks marked "A. Q. M., tax in kind." Of course our boys manifested no hesitation, but pitched into it unhesitatingly, and if the rear of the column appropriated as much as the head, there was but little forage left in Christiansville. A little way the other side of Christiansville a force of Rooney Lee's cavalry charged upon our rear, and were handsomely repulsed by the Eleventh Pennsylvania. This same body of cavalry also made an essay on the rear of Colonel Spear's brigade, near an old church, some six miles from Christiansville. Spear's men were watering their horses in a small creek, many of them having dismounted for that purpose, when suddenly the rebels dashed upon their right and left flanks and rear, then gave them a volley and received one in return, and fell back into the woods.

Six miles from Christiansville we bivouacked for the night. Captain Whittaker captured a quantity of flour, bacon, sugar, &c., in the woods near the town above mentioned, with a number of valuable team horses that had been hidden by their owners, fearing they would be captured.

MONDAY, June 27, 1864.

We resumed our march at three o'clock this morning, and have been pressing forward all day, and nothing has transpired of an unusual nature. A slight shower of rain just at dusk has cooled the atmosphere very much. This raid thus far has been hard on the men and horses, owing to the heat of the weather and the little rest given them. Hundreds and hundreds of horses have dropped down on the middle of the road, completely "played out." We have bivouacked for the night on the road to Smoky Ordinary. I do not know the name of the place, if it have one; but it is somewhere in the vicinity of Smoky Ordinary and Non-Intervention.

TUESDAY, June 28, 1864.

EN ROUTE TO STONEY CREEK.

We were in the saddle this morning at two o'clock, taking the road to Smoky Ordinary, which ordinary town with an extraordinary cognomen we marched through at ten o'clock A. M. At Peters' bridge, on the Stoney creek, we met a squad of rebel pickets, who fired on us and fled into the forests. A few minutes before we made our appearance a rebel parson had been haranguing them, telling them, among other things, that it was a glorious achievement to rebel and die for one's country. He also told the pickets to shoot him a few Yankees, so that he might have the pleasure of burying them without form or prayers, and in various other ways this divine individual manifested a decidedly unchristianlike disposition.

SKIRMISHING.

About two miles beyond Stoney creek the Third Indiana, which was in advance of the column—this regiment belongs to Chapman's brigade, which was in the rear—encountered a strong picket force of the enemy. Brisk skirmishing immediately followed, and the rebels were driven through the swamps and woods for a mile and a half. Here we emerged from the forests into a large open space, covered to a considerable extent with a fine growth of wheat. A large farmhouse, with a barn and other outbuildings, was standing a little to the left of the road. The enemy was encountered in the wheatfields in considerable force. The Third Indiana was formed into line immediately, and they charged the rebels, mounted but, finding them to be dismounted, they fell back a short distance, dismounted and advanced again to the attack. At this juncture of affairs the First brigade, under the temporary command of Colonel Harbourne, reached the field, and, dismounting from their horses and sending them to the rear, the brigade deployed into line. The fighting now became very heavy, and we discovered that it was a force of infantry as well as cavalry we were engaging. Lieutenant Fitzhugh got a section of his battery into position and gave them repeated discharges of grape, canister and shells. Still we did not gain any decided advantage. The enemy were in too much force for us, and cavalrymen, with their short carbines, fight at a great disadvantage against the long range Minie rifle. A movement was made about midnight to give them the slip. General Kautz's division moved by the enemy's left towards Ream's station, followed by the First brigade, while Chapman's brigade remained on the field to cover the retreat.

WEDNESDAY, June 29, 1864.

COLONEL CHAPMAN

dismounted his command, and sent the led horses some distance to the rear, on the left of the road. He formed a line of battle on either side of the road, just in the skirt of the forest bordering the open field above mentioned. Everything remained comparatively quiet until just before daybreak, when the enemy advanced in strong lines of cavalry and infantry. The attack was made on both flanks and the front simultaneously. The force attacking our left were so far in the rear as to be almost among our led horses, firing among them to make them stampede. Colonel Chapman did the only thing that could be done under the circumstances. He removed his brigade from the dangerous situation with all possible haste. Yet he fell back in as good order as could have been expected at such a critical moment. He made a long detour through the forest and fields, going some ten or twelve miles out of the way, and finally joined General Wilson near Ream's station.

AT REAM'S STATION.

When we joined the main body of the cavalry corps (I had been with Chapman), we found everything in a state of excitement and confusion. General Kautz had been heavily engaged with a far superior force since morning, and notwithstanding the exertions of General Wilson and himself we could gain no advantage over the enemy. Some fifty prisoners we had captured said they belonged to Ewell's corps. Thus it would seem that Wilson's little body of cavalry had been valiantly attacking the right flank of Lee's army. About two o'clock P. M. the enemy was advancing on us on all sides in such numbers that it would have been madness to attempt to fight him. We accordingly fell back to make another attempt to rejoin the Army of the Potomac by another route. Unfortunately our wounded all fell into the hands of the enemy, as well as our ambulances and wagons and three batteries of artillery. It is possible that our guns and wagon train might have been saved had not some portions of the division become panic stricken at the sight of the immense body of men the enemy was throwing upon us. General Wilson made almost superhuman efforts to rally the regular masses of cavalry; but in most instances the regiments would break almost as soon as they were formed. A portion of the First Connecticut, I believe, remained longer on the field than any other regiment, and held the advancing rebels in check whilst a number of regiments were crossing the bridge over the Rowanty, and after it had crossed the river itself some ten men volunteered to return and burn a number of cotton sacks that were about to fall into the hands of the enemy. Had we not crossed the river at the time we did the Third division must have been captured, as the rebels were advancing rapidly on both flanks to gain the bridge and cut off our retreat. The fire at the bridge from the enemy was very hot, and we lost many men.

CAPTAIN FRENCH,

the Third division provost marshal, remained upon the field up to the last moment, actively discharging his duty. A body of the enemy dashed up to him and commanded him to surrender. His response came from his revolver. The rebels instantly discharged a volley of bullets at him, one of which tore his hat, another passed through the sleeve of his coat, while his horse fell dead on the spot. The Captain, however, made his escape.

CROSSING THE ROWANTY.

After we had crossed the Rowanty we followed a road leading southward with as much speed as possible, as the enemy was still trying to flank us, as we could perceive by the immense clouds of dust rising upon our left. We crossed Stony creek in our course, and the Nottoway just before dark. We encountered a picket post at the bridge, one of whom was killed.

THURSDAY, June 30, 1864.

AT JARRETT'S STATION—OUR ROAD TO CITY POINT.

We kept on with unabated speed, some of our horses giving out at almost every rod of the way. We crossed the Petersburg Railroad between seven and eight o'clock A. M., at Jarrett's station, twenty miles below Ream's by rail, but thirty eight by the sinuous roads we pursued.

SATURDAY, July 2.

From the 30th ult. till to-day we have been winding and turning among the various roads and streams between Jarrett's station and City point, on the James. I cannot describe the roads, since they are not down on the ordinary map. A more forlorn and utterly used up set of men than those attached to this cavalry division I have never yet seen. Hard riding by day and picket duty at night, with almost continual fighting, have been the sole occupation of this command.

Our supplies had been exhausted for several days, and the men were reduced to the unpleasant necessity of foraging upon the larders of the citizens or starving in the majority of instances I believe the former was preferred.

WAS THE RAID A SUCCESS?

It is reported that General Grant said that the work General Wilson accomplished on the Richmond and Danville Railroad was worth a hundred pieces of cannon, and that the losses sustained fell far short of what might have been expected. This certainly is a handsome compliment to General Wilson, and one that his meritorious conduct fully deserves.

STRAGGLERS AND "DEAD BEATS."

There never can be any large body of men collected promiscuously from society at large without having some who are utterly worthless being found among them—a little chaff will ever be found with the best of grain. There are two classes of men that disgrace our army—stragglers and "dead beats." They are not peculiar to the cavalry service, but are to be found in all branches of the army.

Your straggler generally manages to have a played out horse, and beguiles the provost guard with a story that his captain excused him from the ranks, as he could not keep up with the regiment. Yet this same fellow will manage to ride the horse twice the distance his regiment marches by visiting every house and cherry tree within a mile of the way. The way these fellows use up their horses can be seen at a glance. They fall out of the ranks, and set about ransacking a deserted house. There is no one extant more expert than your cavalry straggler for opening trunks, gutting bureaus, turning valuable library sets upside down, and raising a chaotic medley generally. It is his delight to mix shoes, hats, pots, kettles, books, pamphlets, old bonnets and other articles of female apparel over a house from cellar to attic. But this takes a little time, and in order to rejoin his regiment he must gallop his horse a number of miles through the stifling dust and overpowering heat. I can safely say that six horses out of every ten that play out on the march are ruined in this way. A "dead beat" differs materially from the straggler proper. He is a culmination of all the evil qualities that characterize the straggler, "bounty jumper," "bureau gutter" and coward; a fellow that should be mustered out of service at once, as he is a disgrace to all engaged in it. He never fights, never stands guard, never does picket duty, and, to use a Virginia phrase, "he never does nothin' for hisself nor nobody." As a rule the "dead beat" is a clever rascal and cautious, and many and various are the devices he uses to avoid his duty. There are men in the Army of the Potomac who have been in the service since the summer of 1861 who have never seen a rebel save under guard. Yet their regiments have won laurels that will be fadeless as wreaths of amarynth, which in days to come he will share in common with them.

A LITTLE CONTRABAND NEWS.

We had scarcely marched ten miles on the late expedition when the negroes began to rally round our flag, and the number with us rapidly increased, till, I feel perfectly safe in saying, two thousand contrabands of all ages followed the expedition.

It was an amusing sight to witness the manner in which they came in and to see the taste they displayed in selecting articles to carry along into the promised land; for it seemed to be a settled opinion with them that when once they reached Yankeedom they were in the land of promise "sure 'nuf." A wench, dressed in some cotton stuff coarse enough for gunny bags, dirty and greasy withal as the sacks pork merchants encase sides of bacon in, would steal her mistress' fashionable bonnet, ornate with marvellous ribbons and wonderful plumes and flowers, and with this upon her head she would trudge along through the dust, supremely proud of her finery, and thinking herself as attractive as an African Venus.

Some of the women would take articles along with them of no earthly utility. Occasionally one could be seen carrying a huge mirror, another a china washbowl or pitcher, or some other article of crockery ware of equally doubtful utility. Some boy, whose master had skedaddled, would steal his clothes, even to his cane, gloves and hat, and, mounted on a gay and prancing steed which he had purloined, he would ride about, swelling like a peacock, and looking down upon his walking companions with the imperious air of a Magnus Apollo. How the women and children managed to keep up with us I cannot conceive. From the 22d of June till the present they have followed us, notwithstanding the fact that at times we scarcely rested for an hour in forty-eight; and in twenty-four hours we have marched more than sixty miles. Yet the poor creatures follow, panting and perspiring, still keeping up.

Many of them joined us mounted on either horses or mules, and as these were wanted in the batteries and wagons they were taken from them. A large number of carts, wagons, carriages, coaches, barouches and vehicles of every description were brought into our lines, but have since fallen into the hands of the enemy. The rebel cavalry sabred many of the negroes who fell into their hands, when they made their charge near the Rowanty. It was really appalling to hear the heartrending shrieks of the women and children as the rebels dashed into them, firing their carbines among them and cutting them down with their sabres. Probably a thousand men, women and children followed us to our lines.

OUR LOSSES.

At present I cannot speak with any degree of certainty in regard to the actual amount of our killed, wounded and captured. All told, they may amount to a fraction over a thousand. Our killed and wounded will not exceed three hundred. The names of these even cannot now be given to the public, since some of the surgeons having lists of the casualties were captured.

The following officers of the Second brigade are known to be captured:—Major Moore, Eighth Illinois; Lieutenant Colonel Pope, Eighth Illinois; Captain Compson, Eighth Illinois; Captain Charles McVane, Eighth Illinois; Captain Goodrich, Eighth Illinois; Lieutenant Swain, Eighth Illinois; Lieutenant Metcalf, Eighth Illinois; Lieutenant Shannon, Third Indiana; Lieutenant Lamson, Third Indiana.

THE LOST ARTILLERY.

Batteries C and E, Fourth United States artillery, were captured near Ream's station, with Lieutenant Fitzhugh, Lieutenant Reilly and Lieutenant Feiger, and about one hundred and forty-seven men.

Battery K, First United States artillery, was captured at the same place. Lieutenant Menadier, commanding, his man say, was killed. Lieutenant John Egan was captured. Lieutenant Ward escaped, with about twenty men.

Battery B, commanded by Lieutenant Lee, was captured. Only three men escaped out of one hundred and forty.

The men who were separated from their different commands are returning to camp in squads of ten to twenty-five. The four companies of the Third New York cavalry, who were cut off from their regiment at Ream's station, and supposed to have been captured, are among the number.

COLONEL LEWIS, THIRD NEW YORK CAVALRY.

Lieut. Colonel Lewis, of the Third New York cavalry, has been promoted to colonel, vice Colonel Mix, killed. This gallant officer entered the service in the spring of 1861 as a captain in the Thirteenth New York Volunteer infantry. After the battle of Bull run he, with his company, was transferred to the Third New York cavalry, where he has gradually won his way up to colonel.

MONDAY, July 4, 1864.

IN CAMP—OUR LOSSES.

Since its return from the raid the Third division of the cavalry corps has gone into camp, at Jordan's Point, five miles below City Point by water, but ten by the shortest land route.

It seems the losses in this division are not nearly so great as was at first reported. Many of the men and officers supposed to have been captured in the fight near Ream's station and Rowanty swamp bridge came through with General Kautz's division, and *vice versa*. Our loss, all told, is now estimated at about twelve hundred.

Lieutenant Fitzhugh, of the Fourth United States artillery, has turned up all safe; but his men and cannon are lost.

Below will be found the present organization of General Wilson's staff:—

GENERAL WILSON AND STAFF.

Brigadier General—J. H. Wilson (formerly in charge of the Cavalry Bureau at Washington, and captain of engineers).

Acting Adjutant General—Captain Siebert.

Acting Inspector General—Captain Russell.

Acting Quartermaster—Captain Ludwington.

Surgeon in-Chief—Dr. Hackley.

Captains and Aids de Camp—E. Whittaker, E. A. Beaumont, J. A. Andrews.

Provost Marshal—Captain French.

Aids-de-Camp—Lieutenant Yard, Lieutenant Lowe.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL BAGRATT,

formerly of General Grant's staff, is at present in charge of the commissary at Tree hill, Quartermaster's department of the division. In addition to this, during the late raid he had a squadron of cavalry, and scoured the country for miles around in search of horses, mules, &c., notwithstanding the immediate proximity of Rooney Lee's cavalry. He brought in a considerable number of horses, which proved of great service to us, since so many of ours were lost during the raid. He was severely wounded on the hip by a bullet at the Ream's station fight.

NARROW ESCAPE OF CAPTAINS MOREHOUSE AND THOMPSON.

It is sometimes strange how slight a thing at times will obviate death, and again how slight a one will produce it. A rebel bullet struck Captain Morehouse, of the First Connecticut, in the breast, hitting a small memorandum book, passing through the cover and eight sheets of paper, where it lodged, doing him no injury other than a severe jar. Another ball passed through the sleeve of his coat.

Captain Charles Thompson, of Company M, and twelve men, were cut off from the column when it fell back, and managed to pick their way through the lines of rebel cavalry and infantry in safety.

BRIDGE INCIDENT.

When General Wilson's column was engaged in crossing Blunt's bridge, on Blackwater creek, near Waverley station, the bridge suddenly gave way, precipitating all who were upon it into the mud and water; but as the bridge was a very low one, and the water not deep, no serious injury was done. General Wilson was standing upon the bridge at the time. The pioneers were immediately ordered up, trees were cut, and a new bridge thirty feet in length put up, and the whole division marched across in three hours. This is considered pretty rapid bridge building.

REBEL ACCOUNTS.

The Fight on Staunton River.

[From the Richmond Examiner, June 30.]

We have learned some of the particulars of the fight at Staunton river bridge last Saturday from men who took part in the engagement. We purpose laying the facts before our readers, withholding nothing necessary to the interest of the affair, and publishing nothing which in the remotest degree can benefit the enemy. Whatever we state shall be true, to the best of our knowledge and belief.

Staunton river bridge, upon which the Danville Railroad