The Telegraph.

MONROE, LA., SEPTEMBER 24, 1887.

SOME ANOMALOUS EXPERIENCES UNDER FORREST.

Crossing Duck River—A Federal Color Sergeant Badly Sold—A Confederate Cavalryman Charging with the Federals—Killing Their Own Men.

[For The Times-Democrat.]

We had been discussing the boom in Alabama, beginning with Birmingham, and traveling on to Gadsden, thence to Decatur, Cortland and Sheffield, one after the other. Further progress on the map was arrested momentarily by the Tennessee river, and particularly by the far-famed Mussel Shoals, which, though impeding the current of the Tennessee, served only to add interest and velocity to the current of our afternoon talk.

Whether the march of armies precedes or is preceded by the lines of greatest development of natural resources, may be matters of debate. Perhaps, as in this instance, the lines being the same, the order of precedence would be difficult to determine. Thus we had been traveling over the same ground in conversation that two members of our little party, which I shall designate as the vestry, to distinguish it from other similar parties, and because also it is not a vestry, had gone over as soldiers more than two decades ago. To locate the famous shoals and their length and the canal now building to avoid them, personal recollections of the war period were appealed to. The switch, any old soldier will understand, was now wide open to the post, and we swarmed across the Tennessee at the foot of the shoals, as we had done under Hood, in November, 1864, and set forward again in the face of blinding snow, and rain, and sleet along almost impassable highways, on the disastrous march into Tennessee and conjectually on to the Ohio.

We talked hurriedly enough over the ground we had toiled over as painfully before, and very soon reached Duck river and halted before Columbia, where Gen. Thomas with a large force was entrenched to dispute our passage. Gen. Forrest was again ordered to seek a crossing above and east of Columbia. My old comrade in arms was a soldier in Forrest's cavalry, or mounted infantry, to speak more in accordance with that intrepid leader's manner of fighting, whose war theories were all embraced in the terse phrase "To git thar fust, and with the most men;" and my friend's company was selected to lead the advance and force the crossing.

"Did you ever serve in the Yankee army?" inquired my friend, having reached the point of crossing the river. Although I had spent a few days in the Nashville penitentiary, a few more in the old Medical College prison at Louisville, two weeks at Camp Chase and some months on Johnson's Island, I had not served in the Federal army, and so replied.

"Well, I did, for about ten minutes," said the old trooper, "and I'll tell you how it was, if you would like to hear it."

Copious reading and not infrequent interchanges of war reminiscenes had failed to acquaint me with anything so unique and apparently so preposterous, and all the veetry voted urgency and approval.

"Well," began the narrator, "when our company reached the crossing we had discovered, we found the river swollen, and a Federal force, with artillery, on the opposite bank. It was a common country crossing, the road leading to the opposite bank in the same manner. A few well directed shots from a section of artillery we had brought along, soon dislodged the Federals, and we plunged in to swim as we were, thoroughly soaked with rain, and encrusted with sleet. We ascended the opposite bank, re-formed and set forward on the settlement road. Pretty soon we found the enemy, about a company strong, barricaded in a ginhouse. This we charged, capturing all the bluecoats it sheltered.

"While engaged in mustering the prisioners and arranging an escort to carry them to the rear, a courier, bearing a Federal flag, came riding at furious speed towards us, his horse leaping the ginhouse fence, and halting before our lieutenant, he gave the order, 'Fall in, men.' The response from our lieutenant in command was, 'You fall off that horse,' which the rider readily did. He turned out to be the color sergeant of the regiment who had volunteered to bear the order of his Colonel to his advance guard, and not, as it turned out, to us.

"Sending our prisioners under a small escort—we had only twenty-eight men, all told—to the rear, we again started forward, intending to strike the turnpike near Spring Hill. We were now in Gen. Thomas' rear. It was not long before we came in full view of the enemy's camp fires. Our pickets, pushing forward continuously, discovered that the fires were burning brightly but had been abandoned, and presumably in great haste. It was far into the afternoon when we crossed the river, and it was now deep dark. The rattle of our sabres, the sounds of the horses' hoofs and a low murmer of conversation alone disturbed the stillness of the night. We drew up about the fires, halted and formed into line.

"I took advantage of the halt to disengage my feet from the stirrups, placed them behind on the rump of the horse and leaned forward, my hands resting on the pomel of the saddle. The lieutenant had called the company to attention, and, as I afterward learned, was about to tell the men they might dismount, tie their horses and take a rest on their arms for the night, when from our rear came a volley as if from a regiment, which stampeded our horses and threw us into the greatest confusion in that darkness. In addition to a Spencer carbine I was carrying a Tranier repeater, through the ring of which at the butt was passed a stout cord, and this was passed around my neck and tied. I was thrown from my horse, who suddenly wheeled at the discharge of the volley, but in falling the cord caught around the the horn of the saddle, and, the pistol being secured to my waist, I was dragged along, nearly erect, by the frightened animal in his heedless flight.

"I was not unmindful of the flying bullets, but I was much more concerned about regaining control of my horse in that dire confusion. I finally grasped the reins, which I had fortunately left over the horn of the saddle, and soon had my flying steed under restraint. I now found myself alone in the darkness, and knew not what direction my company had taken. There were plenty of soldiers about, but I could recognize neither man nor horse; nor could I recognize any of the many voices I heard. I had taken refuge behind a tree, in order to make observations safely and to get my reckoning. You can hardly imagine the sense of goneness I felt, only hoping and praying that I would be undiscovered and left alone, and thus finally escape capture. I did escape, but by a bit of strategy so unexpected and so clever withal that I sometimes laugh when thinking of it now, serious as I was then.

"I could conceal myself, but not my horse, and to let him go was not to be thought of. Seeing my horse, an officer rode up to me, and with an oath, fiercely ordered me to fall into line. I did not know the man, but as well from the habit of obedience, probably, as from necessity, I obeyed the command and fell into ranks with a lot of men who were forming not far from me. I was dressed about the same as they were, wearing a Yankee overcoat, which, however, had been dyed black, the color making little difference in the dark. I did not recognize a man in the line, whereas I knew every man as a brother belonging to our company.

"We remained drawn up several minutes, when to my utter discomfiture, as I apprehended, the bugle sounded the charge. The line instantly sprang forward, and Yankees though I now knew they were, I 'lit' out with them.

"What they were going to charge or in what direction I hadn't the remotest idea. I had enlisted for that charge go where they might, at the suggestion of my wits, which in this trying dilemma and under an alien flag had said, 'Old fellow, now is your chance; lead the charge!' This I determined to do as soon as thought of, and I did outcharge the whole line! I sometimes wonder what those Yankees thought of my recklessness; whether they thought I was killed or wounded, or fell headlong into one of the numerous lime pits which are to be found all through that part of Tennessee. I held my course dead ahead, until, having outstripped my late companions in arms, I suddenly bethought me of the enemy, now again my friends, I was charging solitary and alone, the Yankees having already halted.

"I had heard in answer to the Yankee bugle charge the answering charge of my brother, who was bugler for our company, and so had an idea of their location. While waiting for further knowledge on that point, and now deep in the woods and in a state of the greatest uncertainty, I heard a voice halloing: 'O, Lieut. Watkins!'—the same who is now associate justice of our Supreme Court. Proceeding cautiously in the direction of the response, and taking care to make myself known as I approached, it was not long before I rejoined my company, which I found huddled together in a cornfield several, of the men not yet having got in, though all were in camp next morning. My brief service under the Federal flag, was now at an end, and so is my story, but I might as well finish telling the remaining events of that night, to me forever memorable.

"I apprised Lieut. Watkins of what I had seen and learned while with the enemy, and cautioned him against the attack which he was preparing to make on them, as they greatly outnumbered his little band, now counting only twenty men. The movement was abandoned, but there was work ahead. We sat our horses in silence as the enemy (we had gained their rear) filed along the pike past us in the direction of their main force. From their rear came the rumbling sound of wagons, which Watkins mistook for artillery. We charged down on this with all the abandon and confidence of a regiment, and the result was the capture of three ordnance wagons and about eighty prisoners. The wagons were supplied with cartridges for Spencer rifles, and it was just what we needed, for we were armed with that weapon, captured from the enemy in prior engagements, and were nearly out of ammunition. The Confederacy was then making none of that kind.

"A report was sent to Gen. Forrest, who had crossed the river, but had not come up, and we were directed to go into camp for the night, which we did, corraling our prisioners and putting a guard of three or four men over them, which we found all-sufficient.

"I have told you about the lime pits or holes. Well, while I was standing guard that night one of our men had occasion to step outside camp into the darkness. Soon after he had gone I heard a scream and a cry for help, like some one who was about to drop out of existence. I picked up a shuck torn from the corn which we had fed to our horses, lit it at the fire and went to the man's relief. A more woebegone man or more ludicrous sight you never saw, or any of you. He had slipped into one of these lime sinks, but in falling had grabbed a small bush growing at the edge, and was holding on, pleading to be relieved and thinking he was about to sink into eternity. I saw his mistake at once, and though tortured as he was, I could not suppress a roar of laughter before I could find utterance for the fact that his feet were not six inches from the bottom of the hole!

"Next morning," concluded the narrator, "Gen. Forrest brought up all his cavalry, struck the enemy's rear, and captured or destroyed wagons, stores and ordnance far in excess of our most sanguine expectations. Our company, in passing to the front, inspected the locality of the previous night's surprise. We found the bodies of six dead Yankees on the grounds; how many were borne away dead or wounded we never knew."

"How was that?" was inquired; "you never fired a shot, did you?"

"No; not a man of us discharged either his carbine or his repeater. They were killed by their own men, and not a man of us, strange to say, was even touched."

The vestry voted to aid its worthy member in securing an allowance as a "compensioner" on the government, and thereupon closed the afternoon's deliberations. G. W. McCRANIE.

New Orleans.

IN ARCADY.

Because I choose to keep my seat,
Nor join the giddy dancers' whirl,
I pray you do not laugh, my girl,
Nor ask me why I find it sweet
In my old age to watch your glee—
I, too, have been in Arcady.

And though full well I know I seem
Quite out of place in scenes like this,
You can't imagine how much bliss
It gives me just to sit and dream,
As you flit by me gracefully,
Ho *w* I, too, dwelt in Arcady.

For, sweetheart, in your merry eyes
A vanished summer buds and flows,
And with the same bright cheeks of rose
I see your mother's image rise,
And o'er a long and weary track
My buried boyhood wanders back.

And as with tear-dimmed eyes I cast
On your sweet form my swimming glance,
I think your mother used to dance
Just as you do, in that dead past,
Long years ago—yes, fifty-three—
When I, too, dwelt in Arcady.

And in the music's laughing notes
I seem to hear old voices ring
That have been hushed, ah! many a spring,
The echo of a melody
I used to hear in Arcady.

And yonder youth—nay, do not blush—
The boy's his father o'er again.
And hark ye, miss, I was not plain
When at his age—what! must I hush?
He's coming this way? Yes, I see,
You two yet dwell in Arcady.

—*Boston Advertiser.*

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