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The Camden Confederate,

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[FROM OUR OCCASIONAL CORRESPONDENT.]
TULLAHOMA, TENN., JANUARY 12, 1863.

Being at leisure this morning, for the first time since the great struggle near Murfreesboro, I will give you a short sketch of the eventful week just passed, which, I trust, will not be wholly uninteresting. Our Regiment left Tribune on the 27th December, and marching through a drizzling rain all the day, reached Murfreesboro on the 28th. The vast camp around the city appeared deserted, for the troops were all out on the front in line of battle, awaiting the approach of the Abolitionists. Our position was soon assigned us, and we stood there for two days, shivering in the cold rain that was falling. On Wednesday the 31st the Brigade was ordered to the left, where the conflict of the previous day had raged. Crossing Stone's River, Gen. Polk rode up and told us that the enemy was being driven back. This information fell gratefully upon our hearts, and we pushed forward. A few minutes afterwards Gen. Bragg and staff came up. Three deafening cheers greeted the veteran soldier. Acknowledging the compliment, he spoke a few words of cheer to us and moved to the head of the column. Could we have gone into the fight at that moment, we would have carried any position. I never saw soldiers so enthused before, but our time had not yet come. Forming in line of battle we had to march a mile through an open field under the raking fire of the enemy's guns. Shell and shot flew thick and fast over our heads—these we heeded not, but marched in solid line still towards them—"That battery must be taken," was the order. Three brigades had already tried it, and ours was the fourth that was to seek its reputation e'en at the "cannon's mouth." On reaching the Nashville Pike we formed in column of companies across it. I was truly nervous for the safety of the Regiment while in this position. A round shot would have gone through every company. Luckily the enemy did not take advantage of the occasion, and very soon we deployed. When within good range we gave the enemy a volley, and then a charge. The first line of the Abolitionists gave way and left two pieces of their artillery in our possession, but the second line stood the shock valiantly. I could see the Yankee officers riding up and down their line, encouraging their men. Their artillery had limbered up and was moving off, but at this moment the regiment on our right gave way, and soon our regiment, with thinned ranks, was subjected to a murderous enfilading fire. We could not stand it longer. Our Brigadier seeing our condition, ordered a retreat. Had the rest of the brigade stood up to us, we would have taken that formidable battery and carried it safely to the rear. After being shelled for some time we took another position, and rested from the weary labors of the day. I was glad to get a place where I could breathe freely again, for I was well nigh exhausted. We lost many brave men in killed and wounded in this charge, among whom was our Colonel—than whom none was braver. I escaped unhurt—thanks unto Almighty God—but my clothes were shot in several places. We slept upon our arms on the battle field. The scene was a sad one. The cries of the wounded and dying reached my ears from every direction. The dead lay in heaps, and the pale moonbeams resting upon their pallid cheeks filled me with the most painful emotions. Never more do I

wish to behold a spectacle so heart rending. The enemy's right had been driven back some four or five miles during the day, and all of their dead and wounded were left on our hands. Ambulances were running all night, gathering up the wounded and carrying them to the hospitals. Wagons too, were busy in hauling away the spoils, which were considerable, in the way of small arms and knapsacks. Thus ended the old year with me. I trust that yours was more agreeable and pleasant, and for a New Year's Gift, let me wish that you received other than *bombs* and *bullets*. No fighting was done on the first day of the year. We occupied the well fought field, and eyed the Yankees all the day. Each party seemed loath to commence the strife again. Our lines were concealed in a dense cedar grove, and the enemy were just beyond us, in an open corn field. I presume they had a trap laid for us—for they do not like to show themselves—preferring always to crouch behind something for protection. We did no fighting on the second until nearly sundown, when we were ordered to support a charge of the Kentucky brigade, commanded by Gen. Harrison. The enemy were posted on this side of Stone's River, upon a hill side. Our Kentucky boys run up to them ere they fired a gun, the enemy, however, firing all the while. When within a few yards of the Yankees our men gave them a broadside, and the fight became in some instances hand to hand. The enemy could not stand it. They took to their heels—our men pursuing, until they had been driven across the river. A large number of them were killed, and some three hundred taken prisoners. I never saw anything equal to that charge—it was truly magnificent, and I was heartily amused at the quick time the Yankees made across that stream. The brave General Harrison was mortally wounded, to the regret of every true son of Kentucky. The next day, Saturday, the cold rain fell pitilessly upon us. Drawn up in line, we waited for the enemy to show themselves. They came not. Fatigued beyond endurance, some of our men would sleep, despite the falling weather. At one o'clock a. m., on Sunday, January 4, we moved quietly away from Murfreesboro. I regretted to leave a field so gloriously won, but our troops were exhausted and needed rest and recuperation. 'Twas wise and humane therefore to draw off and obtain the necessary recreation. I wish it could have been otherwise, but under the circumstances it could not be avoided. We are once again in camp. I enjoy the rest it gives, and am ready to meet the foe when duty calls. Tullahoma is about forty miles south of Murfreesboro—immediately on the railroad—the village is a small one, and when once seen, one never wishes to see it again. I have no news from the front to-day. I guess the enemy will follow us very slowly, if at all. I suppose they will use the spade and shovel pretty lively around Murfreesboro, before they advance.

Nothing more at present.
Yours, &c.

Capt. A. Hamilton Boykin, of Kershaw, says the Charleston *Mercury*, has declined the appointment of Judge Advocate for the Military Department now commanded by Gen. Beauregard. He places this decision, we believe, on want of legal practice and status. We regret the decision and we dissent from the opinion it implies concerning his qualification, but we cannot withhold an expression of approval for the precedent and the modesty exhibited.

Many citizens less qualified than Capt. Boykin would gladly accept such an offer.

The Springfield *Republican* expresses the opinion that the country is getting tired of unsuccessful war, of blunders in the field, of doubt and hesitation and confusion in council, of fraud and rascality everywhere.

It is believed at Washington that Secretary Chase will soon lead to the hyemorial altar the accomplished widow of the Late Senator Douglas.

A Hero on Crutches.

Some weeks ago the Richmond correspondent of this paper, alluding to Bishop Elliott's proposition for a monument to the unknown dead, said, "the topic of unknown heroes was frequently introduced in conversation, and mentioned a number of these heroes, among them a cavalry man from Texas, who, unable to walk a step carries a pair of crutches on horseback, and with them has continued to perform all the arduous duties required of him." Our correspondent, we dare say, little dreamed that this unknown dragoon would prove to be not only the most heroic of all the heroes of the war, but a poet of a high order besides. The following letter, addressed to the *Mobile Register and Advertiser*, reads like a romance, yet bears upon its face the evidence of truth. We copy it as a just tribute to a gallant soldier, and as of far more interest than any number of extracts from Yankee papers:—*Mercury*.

This soldier is Lamar Fontaine, a private in the "Campbell Rangers," 2d Regiment Virginia Cavalry. He is the eldest son of the Rev. Edward Fontaine, an Episcopal Minister, residing near Jackson, Miss., who commanded the Burt Rifles, of the 18th Regiment Mississippi Volunteers in the first battle of Manassas, and who is honorably mentioned in Gen. Reauegard's report of it. He was born in Washington county, Texas, in 1841, while his parents resided there; and was named after his father's intimate friend, Gen. Mirabeau Lamar. Previous to the present revolution Lamar Fontaine lived in his native State, was educated in Austin, and at the military Academy in Bastrop, and learned, practically, the most essential duties of a soldier as a Texas Ranger and hunter on the frontiers of Western Texas, where he was unsurpassed as a dexterous rider and skillful marksman. As soon as the war commenced, he came to Mississippi and enlisted as a private in the first company organized for the defence of the State, the Mississippi Rifles, of Jackson, commanded by Capt. Robert Smith, the heroic Col. Smith, who fell at Mumfordsville, Ky. Under this excellent officer he served at Pensacola, as an infantry soldier, and then as an artilleryman until he was transferred to his father's company in the Army of the Potomac. At the battle of Manassas he was severely wounded by a cannon shot, which passed under his feet, bruising one of them so badly that he was unfitted for further duty as an infantry soldier. Finding that he was unwilling to be discharged, his father procured him a transfer to Capt. Alexander's Company (I), 2d Regiment Virginia Cavalry. Under Generals Jackson and Ewell he distinguished himself in the battles of Front Royal, Cross Keys, and all the actions of the Valley. Near Winchester, in company with a young gentleman from Campbell county, Va., (private John Moore,) he performed a feat without a parallel in the annals of war, and which is mentioned with the highest commendation in General Ewell's official report. These two young men, unassisted and alone, charged a piece of artillery planted on the Winchester Turnpike, manned by eight of the enemy, killed and wounded two of their number, drove the rest from the gun and brought it off in triumph to their commander. Near Strasburg a shell exploded against his horse's head, blowing it to atoms and breaking Lamar's thigh. While his comrades were carrying him from the field, another shell wounded him severely in the hip. Soon after his wounds were dressed, while lying under a tree, a minie ball penetrated the back of his neck, passed down near his spine and lodged where the surgeons have not been able to find it. Since then his right leg and side have remained paralyzed. He recovered sufficiently to obtain leave of absence from the hospital in Charlottesville for several weeks, which he spent with his company in performing military duty with his crutches tied to his saddle. In this condition he fought seven battles—Hazel River Bridge, Warrenton Springs, the Rappahannock or Waterloo Bridge, the battles of the 30th

30th and 31st at Manassas, and the battle of Germantown.

While the enemy were shelling Warrenton Springs, Gen. R. H. Anderson wished to ascertain what division of the army occupied the north bank of the Rappahannock, opposite his position. He volunteered to bring him the necessary information, swam the Rappahannock, surprised three of the enemy's armed pickets, and brought them across the river to the General, who gave the crutched hero a periphrastic complimenting his skill and gallantry. At the battle of Hazel River a minie ball broke one of his crutches, and one of the enemy's horses without a rider ran against him and broke the other. In the second day's fight at Manassas he had a horse killed under him, and another the day after at the battle of Germantown. While pursuing the enemy's cavalry, a pistol shot penetrated his hat, grazed his temple, and knocked him from his horse. Since he has been pronounced incompetent to perform military duty on account of his wounds, and while acting as a volunteer on hospital furlough, he has captured six prisoners without any assistance, and killed many of the enemy. In different battles he has had six horses killed under him, and I have no doubt has killed more of the enemy than any soldier in our army.

If skill, courage and hazardous and useful service on the battle field deserve promotion, he has nobly earned it. Just before the resignation of the Hon. G. W. Randolph he was recommended for promotion by Gen. Ewell; but so far his merits has been overlooked, and an "unknown hero," capable of drilling and leading an army to victory, is a mutilated private, while scores of "cross road" politicians, unscathed by ball or sabre, and strangers to the roar of battle, are commanding companies and regiments.

It will gratify the friends of our "unknown heroes" to learn that Lamar Fontaine is the author of the beautiful lines which have recently been published in all our papers, commencing "All quiet along the Potomac to-night," a copy of which, corrected by the author, is herewith enclosed:

"ALL QUIET ALONG THE POTOMAC TO-NIGHT."

By Lamar Fontaine, Company I, Second Regiment Virginia Cavalry. Written while on picket on the bank of the Potomac, 1861.

"All quiet along the Potomac to-night,"
Except here and there a stray picket
Is shot as he walks on his beat to and fro
By a Rifleman hid in the thicket.

'Tis nothing—a private or two now and then
Will not count in the news of the battle;
Not an officer lost! only one of the men
Mourning out, all alone, the death rattle.

"All quiet along the Potomac to-night,"
Where the soldiers lie peacefully dreaming,
And their tents in the rays of the clear autumn moon,
And light of their camp fires are gleaming.

A tremulous sigh as a gentle night wind
Thro' the forest leaves slowly is creeping,
While the stars up above, with their glittering eyes,
Keep guard o'er the army while sleeping.

There's only the sound of the lone sentry's tread,
As he tramps from the rock to the fountain,
And thinks of the two on the low trundle bed
Far away in the cot on the mountain.

His musket falls slack—his face, dark and grim,
Grows gentle with memories tender,
As he mutters a prayer for the children's sleep,
And their mother—"may Heaven defend her."

The moon seems to shine as brightly as then—
That night, when the love yet unspoken
Leaped up to his lips, and when low murmured vows
Were pledged to be ever unbroken.

Then drawing his sleeve roughly over his eyes,
He dashes off the tears that are welling;
And fathers his gun close up to his breast,
As if to keep down the heart's swelling.

He paces the fountain, the blasted pine tree,
And his footstep is lagging and weary,
Yet onward he goes, thro' the broad belt of light
Toward the shades of the forest so dreary.

Hark! was it the night wind that rustled the leaves?
Was it the moonlight on the water's surface?
It looked like a star—'twas the eye of a hero,
And his life blood is coursing and ebbing.

"All quiet along the Potomac to-night,"
No sound save the rustle of the river,
While on the bank the due on the line of the dead
The picket's "off duty" never.