

WAR STORY.

Sent on a Perilous Ride Through the Enemies' Lines.

Dr. J. A. Wyeth in Confederate Veteran.

A few days before the battle of Chickamauga our division of cavalry was moved by a rapid all-night march to the extreme left of the position which Gen. Bragg had first selected for his battle ground. It was tiresome and slow work, for a large body of cavalry stretched along several miles of ordinary country road at night, with here and there a narrow or defective bridge or causeway, cannot move with anything like the rapidity of a daylight march. We were the advance brigade, and I recall the fact that, in order to get as much of the fun and frolic as possible out of an uncomfortable situation, a number of the best voices in the command had been gathered about the center of our regiment and were wailing the echoes in the gloomy forests which hemmed us in by singing all the lively war songs then in vogue. About midnight word came down the line from the head of the column to stop the singing, and for the entire column to move in silence. Personally I was not displeased when the order came, for, while many of the war ballads were thrilling, and some few were set to inspiring music, the men in the ranks had learned or improvised a few stanzas which would not have met with the approval of the Westminster Confession. From my point of view at that time, war was a very serious business, and a large proportion of the soldiers in our army had in 1863 passed into an extraordinary condition of mind. In the beginning we thought it would be a grand and exciting, and yet short-lived, adventure, and many under military age hastened into the service for fear it would be over too soon for us to have a hand in the glory of it. That fancy, with many other illusions, had in the clear light of a bitter experience faded from our mental vision. Nearly three years had passed, and the army to which we were attached had, despite the patient toil and suffering and the heroic sacrifice of the battlefield, met with so much disaster that it forced upon us the conclusion that our struggle was hopeless, and that if we fought on as we had determined to do death was the inevitable end. It was only a question of time, and we tried to be ready for it. That was my conviction then and until the war was over. Had it not been so, I might not have volunteered to go on the errand which I undertook that night.

When the order to move in silence had passed down the line, we knew that we were coming close to the enemy, and the march was continued with the choruses omitted. About three o'clock we were again halted, and some word was started at the head of the column to be carried in a low tone down the line, as was the custom on midnight marches, since, on account of the darkness and the crowded condition of the roadway, an aid or courier could not get through. The wording of this message gradually grew clearer, and at last was distinctly made out: "A volunteer is wanted at the head of the column who will go where he is sent." It evidently pertained some expedition out of the ordinary, and in all likelihood involved more than usual personal risk. If this were not the case, some well-tried man would have been ordered to go upon the duty. When I said to Lieut. Jack Weatherly, of my company, that I would go if they thought I was big enough, he sent word back toward the head of the column that Company I would furnish the man. There was no time to be lost, so I dismounted to readjust my saddle and unstrap my oilcloth, blanket, haversack and forage bag. These and my gun were left behind. One of the men of our company (Jacob McCain) insisted on placing his surcingle over my saddle for greater security, for fear my own single girth might break if I got into trouble. I carried with me only two articles, my army six-shooter and a small Testament my mother had placed in my jacket pocket when I left for the war. What a strange companionship! A weapon capable of causing such anguish of mind and agony of body, and the Book which taught the gospel of peace and of brotherly love.

Lieut. Weatherly, with whom I "messed," and who went by the familiar name of "Jack" when we were off duty, and who, moreover, was as brave a soldier as ever died (for he fell at the head of his company in the hot fray of Big Shanty in 1864), rode with me to headquarters and reported with his "man."

Here at the head of the column there were gathered quite a number of officers and aids, some mounted and some on the ground. It was too dark to recognize features or individuals, but there was enough light to distinguish the forms of men. The general in command asked me if I was willing

to go inside the enemy's lines. I replied that I would go where he directed me, provided I could wear my uniform, but that I did not wish to go as a spy. He then said: "I want you to carry an order to a detachment of cavalry which has been sent around the right of the enemy's lines, and which should be by this time in their rear and about opposite our present position. They have been ordered to attack at daylight, and I want the order countermanded without fail, and the command directed to return to this column by the route which they have already traveled. In order to reach them," he added, "you will proceed upon a road which should bring you in contact with their pickets between one and two miles from this point, and you will probably have to pass through a portion of the enemy's camps. You must ride hard to meet them my daylight, before they can attack." I answered, "All right," and told Jack good-by. As I started, Col. Hambrick, commanding the regiment at that time, and whose voice I recognized, said to me: "This is an important matter; and if you succeed, you can have a furlough for as long as you desire." A guide from headquarters rode with me a few hundred yards on the road I was to travel, and then turned back. By this time it must have been between four and five o'clock.

To the normal human being the love of life is so natural and so strong that it is difficult to appreciate, until one has passed into and through it, that strange and unusual mental condition in which the value of existence becomes a minor consideration. Hence our admiration at the calm courage of a Cranmer is scarcely as great as our surprise at its exhibition, or our wonder at the coolness of the criminal who with unflinching step ascends the scaffold to be strangled. I would not have the reader infer that I felt that there was any such hopelessness in my own situation, for I realized that, no matter how heavy a picket force I might encounter, with a good horse and the cover of darkness I had a fair chance of running through them with safety, and yet I was equally sure that I was going to run a very great risk of being shot. Although it transpired that the danger I had voluntarily incurred was greatly overestimated, as was the importance of the mission upon which I had been sent, still I look back upon this occasion as the one moment when I came nearest to the elimination of every selfish consideration from the motive with which I was then actuated. I sincerely believed death was preferable to life with failure in accomplishing my errand.

As to the course I should pursue, my mind was clear. It was to approach the picket as closely as possible before being halted, and then make my rush. Should they hail me at a distance, the outpost would be aroused and the danger thus enhanced. I did not intend even to fire my pistol, unless in dire extremity, although I had taken it from my belt and had it ready for quick use. I was riding a splendid horse, strong, swift and mettlesome, and so alert that nothing escaped his quick observation. He was so graceful and smooth of action that as he cantered swiftly along the soft roadway, fetlock deep in the sand, scarcely a sound was perceptible. As well as I could estimate, in my excited condition of mind, I had proceeded about one mile and a half, when suddenly I felt my horse check himself up slightly, as if he were about to change his gait. It told me that he had seen something more than the ordinary inanimate object. At the same instant he lifted his head so high, and in such a knowing way, that I was convinced the moment had come and we were on the Federal outposts. Without waiting to be halted, I tightened the reins, and, crouching down on Russell's back, touched him with the spurs, and he bounded forward like the wind. The clear vision of the horse was not at fault, for as I flew by I saw two men leap up from the edge of the roadway and jump into the shadows of the woods and undergrowth to my left. I was so intensely excited, expecting every moment the crack of their rifles, and so intent on urging my faithful horse to still greater speed, that no part of the picture which flashed through my mind remains clearly registered excepting the forms of the two men as they leaped into the bushes. They never fired, and it is difficult for me to understand their failure to do this. It may be that they felt something of the fright I was experiencing, but more than likely they were drowsy or asleep, and the sandy road enabled me to approach them so close without being heard (for in the darkness they could

not have seen farther than about twenty feet) that they were taken by surprise, and I had passed them. Perhaps they had orders not to fire, and it may be they were not Federal pickets. In any event, in less time than it takes to write it, I had scurried away beyond their vision and out of the range of their guns. Certain it is I saw no other living thing at that time. If, as I had been made to believe, the Federals were in bivouac on either side of the road along which I was riding at such a rapid gait, I saw no signs of them, and they were not there later in the day, for our troops occupied that position. I cannot now even estimate how far I went at the speed I was making—probably a mile, or maybe more. I know I had slowed up and was riding again at a canter when daylight began to break, and with it I noticed a cloud of dust not more than half a mile in front of me. This told me of the cavalry that was moving along that road, and in a minute or two more I had met the column that I was sent to intercept, delivered my message, and felt extremely happy. I remember distinctly the pride I felt when a day or two after I was thanked for the success of the enterprise. They offered me the furlough, and it was a great temptation, for I was only two hard days' riding from home and my mother; but the concentration of so many troops told me that a big battle was impending—for even the private in the ranks learned to know this much—and I did not think it was right for me to be away when this came on. Within a week the bloody battle of Chickamauga had been fought, and we had won it. I lost my furlough, but I counted it small loss as compared to the privilege of having taken even an insignificant part in that heroic and bloody battle, one of the few great signal triumphs of the Army of Tennessee.

Was Taken for a Burglar and Shot in the Head.

LANCASTER, Nov. 27.—A sad accident, which came very near being a fratricide, happened here at an early hour Sunday morning. J. Harry Foster, Esq., a young attorney at law, residing at Kershaw, this county, in company with Mr. Martin S. Witherpoon, left Kershaw, twenty miles distant, for Lancaster, to visit their parents at this place. They reached Lancaster about midnight. Mr. Foster's family were not expecting him, and all had retired for the night. On reaching the house, he went on up stairs into the room occupied by his brothers, Carl A. Foster and Ralph Foster. Seeing his brothers both asleep, he went into his own room, but having no matches, he returned to the room occupied by his brothers, and securing matches from his brother's pocket, went back to his own room and lit his lamp. While reading a letter he heard a noise in the passage and stepping to the door, peeped out. As he did so, there was a report of a gun, and Mr. Foster received a part of the discharge in his face. It seems that Mr. Carl A. Foster had become thoroughly aroused when his brother was in the room, the last time, and being unable to see distinctly, thought it was a burglar in the house. When his brother left the room he and his brother Ralph both got up and loaded an old gun with duck shot and slugs and went out into the passage to hunt the supposed burglar. When out in the passage, Mr. J. Harry Foster heard them, and thinking they were burglars, cracked his door and peeped out. As he did so, Mr. C. A. Foster fired at him. Fortunately only two shot took effect—striking him in the forehead and glancing round; the remainder of the load went into the door near his head. As soon as the mistake was discovered Mr. C. A. Foster rushed to the relief of his brother. The whole affair seems to have been a "comedy of errors," but came dangerously near being a most lamentable tragedy. Mr. Foster's wounds, whilst painful, are not dangerous.—The State.

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—Some houses have wings but they don't fly.

Addressing the Jury.

A man who had never seen the inside of a courtroom until he was introduced as a witness in a case pending in one of the Scottish courts, on being sworn, took a position with his back to the jury and began telling the story to the Judge.

The Judge, in a courteous manner, said:

"Address yourself to the jury, sir."

The man made a short pause, but, notwithstanding what had been said to him, continued his narrative.

The Judge was then more explicit, and said to him:

"Speak to the jury, sir; the men sitting behind you on the benches."

The witness at once turned around, and, making an awkward bow, said, with perfect gravity:

"Good morning, gentlemen."

How to Cure Croup.

Mr. R. Gray, who lives near America, Dutchess County, N. Y., says: "Chamberlain's Cough Remedy is the best medicine I have ever used. It is a fine children's remedy for croup and never fails to cure. When given as soon as child becomes hoarse, or even after the croupy cough has developed, it will prevent the attack. This should be borne in mind and a bottle of the Cough Remedy kept at hand ready for instant use as soon as these symptoms appear. For sale by Hill-Orr Drug Co."

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Explaining His Luck.

I went fishing the other day for trout in a small country stream which I have always held sacred even from my closest friends of the rod. I had no luck, and was on my way home when I met a boy with a long string of fine trout. His outfit would have caused a horse to laugh, but he had the fish, and I had none, so I did not feel like laughing myself. With my guying friends in mind, I struck a bargain with the urchin, paying him three prices, and went on my way rejoicing. Two days later I visited the same stream and had the same luck, not even hooking the big one that always gets away. Coming out I met the boy again, carrying another string of trout, and we struck another bargain.

"See here," said I, somewhat exasperated at his luck, "I'll give you 50 cents if you will tell me how you manage to get such a string of trout every day."

The boy held out for a dollar and got it.

"It's jest this way," said he, "all the kids around here fish more or less and sometimes they catch one or two, and I go around and buy 'em up; and then I sell 'em to some greasy that ain't had no luck. I ain't had time," he added, with a grin.

—After a woman loves a man beyond a certain point she never trusts him.

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