

WAR STORIES.

How Captain Strother's Men Took 28 Yankee Cavalrymen.

Atlanta Journal.

During the winter of 1864-65 there was a great scarcity of food for cavalry horses, and hence a great many companies of cavalry in the neighborhood of their homes in the army of Northern Virginia were allowed to go to their respective counties throughout Virginia to rest, recruit and fatten their horses for the spring campaign. This was the case with my company, the "Madison cavalry," and I assure you that we boys were delighted to be with our home folks, where we spent a delightful winter. Surprise parties were all the rage. The girls would manage to get together in some way or another, coming in wagons, buggies, ox carts, horse-back, some with men's saddles and blind bridles. Then the dance! What a glorious time we had! The intermissions were frequently enlivened with southern songs, charades and refreshments, the latter consisting of ginger cakes, cider, persimmon beer and so on, and not until the rising sun had kissed the snow-clad hills along the Rapidan river did we cease to trip the light fantastic toe, and go home with the girls in the morning. It was at the conclusion of one of these gayest of parties at the old Lewis house on the Rapidan, that one of our company quietly informed a dozen of us boys to report at once to headquarters, then at Madison courthouse. Of course we were curious to know what was up, and bidding adieu to our sweethearts, we reported promptly. On our arrival at the courthouse we found but very few of the company present and hence our curiosity was still greater; but very soon Captain Strother informed us that he needed but a few men—men in whom he had implicit confidence—and hence picked men of the company. What was the work to be done? Many questions of the kind were asked, but no one seemed to know. A hazardous undertaking awaited us. During the war but few men were in the confidence of their superior officers, and on this occasion but few of us knew to what point of the compass we were destined, or what the nature of the work, but judging from the orders fifteen of us (who had volunteered from among 25 or 30) had received, that is, "Leave your baggage behind, take nothing but your pistols, sabres and plenty of ammunition; see that your horses are in good trim, and meet me at the old Lutheran church on the Robertson river (a tributary of the Rapidan), to-night at 12 o'clock, promptly."

Every emotion of our youthful hearts bounded with joy. The devotion to our native country was shown in the hearts of each of us, as we cheerfully and promptly responded to his orders. The Yankees had a signal station on Mt. Pony, in Culpepper county, overlooking much of the territory of the Robertson river was our picket line, while that of the Yankees was four or five miles away, but parallel with the river. Scarcely a day passed that a foraging party of Yankees did not harass and pillage our citizens between the lines. Many sad reports came to us from day to day through our citizens that they could seldom get even a meal ready to be eaten, but that some raiding party of Yankees would pounce upon it, and often would not leave enough on the premises to furnish another meal. Promptly at 12 o'clock Captain Strother rode into our little squad of 15 determined Confederates who were at the river dismounted and quietly awaited his coming. The captain's face showed signs of the fiercest conflict of a Confederate soldier, besides scars received in the Mexican war; and although he was a hard fighter, still he was ever ready to accord to his enemy the rights of a civilized warfare. The time had come for our departure. He said: "Boys, are you ready?" We answered by promptly mounting our horses and forming in line of march. He said: "We shall have some fun, and I shall expect every man to do his duty."

The stars were shining brightly, the ground frozen and the night air chilled by a heavy frost. We had crossed the river and with orders to hook up our sabres so that no noise could be made, we rode quietly along, except an occasional whisper from one to another, until we reached James City (a little village near Madison courthouse), from where we could see the campfires burning in every direction. We halted there for some time until two of our scouts carefully examined the picket posts which were some distance apart. The captain's dwelling was only a half mile from where we halted and I accompanied him to his home where he welcomed once more to his

bosom his wife and children who were no doubt surprised at his coming. Our two scouts soon returned and reported all quiet along the line. We were then marched off through old fields and woodland until we reached a dead ravine, beyond the picket and through which a small stream flowed, with dense pines on either side; here we were ordered to dismount and keep our horses quiet. The noise of the little stream and that of the whip-poor-wills were the only sounds that greeted our ears during the hour of suspense. The main road to James City ran along the brow of the hill through the pines about one hundred yards above us, a fence on both sides of the road, and Captain Strother had secreted himself in the corner of the fence and covered himself up in the leaves after he had pulled down a gap and leaving orders with a sergeant to bring the men forward at a signal from him. After waiting for an hour or so day began to break and we heard the tramp of horses, men laughing and talking, and in a few moments a foraging party of Yankees passed along the road going to breakfast, or at least there is where they had started. After they had passed the gap in the fence, Captain Strother gave the signal, mounted his horse and ordered us (who were nearly frozen) forward. We soon passed into the main road and were then in rear and in full view of 28 Yankee cavalrymen, a lieutenant in charge. They did not seem to notice us until we had followed them for about one hundred yards, then several of them suddenly turned in their saddles and looked at us, but taking us for another squad of Yanks, did not realize their situation, and hence were not in the least disturbed at our sudden appearance. We were then gaining on them a little and Captain Strother glancing backward over his shoulder smiled and said to us: "Let us get out of the woods, boys, and then charge and give them the pistol."

We quickened our pace and were in a few yards of them and in the open field, when the order came to charge. The sudden dash upon them was like a clap of thunder from a clear sky; bang, bang, bang was heard in every direction; they wheeled and fired a volley into us, but being unable to withstand the sudden onslaught of our boys and our determination to win they all surrendered, but not until several of our boys had had hand to hand encounters with the best of them. A few Yankees were wounded, none killed. We did not have a man injured.

We gathered them together in a short time and marched them to Madison courthouse and that night we were all back at our homes telling of our experiences the night before.

W. B. CONWAY,  
4th Regular Virginia Cavalry.

With Evans and Anderson at Battle of Rappahannock.

In The Atlanta Journal of May 25th Mr. W. H. Andrews introduces some personal reminiscences of Thoroughfare Gap with the statement that Evans' and Anderson's brigades received a severe drubbing at Rappahannock. It seems to me that this statement is misleading. These troops, without firing a gun, the enemy out of musket range, were for hours subjected to a storm of iron hail, fragments of shells and solid balls poured into their ranks from batteries in surrounding positions on the opposite side of the river. Then these commands were, as I know Evans was, made up of unseasoned troops. But they did not run or retreat, but bravely held their position from early morning until late in the afternoon, when the Federals fell back toward Washington. This severe test of the courage of these untried soldiers was a part of Lee's program that had to be acted, for on it hinged the success of his strategic move. Pope must be delayed on the banks of the Rappahannock to give Jackson time to get between him and the national capital. This make believe effort to cross the river had the desired effect, and I submit that it was a victory and not a drubbing. But there was some dusting done there that day. I know whereof I speak, for I was one with those who did the running. The Macbeth Light Artillery, under the command of Captain Robert Boyce, was at that time attached to Evans' brigade. Captain Boyce had a fine education and was a promising lawyer. He was high-strung and very sensitive. He had the ambition of a Caesar, and a braver man never lived. He was as oblivious to danger as the coward is sensible to it. And he was, as General Lee said of him that day, spoiling for a fight.

With a chance, he had no fear of the decree of public opinion. Captain Boyce looked upon the enemy as a huge machine and each individual soldier a necessary part of it. He believed, too, that obedience was the highest evidence of one's fitness to do his part of the work expected of the machine; and with it all he was rash and impetuous. It is not surprising, then, when he was ordered to take a position on the hill occupied by our infantry and drive off or silence the Federal guns that were annoying them, that he should, without considering the feasibility of its execution, go at a headlong speed. Just before reaching the crest of Grave Yard Hill (for such was its ominous name, and if prophetically christened had its fulfillment that day) we were stopped by a line of earthwork. Seeing the impossibility of training his guns in the evening, the top of the hill interposing, Captain Boyce ordered the battery through an opening to the left, his splendid men leaping the breast-work up hill as nimbly as a cat, though Captain Boyce weighed about two hundred pounds. Passing the first line of breast works, we were confronted by another in the form of a crescent extending to the first on either side of the opening, and thus making a half moon battery and large enough to operate two guns successfully. Into this small enclosure we had joined six guns and six caissons. The enemy, divining the trap into which our inexperience and rashness were leading us, gave our infantry a resting spell, reserving the wrath of their guns for us. And now, having us packed like sardines in a box, the range and distance having been acquired by the morning's practice, no longer waited to let loose their dogs of war.

In a moment the air was vocal with whizzing balls and shells bursting like claps of thunder above our heads. As quick as the flash of thought we saw the folly of our mission. And how we extricated our guns I know not. But I do know that in an unquestionably short time we were beyond the range of Federal guns. And our lucky escape from destruction was due to the inaccuracy of Yankee gunners. Two men wounded, seven horses killed or wounded were the extent of our disaster.

This was our initial fight and it had a demoralizing effect on the men, for it was so easy to imagine that we would have a like experience every time we met the enemy. But in a remarkably short time our men regained their marshal spirit, as was witnessed at second Manassas and Sharpsburg. At Manassas our guns were piked on the highest hill along Lee's line of battle. During the morning Lee and Jackson had a map of that country spread out on the ground a few feet in the rear of our battery, and were for some time on their knees carefully examining it. The points for assault being arranged, Lee took Jackson aside and whispered in his ear the word go that soon started the music of war. Jackson quietly mounted his old claybank horse and rode off in a bending-forward position without anything in his appearance to thrill one with admiration. But to be told that it was Jackson was sufficient to set the tongues of our soldiers in vibration. Lee and Jackson seemed to have caught a sight of General Fitz John Porter's awe-inspiring command moving in their solid columns against Jackson's battle-thinned line at the same time, and each without the knowledge of the other called on General Longstreet for help. Our battery was some four or five hundred yards in front of Porter's advancing troops, and about two hundred yards to the right of the turnpike. We were ready and waiting in expectancy when we caught sight of a courier coming towards us with his horse urged to its utmost speed. As soon as he was in ear shot he began to beckon us forward with his hand and in loud words ordered us to the front in all haste.

General Evans was standing close by and said: "Captain, go over there and tear them to pieces." We went down that long hill like a tornado, our horses doing their best to keep our guns and heavily loaded caissons under the impelling force of accelerating motion from running over them. General Longstreet was in the turnpike at the foot of the hill and ordered us to take position on a hill to the left of the turnpike about fifty yards further on.

Our arrival was timely, and our position could not have been better selected had we ever so much time for doing it. There, just on the other side of a little branch, with easy range, was Porter's magnificent command of regulars moving in their heavy columns to crush Jackson's little corps of heroes.

We were on their left flank and had an enfilade fire. We could not miss them and we wasted no ammunition. We loaded quickly. Our guns grew hot, but from their blazing throats the missiles of death flew thick and fast. Under our destructive fire they gradually slowed up, then halted and broke, and formed and reformed for

the third time before they gave up the hopelessness of their undertaking. Our position was about fifty yards to the left of the turnpike and the Federals were in an open field some four hundred yards further from the turnpike. They retreated, not hastily, in a left oblique direction towards the turnpike, a distance of four or five hundred yards. And during all this time they were in about the same range of our guns, and we were hurling into their ranks death blows at every step.

During this fight Lee and Longstreet sat on their horses just under the hill and were the silent witnesses of the fight we made. We were glad of this opportunity to get even with the Federals for our humiliation at Graveyard Hill.

We were not ashamed of the place we occupied in the second battle of Manassas, but it does not compare with the fight we made at Sharpsburg. We went into that fight early in the morning and ceased to fire when the curtain of night shut out the view. We went in with six guns and brought two whole ones out. We had no relief during the entire day. There was none to be had. We brought off all of our guns, four of them disabled, and we brought off nineteen men who had been killed or wounded. But I am sure that there was no company that killed more of the enemy that day than we did.

H. F. SCAIFE,  
Union, S. C.

A Valid Excuse.

"During the Civil War," said the old army officer who was in a reminiscence mood, "I was detailed to take charge of a camp of raw recruits and lick them into shape. Now, making soldiers out of raw material is about as disagreeable a thing as an officer cares to undertake, and I had gray hair before the government listened to my frantic appeals to be allowed to go to the front.

"One cold, rainy night it occurred to me that it would be a good plan to make a tour of the picket lines and see if the sentinels were attending to their duties. To my horror and astonishment, I found post No. 1 vacant. Boiling with rage, I made for post No. 2. Here, too, I found the same state of things. Post No. 3 was in the same condition, and I was rapidly developing symptoms of apoplexy. A little further on I found the three missing sentinels grouped together under a tree.

"What are you doing here?" I roared.

"Why, mister," drawled out one of them in tones of remonstrance, "it's raining."

"Don't you know that you can be shot for this?" I roared again.

"We got here just as quick as we could," answered the raw recruit, who evidently thought I referred to their being wet, "and the darned government didn't furnish us with any umbrellas."

"I went to the front soon after that and saw the same raw recruits face without finching rains that were composed of leaden bullets, and they did not ask for umbrellas, either."

No Friends of His.

The Rev. Dr. Leighton Parks, rector of Emmanuel Church, is no bad for his skill in repartee. He is also a good story-teller, but it is as an originator of funny sayings that he has won especial distinction.

Not long before he sailed for Europe he was a guest at a public dinner. On his left sat a young man who had contracted the habit of profanity, and the habit was so strong that it had gotten beyond his control. The young man had a particular weakness for the expression, "Oh, the devil!" He used it thoughtlessly and without intention to give offense, but it seemed to serve as a sort of punctuation for every sentence he uttered.

Finally a friend of the young man thought it necessary to give him a hint, and said to him: "You'd better be a little careful of your expressions. You're sitting next to the Rev. Dr. Leighton Parks."

"The devil," said the young man in surprise. And then, recovering his presence of mind, he turned to the clergyman and made a very polite apology.

"Oh, you needn't apologize to me," said the doctor. "The devil is no friend of mine."

A Minister's Good Work.

"I had a severe attack of bilious colic, got a bottle of Chamberlain's Colic, Cholera and Diarrhoea Remedy, took two doses and was entirely cured," says Rev. A. A. Power, of Emporia, Kan. "My neighbor across the street was sick for over a week, had two or three bottles of medicine from the doctor. He used them for three or four days without relief, then called in another doctor who treated him for some days and gave him no relief, so discharged him. I went over to see him the next morning. He said his bowels were in a terrible fix, that they had been running off so long that it was almost bloody flux. I asked him if he had tried Chamberlain's Colic, Cholera and Diarrhoea Remedy and he said 'No.' I went home and brought him my bottle and gave him one dose; told him to take another dose in fifteen or twenty minutes if he did not find relief, but he took no more and was entirely cured." For sale by Orr-Gray & Co.

This Soldier Shows Wisdom.

OWENSBORO, Ky., Aug. 10.—The devotion of a soldier and his sweetheart is exhibited in the case of an Owensboro girl and one of Uncle Sam's fighting men in the far-away Philippines. He enlisted nineteen months ago and was at once sent away to the fighting line.

Before leaving he made an assignment of \$10 per month of his salary to his sweetheart. Regularly once a month the War Department has sent her a check for this amount, and she has regularly deposited it in a bank, where it is drawing interest.

He has seventeen months more to serve in the army, and if the fortunes of a soldier's life bring him through safely, at the end of three years there will be a snug sum for them to begin a life of double blessedness with. If he should die she will turn the money over to his relatives.

The Act of Dying.

The popular idea that the act of dying is a painful process often causes a fear of death. But death from even the most painful mortal diseases is usually preceded by a period of cessation from suffering and partial or complete insensibility, resembling falling asleep, or the pleasant, gradual unconsciousness caused by an anaesthetic. The common phrase "death agony," is not warranted by what occurs in actual death, which is a complete relief from all pain. When death is owing to heart failure or syncope it is sudden and painless—perhaps pleasant. Death by hanging, there is reason to believe, is attended by a voluptuous spasm. Death by decapitation or electricity is only a momentary shock, hardly felt. Death by poisoning varies in painfulness according to the poison employed. Opium and other narcotics probably give a painless, perhaps a pleasant, dreamful death. Hemlock, as we know from the account of the death of Socrates, causes gradual insensibility, from below upward. On the other hand, arsenic, strychnine, carbolic acid and mineral acids, corrosive sublimate, tartar emetic, and other metallic poisons inflict slow and torturing death. Prussic acid and cyanide of potassium cause quick and painful death.—Humanitarian.

—Doctor—There's nothing serious the matter with Michael, Mrs. Muldoon. I think a little soap and water will do him as much good as anything. Mrs. Muldoon—Yes, doctor; an' will O! give it t' him befoor or after his males?



After Baby Comes.

In the days following the baby's birth there is often a long up-hill struggle to recover strength, and the nurse busies herself in the preparation of jellies and broths for the invalid.

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"I was pleased that Dr. Pierce answered my letter," writes Mrs. C. W. Young, of 21 South Regent Street (Lee Park), Wilkesbarre, Penna. "When I had those mishaps I began to think I would never have children. My back used to almost break and I would get sick at my stomach and have such headaches I did not know what to do; they used to set me nearly crazy, and I used to dread to get up. I felt so bad; then I began taking Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription. When baby was expected I took it all the time I was that way. I felt fine all the time, and I never get those dizzy spells now. I hardly ever have a nervous headache any more. I have a perfect romp of a boy; he is the light of our home. I am now twenty years old and my baby is almost eight months old. I now feel well, and weigh 150 pounds, and the baby 25 pounds. We feel very grateful for the good your medicine did for us. We are both healthy, thanks to Dr. Pierce's medicine."

Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets keep the bowels healthy.

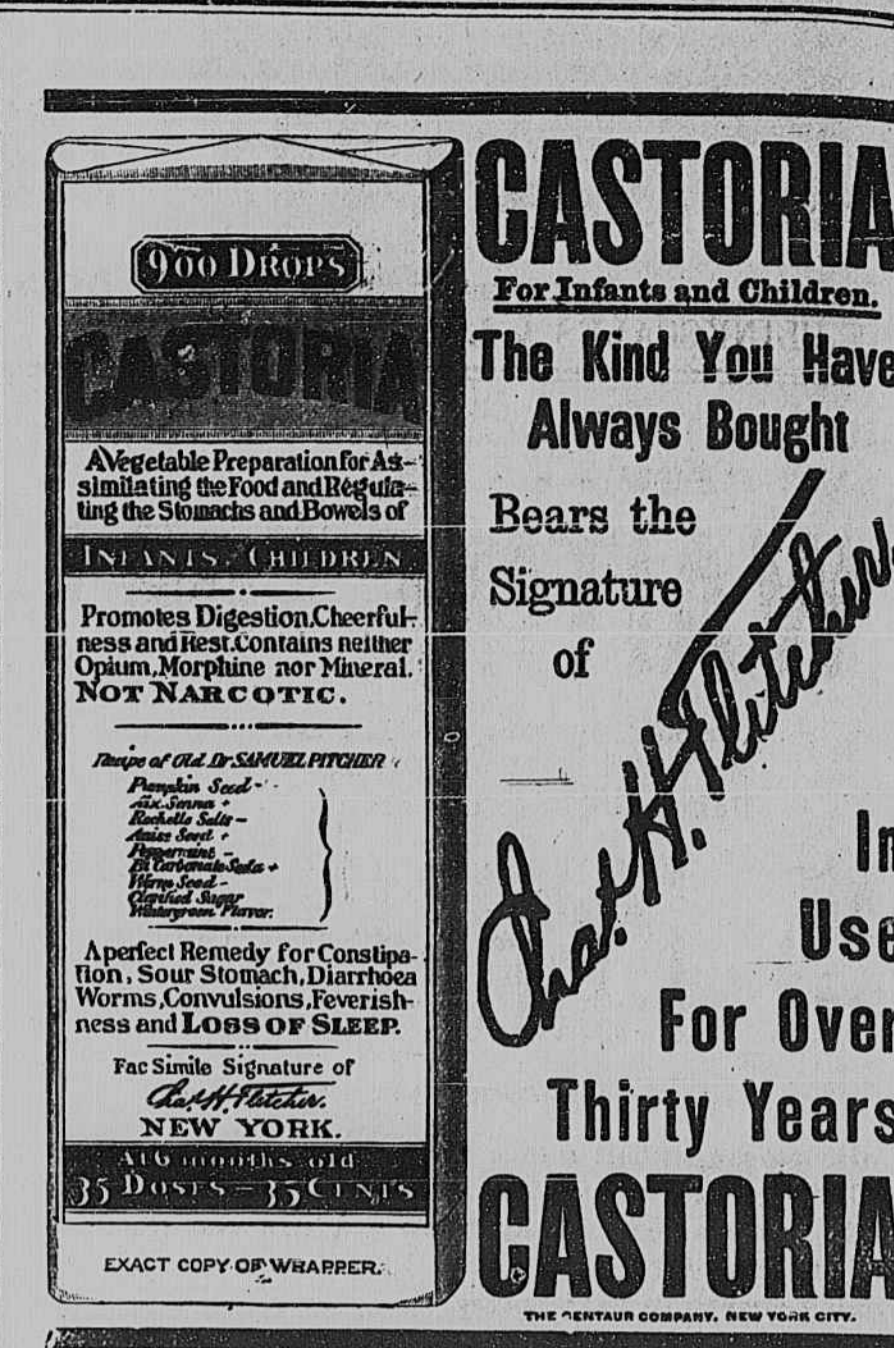
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