

WAR STORIES.

An Adventure so Extraordinary as to Tax Credulity.

To the Editor of the News and Courier: I lately asked my old friend and schoolmate, Gen. Samuel W. Ferguson, (a Charlestonian, a graduate of West Point and a gallant Confederate soldier,) whether he had ever had a hand-to-hand fight with the enemy during the civil war.

Gen. Ferguson's story was as follows: "Only on one occasion during the war was I engaged in any affair which can be called a hand-to-hand fight and it came about in this way:

"Towards the close of a winter afternoon in November, 1862, I was riding along a country road in Mississippi, when my horse was stopped by a warm fence built directly across the road, the riders of which were heavy logs. I dismounted, hitched my horse and tried to throw over the rider of the panel which barred my way, but the result was that the whole fence fell, carrying me with it. On rising to my feet I was suffering intense pain and found my right arm broken. My first object was to get to my horse, who was on the other side of the fence. After following the course of the fence for twenty yards I found a panel down, went through it, mounted my horse and pursued my way.

"Finding it impossible to get adequate surgical treatment where I was I soon after went to Charleston and consulted the distinguished surgeon, Dr. Chopin, in regard to my injured arm. As soon as he looked at it he said: 'You have had a remarkable accident, an anterior dislocation of the radius, which does not occur more than once in five hundred dislocations of the fore arm.' This contribution of mine to the higher surgery kept me from duty for three months and, when at the end of that period I was discharged by the surgeon, my right arm was so stiff that it could not be bent at the elbow. The bearing of this accident upon my adventure will be obvious later on.

"In February, 1863, I reported for duty in Mississippi, and was put by Gen. Pemberton in command of a force of about ninety irregular cavalry and a battery of six guns made up of detachments from three batteries and commanded by Lieut. Woods, of Bledsoe's Missouri battery. The cavalrymen had no sabres, some had shot-guns, some pistols, some were entirely unarmed, and all were untrained and undisciplined. My orders were with this force to harass the Federal gunboat transports on the Mississippi River. My operations quickly caused the landing at Greenville, Mississippi, of a Federal force, consisting of 1,200 infantry, 250 cavalry and a battery of artillery, all under Gen. Burge, for the purpose of capturing or driving off my force. The latter object was easily accomplished; my cavalry was attacked, scattered and pursued over the level country, and my battery was left to make a perilous retreat by a road following the right bank of Deer Creek, which protected in a manner its left flank. A curious episode of that day's history was that I saw in the distance my wife's father, mounted on her favorite white horse, captured and taken to the rear by the enemy, without being able to protect him.

"Alarmed by the exposed position of the battery, I left it and rode rapidly eastward, with the purpose of rallying my cavalry and bringing them back to the support of the battery. I was mounted on a magnificent thoroughbred horse, which I had bought in Virginia, and trained in the Boucher method of jumping, and I was armed with the old-fashioned Colt's army revolver of six chambers. I wore no sabre because my right arm was absolutely useless for that purpose. In the course of the morning fight I had lost my hat. Seven cavalrymen who had stood by me, accompanied me in the ride. We had ridden rapidly some distance when we saw, one hundred yards in front of us, a party of about ten Federal cavalry-

men, who had got into our rear, had captured some of my men and some negroes, and now entirely barred our line of retreat. The alternatives presented to me were my surrender and the loss of my men and probably of the battery, on the one hand, and an attack on this opposing force. I chose the latter, trusting to the superiority of my horse to be able to force my way through the enemy and to escape. Drawing my revolver and calling upon my men to charge, I rode straight toward the enemy. My men who, as I have said, were practically unarmed, failed to follow me and scattered about, and in a moment I was alone, within twenty feet of four of the enemy, the rest of them having probably scattered in pursuit of my men. I then discovered that these four men had been brought to a standstill in their movement towards me by a ditch, which their horses could not cross. I halted and we began shooting at each other across the ditch, I firing three shots without any result, my aim having been affected by the restiveness of my horse and the condition of my arm.

"At this moment my horse suddenly fell with me, but quickly got up. In the fall, however, my forehead, being unprotected, was struck by the heavy revolver and I was in a measure dazed by the blow. Rapidly recovering myself and finding my horse standing perfectly still I half-cocked my pistol and revolved the cylinder to ascertain how many shots I had left and counted three. I thereupon took deliberate aim and fired at one of the party. My second shot was at the captain in command, who immediately dropped his reins and clasped his horse's neck and the whole party, to my intense relief, rode away at a full run. Just then I noticed a fifth trooper, who was a little away on the left flank of the above group of four, aiming his carbine at me. Forgetting that my horse had been wounded I touched him with the spur, when he cleared the ditch with me and I dashed up to and against the trooper, who all the while kept his carbine at his shoulder directed towards me and made no sign of surrender. Having but one shot left I was careful not to fire it until I was touching my adversary, when I shot him in the mouth, the powder burning his face and the bullet coming out at the back of his head and he fell dead backward from his horse. It appeared afterward that his carbine was empty and that he had probably feared to exchange it for his loaded revolver or his sabre or been too frightened to do so.

"The danger in my front had thus been removed and, looking around, I saw about sixty yards in my rear some of my men, who were calling to me. I galloped to them, when one of them said to me: 'Colonel, we have these two men prisoners, but they won't give up their arms.' I thereupon raised myself in my stirrups and was about to bring my empty pistol down on the head of one of the prisoners, when he quickly unclasped his belt, with pistol and sabre, and handed it to me. I was in the act of buckling his belt over my own when my horse, without warning, dropped dead under me; so quickly, indeed, that I did not withdraw my feet from the stirrups. He did not give a quiver and on examining him I found that he must have been shot through the heart before jumping the ditch.

"I lost no time in mounting the horse of one of the prisoners and in concealing the whole party in a cane-brake close by. I learned afterwards that both of the men whom I had shot at across the ditch died; one at Greenville, Mississippi, and the other one on the hospital ship going up the Mississippi River.

"I cannot close this story without mentioning the remarkable feat of my battery. Abandoned by the cavalry, which should have supported them, these gallant fellows fought their way for six miles through the open country along Deer Creek, having that stream as a protection on their left flank and ferry to front and right and to rear by prolonge, in such fashion that they not only repulsed every attempt of the enemy's cavalry to capture them, but recaptured, first, their caissons and then their baggage wagons, which had been sent to the rear before they started back and had been captured by the enemy's cavalry passing round them."

I have now accurately reported Gen. Ferguson's story. It is for the reader to determine which is the more remarkable, the escape of Gen. Ferguson from the bullets of his five antagonists or the performances of his horse after he had been shot through the heart. The successful retreat of the battery is itself not far short of the marvellous. J. L.

Battle of "Nine Mile Road."

Atlanta Journal.

Because of the paucity of numbers engaged in this battle it might not interest many. I only wish to show how the tattered and footsore legions of Lee and Jackson could fight against the odds they had to contend with.

This particular engagement was fought with not exceeding one hundred men, against a brigade of negro troops on the Nine Mile road. General Grant was putting forth his best efforts to capture the much coveted capital of the confederacy and was rushing strong columns of troops along the Charles City, Williamsburg and Nine Mile road. We had been fighting along our front and every man had his hands full. A courier came dashing up for a section of our battery to report at once to this road to repel an attack from that quarter. The order was given to limber up and cannoners mounted, and we dashed with all possible speed, drivers applying lash and spur, cannoners swinging to guard rods, wheels rebounding. Speed was very necessary at this moment to check this advance. We, however, soon found a position and also plenty to shoot at. I have seen men fight by squads, regiments, brigades and army corps, but this handful of men had work to do.

General Gary in the meantime had come up to our aid with about sixty men of the famous Hampton legion, and deployed his men between our guns, with his characteristic, sharp, decisive command, to stand by those guns. These cavalrymen put up one of the best fights of the war right here, and stayed with us till we had repulsed three distinct charges of the enemy.

I will here state Sergeant Hill had planted a parrot gun in a temporary earthwork just to the right of the road. The Napoleon gun was placed to the left of the road, so as to give an oblique fire down the lines. To the right was a pine thicket and the enemy could come within about 400 yards under cover of this woods, but we never let up firing, and sent many damaging shots whizzing through this timber.

But late in the evening the enemy came again with renewed spirits. Barleycorn, deploying their column so as to flank us by lapping around our left, drove us from position.

In shooting down the lines this Napoleon gun was charged with double canister and when the gun was fired I put it mildly to say, "some one was hurt." This gun in the recoil would jump back about four corn rows. They came over the works and captured our guns, but only for about 30 minutes. I being with the gun on the left, ordered the drivers to retire with the horses and leave the gun as we were pressed so tightly, and it proved the proper thing to do in this emergency, so as not to use our own guns on us. Now Sergeant Hill being farther to the right ordered his gun out and had it limbered up when the enemy caught him before getting away, and clubbed Daniel Holliday off the rear horses. Now, Dan was a six footer and not to be trifled with. He arose with all his might, grabbed the gun, wrenched it from the soldier's hand and dealt a blow that left one soldier less to fight; then he broke and ran and strange to say, although surrounded by the enemy, he made his escape.

The strange part to me has always been that the only casualties with our two pieces was the capture of two men, Cooper and Betz. Sergeant Hill had his horse tied to a sappling and they never had time to take him off in their hurried retreat.

Gallant and dashing young officer, Tom Logan, came up full tilt with the Hampton legion and drove the enemy from the works, recaptured our guns and opened a deadly fire at about 20 paces. They captured two of the legion, so says a former comrade who was in charge, and bayoneted them. This so incensed the legion that with the sharp crack of the carbine and clashing sabres flying right and left we drove them back into this dense pine thicket, and night coming on it what saved the whole turn-out.

Now, in honor of the battle-scarred soldiers that made up this grand army that stepped forth from cabin and castle with the courage and refined chivalry that made the Confederate soldier, as belonging to the grandest family of men then living, shall they be so soon forgotten and brushed aside for the heroes of to-day.

History is full of sad and tender memories. They have no quarrel with patriotism, but the results of patriotism, and in a few more years the custain will drop and these old heroes will all pass over the river to join Jackson and Lee and fill martyrs' graves. JAMES G. RAMSBY, Palmetto Battery, A. N. Va.

The kidneys ache when they are over-worked and the trouble gets serious unless promptly removed. Prickly Ash Bitters is a reliable kidney tonic and bowel regulator. Evans Pharmacy. — Girls wouldn't mind so much if the only thing that got chapped was their faces.

Boy and the Presiding Elder.

Anecdotes of preachers being on tap, Hon. John Dougherty, of Missouri, contributed the following:

In one of the counties composing the Third congressional district of Missouri there lives a good Christian lady, a devout and constant member of the Methodist Episcopal Church South. Some days before the date of a quarterly conference held there some years ago our good lady friend received word that the presiding elder would be her guest for a few days during the meeting. In order to convince the elder that she had been and was doing her Christian duty in the matter of training her only child, a boy, about four years old, to walk in "the straight and narrow path," she thought it not amiss to give some special instructions before the minister arrived. So taking the little fellow upon her lap one day she told him that the presiding elder, a big and a great man, would visit them soon and that he would "be very sure to ask some questions about your Sunday school, how you like your teacher, etc. But probably the first question he asks will be: 'What is your name? How old are you? Do you know where bad boys go when they die? Now, when he asks your name, tell him Johnnie Jones. When he asks how old you are, tell him four years old, and when he asks if you know where bad boys go when they die, tell him, using the Scriptural word, that bad boys, when they die, go to hell.' John was drilled on these questions daily until the minister came. In the meantime he knew by rote that his name was Johnnie Jones, that he was four years old and that when bad boys die they go to hell.

The minister was a portly gentleman of friendly manner and pleasant countenance. After receiving a cordial welcome, he was seated in the sitting room, and the proud parent excused herself and sought Johnnie, the pride and expectancy of her life, to introduce him to the minister. After John's face was washed his hair combed and he was otherwise made presentable his mother led him in to meet the preacher. As the usher entered the sitting room he observed through the open door a neighbor playmate sitting on the fence whistling for him and calling him to come out quick. Johnnie at once grew impatient to go out and wished the ceremony of meeting the preacher and answering his questions to be done with as quickly as possible. The doting mother introduced him as the youngest and her only child, the baby of the family. The good minister called the boy to him and taking his little chubby hand in his own remarked: "What a very handsome lad? How like his mother?" His next question was exactly as had been anticipated. "Well, my little man, what is your name?" The boy glanced first up to the minister, then at his waiting playmate, and intending to expedite matters as much as possible by answering the three expected questions at once, replied, "Johnnie Jones, four years old, go to hell," and in the confusion that followed skipped to meet his friend. — Champ Clarke's Cloak Room Stories.

In Greece, in the third century B. C., the wearing of silk was forbidden to women, the husbands of those who violated the law being heavily fined, on the theory that a husband ought to be able to control his wife's taste for finery. — Diphtheria germs survive at least fifteen years. This has been proved by two cases of diphtheria in children who could have contracted the disease in no way except through playing with toys that had been stored fifteen years in an old trunk.

— If I am not in error," Miss Daisy Peachblow said earnestly, compressing her lips in an ominous manner at each pause, "if I am not wandering by the wayside mentally, you stated a moment ago that Reginald Stapley was a bright fellow."

"Well—er—er—I think I did make some such good natured remark," admitted Myrta Haggood. "Why, isn't he a bright fellow?"

"Well," said Miss Daisy, "he is either a fool or a knave, and I'm quite sure he isn't a knave."

"Then he must be a fool. There's only the fool left. Aren't you rather severe, Daisy, dear?"

Fool or Knave.

"Judge for yourself. He was here all Christmas eve, you know?"

"Yes. He remained until 12 o'clock, I believe you said."

"That's true—four long and weary hours until midnight, and, as you can see, I have this bit of mistletoe hanging from the chandelier in the middle of the room."

"Of course. Well?"

"Well, it was here last night, and during the long and weary hours I naturally happened to drift under it a few times, and he—"

"Tried to kiss you, did he? Ha, ha!"

"Tried to kiss me!" cried the indignant Daisy. "What, that bright fellow try to kiss me? Listen! Every single time I happened under the chandelier he jumped up and down, waved his arms in the air like a crazy man and shrieked: 'Look out, Mith Daithy! Look out! You're right thquare under the mistletoe, Mith Daithy!' Bright fellow? Fool—fo-o-ll!" — New York World.

— The Boston Journal has discovered and printed the names and residences of 818 couples in New England who have been married fifty or more years.

— Consulting Physician—"Do you think the patient can stand an operation?" Family Doctor—"Can he stand it? Why, my dear sir, the man is a millionaire."

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