

DUNLOP'S DESPERATE CHARGE.

HEROISM OF A PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER AT MURFREESBORO.

How the Blunder of the Adjutant Caused One of the Most Daring Charges During the War.

The recent death of the zealous Presbyterian minister, the Rev. J. E. Dunlop, of Georgetown, recalls his splendid service as a colonel in the Confederate army. The following tribute by H. T. Hoyt appeared in the Southern Presbyterian:

In the summer of 1862 a Confederate cavalry force, consisting of four or five regiments, was encamped at McMinnville, Tenn. Forrest, afterwards general, but at that time rank only as a colonel, was in command of the brigade. The 2d Georgia regiment, commanded by Col. W. J. Lawton, was a part of this force. In it was a company commanded by Rev. J. E. Dunlop, a Presbyterian minister, who had resigned the charge of his church in Bainbridge, Ga., to buckle on the sword, and had been elected captain of a cavalry company which he had been instrumental in raising and to whom his men were perfectly devoted.

At Murfreesboro was a force of Yankees, consisting of cavalry, artillery and infantry; and considerably outnumbering the Confederates. Col. Forrest decided to surprise and capture the Yankees and thus get supplies and arms for his men, many of whom had at that time nothing more effective than double barrel shotguns. Accordingly we broke camp one Saturday and, after marching all night, reached Murfreesboro Sunday morning just at the dawn of day. The Yankee pickets were captured without giving an alarm and our foe, all unconscious of danger, was quietly sleeping. They were in two camps, one on the opposite side of the town from our approach and the other to the right as we entered. The gallant Wharton, with the Texas Rangers, with part of the command, was ordered to attack the one on the opposite side of the town. Wharton's attack was a complete surprise to the enemy. Without warning he and his Rangers burst into the sleeping camp, yelling and shooting, drove out the terrified Yankees, and for a while held possession of the camp. Afterwards, seeing the small force of the assaults, the Yankees rallied, and after a stubborn fight, in which Wharton was wounded, they regained possession of the camp. The part under Forrest, in which was the 2d Georgia, were not so successful. The noise of the horses' feet striking upon the ground as we charged through the town awoke the sleeping inhabitants, who rushed out to greet us, wildly shouting and cheering, and in their enthusiasm raising such a din as to reach the ears of the sleeping camp a short distance out of town. Then, too, another unexpected difficulty arose. In the centre of the town, directly fronting the street up which we were charging, stood the brick court house. In this was a Yankee guard, keeping watch over some prisoners. As soon as the head of our column came in sight this guard opened fire upon us out of the windows of the court house. This unexpected attack delayed Forrest and frustrated his plan of surprising the camp beyond. When we got there, instead of taking them by surprise, we found them drawing up in line of battle on the crest of a slope in an old field, having a splendid battery of six guns and a long line of infantry supporting it. We were the party surprised. Under this derisive unlooked for condition of things Forrest ordered Col. Lawton to draw up his lines in a piece of woods which sheltered us to some extent, saying that he, with the rest of the troop, would ride around them, and attack them in the rear, and bring Lawton, as soon as he heard his guns, in the rear, to charge them in front. Thus we stood for about two hours, I suppose, waiting to hear Forrest's guns in the rear. In the meantime the Yankees, knowing that we were in the woods, kept up an incessant fire with their artillery, sending a continual stream of shot and shell screeching over our heads, cutting down the limbs of trees, bursting over us, doing no particular damage it is true, but terrifying and demoralizing the men, most of whom had never been under fire before. Thus matters stood; we with our shotguns listening to the music of the shells, and the Yankees having a perfect picnic in the way of target practice, we being the target.

Finally, becoming emboldened by our continued silence, the sharpshooters from the infantry crept down to the edge of the woods and, concealing themselves in the underbrush, began to pick at us with their rifles, and the whizz of their bullets was getting to be uncomfortably close to our heads. Col. Lawton, noticing this, directed his adjutant to carry a verbal order to the major to send a squadron—two companies—to charge those sharpshooters, drive them back and return to the command. The adjutant, in his excitement, misunderstood the order and, riding up to the major, he said, "The Colonel orders that you send a squadron of men to charge that line of battle, reform the men and charge back." The order was delivered to Capt. Dunlop to execute. I happened to be near him at the time. I saw him straighten himself to his full height in the saddle. I saw the fire of battle kindle in his eye. I saw him draw his sabre and turning to his men he said, "Forward boys."

"Charge" was the Captain's cry; theirs not to reason why, theirs not to make reply, theirs but to do or die.

Riding down the sharpshooters, clearing the woods, out in the open field they were met by a tempest of grape and canister from the artillery and of minie balls from the infantry. Many a gallant rider and his horse went down under the storm of shot and shell. But nothing could stay the headlong course of the fearless leader. Passing between the battery and the infantry he sabred one gunner, drove them all from their guns, and caused the whole line of infantry next the artillery to waver. Had this gallant charge been followed immediately by that of our whole command we undoubtedly would have won the day at that moment. But it was not done. Capt. Dunlop dashed on after cutting through the line of battle to their rear, and when out of range of their shot halted to see who were left of his command. Seven men had followed him through and were all that were left. Turning to them he said with grim humor, "Boys, the command was to reform and charge back." One of the men replied, "Well, Captain, we have followed you this far, but if you are going back through that line of battle you will have to go by yourself. We have had enough of it." Of course he had no thought of doing so. He was only putting his men to the test. Riding around their line and out of range of their shot, the heroic little band rejoined their commander.

It is not my intention to continue the history of the battle. My only purpose was to recount the most desperate charge I ever witnessed during my four years' experience in the war. Sufficient to say that by sundown we had captured the whole force of the enemy. The boys threw away their shotguns, replacing them with improved arms. The battery we kept till the war closed and good service it did against its former owners. That night we started back for McMinnville, halting only long enough to parole our prisoners, with whom Forrest did not wish to be burdened. We reached our camp at McMinnville about noon on Monday, having been in the saddle about 48 hours. That battle secured Forrest's promotion to the rank of general, and our gallant Capt. Dunlop afterwards became colonel of his regiment, and was loved and admired by every man in his command.

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