CHAPTER SIX

MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

The embryo of the present town of Greenville was the Blantonia Plantation on Bachelor's Bend. In 1828 the land was settled by Colonel W. W. Blanton, and in 1866 sold by his widow, who was then Mrs. Harriet B. Theobald, for the third county seat; the first was destroyed by inundations of the river and the second was burned by fires from Federal gunboats in 1863. After being burned, this second site caved into the river. The whole county was ravaged by war, during the grim days from 1861 to 1865, and the women as well as the men of Washington County had more than their share of war's bitter destruction. Of special interest are the following recollections of life at home as well as life in uniform during the Civil War period in America.

Reminiscences of a Cavalryman

By

J. M. MONTGOMERY[21]

You know, I first went out in the Erin Guards of our county. George B. Hunt, captain, A. M. Kirk, 1st lieutenant, J. M. Montgomery, 2nd lieutenant, and John Webb, 3rd lieutenant, were the officers of our outfit. After or prior to the close of the Western Military Institute, we were ordered by the governor of Tennessee to drill and assist in organizing the state militia. I was offered a first lieutenancy in two different companies, but preferred coming home to see my parents and going out with a home company. There was but one company ready to go, the Swamp Rangers, under the command of Captain W. A. Percy. I knew but few of his men, however, and did not join them. A good many Irish were then in our county, engaged in levee building. They were always ready for a scrap and quite willing to go to the war. Captain Hunt's father and my

[21] This paper was read by Mrs. Nellie Nugent Somerville, before the Washington County Historical Association on December 5, 1910, January 2, 1911, and February 6, 1911.

father proposed to give us some assistance, and we proceeded to organize a company. My father had a large claim against the government, and the United States Commission got up evidence that our fathers had helped to equip our company. As a result, the claim has never been allowed.

We went to a camp of instruction at Iuka, Mississippi. We had much difficulty in getting in the Mississippi regiment, as they claimed that they did not want any Irish. It became necessary for us to sustain the reputation of our company, although a rough set they were. The entire company got in a melee with the Morton Pine Knots, on one occasion, and the guard had to be called out to separate them. Captain George Hunt tells a joke on me, which I dare say is true. He says that the Pine Knots accused our company of stealing their blankets. After a council, it was decided that we would hold the captain responsible. Captain Hunt was to take the first round, if he was killed, Kirk was to take the next round. If Kirk was killed, I was to take the next. The junior lieutenant, Webb, said he would not give way to Mac Montgomery, so I told him all right, if they killed Hunt and Kirk, he could have my place with pleasure.

I became impatient to get to the front, and tendered my resignation as a member of our company. I had been with the company quite awhile, and was much attached to them. I had drilled them entirely, and helped to equip and organize them, and it grieved me to part with my Erin friends. There was so much criticism about the Irish, however, that I preferred going to another company as a private soldier. Captain Hunt stuck it out to the end, and got to be major of his regiment. They were eventually mustered into the Thirteenth Arkansas. They are now, I believe, "sleeping on fame's eternal camping ground, where glory guards with solemn wound, the bivouac of the dead."

The little girl who presented our beautiful silk banner, with the harp of Erin on one side, and the shamrock on the other, is still dwelling in the city of Greenville. She is now Mrs. John H. Moore, a lovely matron, and I am glad to see that time has made but slight impression on her

brow, and that a firm and elastic step still graces her motion.

I will give you a roster of the Bolivar troop, as well as I can remember at this late date. The company was always popular, bore a fine record, and was composed of the flower of Bolivar, Washington, and Coahoma counties, a few from Arkansas, and some from Louisiana. Therefore, it was very little trouble to keep up the full quota of men.

The previous organization of this troop was as follows: Charles Clark, 1st captain; F. A. Montgomery, 2nd captain; Gadi Herron, 3rd captain; D. C. Herndon, lieutenant; Dick Bell, lieutenant; Lafayette Jones, lieutenant; and Frank Gayden, lieutenant.

As last organized the troop officers were as follows: J. M. Montgomery, captain; William W. Worthington, 1st lieutenant; Livingston Lobdell, 2nd lieutenant; John Lawler, 3rd lieutenant.

The troop included the following men: W. A. Alcorn, Hal Alcorn, Tom Bogue, O. P. Bishop, William Barker, John Barnett, Will Bridges, Henry Bridges, John Blanchard, Dr. Blanchard, J. H. Brown, D. Brewer, J. M. Boreman, C. T. Christmas, Claughter Cook, Oscar Coleman, Ed Coleman, Denny Clay, L. M. Camp, Ed Curtis, A. B. Connor, Carter, of Louisiana, Davis, N. Davidson, L. M. Darden, John Dickey, A. Eastman, Henry Elliot, C. C. Farrar, Theodore Frank, H. P. Goodrich, William Glap, T. Graham, Pat Heath, Tom Hume, H. H. Irwin, Jim Jones, Orrin Kingsley, Clay Kingsley, Caleb Lobdell, Lightfoot, R. A. Looney, Will F. Montgomery, Dick McGuire, Charles McGuire, James Mattingly, Mallett, Nat McCullough, Calvin Miller, R. C. Miller, Dr. Niles, E. Norton, John Noble, Joe Newman, New, Billy O'Brien, J. Orr, William Peek, Jeff Peek, J. N. Philpot, J. J. Rop, G. W. Roden, H. L. Rennean, Dave Reinach, Alf Saunders, Webb Saunders, Smith, of Arkansas, Smith, of Louisiana, Tom Spencer, John Sherrer, L. M. Sykes, W. N. Stansell, J. B. Stewart, John Thompson, Dr. Tully, John Finger, Yarborough, and A. D., B. T., C. T., E. T., W. W., and Tom Worthington.

In this roster I have undoubtedly omitted the names of some men who were good and true soldiers, and it is a

source of much regret that I haven't the old roll at hand to copy. Those who deserted our ranks do not deserve to be recalled, as their names would have no business on this roll of honor of the dear old Bolivar troop, the recollection of which will be a bright spot in my memory, so long as life may last.

The following extract is from a letter from General Frank Armstrong to Colonel F. A. Montgomery, concerning the old First Mississippi Cavalry. "Nothing I may say is too complimentary; my confidence never wavered with the old 1st Miss. regiment on the line. The chief scouts of our company were Will Montgomery, Ben Worthington, John Barnett, and Dennis Clay, and four good ones they were. Your brother was very fond of the scout life. I frequently let him go with Colonel Will Montgomery near Edwards, Mississippi. He had a famous company of scouts that operated around Vicksburg. He was a holy terror to the Yanks, so much so, that they ordered him or his men shot whenever caught. We had a nest of relatives in that neighborhood, so your brother always found a welcome when there. Colonel Will, like yourself and Dr. Nichols, was captured, and while taking him up the river on a gunboat, he made his escape, like you and Dr. Nichols, jumped off into the river, and swam away. Colonel Will told me there were two more with him, who were drowned. He was a fine swimmer, but it was very cold weather. He was exhausted when he reached bank, and to add to his danger, when he grabbed the bank, it caved in on him, and buried him so deep in the earth and water that he thought his time had come at last. But he finally extricated himself and sought the river again for safety, as it was a dark night.

"At length he came across a tree that had caved in the river, and the roots were still clinging to the bank. On this he climbed out safely. He found himself in Bolivar County, and made his way to a farm house, where he was kindly received and treated. While there he had a severe case of pneumonia, caused by exposure in the river so long. It was a daring leap for liberty you and he made, it makes me shudder to think of it now. I am sure I would have

found a watery grave in the old river, as I am a poor swimmer."

Colonel Will took a conspicuous part in the reconstruction, and with his company, was instrumental in quelling one or two riots around in Warren County. My brother, Major W. E. Montgomery, had a battalion of state troops that operated in the Delta counties. He, too, was captured, and made his escape. His guard had him near a canebrake, and he was telling the guard some big bear stories, stressing the fact that bears were plentiful. The Yank became much excited, and about that time something made a noise in the cane, and my brother said, "There is one now." The Yank started to run, and my brother made for the canebrake, where he escaped. The guard wheeled, shooting at him, but he never hit him.

Dave Reinach, who is now a respected and wealthy citizen of Bolivar County, was a good natured, jovial and lighthearted soldier. We were on our march into Tennessee, in that memorable but disastrous winter campaign of General Hood. Our men were bare of everything, but most especially clothing and shoes. At length, the long looked for clothing arrived, but it was such a small quantity that we could only issue to the most needy, who had to draw straws. Dave Reinach was left in the draw. I felt sorry, but could give him no help, and every time he came in my presence, he would say it was a rich man's war and a poor man's fight. I got tired of it, and told him if he would go home, I would promise not to report his absence. He never went home nor did he grumble any more, but he made a faithful soldier, until the end.

I will now relate some incidents in regard to our Campbellville fight. While on our march to Nashville, the enemy was in retreat, and Forrest struck them on the flank. As soon as he came in sight, he dismounted our regiment. There was a farm house intervening, and we and the dismounted Thirteenth Illinois Yanks both made for the same house, and got there about the same time; however, they had a good rock fence on us, and that gave them much advantage. We fought in the yard, lots, and orchard. The Second Mississippi came in on the flank and drove them

from the rock fence; we then got started, using our six shooters as they ran across an open pasture. We killed a good many, dotting that pasture with many a blue coat, and would have killed more, but General Armstrong stopped us to get out of the way for the Twenty-eighth Mississippi to run over them with their horses. The Twenty-eighth was not as near by as we thought, and the enemy succeeded in getting back to their reserve, which was formed across a narrow gorge, and in a very strong position. However, the Twenty-eighth formed on foot under fire, and formed as nice as line as you would see formed on dress parade. They made a gallant charge and drove the enemy from their position. They lost some fine men. Among them was my old friend, Guinard Scott, who was killed, and Ben Offut, who was badly wounded there. As we approached the house where the fight first began, Spencer, of my company, was wounded. I sent him to the rear with Clay Kingsley. In a few minutes after that, Sergeant Orrin Kingsley was killed by a Yank that had surrendered to him. The Yank did not have a chance to move out of his tracks before he was killed. Clay Kingsley returned to fight and found his brother dead on the ground where he had just left him. Orrin Kingsley was one of the best of men and best of soldiers, and the brothers were always much devoted to each other. His death was a sad blow to our troop.

After the fight, the wounded from both sides were gathered up and placed on the gallery of the farm house, and out came four or five ladies, all covered with smut, and the blackest objects you ever saw. They had sought protection during the fight in a large stone chimney in the house. In that fight was killed a man who had deserted our regiment and joined the Thirteenth Illinois—the men we engaged with. I have a pocketbook now that was taken from a dead Yank there. It had no money in it, and none to this day, but it contains my amnesty oath and parole.

This made the fourth time during the war that we had come in contact with the Thirteenth Illinois. On two occasions they gave us a good sound thrashing. However, we did the same for them on two other occasions, so honors were even.

Grierson made the raid through Mississippi, from northern to southern borders. His men were as bold and brave a set of men as any in the Union Army. We captured Captain Will Blackburn, who was, I think, a member of the same regiment. He found many relations in our command, including Captain Hunt, the Johnsons, and General Abe Buford.

During the recent ceremony incident to raising a monument to the Illinois troops at Vicksburg, Governor Deneen and his commission extended an invitation to my aunt, Mrs. Champion, who owned the battle-ground of Champion Hill, to be present as a guest of honor at the dedication ceremonies. I wrote the governor a letter, thanking him for his consideration and courtesies to my aunt, and told him I thought that if Illinois had kept her troops at home, we could very easily have taken care of the balance. He thanked me for the compliment, and wrote a very nice letter in reply.

During the Tennessee campaign, I had three companies under me, and was the only commissioned officer.

On the Kilpatrick raid around Atlanta, Ross had Cobb's battery stationed on the road over which one column charged. They killed horses and Yanks within forty feet of the cannon front and rear. That was the only place during the war that I saw both horse and rider killed, and the rider still sitting astride his horse.

A short while after this, our regiment charged their rear guard on foot. That was the first time we came in contact with the sixteen shooter. It was an unusual fire, and we all dropped on the ground. In a short while their magazines were emptied. Then we were at them again, and had things all our own way. In that charge we had a battery of two pieces against us, and one of them burst in two and came rolling down the hill—much to our joy. Ross, Reynolds, and our brigade killed and wounded about one hundred and fifty or two hundred.

My brother had the wounded in our last charge put on a gallery of a nearby house. A young lady came out to view the situation and discovered the man who had gone

through her wardrobe. She abused him soundly and told Dr. M____ he could not die on her gallery, that he must move out under a tree in the yard.

Dick McGuire, our orderly sergeant, had been barefoot for quite a time and was betting high on getting well-shod in the next fight. Although there were lots of dead Yanks, unfortunately they all had smaller feet than Dick. A Yank hardly hit the ground before he was disrobed, as our men were shoeless and without clothing. We got lots of sugar, coffee, and other supplies, but few prisoners, and Kilpatrick made his escape and did no damage to the railroad.

I note the conspicuous part your good wife is taking in the United Daughters of the Confederacy. I often read her fine speeches with both pleasure and pride. The Sons of Confederate Veterans and the U. D. C. are the ones we have to look to, to preserve the hallowed memories of the past. They are the palladium of all our hopes, our sentinels on the watch-tower, to bear aloft the beacon lights of truth and justice and to vindicate our cause when we are dead and gone. We do not have to turn back the pages of time very far to find the more cautious telling us, "Don't have any reunions; don't bring out those bullet-rent and blood-stained old flags and make more bad blood."

We find the reverse of that is now true. Our flags have been returned to the states by the national government. The lamented President McKinley said the time would come when the government would care for the Confederate graves. We also see our good president sending a wreath of flowers from himself and his wife. This wreath was to be laid on the grave of Mrs. Davis, the mother of the Confederacy. The grand-daughter of Raphael Semmes placed a Confederate badge on his coat during his last Southern tour. We are fraternizing in the same camp, fighting under the same flag.

It is hard, however, to forget the past, and now and then it reappears, as when Joe Wheeler, during the Cuban War, hollered out, "Give them Yanks hell, boys!"

If a war cloud appears, the young men are tumbling over each other to see who will get there first. As in the Cuban

War, when one section moved out from the depot, those left would be singing, "If you get there before I do, tell them I am coming too." With such a rampant spirit of militarism or of patriotism, who will say now that we have not a more indestructible Union than ever before? The doctrine of state's rights is yet feebly indicted in our courts. The doctrine of secession I thought to be dead, but our good president is now a bold exponent of it, recognizing the republic of Panama ere it had left its mother's breast. I guess the people have long since convinced the act.

We are now moving along the walk of life with feeble steps. Life's battle will soon be over with the strongest of us. As we look back into the long ago, we can see where we committed some errors, but we submitted all to the arbitrament of the sword and did our duty as God gave us the light to see that duty. God grant when Gabriel blows his trumpet for the last rally, and the recording angel passes on our deeds, one by one, that he will write the good in smiles and blot the bad in tears.

I have not mentioned many of the dead and wounded of this dear old company, as there are not many that you know. Out of the large company, some nine or ten are now living. They were as gallant a troop as ever fought under the stars and bars. I will say for those slain on the field of honor like the "Peri" when it sought the patrol's last drop of blood, as the most acceptable gift to give for her entrance to the gates of Eden:

> "Oh! If there be on this earthly sphere,
> A boon and offering that heaven holds most dear;
> 'Tis the last libation liberty draws,
> From the heart that bleeds and breaks in her cause."

The following letter was written by Captain Montgomery to his cousin, Victor Montgomery, at Santa Ana, California:

Dear Cousin Victor:—

In reply to your request that I give you an account of the career of your brother, William Flournoy Montgomery, in the Confederate States Army, and of my own recollec-

tions of the war, I will say that the task is a pleasant, though onerous, one.

So many years have elapsed since the scenes to be recounted were enacted, that my remembrance of them has grown feeble. My correspondence with your brother has been only occasional, and it has been long since we have had any social intercourse. Had it been otherwise, we might together have talked over all the stirring incidents of our fratricidal Civil War. As it is, I fear I cannot, at this late date, give an accurate account, but will do the best I am able.

We joined the Bolivar troop, afterwards Company H, at Sykeston, Missouri in August, 1861. The first captain of the troop upon its organization was Charles Clark (afterwards general and governor of Mississippi). Its first encounter with the enemy occurred near Bird's Point, Missouri, with Captain Noland's Illinois cavalry, in which engagement the company had one man wounded, and one or two horses shot. Two of the enemy were killed. I do not remember the date of this action, but I think that this was the first fight that occurred between regular troops of the Army of the West.

The next engagement in which the troop took part was the Battle of Belmont. I was not present at this battle, but think your brother was in this as well as the clash with the Illinois cavalry. After this battle we crossed over to Columbus, Kentucky. There four more companies were added to ours, making the First Battalion of Mississippi Cavalry, commanded by Colonel John Miller. Later, five other companies were added, and the whole was organized into the First Regiment of Mississippi Cavalry. A West Pointer by the name of Lindsey was appointed colonel, and he commanded the regiment at the Battle of Shiloh. At that time we were attached to Breckinridge's division and Polk's corps. About that period, or perhaps a little before, our twelve months' term of enlistment expired, and we were re-enlisted for three years of the war. Will was not old enough for enlistment, but re-enlisted without even claiming a furlough.

At that time, too, our regiment was re-organized. The officers elected for Company H were as follows: Gadi Herron, captain; myself, 1st lieutenant; W. M. Worthington, 2nd lieutenant; and L. Lobdell, 3rd lieutenant. The regimental officers were as follows: Richard A. Pinson, colonel; Frank A. Montgomery, lieutenant colonel; Simmons, major; and D. C. Montgomery, surgeon.

We had a skirmish at Purdy, Tennessee, and one at Swallow Bluff, on the Tennessee River, and some fighting around Corinth. Our last brigade was commanded by W. H. Jackson, now living at Belle Meade, the old Harding property near Nashville. After that time it was commanded by L. S. Ross, who afterwards became governor of Texas. It was composed of the First Mississippi, and the Sixth and Ninth Texas regiments. General Ross was a commander for whom we cherished the greatest admiration. The brigade made a good record wherever it went. Crosby was its commander for a short time, and then it was commanded by Frank G. Armstrong until the close of the war. It was attached to Van Dorn's division and Stephen D. Lee's corps, and the last year of the war, to that of Forrest. We were never in Virginia, our service being mainly in Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Missouri. While withdrawing from Tennessee under Brigadier General Frank E. Armstrong with Lee's army corps, we fought in the battles of Medun, Denmark, Moscow, Davis' Bridge, Bolivar, and two or three others which I cannot recall.

At the fight of Davis' Bridge we were the rear regiment, and Jackson, who commanded the division, ordered our regiment to the front to make the charge which was to take place just at dark. The Bolivar troop had the honor of leading this charge. The enemy, a thousand strong, had just gone into camp on the opposite side of the river. As we passed the Davis house, it was lined with Yankee officers, awaiting their supper. We did not stop, but rushed into their camp, where most of them were cooking. One company was mounted, and fired into ours, wounding our colonel, Richard A. Pinson, one of my men, and two horses. We captured all the camp equipage, six hundred horses, and

about three hundred and fifty men. It being dark, the officers in the house made their escape, together with most of the men.

Many amusing things occurred that night. Our company was posted on picket, and late in the night, after everything was quiet, the Yankees came out from their hiding places. A Yank would holler, "Hey, Tom, are the Johnnies all gone?" We would answer, "Yes, long ago," and out he would come into our trap. In that way we picked up quite a number. The next day, much to our sorrow, Jackson made us give up our captured property and divide with the balance of the regiment.

The Battle of Shiloh preceded these many engagements. In that action, we were not engaged much the first day, although our regiment charged and captured a battery. The next day we were in it, from start to finish. However, Buell and his forty thousand troops were on us. The first day's fight was the grandest I ever saw in my life. There was no protection whatever for either side. The country was mostly timbered, with a few open fields at intervals. Our first commander, A. S. Johnston, planned and executed well. We struck the enemy before daylight, and some of them were killed in bed, blissfully ignorant of the bloody program to be enacted that day. Numbers of breastplates were piled in profusion around the first camp we struck, but curious to say, I never saw one after that fight.

At times it would seem that it was impossible for our line to stand it one minute longer, but at the opportune moment, fresh troops would arrive, and take the places of the hard pressed ones.

When General Johnston made his last charge, music was brought up and went along the line playing "Rally Around the Flag, Boys." The enemy's encampment was one of the finest ever sent forth by the United States government. The poet's lines, "There is a tide in the affairs of men, which taken at the flood leads on to fortune," were impressed upon my mind on that eventful night.

Strolling around, along the enemy's tents, we came upon the paymaster's fine Sibley tent, carpeted and filled with

bureaus and Saratoga trunks. In the course of our investigation, we found a trunk filled with United States money. Our patriotism at that time was at such high flood tide that we scorned the filthy lucre, and consigned it to the flames, only reserving a few bills as mementos. That was my tide. We could have walked away with millions.

In that battle, I saw ten Louisiana Zouaves have their heads shot off with one cannon ball.

Your brother was in the Battle of Corinth. I was not in that battle. It was styled by friend and foe "Van Dorn's slaughter pen." The cavalry did not suffer much. We were again in front of Grant when he started down through central Mississippi, by way of Holly Springs and Oxford. At the former town we ambushed Sherman's advance, killing and wounding a good many. At that time Will's mare, Alice Gray, broke from the horse holders and made straight for the advancing infantry. Will followed after, and I could not make him come back. I dashed after him on my horse, and caught him by the arm just as the Yankees were catching his horse, and by mere accident we made our escape, under the fire of a whole regiment. We then returned rapidly through Holly Springs.

Here General W. T. Sherman, the originator of the expression that "war is hell," gave his first illustration of this fact by bringing up his batteries and shelling a defenceless city, without notice.

I never witnessed such a sight. Women screaming and running about with infants in their arms, and confusion everywhere. From this place down to Grenada, the usual skirmishes, which are now dignified by the name of battles, took place. From Grenada came an order for the detachment of one of the best squadrons of cavalry for service on the southern coast. Companies H and K of our regiment had the honor of being selected, and we went into winter quarters at Pontchatoula, Louisiana, where we enjoyed the hey-day of our soldier life, good times and not much fighting.

However, such good luck did not befall my dear and devoted brother, Dr. D. C. Montgomery, who was then chief

surgeon of our division. He remained with Van Dorn, and bore the hardships of his eventful campaigns. Van Dorn's first masterly blow delivered to the enemy was the capture of Holly Springs. There he burned all Grant's stores, ammunitions of war, et cetera, and forced him to abandon for a while the invasion of Mississippi by that route.

It was there, I think, that Mrs. U. S. Grant, Ulysses, and Nellie were captured. Van Dorn treated the family with great consideration. He placed a guard at the house, and never allowed a soldier to enter it. My brother was left in charge of the wounded. Our troops came near getting General Grant. We could see the smoke of the cars that were bearing him out of town, as our troops entered Holly Springs. When his troops returned to Holly Springs, such indignation prevailed among them that my brother told me that he had to seek protection from the officers, and his surgeon's green sash was not recognized for a time. After the excitement was over, he was treated very courteously. When he got ready to leave the city, the general in command gave him a pass out, with a cross-tie ticket down the road, but made him leave his horse behind him. I think General Fred ought to pay for that horse now.

From Holly Springs, the regiment went to Tennessee and underwent the hardships of a fearful winter campaign. It met with great success at Columbia and Thompson's Station. My brother was camped near the headquarters of General Van Dorn, and heard the fatal shot of Doctor Peters that consigned to his grave one of the grandest cavalry captains.

Our squadron, as I previously remarked, were at Pontchatoula, in snug winter quarters, having a nice time with the piney woods girls, while the rest of our command were engaged in a winter campaign, with no quarters at all, and enduring all kind of hardships. However, Uncle Sam gave us some attention once in a while. The post at that time was commanded by Colonel Horace Miller, for whom we formed a great attachment. The troops at the post consisted of our squadron, Company H and K, and an Arkansas company under Captain Corcoran; a splendid body of men they were, too.

In one engagement, Corporal Nahim Davidson, with about fifteen men (I think Will was among the number) engaged a gunboat at the mouth of the Amite River, and succeeded in capturing it. It guess this was one of the few instances in the Civil War, perhaps the only one, in which a cavalry command captured a gunboat. However, the gunboat grounded, and the enemy, seeing no chance of getting away from our little corporal's constant fire, burned it and made their escape. The next day we got a schooner and boarded the wreck. We took the guns off and put them aboard the schooner and went out into Lake Maurepas, and then made our way to the mouth of the Tickfaw or Pontchatoula River. As we passed out of the lake on our way to the mouth of the river, we were spied by a gunboat, which opened on us, thinking we were some schooner running the blockade. The lake was too shallow to admit of their closing in on us, so they dispatched a lieutenant with sixteen men in a big yawl to overtake us. Our men in their fright threw the guns overboard, tied up the boat and crossed to the opposite side of the river and there awaited the lieutenant and his sixteen men. As they came opposite them, our men opened on them, killing one or two, and the balance took to the water, losing their guns. We had left one man on the boat, Corporal Bill Peek, who had a broken arm and a pistol that wouldn't shoot. He ran down, and they all surrendered to him.

The lieutenant offered me a nice gold watch; I did not accept it, but gravely doubt if it stuck with him during his prison career. A few days afterwards we secured another schooner and went down the river to where the guns were and succeeded in raising them. We brought them to the station, and they were shipped to Port Hudson. One of them, a rifled piece, was said to have been the best gun there, and was named in honor of its captor, Corporal Nahim Davidson. The guns remained there ready to greet and welcome Lieutenant Dewey, now our great admiral and the nation's hero.

Shortly after this exploit, a force of fourteen hundred Federal troops came down from New Orleans and drove us away from our camp to the next station, Hammond, in which

there was a large shoe factory at that time. We were hard pressed here, and, being loath to lose so important a business, and not being able to get reinforcements, Colonel Miller resorted to bluff and put a bold piece of strategy into execution. He had one train there; this he would run up the road and let it stay about an hour. Then it would be brought back, and we would make a holloa and a whoop as if we were getting reinforcements. Then, at early dawn, he, with two hundred and fifty men, deployed a big skirmish line, and moved boldly on the enemy, who were found to be strongly fortified where the railroad crosses Pontchatoula River, behind Cordwood.

Colonel Miller order our company to advance, one half under the command of Captain Herrin, and the other under my command, with instructions to cross above and below the bridge. I succeeded in crossing, and moving up rapidly, engaged the Yanks. To my astonishment, another detachment of Yankees opened up on my rear, and for a little while we were in a particularly warm place. But Captain Herrin soon came up on the far side and opened up on them, and Colonel Miller, with the balance of the command, charged in front. The Yanks moved off in a hurry and reported to their colonel that the whole damned rebel army was after them. They forthwith left for New Orleans, and never stopped till they got there.

By the way, I will mention a coincidence. I had been having chronic chills every morning for a year. At the time we were between the Yankees' fire it was about my chill time, but if I had chills that day I did not know it, and from that time they were broken completely.

I was a lieutenant commanding the post at Madisonville on the lake, and Will was with me, when Butler issued his famous order treating all the ladies as common women of the town, unless they took the oath of allegiance. Boat loads of them were sent out of the city without anything. I never saw anything that so reminded me of the Tower of Babel as the fury and frenzy of those women when landed at Madisonville. On account of this order, Davis branded him with the name of "The Beast," and well did the name

cling to him. He had some redeeming traits; he was in quest of the dollar, and our government kept up a constant trade with him. I was ordered elsewhere, and Lieutenant W. W. Worthington was put in command at Madisonville.

Our company, being from the river counties, were not allowed to trade for even the necessaries of life, and, in consequence, we were not favorable to the enterprise. On one occasion a large train loaded with cotton was burned. A few days afterwards came another train also loaded with cotton, with an order from the Secretary of War that it be guarded until turned over to the Federals. I was detailed for the business. The man who had it in charge was so uneasy for fear that I would let it be burned, that he called me to one side and told me that if I would assure him that the cotton would be safely delivered, he would give me twenty-five hundred dollars. I spurned his offer for doing my duty, but I have no doubt that I could have gotten many thousands in that way. By this I was again reminded of the poet's words.

When the last load of cotton was delivered to a gunboat some six miles out in Lake Maurepas, myself and my men, only one of whom I now remember the name, Jeff Peak of Lake Port, Arkansas, were invited on board and treated to a nice dinner, and we spent a pleasant hour, or longer, with our Yankee friends. We then returned in an open boat, and had been out but a little while when arose the most awful storm I ever saw, and our little boat was tossed about on the waves which, to me, appeared to be sixty feet high, or higher. There was no sinner in our crowd upon that occasion. The thin plank between us and eternity was the constant thought of all. The good Lord answered our prayers and drove us toward the shore, and we then and there firmly resolved never again to venture on the angry waters.

From Pontchatoula we went to Vicksburg, or near there, to meet Sherman and Grant, who were advancing on Jackson. There we again met the balance of our regiment, from whom we had been separated all the winter. We fought Grant or Sherman all the way from that place to Meridian. From there we were ordered to join Forrest, but before we

got to him, he had whipped A. J. Smith, and had him hauling it back to Memphis, and then Sherman began to retreat to Vicksburg. We followed him, skirmishing nearly every day. My brother, Dr. D. C. Montgomery, had, on that occasion, a stump-sucking bay horse. He became supremely disgusted with him, and traded him for a beautiful grey mare, but in doing so, had to bear the pain of parting with a cherished souvenir, a handsome gold watch, a present from his father.

On his first day's mount, after the trade, he was sitting astride his pretty grey mare, near Sharon, Mississippi, awaiting the bringing up of the wounded, when a cannon ball took away both her fore legs, so he was twice dismounted by Grant.

Near Canton, we had several fights. On one of the occasions, Peter B. Starke was commanding; he was from Bolivar County, but he never knew his old friends after his promotion. His command was being pressed hard, and there was nearly a stampede when he came to the rear and found us fighting hard. He recognized us at once, and said, "Bolivar troop, butt them right in the face; don't let them come another step forward." One of the boys answered, "General, how came you to know us so well now?"

The next day our regiment—possibly some other men were with it—captured a train of wagons, about fifty in number. We however, secured only about thirteen of them, and the Bolivar troop had the honor of leading the charge. Again, while we were in camp at Brandon, and the enemy in Jackson, we were out on a scout near by, and discovered a foraging party of about one hundred Yanks. Our captain, Gadi Herrin, was in favor of making an attack at once, but sought my advice, and I preferred an ambush. Gadi was ambitious for promotion; I was ambitious of getting through the trouble with a whole skin. However, he accepted my advice, and we secured a nice place in which to ambush them. But Herrin soon grew impatient, fearful lest someone else should pluck the prize, and he ordered us to mount and go after them. We had scarcely reached our horses when the picket brought the news that they were coming, so

we hurriedly made our way back to our ambuscade. However, we did not have such a nice thing as we expected to have. They had captured a Confederate down the road and threatened him with death for being inside their lines. He at once told them that was not the case, that we had a company down the road. Immediately our tracks were discovered, and they deployed skirmishes on each side of the road to save themselves from running into our ambush. Advancing through the thicket, they ran onto the head of our line, and our first man had to shoot in self defense, on which they at once turned loose a heavy volley on us, but as we were lying flat on the ground, only one man was shot, Joe Keys, of Company D. We jumped up and charged them before they could reload, and captured the whole tea party, and in addition, five wagons, thirty mules and fifteen horses, together with fifty unarmed negroes. We killed and wounded four or five of them. It was there that I killed the only man that I positively knew that I killed. An officer with fifteen or twenty men had run a short distance, and his men were busy reloading their guns. Will Montgomery and two others boldly made for them; I soon saw the situation and started after them, with a few men. Seeing that it was their determination to fire, I showed to the officer that if he fired we would kill the last of them. With that he surrendered his sword to Will, together with his field glass. Many years after the war, Will Montgomery still had these mementoes, and I presume they are still in the hands of his family.

An amusing incident took place here, exemplifying what little occurrences make fast friends. As we were busily corralling our Yanks and captured property, and thinking of the nice things we were going to have, a Confederate major galloped up with a squadron of men, and being the ranking officer, at once demanded and proceeded to take charge of everything. Our anger was at once aroused, and our Captain Herrin said there would be another fight before he could get the goods. The Yanks took it all in at a glance, and saw that our side was only seventy strong, while the others were double that number. The Yankee captain spoke up to Herrin and said that those fellows followed him two

miles and wouldn't charge and if we would give them back their guns, they would help us out of the trouble. At once they began to line up with their guns, and the major marched back without getting any booty.

We were once furloughed in north Mississippi, and went home for a few days. On our return to the army, we found some Yankees ginning cotton at Drysdale's gin in Coahoma county. We stopped to see how they were getting along in the business. The corn was all around the gin house, and we were on them before they knew it, killed one or two and captured five. Among them was a young Charlie Montgomery, from Ohio or Illinois. He was shot some three or four times. We immediately paroled them, and Lieutenant William Mason Worthington carried them to General Hurlburt, at Helena, under a flag of truce. Hurlburt sent back by him some nice cigars and a bottle of good whiskey. Some years after the war, I was coming up the river with a Federal officer, and in talking over the war times, I found that he belonged to the regiment that we had fought at the gin, and knew Charlie Montgomery. He was notified where I lived and a pleasant correspondence was started, which was kept up for many years. In his first letter he said that at the time he regretted losing his photos, but that now it didn't matter, as one was of his sweetheart, who went back on him, and he was now glad the Johnnies had kept them. He had succeeded in extracting two balls, and sent one of them to me as a memento, but said that he still had three in his body, and that was all the mementos he wanted.

Swallow Bluff, on the Tennessee River, was the scene of my first engagement. I missed the battle of Belmont, and the fight near Bird's Point, Missouri, having been detailed to go home with my sick brother. Upon that occasion (Swallow Bluff), five of us, under Sergeant Tom Hume, were posted on the Tennessee River, and directed couriers in communication with General Johnston's headquarters at Corinth, keeping him posted as to the time and number of Federal troops that were being sent up the river to Pittsburg Landing, with strict orders not to molest them. These orders were carried out until one day the steamer *War Eagle* came along loaded down with troops, with a flag flying from

her jackstaff, on which was written "Corinth or Hell." She was within seventy yards of our bank, when we began to assist some of them to their final destination. We fired some fourteen rounds each, and it was said we killed and wounded forty of them. So many of them ran to the farther side of the boat that the wheel next to us was lifted clear out of the water, and for a little while we thought we had sent the whole load into their destined port.

After the siege of Vicksburg, we, under Stephen D. Lee, fought the troops that were going to Rosencranz at Chattanooga, by way of Memphis and Charleston Railroad. At Moscow we drove Batch's brigade into the Hatchie River, and gave to General Hatch what was said to have been the most remarkable wound of the war. The Bolivar troops had the honor of leading this charge. My old friend and schoolmate, Nat McCullough, was killed in this charge. We fought them all along the road, clean on to Tuscumbia, Alabama, destroying bridges and tearing up roads, so impeding their march that Sherman abandoned the attempt, crossed the Tennessee and continued by way of Nashville and Chattanooga road.

After that, Polk's corps moved forward and joined Johnson's army at Cassville, Georgia. Upon our arrival that evening, we were in quite a spirited engagement, and that night Johnson's battle order was read to us for the fight on the morrow. There was not much sleeping that night, and many were the prayers that went up for our personal safety and the success of our arms. During the night a council of war was held. General Hood, and subsequently, I have heard, General Polk, stated that they could not hold their position, and Johnson, listening to their advice, withdrew the next morning. He has since said that it was the fatal step of his life. I was at the time convinced that he had made the mistake of his life.

Hood was then intriguing to obtain command of the army. From Cassville down to Atlanta, it was a constant fight, almost day and night. However, Johnston by his well planned retreat, managed to kill ten to one. On a line near New Hope Church and Dallas, we made a vigorous stand.

We were posted on the left wing of the army, near Dallas, and while there, our brigade and Ross' Texas brigade were sent down to Rome, Georgia, to repel a raid of cavalry. However, Ross' men met the enemy first and did the work, but while retreating through Rome, we brought up the rear guard, and the citizens, seeing that we were the last from the scene of action, naturally thought we had done the fighting. And as we got about midway in the town, I noticed a large crowd of girls and ladies with a beautiful battle flag, made of white and red roses. I told Herrin to make ready his speech as they were certainly going to give us that banner. The gallant little captain was ready for that duty, as he was for every other. We had not done the fighting, but were, of course, ready to appropriate the glory. As they say, all is fair in love and war. Sure enough, as we reached them, out came the spokesman with the banner, and said that they gave us that banner in appreciation of our valiant conduct in driving back the invaders from their town. Herrin alighted from his horse, one that had been a present to some member of our company by your father, and received it, and in response told them he expected to be in an engagement on the morrow, before the lovely petals that composed it could fade away and die. That the beautiful white roses he accepted as emblems of the purity, virtue and patriotism of Rome's fair daughters, and that the deep red roses that composed the cross would be emblematical of the blood of himself and his trusted boys ere the enemy should pollute this beautiful and novel banner.

From this place we went to Dallas, dismounted from our horses, and again took our position in the trenches along with Johnston's web-footed infantry. We were there confronted by McPherson's corps, the best in Sherman's army. Johnston thought Sherman was at his old flanking game and was only holding his line with a small force, consequently, the only way to develop it was to make an assault, so he forthwith ordered one. The signal for formation was the fire of a six-gun battery on our line, and, in a few minutes after, another fire from the same battery was the signal for the charge. As Johnston had obtained the desired information, wanted to stop the charge, the order had to come

from right to left, and they succeeded, according to my recollection, in stopping three infantry brigades. Our brigade and one brigade of infantry continued the charge.

Previous to this charge, our gallant little captain encouraged the boys by telling them that, as they knew, the infantry called them "Buttermilk Cavalry," it would be well to show them who would be there first that day. He also said that the ball was not molded that would kill him. We took the first line of works with a large number of prisoners and a battery of siege guns. There was a second line, and from thence they poured upon us a very destructive fire, so that we had to abandon the works as well as our prisoners, and received from our captured line as heavy a fire in retreat as we did in the charge. In our immediate front was a deep ravine, which protected us nearly two-thirds of the distance, but the infantry on our right had to move across a more level space, and only a few of them reached the works. They were almost annihilated. This happened on the twenty-eighth day of May, 1864. Our loss was some fifteen or sixteen hundred killed and wounded, in about one hour's time. As nearly as I can remember, the charging column numbered not more than three thousand men. Captain Herrin was killed and fell upon me, pierced with a score of bullets. Your brother, Will, was wounded in the right arm below the elbow. Of our regiment, nearly every captain was killed or wounded, and of company, many. I could not at this late date give all their names. The little rose banner had some four bullet holes in it, and three of its bearers were shot.

Lieutenant William M. Worthington had just received some greenback money. A ball passed through his pocketbook in which they were, and he remarked that our friends over the way were shaving their own currency. This was the bloodiest fight in which I participated during the whole war, and well could one say, on that day, that against the breadth of every one's breast was reared the red crest of destruction. In his history of the Civil War, General Johnston speaks of this charge, and, in a manly way, assumes all responsibility for the unfortunate action.

Some days after this, the enemy evacuated that part of their line, and upon our occupying it, we found that they had buried our dead in the breastworks. I found Herrin's body, and having him placed in a plain coffin, had him buried nearby. A gold ring that he wore, a present from his sweetheart, had been taken from him.

The next day I sent back to Rome all that was left of the rose leaf battle flag, with a message to the effect that the words that had been spoken yesterday, that had then been considered fulsome flattery, were prophetic, and had now become as true as Holy Writ.

In this engagement, which in the histories of our Civil War has never been dignified with the name of a battle, we lost more men in one hour than were lost during the whole Cuban War. Yet that Santiago campaign has robed our nation in garments of glory, and made a governor for the Empire State. It has added new laurels to the peerless Lawton's brow, and made countless heroes for history's page.

Will Montgomery, being wounded, was sent to Atlanta, and from that city to Forsythe, Georgia, where he received the best and kindest treatment from one of Georgia's lovely girls, which soothed many a pain and cheered many a lonely hour. I always accused him of falling in love with this young lady, but he stoutly denied it, until a few years ago when he wrote me and made acknowledgement. He told me that there was a little episode of his life during the war of which he had never told me, and that it was tinged with the only regret he felt for any occurrence during that period. This was his falling in love with, and engaging himself to his kind nurse. He said his love was all the reward he had to give her for her world of troubles. He consoled himself with the belief that she had soon ceased to grieve for him, thinking that he had been killed in some battle after his return to the army, and was included in that huge list of unknown and unrecorded dead, whose memories are even now being perpetuated by enduring monuments raised by loving hands throughout our southern country.

In my reply I told him that I saw no cause for regret in that boyish freak, that it was a common affair. That he

should accept Napoleon's definition of love, who, when asked what love was, had said, "that it was the pleasure of youth, the pastime of mature years, and the folly of old age."

After Dallas, we were parted for a long time. I forgot to mention that shortly after the Dallas fight, I was shot, the ball striking a heavy buckle on my sword belt, glanced and thus saved my life, though at the time I was so hurt that I had to be carried from the field. And that from that day dated my captain's commission in the Confederate States Army. We were driven back in the direction of Atlanta, fighting from every hill top. We made several raids in the rear of Sherman's army, capturing trains, provisions and beef cattle. During our stay on the Chattahoochee line, our pickets and those of the Yankees became quite friendly, swapped tobacco, knives and would often go swimming together. The officers tried to put a stop to this manner of communication, but didn't succeed very well. The pickets would call "lie down," and then shoot in the air. Corporal Bill Peek was the man who first opened these communications with Yankees on that line.

Hood was now in command, and busy verifying Sherman's words, butting out his brains against Sherman's words. In his two battles on the right and left of Atlanta, he lost some eighteen thousand men. The one on the left, called the battle of the Poor House, we were engaged in, and also in the one at Jonesboro, and we fought Kilpatrick on his raid around our army.

At this time Mr. Davis came down to restore confidence and make us take a round dance on Sherman. In his speech, he tells us of the nice times we are going to have in Tennessee, Kentucky, and perhaps in Ohio. Parts of our command were engaged in the capture of Big Shanty, Ackworth, and in the fight at Altoona, and again at New Hope Church, and at Rome. At Rome, Captain Brooks lost his leg. He was General Armstrong's inspector-general. Lieutenant W. M. Worthington was appointed in his place. I regretted very much to lose him. General Armstrong told me he has made a most competent and excellent officer.

Now, in the death throes of the Confederacy, the powers that be began to lay aside prejudice and to recognize true

merit, and so the great "Wizard of the Saddle," Forrest, is placed in supreme command of all the cavalry in the West. Davis had always been friendly to Forrest, but Bragg, his military adviser, had no use for him, since Forrest cursed at Chickamauga.

At Shoal Creek, my company had a brush with the enemy, and there I received a slight wound on my nose. From there on to Franklin, it was constant fighting with retreating Federals. We had much night fighting. One morning, my company being in advance, I had the honor of riding with Forrest. We soon struck the enemy, who were formed behind rail piles. Forrest turned to our colonel and said, "Have your men got sabres?" His reply was that they ought to have them, and at them we went, losing many horses, but not many men.

At Columbia we had another sharp fight in the daytime, (E. T. Christmas was wounded there) and at Spring Hill, an all night attack on the enemy's retreating trains and army, and from there we went on to Franklin, the bloodiest drama in the picture of time. Forrest pleaded with Hood to go around it and force the enemy to fight in open ground, out of their works, but he would not listen to him, and proceeded with his old tactics, completing his military career by butting out the little brains he had left. All his men asked was a fair open field fight. Thirty-four percent of the entire army was destroyed in the conflict. The cavalry being on the wings, and having no breastworks to contend with, suffered but little in comparison with the infantry. Thirteen generals, our bravest and best, were killed and wounded, and one was captured. My schoolmate, General G. W. Gordon, was among them. More general officers were killed in this attack than in any other battle in the Civil War. Hugh Kirk and Sam Montgomery, cousins of ours, were killed in that battle.

The esprit de corps and morale of the army were there destroyed. Nevertheless, on Hood went to Nashville, with an army already vanquished. I have often thought how nice it would be if the angels with their tears could blot from the historic page the record of that useless butchery, that great human sacrifice.

We soon arrived at Nashville, approaching it on the Granny White Pike, and once more to my vision appeared many familiar scenes, among them the historic old capitol and the ruins of your father's once palatial and hospitable roof. These scenes brought to my mind the halcyon days when boyhood knew no grief, but pleasure and buoyant hope reigned supreme in those grand old halls, which I had learned to love as my own. The hill was occupied and entrenched by our troops, and we remained there but a short time. Forrest was sent to Murfreesboro. On our way we captured several blockhouses and at Smyrna a fort, with a good many prisoners. The dread of Forrest's name did the work. All we had to do was to demand a surrender. One surly chap in a blockhouse refused to give up, and Forrest ordered the men of our regiment to stack arms, take pistols in one hand, a billet of wood in the other, and stop them up and burn them. This bluff was successful and accomplished the work intended.

General Rousseau, with eight thousand men, occupied Murfreesboro, and Forrest wanted to capture them. Bates' division was sent to him. He did succeed in drawing the enemy out, but Bates' division gave way, and Forrest's movement failed.

While there, our regiment was ordered to report to Forrest before daylight. My company again happened to be in advance, and again I had the honor of riding with him, an honor I assure you I never coveted. Off we went for a reconnaissance around the city, and as we reached Stone River, he ordered me to cross it at a certain ford, and meet him on the other side, at the Salem bridge. When I got to the ford, I found about fifty Yanks there, and sent him word of that fact. His reply was, "Catch them!" At them I went, and they soon scampered away. I moved down the river and met him at the bridge. Then he moved us down the pike to the city, driving in the pickets on a dead run. After getting within three hundred yards of their works, he wheeled the regiment to the right and directed me to fall in behind, and made a complete circuit of the town, between their infantry pickets and the city, before the enemy could wake up and man their works, or get their guns to

bear on us. It was the most daring and foolhardy move I ever heard of a man doing. It was a dreadful cold winter day, snow was on the ground all the while, and we were poorly clad, shod and fed.

My good brother, who was now chief surgeon of our division, succumbed to his onerous duties and the severity of the weather, and was taken down with typhoid pneumonia. I succeeded in getting him carried to a house. The lady's name was Napoleon Jackson Smith, on Stewart Creek. This lady gave him every consideration and kindness, nursing him through a long and dangerous illness. And when, after our evacuation, the prisoners were all ordered into Murfreesboro, she went on his bond for his prompt delivery as soon as he should be well. She gave him some clothes and twenty-five dollars in money. This was the first debt he paid after his discharge from prison. That noble woman has long since been dead, but if good deeds on this earth will bear anyone to heaven, she is surely there.

Hood had played his last card at Nashville. The once grand and glorious army that Johnston had commanded had melted away, and Forrest was called to Nashville to bring up the rear. On our way to Nashville, we passed the house in which my sick brother was staying. I stopped to bid him farewell, never expecting to see him again. It was the saddest duty I ever performed, leaving him so sick among the enemy, a stranger in a strange land.

I must commend Hood for one good thing he has said. In his *Advance and Retreat,* he speaks of the heroic act of Mary Bradford, one of your neighbors and our old schoolmate, in assisting to rally the troops on the pike near her home. For her heroism upon that occasion, he said her name deserved to be handed down in history as one of the Joans of Arc of the southern Confederacy.

This Waterloo of Hood's reminds me of Bonaparte's retreat from Moscow in the dead of winter. Such hardships as our men underwent were never before witnessed. Fighting by night and by day a victorious and vindictive foe, without food for man or beast. Forrest and Walthall alone saved Hood's army from complete destruction at Pulaski.

At that place, our men, seeing the Yankees charge down on us, thought we were all captured, and fired the covered bridge to prevent the Yankees from coming over. Some of men took to the river, but myself and my little command, which then consisted of three companies, in all not more than fifty men, took to the burning bridge, and got safely over. A few miles south of this, we made a stand, drove the enemy back, and captured a fine battery. After this venture, they had more respect for us, and we had some little rest. Near Pulaski, General Buford was shot by my side.

Shortly after these events, we reached the Tennessee River and crossed to the south side. Then joy reigned supreme, and I felt as if the Atlantic ocean rolled between us and our foes. Ragged, hungry, lousy, and dirty, we wended our way to Tupelo, where we were given a rest and many of us a short furlough. Our own parents scarcely knew us in our tattered garbs. We soon returned to the army, and your brother Will's wound having healed, he was again at his post of duty in our same brigade, Armstrong's.

Forrest at Columbus, Mississippi, was again gathering together his shattered few, to make his death-grapple with Wilson's eleven thousand mounted men, who were coming down through north Alabama, in the direction of Selma. While on the way, a young boy from New York, named Henry Elliott, who was raised at Marion, Alabama, came out to join my company. He was a mere lad, and not of conscript age, and I did my best to dissuade him from doing so, telling him that the next battle would surely close the war, but he would come.

Into Selma Forrest went with the most of our brigade. The place was well fortified, but we didn't have men enough to man the trenches. They were from five to ten steps apart in the ditches. Wilson came on, getting between Forrest and the rest of his command, and at once moved on our works. Not an officer was mounted, and every man of them, it is said, had his whiskey. We did not open on them until they had gotten within sixty or seventy yards of us, and then we raked them well. They could not force our