

THE  
FIFTEENTH OHIO  
VOLUNTEERS  
AND  
ITS CAMPAIGNS

WAR OF 1861-5

BY  
ALEXIS COPE

CAPTAIN, FIFTEENTH OHIO VOLUNTEER INFANTRY

Private, Sergeant, Sergeant Major, Second Lieutenant, First Lieutenant, Adjutant and  
Captain in the Fifteenth Ohio Volunteers, Acting Assistant Adjutant General  
of the First Brigade and of the Third Division, Fourth Corps,  
Army of the Cumberland, and Acting Assistant Inspec-  
tor General Western Sub-District of Texas.

STONES RIVER N B	
REC'D	8/23/63
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COLUMBUS, OHIO  
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1916

December 25, was Christmas Day, but it was no holiday for us. After breakfast we received orders to march with another foraging expedition at 8 o'clock. We took our former route, following it until we came to a road leading south from the Nolensville Pike. We marched about five miles on this road, when we came to a place where there was forage in abundance and filled our wagons by 3 o'clock. There had been some skirmish firing in our front as we marched.

Near the place where we loaded our wagons there was a house where a Christmas dinner had been prepared for some of our enemies, and some of our men either confiscated it or paid for it with counterfeit confederate scrip. We were well into a portion of country where the enemy was in control and it was a matter of some concern to get our loaded train back safely to camp. But we had a formidable force, covered our train well with flankers and brought it in safely. On arriving at camp we learned that orders had been received at brigade headquarters to march in the morning, but that they would not be published until it was certain that we would move. There was now every indication that a general movement was on foot.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE CAMPAIGN AND BATTLE OF STONE RIVER.

The morning of December 26, we had roll call at 5 o'clock. As we were eating breakfast the order came to move in an hour. At the time appointed the assembly sounded and we marched, taking the familiar route of our late foraging expeditions. We were halted before we reached the Nolensville Pike to allow a large body of troops to pass, and when we reached the pike there was a long ambulance train moving out in advance of us. We now had little doubt that there was a general forward movement of our entire army, and that there was hot work for us ahead. We felt, however, that we were ready and fit for any trial or emergency, and our hearts quickened and beat high with the thought of again meeting the enemy. We took the direct road for Nolensville. Our progress was slow, there was considerable cavalry skirmishing ahead, and it was evident that the enemy's cavalry was impeding our advance. It was thought that the enemy would make a stand at Stewart's Creek, but they fell back from this line after destroying the bridge to impede our progress. Night came on while we were still on the march, but we marched on until we reached Nolensville, and went into camp just beyond it on a hillside near the road. For the first time, we pitched our shelter tents. We were safely tucked away in them when it began to rain and we found them rain-proof and comfortable. From our regimental camp we looked out on a great number of other camps which formed an irregular semi-circle overlooking a valley or depression. The tents were lighted with candles, and they gave the impression of an almost innumerable host. It was an inspiring and comforting spectacle. At nine o'clock we were called to rest by the "German Tattoo", sounded by General Willich's bugler. Never in all the lives of some of us, have we heard anything sweeter than those long drawn notes of that famous call as it was sounded that night on the hill near Nolensville.

Mr. John H. Sarchet of Cambridge, Ohio, who was our principal musician and band leader during the later years of our service, has reproduced the music of this call and it is here given:



We were all very tired after the day's march, although we had marched only ten miles.

It was raining next morning, December 27, but we resumed our march at nine o'clock, passing Negley's and Sheridan's divisions and taking the front in the advance. After marching at a rapid pace for three or four miles, hearing cannonading in front, we reached a little valley where the advance of our division was drawn up in line of battle. We were halted here until afternoon, when we were moved forward in double ranks over the hill and across another little valley, and halted on the summit of the next ridge. Our artillery was here brought forward and opened on the enemy, who occupied a position across another little valley in our front. Our fire soon drew the fire of the rebel artillery and down in the valley we heard the rattling fire of the carbines of the cavalry who were advancing against the enemy. While this firing was going on a very heavy rain set in and continued until the firing ceased. One who was there, a sergeant of Company K, has a vivid recollection of General Willich and of his appearance at this time.

He wore a rubber cap, rubber overcoat and rubber boots. He seemed changed in manner, for he was quiet and cool, where before he had been nervously and intensely active. Afterwards we learned that this quiet, cool, deliberate demeanor was his battle manner.

The enemy's artillery was soon silenced and we were moved forward beyond the ridge and soon came in sight of the village of Triune on a steep bank beyond a small stream. The enemy having retreated we moved forward rapidly, crossing the stream on the stringers of a bridge and on stones in the stream, and passing through the village were halted on a wooded hillside where we encamped for the night. The entire population of the village seemed to have fled and it was literally sacked by our men. Everything was taken that the stragglers could carry away. On our march next morning men were seen carrying bolts of cloth, muslin, calico, hoopskirts, ribbons, hardware, queensware and glassware, and one was happy in the possession of an old fashioned surveyor's compass, which he was carrying on his knapsack.

General Rosecrans on December 28, reported to General Halleck at Washington, concerning our advance on Triune, as follows: "Our advance was delayed one day. The right wing under McCook drove Hardee's skirmishers 18 miles down the Nolensville pike and advanced on Triune for battle. A heavy fog delayed their advance and gave Hardee time to escape towards Murfreesboro."

Sunday December 28, we had orders to move at 7 o'clock a. m. After passing the outposts, the two Indiana regiments of the brigade, the 32d and 39th, sent out skirmishers, with a squadron of cavalry in the advance. We moved forward rapidly southward on the Shelbyville pike, but soon left it and turning into a road running west toward Salem, followed it for two or three miles and formed line of battle in a large open field, where a sharp skirmish took place in front. There we received orders to return and marched back to our camp at Triune.

General Rosecrans speaks of this march as a reconnoissance to Riggs Cross roads, which developed the fact that Hardee's corps had fallen back toward Murfreesboro.<sup>1</sup> General McCook at 1:30 P. M. sent a dispatch to General Rosecrans saying, among other things:

"The following dispatch has just been received (verbatim et literatim) from General Willich, who is 7 miles in advance on the Shelbyville pike. 'The enemy is no more here; all gone to Murfreesboro'."<sup>2</sup>

On the night of the 28th, General McCook sent word to General Rosecrans that, unless he had other orders, before daylight next morning he would march his troops (the right wing) as rapidly as possible toward Murfreesboro over the Bole Jack road, that the road went by Lane's store and crossed the old Shelbyville road at Wilkinson's, seven miles from Murfreesboro, that the distance from Triune to Murfreesboro was 16 miles, that his corps threatened the enemy's line of communication and that he expected to be strongly resisted.<sup>3</sup>

December 28, we marched at 7 o'clock, and in order to reach the Bole Jack road marched apparently towards Nashville for about three miles, which gave rise to the rumor that we were retreating. We then struck the Bole Jack road and followed it all day. The first few miles of the road had been beaten smooth by other troops preceding us and the marching was easy. But after passing over a hill from the top of which we had a fine view of the country for a long distance, we came to a dense cedar forest

<sup>1</sup> W. R. R. 20, part 1-190.

<sup>2</sup> W. R. R. 20, part 2-254.

<sup>3</sup> W. R. R. 20, part 2-255.

where the roads were nearly impassable and we made slow progress. About dark, when pushing on ahead of the artillery and trains, we came into an open country where we rested for awhile. We then moved into a muddy corn field near Wilkinson's Cross roads, where we bivouaced for the night and were forbidden to build fires. We were hungry and cold and would have given almost anything for a cup of hot coffee or a chance to make it. To add to our discomfort it began raining. We passed a miserably uncomfortable night. Except some light skirmishing early in the evening, nothing occurred to indicate our close approach to the enemy, although we were said to be within four or five miles of Murfreesboro. At 10:25 that night General McCook sent a dispatch to General Rosecrans saying that all was quiet on his front, that his right was retired and he thought safe, that his headquarters were exactly on the cross roads and that he hoped to see him, General Rosecrans, that night or early next morning.<sup>1</sup>

Next day, the 30th, at daybreak, we were permitted to build small fires, and after getting our breakfasts stood around them in a pouring rain. We were ordered to move at 8 o'clock and resumed our onward march toward Murfreesboro on a new pike made of sharp gravel which ground away our shoe soles, already grown thin from recent marches. We began to hear an occasional boom from our cannon opening the great contest which we realized was beginning. After marching two miles we formed column in a piece of woods, where the 5th brigade, (General Kirk's) was also formed. We afterwards advanced to the cover of another woods, where we remained during the afternoon. Considerable firing was going on, both artillery and infantry, as our army gradually closed in on the enemy.

The writer recalls that while in these woods awaiting orders, all were impressed with the sense of impending battle. Those who were close friends seemed to wish to get together and talk of home and mutual friends and of the chances of the strife. The writer recalls a talk he had with Sergeant William Addison Hogue of Company E, a home friend and companion, who went into the battle next day and was never heard of afterwards.

We were held in this place in reserve until near dark, when we were moved about a mile to the right on the Franklin road. There the brigade was formed to protect the extreme right of the army. Five companies of the 39th Indiana were formed on the right of General Kirk's brigade, but retired almost at right angles to it, and five companies were put forward as skirmishers, connecting with General Kirk's skirmishers on the left, and on the right with the skirmishers of the 32nd Indiana, which extended

<sup>1</sup> W. R. R. 20, part 2-269.

south and west of the brigade and covered its flank, extending round to its rear. The 49th Ohio was formed, its left connecting with the right five companies of the 39th Indiana, and fronting south. The 89th Illinois was in close column in rear of the 49th Ohio. Our regiment was formed facing to the west, directly west of the right flank of the 89th Illinois—our left only a short distance from the right of the 49th Ohio. Our line was at right angles to that of the 49th Ohio, and we faced directly to the rear. In the angle formed by the 15th and 49th Ohio was placed Goodspeed's battery. In this position we bivouaced for the night. We were not allowed to build fires, the night was very cold and some of the men suffered severely. We did not know how we were situated with reference to the enemy, but we afterwards learned that our position was about opposite the center of the rebel army.

General Rosecrans' plan of battle was to make a feint of moving to the right to threaten the enemy's line of communications and when the enemy had massed to meet the feigned attack, to push the left of his army rapidly across Stone River and into Murfreesboro. It was made on the assumption that the enemy would not make the counter-attack which he did, with a view of cutting us off from our communications. We did not know our General's plans and rested in blissful ignorance of what awaited us on the morrow.

That night, it is presumed, General Rosecrans issued the following general orders dated December 31, 1862.

Hdqrs. Dept. of the Cumberland,  
In Front of Murfreesborough.

General Orders.

December 31, 1862.

No. \_\_\_\_\_

The General commanding desires to say to the soldiers of the Army of the Cumberland that he was well pleased with their conduct yesterday, it is all he could have wished for, he neither saw nor heard of any skulking, they behaved with the coolness and gallantry of veterans. He now feels perfectly confident, with God's grace and their help, of striking this day a blow for the country, the most crushing, perhaps, which the rebellion has yet sustained.

Soldiers, the eyes of the whole nation are upon you, the very fate of the nation may be said to hang on the issue of this day's battle. Be true, then, to yourselves, true to your own manly character and soldierly reputation, true to the love of your dear ones at home, whose prayers ascend to God this day for your success.

Be cool! I need not ask you to be brave, keep ranks. Do not throw away your fire. Fire slowly, deliberately, above all fire low, and be always sure of your aim. Close steadily in upon the enemy, and, when you get within charging distance, rush on him with the bayonet.

Do this, and the victory will certainly be yours. Recollect that there are hardly any troops in the world that will stand a bayonet charge, and that those who make it, therefore are sure to win.

By command of Maj. Gen. W. B. Rosecrans.

J. P. GARESHE,  
Asst. Adjt. Gen. and Chief of Staff.

As will be seen there was no time to publish this order on the morning of December 31 to the troops on our part of the line.

The morning of December 31, 1862, was very cold and clear. At daybreak we were awakened, built small fires and made our coffee. While we were so engaged we had time to look about us. We saw that our brigade, posted as above described, was in a wooded field about 330 yards square and that a comparatively open country stretched away toward the supposed position of the enemy, with a clump of woods several hundred yards to the south-east of our position. To our rear, towards which our regiment fronted, was a small open field and on the farther side of it was a fence made of upright cedar poles closely tied together, and to the left of the fence was a small farm house which was reached by a gate in the fence.

Lieutenant Colonel Miles, of the 49th Ohio, who was then a Lieutenant and Aide de Camp on the staff of General Willich, in a letter written to his father January 7, 1863, says that very early, on the morning of December 31, General Willich rode to General Johnson's headquarters, that he, Lieutenant Miles, notified Colonel Gibson of General Willich's absence and then followed him. That the general had started back to the brigade and rode right into the advancing enemy and was captured; that he, Lieutenant Miles, after reporting to General Johnson, also started back to the brigade and rode between two of the advancing lines of the enemy. That having on his overcoat, he was mistaken for an aide of one of the Confederate generals and ordered to place an Arkansas regiment in position. He says, "I saluted him as I would one of our own commanders, wheeled my horse and rode in the direction of their reserve until behind a cluster of bushes, when I turned to the left and came out through Davis' lines". He also says that he met General Davis, told him where the enemy's lines were, saw him place a battery in position to play on them and then rode back to the brigade.

While we were blowing our coffee cool enough to drink, suddenly came the sharp *st, st,* of bullets and we heard General Gibson's stentorian voice calling out, "Fall in 49th and 15th Ohio! Hook up them battery horses"! Dashing our coffee to the ground we rushed to the line, took our guns from the stacks and soon had orders to move a few paces forward and countermarch. In the

confusion, the order was not understood by Captain Joshua K. Brown, commanding Company B, and there was a momentary delay, until a sergeant of Company K<sup>1</sup> ran to him, took him by the arm, told him the order and pulled him in the right direction. But before the movement to countermarch could be completed, we were ordered to lie down and commence firing. Captain Thos. E. Douglass, long afterwards, claimed to have first given the order to fire. Mr. A. B. Graham, who was writing a history of Richland County, asked the writer to confirm his statement in this respect, as Captain Douglass had cited him as witness of the fact, but the writer could not recall the incident he described. How many rounds we fired one cannot remember. Colonel Gibson in his official report as brigade commander says six. It may have been more or less. It seems, however, from the official reports that we held our ground long enough to enable the 49th Ohio and 89th Illinois to retire in fairly good order, but not the 32d and 39th Indiana, who for a time were separated from the brigade. It soon became apparent that the enemy were rapidly closing in on our front and flank and threatening our rear in such numbers that our only hope of escape was in rapid retreat. Whether we received an order to fall back or not one cannot recall, (Colonel Wallace in his official report says he gave such order). We went back in fairly good order until the picket fence, heretofore mentioned, arose in our way. Many of our men tried to pull the pickets apart in order to get through. Some got over and many were either killed or wounded trying to do so. The writer tried to get over or through the fence and failing to do so, ran to the left towards the advancing enemy and passed through the gate leading into the house before mentioned. Just after passing the house a ball from one of the enemy's rifles struck him in the right arm and knocked his gun from his hand. He picked it up with his left hand and continued his retreat not knowing whether his arm was broken or only bruised. Fortunately the ball was so far spent and his overcoat cape so thick that it only inflicted a severe bruise.

The above description of the beginning of the battle is the writer's personal recollection. Gleason in his diary says, "we had hardly tasted our breakfasts when the bullets began to whistle about our heads and we sprang to arms as quickly as possible. Advancing to the open field in the edge of which we had lain, we received the order to counter-march by file left to bring us facing the enemy, but before this movement could be executed our men began to fall and after delivering one volley, seeing the enemy in close proximity, three lines deep, with no

<sup>1</sup> The writer.

supports near us, we were ordered to fall back. A high rail fence was close in our rear, while a little to our right was a gap leading to some negro quarters on a plantation. Many of the men went through the gap instead of climbing the fence, and got too far to the right (he means too far to the west), while those who got over the fence necessarily lost their formation, and the result was an indiscriminate retreat to the rear, in which men of nearly all the regiments of the brigade mingled together."

This fence proved to be a fatal obstruction to anything like an orderly retreat. The writer thinks he cannot be mistaken in its character, for he tried to get through it by pulling the cedar pickets apart and failing to do so took the course before mentioned. The fence farther to the right may have been built of rails and this may account for the discrepancy in our experiences. It was in this field and at or near this fence that we suffered our chief losses of the four day's battle. Here Lieutenant Colonel Askew, Major McClenahan, Capt. Thos. E. Douglass and Lieutenants Samuel Hilles and Nicholas Fowler were wounded. Here the most of our killed and wounded fell, and here over a hundred of our men were taken prisoners by the enemy. Lieut. Col. Askew was severely wounded in the hip. Sergeants Wm. G. Malin and William Addison Hogue of Company E tried to get him off the field, but he ordered them to leave him and take care of themselves, which they did. Sergeant Malin is the last known person who saw Sergeant Hogue alive. He was never seen or heard of afterwards and to this day his fate is not known. Father, mother, sisters and brothers, since then have searched among the grave stones in all the cemeteries north and south and have traced every clue which promised anything tangible, but all to no purpose. All that can be said of him is, that he went into the battle and was never heard of afterwards. One can imagine the weary vigil in the country home where he was the joy and pride of the family, and how a step on the walk, or an unexpected knock at the door, made the hearts of loved ones beat with fond hope, only to sink again into despair. The father and mother are long since dead, but perhaps even yet, some loving one of the family is still hoping against hope for his return. The war was full of terrible tragedies, but there were few more terrible than instances like this.

Shortly after clearing the fence, those who did so, crossed a small stream and came on to higher ground. Our compact, close, efficient organizations had apparently gone all to pieces and one could see only a disorganized crowd moving to the rear, apparently under no command whatever. The enemy's cavalry appeared on our flank, and some one called out "fix bayonets" and

every man fixed his bayonet to be ready for a cavalry charge. Soon we came to a rail fence extending along a bluff bank which commanded a good view of the valley we had crossed in our disorderly retreat. Everyone saw it was a good place to make a stand, and without orders the men formed a line along the fence. A sergeant of Company K<sup>1</sup> noticed that the men still had their bayonets on their guns, and went along between the fence and the approaching enemy and asked the men to unfix bayonets so they could better fire through the fence. The request was as promptly complied with as if it had been an order from the commander in chief delivered in person. Lieutenant Belden with one gun of Goodspeed's battery had taken position on our left, and as the enemy came forward in heavy columns he planted some shells right in their midst. The shells and the well-delivered fire from our line behind the fence gave the enemy a momentary check. Soon, however, we were out-flanked by the enemy's cavalry and were compelled to fall back, firing at the enemy every chance we could get. Finally, we came to a "devil's lane", two fences close together, crossed them and came into a fine open piece of woods through which thousands of men seemed to be drifting in disorder. There had been no attempt to reform our regiment and so far as one could see, the other regiments of the brigade with one exception were in the same state of disorder. The exception was the 89th Illinois. It appeared to be compact and in perfect order. It was commanded by Charles T. Hotchkiss, its Colonel, who was mounted and was coolly conducting its retreat. In this woods we had the color sergeant with us, who was still carrying our regimental flag. Lieutenant Chandler W. Carroll of Company E and a few men rallied about the flag, raised a shout, and started back through the woods to the devil's fence above mentioned, calling on every one to turn back. In a moment, almost, the tide of retreat turned and everyone was cheering and rushing wildly back. We formed along the devil's lane and as the enemy came up we gave them a galling fire. We continued it until the enemy's cavalry again came round our flank and we were again compelled to fall back. It was our last stand until we reached the Nashville pike. Here we saw a line of men in perfect order, standing with bayonets fixed, and ready to meet the enemy as soon as our stragglers got out of the way. The line was in command of Colonel Moses B. Walker of the 31st Ohio, who sternly ordered us to pass round his troops and not to attempt to break his line. We had no sooner passed to his right than the enemy approached within firing distance, and Walker's men did some as fine stand up firing and fighting as we

<sup>1</sup> The writer.

had ever seen. The remnants of our regiment soon formed on the right of Walker's troops and with them advanced into the cedar woods and engaged the enemy. Here Isaac Eugene Dillon of Company E was wounded—shot in the cheek or jaw—and the writer can still see his look of anguish as he went to the rear. At this point the enemy's advance was checked. It was about night-fall. The remnants of the regiments of the brigade were gathered together and withdrawn a few yards and placed in reserve, Colonel Wallace in command.

We bivouaced among the rocks, and as our stragglers came up we began to realize how disastrous the day had been. General Willich was reported killed. Colonel Askew was wounded and captured, and more than one-half our men were missing, many of whom were killed or wounded and in the enemy's hands. We had been driven back between three and four miles and had lost, it was said, thirty-one pieces of artillery and thousands of prisoners. The night was very cold, all had lost their blankets and overcoats and fires were forbidden. A group of shivering men, in violation of the order, had made a small fire between two rocks and were trying to warm themselves when General Rosecrans came by on foot. He said, "My men you must not do that. Just a short while ago some men farther along the line made a little fire and the rebels threw a shell into their midst and killed or wounded some of them. Better bear the cold". The men put out the fire very promptly. While we were shivering and waiting, a group of officers were crouched together talking, and we noticed Colonel Gibson who had been taken prisoner in the morning, and when released had drifted back with the debris of battle to Overall's or Stewart's Creek. He had just come up and was relating his experiences. He said, among other things, "when our cavalry charged the enemy and released us, I thought the day was lost, and said to myself, 'Here's for Nashville or the Cumberland River'". General Rosecrans came to our part of the line more than once during the night. He seemed to be unattended. He wore a private's cavalry overcoat. His face was drawn, his jaw set, and we heard him say more than once, "Bragg's a good dog, but Hold Fast's a better". His presence inspired confidence. He gave us to understand that there was to be no retreat, but that we would fight it out where we were. We got the impression that we were receiving large reinforcements, and stragglers coming in reported seeing the camp fires of several thousand new troops coming to our help. We heard afterwards that, to create this same impression on the enemy, General Rosecrans had sent out officers to instruct the stragglers back at Overall's and Stewart's Creeks to build fires. This deception evidently had its

desired effect for General Bragg in his official report of the battle gives our reinforcements as one of his reasons for giving up Murfreesboro. It also gave us hope that we could renew the battle next morning with hope of final victory.

Our regiment that night was but a sorry remnant of the fine body of men which had faced the enemy at daybreak. Over one hundred had fallen into the hands of the enemy, how many had been killed and wounded, we could not know. Company H which mustered 60 men in the morning, could only muster 8 including Lieutenant Updegrave and Orderly Sergeant Gleason.<sup>1</sup> Some of the other companies had suffered as severely. But our thinned ranks closed up and there was no faltering on the part of any one. Added to the terrible depression over our defeat and the loss of so many of our comrades, was the hunger which seized us. We had had no rations all day and none were in sight. So in hunger and cold and wretchedness we passed the awful night. The near presence of the enemy and an occasional firing along the picket line, however, kept us nerved up for further effort and prevented anything like despair.

The next morning we drew one day's rations of hard tack, bacon and coffee. We were on the reserve of the brigade but expecting to be called on at any moment. The conflict of the preceding day had been so fierce and deadly, that it seemed both armies were loth to renew it. There was some artillery firing on different parts of our line and an occasional lively rattle of musketry along parts of the skirmish line, which seemed a renewal of the battle. Although we were on the reserve, we were exposed to the artillery fire of the enemy, but it did us no damage. One solid shot from the enemy's cannon came ricocheting into our bivouac, knocked down a stack of guns and struck Sergeant John J. Glover in the rump, which caused a great laugh at his expense, as we saw it did not seriously hurt him.

We were shortly called into line and the brigade, Colonel Gibson in command, moved back along the pike. We moved out behind a ridge which hid our movement from the enemy and then marched back in plain view of his skirmishers and cavalry. We did this a number of times, for the purpose, it was said, of giving the rebels the impression that we were receiving reinforcements. We were a nervous lot, although we made a bluff of seeming as brave as ever. When we were making one of these marches, a single musket ball from the enemy's lines came singing over our heads and every man in the line ducked his head as it passed, which caused a general laugh. Finally we were posted along the pike to resist a threatened attack on our right. Colonel

<sup>1</sup> Gleason's Diary.

Gibson in his official report says our brigade was directed to reconnoiter the woods to the right and rear of our position, that it was done under the observation of Generals Rosecrans and McCook; that we reached the woods unobserved by the enemy, but soon met his sharpshooters and discovered that he was massing his infantry under cover of these woods, with the apparent design of attacking our extreme right; that in withdrawing we were harassed by shot and shell from the rebel batteries, but sustained no loss; that we were soon directed to reoccupy the woods and promptly took up our position with the 15th Ohio, the 32d Indiana and the 89th Illinois in line of battle, (their front covered by skirmishers) and the 39th Indiana and 49th Ohio, which had been temporarily consolidated under Lieutenant Colonel Jones, as a reserve; and that the enemy's cavalry made a dash upon our position but were gallantly repulsed by our skirmishers. He also says that other troops were placed on our left, our line withdrawn to the margin of the woods, our flank covered by a strong force of cavalry and that "the prompt movement of our forces and the splendid maneuvering of the commander in chief defeated the designs of the enemy and no further attack was made".<sup>1</sup>

Lieutenant Miles really first discovered and reported this attempt of the enemy on our right, and in the letter before quoted from he says: "General Rosecrans in the after part of the day, (January 1st) ordered Gibson out with the brigade about three-fourths of a mile to the rear and right on a reconnoissance. We discovered immense bodies of the enemy's infantry and artillery approaching, preceded by cavalry, which made one dash upon us and were handsomely repulsed. Reporting the same to General Rosecrans, he came on, viewed the ground, and in a few moments great preparation was made for an attack. The enemy seeing this, withdrew during the night to their center".

We remained in the position last above described until night, when our regiment was marched back near the General Hospital, where we were permitted to build fires and make ourselves as comfortable as possible for the night. Companies G and H were called out, however, after three hours rest, and went on picket duty for the same length of time. We were without rations and there were no prospects of receiving any, as the enemy had burned the train which was bringing them up to the front. These facts are taken from Gleason's diary, and he adds, "So we expect to fast tomorrow as well as fight." The day had passed without any very serious fighting on any part of the lines, and it seemed both armies were resting and making ready for hot work on the morrow. During the day

<sup>1</sup> W. R. R. 20, part 1-306.

quite a number of our men who had been slightly wounded came up and took their places in the ranks.

The morning of January 2, we were called out on picket and stood until daylight, when we were relieved and built fires with rails from the roadside. We soon heard considerable artillery firing at the front towards Murfreesboro, and were marched back to the position we held the morning of the 1st. The cannonade soon became louder and more terrific, and we knew that the enemy was making an assault on a portion of our line. The attack continued nearly an hour, the shells, some of them, falling unpleasantly near us, when the enemy was driven back. We were again in reserve, one of the most trying positions during a battle. We were exposed to the enemy's fire but could not reply. We were in constant suspense, not knowing when we would be called on, but realizing that some disaster on some portion of the line might occur at any moment, and that then we would be called to help retrieve it. Added to our suspense was a keen hunger, for we had no rations issued to us that morning. During the day we did get some corn which we parched on the cob, and each man got about two cubic inches of mixed vegetables which we cooked and ate. We congratulated ourselves that we were not yet driven to horse flesh, as we heard was the case with the men in Rousseau's division. After the assault in the morning there was more or less firing going on on different parts of the line, but it was desultory and indicated no serious advance of either army. Suddenly, there was a furious rattle of musketry and roar of artillery over on our left, and our batteries on a knoll to our left and a few hundred yards in front, began a furious cannonade. The storm of battle raged for perhaps an hour. It had grown dark enough to reveal the flashes of the guns, when out of the dun smoke of the batteries came an officer riding with great speed towards our bivouac. It was General McCook. As he came up he called out: "Colonel Gibson, take your brigade and charge those d—d rebels who are coming up along the river. Give 'em the bayonet! Drive 'em into the river! Stick 'em in the —!" Colonel Gibson at once called out, "Fall in First Brigade." We quickly formed and Colonel Gibson made us a little speech. He said: "Men, there is no use to disguise matters; our situation is desperate. We've got to fight for our very existence. We'll march out here in double column and deploy and go in on the bayonet. Every man to his post!" That speech, delivered with that marvellous voice and impressive manner which distinguished Colonel

Gibson above all other men of his day and generation, has never been forgotten by the men who heard it. All suspense, all anxiety at once vanished, and each man seized his gun with a firmer grasp, as we marched forward to the charge. We deployed into line, fixed bayonets and marched up the knoll where our batteries, fifty cannon, were posted and firing on the enemy. In the growing dusk, the flashes gleamed through the smoke, and it seemed a genuine inferno into which we were marching. The ground in rear of the big guns was covered by men lying on the ground in support of them. We tried to pick our way through them, but they called out, "step right on us boys," and we did step on their prostrate bodies and so preserved our line unbroken. We soon cleared the batteries and charged down along the river. The Thirty-second Indiana was to our right, and was the only regiment of the brigade to meet the enemy, who gave way under their well directed fire. We kept on until our regiment found itself facing the river, with our backs toward the enemy's batteries, which were shelling a ford in our front. There we were halted and ordered to lie down still facing the river. A sergeant of Company K<sup>1</sup> noticing that our own troops were across the river in our front, and that by moving a few feet forward the line could protect itself from the enemy's shells, by the river bank, was imprudent enough to go to Colonel Wallace and make this suggestion, and was rudely ordered back to his post. Just then a shell from one of the enemy's guns exploded in our midst, and severely wounded Sergeant W. G. Malin of Company E and one or two others. Thereupon the line, without orders, quickly advanced to the river bank, faced about and took the position the imprudent sergeant had suggested. We remained in this position for a short time and were then marched back and bivouaced near the river bank. On the way General Negley, a part of whose division had been engaged on the left across the river, galloped past us carrying a rebel battle flag which had been captured in the engagement. Mounted on a fine horse, on which he sat superbly, his striking face all aglow, he formed a picture long to be remembered.

The following taken from the official report of General Crittenden, who commanded on the left, is a good description of the battle that evening, and gives just credit to our brigade for the part it took in securing the complete success of the engagement. He says:<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The writer.

<sup>2</sup> W. R. R. 20, part 1-450-451.

"On the evening of the 2nd about 4 P. M., a sudden and concentrated attack was made on the Third Division, now commanded by Colonel Beatty. Several batteries opened at the same time on this division. The overwhelming numbers of the enemy, directed upon two brigades (across the river), forced them after bloody, but short, conflict, back to the river. The object of the enemy (it is since ascertained) was to take the battery which we had on that side of the river. In this attempt it is most likely they would have succeeded but for the judgment of Colonel Beatty in changing the position of his battery.

As soon as it became evident that the enemy were driving Colonel Beatty, I turned to my chief of artillery, Captain John Mendenhall, and said: 'Now, Mendenhall, you must cover my men with your cannon.' Without any show of excitement or haste, almost as soon as the order was given, the batteries began to open. So perfectly had he placed them, in twenty minutes from the time the order was received, fifty-two guns were firing upon the enemy. They cannot be said to have been checked in their advance—from a rapid advance they broke at once into a rapid retreat. Reinforcements soon began to arrive, and our troops crossed the river, and pursued the fleeing enemy until dark.

It is a pleasant thing to report that officers and men from the center and right wing hurried to the support of my left, when it was known to be hard pressed. General J. C. Davis sent a brigade at once, without orders; then applied for and obtained orders to follow immediately with his division. General Negley, from the center, crossed with a part of his division. General McCook, to whom I applied for a brigade, not knowing of Davis' movement, ordered immediately Colonel Gibson to go with his brigade, and the Colonel and the brigade passed at double-quick in less than five minutes after the request was made. Honor is due to such men."

In the evening we heard that the heavy firing just before our charge was an attack by Breckenridge on our left, which had been repulsed, and that we had captured several pieces of artillery. We were also told that the enemy were forming to cut off our troops across the river, and that our charge prevented it. That night we got rations of flour, beans and molasses, and our hunger was appeased. Shortly after we got back to our bivouac it began to rain and rained all night.

Since December 31, the enemy had tried in vain to find some weak spot in our line, and with the day's successes we

were encouraged to hope that victory would yet crown our arms.

Once in the night we were awakened by an alarm which proved to be false. The rain was so heavy that our shelter tents afforded us little shelter. At 4 o'clock next morning, January 3, 1863, we were called into line and moved by a circuitous route through water and mud to our former place on the reserve in a grove of tall cedars. After daylight we built fires from dead branches picked up in the grove. Our supply train had come up and about 11 o'clock we were getting in a new supply of rations, when we were called into line and stood for an hour expecting the enemy to attack our right. The attack was not made and we returned to our fires and rations. The rain ceased about noon. The firing during the remainder of the day was desultory, and we dried our clothing and blankets and some of us cleaned our guns, which had become very foul and rusty. We had prepared our supper and were thinking we would have no more fighting that day, when suddenly our guns began shelling the woods to our left front. The cannonade continued for a space and then we heard cheering that indicated a charge on the left of our line. The cheering extended along the line from the left until finally it reached our front, and we were expecting to be called out, but no such orders came. We afterwards learned that a force of three or four regiments, under cover of our artillery, had advanced and driven the enemy's skirmishers back to their main line. Picket firing was kept up during the night until towards morning, when it apparently ceased, on the part of the enemy, at least, and we slept.

Next morning, January 4, 1863, we could scarcely realize that we were not to be called into line and stand at arms in anticipation of attack by the enemy. Instead, we slept on, and when we did rise from our damp beds, it was daylight and all was quiet along the line. Soon reports came that Murfreesboro had been evacuated, and some of our troops began moving to the front. Later the report was confirmed. The long, hard and bloody battle was over and we were in possession of the field.

In the early afternoon all who had loaded guns were taken out to a safe place and discharged them. The writer was placed in charge of a detachment of two men from each company of the regiment and directed to go over the ground covered by our retreat of December 31 and look after the killed and wounded. It was a march of three or four miles back to our position on December 31, 1862, and covered the

ground where some of the hardest fighting took place. We found that the enemy had begun to make preparations for burying our dead. Their own had already been buried or carried off the field. In a number of places the bodies were laid side by side in long ghastly rows, and in one or two places the ditch in which they were to be placed was partly dug. The dead had been stripped of their outer clothing, their shoes and socks, and the awful wounds gaped at us as we went by. They were of every conceivable character. The rain had washed them clean and there was absent the sickening smell of dead human flesh that is one of the usual results after a two or three days' battle. But no one who that day saw these awful results of the conflict could ever forget it. We went on and on and finally came to the house and the fence where so many of our men were killed, wounded, or captured. In one house we found several of our men who were badly wounded, and almost starved, and we gave them everything in our haversacks. Some of them wept for joy at our coming. In one room we found Fernando W. Shackelford of Company E, John Rennard of Company K and others. Sergeant John Danford of Company E, was lying on the floor with his shoes for a pillow. He was suffering from a mortal wound in the abdomen, from which he shortly afterwards died.

In another house we found others of our wounded, and in still another, about a mile from where he was wounded, we found Captain Douglass, who had been shot in the lungs and still carried in his body until his death in 1914, the bullet which wounded him.

Some of the men had wonderful stories to tell of their experience, but we could not take the time to hear all of them then. We searched the fields for our killed, found some of them, and as hogs, running at large, had begun to eat some of the bodies, we hastily gathered together all of our dead we could find, and built a pen of rails to protect them until another party could come to bury them. One of the severely wounded men has written the story of his experience in such a wonderfully interesting manner that it is given here, and will show how our seriously wounded suffered on and after that first terrible day of the battle.

He who writes the story is John Rennard of Company K. He had enlisted August 11, 1862, had fallen in with the Ninety-eighth Ohio just before the battle of Perryville, and had fought with that regiment in that battle, its baptism of fire, October 8, 1862. After the battle he had

joined the Fifteenth Ohio and had been with it ever since. He says, under date of May, 1909:

Your request for my recollections of the Battle of Stone River, brings to my mind recollections of scenes that I shall never forget as long as reason remains on her throne. The battle for you, and for me, began December 31, 1862, when we were attacked about sunrise where we had bivouaced the night before. When the attack began we were trying to make our breakfast on the remains of our rations, which were supposed to have run out the evening before. The attack was so sudden that we did not know what to do. The battery horses had gone to water. Colonel Gibson rode up, inquired for our Colonel, and ordered us to fall in. He then galloped off in search of Colonel Wallace. Colonel Gibson assumed command of the brigade as General Willich was on the picket line and had been taken prisoner by the Confederate forces. We marched rear in front and in line out into a cotton field. In crossing the cotton field Colonel Wallace saw we were in an awkward fix and tried to change our front by a counter-march. As we were trying to accomplish this feat the Colonel saw the rebels were gaining on us too fast, and gave the command forward! That seemed only to tangle the men all the more. We were then ordered to lie down and fire. It was when we rose to retreat that one of our boys was shot through the head. His name was Samuel Cowles. We then came to a fence, and after getting over it I was trying to reload my gun as we ran. Had succeeded in getting the charge in the muzzle, took my place in line, and was in the act of trying to ram the charge home when I was shot in the right thigh by a minnie ball. I threw my gun in one direction and the ramrod in another, spread my arms, a black curtain came before my eyes, and I fell on my side. When I struck the ground the curtain seemed to be gone. I lay in a thick frost which had fallen in the night, and was without overcoat or blanket. The rebels marched by me three lines deep, the first passing directly over me. It was but a few minutes until some of them came back, bringing with them some of our boys as prisoners. I recall Calvin Etzler, Leinard Pickering, and a boy named Wagner (of Co. G I think), whom we called "Cap" Wagner. As they passed I called out "hello Cap". I was dreadfully cold, my teeth were chattering, and I saw the Hospital flag hoisted over the Smith house, about two hundred yards away. I thought I would try to drag myself to it, as it did not seem so very far off. My feet were towards it, and I found I must get around with my head towards it. I drew up my sound leg, anchored my heel in a horse track, and made the effort. But I might as well have tried to crawl away with my body chained to the rock of Gibraltar.

During the forenoon two rebel captains came along gathering up stragglers, and stopped to talk with me. One of them asked if I was cold. I asked him if he did not see my teeth chattering. He ordered some of the men he had gathered up to go upon the field and get some blankets. They soon came back bringing three, which had been discarded by the rebel soldiers when they found better ones thrown away by our men in their retreat. He spread them on the ground so as to make the holes in them miss each other, and then said, "come men", and made a move to put me on them, but I begged to remain just as I was. He said he would be careful with my broken leg, so I consented, and they lifted me and placed me on the blankets. He ordered his men to get more blankets and they brought three more

and he placed them over me tenderly, and said he could do no more. I thanked him warmly. He then knelt at my head, uncorked his canteen and told me to take a good drink. I was shy about it, but he told me it would do me good, as it was something fine. I drank of it and it was as he said. The blankets, the whiskey and the sunshine began to warm me up, but the night was before me, and it gave indications of being very cold. The rebels at Murfreesboro had parolled some of our men, and had directed them to go out over the field and care for the wounded. I had a call from one of them. The night was very clear and I got very cold. All night long I could hear the groans of Samuel Cowles, but towards morning he died. He was a noble true hearted soldier.

The next day dawned bright and clear and about ten o'clock two men rode up and I asked them if there were no surgeons in their army. They asked me why, and I told them I would like to have my wound dressed. They called each other doctor and both got off their horses and looked at my leg. I asked them about the possibility of saving it and they told me that if they had me where they could care for me, they could save it. Towards evening they put me on a stretcher, carried me to the hospital and laid me in the yard with my head near a tree. They filled the circle around the tree with other wounded men. Morning came again, at last, and the day wore on until evening of Friday, January 2, when I was taken into a lower room of an out house which had been used for cooking and weaving. As I was taken into this place one of the doctors said, "Now I have all sheltered but one up among the rocks who is shot in the head, and a squad are after him." It then began to rain. While I lay out in the field I thought the noise from the artillery would burst my head. The echo from that wide valley was far louder than the original report, and nearly distracted me. I tried to keep out the noise by stopping my ears with my fingers.

I recall another incident which occurred while I was lying on the field. Three stragglers came along, and seeing me covered up, one of them said "he is one of our men and is all right." Then one of them saw my cap and said, "No, he is a yank". Another picked up my gun and ram rod and said, "Look! he had a ball ready to ram down to kill us. Let us ram it down and give it to him and see him grind." Another agreed with him so he rammed the load in the gun. But the third said, "No, he cannot hurt us now" and persuaded the others to go away and let me alone. They took my gun with them. On Saturday night the firing ceased and on Sunday morning I remarked that there were no Johnnies around, and was told they were cleaning up for inspection. That morning they brought us some chicken broth in one of our tin cups. It tasted good for it was the first food I had had since Wednesday morning. I begged for more but was told it was all I could have. In the afternoon the nurse told me there was a skirmish line coming across the field and he thought it was our men. He went out, and soon came back and said it was indeed our men. He had hardly told it, until the door opened and Captain C. W. Carroll and a few comrades walked in and I wept the sweetest tears I ever shed. My eyes fill again as I pen this sketch. I begged them for something to eat, but all they had was one hard tack and a part of another. After they had gone I broke the hard tack into small pieces and divided it among the wounded in the room. I think there were five besides myself. After suffering eight days, they came in the night

of the eighth day and set my leg. Doctor Park, Surgeon of the 49th Ohio, was head surgeon of the Smith Hospital, where we lay. Of the soldiers in this hospital I recall the names of but two. Fernando Shackelford of Company E of our regiment and John T. Gantz of the 89th Illinois. Gantz was wounded in the right thigh, and Shackelford in the leg below the knee.

Sometime after Shackelford's leg was set, the pus burrowed down to near the ankle, and it was decided to amputate it. The doctors were consulting about trying to save the knee, but Shackelford insisted that they should cut off the knee too, as it too was affected. When the surgeons were ready to operate they came to me and asked if I wished them to take him to another room for the operation. I told them that if Gantz was willing to have it done in the room, I was. Gantz consented and we saw as much of the operation as we cared to see. The bone was not sawed off short enough, and soon protruded through the flap, making necessary a second operation. As we were soon to be removed to the General Field hospital near Murfreesboro, Doctor Park said he would not perform the second operation until after such removal. After the removal the same three of us were in the same tent and I saw him operated on again. Oh! but I felt sorry for him. When the anesthesia passed off I did not dare to look at him. But when supper time came I turned towards him, and to my surprise and astonishment, he said in a weak voice, "Rennard, when this leg gets well I am going to have the other one cut off." I asked why, and he said, "then I will get some more good wine to drink." He had more grit than any man I ever knew.

At one time while we were in the Smith Hospital they ran short of proper food for the wounded, as all the chickens in the neighborhood had been killed. The doctors were troubled about it, and Mr. Smith who owned the premises, suggested that they get robins. Doctor Park laughed and said there would be nothing left of the robin when shot by one of our guns. Mr. Smith then suggested that if the attendants would go out after night with a lantern into the second growth cedars where they roosted, and tap them with clubs, they could get numbers of them. This was tried and the first party came back with a half bushel basket full, and the next with a two bushel bag and a basket full. Some of them were sent to another hospital about a mile away from us. They usually served them boiled with hulled barley, and they were fine eating. But they only gave us one a day for fear we would tire of them."

This one personal reminiscence reveals the condition in which our wounded were left after our right was overwhelmed on that terrible morning of December 31, 1862. The case is a typical one—not the most extreme—for Shackelford was left on the field without shelter or covering until Friday evening, his leg below the knee being shattered by a ball and being also shot through the arm, and was not operated on until the wound in his leg had begun to mortify.

We had more than a hundred men captured during the battle, and to show how it went with them, the following narrative has been prepared by Morris Cope, who was then a Corporal of Company E, and afterwards a First Lieutenant of Company I. The narrative is dated 809 Vance Avenue,

Chattanooga, Tenn. (where he now resides), May 15, 1910. It is as follows:

"You probably know that on the night of December 30, 1862, the rebel army was massed in front of the extreme right of our line before Murfreesboro, their left extending far beyond our right. The 15th and 49th Ohio Regiments were formed at right angles to our front and on the extreme end of our line. I think the general understanding among our soldiers was that the most of the rebel army was in front of our *left*. Our commanders, I suppose, knew or should have known, the true situation. I don't remember that any extraordinary precautions were taken to guard against surprises, or to resist an attack by superior forces.

We had only one line of battle, with no reserves within supporting distance. The next morning while our artillery horses were at water and our men at breakfast, with guns stacked in line, our pickets, many of them, were captured, and the rest were driven in, followed so closely by the enemy, that many of our men were shot down before they reached their guns.

I suppose you remember the awful blunder that was made by ordering our regiment to countermarch out in an open field under fire of the enemy, before we got to fire a shot. By the time we got into position to fire the rebels were close upon us, and even then, our commanding officer yelled at us not to fire, that they were our own men. But dear old Askew was there and had his head with him, and said, "Damn it, don't you see their rebel flag? Fire," and fire we did, with good effect. But as they were close to our single line of battle with their four lines, we could not stand long before them. In our rear was one of those cedar picket fences with some gaps in it, and I think several of our boys were captured here. You know it is a serious matter to climb one of those fences under the most favorable circumstances, but with a howling mob of Johnnies after you it was somewhat embarrassing. I remember one incident connected with this crossing that in spite of the serious surroundings was amusing. You remember we had in Co E. one Jack Heaton (familarly called Granny Heaton), and one Edwin G. Blocker, both good old soldiers, always ready for duty and never shrinking from danger, but they were disposed to be a little irritable at times when matters didn't suit them. They would quarrel at the drop of a hat. On this occasion they both arrived at the same moment at a narrow opening in this fence. It was too narrow for both to pass at the same time, and each was determined to go through first. They quarreled about it until both came near being captured.

After passing this barrier, our boys did some effective shooting. They were considerably mixed up, but fell back slowly and fought over all the ground. We saved one gun of our battery and under command of Lieutenant Belden, it mowed some good gaps through the ranks of the rebs. I don't know the particulars of the capture of many of our boys. I would not have been taken prisoner if I had not undertaken to carry off one of our boys. Johnny Fenton was shot through the foot. You remember he was a little fellow, and he coaxed so hard for me to help him that I took him on my back and toted him off. I had been painfully hurt about the time I crossed the fence. I think it must have been a large piece of shell which struck my gun, breaking it and knocking it out of my hand and dislocating my wrist, from which I suffered terribly until it was put in place several days afterwards by a rebel doctor at Atlanta.

Right here I wish to relate an incident which should be given a permanent place in the history of our regiment. I was one of the color guard, and the color sergeant had been shot in the beginning of the fight, one of the other color guards took the colors, and just after we got over or through the picket fence the colors went down. I took the flag and tried to keep it up. Captain Andrew R. Z. Dawson noticed me, saw that I was hurt, and himself took the flag and waved it and called on the men to rally to it.

I carried Fenton back until we came to an old log-house filled with corn shucks. I put him inside near a window and covered him up with my overcoat and started out, when I saw,—I think, not less than twenty revolvers, pointing at me and several gentlemen very emphatically invited me to surrender. I notified them that I would do so at once. It was the Texas Rangers who captured us. They were a bully set of fellows and treated us very nicely. We had seen, as we were going into the cabin, a long line of blue-coated cavalry on our flank, and thought they were our own men until they introduced themselves as above described. They gave Fenton a horse to ride and at once started with us for Murfreesboro. As we passed through corn fields they let me lead the horse, so as to keep standing stalks from hurting Fenton's foot. When we got to Murfreesboro we were required to sign a parole binding us not to perform any military duty until exchanged. We were then turned into the Court House yard, among the rest of the prisoners from our regiment and brigade. The yard was about full.

As we were passed into the crowd, I noticed General Willich. He seemed very much distressed to see so many of his soldiers captured. He was rubbing his hands, and as we passed him he said, "Oh my poor boys, my poor boys." I did not see him again during our captivity.

A very strange circumstance occurred that afternoon. I have never had any explanation of it, and suppose I never will, now. Some rebel soldiers came to the yard and took me and four or five others out and marched us to the county jail and not only locked us up, but placed a guard over us for the night. I do not remember who the others were, but if this incident should ever appear in print and any of them who were with me in that jail the last night of Dec. 31, 1862, should see it, I hope they will write to me at once. I don't think this special attention was because we were more dangerous looking than the other prisoners. They must have thought us the handsomest,<sup>(1)</sup> and should be separated from the common herd. They came the next day and without further explanation took us out and loaded us in stock cars with the other prisoners.

At Chattanooga we were placed in camp on a hillside which is now covered with beautiful residences. It was raining and the wounded were furnished with old tents that the water dripped through. The water ran through under the tent I was in and drove us out. Next morning we were again loaded on stock cars and started for Atlanta. I think I suffered a thousand deaths from my dislocated wrist, that night and the next day, until we reached Atlanta, where it had the first attention. From Atlanta we were taken to Montgomery, and then back to Atlanta, and there we were put on a train for Richmond, where we finally landed in "Libby." We understood that it was first intended to take us to Vicksburg but Grant's operations there caused them to change their minds.

I think our boys were mostly captured by keeping too far to our

1 Corporal Cope's comrades will appreciate this joke.

right as we fell back. Wheeler's rebel cavalry was hovering on our flank ready to take any one who came their way.

It was a long tedious trip. The railroads were in poor condition and poorly equipped. We rode many miles over roads with wooden rails with a bar of iron spiked on top. The weather was mild and pleasant most of the time, which was well for us, for we had neither blankets nor overcoats. We had little to eat, I have no recollection of what we did eat, but I remember I was hungry most of the time. One time we stopped at Dalton, Ga., and waited most of a day for an engine to pull us to Knoxville, Tenn. On a side track near our train, was a car load of sugar. We managed to open a hogshead, and filled our haversacks with it, and some of the boys also filled their tin-cups and pockets with it. I saw one boy with his cap full. We were a sweet lot for a day or two at least.

We passed up through East Tennessee at a time when they were conscripting every man, young and old for the Confederate army. It was a sorrowful time for these people, for they were dragging young boys and old men from their homes at the railway stations, followed by their weeping wives and children. I do not remember the day we arrived at "Hotel Libby." Libby Prison had been an old tobacco warehouse, and was situated on the bank of the James River. Near two hundred and sixty prisoners, including myself, were quartered in a room in the second story of the building. We were somewhat crowded. When we lay down to sleep at night we covered about all the floor space. We had nothing to do but to talk and time passed slowly with us. We were fed once a day. One day we had a small loaf of bread and some soup and the next day some bread and the meat the soup was made from. We were hungry most of the time, but hungriest after disposing of our daily rations. It was mid-winter and part of the time it was quite cold. We were without blankets, and the floor was pretty hard, but it was dry, and some of us slept a good deal. There were windows in the end of the room, without glass, and sometimes the wind blew in off the river and chilled us through. But as I recall it now, after 47 years, we were most of us in good health. The quarters where our captured officers were confined were on the first floor directly under us and we managed to make a hole in the floor large enough for them to pass a deck of cards up to us. I think several packs found their way to us through this hole, and I think none of them was idle as long as it was light enough to see the spots on them. When the sun went down our light went out. It came back when the sun rose in the morning. We were allowed no artificial lights in the prison, and the gloomy winter nights seemed doubly long. Day and night the sentinels paced their beats about the prison, and every hour of the night was called the refrain, "All is well." I remember how lonesome and homesick I would feel when the sentinel at mid-night would call out, "Twelve o'clock and all is well."

One day some rebel officers came in to our room and asked us to volunteer to work on the stockade for the prison they were building on Belle Isle. We told them we were already volunteers for three years or more, or during the war, and could not volunteer again until our time expired. After that we would volunteer to build stockades, but it would be to put *them* in.

When our time came to leave the prison we had no notice of it until we were ordered to get ready to leave. I don't understand yet what we had to do to get ready, or why that order was given, unless some of us were lying down, and it meant for us to get up. We had

nothing else to do to get ready. Perhaps some of us had to turn around and face the door before starting. We were not told where we were to go. Some one said we were going to South Carolina, and it was reported we were going to Andersonville, Ga., where a prison was to be established. As we were marching along the street a man handed me a morning paper, and I read in it an item stating that 1000 Yankee prisoners were to be sent to City Point to be turned over to U. S. officers. We soon all knew that we were going home and no one could express what that meant to us. We were loaded on flat cars, but that didn't matter, we were going home! We would have been willing to ride on the cow catcher.

We were all feeling fine, but kept quiet until we rounded the bend of the river at City Point and caught a glimpse of our own Stars and Stripes floating over the steamer New York. Then we broke loose. Talk about the Fourth of July, political meetings, Teddy, or the cheers of modern base ball fans. Any or all of these would be tame beside the cheers we sent forth. We got off the cars, cheering, and kept it up until we got on the boat. Then the cheering suddenly stopped. We were passed between two lines of our own men and each one of us was given a loaf of bread, a big hunk of meat and a tin-cup full of good old black coffee. Gee! we soon forgot all about that old flag, and ate and drank until we were too full to cheer any more just then. We ate what was given us, and then more and more, for they gave us all we wanted and I really thought some of us would be sick from over eating. But I guess when a fellow is real hungry, it does not matter how much he eats. None of us suffered from our over-eating, as I recall it.

We rejoined the regiment about the middle of June, finding it encamped on the Stone River battlefield, and two days afterwards, started on the Tullahoma campaign. While absent we had seen our friends at home, and had missed no battles. We dropped back into the routine of a soldier's life so quietly and naturally that in a day or so we could hardly realize there had been any break or gap in our service.

Lieutenant Colonel Frank Askew, it will be remembered, was severely wounded in the hip on the morning of December 31, 1862, and was left on the field. He soon, of course, fell into the enemy's hands. He was taken to a house in Murfreesboro and placed in the same room with General George W. Gordon, then Colonel of the Eleventh Tennessee, who had been dangerously wounded in the cedar thicket where our line made its last stand and the enemy was checked. The two wounded officers, though political and military enemies, soon became friends. Colonel Gordon, with genuine southern hospitality, interceded for Colonel Askew, and he was spared the trouble and annoyance of signing a parole. Afterwards, when Murfreesboro fell into our hands and Colonel Gordon was our prisoner, Colonel Askew interceded for him and the same courtesy was extended to him that had been shown to Colonel Askew. Occasionally during their long period of after service they exchanged personal compliments under the white flag. Later, in another battle, they again had opportunity to meet face to face, but that belongs to a later chapter.

The evening of January 4, 1863, after our return from our trip over the battlefield, Colonel Gibson made us a speech, telling us in substance, that Murfreesboro had been the objective point in our campaign, that it was now in our possession and that the enemy was in full retreat. As usual, when he made a speech, he was heartily cheered.

On January 5, we sent out a party of three men from each company to bury our dead. We heard cannonading at a distance during the day, which indicated that our troops who were in pursuit of the enemy had come up with his rear guard. We got no rations that day, as all on hand had been issued to the troops who were pursuing the enemy. We were very hungry and when our teams bringing rations came up in the evening the boys helped themselves to a box of crackers. Some of our slightly wounded men who had been taken to hospital in Murfreesboro rejoined the regiment. During the day the orderly sergeants and the adjutant were busy making out lists of our losses for the official reports. The following are the names of the killed, wounded and missing, or captured, during the engagement:

## FIELD AND STAFF.

WOUNDED.—Lieutenant Colonel Frank Askew and Major John McClenahan.

## COMPANY A.

WOUNDED.—Wm. T. McKinney (and captured), Jacob Kissinger, Wm. J. Permar (and captured), James W. White, Corporal Johnston Hammond (and captured), Jos. S. Brown (and captured), and Richard McKinney (and captured).

MISSING.—Sergeant Andrew L. Hadden Joseph McKinney, Corporal John D. Fleming, Corporal Matthew E. Cherry, Samuel B. Few, Wm. Melone, Robert W. Thompson, David Wilson, Wm. R. Stewart and Benoni Ledman.

## COMPANY B.

KILLED.—Corporal James W. Pollock, Alvalh P. Allison, Absalom Sines and Levi Frost.

WOUNDED AND AFTERWARDS DIED AS THE RESULT OF SUCH WOUNDS.—Corporal John R. McCune, Wm. H. Wiles, Samuel Black and Andrew S. Ross.

OTHER WOUNDED were, Isaac Adamson, Benjamin Chance, Wm. Calvert, Andrew Downer, Wm. Selders, Alonzo Milner, John S. Penrose, David Frazier, who was also captured, Thomas W. Evans, also captured, Lemuel Smith, John Hunter, Patrick Kelly, and Alexander Milligan.

## COMPANY C.

KILLED.—John Massmore.

WOUNDED AND DIED OF SUCH WOUNDS.—Marshall S. Byrd, Emanuel Strawbridge and Sherman A. Jolly.

OTHER WOUNDED.—Wm. A. Ward, Albert Noe, David K. Baggs, Geo. M. Chambers, Daniel C. Courtwright, Amos T. Harding, Enoch Timbers, Calvin S. Paxton, and Jacob S. Riser, who was also captured.

MISSING.—Henry C. Graff, Robert D. McBride, Harvey C. Calkins, Henry C. Meredith, Aaron M. Craven, Wm. D. Ham-mell, Alfred H. Hurd, and Joseph B. Ross.

## COMPANY D.

WOUNDED.—Amos F. Miller, Henry Schriver and John Hesser.

MISSING.—Corporal John Sheehy, Charles F. Hoffman, Wm. H. Cavins, John A. Clark, Francis M. Carter, John Harnett, John Hahn, Christian Mafzgar, Butler Ramey and George W. Tucker.

## COMPANY E.

KILLED AND MISSING.—Sergeant William Addison Hogue, who went into the battle, and was last seen trying to help Colonel Askew off the field. He was never heard from afterwards.

WOUNDED AND DIED AS RESULT OF SUCH WOUNDS—Corporal John W. Danford and John B. Dysart.

OTHER WOUNDED.—Lieutenant Samuel Hilles, Sergeant Wm. G. Malin, Isaac Eugene Dillon, George Billeb, Geo. W. Ashton, Corporal Morris Cope, John Fenton, John P. Heaton (the four last named were also captured) Smith Gardner, Fernando W. Shackelford, Samuel McMillan, John Pickering, Andrew J. Taylor, Wm. B. Smith and James Hall.

MISSING.—Corporal Calvin Etzler, Isaac W. Knight, Henry H. Brooks, Stephen Burley, Wm. Cavender, Charles Embree, Hugh Foster, William Cilham, Oliver J. Henderson, Charles W. Hall, Abner Jones, Anderson McGrew, David S. McMasters, Alfred Powell, John D. Roscoe, Jos. E. Stewart, Wm. H. Satterthwaite, Albert Wagner, Hugh Hawkins, Isaac Paxton and Wm. McComas.

## COMPANY F.

KILLED.—Corporal Adam C. McCaffrey, John Craig and Jacob Hesht.

WOUNDED AND DIED OF WOUNDS.—Wm. Scott.

OTHER WOUNDED.—Corporal E. W. Hutcheson, Dixon M. Hays, Josiah D. Bowles, Joseph Bowles, Andrew Garlock, Nelson D. Madden.

MISSING.—Lafayette Hess, Thos. Benton Jackson, Charles Brandon, Thomas C. Collins, Charles C. Gibson, Isaac H. Green, Joseph McMillan, Daniel Thomas, James Barnett, James Bernard.

## COMPANY G.

KILLED.—William Bell, Edward Brown, Wesley Nelson, John R. Park and Archibald Ralston.

WOUNDED AND DIED AS RESULT OF WOUNDS.—Jacob G. Everly and Philip C. Haffick.

WOUNDED.—Wm. H. Patterson, Joseph C. McColley, Smith A. Walker, Wm. G. Whips, Jacob Stauffer, Thos. G. Maycock, Charles W. Craycraft and Charles K. Sanders, the four last named being also captured.

MISSING.—Andrew B. Dobson, Joseph T. Hanes, Logan McD. Scott, Wilson Barcus, George B. Gilbert, Hiram K. Brooks, Joseph Harnley, William Wallace, John Koons, and Theodore Coss.

## COMPANY H.

KILLED.—Elias H. Evers.

WOUNDED AND DIED AS RESULT OF WOUNDS.—Chris. R. Harnley, Henry K. Wise and Wm. Crone.

WOUNDED.—Captain Thomas E. Douglass, Corporal Wm. Crates, Corporal David Capper, Jas. R. Updegrove, William H. Pier, Eli Timbers (also captured), Casper Miller, Wm. Angevine and Philip Beamer.

MISSING.—Sergeant George T. Todd, Corporal Calvin Morehead, Corporal Jos. S. Lehew, Cornelius Linn, Wm. G. Balding, Asa T. Crapo, Peter Cupp, Andrew J. Stewart.

## COMPANY I.

KILLED.—Lucas Borer, John W. Charity and William H. Whiting.

WOUNDED AND DIED AS RESULT OF WOUNDS.—Louis Goshorn.

WOUNDED.—William Morton (also captured), William McConnell, James M. Swanger and Winfield S. White.

MISSING.—Sergeant Alexander R. Lord, Corporal, Jos. J. Millard, David D. Hart, Barnet Sims, Joseph Lee Kerr, Benjamin Gardner, George Stoll, Thomas W. Curran, Jas. C. Delancy, Alva Anderson, John Coble, Samuel Canter, Samuel Fletcher, James Guthrie, Peter S. Kirkendell, Joseph E. Meck, Geo. W. Rockwell, Alexander Simon, Joseph Sheehy, John F. White, Thomas Connor.

## COMPANY K.

KILLED.—Samuel W. Cowles.

WOUNDED.—Sergeant Alexis Cope (slightly), Landon B. Grimes, John Rennard, Peter Russell, Jas. W. Thompson, Eber T. Fort and Frank W. Sanders.

MISSING.—Sergeant George W. Chessell, Corporal Rees

Pickering, Brown Deselems, James M. Andrews, James W. Bateman, James McConnell, James McMillan, Leinard Pickering and Benjamin R. Buffington.

The appalling total is three (3) officers wounded, nineteen (19) enlisted men killed, seventeen (17) enlisted men, mortally wounded, i. e., died as the result of wounds received in the battle, eighty (80) other enlisted men wounded, and one hundred and sixteen (116) enlisted men captured or missing—a grand total loss of 232 killed, wounded and missing.

The return of casualties of the army under General Rosecrans from December 26, 1862 to January 5, 1863 inclusive,<sup>1</sup> made up as stated from nominal lists, returns, etc., gives the losses in the 15th Ohio as 17 killed, 70 wounded and 128 missing or captured, or a total loss of 215. But herein are given the names of each man and the total is 17 greater. The names are taken from the official rosters and reports and corrected by reference to diaries of Chaplain Ross, Lieutenant Andrew J. Gleason and Sergeant John G. Gregory.

The 17 men reported above as mortally wounded, or died as the result of wounds received in the battle, died a day or a few weeks after the battle and might perhaps be classed as among the killed.

The number of missing or captured include only those who were reported captured or missing and not known to be wounded. Those captured who were also wounded are numbered among the wounded and not among the missing or captured. One man reported among the killed is Sergeant William Addison Hogue of Company E. At the time he was reported among the missing, but as he was never heard from, it is believed that he was killed and buried on the field by other troops without having been recognized. That could easily be accounted for. Our dead left unburied by the enemy had been stripped of all their outer clothing, leaving nothing on their bodies by which they could be identified. The other discrepancies between the actual and then reported losses may have readily occurred as a result of the confusion following the battle.

Surgeon Clarke McDermott, the medical director of the right wing, General McCook's command, gives the loss in killed and wounded in the 15th Ohio, as follows: Killed 17, wounded 96, total 113.<sup>2</sup> The number of wounded given in his report is one less than that given above in this history, while the number of killed is two less. His report was forwarded to General McCook January 14, 1863, several days after General Rosecrans

<sup>1</sup> W. R. R. 20, part 1-208.  
<sup>2</sup> W. R. R. 20, part 1-259.

"Return of Casualties" above mentioned, and is probably nearer the truth.

The battle of Stone River was one of the hardest and bloodiest contests of the war. The losses in killed and wounded, in proportion to the numbers engaged, were exceeded in only a very few battles where equal or greater numbers were engaged. General Rosecrans officially reports the effective force of his army at the battle of Stone River December 31, 1862 as 43,400<sup>1</sup> and his percentage of loss as 20.22 per cent of the forces engaged. But his return of casualties above referred to shows 1730 killed, 7802 wounded and 3777 captured or missing—or a total loss of 13,249,<sup>2</sup> which indicates a loss in killed and wounded of nearly 22 per cent, or a total loss of over 30 per cent of the numbers engaged. General Bragg officially reports 37,712 officers and men present for duty, December 31, 1862, and that his losses were killed, 1294, wounded 7945, missing 1027—a total loss of 10,266<sup>3</sup>—a loss in killed and wounded of a little over 21 per cent, and a total loss of 27 4-7 per cent.

There are no means at hand to enable the writer to arrive at the exact percentage of loss in the 15th Ohio. General Rosecrans' official statement of the effective force present December 31, 1862, gives the number in each brigade, but not the number in each regiment. The number in Willich's (our) brigade was given as 1650. There were five regiments in the brigade—the 15th Ohio the 49th Ohio, the 32nd Indiana, the 39th Indiana and the 89th Illinois,—all good sized regiments. Neither Colonel Gibson, who made the official report of the battle for the brigade, nor either of the regimental commanders, in his official report of the battle, gives the number of men present in his command December 31, 1862. Gleason in his diary says Company H went into battle that morning with about 60 men. Company H was at that time the largest company in the regiment, having received fourteen recruits on October 26, 1862. It is probable that the regiment, as it hastily formed on the morning of December 31, 1862, mustered 360 officers and men. The writer recalls that on the morning of January 1, 1863, there was a mere remnant of it left. Gleason in his diary says that when the regiment reformed after we had got back to the Nashville pike on the evening of December 31, there were present only eight men of Company H, including Lieutenant Updegrave and himself. Other companies could not muster any more, but the next day quite a number returned and we had perhaps a hundred or more present. On the supposition that the 15th Ohio had 360 men December 31, 1862, its percentage

<sup>1</sup> W. R. R. 20, part 1-201.  
<sup>2</sup> W. R. R. 20, part 1-215.  
<sup>3</sup> W. R. R. 20, part 1-674.

of loss in killed and wounded was 32.2 per cent. and its total loss 64.4 per cent.

General Sheridan, who commanded a division in the right wing, says in his "Memoirs", (Pages 241 and 242), "my effective force in the battle of Stone River was 4154 officers and men", (General Rosecrans says 5029),<sup>1</sup> and that his killed and wounded and missing numbered 1633, or nearly 40 per cent. He also says that "in the remaining years of the war, though often engaged in most severe contests, I never experienced in any of my commands so high a rate of casualties".

The writers of war history and military critics have generally regarded the battle of Stone River as not of much importance, and have passed it by without giving it the attention it deserves. General Grant is on record as saying substantially that it led to no results and should never have been fought. But it is due to the men who fought there to say that on no field of battle during the great war of 1861, were the courage and endurance of soldiers on both sides more severely tested and more steadfastly maintained. There was little disparity of numbers in the opposing armies, and we may claim that under the circumstances they were evenly matched. It was a life and death struggle lasting for four days, and it ended by the practical exhaustion of the contending forces. The percentage of loss in killed and wounded in the two armies was practically the same, as is shown,—the loss in our army being a little less than 22 per cent and that of the enemy over 21 per cent. Neither army can lay claim to any superior valor or skill. So far as these are concerned, it was a drawn contest. But history should continue to repeat that on no other battle field in its history did American manhood show higher examples of patriotism and devotion to duty than on this bloody field of Murfreesboro and Stone River.

Eighty thousand one hundred and twelve men engaged in the contest, and twenty-three thousand five hundred and twelve men were killed, wounded or missing. Little has been done to preserve this battle field and it lies neglected. In justice to the men, living and dead, who fought there, the field should be made a national park and the historic portions of it should be marked by fitting monuments, while there remain alive those who could see that they are accurately placed.

On January 5, burial parties were sent over the field to bury our dead. Some of the other troops were ordered out in pursuit of the enemy and all the rations on hand were issued to them. We went hungry until our burial parties returned, when some of the men brought some mutton they had foraged.

<sup>1</sup> W. R. R. 20, part 1-201.

January 6, a little after noon, we were formed in line and marched into Murfreesboro, crossing Stone River on the railroad bridge. We reached the town about three o'clock and marched through it without halting, taking the Shelbyville pike. When we had gone about four miles from the town the brigade halted and went into camp. The 15th and 49th Ohio were ordered to go on picket duty and marched about two miles further, where we were placed on a line west of the pike in a thick woods. We were forbidden to have fires at the reserves. At a plantation near one of the posts some of the boys captured some fresh pork and yams,—a fine combination at any time,—but to half starved men nothing could have been finer. The night passed without any unusual incident.

