

# ANNALS OF IOWA.

VOL. VII. IOWA CITY, APRIL, 1869.

No. II.

## THE ARMY OF THE SOUTH-WEST, AND THE FIRST CAMPAIGN IN ARKANSAS.

BY SAM'L PRENTIS CURTIS,

BREVET CAPTAIN AND AID-DE-CAMP TO MAJOR GENERAL CURTIS.

### CHAPTER FOURTEENTH.

(Continued from page 20.)

The order of Curtis in relation to guerrilla operations in Missouri, as well as his order announcing the victories of Bowen and other officers, the letters of Hindman and Roane, and the reply of Curtis thereto, are here inserted, together with the plan of Gen. Hindman, whereby he proposed to reduce a warfare which had hitherto been conducted comparatively in accordance with the humane rules of an enlightened civilization, to worse than savage ferocity and barbarity:

HEADQUARTERS, ARMY OF THE SOUTH-WEST, }  
BATESVILLE, ARK., May 28, 1862. }

*General Orders,* }  
No. 21. }

Trains bearing provisions to this command have been attacked, and a small portion destroyed by marauders or guerrilla bands. Unorganized parties, such as these, cannot make war, and in their attempt so to do, they become outlaws, robbers and marauders, and will be treated as such. All acts of violence by them will be punished with death, now or hereafter. Timely notice of such villainy must be given by the neighborhood, and the persons and property of all sympathizers or secessionists in the vicinity of their depredations, will be arrested and seized.

An army like this will not fail for want of supplies so long as anything remains in the country. An interference with its ordinary channels of support only compels it to use its power to maintain itself, and cause the inhabitants of all classes and conditions perchance to suffer. The destruction of provisions, therefore, by these unlawful bands falls upon the weak, unarmed people, the

poor, including women and children—not so hard on the army, which can provide against disasters. Hence, destruction of property and provisions is atrocious, impoverishing the innocent, and will be most certainly and severely punished. The officers of this command will see that all such marauding parties are attacked with vigor, and the severe penalty of death inflicted summarily in the field, or by military commission.

The burning of mills and cotton is a public calamity and crime, and Union soldiers and citizens are prohibited from such outrages. If the enemy burn his own stores, his own mills, and his own cotton, he impoverishes himself, and should be encouraged and given ample time for such acts of self-humiliation and destruction; but when the Union flag prevails, let us check as far as possible the waste of private property, and strive to preserve the peace and restore the prosperity of our once happy country.

By command of Major General Curtis,

H. Z. CURTIS, Asst. Adj. Gen.

---

HEADQUARTERS, ARMY OF THE SOUTH-WEST, }  
BATESVILLE, ARK., May 31, 1862. }

*General Orders,* }  
*No. 23.* }

I. The Major General Commanding announces to the Army of the South-West, that, by telegraph from St. Louis, he is informed that Corinth is ours, and the rebels are retreating southward.

II. He also desires to return his thanks to Lieut. Col. F. W. Lewis, of the 1st Missouri cavalry, Lieut. Col. H. F. Sickles, of the 9th Illinois cavalry, and Major W. D. Bowen, commanding detachments of Bowen's battalion and the 3d Iowa cavalry, and the officers and soldiers under their respective commands, for the venturesome spirit, the gallant and daring action, shown in their several forays this week. Each have met, charged, and routed the enemy. Lieut. Col. Lewis, on an expedition to the west of Searcy; Col. Sickles, at Cache Run Bridge, in Jackson County, and Major Bowen, on a most successful expedition up the south side of White River. By these several excursions we have captured a large amount of camp and garrison equipage, ordnance, and ordnance stores, a number of prisoners of war, and scattered and driven the enemy.

Officers and soldiers of the cavalry! emulate the example of the renowned in your arm! keep your sabres polished! drill daily in the use of them, and watch the opportunity to show the heroic deeds you may accomplish.

By command of Major General Curtis.

H. Z. CURTIS, Asst. Adj. Gen.

---

LITTLE ROCK, ARK., May 24, 1862.

GENERAL S. R. CURTIS:—

In a skirmish which took place near Searcy between the two belligerent forces, Surgeon A. Krauswick, 3d Missouri volunteers, U. S. A., was taken by my troops and brought to this city, where he now enjoys the limits of the city, awaiting an opportunity to be returned to the federal army.

In the campaign about to open before us, I desire to have some distinct understanding with you on several points, which I shall clearly define, and to which I beg as distinct replies:

1. I propose that surgeons and their assistants belonging to either army, as agreed upon by Gen. Beauregard and Maj. Gen. Buell shall be allowed to visit the field of battle to attend to the wants of the wounded on both sides, without any molestation from either party.

2. It having been stated that you or your officers are in the habit of arresting citizens of this State (who are not in arms) and making their release conditional upon taking an oath of allegiance to the United States, forcing them to accept conditions wholly obnoxious to their wishes and our laws. I sincerely trust this is not the case, and that you or your officers do not arrest unoffending citizens without arms. I am therefore compelled to inform you that I cannot respect an oath taken under such circumstances as are referred to above. Should any person who has thus been forced to take the oath engage in the service of the Confederate States and be subsequently taken prisoner by you, I shall expect that they be treated with the same consideration which civilized warfare demands from belligerents.

I take this occasion to say, however, that should you inflict upon any such person the penalty of the violation of an oath, I shall deem it my duty to retaliate, man for man, as fast as authentic information of the fact reaches me. I desire, General, to conduct this war, so far as I am able, in the limits of the most enlightened warfare, and to that end I do not seek to arrest unarmed, defenceless, or molest helpless women and children; and I am unwilling to believe that you desire to conduct your campaign on any other principles, and to this end I have addressed you this communication. All of your prisoners held by me are daily walking about the streets, under no confinement, and I shall always hold myself ready to exchange "rank for rank" with you for Confederate soldiers, provided the same willingness be shown by you.

Yours, &c.,

JOHN SELDON ROANE, Brig. Gen. Confed. Army.

---

HEADQUARTERS TRANS-MISS. DISTRICT, }  
LITTLE ROCK, ARK., June 8, 1862. }

GENERAL:—

I have received information that you have in prison at Batesville certain citizens of Izard County, Arkansas, captured a few days since by a detachment of your cavalry, who are charged with firing upon your men while attempting to arrest them, and whom it is your intention to hang as outlaws.

Without stopping to inquire whether they did actually fire upon your soldiers or not, I assert it to be the duty as well as the right of every citizen of this State, to fire upon the soldiers of the United States Government, so long as that government persists in the invasion of their homes, and they have the arms to defend those homes with, and, in the performance of that duty, I shall sustain them at all hazards.

I have in custody several officers and soldiers of the army of your govern-

ment, and I write this to warn you that if your threat is carried into execution against one single citizen of Arkansas, who now or hereafter may fall into your hands, I shall avenge his death by hanging every federal officer and soldier of war, and from that time forward, this becomes a war of extermination between us—neither asking nor granting quarter. I shall put to death, without mercy, every soldier and citizen of the United States who falls into my hands.

I am further informed, that, in a published order, you have already declared this to be a war of extermination, and that you expect to wage it as such. I request, sir, that you specifically advise me as to the truth of such information, and, if compatible with your duty, furnish me a copy of the order in question. If such proves to have been your declaration, however, you can consider this as an acceptance of the issue tendered, and we will ignore all recognized rules of civilized warfare, and make our campaign one of savage cruelty and unsparing butchery.

Hoping, General, that there is some mistake in this matter, and that the rules of civilized warfare will continue to influence us both in conducting the campaign in which we find ourselves engaged, I have the honor to be

Your obedient servant,

T. C. HINDMAN, Maj. Gen. Com'd'g.

To Brig. Gen. Curtis, Commanding United States forces in Arkansas.

---

HEADQUARTERS, ARMY OF THE SOUTH-WEST, }  
BATESVILLE, ARK., June 11, 1862. }

GENERAL:—

Your letter of the 8th inst., stating that you had been informed I was going to hang men who had fired on United States soldiers in IZARD COUNTY, and that I had published an order declaring this a war of extermination, and in the probability of such reports being true, expressing a remarkable zeal on your part to avenge such conduct by "hanging every federal officer and soldier" you hold, and declaring that you "will put to death without mercy every soldier and citizen of the United States who falls into my (your) hands," is duly received.

As there is no truth of the reports you have received of my threat to hang or exterminate, the terrible vengeance so lavishly avowed by you will not require notice. There was a company of about seventy rebel soldiers attacked by my body-guard in IZARD COUNTY, and twenty-two taken prisoners, fifty guns, revolvers, and some twenty bowie-knives, were taken. They were supposed to be regularly organized troops, and were sent to the rear as prisoners of war.

To prevent this war descending into one of rapine and assassination, I have published the following order, [General Order, No. 21,] which I intend to apply to such unauthorized bands as Gen. Price, in a former negotiation with me, refused to exchange as prisoners of war, because they were private marauders.

I will call your attention to the conduct of some of your soldiers who recently robbed and burned the house of Mr. Peoples, who fled to the Union flag for shelter. I have heard of many threats, and have proofs of innumerable acts of barbarity practiced by your troops, which I trust will receive proper attention

on your part, so that your soldiers may not extend that species of warfare which you so graphically enunciate.

The United States soldiers are here to restore peace, not to invade the homes of the citizens of Arkansas; and the people who fire upon us only prolong an unfortunate and unnatural civil war, that destroys the peace of society.

I have the honor to be, General, very respectfully

Your obedient servant,

S. R. CURTIS, Major General.

To Brig. Gen. T. C. Hindman, Confederate Army.

---

HEADQUARTERS, TRANS-MISS DISTRICT, }  
LITTLE ROCK, ARK., June 17, 1862. }

General Orders, }  
No. 17. }

1. For the more effectual annoyance of the enemy upon our rivers and in our mountains and roads, all citizens of this district, *who are not subject to conscription*, are called upon to organize themselves into independent companies of mounted men, or infantry, as they prefer, arming and equipping themselves, and to serve in that part of the district to which they belong.

2. When as many as ten men come together for this purpose, they may organize by electing a Captain, one Sergeant and one Corporal, *and will at once commence operations against the enemy*, without waiting for special instructions. Their duty will be to cut off federal pickets, scouts, foraging parties and trains, and to kill pilots and others on gunboats and transports, attacking them day and night, and using the greatest vigor in their movements. As soon as the company attains the strength required by law, it will proceed to elect the other officers to which it is entitled. All such organizations will be reported to these headquarters as soon as practicable. They will receive pay and allowances for subsistence and forage, for the time actually in the field, as established by the affidavits of their Captains.

3. These companies will be governed, in all respects, by the same regulations as other troops. Captains will be held responsible for the good conduct and efficiency of their men, and will report to these headquarters from time to time.

By command of Major General Hindman.

R. C. NEWTON, A. A. General.

As before stated, the telegraph line was pushed forward until it finally extended to Batesville, and easterly to within about ten miles of Jacksonport, but for some unknown reason it was difficult to communicate with Halleck at Corinth, through the military headquarters at St. Louis. Halleck complained that he was almost entirely ignorant of the movements of Curtis, although frequent dispatches were sent to him, while orders mentioned by the former as having been

telegraphed to the latter, were by him never received. Telegrams were unaccountably delayed, and the interests of the public service were somewhat embarrassed in consequence. Curtis had desired the privilege of raising ten regiments from the loyal Arkansans, but it was not until a short time before the departure of the army from Batesville, that he received the requisite authority. It was at this time that the rebels first enforced their conscription, and hundreds of loyalists formed themselves into companies for the purpose of resistance. Many of these companies came within the Union lines and tendered their services to the national government. An incomplete regiment was speedily formed, and, upon the request of all the officers of the regiment, Lieut. J. C. Bundy, of the Kane County Illinois cavalry, was appointed Lieutenant Colonel and placed in command. The regiment was mustered into the service for the period of six months. It was principally composed of men who left families at home, at the mercy of the rebels, to engage in the defense of the old flag and the national constitution and government. The sacrifices and patriotism of these Arkansas soldiers cannot be too highly appreciated. Everywhere, except in the immediate vicinity of the Union army, a reign of terror existed. The rebel conscription was rigidly enforced, and to be suspected of loyalty to the national government was an offense often visited with death, or the most barbarous punishment. The savage barbarities practiced upon loyalists and Union soldiers were numerous and well authenticated, while many instances must have escaped notice. At Grand Glaize, near Searcy, a young man from the north fell into the hands of the rebels. He was accused as an abolitionist, and was tortured during the greater part of one day. The rebels placed a rope around his neck and repeatedly hung him until life was nearly extinct, all the time threatening him with death. He was finally placed in a box of such a size and shape that he could neither sit, comfortably stand, nor lie down. Slats were nailed over the box to give him air, and thus caged in a way that would have been cruelty to a brute, he was left upon the

river bank to await the arrival of a steamboat. In the meantime an old woman went to the box and exerted all her feeble strength to force it into the river, with the fiendish object of drowning the prisoner, but her physical power was unequal to the accomplishment of her purpose. Upon the arrival of a boat, the box, with the prisoner, was placed on board, labeled "an abolitionist," directed "to Abe Lincoln," and sent to Memphis. What was the subsequent fate of the prisoner is unknown. These facts were related by loyal eye-witnesses who dared not interfere in behalf of the prisoner. A soldier of Osterhaus' division, Corporal Tossen, of company "C," 3d Missouri infantry, swam across Little Red River from his encampment. While resting upon the opposite bank, naked and defenceless, in sight of his comrades, he was shot by guerrillas, and barbarously beaten and mangled with clubs, dying soon afterwards from his wounds. The deliberate attempt at poisoning Union soldiers at Mudtown, scalping and shooting of the federal dead and wounded at Pea Ridge, the treatment of the surrendering foraging party from Osterhaus' division near Searcy, the subsequent firing upon a hospital boat on White River, filled with sick and wounded Union soldiers, and after its character had been fully made known; the savage malignity of the system of guerrilla warfare planned by Hindman, and of his letter to Curtis and his subsequent plan to cut off "the retreat" of the latter through Arkansas, all evince a blood-thirsty, vindictive barbarism, rarely found in a people with pretensions to civilization.

In the subsequent history of the war in Arkansas, it is a well attested fact that loyal Arkansans, captured by guerrillas, have been lashed to trees, and their finger and toe-nails extracted, one at a time, with bullet-moulds. Has savage barbarity, or the oft cited horrors of the inquisition ever exceeded the cruelty of tortures such as these? Volumes might be filled with the cruelties practiced by rebels in the South-west during the war. The outrages perpetrated by Forrest at Fort Pillow by Quantrell, at Lawrence and Baxter's Springs, by Todd, Anderson and others in Missouri and Arkansas, were far

from being exceptional. It is not wonderful if in the course of a long war, replete with such outrages by the enemy, Union troops may have been tempted to retaliate, but have Union troops ever, in the moment of wildest excess, perpetrated such enormities, or sunk to such degraded and brutal barbarism? Civil wars are proverbial for their ferocity, but, to the honor of the Union army be it said, such conduct has been very seldom imitated, and never equaled by Union soldiers, and the public opinion of the Union army has uniformly condemned such iniquity.

Such were the men who constituted the rebellious element in Arkansas, the self-styled "chivalric sons of the South;" and men who preferred to leave their wives and families surrounded by such neighbors, and fight under the old flag rather than join the fortunes of the rebellion, then in its most prosperous days, were certainly deserving of great glory for pure and undoubted patriotism, and for a spirit which sacrificed almost every personal interest for the honor and welfare of their country.

Upon the withdrawal of Steele's command from Jacksonport to Batesville, the regiment of Col. Brackett was left encamped upon the west bank of Black River, at the junction of that stream with White River, as an outpost of the army, and to observe the town of Jacksonport and the movements of rebels in that vicinity and on White River. Brig. Gen. Benton's headquarters were established at Sulphur Rock, on the road from Batesville to Jacksonport, ten miles from the former and sixteen miles from the latter place. Besides the troops at Sulphur Rock, his command extended over the regiment of Col. Brackett.

A rebel gunboat had made its appearance in White River. It was called the "Maurepas," a name commonly corrupted "Mon Repose," by the Union army. It mounted three heavy guns of the largest calibre, and was commanded by Capt. Fry, of the rebel navy. On June 2d it made its appearance at Jacksonport, supported by cavalry on the river banks. Col. Brackett removed his camp two and a half miles back

from the river, in anticipation of its arrival. He was unwilling to attack it with artillery while at Jacksonport on account of the danger which would ensue to the women and children in the town, and in fact no opportunity was afforded for an attack, as the boat remained protected by a point of land extending into the river, and which shielded it from the carabines of the cavalry. The gunboat burned all the cotton found near White river, and shelled the woods where Col. Brackett's regiment had lately been encamped, after which it again moved down stream.

Several plans were proposed for the capture of this vessel. An attempt was to be made to seize her as she lay under the high banks at Des Arc. A detachment was to proceed to the mouth of Bayou Des Arc, there station artillery, and send infantry across to attack and board the boat. The guns were entirely exposed and could not be fired at an object above their level, and the boat, a very unwieldy affair, was only iron-plated about the boilers. After being captured, she was to have been, if possible, taken up the river to Jacksonport. A subsequent plan was arranged for her capture by a simultaneous attack from both sides of the river. One obstacle to the navigation of White River would thus have been removed, and perhaps made an auxilliary to the movements of the Union army. But all these plans proved futile, for the reason that the boat kept moving and out of the reach of the national troops. She was subsequently destroyed in the great naval engagement of Fitch's expedition on White River, at St. Charles.

On June 12th, Col. Brackett reported an engagement at "Waddell's farm," as follows :

HEADQUARTERS 9TH REGIMENT ILLS. CAV.. CAMP TUCKER, NEAR }  
 JUNCTION OF BLACK AND WHITE RIVERS, ARK., June 12. }

GENERAL:—

It gives me great pleasure to report to you that I have this afternoon had a most successful fight with the rebels.

This morning I sent out a train of thirty-six wagons, for the purpose of getting corn and bacon at the Waddell farm, near Village Creek, Jackson County, Ark. I sent as an escort, parts of four companies of the 9th regiment of Illinois cavalry, under Major Humphreys. The farm is about five miles from Jacksonport, and when the train was within about half a mile of it, my men were suddenly at-

acked by a large force of the enemy. Maj. Humphreys, seeing his command was too weak to cope with the rebels, sent word to me to join him as soon as possible with reinforcements.

I started with two companies of Bowen's battalion, with two small howitzers. I found the train halted in the road about half a mile from the farm, and the enemy in strong force in front, and shooting at my men, and occasionally exchanging shots. I removed the fence on the right and unlimbered the howitzers in the road. I then formed companies A., M., K., and C., 9th Illinois cavalry under Capts. Burgh, Knight, Cameron and Blakemore, on the right in a cotton-field, with orders to charge the enemy as soon as Lieut. Madison, of Bowen's battalion should fire the howitzers, which were supported and defended by Capt. Williams and Lieutenant Ballou, of Bowen's cavalry battalion. I fired two shots directly into the enemy, when the four companies of the 9th Illinois cavalry rode forward with drawn sabres, and made the finest charge I ever witnessed. The enemy was scattered in every direction, being completely routed and broken up. I continued to fire several rounds into Waddell's building, and then advanced upon it with Capt. Blakemore's company.

I then filled my thirty-six wagons with corn and bacon, and returned to this place, arriving after dark.

Capt. Cameron behaved with the greatest gallantry, as did his company, K., 9th regiment Illinois cavalry.

I must particularly recommend to your notice the conduct of Maj. Humphrey, Capts. Cameron, Cowan, Blakemore and Perkins, Lieuts. Benton, Hillier, Shear, Conn, Butler and Smith, and 1st Sergeant Clark, of the 9th Illinois cavalry, and Capt. Williams, Lieuts. Madison and Ballou, and 1st Sergeant Miller, of Bowen's cavalry battalion.

My thanks are due to Surgeon Jas. A. Brackett, for his care of the wounded, and to Bat. Adj. Blackburne, Quartermaster Price, and Sergeant Major George A. Price, 9th Illinois cavalry.

The enemy lost twenty-eight in killed, wounded and prisoners. Private Futrel, of Hooker's company, one of the prisoners, is mortally wounded. Captain Shuttleworth, in command of Hooker's company, is also wounded.

My loss was one taken prisoner by the enemy and twelve wounded, all of them of company K., 9th Illinois cavalry.

I am very respectfully,

ALBERT G. BRACKETT, Col. 9th Ills. Cav., Com'd'g.

Although the army had fallen back from Little Red River to the vicinity of Batesville, the intention to capture Little Rock was not abandoned. At first it was hoped that supplies and reinforcements would be received overland from Missouri, and that, as soon as the roads became passable, the army might advance. But the difficulties of the Searcy route were made evident, and it was not likely that the army would be able to move on the rebel capital over the ground they had already occupied on Little Red River.

But at this time the city of Memphis had been captured and was occupied by a large Union force. The national gunboats controlled the Mississippi from Cairo to Vicksburg, and it was hoped that they would soon be able to penetrate the White and Arkansas Rivers, and ascend to Jacksonport and Little Rock. The Mississippi, which, upon the arrival of the army at Batesville, had spread itself for miles over the low alluvial country east of Jacksonport, had resumed its ordinary channels, and with a view to changing his base of operations either to Memphis, on the Mississippi, or to Jacksonport, Augusta, Des Arc, Duvall's Bluff, or some other point on White River, Curtis had directed reconnoissances down the latter stream soon after the return from Little Red River. He hoped, if possible, to make Duvall's Bluff a base of operations. Halleck, and the chief quartermaster in St. Louis, had telegraphed information to Curtis, that five light draught steamboats, loaded with supplies and convoyed by gunboats and a large force under command of Col. Graham N. Fitch, had left Memphis and would ascend White River to Jacksonport. Curtis was directed to telegraph immediately of their arrival, to which he replied, that he would be very happy to do so when that event occurred. But intelligence was received of the failure of the expedition. A terrible land and naval engagement had occurred at St. Charles, on White River, resulting in a federal victory and the capture of the rebel fort. But the gunboats had been injured, and the steam drum of the Mound City had been penetrated by a shot and the crew, terribly scalded by the escaping steam, had either died on the boat or leaped into the water, where many of them were shot by the merciless rebel marksmen. In consequence of these injuries, the expedition had returned to Memphis. But it was proposed to renew the attempt to reach Jacksonport with the fleet, and the expedition was refitted under Col. Fitch, and again advanced up White River.

It became necessary for the army of Curtis to advance and meet the expedition. Jacksonport was re-occupied by the Union troops, and the pontoon bridge was laid over Black

River, affording means for the entire army to cross. General Cadwallader C. Washburn's command, Col. Bell's 13th regiment of Illinois cavalry, Col. Clayton's 5th Kansas cavalry, and all other troops belonging to the army, and which had hitherto been in Missouri, were ordered to the front.

The troops were rapidly transferred from Batesville to Jacksonport. On June 25th, Curtis, with most of the remaining troops, moved from the former and arrived at the latter place. A small garrison, under Lieut. Col. W. D. Washburn, was left for a few days at Batesville, but it was immediately menaced by a superior rebel force, and the Union picket at Heath's Ferry was attacked and one man was killed. Col. Washburn fortified himself in the court house and jail and prepared to defend his position. Meanwhile most of the sick of the army were placed in ambulances, on beds of cotton, and removed to Jacksonport, and those who were too sick to be moved in this manner were placed upon flat boats and floated in safety down White River to the same point. When the removal of the sick had been accomplished, Col. Washburn was ordered with his command to join the army. On June 30th he evacuated Batesville, and on the 2d of July the 15th regiment of rebel Texans occupied the town and destroyed the Union telegraphic communication with St. Louis, which had been maintained until the last moment by our army.

Curtis had now become satisfied that he would be compelled to move down White River as far as Augusta or Clarendon to meet the gunboat expedition, of which he could learn nothing. In case he did not meet the gunboats he would endeavor to reach Helena. Halleck had hitherto directed the army to await the arrival of the gunboats. At the last moment, having learned the inability of Fitch to reach the army, he sanctioned the plan of Curtis and directed the latter to move down White River until he should meet the fleet from below.

With the evacuation of Batesville and the removal of the army to Jacksonport, terminated the second grand movement

of the army of the South-West. It had hitherto occupied positions far advanced into the enemy's country, first at Pea Ridge, and afterwards at Batesville, but resting upon the distant and insecure bases of Rolla and Pilot Knob. It was now to revolutionize its lines of communication, and after a long march receive its supplies from almost directly in front. It must pass through the enemy's country, and cease to communicate by land with loyal territory. It had advanced so far into Arkansas, that its most available assistance must come from the Mississippi River. The last overland supplies, enough it was hoped, for subsistence until a meeting with the fleet of Fitch, were received at Jacksonport. For a time all communication with loyal territory would cease. The army of the South-West would have no base of operations. It was attempting a new and dangerous movement, and one which had not hitherto been undertaken during the war. Surrounded by hostile territory, it must live entirely on its own resources and the country through which it might pass, until it should reach the gunboats on the White or the Mississippi Rivers.

The first object of the army of the South-West had been the expulsion of the rebel armies from Missouri, and this object had been attained. The secondary object, the capture of Little Rock and the restoration of Arkansas to the Union, had not thus far been accomplished. That it had not been done was due to the removal of the greater portion of the best troops to the army at Corinth, to impassable roads, swollen streams, and to the great difficulties which must at any time attend an overland campaign from Missouri over a long road and through a primitive country, without the aids of railroads or navigable rivers, and which difficulties had been greatly increased by the hot and sickly season which had now arrived. It was hoped that a change of base to some point on lower White River, or on the Mississippi, might result in easier movement, by river and railroad, greater safety to the army, and the earlier capture of the rebel State capital.

But other important objects had been attained. By standing in the enemy's country in advance of Missouri, the army of the South-West had long protected that State from invasion, and assisted in more firmly riveting the ties which bound it to the Union. At the same time, by occupying the attention of the enemy west of the Mississippi, forcing him to ceaseless vigilance and the holding of forces in Arkansas to protect his country from further invasion, valuable co-operation and assistance was rendered to Halleck, then conducting the important operations in the vicinity of Corinth. A large number of organized troops that would otherwise have reinforced Beauregard, were detained in Arkansas to operate against the army of the South-West, while the presence of a hostile force prevented the conscription of a vast number of men into the rebel army. The enemy was thus disabled from rallying and concentrating so overwhelming a force east of the Mississippi, as he might otherwise have done. The army of Halleck was possibly saved from the slaughter of a second Shiloh, while the paralysis of rebellion in Arkansas materially weakened its power in other quarters.

#### CHAPTER FIFTEENTH.

##### MARCH OF THE ARMY FROM JACKSONPORT TO HELENA—ENGAGEMENTS—ROUND HILL—TERMINATION OF THE CAMPAIGN.

The army had now arrived at Jacksonport. Composed almost entirely of raw and inexperienced troops, it had left Rolla and Otterville in mid-winter, traveled through a wild, desolate and mountainous country, in snow, mud, rain and frost, over swollen streams and rough roads, through all inclement exposure, to Pea Ridge and Cross Timbers. With the advent of spring, crossing the Ozark to the east, and turning south, it had penetrated the interior of Arkansas. It had become an army of veterans. Now, in mid-summer, it was to commence its two weeks tiresome march through a country widely different from any previously traversed. A low, alluvial country, mainly in the vicinity of large streams, with huge, rank forests, cavernous cy-

press swamps, vast fields of cotton and corn, canebrakes and plantations. Water would be often difficult to obtain. The weary soldier, thirsty and footsore, would now encounter the withering heat of a sun almost tropical in intensity. He would contend perhaps at the same time with hunger, thirst, and the diseases incident to a southern latitude and malarious country, and with a powerful rebel soldiery, inured to the climate, fighting on their own soil and in a region with which they were well acquainted, and struggling for imaginary rights and delusive prospects of victory, with all the ardor of real patriots defending a just cause from wrongful invaders.

Eastward of Batesville the road soon left the region of rolling, wooded hills, and entered the low, alluvial valley of White River. From Jacksonport to Helena, the country traversed was in all its essential features the same. A rich, rank soil existed throughout the region of bottom lands between White River and the Mississippi; a soil which was capable of the finest cultivation, and which constituted the best cotton region of Arkansas. The evergreen and "black jack" or scrub oak woods of the Ozark, were followed by the cypress swamp and canebrake; the hardier vegetation of the hills by the thicker and richer luxuriance of southern low-land forests. The Virginia creeper, the wild passion flower, "Hercules club," prickly pear, cyprus, cane, pecan, China, white mulberry, live oak, chincapin, and magnolia trees marked the approach to a warmer climate.

On arriving in Jacksonport, Curtis established his headquarters in a large frame dwelling formerly the headquarters of Van Dorn. Jacksonport, situated at the junction of White and Black rivers, was an ill-looking village of strong rebel proclivities. In former times, as the virtual head of navigation on White River, it had been a place of considerable commercial importance. But it was now nearly deserted save by the spiteful and malignant rebel women. All commerce was dead, while the wreck of a large steamboat, sunk in the channel opposite the town, seemed a monument of by-gone prosperity under the old Union.

During the five days of occupancy by our army, the rebels made repeated attempts to burn the town, all the time asserting it to be the work of the vandal "feds." They so far succeeded as to destroy a large frame livery stable and several adjoining buildings.

On June 27th a foraging party from the 3d Iowa cavalry, with a train of wagons, was attacked by a large force of rebels at "Stewart's Plantation," in Jackson County. Colonel Brackett, with one battalion of his regiment, was sent as a reinforcement. His report of the engagement is as follows:

HEADQUARTERS 9TH REG. ILLS. CAV., CAMP, ON VILLAGE CREEK, }  
JACKSON COUNTY, ARK., June 28, 1862. }

CAPTAIN:—

Yesterday afternoon I received orders from Gen. Steele to send a force down White River to re-inforce the 3d battalion of my regiment, which I had sent out under Maj. Wallis on a foraging expedition, the train of the post quartermaster having been attacked by the enemy. Accordingly I started with the 2d battalion of my regiment, and shortly after overtook my train, which was returning without corn. I caused the train to go back, and joined both of my battalions together. At Stewart's plantation I learned that the enemy was near by, and I determined to attack him.

When a mile beyond Stewart's plantation, which is about six miles from this place, my advance guard, under Capt. Knight, came suddenly upon the enemy, and the fight commenced in earnest. I sent my companies forward, one after another, amid a continuous blaze of fire from the enemy, who were strongly posted among the trees and on the edge of a swamp. I tried several times to charge them, but they were so well posted, and the underbrush was so thick, that I was unable to do so, notwithstanding my men were close upon them, some of them being within fifty yards.

I fought them in this way for at least half an hour, when seeing that I could not force them from their position, as they outnumbered me greatly, and it being dark, I gave orders to move back to a large cornfield, where I knew if they followed me I could cripple them, as they would not then have the advantage of their cover.

I got my men out in fine order, and upon reaching the turn in the main road halted, but the enemy had been so severely handled that they made no attempt to follow. It was now quite dark, when seeing nothing further could be done, I returned to this camp. As I left the woods the enemy retreated, leaving their dead men lying in the road, and to-day they have sent in a flag of truce to obtain permission to bury them.

On my way in, I met an artillery and infantry force going out under Brig. Gen. Benton, but it was too dark for him to travel, and he halted.

My officers and men are entitled to great praise, and fought with the most perfect coolness and determination. I had with me Majs. Humphrey and Wal-

lis, (wounded,) Capts. Gifford, Chidister, Knight, (wounded,) Cameron, Blake-more, and Booth; Adj. Stevenson; Battalion Adj. Blackburn, (wounded,) Lieuts. Harrington, Shear, Ellsworth, Bayley and Shattuck, all of the 9th Illinois cav-alry.

My guide, William McCulloch, Sergeant Maj. Price, Bat. Sergt. Majs. Knight and Roberts, and chief bugler Fritson, also behaved admirably.

I was struck with a rifle ball in the breast, which sickened me for a time, but I soon recovered from its effects sufficiently to give orders.

My wounded men were well cared for by Surgeon James W. Brackett and Asst. Surg. Charles Brackett, for which they have my thanks.

My loss was thirty-three officers and men killed and wounded. Seven horses killed and twenty-four wounded. The loss to the enemy, under Col. Matlock, was severe.

I am sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

ALBERT G. BRACKETT, Col. 9th Ills. Cav.

To Capt. J. W. Paddock, Asst. Adj. Gen. Steele's Div., Curtis' Army.

In the 3d Iowa cavalry foraging party, one officer and three men were killed and four men wounded. Five dead rebels were seen on the field.

In consequence of the attack upon this foraging party, and to prevent future mishaps the General issued the following order, which also compliments Lieut. Col. Cramer, and which was intended to prevent rapine and useless devastation on the line of march soon after followed by the army. But in the hurried movements of our troops through a hostile region, it was impossible always to prevent the destruction of property. Houses and cotton gins would inflame and be consumed apparently by spontaneous combustion, and the incendiaries were never discovered. Pressed by vigilant enemies and hurried by the necessity of reaching some point communicat-ing with supply depots, commanders found little time to de-vote to police regulations.

The rebels themselves burned all cotton on the line of march. At every plantation a smouldering heap or the re-mains of blackened bales, attested how well they obeyed their instructions to permit none of it to fall into the hands of the Union forces. It would have been of no use to an army with the march before it which the army of the South-West had undertaken. The responsibility for burned houses, by common report among soldiers, seemed principally to attach

to the German Division of Osterhaus, but it is probable that other troops were equally if not more culpable.

HEADQUARTERS, ARMY OF THE SOUTH-WEST, }  
JACKSONPORT, ARK., JUNE 28, 1862. }

[*General Orders,* }  
No. 28. }

I. The official reports having been but recently received of the skirmish near Searcy, on the 19th of May, ultimo, the General Commanding is thus late in calling attention to the gallant conduct exhibited on that occasion by Lieut. Col. J. F. Cramer, of the 17th Missouri infantry. Col. Cramer had command of the reinforcements, which he conducted in a military and successful manner, driving the enemy and relieving our friends.

II. Officers sending foraging expeditions beyond the outer pickets, will see that they are accompanied by strong escorts, if possible with howitzers or other artillery, properly commanded and instructed. The commander of the escort will in all cases exercise great precaution against surprise, keeping out advance, rear, and where possible, flank guards while on the march, posting videttes while loading the train, and at all times keeping the main body of the escort together and on the alert.

III. It is reiterated that any officer or soldier of this army, detecting a citizen or a soldier in the act of setting fire to any building, or out-building, or cotton in bales or in the gin, or destroying record books, or personal property of value of any sort, is hereby authorized and commanded to fire upon him at once.

By command of Maj. Gen. Curtis.

H. Z. CURTIS, Asst. Adjt. Gen.

It was the plan of Curtis to move rapidly down the east bank of White River and, if possible, to effect a junction with the gunboat flotilla on lower White River. The stream had fallen so low that steamboats could not reach Jacksonport. It was hoped that they might be found at Augusta, thirty-five miles below. If not found at this point, it was contemplated to continue the march down the river, and possibly to Helena on the Mississippi. Succeeding events directed the army to the latter point.

The Mississippi being now in possession of the federal fleet as far down as Vicksburg, the route by the east bank of White River offered considerable advantages. It had been reported as a difficult if not impracticable route. The Cache River bottom which would necessarily be crossed, was said to be impassable for heavy trains and artillery. But the advance on the west bank had already been tested and was liable to similar objections. The enemy could receive no considerable

reinforcements from the east. Their force east of the river above Des Arc and in front of Curtis, numbered about two regiments. On the west bank they could command a much larger force, but the stream could not readily be crossed by any considerable number of troops without boats or pontoons, and these the rebels did not possess. The stream which had once already served as a similar protection on the north to the rebels occupying the greater part of Arkansas, would now constitute a defensive ditch on the west to the army of the South-West, very difficult for the enemy to cross in large force, and behind which the army could in comparative safety attain a position much nearer Little Rock, and open water communication with Memphis and St. Louis.

Hindman issued a flaming proclamation setting forth that the Yankees under Curtis, no longer able to maintain their position in Arkansas, were "in full retreat" to join their gunboats on the Mississippi. "This might be prevented if every man would but do his duty; turn out with every and all possible weapons, attack the invader in front and on the flank, hover upon his rear, cut off his foraging parties and his stragglers, give him no rest and 'no quarter'! Let every tree conceal a Confederate soldier, every canebrake prove a deadly ambush." The spiteful venom of the proclamation was its distinguishing feature. The impotence and inability of Hindman to execute his threats were well-known, and his words were devoid of terror to the veterans of Pea Ridge. The rapid movements of the army prevented any formidable concentration of the enemy even had his force been sufficient to venture upon a general engagement.

The division of Steele had been encamped at the front south of Jacksonport. On the march which ensued to Clarendon, Steele's division took the advance, and the division of Carr brought up the rear, the division of Osterhaus occupying the centre. Headquarters of the Commanding General, Quartermaster and Commissary trains, the Provost Marshal General's command and troops attached to headquarters moving on the centre.

Two rebel regiments had been reported in the front. On July 2d, a Union force under Col. Hovey and Lieut. Col. Wood, of the 1st Indiana cavalry, attacked and defeated a rebel force six hundred strong, at "Pickett's farm." There was no Union loss. The enemy lost twelve killed.

On July 2d, Curtis left Jacksonport, and the army commenced its march. Many of the sick were placed in the boats which had been brought down White River from Batesville. These boats were guarded by a detachment of the 13th Illinois infantry, commanded by Capt. Wadsworth. Three miles above Grand Glaize, on July 4th, the enemy fired on them from the west bank of White River. The hospital flag was displayed, and the sick were exposed to view. The enemy were told the nature of the craft, and as a last resort a surrender was proposed. But the enemy paid no attention to these demonstrations, and continued firing volley after volley into the boat. The vessel was run ashore and all that were able, escaped, but five or six of the invalids were unable to leave their cots. These remained on the boat, which finally floated beyond the range of rebel bullets. Several of the sick were wounded and one died of his wounds. Such were the legitimate results of the barbarous system of warfare adopted by the chivalric rebel Hindman.

After three days hot, dusty marching through huge forests and cypress swamps, past cotton and corn-fields, and large plantations, Curtis arrived in Augusta on July 4th. A salute was fired in honor of the day, and the Commanding General encamped in a grove on the river bank below the town. The face of the country traversed, indicated the obedience shown by the population to the laws of the so-styled Confederacy in relation to the cultivation of land. Cotton fields were generally devoted to the cultivation of corn, and the usual ratio of the production of these staples was probably reversed. Perhaps five acres of corn were being cultivated to one of cotton. The rebels were endeavoring to make themselves independent in matters of subsistence.

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.