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

BY SAM'L PRENTIS CURTIS,

LATE LIEUTENANT AND AID-DE-CAMP TO MAJOR GENERAL CURTIS.

CHAPTER THIRD.

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All commanders are very naturally disposed to speak as favorably as possible of their own cause and success, and as disparagingly as may well be of their enemies. This report of Price puts as favorable a view as could well have been done upon his retreat. Although abounding in false statements and misrepresentation, in the way so common with rebel Generals, it is withal a tolerably correct statement. Some of its erroneous points may be briefly mentioned.

His statement that Missouri had been admitted as an equal member of the Confederate States, was always claimed to be truth by the rebel government. After the Missouri state convention, elected more especially to consider the subject, had decisively refused to secede, a small and fugitive rebel fraction of the state legislature, a body elected before the rebellion, and with only limited powers, in no way as great as those of the convention, assembled within the lines of the rebel army at Neosho, a remote and obscure point in the extreme south-

western corner of the state, and undertook to declare Missouri out of the Union and in the Confederacy, when nearly the whole of its territory was held by the Union army. This step was necessary among the rebel leaders, to give their cause in Missouri even a color of law among their ignorant populace and soldiers. Right or wrong they would adhere to it. But were secession legal, under such circumstances it would be absurd to claim such action, by such a contemptible and illegal body, to have been that of the people of the state of Missouri, when entirely unratified by them, in the face of the contrary decision of their sovereign convention, and more especially when so contrary to all previous and subsequent action of the state.

The loss suffered by Price, of guns, stores, &c., before reaching Cassville, he may have considered as "unworthy of mention in any respect;" but it is not true, as he impliedly states, that he was not attacked until reaching Cassville. Neither is it true that the two armies were greatly unequal in numbers. It is difficult to perceive in what manner he could have repulsed his enemy "upon every occasion with great determination and gallantry," when that enemy was continuously driving him in a headlong flight to Arkansas. His exceedingly modest estimate of his own loss, may be true, but is more probably false. We may suppose that the commander of a fugitive and closely pursued army, may not very accurately be able to know the loss of an enemy, when he has been constantly driven before that enemy for nearly two hundred miles, never once even holding a contested point, or possessing any of the usual means by which commanders estimate the loss of their foes. We know in this instance the light nature of the Union loss, and when General Price informs us that he "knows" it "to be ten times as great" as his own, we may know that he utters a deliberate falsehood.

On March 6th, 7th and 8th, was fought the battle of Pea Ridge, by the rebels called Elkhorn, of which, the official reports are given, as furnishing the best and most accurate account of that terrible contest.

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