

the view. Our men, unable to use artillery, but played on to some extent by the enemy's artillery on the hills on the other side of the river, captured the entrenchments, drove the enemy out of the town, took a number of prisoners and held the battle field while the enemy retreated to Nashville, 18 miles away, pursued by our cavalry. The Confederate loss was enormous. We had less than 20,000 engaged, practically only infantry. Lee's corps, except Johnson's Division, was still behind, coming up from Columbia. Our loss in a few hours fighting was 5500 in killed and wounded, among whom were five Generals killed on the field and eight wounded.

General Hood moved his army up to within three or four miles of Nashville, Dec. 2nd. or 3rd., and there took position facing the city and entrenched. What he could have expected or hoped for it is hard to conceive, as the Federal General, Thomas, was in Nashville with an army largely superior in numbers to Hood's, and receiving reinforcements which eventually raised that army to 80,000 men, while Hood's whole army was less than 30,000, and greatly disorganized by the terrible slaughter of officers of all ranks at Franklin.

The two weeks which ensued were, all things considered, quite pleasant for me. Gen. Hood was quartered in the house of Mr. John Overton. His staff established themselves in tents in the extensive grove appurtenant. Col. A..P. ("Pen") Mason <sup>and I</sup> shared a little tent and slept together. We had an abundance of good food, beef, mutton, pork, flour and potatoes. At the door of our tent stood a barrel of Robinson County whiskey for the solace and inspiration of our mess, which included the Chief Quartermaster and

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the Chief Commissary of the army. The weather was clear but very cold, and several times during the night Mason has nudged me with his elbow and admonished fiercely: "Warm my back! You damn little rascal!" The night were more than once too cold for continuous sleep under our scanty covering, and I would get up and sit by the blazing fire outside while Charley, the colored cook, broiled me a beefsteak on the coals, and I ate it to the accompaniment of a tin cup of Robinson County. I was constantly in the saddle during the day, and I was in perfect health. There were several ladies staying at the Overton Mansion, two or three of them agreeable musicians, and the evenings were sociable and pleasant.

Well, at last Thomas having made all dispositions to ensure victory marched out December 15th. and attacked our lines. He was repulsed at every point. It seemed to me the fighting was rather tame. It died down at night fall and Gen. Hood and his staff returned to the Overton house. We were in the saddle by daybreak of the 16th., and while we waited at the house for the General to limp out and mount, the ladies appeared at the upper windows. Evidently they were just out of bed for they held the curtains across their persons up to their chins, and over those breastworks gave us their wishes and blessing. There was a general admonition to me "not to ride that white horse!"

The enemy began the attack pretty early in the day. He was repulsed all along the line for hours, but was steadily working around our left flank. I was considerably exposed, even before the rout commenced, carrying orders, etc., and once when a cannon ball spattered me and my horse with mud a ~~Memphis~~ Memphis Captain, whom I knew but whose name I have forgotten, called out: "Major they liked to have got you that time!"

Between four and five o'clock in the afternoon the enemy having completely passed our left flank, made a strong attack upon it, broke and rolled up our lines. A veritable rout ensued. All this was under the eyes of General Hood and his staff, and some attempt was made to check it, but he soon saw that it was hopeless, and he was swept off the field with the mass of fugitives. As he rode off he directed me to go back to General Cheatham, and direct him to rally as many men as he could on a hill which General Hood pointed out, and hold it at all hazards and cover the retreat. I found Cheatham and gave him the order, but efforts to carry it out were vain. Many years after the war I was standing at "Schneider's Corner" in Augusta, when I was accosted by a <sup>member of the Augusta Police</sup> ~~member of the Augusta Police~~, Sergeant Morgan, whom I knew fairly well. He said to me: "Major, I saw you on one occasion when I thought you were a perfect damn fool!" I said there were doubtless many occasions in my life when I was justly liable to that imputation, but what was the particular occasion he referred to. He replied: "It was at the battle of Nashville. You were dashing about on a white horse trying to stop the men. I said to myself 'what a damn fool! If I had that horse I would make a better use of it!'" Up to that interview I had not known that Sergeant Morgan and I had been comrades in arms.

The execution of General Hood's order had separated me from him and the rest of the staff, and I made no immediate effort to join him. Instead I dashed across country to the Overton house where I had left Lucius and my other horse in the morning. But Lucius was a seasoned veteran; he had seen how things were go-



ing, and had beaten a timely and orderly ~~retreat~~. The house was tightly closed and there was no sign of life except that Major Clare of the staff was raging out in front trying to communicate with his bride (Miss Hadley) whom he had married about a week before, and who was one of the ladies I have mentioned as staying at Mr. Overton's. He came to the conclusion that all had fled, his bride among them, and rode away. I, however, to make sure that Lucius was not there, <sup>rode</sup> ~~walked~~ to the back of the house, ~~walked~~, and then heard voices calling me from the cellar door, I dismounted and went down the cellar steps to the door where I was greeted with questions by the ladies--how was the battle going--what they should do, etc.. I hurriedly told them to get the protection of the wall next to the advancing Union troops as there was no more firing from our side. All this happened in less time than I have taken to tell it. I ran up the cellar steps and mounted. I had been aware that when I dismounted a man emerged from the cellar and held my horse while I went down the steps, but I had barely noticed him. As I returned to ride away he said very heartily: "Goodbye, Major! Good luck to you!". I was startled by the unmistakable Northwestern tone, and for the first time noticed that he wore the Union uniform. I have never had any express explanation of the incident, but I am quite sure that my surmise is correct: It is this: When we moved up rapidly to Nashville, after the battle of Franklin, we captured a number of "Safeguards," among them one at the Overton home. A safeguard is a detachment usually composed of <sup>two or three men</sup> furnished from an invading army to homes of the inhabitants of the invaded country to protect them from marauders of the invading

army. It is <sup>in</sup> not accordance with the laws of war to treat such captives as strictly as the ordinary prisoners of war. They are kept prisoners but have some privileges on parole. There were three such men at Mr. Overton's, where they had been kindly treated. I am quite sure my friend was one of them, and he generously abstained from putting me in a bad fix, as he might easily have done by leading my horse away while I was in the cellar. By the time I was again in the saddle it was too late to get back to the turnpike by which the army had retreated. The enemy had possession of that. So I rode down through the Overton premises and found a gate through which I could just squeeze on horseback, and thus got into the open country. By this time it was night fall and there was no chance, in the confusion, of reaching General Hood, so I continued on with the troops, and my first clear recollection is that I laid down to sleep on a cellar door in Franklin, holding my horse by the reins passed over his head. There I rejoined General Hood.

The final shots in this battle were the last I heard in the Great War between the States. While it lasted about four months longer, and while most of this time I was with the army in the field, it so happened that I was not in any engagement nor in sound of any.

Notwithstanding the rout of the left and center of our army at Nashville December 16th., it was in good order the next day. Indeed, Lee's corps, except Johnson's Division, had not been in the battle of Franklin, and was in better shape than the rest of the army--was not involved in the rout. It withdrew from the field in good order, and the next day, in a considerable engagement