XIV.—THE WILDS OF ARKANSAS.

Extremity and Population.—Secession.—The Indians.—Commencement of Hostilities.—The Battle of Pea Ridge.—Disastrous Gun-boat Expedition.—The march to Helena.—Battle of Bayou Cache.—Battle of old Fort Wayne.—Battle of Cross Hollows; of Cane Hill.—Battle of Prairie Grove.—Capture of Van Buren; of Arkansas Post.—Repulse of the Rebels at Helena. The march upon Little Rock; its Capture.—The State Redeemed.

Thackeray, upon his return to England from this country, was honored by a breakfast, given him by Dickens and others of the literati of London. The conversation turned upon America and the mother-wit of the common people. Thackeray was asked what was the wittiest thing he had heard during his tour. He replied:

"I was once steaming up one of the majestic Western rivers, fifteen hundred miles from the Atlantic coast, when I met a Western man who had just returned from the tour of Europe. I asked him how he liked England. He replied, hesitatingly, 'Why, I liked England very well
—very well indeed, in the daytime. 'In the daytime,' I rejoined, 'why was the difficulty in the night?' He answered very solemnly, 'I was always afraid to go out after dark lest I should step off!'"

The magnitude of this country exceeds all ordinary comprehension. Arkansas, which derives its name from an extinct tribe of Indians, and which is one of the new and but little known States of the Mississippi Valley, embraces an area of 52,198 square miles. It is considerably larger than Ireland, and about equal to the whole of England. The Arkansas River, which sweeps through its centre, takes its rise among the Rocky Mountains, and flows unobstructed two thousand miles before it empties its flood into the Mississippi, of which it is a tributary. The Mississippi, in its tortuous course, washes the eastern border of the State for a distance of nearly four hundred miles. The Arkansas River rolls its majestic flood through the heart of the State in a winding course of nearly fifteen hundred miles. In the year 1800 France was in possession of the whole of the vast region north and west of the Mississippi to the Pacific Ocean, and as far north as the British territory, excepting only the portions then occupied by Spain.

Jefferson and other far-seeing statesmen of that day were keenly alive to the importance that the mouth of the Mississippi, and the immense valleys watered by its western tributaries, should be under the exclusive control of the United States. After much diplomacy the country was purchased by the United States Government for fifteen millions of dollars. The whole country, which was then almost an unexplored wilderness, roamed over by painted savages, was called Louisiana. It has been cut up into the States of Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri, the greater part of Minnesota, Nebraska, Kansas, the Indian Territories, etc. Such a transfer of real estate was probably never before made since the creation of the world. Its possession by the United States was deemed a matter of vital importance to our national peace and prosperity. Napoleon said, when he had signed the articles of cession: "This accession of territory strengthens forever the power of the United States. I have now given to England a rival who will sooner or later humble her pride." Arkansas was received as a State into the Union in 1836.

At the commencement of the rebellion the population of Arkansas consisted of about 324,925 whites and 111,104 slaves. At the Presidential election of 1860, which called out nearly every available voter, the State cast 36,959 votes. This handful of men assumed that the State belonged exclusively to them, and that they had a right to withdraw the territory from the National Government, and transfer it to England, France, Spain, Mexico, or the Confederate rebels, as they pleased.

There was a strong Union party in Arkansas, composed of the peaceable and respectable classes of the people; but they were soon overborne by the madness of those reckless men who were determined at every hazard to break up the Government. On the 16th of January, 1861, the Legislature voted to submit the question to the people, whether they would call a Convention to act upon the subject of secession. The election was held on the 18th of February. The vote stood 27,412 for the Convention, 15,816 against it. At the election of delegates for this Convention the Union vote was 23,626, the secession vote 17,927, being a majority of 5699 against secession.

As one of the measures adopted to "fire the Southern heart," on the 8th of February a mob of rebels under military organization, but acting without either State or National authority, ascending the river in two steamboats from Helena, demanded of Colonel Totten, the United States officer in command, the surrender of the National arsenal at Little Rock. These desperate men, four hundred in number, seem to have overawed the Governor. Without the shadow of an excuse for the reasonable act—for the State had not then even pretended to secede—he demanded, backed by the bludgeons and the bowie-knives of this mob, the surrender of the arsenal. Colonel Totten had no force to resist the demand. Thus the arsenal, with 9000 stand of arms, 40 cannon, and a large amount of ammunition, passed into the hands of the rebels. Colonel Totten did every thing which his country could have asked of him under the trying circumstances in which he was placed.

After long debate the Convention, not being able to agree, adjourned on the 20th of March, referring the question of secession back again to the people. On the 12th of April South Carolina found her open fire upon Sumter. This brought matters to a crisis. Every man was compelled to take sides, for the nation or against it. The rebels in Arkansas were elate with joy. In reply to the demand from the National Government for a quota of troops to aid in putting down the rebellion Governor Rector replied:

"In answer to your requisition for troops from Arkansas to subjugate the Southern States, I have to say that none will be furnished. The demand is only adding insult to injury. The people of this commonwealth are freemen, not slaves, and will defend, to the last extremity, their honor, lives, and property against Northern meandacity and usurpation."

Twelve days after the fall of Sumter, on the 22d of April, the Arkansas rebels seized a fine marine hospital which the United States Government had built at Napoleon, near the mouth of Arkansas River. The Government had in store there one hundred and thirty boxes, containing one hundred and forty thousand ball cartridges, one hundred Maynard rifles, two hundred cavalry saddles, and five hundred sabres. These were destined for the National troops, two thousand in number, who were stationed along a line a thousand miles in extent to guard the frontiers of Arkansas and Texas.
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from incursions of the Indians. These military stores were seized by General Jones under instructions from Governor Rector.

Two days after this, on the 24th of April, Governor Rector sent Colonel Borland to capture Fort Smith, at the city of the same name, upon the Arkansas River, on the extreme western border of the State. The insurgents reached the fort in a steamer at 12 o'clock on the night of the 24th. Captain Sturgess, who was in command, apprised of their approach, left with his little garrison of two cavalry companies an hour before their arrival, taking with him the horses and all the stores he could remove, falling back upon Fort Wachita, in the Indian Territory. Fort Smith was one of the finest on the frontier. The rebels having seized it, with National property estimated at the value of three hundred thousand dollars, raised the Confederate flag with cheers for Jeff Davis.

The Convention was now hurriedly reassembled, and without waiting for the action of the people, on the 6th of May an ordinance of secession was passed, with but one dissenting vote. Commissioners were immediately dispatched to the rebel Congress in Montgomery, and on the 18th the State of Arkansas was declared no longer to belong to the United States, but to the Confederacy of Southern rebels. The passage of the ordinance of secession in the Convention was a solemn scene; and yet but few of those infatuated men were aware of the woes they were bringing down upon their land. It was three o'clock in the afternoon. The hall was crowded almost to suffocation. Profound silence prevailed as vote after vote was given, broken only by cheers when some well-known Union man gave in his adhesion to the cause of treason. When the result was announced a cheer arose which shook the building to its foundations. Thus the great crime was perpetrated which plunged thousands of the families of Arkansas into life-long woe.

West of Arkansas extends the Indian Territory, spreading over almost countless leagues and occupied by remnants of many Indian tribes. Their country embraces 82,073 square miles, being about equal to the whole island of Great Britain. The region had been divided out to the Cherokees, Osages, Quapaws, Sene- cas, Shawnees, Creeks, Seminoles, Reserve Indians, Choctaws, and Chickasaws. Their aggregate population amounted to 71,500. Some of these, through the labors of missionaries, were partially civilized; others were in a very savage state.

The Secession Convention had authorized the calling out of sixty thousand men to prosecute the war against the United States, and efforts were immediately adopted to bring the tomahawk and the scalping-knife of these fierce warriors to their aid. As early as the 29th of January, 1861, more than three months before the act of secession was passed, Governor Recotor wrote to John Ross, the veteran, well-educated Chief of the Cherokees, urging him, by every consideration he could present, to marshal his warriors under the rebel flag. The Indian Chief wrote a very dignified reply, declining to enter the war path against his brethren of the United States, from whom he declared that he had received only kind treatment. But the rebels were determined to drag the poor savages into the conflict.

On the 13th of May Colonel Kennedy, the rebel commissioner at Fort Smith, which was just on the borders of the Indian country, and which, as we have shown, the rebels had wrested from its feeble garrison, wrote again to John Ross, wishing to know explicitly "whether it is your intention to adhere to the United States Government during the pending conflict, or if you mean to support the Government of the Southern Confederacy." The reply of John Ross was noble. After stating that their relations were perfectly amicable with the United States, and that they had no grievances of which to complain, he adds:

"The Cherokees have properly taken no part in the present deplorable state of affairs. They have done nothing to disturb the cordial friendship between them and their white brothers. Weak, defenseless, and scattered over a large section of country, in the peaceful pursuits of agricultural life, without hostility to any, and with friendly feelings toward all, they hope to be allowed to remain so, under the solemn conviction that they should not be called upon to participate in the threatened fratricidal war between the United States and the Confederate States, and that persons gallantly tenacious of their own rights will respect those of others. Under existing circumstances, my wish, advice, and hope are, that we shall be allowed to remain strictly neutral. Our interests all centre in peace."

But the rebels were inexorable. As by the rigors of a conscription more merciless than the world had ever before known, they drove every man within their borders, capable of bearing arms, into their ranks, so they compelled the poor Indians to take sides. When these half-civilized men found that they must fight, many of them rallied beneath the banners of the United States.

On the 29th of January, 1862, General Earl Van Dorn took command of the rebel forces in the trans-Mississipi district, having his headquarters at Little Rock, the capital of Arkansas. He was preparing to invade Missouri, to co-operate with rebels there in compelling the State to secede from the Union and to unite with the Confederacy. To frustrate this purpose, General Halleck, in command of this Department, sent a considerable force, under General Curtis, down into the southwest corner of Missouri, where the rebels had already commenced their march of invasion. The two hostile bodies met near Springfield. The rebels were repulsed, and the patriots unfurled their triumphant banners over the court-house in the city.

The Confederate General Price retreated toward Arkansas. General Curtis hotly pursued him. There were sandry skirmishes between the rear-guard of the fugitives and the advance of the pursuers, until, after a chase of
seventy miles, it was telegraphed to Washing-
ton, by General Halleck, on the 18th of Febru-
ary:

"The flag of the Union is floating in Ar-
 kansas. General Curtis has driven Price from
Missouri, and is several miles across the Arkans-
sas line, cutting up Price's rear, and hourly
 capturing prisoners and stores."

The rebels made a brief stand at Sugar Creek,
but were speedily routed and driven headlong toward Fayetteville. Again they
offered resistance at Cross Hollows and at
Fayetteville, and again from each place they
were driven wildly, with loss of prisoners and of
stores. At Mudtown, one of the encampments
of the foe, the rebels, as they retreated, pois-
one the wells and the provisions which they
left behind. It was reported to General Hal-
leck that forty-two officers and men were thus
poisoned. Notwithstanding the exasperation
of our soldiers in view of such barbarity, they
did not wreak any vengeance upon the rebel
prisoners in our hands.

General Curtis was now in quite a wilderness
of country, many a weary league from the base
of his supplies at St. Louis on the Missouri. He had with him an army of about 10,500
men and infantry, with 48 pieces of cannon.
Anticipating that the rebels would concentrate
all their possible force to attack him, he selected
a strong position about fourteen miles east of Ben-
tonville to make a stand against whatever odds
might march against him. The four divisions
of his army were stationed at points to guard
all approaches, but from which they could be
easily rallied and united in case of an attack.

The 5th of March was bitterly cold and blus-
tering, and the ground was white with snow.
As General Curtis was engaged in writing,
scouts came hurried in with the information
that the rebels were approaching in force, evi-
dently prepared to give battle. Van Dorn had
concentrated an army of between 25,000 and
30,000 men, composed of troops from Missouri,
led by Price, bands from Arkansas, Louisiana,
and Texas, under M'Colloch, and a mass of In-
dians, whom they had compelled to join their
ranks, from the Cherokee, Chickasaw, and
Choctaw tribes, goaded on by Albert Pike.
These troops were gathered in the Boston
Mountains, a high range in the extreme north-
western part of the State.

Generals Sigel and Asboth were southwest
of Bentonville. The first dash of the foe was
against their little band. Sigel immediately
retreated upon Bentonville, and then, while
pressed by an overpowering force—often sur-
rounding him, in one of the most brilliant ex-
 ploits of this or any other war, slowly retired,
beating back the assaults of the foe on both
flanks and his rear for five-and-a-half hours,
until safely, and with all his baggage train pre-
served, he reached the reinforcements which
Curtis sent to his aid. Truly does Sigel say,
in his address to his soldiers:

"On the retreat from Bentonville to Sugar Creek, a dis-

Curtis rapidly concentrated the patriot army
upon a commandng swell of land called Pea
Ridge, on the banks of Sugar Creek. Van
Dorn, exulting in his immense superiority in
numbers, marched from Fayetteville to Ben-
tonville, leaving Pea Ridge some miles distant
upon his right. Near Bentonville he took a
detour to the westward with the main body of
his army, and while he made the feint of an at-
tack upon Curtis upon the south, he pressed
rapidly northward and gained, about eight
miles from Curtis, and in his rear, the only
road by which he could retreat to Springfield.
He now felt sure of his victims. Less than
ten thousand patriots, in a strange country,
with their lines of communication and their re-
treat cut off, were completely surrounded by
thirty thousand as desperate men as ever
plunged into the horrors of battle.

Curtis, fully aware of the arduous conflict
which was before him, prepared to meet the
foe, now rushing upon him from all sides, by
adopting all the precautions which military
skill and bravery could suggest. Parties were
detailed to fell timber to obstruct the approach-
es; earth-works were thrown up and positions
selected for the batteries. All the men worked
with a will, and as by magic the spacious en-
campment became strongly fortified. By the
middle of the afternoon of the 6th the four di-
visions were assembled on the selected field to
await the crisis of a battle whose result was
very uncertain, and the issues of which would
inevitably prove most momentous. The line of
the army extended three or four miles front-
ing Sugar Creek on the south, with the broken
plateau, called Pea Ridge, extending north-
ward in the rear. It had been supposed that
the enemy would attack from the south, as it
was not then known that the great mass of the
rebel army had swept around to cut off our re-
treat and to attack us from the north.

As soon as this movement of the enemy was
ascertained on the 6th a change of front became
necessary. While effecting this change intel-
ligence was brought that the rebels were ad-
vancing in force, having already commenced
their attack directly in our rear. It was then
about half past ten o'clock in the morning. It
was clear and cold, and not a breath of air swept
the ground, which was slightly whitened with
snow. The battle commenced on the right of
our column, and raged all day most furiously
through ravines and over ridges and into for-
est, with charges and counter-charges, rep-
ulses, and victories in a blending of terror,
confusion, uproar, wounds, and death which it
is in vain for any pen to describe. The Third
and Fourth Divisions, severally under the com-
mand of Colonels Carr and Davis, bore the
brunt of this battle.

The loss on both sides was severe. Van
Dorn had massed an immense superiority of numbers at this point, and threading deep gullies and penetrating thick underbrush, succeeded in driving back our right wing nearly a mile. Night closed the conflict. General Curtis thus sums up the result:

"The enemy ceased firing, and I hurried men after the caissons and more ammunition. Meanwhile I arranged the infantry in the edge of the timber, with fields in front, where they lay on their arms and held the position for the night. I directed a detail from each company to bring water and provisions. Thus, without a murmur these weary soldiers lay, and many of them slept within a few yards of the foe, with their dead and wounded comrades scattered around them. Darkness, silence, and fatigue soon secured for the weary broken limbs and gloomy repose. The day had closed on some reverses on the right, but the left had been unassailed, and the centre had driven the foe from the field."

General Asboth with his artillery rendered signal service, as did Colonel Osterhaus in a very gallant charge. Before the battle commenced the purity of the atmosphere was such that every object on the hills and slopes was visible. But the smoke of the conflict soon settled so thick and heavy that the whole scene was enveloped in sulphurous gloom, and the position of the batteries could only be discerned by the lurid flash at the moment of discharge. The dense masses of infantry were entirely obscured by the ever-thickening cloud. During the night the lines of the hostile parties were not more than six hundred feet apart. It was bitter cold, but no fires could be safely lighted lest the batteries of the enemy should open upon them; and the air was so still that
it was necessary to carry on conversation in whispers. The braying of the mules through the long hours of the night was painful to hear. Many of them had been without water for forty-eight hours, and without food for twenty-four.

The patriot commanders passed a sleepless night. Though Curtis kept up good courage and was sangwine of ultimate success, the superiority of the foe in numbers was so great that most of the officers, though prepared for a desperate fight, silently and anxiously awaited the dawn. The long-looked-for light at length appeared in the east; and the sun, like a fiery ball, shone portentously through the murky clouds. The enemy held the only road by which we could retreat. The woods and hills swarmed with their troops. They outnumbered the patriots three to one, and a thousand of our men had already fallen dead or wounded.

Soon after the dawn there was some skirmish firing, and at eight o'clock, as the cannoniers stood to their guns along the entire line, the fire was opened. Sigel arranged his batteries in a way which elicited the highest admiration from the most scientific observers. He soon had thirty pieces of artillery opening upon the enemy a fire which no human courage could endure. Canister and grape tore through the crowded ranks of the foe with awful destruction.

An officer in the regular army, who was a witness of this scene, writes:

“For two hours and ten minutes did Sigel's iron hail fall thick as autumn leaves, furious as the avalanche, deadly as the sneeze. One by one the rebel pieces ceased to play. Onward crept our infantry. Onward crept Sigel and his terrible guns. Shorter and shorter became the range. No charge of theirs could face that iron hail, or dare to venture on that compact line of bayonets. Again Sigel advanced his line, making another partial change of front. Then came the order to charge the enemy in the woods; and those brave boys, who had lain for hours with the hail and shot of the enemy falling upon them and the cannon of Sigel playing over them, rose up and dressed their ranks as if it were but an evening parade. And as the 'Forward' was given the Twenty-fifth Illinois moved in compact line, supported on the left with the Twelfth Missouri acting as skirmishers, and on the right by the Twenty-second Indiana. As they passed into the dense brush they were met by a terrible volley. This was answered by one as terrible and far more deadly. Volley followed volley; yet on and on went that line of determined men. Steadily they pushed the rebel force until they gained a new ground. Here the Confederate force broke in confusion and fled. The day was ours. And the battle of Pea Ridge was added to the already long list of triumphs clustering around the old starry flag.”

The rebels retreated precipitately through the gullies and ravines, pelting by round shot and shell from such batteries as could be brought to bear upon their rapidly-vanishing lines. Sigel pursued them some miles toward Keitsville, firing on them as they ran away. M'Culloch, a rebel of reckless daring and much military skill, fell in this engagement. His loss was greatly deplored by his comrades. The Indians, goaded on by Albert Pike, were roused, like wolves having once lapped blood, to demonic ferocity. They gratified their savage propensities by scalping the wounded; and it is said that it made no difference to them whether the scalp was peeled from the brow of friend or foe. All would alike count as trophies of their prowess around their camp-fires. The rebels complained that they were little efficient service; that they were bewildered by the deafening roar of battle. They had been accustomed to the rifle. They had heard the war-whoop. But when they saw 12-pounders running around on wheels, causing the forest to tremble with their thunderings, while shells shrieked through the air, prostrated large trees, and exploded with carnage which swept away whole platoons, their amazement passed all bounds. No power could hold them to the discipline essential in modern warfare.

The Texan Rangers were more fierce and savage even than the Indians. Probably a more desperate set of men never existed. The Richmond Whig speaks, with much complacency, of the Texans, "with their large, heavy knives, driving skulls in twain, mingling blood and brains and hair." This spectacle, the Whig amiably declares, "was not devoid of satisfaction."

The patriot loss in killed, wounded, and missing, as given by General Curtis, was 1351. The rebel loss has not been ascertained; but it must have been far more severe, from their crowded masses and the terrible accuracy and destructiveness of our fire. The rebels retired south of the Boston Mountains, to repair damages and to recruit their forces. General Curtis established himself at Keitsville, and received reinforcements from Kansas and Missouri. Then ensued for many weeks a series of marchings and countermarchings to battle the designs of the rebels. The story of these arduous campaignings through darkness and storms, traversing with weary footsteps wide and miry prairies, and fording swollen streams, can probably never be told.*

* These movements, though all-important, though accomplishing great results, though accompanied with the heroic endurance of fatigue, exhaustion, and death, were uneventful in those incidents which give so dreadful an interest to the carnage of the field of battle. By the middle of April General Curtis was marching through the State with the strifes of a conqueror. In that sunny clime the chilling winds of winter had passed away, and every where verdure and summer's bloom cheered the eye. Foraging and scouting parties were moving in all directions, sweeping vehemently before them every form of opposition. Curtis now sends for Little Rock, the capital of the State, on the Arkansas River. Leaving the Boston Mountains on his right he marched by the way of Salem and Batesville... At Bates-

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* For this narrative of the great victory at Pea Ridge I am indebted to the official reports of Generals Curtis and Sig. A. and of the subordinate officers, Colonels Jeff. C. Davis, Patellon, Washburn, White, and others; also to an admirable description given by an officer in the regular army; and a very minute detail from the correspondent of the New York Herald. I have also examined the rebel narrative given in the Richmond Whig.
ville he expected to meet a gun-boat expedition, which was fitted out at Memphis under Colonel Fitch, to descend the Missouri, and steam up the White River with supplies and reinforcements. But this expedition, consisting of three gun-boats and a transport, having on board the Forty-sixth Indiana Regiment, met with disaster, and failed to accomplish its object.

The boats successfully entered the White River, and had ascended the stream some fifteen miles, to a point near Saint Charles, when they encountered a concealed battery. Though the troops landed and captured the battery, it was not until a shot had pierced the steam-drum of the Mound City, filling the boat with scalding vapor, which drove the men into the river. Nearly every one was scalded. Out of a crew numbering 175 but 23 escaped uninjured. After the explosion took place the rebels fired upon the scalded men who were struggling helplessly and drowning in the stream.

The loss of the Mound City, and the necessity of sending two other steamers back to Memphis to convey the wounded there arrested the immediate progress of the expedition, though it subsequently reached its place of destination. The scene of suffering witnessed as these scalded men were collected is too painful to record. Awful has been the price of misery and of death through which our country has been redeemed from the assaults of rebellion. Thirty-seven of these unhappy men died on their passage to Memphis. This disaster and victory—for the batteries were taken, and White River thrown open—occurred on Tuesday, June 17, 1862. Among the many incidents of the disaster may be mentioned that a sailor by the name of Jones leaped, badly scalded, through one of the port-holes into the river. As he was swimming around to get to some one of the boats he received three gun-shot wounds—one in the leg, one in the shoulder, and one in the back. Still he kept aloft, and not being able to reach any of the small boats was swept down the rapid stream nearly half a mile, where he was taken on board the Lexington, and is probably still living.

The situation of Curtis was now very alarming. He was nearly destitute of provisions, far distant from his sources of supply, and surrounded by envenomed foes. To add to the embarrassments of this heroic leader it became necessary just at this time to concentrate all our forces for the siege of Corinth. Curtis received dispatches calling for ten regiments to be sent immediately, by forced marches, to Cape Girardeau. Without a murmur, though it must have been with deep pangs of regret, he yielded to a necessity which frustrated all his plans. But for this in a few days the flag of the Union would have floated over Little Rock, and Arkansas would have stood forth redeemed.

Curtis thus found himself with a very feeble band, altogether too weak to prosecute a vigorous war against twenty thousand rebels dispersed through the State, and in great danger of being surrounded, cut off from his base of supplies at Springfield, and starved into surrender. He therefore decided to move his army across the State to Helena, on the Mississippi. That river, then traversed above Vicksburg by our gun-boats, could be his line of communication with the North.

But such a march as this, through an almost pathless wilderness, where there were scarcely any opportunities for forage, and all necessary supplies were to be transported with the army; where forests were to be penetrated, vast plains traversed in the blaze of a July sun, and rivers forded or bridged; while guerrillas were hovering on his flanks, and a vigilant and daring foe, familiar with the country, was throwing every possible impediment in his way, and often gathering in strength to give him fierce battle, involved difficulties which required the highest qualities of genius and heroism to surmount. Even before the army commenced its march it was exposed at times to severe deprivation for want of food.

The distance to be traversed was nearly two hundred miles, and the march occupied about eighteen days. On the 24th of June Curtis abandoned his communications with Springfield, Missouri, which had been for some time his base of supplies, called in his guards, and commenced his adventurous march. At Jacksonport, twenty-five miles from Batesville, where the Big Black River enters into the White, a delay of five days occurred to make still more efficient preparations. He then again put his columns in motion, to push forward with the utmost possible rapidity.

There was a band of about twelve hundred rebels in front of him, to destroy the bridges, barricade the roads with trees felled by the forced labor of the negroes, to fire upon his trains from the cane-brakes as they could get opportunity, and to place every possible obstacle in the way of his advance. There were frequent skirmishes as our troops fought their way along, until, on the 7th of July, they encountered a force of six Texan regiments upon the banks of the Cache River, who were prepared to dispute our advance behind a blockade of fallen timber. But few have heard of the battle of Bayou Cache; and yet there was exhibited there military discipline and bravery which could not have been surpassed on the world-renowned arenas of Austerlitz and Waterloo.

Colonel Hovey, of the Thirty-third Illinois regiment, was ordered to open the road. Parts of four companies of the Eleventh Wisconsin, under Colonel Harris, were in the advance. Cauntiously they moved forward with one small rifle piece, belonging to the First Indiana cavalry, under Captain Potter. As this little band reached a turn in the road they came suddenly upon two Texan regiments of cavalry, with a regiment of infantry. Their first greeting was a volley of bullets, which killed five of our men
and wounded both Colonel Harris and Captain Potter. The fire was promptly returned from both musketry and the rifle-gun. But now, with loud yells, the rebels came rushing on in an impetuous charge. Our men fell back, but still pouring volley after volley into the ranks of the foe.

Hovey, who was at some distance in the rear, hearing the firing, and seeing the clouds of dust which rose above the trees and filled the air, pressed forward with the Thirty-third Illinois, and very sagaciously placed his men in ambush by the side of the road. Our overpowered troops, still firing as they retreated, were pursued by the rebels, who uttered loud yells as they rushed furiously forward. Suddenly there was poured in upon them a crash of musketry from the patriots in ambush which tumbled twenty-five of the foe from their saddles, and caused the whole column to real and stagger; and as volley followed volley from their concealed assailants the rebels broke and fled, utterly panic-stricken.

It was now about half past ten o'clock in the morning. Just then Colonel Wood, who had been sent fifteen miles from the camp to save a bridge from being destroyed at Bayou de Vieu, and which enterprise he gloriously accomplished, came up at full speed with the First Indiana. They were greeted with cheers, which added to the dismay of the disordered foe. Colonel Hovey rode up to Wood, exclaiming, "You will find the rebels down there, Colonel, thick enough. Pitch into them!" No second word was needed. With cheers the cavalry plunged forward, the horses leaping a
ditch four feet wide, from which the rebels had broken up the bridge. In the perilous leap some of the men were pitched headlong, and one horse had his leg broken. Rails were thrown into the ditch, and some steel rifled guns passed over. The cavalry was then brought into line of battle, the artillery in front drawn by hand. The enemy was soon discovered advancing again with extended wings. At the distance of but two hundred yards we opened upon them with a terrible fire of canister. As round after round tore their ranks again the rebels fled. Onward rushed the pursuers. In the enthusiasm of the moment the officers seized the drag ropes, and thus aided in the impetuous chase. Several times the resolute rebels endeavored to make a stand, but such volleys as were poured in upon them no courage could endure. Thus they were driven, strewing the ground with their dead for a distance of three miles. The enemy lost in killed over a hundred in this running fight, while our loss was but five killed and forty-seven wounded.

Continuing his march through Augusta and Clarendon, the advance, under General Washburn, reached Helena, on the Mississippi, at nine o'clock in the morning of the 12th of July. The last day and night the troops accomplished a forced march of sixty-five miles.
the whole war there were but few adventures more heroic than this movement of the army of Curtis through the wilds of Arkansas.

The battle of Pea Ridge really decided the fate both of Arkansas and Missouri. The rebels made a few attempts to recover their lost ground, some of them quite desperate, but in all they were utterly baffled.

We had a small army of observation on the northwestern frontier of Arkansas, chiefly composed of Kansas troops under General James G. Blunt, and Mississippi and Iowa troops under General F. J. Herron. The rebel forces were stationed at several posts throughout Arkansas, under Generals Hindman, Roun, Rains, and Marma-duke.

On the 14th of July, just after Curtis had safely arrived at Helena, the rebels were concentrating their forces at Fayetteville for a raid into Missouri. Major Miller pounced upon them with a patriot force of about six hundred men, and after a severe conflict utterly routed and dispersed the Confederate band, which numbered about sixteen hundred.

Again, after some weeks of recruiting, the rebels concentrated their forces at Old Fort Wayne, near Maysville. Seven thousand had been gathered there. At a short distance, at a place called Cross Hollows, there were four thousand more, chiefly Texans, under Marmaduke. Blunt, with a small but well-tried Union force, was at Pea Ridge. Maysville is
about twenty-three miles west from Bentonville, and directly on the boundary line between Arkansas and the Indian Territory. Fort Wayne, which is the site of an old United States military garrison, long since abandoned, is about four miles south of Maysville, on the southern edge of a very beautiful prairie.

At seven o'clock in the evening of the 20th of October Blunt, with the Second and Third brigades of his command, consisting mostly of Kansas and Indiana troops, with two Cherokee regiments, left camp at Pea Ridge. Through all the dark hours of the night his troops pushed forward until they reached Bentonville, just before daylight in the morning. Here they halted until five o'clock in the evening for his train to come up. He was anxious to reach, if possible, the rebel encampment, so as to attack them by surprise, before the dawn of the morning. But there was yet before the troops a march of thirty miles, by night, through a strange land, rough, hilly, and densely wooded. The column started from Bentonville at five o'clock in the evening. When they had reached a point about three miles beyond Bentonville the supply train was directed to go into camp, and to follow on early in the morning, while the rest of the column pressed on as rapidly as possible.

About two o'clock in the morning the advance halted, that the long line, broken by
darkness and the incidents of the march, might close up. But the men were by this time so exhausted that, as soon as halted, they dropped by the wayside and were soon soundly asleep. After the delay of half an hour the column was again pushed forward. But by some mistake, in the darkness and the inevitable confusion of such a march, only the head of the column, consisting of about six hundred Kansas troops, was put in motion, while the rear still enjoyed their bivouac. These Kansas troops were under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Bassett. General Blunt, with his body-guard, was ahead. They reached Maysville just before daylight. But by some means the tidings that the Yankees were coming had penetrated the streets, and all the male inhabitants had fled to the rebel camp.

It was now five o'clock. As Blunt was making his arrangements to sweep rapidly across the prairie and attack the intrenched foe he learned, to his surprise, and greatly to his chagrin, that the main body of his little army was seven miles in the rear, and that he had only six hundred men to march upon a force estimated at seven thousand. A courier was dispatched to order the column up as rapidly as possible; while Blunt, with true heroism, resolved to move directly upon the enemy with the small force then at his command, and commence the attack with the utmost fieriness. He hoped thus to hold the foe there until the
main body should come up, and help him to a victory, and cut off the rebel retreat.

One of our ever firm friends, a negro, gave Blunt a minute description of all the rebel defenses, and having his freedom promised him served as a faithful guide. Dashing rapidly forward, these mounted troops swept over the prairies on which we have spoken, and drove the pickets into the edge of the forest, or timber, as it is there called. Cautiously entering the timber they advanced about a quarter of a mile, when they encountered the enemy, drawn up in line of battle at the edge of a pasture. Two howitzers were brought forward to within two hundred yards of the foe, and with great rapidity and precision a fire of shells was opened, which the rebels promptly returned, and instantly the entire line was engaged.

The rebels could not but observe our small force. They probably deemed it impossible that a little band of but six hundred men would have the audacity to attack them. They must have supposed that a larger force was somewhere concealed, or, with their accustomed daring, they would have rushed upon and overwhelmed the bold band which had thus bid them defiance. The Kansas troops were all ordered to dismount and advance on foot to within short range, where they opened upon the foe a terrific fire from their Harper's Ferry rifles.

Just then the Kansas Sixth, under Colonel Judson, and the Third Cherokee regiment, under Colonel Phillips, came upon the field. A charge was now ordered by troops who were without bayonets. Gallantly it was made. Five companies of the Second Kansas, under Captains Hopkins, Moore, Gardner, and Russell, all led by Captain S. J. Crawford, making up for the paucity of their numbers by the vehemence of their cheers, plunged directly into the centre of the hostile lines, drove the cannoniers from their guns, and dragged back the captured battery, consisting of four brass pieces, in triumph to their comrades. It was gloriously done. It was a deed of which Kansas may be proud, and the record of which should be transmitted to the children and the children's children of these brave men.

And now, when the victory over seven thousand men was virtually won by six hundred, the troops which, by mistake, had been left behind began gradually to arrive. The Sixth, under Colonel Judson, with foaming steeds, came galloping over the prairie. Rabbs's renowned battery, urged forward by its youthful commander, came thundering along, the horses on the full trot. The Eleventh Kansas, a splendid new regiment, forgetting exhaustion in their eagerness to reach the spot where the tempest of battle was raging, came on at the double quick. Rabbs's battery was, without a moment's delay, in position, hurling its missiles upon the foe.

But the enemy had now lost all courage, all hope, nearly all organization, and was flying in dismay. They were pursued for seven miles, leaving a trail of their dead behind. So utter was their desolation that they did not halt in their retreat until they reached Fort Gibson, on the Arkansas River, seventy miles from the scene of their rout at Old Fort Wayne. In this brilliant little campaign we lost but four killed and five wounded. The loss of the rebels is not known. Our own troops buried fifty of their dead. But for the accident by which a part of our force had been left behind the entire rebel force would have been captured or destroyed.

We have spoken of another body of the rebels, numbering four thousand, who were encamped at Cross Hollows, a place about twelve miles south from Fayetteville, or on the main road which leads to Ozark, on the Arkansas River. In the evening of the 27th of October General Toten started from Osage Spring, about seventeen miles west from Fayetteville, to capture or disperse this rebel band. He took with him about seven thousand men. A few hours later General Herron moved from his camp with about nine hundred men, mostly cavalry, by a detour, to get into the rear of the enemy, to cut off his retreat. It was a night of Egyptian darkness, and the air sharp with frost. The obscure road led through brushwood and forests, over hills and across torrents. Unexpectedly, just as the dawn was breaking, Herron came upon the foe before Toten had accomplished his march. Herron had apparently "caught a Tartar." He found himself, as the day was dawning, with an exhausted band of nine hundred men confronted by four thousand rebels on their own chosen ground. Taking a hasty survey of the position, he rushed upon the foe with as much enthusiasm as if victory were certain. The rebels were pushed across the river, driven back to their camp, where they made a stand for an hour and a half, when the patriot boys, with loud huzzas, made a charge with such abandon of courage that the foe broke and fled in quite a panic, leaving the camp in our possession. A large number of wooden barracks were found there, which the rebels had used for winter-quarters. These were burned to the ground, and the cooking utensils and most of the camp-equipment destroyed. Pushing on with their victory they drove the routed foe four miles into the Boston Mountains, capturing a portion of their train and taking a few prisoners. Fifteen dead bodies were picked up and buried, and the path along which the rebels retreated was sprinkled with blood. This feat was accomplished mainly by the First Iowa cavalry and by the Seventeenth Missouri. It is too difficult to account for the fact that in this brilliant affair we did not lose a man, and but five were wounded. One of these, however, subsequently died.

General Blunt, who was now commanding the First Division of the Army of the Frontier, encamped at Lindsay's Prairie, fifteen miles south of Maysville. On the 26th of November
he learned that the rebel General Marmaduke, with eight thousand men, was at Cane Hill, about fifteen miles west of Fayetteville. Hindman, with another large force of rebels, was on the march, expecting to effect a junction with Marmaduke on the 28th, when, with a united force, they contemplated another raid into the rich fields of Missouri.

Blunt, with characteristic promptness, decided to attack Marmaduke before Hindman could arrive. With his whole available force, consisting of three brigades, four batteries, and six mounted howitzers, he commenced his march at daylight on the morning of the 27th, with three days' rations of hard bread and salt. There was a march of thirty-five miles before them, over an extremely rugged road, before they could reach the foe. At 7 o'clock that evening the resolute band, exhausted by the rapid march, bivouacked within ten miles of the hostile encampment.

At 5 o'clock the next morning the march was resumed. Leaving the main road the army took by-paths so as to come upon the foe from an unexpected quarter on the north. No resistance was encountered until our troops were within half a mile of the rebel camp. The enemy had, however, received tidings of our approach, had called in his pickets, and was prepared for battle. Our advance consisted of about two hundred Kansas cavalry, commanded by Colonel Cloud, with two mounted howitzers under Lieutenant Stover, and Rabb's Battery, with General Blunt, his staff and body-guard. The main body of the army was still some miles in the rear, struggling against the innumerable impediments of the way.

In passing down a gorge, between two abrupt hills, the advance encountered a small force set to watch the passage, which they drove headlong before them. Emerging from this gorge they found the enemy drawn up in line of battle upon some elevated ground on their right with their guns in battery. Rabb's pieces were soon in position, and for nearly an hour, while the remainder of the patriot army was hastening forward, the hills trembled under the fierce cannonading which ensued. The rebels, not knowing how weak our advance was, did not venture from under cover of their guns. The fire from Rabb's Battery proved so destructive, and the danger was so great from other pieces of artillery coming up and taking position to rake them, that the rebels abandoned their first line of defense, and retreating to another ridge, three-fourths of a mile in their rear, where their reserves had been posted, again made a stand.

But more of our artillery soon came up, and our admirably trained gunners opened a fire so rapid, and with such accuracy of aim and destructiveness of execution, that again the foe was compelled to seek safety in flight. Retreating through the village of Cane Hill, for the third time they made a stand on a very commanding ridge, running east and west on the south side of the town. Here they concentrated their whole force. They were pursued with as much eagerness as they had fled. Blunt had just completed his arrangements for an impetus assault, of whose successful result he cherished no doubt, when to his deep disappointment he saw the foe on the full retreat toward the mountains in their rear. Tenney's Battery succeeded in rushing forward so as to throw a few shells into their ranks just as the fugitives were disappearing under cover of the forest.

Our men and horses were exhausted by the long march. But the rebels, both men and horses, were fresh, and thus they had the decided advantage in the race which ensued. The patriots, animated by the enthusiasm of victors, strained every nerve in the chase. The rebels were retreating through the Boston Mountains, on the main road toward Van Buren, on the Arkansas River. A participant in the battle thus graphically describes the scene:

"From one hill to another, through every deep ravine, up and down mountains and through the woods they fled, occasionally making a stand in some masked place, until charged and shouted out. Thus the battle continued, the retreat and the pursuit, from ten in the morning until dark. Almost every inch of ground was fought over for a distance of ten miles. Both armies were exhausted. Cavalry regiments disembowled and fought through the brush. Artillery horses dropped in their harness, and the men would seize the ropes and drag the guns forward. The closing scene was between sunset and dark. The enemy made a stand in a deep ravine. Our howitzers had not yet come up. Our men, impatient, made a charge, cavalrymen on foot, with sabres and pistols, infantry with bayonets, and Indians with rifles in the thickest of the woods. The cheering of the white men, the shrill war whoops of the Indians, the clashing of sabres, and the incessant roar of small-arms, converted this remote mountain gorge into a perfect Pandemonium. The enemy gave way and darkness prevented further pursuit. This ended the battle of Cane Hill.*"

The pursuit would probably have been still continued had not Marmaduke sent an officer galloping forward with a white flag, requesting the privilege of taking off their dead and wounded. Blunt states, in his official report, that though he was convinced that this was but a cowardly trick to enable them to make good their retreat and save their guns, still consideration for the fate of Colonel Jewett and others, who had fallen upon the ground the rebels then held, and fears lest they might be brutally murdered, induced him to respect their flag of truce.

Our loss was small. The enemy fired wildly in their hurried retreat, and most of their shot whizzed harmlessly through the air or buried themselves in the trees over the heads of our soldiers. But four were reported as killed, and thirty-six wounded. The enemy's loss is reported at seventy-five killed, but the numbers wounded can never be known, as they were borne away by their comrades. Blunt with his victorious command encamped at Cane Hill.

On the second of December, 1862, General Blunt received information that the united rebel forces in Western Arkansas, under the com-
mand of Hindman, were preparing to march upon him from their camp in the vicinity of Van Buren, which was distant but about twenty miles from Blunt's camp at Cane Hill, and that their approach might be expected any day. Blunt resolved, at all hazards, to hold his position. He accordingly sent dispatches for the Second and Third divisions of the Army of the Frontier to march to his aid as rapidly as possible. These troops were in the neighborhood of Springfield, Missouri, and had a march before them of one hundred and twenty-five miles. Herron took command of the two divisions, and with the promptitude which ever characterized this energetic commander, made his arrangements to set out immediately to join his imperiled comrades near Cane Hill. It was midwinter, which in that climate is often cold, wet, and stormy. Under the most favorable circumstances it would require several days to effect the junction.

On the night of the 4th Blunt received the intelligence that the enemy were but fifteen miles off, and were approaching by the mountain road. He sent out a small but resolute force to occupy some commanding position where the foe should be held in check until the reinforcements should arrive. Early the next morning, with his entire command, he took positions outside of the town, which would control the approaches from the south. Here he made every arrangement to meet the foe which prudence and courage could suggest. Detachments were sent out several miles to the east and southeast to watch the various roads leading toward Fayetteville, lest the rebels should steal by and get possession of that city, which was twenty miles in his rear. On the night of the 6th hour of General Herron's cavalry, consisting of the Second Wisconsin, First Iowa, Tenth Illinois, and Eighth Missouri, all under Colonel Wickersham, reached Cane Hill, and also brought the joyful intelligence that Herron himself, with the remainder of his command, was at Fayetteville.

About ten o'clock on the night of the 7th Blunt, while vigilantly waiting for the approach of the foe, received the alarming intelligence that a band of twenty-five thousand of the rebels had contrived, by some of the unknown paths of that wilderness region, to slip by him and were already in his rear. This was almost frightful news, for but eight miles northwest of Cane Hill, at a place called Rhea's Mills, there was a large supply train of four hundred wagons. The enemy, by a rapid movement, might perhaps seize this train, which would be a severe, almost an irreparable loss to the army. Or he might advance rapidly along the Fayetteville road, down which Herron was undoubtedly approaching in a southwesterly direction, and by an unexpected attack might so crush his command, or so cripple it, as to prevent him from furnishing any aid to General Blunt. This it subsequently appeared was Hindman's plan.

Blunt decided first to secure the safety of his train. The little hamlet called Rhea's Mills is at the eastern extremity of a beautiful rolling prairie, about eight miles long from east to west and two miles wide, called Prairie Grove. It was a highly-cultivated region for that country, interspersed with fertile farms and picturesque clumps of trees.

On Sunday morning at four o'clock Herron reached Fayetteville, having marched all night. Allowing his wearied soldiers but one hour's rest after their fatiguing march of one hundred and ten miles, he pushed rapidly forward, hoping to join Blunt by ten o'clock that day. When about six miles from Fayetteville he emerged from a mountain road upon the charming valley of Prairie Grove, then bathed in the light of the rising sun. A more beautiful morning never dawned upon this globe. Suddenly he saw a portion of his advance, consisting of the First Arkansas and Seventh Missouri cavalry falling back in great disorder. They had been attacked by a large body of rebel cavalry under Murmancke. In fact, the two armies of Hindman and Herron had unexpectedly, like two locomotives at full speed, come butting against each other.

The retreating cavalry were speedily checked and re-formed, though Major J. M. Hubbard, their gallant leader, had unfortunately been taken prisoner. The exultant, on-rushing rebels, pressed forward in line of battle, but as our batteries opened upon them they were put to flight, and were vigorously pursued four miles back to Illinois Creek. Here the army of Hindman was found in all its strength, very formidable posted, and all ready and eager for battle. The rebel troops occupied a long ridge, with their batteries in positions which Herron described as "magnificent." For a mile in front of this array of twenty-five thousand men the ground was clear, and, over this cleared space, and in the face of all these batteries, Herron must advance to the relief of Blunt, or be driven back in ignominious defeat. Blunt was ten miles in the rear, and all unconscious of the storm of war just ready to burst upon his friends.

The situation of this little band of patriot troops seemed almost desperate. But Herron, with that promptitude of decision so essential to military success, decided that his only refuge from disaster was instantly and fiercely to open the battle with the hope that Blunt might hear its thunders and come to his aid.

As he was looking over the ground, feeling the enemy's position and searching for places to convey his artillery across the creek, the rebels directed the fire of all their guns upon the General and his staff, whom they saw exposed to view at the side of their pieces. It was a narrow escape for them all. For ten minutes shot and shell were rattling around them almost as thick as hailstones from the clouds. Several shot fell within a foot of Herron.
They promptly withdrew their pieces, and after getting two batteries in position to engage the attention of the enemy, they cut a road through the timber, got fourteen guns across the creek almost unperceived, and opened so vigorous a fire upon the foe as, under its protection, to pass all the infantry over the creek and to form a line of battle, even while the battle was fiercely raging. Our well-trained gunners threw their shot with rapidity and accuracy which elicited the admiration of every beholder.

Herron commenced pressimg his batteries slowly forward toward the enemy's lines, following up close with the infantry. The rebels fought with their accustomed determination. Soon the whole left was engaged. Hindman now endeavored to concentrate his force at that point to crush our left wing. To frustrate this endeavor the Nineteenth Iowa and the Twentieth Wisconsin were ordered to charge a battery placed near a farm-house on the brow of the hill. They stormed the hill, captured the battery of four guns, and drove the rebels back more than half a mile. But rebel reinforcements came thundering on, and our men, overpowered, were unable to hold their ground. One hundred patriots left dead upon the field attested the desperation of the charge.

And now the rebels, chafing and infuriated, attempted, in their turn, to charge en masse the batteries of Fonst, Buckof, and Boerries. They came rushing on with their customary yells to within two hundred yards of the muzzles of our guns. But they were met with such a merciless fire from artillery and musketry that they broke and fled, having suffered slaughter which was truly awful. Again the enemy attempted to mass his troops upon our left. Again the order to charge was given. The Twenty-sixth Indiana and the Thirty-seventh Illinois were selected for this service, and Colonel Houston in person gallantly led them. The victorious advance of our troops was followed by a repulse, as in the first charge. The battery was captured by the patriots, and recaptured by the rebels.

It was now about three o'clock in the afternoon of the short winter's day. Still there were no tidings from Blunt. Soon the gloom of night would terminate the conflict. Herron's troops were exhausted and badly cut up. Nothing remained but to hold on until dark. At this critical moment the opening fire of a battery opposite General Herron's extreme right arrested attention, and the crisis was so imminent that General Herron, accompanied by Captain Clark, rode out to examine it. With joy which can not be described they found that the advance of General Blunt's army was pressing forward but a mile distant upon their right wing. A courier was at once dispatched to inform General Blunt of the position of the foe; and with renewed fury inspiring both sides, the battle was kept up until night spread its pall over the blood-stained field. Let us now turn back to General Blunt. About one o'clock he had reached his wagon train, which had been spread out on a large open plain at Rhea's Mills. Immediately he sent forward the First Iowa, the Tenth Ohio, and the Eighth Missouri cavalry, with three howitzers, on the road to Fayetteville to ascertain the position of Herron. These troops had advanced about two miles when, as they reached the top of a swell of ground which commanded an extensive prospect, they heard the booming of cannon and saw clouds of smoke rising over a distant valley, which told too plainly that the foe had fallen headlong upon the approaching patriots.

A courier was dispatched at the top of his speed to announce the intelligence to Blunt, while the cavalry pressed forward to the assistance of their friends. Colonel Wickersham, who was in command of the detachment, soon came upon a large body of the rebels, who were endeavoring, by a secret movement, under cover of a heavy piece of timber, to flank Herron upon the right. The Colonel, though holding a far inferior force, brought forward his howitzers, and, with his cavalry in position, opened fire upon the rebels, determined to hold them in check till Blunt, with the infantry and artillery, should arrive.

Rapidly Blunt rushed his troops forward, placed his batteries in available positions, and the engagement became general along the entire line. The boom of 70 pieces of cannon awoke such echoes over those prairies as had never before been heard since Creation's dawn. But alas! the scenes of battle were not strange upon those flowery savannas. Though the thunder of artillery had never been heard there before, yet from time immemorial savage hordes had swept over those plains in murderous conflict. The war whoop of defiance, the battle cry of onset, the shout of the victor, and the shriek of the dying, had often blended with the gentle zephyrs of morning and of evening, while blood from human veins had enriched the soil, which for uncounted centuries has bloomed with beauty and with fragrance.

Blunt, in his eagerness to get at the foe, and with every man's nerves strained to the utmost tension by the roar of the battle, had rushed forward, often leaving the main road, over fences, ditches, through fields of chaparral and thorn brush, until his troops came upon the enemy's line upon their left, just in season to thwart the attempt they were making to flank Herron with an overwhelming force. When Herron's heroic little band heard the first guns of their allies, as they came rushing to their aid, a cheer went up from the whole division which drowned for the moment the din of the battle. As cheer after cheer ran along their lines, the booming cannon of General Blunt gloriously responded, hurrying shot and shell into the now dismayed ranks of the foe. A captured rebel said that the first three shots from Rab's battery struck down over 100 of their men. General Blunt, in his official report, writes:
The victory of Prairie Grove deserves to be ranked among the most important battles of the war. The enemy encountered outnumbered us three to one. They were in their own country, and were familiar with every stream and road and mountain pass. Their passions and prejudices had been roused to the utmost intensity by their very able and sagacious leader. They fought with all that reckless daring which often characterized them on every battle-field. The stake was all-important. The victory of the rebels would have, perhaps, annihilated this our army of the frontier. Western Arkansas, Missouri, Kansas, and the Indian country would have been their own without dispute. But this battle, so gallantly won, virtually ended the war north of the Arkansas River.*

On the 8th of December Captain Milton Birch, with a detachment of but 40 men from the Fortieth regiment cavalry of the Missouri State militia, started on a raid from Ozark in Missouri into Marion County, Arkansas, to destroy some gigantic saltpetre works near Yellville. He was signally successful. He returned to his encampment after an absence of but seven days, having traveled 225 miles, captured 42 prisoners, destroyed 40 stand of small-arms, captured 12 horses and 4 mules, and also having utterly destroyed the saltpetre works, which had cost the rebel government thirty thousand dollars. All this was accomplished without any loss whatever.

The latter part of December General Blunt was encamped at Prairie Grove. He learned that Hindman was collecting a large force at Van Buren, on the northern banks of the Arkansas River, preparing for another attempt to force his way into Missouri. Orders were promptly given to pick out the best men from each command, each mounted man to carry one peck of corn for his horse, and all to take six rations in haversack. About seven o'clock in the morning of the 27th the three divisions, consisting of 3000 cavalry and a body of infantry, commenced their movement, in a line almost directly south, for Van Buren, which was 50 miles distant. They reached Lee's Creek that night, where they bivouacked. At daylight the next morning the army was again in motion. The crossing of the creek is described as extremely ludicrous. It was midwinter, and the water icy cold. No time could be lost in constructing bridges. It was therefore ordered that each mounted man should take one of the infantry on the croup of his horse. Many of the proudest steeds resented the indignity, and as their hind quarters were thrown high into the air, such mishaps were witnessed as to cause universal merriment. Others were striving to construct bridges with logs, which the swift current tore from their grasp. The whole command was, however, soon over, and the cavalry, with four mountain-howitzers, dashed forward till, about ten o'clock, they came upon two regiments of rebel cavalry, eight miles this side of Van Buren. Putting spurs to their horses they plunged upon the foe, soon routed them, and drove them in disorderly flight back to the river. The rebels attempted to save some of their camp equipage by throwing the articles loosely into their wagons and gonding the horses to their utmost speed. As these wagons were driven helterskelter along the rugged road, over hills and through ravines, while our cavalry was in hot pursuit, pelting the fugitives with bullets and shells, the ground was soon found strewn with smashed ambulances and broken wagons, while their contents of tents, carpet-bags, clothing, harnesses, saddles, etc., seemed almost to pave the road.

When they arrived within about a mile of Van Buren they found themselves, at twelve o'clock, upon the top of a hill. After a moment's pause to collect the cavalry, and after sending a few greetings from the mountain-howitzers in the direction of the foe, the whole body of horsemen dashed down the gradual descent into the town. While a part of the cavalry entered the streets of the city another part galloped down the banks of the stream to intercept, with their carbines, three stern-wheel steamers, which, freighted with corn, were making as rapid tracks as possible down the river. They were brought back and returned to the levee. The "stars and stripes" were now waving over the court-house, greeted by the cheers of the victors as infantry and cavalry crowded into the city. The inhabitants gazed upon the spectacle thus suddenly bursting upon them with terror and bewilderment.
About 3 o'clock in the afternoon, just as our soldiers had taken full possession of the place, and were enjoying a collation, the report of cannon was heard on the opposite side of the river, and shells began to fall and explode in the streets. The rebels had brought their artillery to the opposite bank, and, without any warning for their own women and children to escape, had opened fire, hoping to shell out our cavalry. They succeeded in killing two soldiers, wounding two, and killing two children. We soon got a battery upon a convenient eminence, and at the third shot from our guns the rebels limbered up and fled. A few shells were sent after them to hasten their flight. Our troops found many hogsheads of fine sugar on the levee, with corn, cattle, mules, and commissary and ordnance stores.

The next morning the whole infantry force, with two batteries, marched in parade through the streets of the captured city, while the splendid field-bands in front played forth our glorious national airs. The streets were lined with spectators. They could not restrain their expressions of astonishment as they gazed upon the well-clad, highly-disciplined, patriot troops. President Lincoln had truly said that there was scarcely a regiment in the Union army from which he could not select a sufficient number of men who were competent to fill the several places in his Cabinet.

The rebels, in their flight, burned a large part of Fort Smith, with all the buildings containing Confederate stores, also blowing up a magazine and destroying two steamboats. Our troops destroyed Confederate property to the estimated value of two hundred thousand dollars. The next day the army returned to Prairie Grove, having inflicted a blow upon the rebels from which they could not speedily recover. General Blunt reported the only casualties to be five or six men slightly wounded.

A few weeks after this General John A. Mc'Clernand, who was in command of a very considerable force at Millikin's Bend, finding that nothing decisive could immediately be done toward the reduction of Vicksburg, organized an expedition to destroy a fort of the enemy at Arkansas Post, from which fort the rebels could seriously annoy our communications between Memphis and Vicksburg.

Arkansas Post, or Fort Hindman, as it was sometimes called, consisted of a small village about fifty miles above the mouth of the river, and one hundred and seventeen miles below Little Rock, the capital of the State. The fort was situated upon elevated ground, on the left bank of the stream, and formed the key to Little Rock, and to the rich valley of the Arkansas, which abounded with cattle, corn, and cotton. It was a square, full-bastioned fort, surrounded by the village. The exterior sides of the fort, between the salient angles, were three hundred feet in length, the parapet eighteen feet wide at the top, the ditch twenty feet wide on the ground level and eight feet deep. Around the interior slope of the parapet there was a banquette or foot-bank, upon which the infantry could stand to fire upon any assailants. There were three platforms for artillery in each bastion, and one in the curtain facing north. There were two casemates, safe from shot or shell, eighteen feet by fifteen, and seven and a half feet high. The casemates were pierced by a single embrasure, and contained one a 9-inch and the other an 8-inch Columbiad. Guns of large calibre en barbette seemed perfectly to command the river below the fort. From the northwestern bastion a line of rifle-pits extended seven hundred and twenty yards toward a bayon. Six field-pieces were mounted along this line, protected by traverses. There were various other preparations for defense which it would be tedious to enumerate. All the resources of military science had been devoted to make this one of the most formidable of the frontier posts. As early as the year 1865 the French, with their characteristic sagacity, had selected the spot for one of their military settlements.

For the reduction of this fort Mc'Clernand took the Fifteenth Army Corps, under General Sherman, and the Thirteenth, commanded by General George W. Morgan. These troops were conveyed in transports, accompanied by a flotilla of gun-boats, under Rear-Admiral David D. Porter. On the 8th of January, 1863, the fleet turned from the majestic Mississippi into apparently a narrow creek or bayou, which seemed to lose itself among the hoary trees, bearded with moss, of a dense and impenetrable forest. This "lonely ribbon of water" was the mouth of the White River. Its sluggish stream was scarcely wide enough for a single steamer. There were no houses, no farms, no cultivated fields along the banks—nothing but swamp and wilderness, through whose glooms our steam puffs and dash of paddle-wheels seemed to sough with melancholy cadence.

After ascending this dismal stream a few miles the fleet passed through a bayou, or cut-off, into the more lordly Arkansas. The day was so warm and delightful that had the forest, which spread for leagues around, been covered with verdure instead of draped with hoary moss, it would have seemed like midsummer. At length the boats reached regions of semi-civilization. Here and there the wretched log-houses of the "poor white trash" began to appear. Occasionally a rambling, comfortless-looking mansion of a planter would be seen upon the banks, surrounded with negro cabins. The aspect, to one accustomed to Northern thrift, was repulsive in the extreme. Occasionally a glimpse was caught of a horseman riding at full speed, carefully keeping out of rifle's reach—probably hastening to communicate to some rebel force tidings of the approach of the flotilla.

The troops commenced landing at five o'clock in the afternoon of the 9th, and by noon the next day they were safely on shore preparing
for the attack. After a careful reconnaissance Sherman was directed to diverge from the river with one division of his corps, General Steele’s, so as by a detour to invest the fort on the upper side. This column was put in motion at eleven o’clock on the 10th, and after traversing with great difficulty a swamp a quarter of a mile wide, came upon an open plain called Little Prairie. Here they ascertained that it was impossible to approach the fort in that direction, except by a march of seven miles, and by crossing a narrow bridge over a bayon, where they would be fearfully exposed to rebel bullets. As this would endanger the safety of the division—even could the march be accomplished—by too great a separation from the rest of the army, the troops were ordered to return.

The second division of Sherman’s corps, under Stuart, had already advanced by the river road until they halted about half a mile below the fort. Steele’s division soon came up and formed on the right, and Osterhaus’s division on the left, next to the river. Rear-Admiral Porter now pushed forward the gunboats. The Baron de Kalb, Cincinnati, and Louisville, all iron-clads, steamed up within three hundred yards of the fort, and opened a terrific cannonade upon it, which was continued until nightfall, thus diverting the attention of the enemy from the movement of the forces. All the vessels then dropped down, and tied up to the bank for the night.

In the mean time Colonel Lindsay’s brigade had landed on the right bank of the river, and, marching up the stream, had planted a battery nearly opposite the fort, but a little above it, so as to prevent any escape of the foe by water, or any reinforcements from thus reaching him. The night which ensued was cold and bleak. Our patriot troops, as patient in enduring suffering as they were heroic in meeting the perils of battle, shivered sleepless yet uncomplaining through the long hours of the winter night, but on the morning of the 11th they were cheered by the bright rays of a warm and cloudless sun.

About noon all the preparations were made for the assault. A little after one o’clock the gun-boats opened their fire, to which the rebels vigorously responded. As boat after boat came into position the bombardment increased in intensity. Our guns were admirably handled. As soon as the range was attained almost every shell struck the guns in the fort, until, one after another, each one was silenced. The Cincinnati, with shrieked, cleared the crew away from the 9-inch Dahlgren on the parapet, when the Baron de Kalb broke off the muzzle with a 10-inch solid shot. Each of the gun-boats silenced the gun upon which it was directed to fire. By half past two o’clock every heavy gun in the fort was either dismounted or its crew dispersed. Admiral Porter, during the bombardment, was in a little steam-tug, moving rapidly about giving directions.

The first gun from the fleet was the signal for the soldiers to move. The engagement immediately extended along our whole line, mainly with a brisk fire from our field-pieces. As soon as there was evidence that the fort was seriously damaged by the fire from the gunboats and the land batteries, our men pressed steadily forward, driving before them the enemy’s advance. Nine regiments, under General A. J. Smith, drove them forward, until they took shelter behind a cluster of cabins. Here Colonel Guppy, with the Twenty-third Wisconsin, charged them impetuously, forcing them to flee to their intrenchments, and followed them up until our troops were within two hundred yards of the fort. The foe continued to pour in upon our advancing ranks a galling fire from the rifle-pits, until the pits were cleared by the storm which fell upon them from our infantry and artillery.

At this moment the One Hundred and Twenty-third Ohio dashed forward to carry the east face of the fort, but were frustrated by an impassable ravine. At four o’clock the gunboats had approached near the bank, and were pouring shot into the fort. The batteries of Lindsay’s brigade, on the other side of the river, were also doing splendid execution; while Morgan’s and Sherman’s commands were pressing steadily forward in front. And now came the final charge. Amidst the roar and the blinding smoke of battle eight or nine regiments, with such shouts and cheers as the frenzy of the hour only could extort, reckless of the bullets which swept their ranks, rushed through ditch and over rampart till they found themselves within the enemy’s intrenchments, and the white flags of surrender floating all around them. The Sixteenth Indiana, under Lieutenant-Colonel John M. Orr; the Eighty-third Ohio, Lieutenant-Colonel Baldwin; and the One Hundred and Twenty-third Ohio, Colonel D. French commanding, were the first to enter the fort. Thus, after three and a half hours of hard fighting, at half past four o’clock our forces were in possession of all the enemy’s defenses.

As trophies of this victory our troops could display five thousand prisoners, seventeen pieces of cannon, ten gun-carriages, three thousand stand of small-arms, one hundred and thirty swords, fifty Colt’s pistols, forty cans of powder, one thousand six hundred and fifty rounds of shot, shell, and canister, three hundred and seventy-five shells, forty-six thousand rounds of ammunition for small-arms, five hundred and sixty-three animals, together with a considerable quantity of quarter-master and commissary stores.

Our loss in killed was one hundred and twenty-nine; in wounded, eight hundred and thirty-one. Though the enemy fought behind defenses, our fire was so deadly that his loss was very severe, but we are not informed of the precise number. The victory of Arkansas Post was brilliant and decisive. It was won by the combined energies of the army and the
Soon after the surrender of Vicksburg a combined National force, under Generals Steele and Davidson, moved upon Little Rock with the design of obtaining the entire possession of the State. The expedition crossed the White River on the 17th of August. On the 2d of September, after several skirmishes with Marmaduke’s cavalry, the whole available force was concentrated at Brownsville, about seven thousand in number. They marched, nearly abreast, on each side of the Arkansas River, toward the capital. Their rapid approach excited an indescribable panic. Women and children rushed into the streets and listened with terror to the booming of the cannon, every moment drawing nearer and nearer. Rebel troops were hurrying to and fro, applying the torch to steam-boats and public stores. Steele’s column had now reached the banks opposite the city, and planting his batteries there, shells were thrown shrieking and howling over the city and exploding in the woods beyond. The rapid march of infantry through the streets, the rush of flying horsemen, the clouds of dust and gleam of sabres, the terror of the citizens and the ever-deepening roar of the battle combined in a spectacle as awful as it was sublime.

Soon a squadron of United States cavalry came dashing through the streets. They urged their horses to the arsenals, and reached it just in time to save it from being blown up by the enemy. There was over a ton of powder and several thousand pounds of ammunition in the building. The mayor, who was sick, sent hastily a message to General Davidson, surrendering the city and imploring his mercy. As the bridges were destroyed Steele and his staff crossed the Arkansas in a skiff and joined Davidson. The star-splangled banner, greeted by music and the proud tramp of the conquerors, now floated over the capitol. It was the 10th of September, 1863.

General Steele, who was in command, captured one thousand prisoners and all the public property which the rebels had not found time to destroy. Marmaduke retreated to Arkadelphia, his depot of supplies, hotly pursued by the National cavalry. As our troops came up and took possession of Arkadelphia the dispirited, disorganized bands fled from the State, and sought refuge from the avenging hands which pursued them among the mountains, ravines, and forests of Northwestern Louisiana.

Arkansas was now redeemed—nobly redeemed, by heroism and endurance which have been rarely equaled and never surpassed. The flag of the Union now floated over the whole State undisputed, save by a few robber gangs. One of these gangs, eight hundred in number, headed by a man by the name of Quattrell, on the 29th of August entered Lawrence, in Kansas, murdered in cold blood one hundred and twenty-five of its peaceful citizens, and laid nearly the whole town in ashes, destroying property to the amount of two millions of dollars. In December there were eight regiments
of Arkansas citizens rallied under the National banner, besides several thousands who had joined the companies of other regiments. Among the men who contributed most essentially to the restoration of the State, and who are deserving of especial honor, should be mentioned Brigadier-General E. W. Gantt.

On the 12th of November a very enthusiastic meeting was held at Little Rock, which was succeeded by others in all parts of the State, to take measures for the restoration of Arkansas to the Union. The Convention met in January, 1864, declared the Secession ordinance null and void, abolished slavery, the cause of all our troubles, adopted a revised Constitution, and chose Issac Murphy Governor. In his proclamation to his constituents Governor Murphy says:

"This is nobility enough; this is honor enough to be called a citizen of the United States, whose flag commands the admiration and respect of the world, and whose government has never failed to avenge or right the wrongs done to its humblest citizen. Spurn, then, the tyranny and oppression of the leaders of this wicked rebellion, and return to the home of your ancestors, and your own by inheritance, and atone for the past by securing to your posterity freedom, security, and happiness hereafter."

SHELBY CABELL.

My acquaintance with Shelby Cabell began in a queer sort of way. I was crossing the Pont Neuf late one night, returning from an evening spent with some friends in the Rue Tournon to my lodgings in the Champs Elysées. It was not the nearest way home. I could have made better time by going along the quai to the Pont de la Concorde. But I always liked to loaf through Old Paris—le Paris qui s'en va—when I could; and there are few spots more engaging to a man with a taste for the mouldy than those fine old relics of the times of the Fourth Henry, the Rue Dauphine, and Place Dauphine, and the quiet quarters that form at either end of the bridge a sort of tête-de-pont to resist the encroachments of demolition and change. So I used to go a little out of my way, returning from the Latin Country to the fresh drab avenues of the Elysian Fields, to pass through those fine old haunts of the fast people of two centuries gone, and have my little protest against the barbarisms of civilization. The night I speak of I was going over my customary plaint: "Ill fares the nation where the present snubs the past—the poets have no show in this age—picturesqueness and dirt have lost their charm—the municipal council will soon begin to make knife-handles of the bones of the dead," but it was late, and I had passed the evening in good company. Near the middle of the bridge I perceived a man standing motionless in the road. As I came nearer he started, ran, and leaped upon the high stone balustrade overlooking the river. His hat fell off as he jumped, and as he balanced himself on his perch with outstretched arms his long light hair streamed out in the wind, and gave him an old, uncanny look. I sprang toward him, caught him by the clothes, and dragged him down from his dangerous pedestal. In my excitement, forgetting I was in France, I said, "What are you about?" As he gazed at me coolly an instant without answering, I said, "Pardon, Monsieur, mais que faites vous là?"

He picked up his hat, and brushing it with his sleeve, said, "I like your first phrase best. I speak English full as well as French, and I reckon you do too."

"Yes, but what business has a Kentuckian taking a plunge-bath in the Seine at midnight?"

He looked sharply at me. "How do you know I am a Kentuckian?"

"I reckoned so," I answered. He laughed and shook hands.

"A fair shot," he said. "We follow from the woods have always some loose joint in our armor. Where do you hail from?"

"Not far from you, I should think: Fayette County."

"Hurrah for the Blue Grass!" he shouted. "This is a godsend. You are the first neighbor I have met in an age. Let's go and take a drink."

"Of course," I replied. "But you don't seem to me like a man who was on the point of drowning himself five minutes ago."

"Oh no! I had no idea of doing it to-night. I just got up on the wall there to see how it would look, if a man were ready to try it. And, by-the-way, talking about drowning yourself, I have an old grudge against that useless point of land down there, the Vert-Galant. It would be a very neat thing to go off the shoulders of the Béarnais with a plunge and a splash, if one could light in deep water; but those green trees and the moist turf below would let you down with a few bruises. If you could get on the neck of the bronze horse, with plenty of spring in your legs and arms, you could do it leap-frog fashion, over the head of the King. It would be quite sensational on a bright afternoon when the bridge is full of passengers!"

He walked up as he talked to the equestrian statue of Henry IV., which stands in its spacious alcove, midway of the bridge, staring, horse and rider, into the narrow opening of the Place Dauphine, waiting and watching for something that never issues from the dump and quiet court. The moonlight touching to a softer expression the wide eyes and the firm mouth of the great Bourbon, one could fancy that his image smiled at the grotesque fancy of the strange creature at my side.

"But it's no use talking about that," he said, turning away. "Until they clear away that snout of the island the jump would be only ridiculous."

"Especially," I replied, "for a countryman of Sam Patch."

We were walking through the dark little Rue de la Monnaie, toward the Rue de Rivoli. My companion lifted his hat respectfully.

"You have just pronounced," he said, "the