

river to where the boats awaited them. There were twenty boats in all, capable of holding ten men each. Two men in each boat were provided with mallets and wooden plugs to stop up any bullet holes which might be made in the sides of their little craft. Perfect silence was enjoined upon the men; not a word was to be spoken during the passage; all orders had been given ere they took to the boats; oar locks were muffled, and every precaution taken to insure success.

The night was propitious for an undertaking of this kind. The moon had sunk below the horizon, and a dense fog hung over the river, concealing the men from view while they launched their boats and pushed out into the middle of the stream. Captain Norwood's boat was the first to leave the shore. He had taken with him a red light, which, when displayed, was to be the signal that all was well with them, and then the engineer corps was to commence laying the pontoons. Posted on the south side of the river were the pickets of the enemy, and as Captain Norwood's party floated by in the darkness they could hear the sentinels talking to each other.

"Hello, thar!" said one. "D'ye see them ar logs floatin' past yer?"

"Yas," answered the other, "I've been watchin' 'em. Wonder who's put 'em in the river this time o' night?"

"I dunno, 'less it's Pat Claburn's division; they're camped up the river."

"I wonder," said the first speaker, "if 't could be them ar Yanks comin' down the river in them pant-loon boats?"

"No, I kinder reckon not; I've been peerin' into this ere infernal fog, to try an' make out what they was, but I can't see very fer, the fog's thicker'n sorghum merlassesa."

"'Spose we give 'em a shot fer luck," said one of them.

"No," replied the other, "that wouldn't do, fer it 'ud fetch out the whole camp to see what was the matter, an' they'd have the laugh on us fer shootin' at a lot o' logs."

The "logs" soon floated past these pickets, and as they neared the place selected for landing, the men quietly steered the boats toward the shore. Most of the rebel pickets, not expecting an attack at that hour, nor from that quarter, were wrapped in their blankets and lay sound asleep. A few of their number were on guard, more to watch for the coming of their own officers than for the Yanks.

When within a few rods of the place of landing, the captain gave orders to pull for the shore, an order which was obeyed with alacrity, and a few strokes

with the oars sent the boats into the muddy bank. Scarcely had the first boat touched the shore, when Captain Norwood, sword in hand, leaped out, followed by his men.

"Halt! Who goes there?" shouted a rebel picket, and getting no reply he fired his gun in the direction of the party.

"Forward!" shouted Captain Norwood, as he led his men up the bank.

The men sprang after their leader, discharging their guns at the rebels as they fell back. The rebel reserve had been aroused by the discharge of the guns, but before they could fully comprehend the situation they were made prisoners. Ten minutes from the time the first boat touched the bank, the captain's party had killed or captured the entire picket post, with a loss of only two men. Up went the red light, and soon was heard the sound of the laying of the pontoon bridge, and preparations for crossing by the army. By daylight, General Thomas' corps was in line of battle on the south side of the Tennessee river. It was learned from the prisoners captured that only a small portion of the rebel army was encamped near the river, the main body having kept on to Chattanooga, at which point they intended to make a stand. Two days were consumed in crossing the river, and when the troops had been re-victualled the order to march was given. The weary and footsore soldiers, who had been on the march for more than thirty days, and during that time had engaged and defeated the enemy at Tullahoma and other points, slung their knapsacks over their shoulders and cheerfully obeyed the order. Slowly they climbed the steep and rugged side of Sand mountain, dragging the artillery after them. It was a grand sight to see those heroic soldiers toiling wearily along, day after day, no word of complaint escaping them. The love of country, instilled into their hearts from early childhood, had a wonderful effect in sustaining them in the many arduous duties they were called upon to perform.

After days of weary marching over mountains and through ravines, the Union army gained the rear of Chattanooga, on the 18th of September, compelling the rebels to abandon that stronghold and attempt to escape into Georgia; but they were intercepted by Rosecrans at Chickamauga creek. Finding that he could not escape the Yankee forces, the rebel general, having received heavy reinforcements, turned about and made a bold attempt to cut the Union army in two and regain the old position at Chattanooga.

[To be continued.]