

CHAPTER VII.

Destruction Of Property At Staunton-----On The Move,
Still Going South-----Return To Staunton To Meet A
Supply Train-----Hard Marching To Overtake The
Army-----To Lexington-----Destruction Of Rebel
Property And Washington College-----And On We Go-----
Regular Army Engineering Superseded By Western
Ideas-----Lynchburg-----Battle Of Lynchburg-----A
Gallant Charge-----Reports-----Retreat To Gauley Bridge
-----At Parkersburg-----At Martinsburg Again.

The next day after our arrival at Staunton, we were engaged in destroying rebel stores and property of different kinds, including railroad depots and tracks. The following day our regiment was sent out to tear up the railroad track west of Staunton. We did the work effectually. Tobacco warehouses seemed to abound in and around Staunton, and the men will certify that they were filled with a most excellent quality. What the troops did not appropriate was either destroyed or sent to the rear in the train that went back from Staunton. Large quantities of war material were also destroyed, the rebel agent in charge of them estimating their value at \$400,000. On the 7th, our regiment started for Buffalo Gap, in which the rebels were holding General Averill. After marching out about five miles, we met his cavalry coming in, the rebels having left the Gap on hearing of the approach of infantry in their rear. We then turned back to Staunton. Quartermaster Williams was now returned to the regiment. Quartermaster Sergeant Walker, though quite unwell much of the time, had performed the duties of Quartermaster to the satisfaction of everybody in Quartermaster Williams' absence. We ought to mention that all the wounded who could be safely moved so far were sent out with the train returning from here, also the prisoners captured at Piedmont. The term of service of the 28th Ohio being nearly expired, that regiment was given charge of the train. The 34th Mass., Colonel Wells commanding, supplied the place of the 28th in our brigade, and Colonel Wells became our brigade commander.

On the 8th General Crook, with his army from the Kanawha Valley, joined us, making now an army of about 18,000 strong. The morning of June 10th, the whole army left Staunton and reached Lexington?? the 12th. We left about 300 sick and wounded at Staunton, and with them some surgeons and about forty men, all of whom the rebel Colonel E. G. Lee paroled on the 12th. The 116th was the last regiment to leave Staunton, which subsequently proved a little unfortunate for it. After marching seven miles out, the regiment was sent back in haste to meet and guard a supply train, which reached Staunton that morning after our departure. We met the train just coming out of town in charge of the 161st Ohio regiment. It consisted of over 200 wagons, and how it ever got safely to Staunton can only be explained by the fact that all the rebels in the Valley had been concentrated in front of Hunter at Piedmont. We at once turned back, and for the third time that day, traveled over the same piece of road. At dark we stopped for supper. Finding there was hard tack, coffee and sugar in the train, after considerable red tape had been run off we drew some of it, and for the first time in a week, had a good square meal. As we were eating supper, we were told the train had brought up a mail, and after supper found this to be so, for here came the "Post Master" with a load of letters and papers from home. How eagerly their contents were devoured. They were as great a luxury as the supper we had just eaten. After reading our letters and resting an hour, we started with our train to overtake the main column, which was several miles in our advance. It was a dreary, tiresome night march. At two o'clock in the morning we halted, made coffee, and then laid down to sleep. Slept until four, when we took the road again, and after marching four or five miles, came up to the rest of the army, just as it was moving out on the road, General Hunter sent word to us to rest until ten o'clock, and then join him as soon as possible. Towards noon, as we were passing a house by the roadside, quite a number of women stood at the door, who requested us to unfurl our flags, saying they had walked several miles that morning "to get one more look at the old stars and stripes." The flags were unfurled, and the men gave three lusty cheers for these loyal women of Virginia. As the men started up "The Union Forever," the women joined their voices with theirs, which was the first time for several months many of them had heard a woman's voice in the harmony of song.

We reached Lexington just before dark, and just as Crook, who had come in by another road, had captured the place. Lexington was the home of "Stonewall" Jackson and Governor Letcher. Jackson's remains were buried here. By General Hunter's orders the Virginia Military Institute, Washington College, Governor Letcher's residence, and some other fine buildings, including the residences of the professors, were burned. A fine bronze statue of Washington, in front of Washington College, was taken down, and afterwards taken to Wheeling. Four pieces of artillery which belonged to Lafayette were loaded up and taken with us. Two 64-pounders of the same battery were left for want of transportation. There is a slack-water navigation of the James River at Lexington; and a great many canal boats were captured and destroyed, as they were being run off to Richmond, laden with public and private stores of various kinds. Six pieces of artillery were among the cargoes. The young cadets of the Military Institute fought better than any rebels on the field at Lexington. Their bravery and skill was worthy of a better cause.

General Hunter has been severely censured for burning the buildings here, and destroying property, especially for allowing Washington College to be pillaged, and its libraries and apparatus carried off. Generals Crook, Averill and Sullivan protested against the act at the time, and all felt indignant, because they regarded the act as wanton vandalism. The burning of the Military Institute was not so much objected to, and yet its destruction involved the loss of several fine libraries, museums, valuable apparatus, mathematical and astronomical instruments, and rare works of science and art, the destruction of which benefitted?? nobody, but in which science, art and literature suffered a great and irreparable loss. But for the vandalism in the college, there can be no excuse. Washington College was organized in 1749, was endowed by General George Washington in 1796 with 100 shares in the James River Canal Company, which was afterwards commuted by the Legislature of Virginia to an interest bearing fund of \$50,000, at which time it was given its name, it having before that been known as Washington and Lee University, which last name was again given it on the death of General Lee in 1870. At the time it was vandalized, in 1864, it had libraries containing 20,000 volumes, among which were many very old and rare books. To be sure, it and the Institute had educated a great many officers for the rebel army, but West Point had educated a great many more than both of them for the same army. The name and memory of its great founder should have saved it from the vandalism of Turks, and what can be offered in palliation of the act when committed by American soldiers? It will always remain a deep reproach to General Hunter, gallant soldier though he was.

The army moved from Lexington on the 14th, our regiment again being rear guard. The main body reached Buchanan late in the afternoon, where they found a long bridge spanning the James River, destroyed by the rebels the day before, as were all others, great and small, along the road, as they fell back before our cavalry. The citizens of Buchanan had done all they could to prevent the burning of the long bridge across the river, first because firing it would endanger the safety of the town, and second, because the river was everywhere fordable. But McCansland?? had a mania for burning, and, as anticipated, the town was also set on fire, and a great many fine buildings, including nearly all the stores, were burned. The main body of the troops were across by midnight, but the delays at the front prevented our regiment reaching Buchanan, until 3 o'clock in the morning. We had to remain on the north side of the river until everything was across, and so rested a few hours, but all our cooking utensils were in our wagon, away, somewhere, to the front of the train, and so could cook nothing to eat. Next morning, June 15th, we forded the river and started for Liberty, the other side of the Blue Ridge, over what is called the "Peak Road," taking its name from the fact that it passes the "Peaks of Otter," three very high mountains close together on the other side of the Blue Ridge. On our way across, we were greatly impeded by trees felled across the road, rocks rolled in, and streams of water diverted from their course into the road. At one place we saw the body of a man lying by the roadside. It would shock anyone to repeat the trifling remarks made by the men as they passed him. We passed between two of the Peaks of Otter, and within a mile and a half of the Natural Bridge, but not being on a pleasure excursion, we did not visit this marvelous curiosity of nature. A few of our daring fellows, who never miss anything in any country through which they pass, did visit it, however, and brought away with them relics in proof of their midnight venture. Near the summit of one of the Peaks of Otter is a very large spring, from which flows Otter Creek. We camped a short distance beyond the Peaks, and drank from the cool water of this strange mountain spring. Next day we passed through Liberty, which was at that time almost nothing but a rebel hospital. The houses were nearly all filled with rebel wounded, and besides, there were four large hospital buildings, erected for the purpose of accommodating the wounded from Lee's army. Every village we entered east of the Blue Ridge, and every one reached by our

cavalry on either flank for miles, was in the same situation. Every country house and barn was filled to repletion with wounded men. The Virginia & Tennessee Railroad passes through Liberty, and utter destruction was made of its depots, track, etc., as usual in such cases. Liberty is a very pretty place, and the people, though in the heart of rebeldom, treated us decently. Some of the more ignorant people, who had never seen a "Yank" before, were surprised to see us without horns and all the other traditional appendages of "Old Nick." We had but half rations for two days past, and the Quartermaster said we would have *none* to-morrow. The men told him *he* would suffer if we had none.

June 17th, we left our camp, three miles south of Liberty, for Lynchburg. About 10 A.M. we met the enemy in some force, but drove him before our skirmish line steadily, till between 2 and 3 P.M., when a stand was made at a creek, our crossing of which they disputed. But the advance was sufficient to disperse them, not, however, until they had destroyed the bridge. Its reconstruction delayed the trains and it's guard several hours. The rear guard came up while it was yet scarcely begun. All were in haste to cross, but the engineer in charge of its reconstruction was bound to see that it was put up only after the most approved methods of regular army bridge building. But the plans were too elaborate and tedious, and everybody got out of patience, for firing in front was urging everyone forward, especially the artillery. Western expedients came to the rescue. Then the 116th came up, Captain John F. Welch, of our regiment, who was in charge of the pioneer corps of our division, was expostulating with the engineer against his plans, which involved too much time. Finally he prevailed on the engineer to let him try his way of building a bridge "in a hurry," and calling for a number of good choppers from the 116th, which it contained in abundance, as he knew, they went into a woods close by and began cutting timbers, which were carried to the ground by the stalwart fellows of the regiment, and in less than an hour the artillery was crossing, on the gallop, to the front. Moving on rapidly now, we arrived at the Quaker Stone Church, in the midst of a sharp engagement, in which the 91st Ohio suffered considerably, Colonel Turley being severely wounded. The 116th took but small part in this affair, being too far to the left, the fighting being more to the right. Crook's division was engaged with the enemy at the church when we came up. The rebels were driven from this point into their entrenchments around Lynchburg. Our division now relieved the second, which went into camp. By this time it was dark, and after our regiment had been moved from one point to another several times, we went on the picket line, quite close up to the rebel entrenchment, and there lay until morning. About 10 o'clock that night, we heard the whistle of a locomotive and the rolling of a train. From that hour till noon next day, we could hear trains arriving, and after daylight could see large bodies of troops moving out of the city towards our position, and hear bands playing, and see movements in all directions, which clearly indicated the arrival of large reinforcements. Early in the morning, we were moved out to the extreme left in support of a battery. The rebels did some of the best artillery firing we ever saw, and our battery had scarcely opened fire, before it was obliged to retire to shelter. Their sharp-shooters were also extremely accurate in their aim, they seemed to know the ground perfectly. About 2 P.M., the rebels made a desperate charge on the right and center of our brigade. We were then a quarter of a mile to the left of it. Our battery pulled out for the right, and we hastened to the support of our brigade. While en route to join the brigade, a column of rebels was seen coming through the woods, directly on our flank. The rebels were making a charge on our center, which they were driving back slowly. Two different regiments went forward in turn to check the rebel advance, but each was repulsed. By this time we had reached a position directly in the course of the regiment that had been last sent in, and was now falling back through us in disorder. Here we halted to stop the further advance of the enemy. We had hardly halted, before Colonel Washburn received an order to "charge with the 116th." We immediately formed for the charge, and went down upon the charging rebels, just as they were ascending a hill. We had the advantage in charging down, as they were charging up the hill, and we not only checked them, but they broke in wild confusion to their breastworks. Clambering over them, we pushed on to their second line, being now reinforced by the 5th West Virginia, under Colonel Enochs. There we were met by a very heavy force well entrenched, and, lying down, we fought hard against desperate odds, waiting for help, which we felt would surely come, until we were assaulted on both flanks by infantry, and by grape and cannister from a battery, planted not five rods in our front. We then fell back to the first line of works we had taken, and on their face, fought again, until we were struck on our left by a large force which crossed over the works in the woods on that flank. We then fell back to a position in the woods, through which we had charged, where we carried most of our wounded. Among our badly wounded was Captain Edwin Keyes and Color Sergeant Fred E. Humphrey, both of whom we were obliged to leave behind us. We again fell back to the line of the rest of the troops, only to find that the retreat had commenced.

Our regiment was praised without stint for its gallantry on this occasion. It was the only regiment of Hunter's army that entered the rebel works about Lynchburg; its colors were the only colors carried over them, or planted upon them. To show that this is no idle boasting, I quote from several authorities, and first General Hunter says in his report: "The 116th Ohio made a gallant charge, and carried its colors over the enemy's works, but was compelled to retire before superior numbers."

Major Pratt, of the 34th Massachusetts, wrote: "For a moment the stars and stripes, borne by the color bearer of the 116th Ohio, were seen waving from the enemy's breastworks; but the word to withdraw was given, and soon our troops occupied nearly their old position."

George E. Pond, in "The Shenandoah Valley in 1864," says: "During the afternoon, Hunter attacked in force, bringing into action his two divisions of infantry and his artillery in the center, on and near the Bedford turnpike, Duffie along the Forest road, on the left, and a part of Averill's along the Campbell road, on the right. Early's infantry sallied from their works on the Bedford road to meet this attack, but were gallantly driven back by Sullivan, aided by Crook, and the 116th even planted its colors on Early's breastworks."

The second division, under General Crook, moved to the right early in the morning, and reconnoitered the enemy's position in that direction for three or four miles, seeking in vain for an unguarded spot at which to make an attack on the enemy's left.

General Crook says in his report of July 7th, 1864: "I was sent to the right to make a reconnaissance, for the purpose of turning the enemy's left. Found it impracticable, after marching three or four miles, and had just returned with my division and got it in position to support General Sullivan when the enemy made an attack on our lines."

About seven o'clock we moved out, and followed in the rear of the trains all that night. Our loss in the charge was twelve killed, twenty-two wounded and ten prisoners, as follows:

KILLED.

Privates James A. Boyd and Jefferson Gatten, Company A: Charles C. Davis, Company B: Geo. B. Blair, Geo. M. Coulter, and Jacob Kernan. Company E: William Fisher, Company F: Gilbert Van Horn, Company I: Moses F. Starr, Micajah Gowdy and Evander B. Hamilton, Company D, and George Lyons, Company K.

WOUNDED.

Company A—Corporal John W. Devore, foot; Henry Harmon, thigh; Daniel P. Hubbard, bowels.

Company B—Captain Edwin Keyes, knee and elbow, (died at Lynchburg, Va., July 19th, 1864,); Color Sergeant Fred. E. Humphrey, shoulder and neck; Royal Daines, side, (died of his wounds after muster out,); Philip Feiger, William E. Lefaver.

Company C—Corporal Walter Tacker, leg; John Egger, leg.

Company D—Corporal Alexander Straight, arm; James G. Dally, leg; Isaiah Mozena.

Company E—Sergeant John G. Reithmiller, side; Joseph Connor, hip.

Company F—William Allen, right arm amputated; Jacob Martin, head.

Company G—Corporal James B. Miller, ankle; David A. Moore, (died at Anderson-

ville, Ga., August 14, 1864.).

Company H—Issac?? Russell, side.

Company I—Corporal William Scott, head.

Company K—Corporal Carmi Allison, lungs; Corporal John Young, foot Corporal Perry Gardner, neck; William Hunter, finger.

PRISONERS.

Captain Edwin Keyes, Sergeant Fred. E. Humphrey, Horace McNeal, Wells Grubb, William E. Lefaver, Nelson Watson, Royal Hoyt, Alex C. Warren, all of Company B; Albia Vickers, Company C, and John Vickers, of Company D.

Making a total loss of forty-four killed, wounded and missing.

Color Sergeant Fred. E. Humphrey was wounded while waving his colors over the rebel works. He displayed the greatest gallantry, the whole color guard as gallantly gathering about and following to the last forward step. The entire guard mounted the works beside him, and their dauntless courage inspired the whole regiment to charge over and up to the enemy's second line. As he fell, terribly wounded, one of the guard caught the colors and held them to the front, until we fell back. The Corporals named among the wounded were nearly all of the guard, and when we came out of the fight, it was found necessary to organize a new color guard. Volunteers to carry them were called for, and among the number who stepped forward was private James Logan, of company C, to whom one of the standards was given, and who most honorably, and with the most unflinching bravery, carried it through some of the subsequent battles in the Shenandoah Valley, until he was promoted to the chaplaincy of the regiment, on the 12th of November, 1864, for brave and meritorious conduct as color bearer. He was in very truth a "fighting parson," and, withal, a most exemplary Christian gentleman. Poor, brave Sergeant Humphrey we were compelled to leave behind us, as we were also Captain Keyes. The Captain had a knee and an elbow shattered with musket balls, and he died at Lynchburg on the 19th of July, from the effects of these wounds. He led his company most heroically in the battle, and received his first wound in the knee, at the last moment, in holding his company against the charge made on our left, just before we fell back into the woods from the rebel works, and his second, in the elbow, just as we began to fall back. He was carried back by his men, and when he heard the command to halt given our along the line in the woods, he repeated it to his men, and directed them to form in their places. As soon as it was learned that he was badly wounded, the officers and his men gathered about him to bid him farewell, for it was evident he could not be moved far. The rebels were now shelling the woods with great fury, and being still within range of the grape and cannister, also the rattle of small arms, the hurling and crashing of flying missiles, the explosion of shells, and the yells of the victorious enemy, combined to make one of the wildest battle scenes we ever witnessed. Captain Keyes was now conveyed to the field hospital. His loss was mourned, not alone by his own company, but by the whole regiment.

The march that night was dreary enough. Our men had had but one cracker apiece in two days, had marched all one of these, fought all the other, and stood picket during the intervening night. In this condition, we marched all night quite rapidly, and overtook the train about daylight next morning. We reached our old camp of the night before, about 6 A.M., and stopped to make coffee. The ever faithful colored people now began flocking to our army by the hundreds. Many of them carried heavy loads of provisions which they gladly divided with the soldiers, and told us where flour, meal, bacon, hogs and other eatables were concealed. A foraging expedition sent out near Liberty, under the guidance of a squad of colored men, returned in a short time with some provisions, which were soon made a meal of. Three good horses were also brought in, taken from the cellar of a "mansion" close by. Some provisions were saved for another meal. Now, when we say "meal," we do not mean to be understood as having had all we wanted to eat. Not by great odds! Some had none, others a little, and a few lucky fellows, who always had enough, no matter what happened, had an abundance. A letter written by Quartermaster Sergeant Walker

to his friends in Athens, upon our arrival at Gauley Bridge, under date of July 1st, 1864, gives such a graphic, faithful history of the retreat from Lynchburg, that with his consent we give it here in full:

“June 18th, 1864. The fighting commenced in good season this morning. Our regiment had been on picket all night, and I had not seen them. After breakfast the hospital steward wanted me to go and help him in the hospital. I started, and was afterwards told I was wanted on the field to assist in the ambulance corps. I went out and reported to Dr. Smith, of our regiment, and remained with him till after the hardest of the fight, which came off between 2 and 3 o’clock P.M. The rebels charged our centre, and drove it. Another regiment then went forward, and were also driven back by the enemy. *Our* regiment then went into the breach, and not only *checked* the rebels, but drove them clear back, and if I am not mistaken in the time, they charged them then, and came near taking another line of works, and would have succeeded had they been properly supported. In the charge Captain Keyes, of company B, was wounded in the left knee and left elbow, and it is feared, it will be necessary to amputate both the arm and leg; if so, he cannot possibly live. I could not keep from shedding tears when I saw him the first time, and yet he would, while lying there on his back, sing in a cheerful tone, “Rally Round the Flag,” and talk to others to cheer them up. He was a *good soldier* and a GOOD CHRISTIAN. This latter accounts for his cheerfulness, even while he knew he must in all probability die. But death had no terrors for him. We also had another “color bearer” wounded, making in all three that have been wounded during this raid. Our flags, too, are beginning to look the worse for wear. Our loss in this fight has not been so great as in the first, but the wounds are of a more serious character. I saw no less than a dozen amputations performed, and there were others that would have to be performed the next day, or as soon as possible. I do hope and pray I may never be called upon to witness the horrors of another battle field. And yet there is no cloud so dark but it may have a silver lining. The poor fellows are so thankful when you do anything for them, it is a pleasure to wait on them. After going to the hospital with Captain Keyes and the Color Sergeant, I did not return to the field, but Lee and I busied ourselves, trying to make the men of our regiment as comfortable as possible. We carried them into a large barn that had been prepared for a hospital, where we made beds of new mown hay. Every man we moved was covered with blood, and by the time we were through we were about as bloody as the wounded men. * * * *
By 6 A.M. Sunday, we reached our old camp near Liberty, where we stopped to get breakfast. Some of the men had foraged a little flour along the road, of which they made batter cakes, but many of the men were obliged to go without bread. About noon we moved forward and stopped about three miles the other side of the town of Liberty, intending to stay all night, but the enemy came up on our rear, and heavy skirmishing ensued. Again we moved forward, and did not stop till Monday morning. The men were so tired that they would go to sleep in the ranks. I went sound asleep quite a number of times, while walking along, and was only awakened by making a wrong step, or something of that sort. While the skirmishing, was going on in our rear, Sunday evening, the boys went out and brought in quite a quantity of flour...enough to last a whole day. It was that, and that alone, that enabled the men to make the long march they did Sunday night and Monday morning. It was almost noon when we stopped for breakfast. The men had barely time to bake their flour and fry their meat, when the order was given to ‘fall in.’ The idea of starting out on another long march without rest was enough to sicken Any one, but it must be done. We were out of rations, and in the heart of the enemy’s country, and we must move fast or suffer from starvation. Marched all night, and reached Salem early in the day, Tuesday. There was some skirmishing upon our approaching the town, but the enemy were easily driven off. Leaving Salem, we had a rough mountain pass to go through, a place of all others where we might expect danger, and yet the train and artillery were started off without the show of a guard. The train of wagons passed through safely, but just as soon as

the artillery had fairly entered the gap, a party of rebs dashed down the side of the mountain, unharnessed the horses, and after cutting the wheels of the artillery wagons, started off over the mountain. As soon as word could be got to General Hunter, a cavalry force was started in pursuit and, I believe, succeeded in bringing back some of the horses. Some of the pieces were not so badly damaged but that we brought them away with us, but we were obliged to burn and destroy eight of the guns. Aside from that disaster, this raid has been a great success, but that leaves a black mark for us to look back upon. This gap, like most others we have passed through, is deep and narrow, mountains rising on either side at an angle of forty-five degrees, very rocky, a small stream winding from one side of the road to the other. It always makes me feel lonely to pass one of them, and yet I am glad when I hear there is one of them on our route. After having marched us three days and three nights, General Hunter concluded to let us rest Tuesday night, and you may be sure the boys were not sorry. After making coffee and frying meat, they laid down and slept soundly till morning. One of our men went out and found a sack of green tea, with over a bushel of tea in it. Wednesday we passed a house where a number of ladies had come together from a distance to get one more look at the old flag they so well loved. Our flag was unfurled, and three cheers given for the flag, and three for the ladies. Our bed that night was the rockiest place you ever saw. Gather together a lot of boulders out of the river, from the size of your fist to that of your head, throw them on the ground till you cannot see anything but stones, cover them with a single blanket, and you are ready to lie down. 'A hard bed,' I think I hear you say, and yet I never slept more sweetly than on the very same pile of stones. Thursday, 23d, we crossed three pretty high mountains, "Sinking Creek," "Spotts" and "Sweet Spring" mountains. While crossing these mountains, many of the teams gave out, making it necessary to burn the wagons. No less than fifty wagons were destroyed in this way in one day, and from 250 to 300 horses and mules gave out, and were shot by the rear guard to prevent them from falling into the enemy's hands. At the base of the "Sweet Spring Mountains" are the Sweet Sulphur Springs. This, though not so noted a place as the White Sulphur Springs, is fast becoming a place of some renown. The buildings, though not quite so extensive, are still sufficient for the accommodation of quite a number of guests. The main building is about 300 feet long, and finished off in very good style. There are two large baths, one for ladies and one for gentlemen, with dressing rooms for each. The water can be graduated from three feet deep to six, at the pleasure of the bathers. I merely tasted the water to see what it was like. It is warm and has a sickish, sulphurish, metallicish, nasty-ish taste that can not be described. I don't see what folks want to drink such stuff for. If they were compelled to do so, I am sure they would never stop complaining. The Red Sweet Springs are about a mile from the first, but are not much visited. Friday, 24th, marched to White Sulphur Springs. Little did I think, when I started on this raid, I would have an opportunity of visiting this great watering place of America, second only to Saratoga. The buildings are much more extensive, numbering over 100 cottages. I should think the main buildings must be nearly 400 feet long, with porches on either side; the basement story was used for culinary purposes, the first floor contained the dining-room and parlors, the former occupying the central part of the building, the latter the two wings; the dining-hall is about 300 feet long by fifty feet wide, the parlors about seventy-five by fifty; the second and third stories are used as rooms for guests, and though very small, the rooms are generally finished off in plain style. Everything has been removed since the breaking out of the war, and the whole thing looks desolate indeed. The cottages are divided as a general thing, into four rooms and a bath room, with high ceilings, large windows and doors, with porches in front, and high steps. On the 25th and 26th, marched as rapidly as we could. The men have been without bread for four days. (I have only been out three days.) We are living on fresh beef and coffee; 27th a supply train came up after we got into camp. I never saw such rejoicing. Some of the boys were so weak that they

could barely talk. The 29th, we passed the celebrated “Lover’s Leap,” and “Hawk’s Nest.” The latter, particularly, is a grand sight. You stand on an overhanging rock and look down several hundred feet into New River, which seems directly under you, and yet it takes a good man to throw a stone into the water. Looking up the stream, you have a fine view of the river, as it comes leaping dashing in its wild career over the rocks between the two mountains. We reached this place, (Gauley) June 29th, tired, dirty, worn out, etc., etc.”

The enemy’s infantry followed us to Bedford Gap, some of his cavalry, under McCausland, to Salem. There is but little to add to the excellent account of Walker. A few incidents of the march only remain to be added. The night before reaching “Sweet Sulphur Springs,” companies A and B, through some mistake, were left on picket on the top of Pott’s Mountain, and were there attacked. Gilbert G. Webster, of company B, was wounded in the arm. The companies made a good stand, and it was due to this that they escaped capture, for they were largely outnumbered. The companies rejoined the regiment about noon next day, pretty thoroughly exhausted.

Quartermaster Sergeant Walker, under date of June 28th, wrote in his diary: “Found a sack of grain in the train which I took. First we have had since leaving Salem.” This shows, as well as more words would do it, how the poor animals of the army fared. A great many of the horses giving out crossing the mountains would, after two or three hours rest and browsing in the woods into which they were turned loose, revive sufficiently to follow along, and were utilized by the men in carrying knapsacks, guns, etc. The poor animals were so hungry they would eat anything, and though the men were half starved themselves, they would cut brush, hunt grass and forage, as much for the horses that were carrying their knapsacks, guns and sick companions as for themselves. In this way a great many abandoned horses were saved and brought through in very good shape. During our halt at Meadow Bluffs, a private soldier...and I wish I knew his name for special mention here...came to our headquarters and gave the Colonel, Lieutenant Colonel and Adjutant each a very large, fresh onion. I do not suppose either of us ever expects again to taste anything half as delicious as those onions were, or to be presented with anything, while we live, that will draw from our hearts such profound thanks. Now and then our men would find among the mountains an “applejack” or illicit distillery. Then there would be “music in the air” for a time. Colonel Washburn’s teeth were not very good, and his attempts at “blessing” the tough meat issued to us was a caution to the Chaplain. We did not hear of President Lincoln’s re-nomination, which occurred on the 7th of June, at Baltimore, until the day before we reached Gauley Bridge.

The assertion has often been made that we might have captured Lynchburg had we pressed on the night of the 17th. Facts, since developed, show conclusively that we could not. After our victory at Piedmont, Vaughn took up a position in Rock Fish Gap, near Waynesboro. Two brigades of Breckenridge, Wharton’s and Echols’, were immediately sent there to reinforce Vaughn. As soon as Hunter was far enough up the valley to insure that he did not contemplate approaching Lynchburg by way of Rock Fish Gap, Breckenridge hastened to Lynchburg with the rest of his division, to which he also withdrew Vaughn, Wharton and Echols, and to which he was also able to add quite an army of home guards and convalescents, for Lynchburg and all the country about there was at that time filled with sick and wounded from Lee’s army. These forces alone nearly equaled Hunter’s army and they were put behind strong entrenchments and, supplied with artillery. But these were not all we met there on the 17th. On the 13th, Lee had sent Ewell’s corps, then under Early, from Cold Harbor, to proceed by way of Louisa and Charlottesville, and passing through Brown’s Gap, to get in Hunter’s rear, who was then supposed to be at Staunton. Striking the railroad at Charlottesville, on the 16th, Early learned of Hunter’s near approach to Lynchburg, when, hastily putting his men aboard cars, he pushed them rapidly on to Lynchburg, and on the 17th, half of Early’s corps had reached the place and the other half had reached it by noon of the 18th. It was part of Gordon’s and Ramseur’s divisions that Crook and Averill fought the evening of the 17th. Of the delay at Staunton no one complains, but that at Lexington?? has been criticized. But there was a sound reason for this. As Hunter started from Staunton he sent Duffie, with his division of cavalry, to demonstrate against Vaughn at Waynesboro, but finding him too strong for him he moved further South, and crossed the Blue Ridge at the Tye River Gap. From there he proceeded to Amherst Court House where he broke the Charlottesville & Lynchburg Railroad, and also at Avington Station. Imboden followed him, when Duffie turned on him and gave him a terrible whipping, capturing 100 prisoners, 400 horses, and a

part of Imboden's train. He destroyed, beside, some iron furnaces and a large quantity of commissary stores. Hunter sent couriers after him to return to the army and waited at Lexington for his return, which he did not do until the afternoon of the 13th. Duffie was evidently bent on distinguishing himself, though it might be at the expense of the success of the expedition. His destruction of the railroad was not sufficient, as has been seen, to keep Early's troops from being conveyed over the railroad, four days afterward, from Charlottesville to Lynchburg, and he caused a loss of two days at Lexington waiting for him.

The plan of General Grant's campaign comprehended a simultaneous movement, early in May, of Generals Sigel, Crook, Averill, and Burbridge upon Lynchburg, but it failed in the execution as entirely as did that of General Butler's against Petersburg. Sigel was defeated at New Market, and retiring to Cedar Creek was relieved by Hunter. General Crook was the only one successful in the part assigned him. He attacked and defeated Jenkins, at Cloyd's Mountain, on the 9th of May. He then advanced as far as Newbern, on the Virginia & Tennessee Railroad, where he was met by General Morgan, with a superior force, when he decided to give up the attempt to reach Lynchburg and return to Meadow Bluffs. Notwithstanding this first failure, General Grant determined to carry out his original plan, and organized other forces to cut off General Lee's communications by the Virginia & Tennessee Railroad, and, if possible, to occupy Lynchburg. General Hunter was reinforced, General Crook, General Averill and General Sheridan were to join him at Staunton or Charlottesville, and General Burbridge, in the neighborhood of Bonsack's Depot or Liberty. Had this plan not miscarried by the failure of Sheridan to reach us from the one side, and Burbridge from the other, the expedition would doubtless have been a complete success, for it would have been extremely hazardous for Lee to have detached troops enough, from his army confronting Grant, to have checked us.

On the 12th of June, the day that Hunter reached Lexington, Sheridan was forced to retreat from before Gordonsville with Torbert's and Gregg's divisions of cavalry, so that his movement did not even aid Hunter as a diversion, for Early reached Charlottesville on the 16th, about the date of Sheridan's return to White House. General Sheridan was given a lengthy letter of instructions to deliver to General Hunter from Grant, which, of course, never reached him. In it, Grant said: "After the work laid out for General Sheridan and yourself is thoroughly done, proceed to join the Army of the Potomac by the route laid out in General Sheridan's instructions." On the 16th Secretary Stanton wrote to General Stahel as follows: "General Sheridan, who was sent by General Grant to open communications with General Hunter, by way of Charlottesville, has just returned to York River without effecting his object. It is, therefore, very probable that General Hunter will be compelled to fall back into West Virginia." The "route laid out in General Sheridan's instructions" for joining the Army of the Potomac was the one pursued by Sheridan in his advance to and retreat from Gordonsville. The object of the expedition was plain enough: to destroy Lee's communications with the country and to weaken his lines before Grant. But history shows that the expedition had another quite unlooked for effect, and one much more far-reaching than either of the two objects named.

After the fall of Atlanta, Jefferson Davis told the people of Georgia that "an audacious movement of the enemy, up to the very walls of Lynchburg, had rendered it necessary to cover that vital point with troops otherwise intended for the relief of Atlanta." Burbridge, who was to co-operate with Hunter, was diverted from doing so by "Morgan's raid" into Kentucky, and finally into Ohio, where he and his whole force were captured. Thus it will be seen that "Hunter's raid," as it was termed, proved of very great importance to the Union cause in many ways, that it stirred up the enemy in several directions, and frustrated the plans of Davis and Lee more, perhaps, than anything occurring during the campaign of 1864.

An expedition attended with such important results cannot, in truth, be called a failure. General Hunter, himself, on June 28th, expressed the view, in a dispatch to the Secretary of War, that the expedition had been "extremely successful, inflicting great injury upon the enemy." And in this view the Secretary and General Grant fully coincided, and so did the country, as soon as the true state of facts became known. It was never intended by General Grant that Lynchburg should be held, even should it be captured. In his instructions to Hunter he said: "According to the instructions I sent General Halleck for your guidance, you were to proceed to Lynchburg *for a single day*. But that point is of so much importance to the enemy that in attempting to get it, such resistance may be met as to defeat your getting on to the road or canal at

all.” But we did get on to both the road and the canal, and destroyed both for long distances, and carried out instructions by remaining at Lynchburg a “single day,” and night too.

A letter written to the Athens (Ohio) Messenger by an officer of the 116th, from Gauley Bridge, under date of July 1st, 1864, sums up the results of the expedition as follows: “We destroyed the Virginia Central Railroad from near Waynesboro to its terminus near Covington. The destruction of the Virginia & Tennessee Railroad was almost complete from Lynchburg to Salem, a distance of sixty miles. Every mill, factory, furnace, foundry and shop in the valley, at which anything was ever made, or could be made, for the use of the rebel army, was destroyed. Perhaps \$30,000,000 will cover the loss to the rebels though many estimate it much greater. We captured 3,000 prisoners, killed and wounded about 2,000, and broke up entirely the rebel army in the Shenandoah Valley. All the furnaces and iron works of the Botetourt county were destroyed. These mainly supplied the rebel manufactories in Richmond with material for cannon, etc. The James River Canal was also badly used up for miles out of Lexington. Our loss will not exceed 1,500 men killed, wounded and missing. All of Hunter’s subordinate officers agreed that he had conducted the campaign admirably, and with great skill and energy. And General Crook, speaking of his division, says: The division became a little straightened for provisions, but came out in good shape, thus settling the efforts of some officers of his division to antagonize Crook against Hunter, and at the same time setting at rest the extravagant tales of suffering on the retreat.

Yet still the boys would always sing

*“General Hunter, on the Lynchburg raid,
D—d near starved the First Brigade.
Stuval, Stuval, etc.”*

Reaching Gauley Bridge, on the 29th of June, we rested until the 2d of July, when we marched down to Camp Piatt. At this place we embarked upon steamboats, and made our way tediously down the Kanawha, and up the Ohio to Parkersburg, frequently disembarking and marching by shoals in the river, the water being very low. As rough and uncouth as was our appearance when we first entered Parkersburg, in September 1862, it was far worse now. The clothing of the officers and men was in tatters and dirty, half were barefooted, and all worn down by the hardships of the expedition. To add to their misfortunes, the camp diarrhea had set in before we left Gauley Bridge, and had prostrated a great many men. We were truly “forlorn and shipwrecked brothers.” Getting near their homes on the 4th, many of the men of companies B, I, and G were permitted to visit their friends in Meigs and Athens counties, under a promise to rejoin us at Parkersburg on the 7th, which promise they kept. Colonel Charles G. Halpine, (“Miles O’Reiley,”) who was General Hunter’s Adjutant General, gave a magnificent dinner to the officers of the 116th Ohio and 5th West Virginia, at Parkersburg, in honor of their charge on the rebel works at Lynchburg. They were so scattered in moving, however, that many of them did not have the pleasure of enjoying the generous hospitality of this brilliant and gallant Irishman.

A great many of our Ohio friends met us here with cordial greeting. On the 9th, we took cars and started for our old home, the Shenandoah Valley. Reaching Cherry Run on the 10th, we found the railroad torn up. From there we marched to Martinsburg, where we camped, and remained one day, the 12th. The men made good use of their time inquiring after their wounded comrades, of whom they found the Union people of the place had taken the best of care. No place in Virginia contained better or truer loyal women than Martinsburg. Many of our men had also left clothes, and other property, in charge of Union people, upon their setting out for Lynchburg, in the spring. It was all safe for them, notwithstanding Early’s army had ransacked nearly every house, in search of property they knew had been left and sent back there by the army of Sigel and Hunter. We were, besides, given a fine reception by the citizens of the place, for the 116th was a favorite regiment when stationed there. The officers and men were invited to meals, and many a barefooted lad was shod and given clean under clothes, gifts that in their needy condition were priceless. Flags were displayed everywhere, and, generally, everything done that could show satisfaction and rejoicing over our return. Several of our convalescent men joined us here, some of whom had been hidden for a long time from the rebel raiders, by the Union people of Martinsburg and the surrounding country.

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