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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK SKETCH OF THE FIRST KENTUCKY
BRIGADE ***

SKETCH OF THE FIRST KENTUCKY BRIGADE

BY ITS

ADJUTANT GENERAL, G. B. HODGE.

FRANKFORT, KY.
PRINTED AT THE KENTUCKY YEOMAN OFFICE.
MAJOR & JOHNSTON.
1874.

TO

GENERAL JOHN C. BRECKINRIDGE,
ITS NOBLE COMMANDER,
TO THE
GALLANT SURVIVORS,
AND TO THE
MEMORY OF THE IMMORTAL DEAD
OF THE BRIGADE,
THIS SKETCH
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

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SKETCH OF THE 1ST KENTUCKY BRIGADE.

In the general history which will go down to posterity of such immense bodies of men as were gathered under the banners of the Confederate States of America, it is not likely that more than a brief and cursory reference can or will be made to the services of so small a force as composed the First Kentucky Brigade. Yet the anomalous position which it occupied, in regard to the revolution, in having revolted against both State and Federal authority, exiling itself from home, from fortune, from kindred, and from friends—abandoning everything which makes life desirable, save honor—gave it an individuality which cannot fail to attract the attention of the calm student, who, in coming years, traces the progress of the mighty social convulsion in which it acted no ignoble part. The State, too, from which it came, whatever may be its destiny or its ultimate fate, will remember, with melancholy and mournful interest, not, perhaps, unmingled with remorse, the career of that gallant band of men, who, of all the thousands in its borders inheriting the proud name and lofty fame of Kentuckians, stood forth fearlessly by deeds to express the sentiments of an undoubted majority of her people—disapprobation of wrong and tyranny. Children now in their cradles, youths as yet unborn, will inquire, with an earnest eagerness which volumes of recital cannot satisfy, how their countrymen demeaned themselves in the fierce ordeal which they had elected as the test of their patriotism; how they bore themselves on the march and in the bivouac; how in the trials of the long and sad retreat; how amid the wild carnage of the stricken field. Fair daughters of the State will oftentimes, even amid the rigid censorship which forbids utterance of words, love to come in thought and linger about the lonely graves where the men of the Kentucky Brigade sleep, wrapped in no winding-sheets save their battle-clothes, beneath no monuments save the trees of the forest, torn and mutilated by the iron storm, in which the slumberers met death. It has seemed to me not improper, therefore, that the story should be told by one possessing peculiar facilities for acquiring knowledge of the movements of detached portions of the force, and who, in the capacity of a staff officer, under the directions of its General, issued every order and participated in every movement of the brigade, who had not only the opportunity but the desire to do justice to all who composed it, from him who bore worthily the truncheon of the General, to those who not less worthily in their places bore their muskets as privates. A deep interest will always be felt in the history of the effort which was made, by men strong in their faith in the correctness of republican forms of government, notwithstanding the tyranny which the great experiment in the United States had culminated in, to reconstruct from the shattered fragments of free institutions upon which the armies of the Federal power were trampling, a social and political fabric, under the shelter of which they and their posterity might enjoy the rights of freemen. When the first seven Southern States seceded, and President Lincoln took the initial steps to coerce them, the Legislature of Kentucky, by an almost unanimous vote of the House of Representatives, declared that any attempt to do so by marching troops over her soil would be resisted to the last extremity. The Governor had refused to respond to the call of the Executive for troops for this purpose. The Legislature approved his course. But here unanimity ceased; effort after effort was made in the Legislature to provide for the call of a sovereignty convention. The majority steadily resisted it. As a compromise, the neutrality of the State was assumed, acquiesced in by the sympathizers with the North because they intended to violate it when the occasion was ripe; acquiesced in by the Southern men because, while their impulses all prompted them to make common cause with their Southern brethren, they believed that the neutrality of the State, in presenting an effective barrier of seven hundred miles of frontier between the South and invasion, offered her more efficient assistance than the most active co-operation could have done. The Legislature adjourned; the canvass commenced for a new General Assembly; delegates were elected, pledged to strict neutrality; the Northern sympathizers had been vigorous, active, and energetic, and unscrupulous. They had in every county organized “Home Guards;” arms were, by their connivance, introduced by the Federal Government in large quantities. On the first Monday in September the Legislature met, the mask was thrown off; neutrality was scouted; troops were openly levied for the Northern army, and the outraged Southern men revolted.

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Early in the summer of 1861, bodies of the young men of the State had repaired to Camp Boone, in Tennessee, near the Kentucky line, where were forming regiments to be mustered into the service of the Confederate States. Most of these had been previously members of the State Guard of Kentucky, and consequently had enjoyed the advantage of systematic and scientific drill. They were rapidly organized into three regiments of infantry, known as the 2d, 3d, and 4th Kentucky Regiments of Volunteers, the 2d having as its Colonel, J. M. Hawes, recently an officer of the United States Army, but who, with a devotion which almost invariably manifested itself among the officers of Southern birth, promptly and cheerfully gave up the advantages of a certain and fixed position in a regularly organized army, to offer his sword and military knowledge to the cause of Southern independence. He was soon succeeded by Colonel Roger Hanson. The 3d had as its Colonel, Lloyd Tighlman, the 4th Robert P. Trabue. Colonel Tighlman, before his regiment was actively in service, was made a Brigadier, and its Lieut. Colonel, Thompson, succeeded to the Colonelcy. These three regiments formed the nucleus of a brigade, to the command of which Brigadier General S. B. Buckner, recently Inspector General and active Commander of the Kentucky State Guard, was assigned by President Davis. To this command were afterwards added the 5th Kentucky, commanded by Colonel Thomas Hunt, the 6th, commanded by Colonel Joseph Lewis, Cobb's battery, and Byrne's battery of artillery.

On the 17th of September, 1861, General Buckner, with some Tennessee troops and the Kentucky regiments, moved to Bowling Green, in Kentucky, and occupied it, fortifying it and fitting it for the base of active operations of the Confederate armies in Kentucky, which it became for some months. One regiment of infantry and a battery of artillery was thrown forward to the bridge on Green river, under command of Colonel Hawes—the bridge, shortly after, was burned by the Confederate troops. Capt. John Morgan, a few days subsequently to this, reached this command with one hundred men from the interior of Kentucky. These men were mounted, to serve as scouts; and here commenced that career which afterwards gained for their fearless leader a continental reputation as a bold, daring, and effective partisan officer. Few men, indeed, with means so limited, and in the midst of movements so grand and stupendous that the career of general officers have been lost sight of, have won such a name and reputation. Of a mild and unassuming demeanor, gentle and affable in his manners, handsome in person, and possessed of all that polish of address which is supposed to best qualify men for the drawing-room and parlor, no enterprise, however dangerous, no reconnoissance, however tiresome and wearying, could daunt his spirits or deter him from his purpose. For months, with his handful of men, he swept the northern bank of Green river, cutting off the supplies of the enemy, destroying bridges necessary for their transportation, capturing their pickets, and harassing their flanks, moving with a celerity and secrecy which defied pursuit or detection. No commander of a detached post or guard of the enemy could flatter himself that distance from Bowling Green or disagreeableness of weather could protect him from a visit from Morgan. He was liable to be called upon at any hour, in any weather, or at any point beyond the intrenched camps of the Federal army. The earth might be soaked with rain, which for days had been falling, the roads might be impassable, the Green and Barren rivers with their tributaries might be swollen far beyond their banks, but over that earth and across those rivers, when least expected, came Morgan as with the swoop of an eagle; and, after destroying the munitions of the enemy, or capturing his guards, was away again, leaving behind him a polite note intimating he would call again soon, or perhaps telegraphing a dispatch to the nearest Federal commander, giving him full and precise particulars of the movements he had just made, and most provoking details of the damage he had just committed. Long after the Confederate army had retired from Kentucky, when the entire State was in undisputed possession of the Northern armies, many a Southern sympathizer found immunity and protection from maltreatment and outrage by the significant threat that Morgan would visit that neighborhood soon. And, indeed, during the disastrous retreat from Nashville, the tireless partisan, passing through Eastern Tennessee and Kentucky, far in the rear of the Federal army, fell upon their train at Gallatin, Tennessee, and lit up the spirits of the despondent Tennesseans by one of his bold and daring strokes. Even when the Southern army had passed the Tennessee river, when every available soldier of the South was supposed to be at Corinth to meet the overwhelming hosts of the invader, Morgan, gathering three or four hundred of his men, recrossed the river, fell upon the railroad train at Athens, Alabama, captured two hundred and eighty prisoners, and destroyed the cars. Ambushed, defeated, cut to pieces, and routed by greatly superior forces a few days afterwards, hardly had the news reached Louisville of his disaster, when, collecting two hundred of his scattered command, he fell like a thunderbolt upon the railroad train at Cave City, in the centre of Kentucky, capturing many prisoners, thousands of dollars in money, and destroying forty-three baggage cars laden with the enemy's stores.

Early in November, 1861, the Hon. John C. Breckinridge arrived at Bowling Green, when he resigned his seat as Senator from Kentucky, in the Federal Congress, and was immediately commissioned as Brigadier General, and assigned to the command of the Kentucky Brigade, General Buckner assuming command of a division of which the Kentucky Brigade was a component part. He assumed command on the 16th of November—having as his Chief of Staff and A. A. General, Captain George B. Hodge, and Aid-de-Camp, Thomas T. Hawkins. The brigade was ordered to Oakland Station, on the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, where, in connection with Hindman's brigade, it remained in observation of the movements of the enemy on the north bank of the Green river, who was known to be in great force at Munfordsville, and in his cantonments extending back towards Elizabethtown, and was supposed to be only waiting the completion of the Green river bridge, which he was repairing, to advance his entire column, estimated at 80,000 men, on Bowling Green and Nashville. Behind the curtain of the brigades of

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Hindman and Breckinridge, Gen. Johnston was rapidly pushing on the fortifications at Bowling Green; and by the latter part of January, 1862, they had become quite formidable.

It had, however, become doubtful whether the enemy would attempt the passage of the Green river. It was certain, if he did so, his true attack would be developed in a flank movement, by way of Glasgow and Scottsville, on Nashville, while there was left him the alternative of massing his troops at Paducah, then in his possession, and availing himself of his enormous supplies of water transportation, of moving by the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers on Forts Henry and Donelson, by a successful attack on those works, turning the flank of the Confederate forces at Bowling Green, opening the way to Nashville, and possibly enabling him to interpose between the Southern armies and their base of operations. To guard against this latter movement, the divisions of Generals Floyd and Pillow, and a portion of the division of General Buckner, were, about the 20th of January, moved, by way of Clarksville, to the support of Donelson. With this force marched the 2d Kentucky Regiment, which, after covering itself with imperishable glory in the terrible combat, of three days, at Fort Donelson, was, on the 16th of February, surrendered to the enemy; and passing into captivity, ceased to participate in the campaign of the spring and summer of 1862. [8]

By the 10th of February, definite information had been obtained by General Johnston of the movements of the enemy. He was convinced that an overpowering force had moved upon Forts Donelson and Henry; that a heavy column was pursuing Crittenden, after defeating and routing him at Fishing Creek, threatening Nashville on that flank; and that a force almost as large as the Confederate force at Bowling Green was held in hand by the enemy, to be poured across Green river and attack him in front, while the two bodies on his right and left united at Nashville and closed upon his rear. With the promptness and decision which characterized his high and serenely courageous mind, General Johnston determined to retire from Bowling Green and fall back on Nashville, where, uniting with the garrisons and troops in defense of Forts Donelson and Henry, should those places be found to be untenable, he could hold the divisions of the Federal General, Grant, in check, while he went to the assistance of Crittenden, and crushed the Federal column advancing by way of Cumberland Gap. The fortifications of Bowling Green were with every expedition dismantled; the government stores shipped as rapidly as possible to Nashville, and on the 9th of February an order was issued by Major General Hardee, commanding the central army of Kentucky, directing Generals Hindman and Breckinridge to repossess the Barren river and be in Bowling Green by the night of the 10th. The admirable discipline which General Breckinridge had exercised and maintained in and over his command, enabled him to comply promptly with the order, without confusion and with no loss of stores, equipments, or supplies. His brigade, marching at 8 o'clock A. M., on the 10th passed Barren river bridge at 3 P. M., and bivouacked three miles south of Bowling Green for the night. Hindman, being farther in the rear, lost a few of his scouts, and had hardly time to blow up the bridges over Barren river when the head of the enemy's column came into sight, and immediately commenced shelling the railroad depot and that portion of the track on which were lying the freight trains. These they succeeded in firing finally. [9]

When the retreat of the army commenced, Breckinridge's brigade was constituted the rear guard—General Hardee, however, being still in rear with the cavalry and light artillery. Notwithstanding the fact that cold, freezing, and intensely inclement weather set in; notwithstanding the fact that evidences of the demoralization which a retreat in the presence of an enemy always produces were too apparent in many divisions of the army, yet the soldierly manner in which Breckinridge brought off his brigade, losing not a straggler from the ranks, not a musket or a tent, speaks more creditably for him and for them than the recital perhaps of their deeds of daring in the field could do.

In truth, history records no sadder tale than the retreat of the Kentuckians from their native State. For the rest of the army there was yet hope. Far to the South lay their homesteads, and their families rested still in security. Between those homesteads and those families and the advancing foe were innumerable places where battle might be successfully offered, or where at least the sons of the South might rear a rampart of their bodies over which the invader could not pass. Time, political complications, mutations of fortune, to which the most successful commanders are liable, might at any time transform the triumph of the Northmen into disaster and defeat. Months must elapse before the advancing columns of the enemy could reach the South, and ere that time arrived pestilence and malarious disease would, amid the fens and swamps of the gulf States, be crouching in their lair, ready to issue forth and grapple with the rash intruders from a more salubrious clime. But for the Kentuckians all was apparently lost. Behind their retiring regiments were the graves of their fathers, and the hearthstones about which clustered every happy memory of their childhood; there, in the possession of the invader, were the rooftrees beneath which were gathered wives who, with a wifely smile gleaming even through their tears, had bidden their husbands go forth to do battle for the right, promising to greet them with glad hearts when they returned in the hour of triumph; there were the fair faces which for many in that band had made the starlight of their young lives; there were young and helpless children, for whom the future promised but suffering, poverty, destitution, and want; there, too, were the thousands who had with anxious and waiting hearts, groaning beneath the yoke of the oppressor, counted the hours until the footsteps of their deliverers should be heard. On the 13th of February the brigade crossed the line between Kentucky and Tennessee; a night in which rain and sleet fell incessantly was succeeded by a day of intense and bitter cold. Everything which could contribute to crush the spirits and weaken the nerves of men, seemed to have combined. But for those dauntless hearts, the bitterness of sacrifice, the weakness of doubt [10]

and uncertainty had passed, when, by a common impulse, the General, his staff, and the field officers dismounted, and, placing themselves on foot at the head of the column, with sad and solemn countenances, but with erect and soldierly bearing, marched for hours in the advance; and then was observed, for the first time in that brigade, through every grade and every rank, the look of high resolve and stern fortitude, which, amid all the vicissitudes of its fortunes characterized the appearance of its members, and attracted the attention and comment of observers in every State through which it passed. Henceforth for them petty physical discomforts, inconveniences of position, annoyances of inclement weather, scantiness of supplies, rudeness of fare, were nothing; they felt that they could not pass away until a great day should come which they looked forward to with unshaken confidence, and with patient watchfulness. They might never again dispense in their loved native State the generous hospitality which had become renowned throughout the continent; what remained to them of life might be passed in penury and in exile. Their countrymen might never know how they had lived or where they had died; venal historians might even teach the rising generation to brand their memories with the stigma of treason and shame, but a day was yet to come of the triumph of which they felt they could not be deprived; days, weeks, months might elapse, they could bide their time. State after State might have to be traversed, great rivers might have to be passed, mountain ranges surmounted, hunger and thirst endured, but the day and the hour would surely come when with serried ranks they should meet the foe, and their hearts burning with the memory of inexpressible wrongs, should, in the presence of the God of battles, demand and exact a terrible reckoning for all they had endured and all they had suffered.

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The night of the 14th was passed at Camp Trousdale, where summer barracks, which had been erected to accommodate the Tennessee volunteers stationed there for instruction, afforded but inadequate protection against the bitter cold of the night. These were the next night burned by the cavalry which covered the retreat, and afforded to the people of Tennessee the first evidence that their State was about to be invaded. The spirits of the army, however, were cheered by the accounts which General Johnston, with thoughtful care, forwarded, by means of couriers, daily, of the successful resistance of Fort Donelson. The entire army bivouacked in line of battle on the night of the 15th at the junction of the Gallatin and Nashville, and Bowling Green and Nashville roads, about ten miles from Nashville. It was confidently believed that by means of boats, a large portion of the force would be sent to the relief of Fort Donelson. But on the morning of the 16th, it began to be whispered, first, among the higher officers, spreading thence, in spite of every precaution, to the ranks, that Donelson not only had fallen, but that the divisions of Floyd, Pillow, and Buckner had been surrendered as prisoners of war. Rumors of the wildest nature flew from regiment to regiment, the enemy were coming upon transports to Nashville—the bridges were being destroyed—the forts below the city were already surrendered—the retreat of the army was cut off—and as if to confirm the rumors, during the entire morning, the explosion of heavy artillery was heard in front and in the direction of Nashville. This proved to be caused by the firing of guns at Fort Zollicoffer, which, after having being heavily charged, were, with their muzzles in the earth, exploded to destroy them. At 4 P. M., on the 16th, the head of the brigade came in sight of the bridges at Nashville, across which, in dense masses, were streaming infantry, artillery, and transportation and provision trains, but still with a regularity and order which gave promise of renewed activity and efficiency in the future. At nightfall General Johnston, who had established his head-quarters at Edgefield, on the northern bank of the Cumberland, saw the last of his wearied and tired columns defile across and safely establish themselves beyond.

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Amid all the disasters and gloom of the retreat, the great captain had abundant cause of self-gratulation and confidence. He had reached Kentucky in October of the previous year to find the plan of occupation of the State to be upon three parallel lines of invasion, and yet all dependent upon a single point as the base of operations and the depot of supplies. Vicious and faulty as these unforeseen events proved it to have been, he had made the most of the situation. He found an army of hastily levied volunteers, badly equipped, miserably clad, fully one half stricken down by disease, destitute of transportation, and with barely the shadow of discipline. Never able to wield more than eighteen thousand fighting men at and around Bowling Green, with these men he held at bay a force of the enemy of fully one hundred thousand men. The Southern States were protected from invasion. Time was obtained to drill and consolidate the volunteer force. The army was sustained in the fertile and abundant grain-producing regions of Kentucky, transportation gathered of the most efficient character, immense supplies of beef, corn, and pork collected from the surrounding country and safely garnered in depots further South for the coming summer campaign; and when, finally, the defeat of Crittenden, and the overwhelming attack on Donelson had apparently cut off his retreat, leaving him eighty miles in front of his base of operations and his magazines, he had with promptness, unrivaled military sagacity, and yet with mingled caution and celerity, dismantled his fortifications at Bowling Green, transmitted his heavy artillery and ammunition to Nashville, and extricated his entire army from the jaws of almost certain annihilation and capture. The enemy came from the capture of Fort Donelson, in which he had lost in killed and wounded a force equal to the entire garrison of the place, to see, to his astonishment, an army in his front undismayed, and held in hand by a General who had just displayed to the world military qualities of the highest order, and a genius for strategy which seemed to anticipate all his plans and as readily to baffle them. In the capture of the army defending Donelson the Confederacy lost, as prisoners of war, the gallant and idolized Buckner, Hanson and his splendid regiment, and many Kentuckians connected with the staff of those officers.

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The night of February 16th found the army encamped safely upon the Murfreesboro and

Nashville road; but it found the city of Nashville in a condition of wild and frantic anarchy.

The Capital of Tennessee, Nashville, contained, ordinarily, a population of about 30,000 souls. The revolution had made it the rendezvous of thousands fleeing from Kentucky, Missouri, and Western Virginia. So great was the throng of strangers, that lodging could be with difficulty procured at any price. Every house was filled and overflowing, boarding was held at fabulous prices, and private citizens whose wealth would, under most circumstances, have secured their domesticity from intrusion, were, perforce, compelled to accommodate and shelter strangers whom the misfortunes of exile and persecution had thrown upon the world. Many business houses and warehouses had been transformed into hospitals for the sick soldiery of the forces in Kentucky. So great was the influx of invalids that in many private families as many as three and four of the sick were to be found. Here, too, were brought hundreds of artificers and artisans, the government having established manufactories of various kinds to supply the wants of the army. In no single city of the Confederacy was to be found so large and so varied a supply of all those articles which are essential to the maintenance of a large and well-appointed army. During the fall and winter, under government patronage and assistance, many thousands of hogs and bullocks had been slaughtered and packed. These were stored in the city. Immense magazines of ammunitions, of arms, large and small, of ordnance stores, of clothing, of camp equipage, were located here. Capacious warehouses were filled with rice, flour, sugar, molasses, and coffee, to the value of many millions of dollars. The Chief Quarter-Master and Commissary were accustomed to fill at once the requisitions of the armies of Kentucky and of Missouri, of Texas and the Gulf. It may be safely estimated that, at the fall of Donelson, Nashville had crowded within its limits not less than sixty thousand residents. It never seems to have occurred to the citizens, or, indeed, the government, that Nashville was really in danger. A few unimportant and valueless earth-works had been thrown up, looking to its defense, but no systematic plan of fortification had been fixed upon or followed up; nothing but the situation of Fort Donelson, on the State line, prevented the enemy's gunboats, or even his unarmed transports, from coming up to the city and mooring at its wharves.

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On Sunday morning, as the citizens were summoned by the church bells to the various houses of worship in the city, congratulations were joyously exchanged upon the successful defense of Fort Donelson. Ere the hours of morning devotion had expired, the news of its fall came like a clap of thunder in a summer sky. The most excited and improbable stories were circulated, yet no exaggeration, no improbability, seemed too monstrous to command credence. Donelson was more than an hundred miles down the river, yet it was insisted that the enemy's boats were within a few miles of the city. The passage of the army across the Cumberland and through the town added to the general panic and confusion. Consternation, terror, and shameful cowardice seemed to have seized alike upon the unthinking multitude and the officers who were expected to evince fortitude and manliness; and now commenced a wild and frantic struggle for escape. Thousands who had never borne arms, who were, by all the laws of civilized warfare, exempt from the penalties of hostilities, were impressed with the conviction that the safety of their lives depended upon escaping from the doomed Capital. On all the railroads from the city trains were hourly run, bearing fugitives a few miles into the interior. The country roads were thronged with vehicles of every character and description; the hire of hacks rose to ten, twenty, fifty, even an hundred dollars for two or three hours' use. Night brought no cessation of the tumult. It rained in torrents, but all through the night might be seen carriages, wagons, drays, and tumbrils crowded with affrighted men and their families. Tender and delicate women, feeble and carefully nurtured children, were to be found, exposed to the inclemencies of the weather, in open carts and wagons, abandoning luxurious and costly houses for the precarious sustenance of doubtful and uncertain charity in their flights. Nor was the disgraceful panic confined to non-combatants or timid citizens. Men who had gained high reputation for courage and presence of mind seemed to have ignored every sentiment of manliness in their indecent haste to secure safety; nay, some who were high in military position, whose province and whose duty it was, peculiarly and particularly, to guard public property and protect government stores, used their official position to obtain trains of cars upon which were packed their household furniture, their carriages, their horses, and their private effects; and having effected this, they made haste to be gone.

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Troops were left in the city by order of Gen. Johnston, but the mob spirit rose triumphant. For many days the store-houses of the government stood open and abandoned by their proper custodians. Every one was at liberty to help himself to what he desired; and it may well be supposed that the thousands who crowded the streets were not slow to avail themselves of the privilege. Not only were hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of provisions carried away and sequestered, but the very streets and highways were strewn with bales and packages of raiment and clothing hastily taken away and as recklessly abandoned. It was currently estimated that public property to the value of at least five millions of dollars was dissipated and destroyed in a few hours. There were not wanting, however, noble and brilliant examples of firmness, courage, and forethought. On Tuesday following the surrender, the wagonmaster of the 2d Kentucky Regiment reached the head-quarters of the Kentucky Brigade with fourteen empty wagons with which he had escaped from Fort Donelson. These the gallant Breckinridge loaded with supplies of subsistence and clothing, which were the means of comfort to his command months after the abandonment of Nashville. Even when the enemy was hourly expected in the city he might have been seen on the northern bank of the Cumberland superintending the transit of herds of well kept cattle brought from Kentucky, that his command might be furnished with fresh rations during their further retreat.

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Slowly and steadily the army fell back from Nashville until, on the 22d of February, it reached

Murfreesboro. Effecting then a junction with the army of General Crittenden, which had retreated from Fishing Creek, and for the first time since the departure from Bowling Green, General Johnston found himself in condition to offer and accept battle from the enemy.

It was evident to the great man who commanded the department of the West that he could not linger in Tennessee. He was doubtless able to successfully resist the force under Gen. Buell which had now occupied Nashville, but it was well known that none of the force occupied in the reduction of Donelson had ascended the river. With unlimited supplies of water transportation, nothing was easier than for them to pass round the peninsula, and, ascending the Tennessee river, land a force in his rear and place him in the same dilemma from which he had just so skillfully extracted his army. A retreat behind the Tennessee was inevitable, and the strategical position he occupied at Murfreesboro opened to him three routes. He might pass over to the turnpike road from Nashville, through Columbia and Pulaski, parallel with the railroad, and cross at Florence, or, throwing himself into the mountain passes of Eastern Tennessee, in their wild gorges and rugged ravines, he might defy pursuit and retreat upon Chattanooga. This, however, would have been a virtual abandonment of the Mississippi and its valley. Still a third route was open. Due south from Murfreesboro ran a road through a comparatively unfrequented country, passing directly through Huntsville to Decatur, on the southern bank of the Tennessee river. While this route offered the advantage of a middle course between the two great lines of macadamized roads east and west of him, enabling him, in case of necessity, to pass over to either; it was not without objections. Lying, for the most part, through cultivated and deep bottoms, on the edge of Northern Alabama, it rises abruptly to cross the great plateau thrown out from the Cumberland Mountains, here nearly a thousand feet above the surrounding country, and full forty miles in width, covered with dense forests of timber, yet barren and sterile in soil, and wholly destitute of supplies for either man or beast. Two weeks of unintermitting rain had softened the earth until the surface resembled a vast swamp; but along this route the Commander-in-Chief determined to pass; and, after occupying a week in reorganizing his army, a cloud of cavalry, consisting of Morgan's Squadron, the 1st Kentucky Cavalry, the Texas Rangers, Wirt Adams', Scott's, and Forrest's regiments were thrown out in the direction of the enemy, with orders, as they fell back, to burn the cotton and destroy the bridges; and the further retreat thus commenced. [17]

History records no example of a retreat conducted with such success under such adverse circumstances. Rain continued to fall almost without intermission; it was spring, the season most unpropitious for transits over country roads, and the passage of such numbers of horses and wagons, rendered the route literally a river of liquid mud. For miles at times the wagons would be submerged in ooze and mire up to the hubs of their wheels, while the saturated condition of the earth rendered comfortable encampments impossible. The ascent of the plateau, although only about two miles of distance, consumed a day for each brigade, and time was everything to men in their condition; yet steadily, earnestly, hopefully, they toiled on until, on the 10th of March, the head of the army had reached a point within three miles of Decatur, but with the Tennessee swollen far beyond its banks, flooding the country for miles in every direction, and sweeping with resistless force over the roads and fords. Happily, at this point, the Memphis and Charleston Railroad crossed the Tennessee; and, as a precaution against its freshets, the railroad company had constructed an embankment fifty feet in height and two miles in length on which were laid their rails; this embankment was still ten or twelve feet above the surrounding waters, and reached to the terminus of the bridge. Its narrow width of seven feet precluded the possibility of anything like orderly movement; but over it were passed the infantry and cavalry without cessation either day or night. The artillery and baggage-wagons were placed on platform cars, and at a given signal the track was cleared while they were run to and over the bridge. Patience, perseverance, and indomitable will finally accomplished the work, and on the 16th the Kentucky Brigade, bringing up the rear of the army, marched through Decatur. A month had elapsed since the fall of Donelson, but the army was at last behind the Tennessee, and all was not yet lost. Still the danger was not yet over. The enemy commanded the river and might, by vigorous movements, prevent the junction of the army of Central Kentucky with that of General Beauregard, which had fallen back from Columbus, in Kentucky, and was now endeavoring to unite with that under General Johnston. In truth, it seemed that, if the enemy was prompt and vigorous in his movements, this would be impossible. The Memphis and Charleston Railroad runs nearly due east and west, pursuing for ninety miles an almost parallel course with the Tennessee river—never diverging from it more than twenty miles, and in many places approaching to within eight or ten. Numerous streams which drain the country and empty into the main river were crossed by it, and on the margins of these streams are almost invariably found swamps requiring heavy trestle-work to support the rail. A little celerity on the part of the enemy might at any hour enable him to destroy a section of this trestle-work, and thus cut off the communication. To transport the army by the country roads was impossible, the torrent-like rains which had impeded the progress of the army through Tennessee had continued to fall after the passage of the river. In many places the country was covered with sheets of water too deep to be forded, while the roads, not thus submerged, were impassable for horsemen. It was difficult for the various corps to pass far enough from Decatur to find encampments. Within a mile of the town might be counted scores of wagons, on the various roads, sunk to their beds in mire, and which the quagmire of oozing earth around them prevented the possibility of unloading. Hindman's brigade of Arkansas troops was thrown forward by rail to Courtland immediately. Crittenden was pushed beyond him to Iuka, and on the 21st the Kentucky Brigade, under General Breckinridge, was dispatched, with its field pieces, ammunition, and baggage, to Burnsville, within fifteen miles of Corinth, by cars, while the horses and wagons were sent to struggle through as best they could [18] [19]

on the dirt roads.

The remainder of the army was gradually pushed on to Corinth, meeting there the army of Beauregard, and confidence and hope were once more restored. The danger of an immediate surprise was over; but the greatest vigilance was necessary to meet and prevent the enemy from landing in force, and, by strength of numbers, accomplishing that which he had failed to do by celerity of movement. For several days his gunboats swept up and down the Tennessee river, shelling the banks, and apparently seeking a favorable point to disembark from his transports. The little village of Eastport, situated some eight miles from Iuka, it was supposed, offered him peculiar advantages, and preparations were made to resist him by throwing up earth-works, and placing in position two thirty-two pounders. He continued, however, to make feints, landing a few regiments at various points, but almost immediately withdrawing them, until information was received, which convinced the Commander-in-Chief that the attack of the enemy would be on Corinth, where is located the junction of the Mobile and Ohio Railroad with the Charleston and Memphis Railroad. Meantime, the greater portion of the division of General Crittenden, composed of Statham's brigade and Bowen's brigade, was sent forward to Burnsville, and ordered to report to General Breckinridge. Hindman's force had passed on to Corinth, and was now incorporated with, and formed part of, the corps d'armee of General Hardee. Scouts were kept constantly reconnoitering the roads leading to the Tennessee river, and vigorous efforts made to bring the army to a high state of efficiency in discipline and equipment. The enemy, it was now known, had landed seven divisions of his army, amounting to about forty-two thousand men, at a point on the Tennessee river, near Pittsburg Landing, and was now encamped in position, his right resting on a small stream called Owl Creek, and his left on Lick Creek, the streams running nearly parallel to each other, four miles apart. To meet and crush this force, or cripple it before General Buell, with his army, which was advancing through Tennessee, could reinforce it, was the object of the Commander-in-Chief, preparatory to which, his army was re-organized and cast into four divisions or corps.

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The first, under General Bragg, consisted of 9,422 men.

The second, under General Polk, numbered 4,855 men.

The third corps was commanded by General Hardee, 15,524 men.

And the reserve, consisting of the Kentucky Brigade, Statham's brigade, and Bowen's brigade, amounted, according to the returns in the Adjutant General's office, on the night of April the 5th, to 6,894 men, commanded by Brigadier General John C. Breckinridge. The cavalry amounted to three thousand.

Two roads, the one from Corinth, the other from Burnsville, lead to Pittsburg Landing; they unite on a ridge four miles from the river, and thence the road, gradually descending a long slope, leads to the Tennessee, along a spur of the hilly range, with lateral slopes, to Lick Creek on the one side and Owl Creek on the other. The whole tongue of land between these streams is densely wooded with unbroken forests; and as it approaches within a mile of the river, is covered, in addition, with a thick mass of undergrowth sweeping to its banks. On this unfavorable ground the battle was to be fought. On the morning of April the 4th, at 3 o'clock, A. M., the reserve corps marched from Burnsville, by way of Farmington and Monterey, expecting to reach the point of junction of the two roads that night. A heavy rain storm, however, obstructed its progress, as well as that of the other divisions of the army, and it was not until the night of the 5th of April that it reached the junction. Rations had been provided for three days, but no tents and no baggage were taken—the want of which added greatly to the discomfort of the commands, and rendered many unfit for duty. The delay and the tired condition of the troops on the night of the 5th caused a difference of opinion to prevail at the council of war as to the propriety of attacking; but General Johnston determined to proceed. The other divisions had, on the night of the 5th, reached the positions assigned them, and were posted thus: the third corps formed the first line of battle within half a mile of the enemy, who seems to have been unconscious of the blow about to be struck. In rear of that the first corps, under General Bragg, bivouacked in order of battle a quarter of a mile distant. The second corps, under General Polk, was massed in column of brigades on the road from Corinth, immediately in rear of the junction with the Monterey road, and had orders to move up and form in line of battle as soon as the troops in advance had moved on sufficiently, while the reserve corps, under General Breckinridge, was massed in column of brigades on the Monterey road, with orders to move when General Polk's corps had passed, and hold itself subject to the contingencies of the day. At 5 o'clock, A. M., on the morning of April 6th, General Hardee drove in the pickets of the enemy, and the terrible battle of Shiloh commenced. Steadily and irresistibly he swept on, driving the enemy before him, until the camps were reached, where the resistance became most desperate. The second line of battle, under General Bragg, had by this time been brought up and intermingled with the first line, and the central advanced camp of the enemy was abandoned by him only, however, that he might make the more stubborn resistance behind it and in front of the others. Observing an attempt of the enemy to flank on the extreme left, General Beauregard sent orders to detach the Kentucky Brigade, and send it to that point. This was done—the command now devolving upon Colonel Robt. P. Trabue, Colonel of the 4th Kentucky and senior Colonel of the brigade. During the whole of that bloody day, from 9 o'clock, when it became engaged, it maintained the reputation of its native State, and slowly but surely pushed back the force opposed to it. It never gave way or was broken, though terribly cut to pieces; it never charged that it did not break the ranks of the army; and it was found, when the action closed in the evening, after ten hours of continuous fighting, in the front

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rank of the army. It will be necessary to refer more particularly to its movements as we progress. Owing to the dense mass of the undergrowth the troops were brought in close proximity to each other, and the firing was consequently destructive, murderous, and deadly.

Two o'clock had arrived; the whole army was and had been engaged for hours, with the exception of Bowen's and Statham's brigades of the reserve corps. The enemy had been driven through, and from half of his camps, but refused to give back further. Giving way on his right and left wings, he had massed his force heavily in the centre, and poured an almost unintermitting hail of fire, murderous beyond description, from his covert of trees and bushes, when General Breckinridge was ordered up to break his line. Having been most of the day in observation on the Hamburg road, marching in column of regiments, the reserve was now moved by the left flank, until opposite the point of attack, rapidly deployed in line of battle, Statham's brigade forming the right and Bowen's the left. The long slope of the ridge was here abruptly broken by a succession of small hills or undulations of about fifty feet in height, dividing the rolling country from the river bottom, and behind the crest of the last of these the enemy was concealed; opposite them, at the distance of seventy-five yards, was another long swell or hillock, the summit of which it was necessary to attain in order to open fire; and to this elevation the reserve moved, in order of battle, at a double-quick. In an instant the opposing height was one sheet of flame. Battle's Tennessee regiment, on the extreme right, gallantly maintained itself, pushing forward under a withering fire and establishing itself well in advance. Little's Tennessee regiment, next to it, delivered its fire at random and inefficiently, became disordered, and retired in confusion down the slope. Three times it was rallied by its Lieutenant Colonel, assisted by Colonel T. T. Hawkins, Aid-de-Camp to General Breckinridge, and by the Adjutant General, and carried up the slope, only to be as often repulsed and driven back—the regiment of the enemy opposed to it, in the intervals, directing an oblique fire upon Battle's regiment, now contending against overwhelming odds. The crisis of the contest had come; there were no more reserves, and General Breckinridge determined to charge. Calling his staff around him, he communicated to them his intentions, and remarked that he, with them, would lead it. They were all Kentuckians, and although it was not their privilege to fight that day with the Kentucky Brigade, they were men who knew how to die bravely among strangers, and some, at least, would live to do justice to the rest. The Commander-in-Chief, General Albert Sidney Johnston, rode up at this juncture, and learning the contemplated movement, determined to accompany it. Placing himself on the left of Little's regiment, his commanding figure in full uniform, conspicuous to every eye, he waited the signal. General Breckinridge, disposing his staff along the line, rode to the right of the same regiment, and with a wild shout, which rose high above the din of battle, on swept the line, through a storm of fire, over the hill, across the intervening ravine, and up the slope occupied by the enemy. Nothing could withstand it. The enemy broke and fled for half a mile, hotly pursued, until he reached the shelter of his batteries. Well did the Kentuckians sustain that day their honor and their fame. Of the little band of officers who started on that forlorn hope, but one was unscathed, the gallant Breckinridge himself. Colonel Hawkins was wounded in the face; Captain Allen's leg was torn to pieces by a shell; the horses of the fearless boy, Cabell Breckinridge, and of the Adjutant General, were killed under them, and General Johnston was lifted dying from his saddle. It may well be doubted whether the success, brilliant as it was, decisive as it was, compensated for the loss of the great Captain. [22]

Few men have moved upon the stage of public life who have been the peers of Albert Sidney Johnston. Tall and commanding in person, of gentle and winning address, he was the most unassuming of men; yet his mind was cast in nature's largest mould; possessed of that high and serene courage which no reverses or trials could overcome, patient in difficulties, earnest in effort, firm in purpose, he had been invested by the President with the powers of a Pro-Consul. His sway extended from the Alleghenies to the western confines of Texas. Supervising the movements of five separate armies, in countries hundreds of miles apart, his capacious mind embraced the details of all, while exercising almost unlimited authority over four millions of people. No stain of personal or selfish ambition rests upon his noble character. The nation and the army felt that there was always hope while Sidney Johnston lived, and yet his death was not without a grand and crowning triumph. Well he knew the battle must be won; fully as well he knew, to win the battle, that charge must be successful. The last vision which fell upon his glazing sight was the flying ranks of the enemy; the last sound which struck upon his ears, now sealing in death, was the exultant shouts of his army, telling him that the field was won, which he believed secured the triumph of the cause for which he offered up his life. [23]

Pure and lofty had been the great soldier's
life;
Grand and worthy even of himself was his
death.

The general repulse of the enemy had now thrown the reserve on the extreme right of the Confederate line. Far on the left might be heard the musketry of the Kentucky Brigade and the roar of its artillery as it pushed its columns forward. It was fighting its way to its gallant General, and the hour was drawing near when they were to meet in the pride of glorious success. General Bragg, observing that behind the right flank of the enemy dense masses of troops were massed, from which reserves were drawn to sustain his line, concentrated the fire of his batteries, loaded with spherical case and shell, upon them. The effect was magical. The right of the enemy broke and fled, the centre followed, then the left wing; and charging along the whole line, the Confederate army swept through the camps of the enemy, capturing three thousand prisoners and driving the Federal force cowering beneath the shelter of the iron-clad gunboats; and then [24]

and there, in the full fruition of success, the Kentucky Brigade and its General met for the first time during that bloody day since their separation in the morning, both covered with glory; both proud of and gratified with each other. The terrible day of reckoning so long and so patiently waited for had come at last; and as they strode over the field of blood their pathway to vengeance had been lit by the gleam of bayonets and the lurid glare of the cannon's flash. The greatest conflict which as yet had taken place between the sections had been won by the scorned and despised "Southern mob." For fifteen hours they steadily drove before them the finest army of the Federal Government. Superior in numbers, in discipline, in arms, and equipments, the army of Grant had lost its camps, its baggage, provisions and supplies, and the panic-stricken remnant of it huddled cowering under the banks of the Tennessee, only protected from total annihilation by the gunboats lying in the stream, a disorganized and terror-stricken mob, while its dead and wounded lay in thousands for miles behind the Confederate army. By some fatal misapprehension of those in authority, which it is useless now to discuss, the full fruits of the victory were not gathered. The Confederate army paused when it had only to stretch forth its hands and grasp as prisoners of war the whole hostile force. Night fell quickly over the scene of carnage, and the tired heroes, worn out with the long and harassing march of the preceding days, and the fifteen hours of mortal combat, sank, by regiments and brigades, upon the blood-soaked earth, amid the dead and dying, to sleep—a sleep so deep and profound that not even the groans of the wounded, or the deep boom of the heavy guns of the enemy, which were fired during the whole night, could break or disturb it. No record exists of a contest between such numbers of men in a country so densely wooded and in a space so confined. Brilliant generalship General Johnston undoubtedly displayed in surprising the enemy, and in the skill with which he handled raw troops, hurling mass after mass upon the enemy and beating him in detail; but there was neither room nor opportunity for strategy or manoeuvre—it was a death grapple of man to man—stern and deadly combat in which the men of the South maintained their long and proud pre-eminence.

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During the night, General Buell with a fresh army of twenty-five thousand men, nearly as large as the Confederate army originally was, came up, hastily crossed the river, and threw himself in front of the army defeated on the 6th. The Confederate army, in the meantime, after despoiling the Federal camps, had been withdrawn beyond them and formed anew in order of battle. Skirmishing commenced at 6 o'clock, A. M., but the engagement did not become general until 9 o'clock, A. M., from which time, until 2 P. M., the Northern armies were again, as on the day before, steadily driven back through its camps and forced towards the river. A heavy and continuous rain had commenced falling at midnight after the battle of the 6th, and continued until near daylight. The effect of this upon men wearied and exhausted, as was the Southern army, was terrible. The wounded who had fallen late in the evening, and near the enemy's lines, could not be recovered; they were consequently exposed during the entire night, and endured sufferings of the most agonizing character. It was impossible, too, in the darkness and confusion, to reform the lines for a night bivouac with that accuracy desirable in such critical circumstances, and the proximity of the abandoned camps of the enemy afforded a temptation to straggling which, in too many cases, proved irresistible, and, as was seen during the battle of the next day, demoralized many corps, and impaired the efficiency, to a great extent, of the army, and it may, with truth, be said, led to the loss of the second day's battle. So great, indeed, had been the diminution of the ranks by death, wounds, and straggling, that at no time during the contest of the 7th was General Beauregard enabled to bring more than fifteen thousand effective men to hand in battle. The army of the enemy under General Grant had been totally defeated, and had only escaped complete rout and annihilation by its inability to cross the Tennessee river, and the protection of the gunboats; thousands had been slain, thousands wounded, thousands captured, and thousands demoralized, but in a force so large as it originally was (estimated by its own officers at forty-two thousand men) there were, of course, large masses capable of effective service on Monday; to these was to be added the force of Buell of twenty-five thousand fresh troops, and it may be safely estimated that, notwithstanding the reverse of Sunday, and the immense loss of the enemy on that day, he took the field on Monday with quite forty thousand combatants, or nearly three times the Southern force. The leaders of the Confederate army were fully advised of the reinforcement, and of the peril which threatened the Confederate army in a second conflict in its exhausted condition, but they deemed it necessary to cripple this force before withdrawing from the field.

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The Kentucky Brigade which had preserved, to a great extent, its organization and discipline, was again stationed upon the extreme left. Its battery of artillery, commanded by Capt. Byrne (Cobb's battery having on Sunday been destroyed in battle), was engaged for three hours with two batteries of the enemy—firing during the duel more than one thousand cartridges, and finally silenced both. The infantry, drawn up in order of battle as a support to the battery, stood enthusiastic spectators of the tremendous cannonade; and, although frequently suffering severely from the grape of the enemy, more than once broke spontaneously into a shout of encouragement and admiration at the gallant manner in which Byrne handled his guns. The enemy hurled charge after charge of infantry against it, but unsuccessfully. The fifth regiment of infantry, commanded by Col. Thos. H. Hunt, charged in turn, routing the opposing force, but with some loss to its force, losing many valuable officers. Colonel Robert Trabue, of the 4th Kentucky Regiment, as senior Colonel of the brigade, commanded it on this, as on the preceding day, with conspicuous gallantry and marked soldiery ability.

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But there is a limit to human endurance. The battle of the 7th was fought by General Beauregard with but fifteen thousand men. Exhausted by the struggle of the preceding day, he had received no reinforcements, and he determined, at 2 o'clock, P. M., to withdraw. In good order, and with the precision of a parade, division after division was withdrawn. General Breckinridge, with his

own brigade and Statham's brigade, bringing up the rear, and bivouacking at the summit of the ridge, during the night, within sight of the enemy's lines. A soaking rain fell all night upon the wearied troops of the rear guard, while the rest of the army slowly made its way to Corinth.

Many of the noblest of the sons of Kentucky had fallen; but conspicuous in position and character were two men who, in the same discharge, in the same regiment, and within a few feet of each other, fell mortally wounded.

George W. Johnson, of Scott county, Kentucky, had passed more than forty years of his life in the peaceful pursuits of agriculture. Singularly modest and retiring in demeanor, he had seemed to scorn the turmoil of public life and the undignified contest for public place. The soul of honor and high integrity, he was respected by all who came in contact with him. Earnest and sincere in purpose, his course in all things was open, to a proverb; cultivated in mind, he was a profound thinker, if not an active participator, in national politics. Early in the history of secession he had arrived at the conclusion that the separation was final; and with all the earnestness of his straightforward nature he had urged that Kentucky should share the fate and cast her fortunes with the South. When it was evident that the Legislature of Kentucky had sold and bartered her honor to the Federal Government, he promptly abandoned home and its tranquil enjoyments to cast his lot with those of his countrymen, who were gathering at Bowling Green to resist the attempt at coercion; and yet in an act of revolution, the strong reverence of the man for law, order, and regular government, manifested itself. Mainly and almost wholly to his efforts is due the formation of the Provisional Government of Kentucky, of which he was elected the head; and when the army retreated from Kentucky, gathering his Council around him, he accompanied it in all its vicissitudes and movements. On Sunday, during the battle of Shiloh, he served as a volunteer Aid-de-Camp to the commanding officer of the Kentucky Brigade, until his horse was killed under him, when, seizing a musket, he took his place in the ranks of the 4th regiment and fought on foot during the remainder of the day. Monday morning found him in the same humble position, assuming all the duties and sharing all the dangers of a simple private in the ranks. At eleven o'clock he fell, shot through the body, remaining alone and unaided on the field while the army fell back, and during the long and inclement night which succeeded. He was found on the morning of Tuesday by the enemy, and died in his camp. None who knew him can doubt that through the long hours of that day of agony, and the silent stillness of that night of suffering and pain, his great heart was consoled by the conviction of the swift coming independence of his country.

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Thos. B. Monroe had early entered public life. His firmness of character, depth of information, and brilliancy of talent, indicated him as a leader of men in the first hours of his manhood. Called before he was thirty years of age to the Secretaryship of State, he had zealously and determinedly advocated the secession of the State. Disappointed, as were thousands of others, at her lukewarmness, he had resigned the Secretaryship, and, making his way through the lines of the Federal army to Bowling Green, had been appointed Major of the 4th Kentucky Regiment. The promise of his military career equaled that of his civil life. A few weeks only was necessary to place him high in the estimation of the senior officers of the army, and to win for him the unbounded confidence of his men. He fell, mortally wounded, within a few feet of Governor Johnson, and died on the field of battle, bequeathing his sword to his infant son, and with the last breath, requesting he might be told "his father had died in defense of his honor and the rights of his country."

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The morning of the 8th of April was consumed in falling back to the junction of the Corinth and Burnsville roads, where General Breckinridge stubbornly took his stand, with his force bivouacking in the open air, sinking often to their boot-tops in mud, drenched nightly with the rain, he and they obstinately refused to move an inch until the wounded in the hospitals were removed. Again and again the enemy sent out strong columns to dislodge him. Sometimes these were charged by the cavalry under Forrest and Adams, and driven back in disorder, losing many prisoners; sometimes, overawed by his firm and dauntless front, they retired without attacking. For five days he thus held his position, his whole force subsisting on rations of damaged bread and raw pork. When he did move every wounded man had been sent forward; the army was safe in its lines at Corinth. On the 13th of April he marched, at the head of his band of heroes, wasted now to spectres, haggard with hunger and suffering, into Corinth. He had won for himself, throughout that entire army, the reputation of a skillful General, a brave and courageous captain, and had now the ardent love and devotion of strangers as well as friends, and was the idol of the Reserve. At Corinth he received the just reward of his high and soldierly conduct, the commission of a Major-General, and passed to the command, permanently, of a division. Here appropriately ends the history of these troops as a brigade. They served throughout the war in other brigades and divisions, but no longer continued to act as one organization.

The cause of Southern independence has gone down in blood. These men and their compeers had elected to try their cause in the tribunal of last resort, the forum of battle. The verdict has been rendered against them; there is no expectation, or, perhaps, wish, for further appeal. Hanson fell mortally wounded at Murfreesboro, Helm died at Chickamauga, Thompson was slain on the very spot of his birth and his infancy in Kentucky, to which he had returned after three stormy years of absence. Buckner surrendered his sword, last of all of the commanders of the South, in the extreme western confines of the Confederacy, and only when the advancing wave of Federal conquest, after sweeping across the face of the continent, had borne to his very feet the wreck of the nation whose soldier he deemed himself. Breckinridge, in exile with saddened eyes, strives through the mists of the great lakes of the north, to catch some glimpse of the land he loved so

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ferverently and served so faithfully. Of their less distinguished comrades, hundreds are lying all along the route of the sad retreat from Bowling Green, consigned to unconsecrated earth, their requiem the sighs of their sorrowing comrades. Many are resting by the lonely banks of the Tennessee and beneath the deep shadows of the tropical foliage of Baton Rouge. They will sleep none the less tranquilly in their quiet and unmarked graves because the dear land for whose deliverance they fought so long and so well, is ground by the heel of centralized power. Some survive, their mutilated forms monuments of a heroism which would have illustrated the days of Bayard or of Coeur de Lion. The memory of neither the living nor the dead "will be rendered infamous" until the peoples of the earth have ceased to honor manliness of spirit, freedom of thought, and heroism of deeds. Imbued with the loftiest sentiments which ever animated the bosoms of men, they went forth to poverty, to exile, to suffering, to battle, and to death, for what they believed to be the maintenance of constitutional liberty and free government.

Selfish ambitions and personal aspirations had no abiding place in their world. Men bore the firelock and served as subalterns, who could, with brilliant genius, have wielded the baton of Generals. Among them but one ambition existed, who should most faithfully serve, who should most steadfastly die. Kentucky has no cause to blush for them. The principles they upheld had been taught them on her soil; they are embalmed in the archives of her Legislatures, enunciated in manifestoes of her conventions. Wayward though she may deem these children in the assertion of her rights, they are still her sons. Not now, perhaps, but in the fulness of coming time, the proud old mother will, with an eager zeal, gather these her offspring to rest in the only fitting place, her honored bosom. Not now, perhaps, but in the coming time, on that monument which she has erected at her Capital to those who have in the past, and will in the future, serve her, she will inscribe their names and write beneath them, "these, too, were my children, and died in what they believed was the defense of my honor." We who saw the gallant dead shrouded in their gory cerements, await with calm confidence the coming of that time.

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Transcriber's Note

Variable spelling is preserved as printed.

Capitalisation of place names is preserved as printed.

Page 5—the author refers to Colonel Lloyd Tighlman, rather than the more usual spelling, Tilghman. This is preserved as printed.

The following amendments have been made:

Page 5—Byrnes' amended to Byrne's—"... and Byrne's battery of artillery."

Page 7—Hawkin amended to Hawkins—"... and Aid-de-Camp, Thomas T. Hawkins."

Page 7—conection amended to connection—"... where, in connection with Hindman's brigade, ..."

Page 24—vengeance amended to vengeance—"... their pathway to vengeance had been lit ..."

Page 29—Murfresboro amended to Murfreesboro—"Hanson fell mortally wounded at Murfreesboro, ..."

Page 30—requium amended to requiem—"... their requiem the sighs of their sorrowing comrades."

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK SKETCH OF THE FIRST KENTUCKY BRIGADE

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