

A humorous dare-devil--the very man to suit my purpose.—BULWER.

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Battle of Cassville Number.

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Battle of Cassville, Ga.

May 24th, 1864.

One of the most notable of minor encounters between the Confederate and Federal troops, during the Atlanta Campaign, was the fight between Wheeler's cavalry and the convoy of a Federal wagon train, at Cassville, on May 24th, 1864.

Regarding this combat, and the momentous occurrences immediately preceding it, we copy the following from "*The Mountain Campaigns in Georgia, or War Scenes on the W. & A.*":

"On the 19th of May, Johnston took position near Cassville for what he intended should be the great battle of the campaign.

Of this he says:

"The Confederate army was drawn up in a position that I remember as the best that I saw occupied during the war—the ridge immediately south of Cassville with a broad, open, elevated valley in front of it, completely commanded by the fire of troops occupying its crest. The eastern end of this ridge is perhaps a mile to the east of Cassville. Its southwest end is near the railroad, a little to the west of Cass Station. Its length was just sufficient for Hood's and Polk's corps, and half of Hardee's, formed, as usual, in two lines, and in that order from right to left. The other half of Hardee's troops prolonging the line, were southwest of the railroad on undulating ground, on which they had only such advantage as their own labor, directed by engineering, could give them. They worked with great spirit, however, and were evidently full of confidence. This gave me assurance of success on the right and in the center, where we had very decided advantage of ground."—(JOHNSTON'S NARRATIVE, page 322.)

During the afternoon, the Federal artillery commenced firing upon Hood's and Polk's troops. This, with a heavy skirmish fire, continued until dusk.

The beautiful village of Cassville was between the two lines. The contest about the village was very severe, especially between the batteries, which

were posted on the ridges confronting each other. Sharp skirmishing and fighting occurred on the streets. Many of the houses were riddled with balls, and the fine college buildings, especially, were pierced through with shot and shell. Some of the dwellings were also fired by these and consumed.

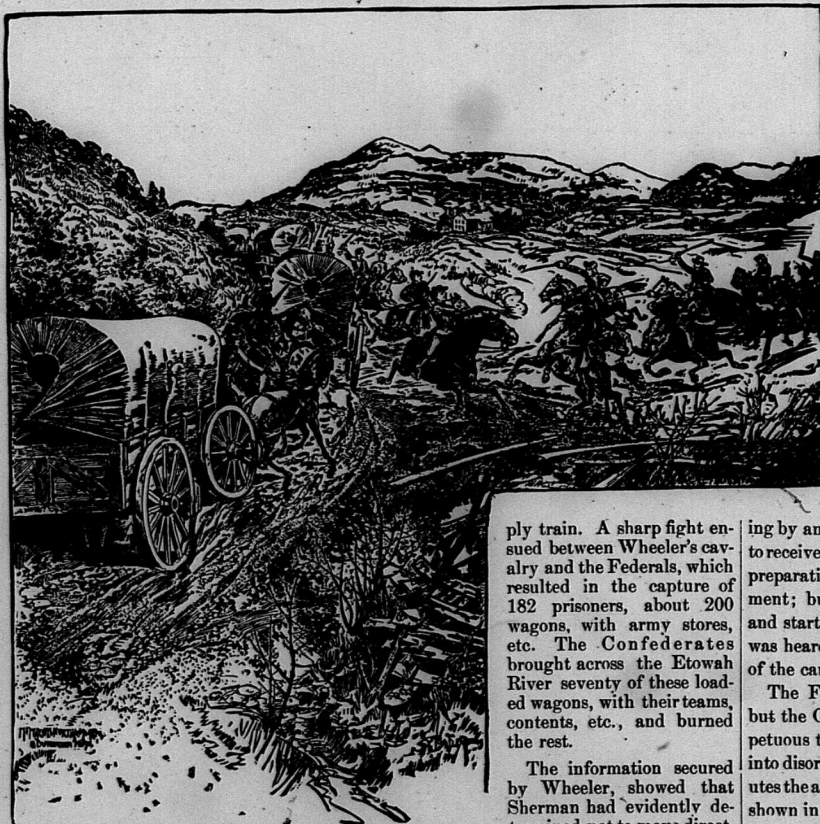
At a council of war, held that night, Generals Hood and Polk expressed to General Johnston their fears that they

River, and crossed it the next day.

On the 22d of the month, General Wheeler was instructed to go north of the river with his cavalry, and ascertain the movements of the Federal army. He soon received information that Sherman was moving westward, as if to cross the Etowah near Stilesboro and Euharlee, and on the 24th, in the vicinity of Cassville, encountered the troops guarding a large sup-

ply train. A sharp fight ensued between Wheeler's cavalry and the Federals, which resulted in the capture of 182 prisoners, about 200 wagons, with army stores, etc. The Confederates brought across the Etowah River seventy of these loaded wagons, with their teams, contents, etc., and burned the rest.

We merely here refer to the capture of the wagon train by the Confederate cavalry.



CAPTURE OF A FEDERAL WAGON TRAIN.

Near Cassville, Ga., May 24th, 1864.

could not hold the positions assigned them, because of a possible enfilading fire from a Federal battery on the opposite ridge. General Hardee stated that he could hold his position, although it was a less favorable one, so far as the nature of the ground was concerned.

Johnston was very unwilling to abandon the position without a battle; but finally, in deference to the judgment of two of his three Lieutenant-Generals, consented to do so; and accordingly fell back to the Etowah

Railroad; but to proceed via Dallas and Burnt Hickory, against Marietta. This movement was a difficult one, being through a rough, densely-wooded country, with few roads and these very indifferent, and, furthermore, away from the railroad, his main channel for supplies."

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The information secured by Wheeler, showed that Sherman had evidently determined not to move directly against the very strong position at Allatoona Pass, on the Western & Atlantic Railroad; but to proceed via Dallas and Burnt Hickory, against Marietta. This movement was a difficult one, being through a rough, densely-wooded country, with few roads and these very indifferent, and, furthermore, away from the railroad, his main channel for supplies."

Concerning the abandonment of the very strong position which the Confederate army occupied on the heights south of Cassville, and General Johnston's judgment at the time and since,

It has been said to us by parties who were present that the scene at the beginning of this fight was to the Federals as startling as its results were important to the Confederates.

The long train of some two hundred or more wagons was slowly making its way down the road leading from Kingston into Cassville, when, suddenly some of the advanced guard of the convoy discovered, coming down the lane on the opposite side of the town, a body of horsemen. Within a minute or two another body was seen approaching by another road. Hastily forming to receive their enemy, they made such preparation as was possible at the moment; but the next instant the wild and startling sound of the "rebel yell" was heard, and then the sharp crack of the carbines.

The Federals attempted resistance; but the Confederate attack was so impetuous that everything was thrown into disorder, and then in a few minutes the affair was over with, the result shown in the extract from *The Mountain Campaigns in Georgia*, as seen above.

The army and medical stores which the Confederates captured with this wagon train were of immense benefit to Johnston's army; but one of the most important results of this movement was the securing of information as to Sherman's intended operations.

Almost a week had elapsed from the time Johnston had retired from Cassville, and nothing definite was known of Sherman's plans as to the movement south of the Etowah river. This information was direct, to the effect that