

Illinois infantry, held Young's and a portion of Sears's and Cockrell's [should be Cockrell's and Young's] Brigades at bay for nearly two hours and a half. [We were delayed about an hour, and that by the entanglements that prevented us from reaching the parapet; besides, we were under fire from guns everywhere.] The gallant Col. Redfield, of the Thirty-Ninth Iowa, fell, shot in four places, and the extraordinary valor of the men and officers of this regiment and the Seventh Illinois saved to us Alatoona.

The capture of the redoubt by Cockrell and Young under the fire of six pieces of artillery, two in fort "C" and one in a battery in advance of the fort, three in fort "T," and musketry fire from every place, besides the 904 men in the redoubt, ends the first act of the tragedy.

It is proper here to give a description of this scene by quoting from an address made by Col. William Ludlow, Corps of Engineers, United States Army, who was with Gen. Corse during the battle, to the Michigan Commandery, Loyal Legion, at Detroit, April 2, 1891. In referring to the capture of redoubt "R," he said:

But the appalling center of the tragedy was the pit in which lay the heroes of the Thirty-Ninth Iowa and the Seventh Illinois. Such a sight probably was never presented to the eye of heaven. There is no language to describe it. With all the glad reaction of feeling after the prolonged strain of that mortal day, and the exultant surge of victory that swelled our hearts, it was difficult to stand on the verge of that open grave without a rush of tears to the eye and a spasm of pity clutching at the throat. The trench was crowded with the dead, blue and homespun, "Yank" and "Johnny," inextricably mingled in the last ditch. Our heroes, ordered to hold the place to the last, with supreme fidelity, had died at their posts. As the Rebel line ran over them they struck up with their bayonets as the foe struck down, and, rolling together in the embrace of death, we found them, in some cases, mutually transfixed. The theme cannot be dwelt upon.

I will now go on with Corse's report, and let him tell his story of the battle in his own way.

So completely disorganized were the enemy that no regular assault could be made on the fort until I had the trenches all filled and the parapets lined with men. The Twelfth Illinois and the Fiftieth Illinois, arriving from the east hill, enabled us to occupy every foot of trench, and keep up a line of fire that as long as our ammunition lasted would render our little fort impregnable. The broken forces of the enemy enabled them to fill every hollow and take every advantage of the rough ground surrounding the fort, filling every hole and trench, seeking shelter behind every

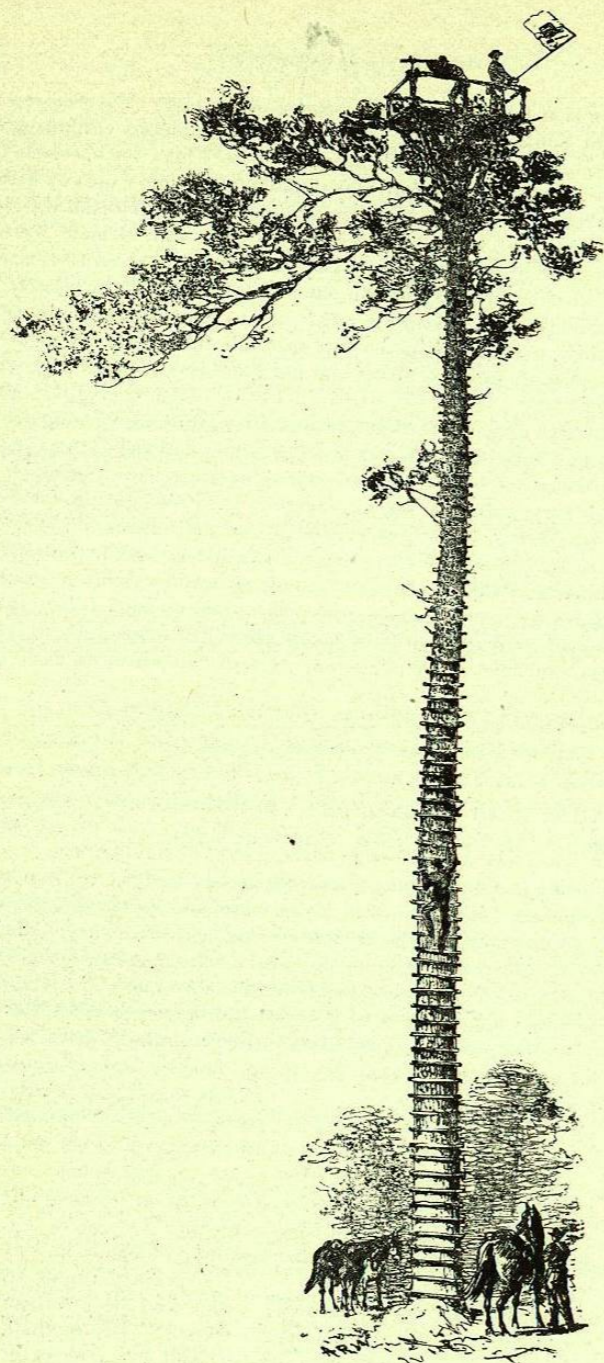
stump and log that lay within musket range of the fort. We received fire from the north, south, and west face of the fort, completely enfilading our ditches, and rendering it almost impracticable for a man to expose his person above the parapet. An effort was made to carry our works by assault [This is an error. We had no scaling ladders, besides the ditch was *solid full* of Corse's men who found shelter there], but the battery, Twelfth Wisconsin, was so ably managed and so gallantly fought as to render it impossible for a column to live within one hundred yards of the works. Officers labored constantly to stimulate the men to exertion, and almost all that were killed or wounded in the fort met this fate while trying to get the men to expose themselves above the parapet, and nobly setting them the example.

The enemy kept up a constant and intense fire, gradually closing around us, and rapidly filling our little fort with the dead and the dying. About 1 P.M. I was wounded by a rifle ball, which rendered me insensible for some thirty or forty minutes, but managed to rally on hearing some persons cry, "*Cease firing*," which conveyed to me the impression that they were trying to surrender the fort. Again I urged my staff, the few officers left unhurt, and the men around me to renewed exertions, assuring them that *Sherman would soon be here with reinforcements*. The gallant fellows struggled hard to keep their heads above the ditch and parapet in the face of the murderous fire of the enemy now concentrated upon us.

Here we have the astonishing official statement that his men would not expose themselves enough to fire over the parapet or out of the ditch, and that most of the officers lost their lives in "nobly setting them the example;" and this is also established by Col. Ludlow in his address, where he says:

Rowett's order to "*cease firing*" had, of course, nothing to do with the cry of "*surrender*." It is true that there were men in the fort ready to surrender or to do anything else in order to get out of it alive. Happily these were few, and most of them lay prone, close under the parapet, *playing dead*, with the combatants and wounded standing and sitting upon them. If I mistake not, *Corse himself*, at least for a time, *was holding down one of these living corpses*, who preferred to endure all the pain and discomfort of his position rather than get up and face the deadly music that filled the air with leaden notes. . . . It was absolutely necessary to keep room for the fighting force along the parapet, so the wounded were drawn back, and in some cases shot over and over again. The dead were disposed of in the same way, except that as the ground became covered with them they were let lie as they fell, and were stood or sat upon by the fighters. . . . The slaughter had been frightful.

One of our guns was disabled from the jamming of a shot, and we were out of ammunition for the other two. . . . I recall distinctly the fact that a regimental flagstaff on the parapet, which had been *several times* shot away, fell again at a critical moment toward the end of the action. There was a mad yell from our friends outside, and a few cries of "sur-



SIGNAL TREE, ALLATOONA, OCT. 5, 1864.

render" among our own people, but a brave fellow leaped to the summit of the parapet, where it did not seem possible to live for a single second, grasped the flagstaff, waved it, drove the stump into the parapet, and dropped back again unhurt. His action restored confidence; a great Yankee cheer drowned the tumult, and no cry of "surrender" was afterwards heard.

Here now is presented the testimony of Corse himself, and of Col. Ludlow, that the men would not expose themselves, and that they cried "cease firing," and "surrender." I know, as do hundreds of others now living, that the fire of the fort was silenced, because our men were close up; and if any one inside the fort or in the ditch exposed his head, instantly it became the target for several Confederates. Confederates moved about with impunity, and I called the attention of my staff to Johnson (Cockrell's flag bearer) riding up to the north side of the fort, sitting quietly on his horse, and listening to what was going on in the fort. In a recent letter from him he writes to J. M. Brown, of Atlanta: "I remember riding up very close to the fort. The distance was short, as I was close enough to tell what the Federals were doing in there." After 12 M. the Confederates merely watched for any person exposing his head above the parapet, and so I am sure that the fire described was not so severe as related by Gen. Corse, but it was very fatal.

Gen. Corse goes on with his report, and writes that about 2:30 P.M. the enemy massed a force (behind a small house) which he threw into great confusion, and that "from this time on until 4 P.M. we had the advantage of the enemy, and maintained it with such success that they were driven from every position, and finally fled in great confusion, leaving their dead and wounded, and our little garrison in possession of the field."

It is hardly possible to crowd into a short paragraph more errors than are found in the four lines above, and most of them he well knew to be false. It is true, no doubt, that he was not aware of the information sent me that induced me to withdraw my troops. That dispatch was received at 12:15 P.M. The Cartersville road, running north, passes within a few yards of fort "C," and then continues some two hundred and fifty yards on through the captured works. It was open to my infantry, but was there not life enough in the two forts, "C" and "T," to shoot down some of the horses and mules passing by within short

pistol shot if I attempted to move the artillery, baggage wagons, and ambulances and block the road if I decided to move *north* to avoid Sherman's troops marching from the south to the relief of Allatoona?

So I resolved to obtain possession of the Acworth and Dallas road before it was occupied in force by the Federals, trusting to their slow and cautious movements. To this end, I first ordered all the artillery except one battery to start at once to the Allatoona Creek bridge to join the Mississippi regiment left there, and hold that position. Next, Sears was directed to withdraw immediately from the north side in front of fort "T," and Cockrell to commence at 1:30 P.M.; and, owing to the rough hillsides, *to come out in squads, or individually.* Although Sears began the movement over an hour before Cockrell and Young did, the latter were all collected on the ridge first, and sat there under the shade of the trees, within sight and easy rifle range of fort "C," until about 3 P.M., waiting for Sears, who had to go around the pond made by the Yankees damming up Allatoona Creek. During all this time but few shots were fired by the enemy. One, however, was fired at us, and it killed a man who had appropriated a fine pair of cavalry boots from the stores, and he fell dead at my feet where we were sitting. In the meantime I went among the wounded men who could not walk over the rocky hills to our ambulances, and explained to them why they would have to be left, and that surgeons had been detailed to remain with them. They gave me thanks without complaint.

After I showed Gens. Cockrell and Young the dispatches I had received, and informed them of my intention not to remain and make an assault on fort "C," lest reinforcements for the garrison should arrive before we could leave the place, they demurred, and said their men were mad, and wanted to remain and capture the place. Col. Gates, of the Missouri Brigade, declared that he would capture fort "C" in twenty minutes after the arrival and distribution of our ammunition, by way of the sally port. He asserted that they were so crowded inside that but few men could fire.

I adhered to my decision to withdraw, because the men had already been three days and two nights without rest or sleep, and that they could not pass a third night without sleep, and risk having to fight reinforcements momentarily expected; and the

subsequent arrival of troops from Cartersville at 8 P.M. proved the correctness of my judgment; also Martin's Brigade reached Allatoona next morning.

About 3 P.M. the last of Sears's men arrived on the ridge near the fort where we rested awaiting them, and we then left the ridge and moved to the Cartersville road, where the wagons were left. Cockrell was now ordered to proceed with the infantry force to the Allatoona Creek bridge, and join the Mississippi regiment and artillery already there on the Dallas road. I rode down to the battery still in position on Moore's Hill to give instructions, and remained there sometime, not a little astonished at the scene presented to my view. The declining sun, seen through the calm, hazy atmosphere, shone red, like the rising of the full-orbed moon, on the fortifications before us. All was silent now where the battle raged so long, and the mellow light gleamed so gently down on the wounded and the dead that I remarked to the officers and men around me: "Silence, like the pall of death, rests over Allatoona; it is as lifeless as a graveyard at midnight." I even went up an inclined tree and used my glasses in vain to discover a human being. And so Corse's statement that we "were driven from every position, and finally fled in great confusion," leaps over the bombastic and loses its force in ridiculous excess of inaccuracy.

Corse, in his report, says that he brought with him 165,000 rounds of ammunition, and Ludlow states that "it was all expended except two hundred and fifty rounds." All the artillery ammunition Corse had in fort "C" was expended, and he got a man to go after some from fort "T," and he returned safely with an armful. See his report.

I will pause here awhile, that you may make a survey of the field of battle at 1:30 P.M.

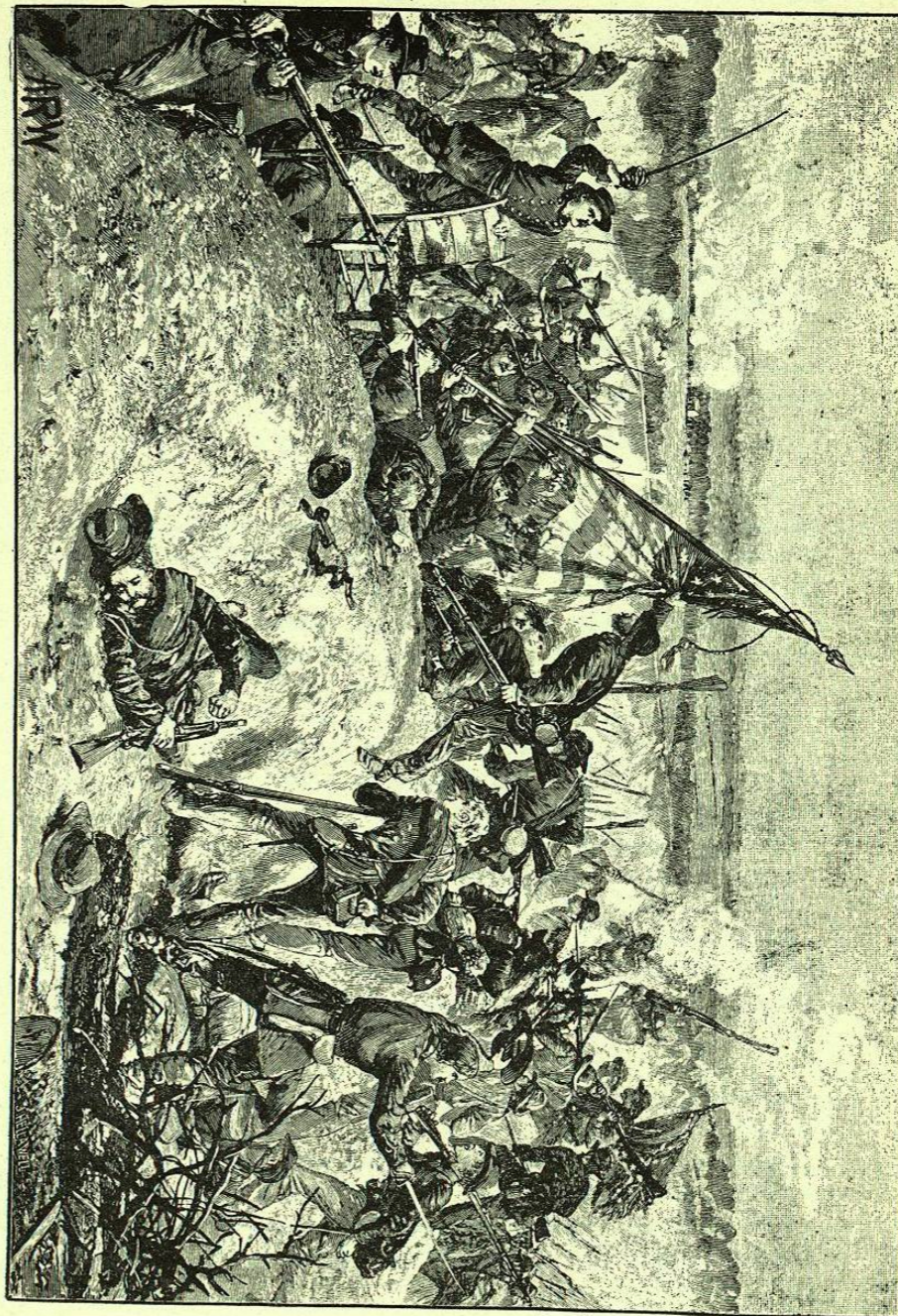
For over two hours there had been pent up in fort "C," inside and in the ditch outside, the Thirty-Ninth Iowa, the Seventh Illinois, the Fiftieth Illinois, the Ninety-Third Illinois, the Twelfth Illinois, two companies of the Fifty-Seventh Illinois, and their artillery, 1,453 in number, less the killed, badly wounded, and prisoners resulting from their defense of the redoubt "R."

The fort, built for artillery mainly, had but seventy-seven yards of parapet, which made it so dangerous for any one to expose his head above the parapet that their men would not fire

voluntarily, "and most of their officers were killed or wounded in setting the men an example;" and they passed the word to "cease firing." They cried "surrender." Some "played dead," and the combatants stood on the "living corpses." Others sat down on them. Even Corse himself used one for a seat after he was wounded (Ludlow). They were out of water. Their ammunition was nearly all expended. Their firing had slackened to a musket shot at intervals. They let us withdraw without molestation, and we sat in the shade of the trees in full view of the fort, within musket range, from 1:30 P.M. until 3 P.M. awaiting Sears. They saw us all leave the ridge at the last named hour. At 4 P.M. Corse sent dispatch No. 23: "We still hold out." So they were in the fort then, and did not come out until the Confederates were all out of sight. The officers tried to keep up the spirits of their men by assuring them that "Sherman will soon come" (Corse's report). The hope of speedy relief prevented utter despondency, and they waited and waited, hoped and hoped for the fulfillment of the encouraging promises implied in the dispatches sent them by Sherman, as: "Hold fast, we are coming;" "Sherman moving in force, hold out;" "Sherman working hard for you;" "Near you." With his troops in this condition, and in the face of all these facts, Corse officially publishes to his commander and to the world, in a vainglorious manner, that the Confederates "were driven from every position, and finally fled in great confusion, leaving their dead and wounded, and our little garrison in possession of the field!!!" It is a beautiful description of an event that never happened.

It must have been pretty soon after we left Allatoona that Gen. Green B. Raum, commanding a division of cavalry that was hovering around *between* the Etowah bridge and the Allatoona, arrived and made a social call on Corse, and sympathized with him in his afflictions; but he must have left at an early hour, for he went to Cartersville that evening and sent a dispatch, which will be found, No. 25, dated October 5.

Soon Sherman was informed that the Confederates had retreated, and had taken the road to Dallas. So he checked his troops that were marching on Allatoona. However, Corse's train, expected every hour during the battle, returned to Allatoona at 8 P.M. with the remainder of Rowett's Brigade. Some cavalry



BATTLE OF ALLATOONA—CAPTURE OF REDOUBT "R."