

# The Bloomfield Times.

TERMS:—\$1.25 Per Year,  
IN ADVANCE.

AN INDEPENDENT FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

{ 75 Cents for 6 Months;  
40 Cts. for 3 months.

Vol. VII.

New Bloomfield, Pa., Tuesday, September 23, 1873.

No. 38.

## The Bloomfield Times.

IS PUBLISHED EVERY TUESDAY MORNING, BY  
FRANK MORTIMER & CO.,  
At New Bloomfield, Perry Co., Pa.

Being provided with Steam Power, and large  
Cylinder and Job-Presses, we are prepared  
to do all kinds of Job-Printing in  
good style and at Low Prices.

### ADVERTISING RATES:

Transient—8 Cents per line for one insertion  
12 " " " " two insertions  
15 " " " " three insertions  
Business Notices in Local Column 10 Cents  
per line.  
For longer yearly adv'ts terms will be given  
upon application.

## THE SCOUTS' ADVENTURES.

ABOUT the middle of April I received orders to report at the front. I had been working at the headquarters of another division, further east, and was glad of the order to send me up the Rapidan, the more so as I received a hint that a scout had been planned for me. Reporting at Stevensburg, or in the Federal camp opposite, I was turned over to two scouts who had served several months with the general, and told to secure from them such information as I desired in regard to the country south of us. When I came to think the matter over, I found that they could only aid me in one way; which was to give me some idea of the Confederate force in Stevensburg, and along the road leading past Pony Mountain, and thence running southwest, or nearly so, to Old Tavern, Mine Run, etc., points celebrated afterwards as hotly contested battlefields. I had traveled the road once, had been at Chancellorsville, Old Tavern, and other points on the pikes, and only wanted to know what was required of me by the general, and something of the force of troops around Pony Mountain and at points beyond.

I was told by one of the scouts, who had crossed the ford, passed the mountain, and been five miles beyond, that the enemy was in heavy force along the road, as it seemed the idea of the Confederate commander that the Federal troops, on the opening of the campaign, would force the ford, and endeavor to advance toward Old Tavern by the regular route.

The general informed me that I was to cross, enter Stevensburg, and not return until I was thoroughly competent to report the strength of the enemy guarding the road between the town and Old Tavern, making the longest and most dangerous expedition which I had ever undertaken. It was not to be a scout, for scouts seldom enter the enemy's camp, but a regular spy expedition, where I must constantly carry my life in my hand, the road being lined by Lee's troops in winter quarters. While acting as scout and spy in the army I always made it a rule never to undertake an expedition without first counting all the chances for and against me; and after I had canvassed the prospects of this one I came to the conclusion that I would be arrested, tried, convicted and hung as a spy within twenty-four hours after crossing the river. However, I was there to obey, and the chances being against me made no difference with the general. He wanted information, and I do not suppose that the news of my death while trying to obtain it for him, would have occupied his mind more than five minutes by the clock. This is not intended as a reflection on the humanity of the army generals, for they had no such feeling; at least that is my experience. Many a private soldier forgot that there was such a word, and made war and its ghastly attendant horrors his sole study; and as for commanders, a soft heart would have resulted in a court-martial for neglect of duty. However, I gave no thought, after my resolution was taken, to what might happen, and on the afternoon of a certain Wednesday had received all the instructions which the general saw fit to give. He had some idea of the route and its dangers, and did not add that I was to make the journey with the speed which might be expected of an express train.

"You will cross the river as you choose, plan as you see fit, go as fast or as slow as you like, and come back, if possible, within a week."

Such were his words as he waved me out, and there was no need of more. I had three hours of daylight left, and these I used in making my final arrangements. I learned from the pickets at the river as near as could be the location of the Con-

federate pickets opposite, and how deep the water was on the ford, and this was all I wanted of them. I then gave my revolver a thorough overhauling, brought out and put a keen edge on a fine knife which had been presented me a few days before, and my war preparations were complete. I next brought out my boots, a pair which I had "constructed" to order in Washington. The heels were made to screw on, the soles could be sprung open to admit a paper, there were pockets in each boot-leg, and, altogether, the boots were "wonderfully and fearfully made," and had stood me more than one good turn. I gave them a thorough greasing, drew them on, and then there was only one more preparation. I wanted the uniform of a Confederate officer. Of course, any reader will understand that I could not have moved about in the Confederate camps in a Federal uniform, and I would not be hung any quicker if caught playing Confederate than I would if arrested in plain clothes. As I said before, it was to be all spy and no scout.

A few days before a Confederate lieutenant of infantry had been captured by some Yankee raiders, and was then in camp, waiting to be forwarded to Washington. He was in full uniform, as well as in a new one, and I was conducted to his quarters. He had refused a parole, and was confined as closely as any of his men would have been. Being admitted to his presence, I prevailed upon him to exchange his uniform for a suit of blue. He murmured considerable at being forced to don garments so entirely misrepresenting his sentiments, but, as the alternative was no suit at all, he made the exchange like a sensible fellow, and I walked out of the hut a Confederate officer. I never saw the gentleman afterwards, or had a chance to beg his forgiveness, and so I do it here, desiring him to understand that the suit came as near causing my death as he could have hoped for, and that I bear him no ill-will for the epithet which he hurled after me as I went out and left him trying to solve the question as to what use he could make of the extra two feet of pant legs with which he was provided. If that particular pair of pants were two feet too long, Uncle Sam had thousands of other pants two feet too short.

The pickets at the river were of the opinion that I could not cross at the ford, owing to the vigilance always exercised at that point by the enemy. There had been a lively rainstorm a day or two previous, swelling the Rapidan until I should have to swim for it, and so it mattered very little where I crossed as far as the getting over was concerned. Half a mile below the ford the banks were high and covered with brush, and taking a last observation just at dark, I made up my mind to shun the ford, and risk my chance below. By landing on the south bank, anywhere below the ford, I would not find the pickets at the water's edge, and would have a little time to recover myself after the cold swim.

The night came on all that could be desired. There was half a gale blowing, the sky was covered with black clouds, the air was damp and full of mist, and one could not see a white tent over three rods away. It was just such a night as I wanted, and an hour after dark I was on the bank ready to cross. One of the scouts and the general's orderly were with me to assist me in my arrangements, but there was little to do. All I wanted was something to float me as an aid in crossing the river, and this we had brought along, in the shape of two wide boards made fast together, forming a raft about seven feet long and four feet wide. The water was cold as ice, and I could not dip my hand into the stream without a shiver. However, I removed my uniform, rolled it up in a tight bundle, had the scout lash it to the top of my head, and in a few minutes was ready to take to the water.

"You will be back before morning, because you can't even get into Stevensburg," remarked the scout, as I stepped into the water. "If you are not back, we'll know that you were captured and put through." The good-by did not warm the water any, for the first moment after I pushed off, I thought I should speedily freeze. My legs were so numb that I could hardly move them at first, but I got a little used to the sensation before I had drifted far down, and headed my float diagonally across the stream. It was the coldest job I ever had, reaching the other bank, and if it had not been for my float I should have gone down like a bag of sand. As it was, I kept my head and shoulders above water, gripped the boards tightly, and floating and swimming, at last bumped the south bank.

When I went to raise myself up I was so chilled that I could not stand, and had to crawl from the water and up the bank on all fours. Had there been a picket on the bank, I should have been captured then and there, for I could not but help cry out as my knees came in contact with the sharp stones. However, I got over the bank, crawled under a small tree, and in a few minutes had donned my clothing. Quite sure that there was no one in the immediate vicinity, I danced up and down until my blood got to circulating again, and then was ready to move forward.

The reader will have noted that I meant to play the role of a Confederate officer. Knowing that I might be asked the location of my regiment, and for what reason I was travelling around, I had written myself the following pass:

"April 10th, 1864.  
"Pass George M. Chapin, 1st Lieutenant  
Co. B., 10th Virginia Infantry, to Rich-  
mond and return. Good for thirty days.  
Lieutenant Chapin is hereby assigned to  
duty in the Quartermaster's Department  
at the headquarters of General Long-  
street's division, and will report at the ex-  
piration of his leave of absence."

I had seen the signature of General Lee several times, and I put his "fist" to the document with a grand flourish. I had also taken care to write the pass in a cramped hand, so that I was hardly able to read it myself when finished. Of course the document was informal, and drawn up altogether unlike a regular furlough or leave of absence, but I depended almost altogether on the influence which the signature would have with pickets, sentinels, or any one else who had authority to demand my document. On a similar pass, signed by General Grant, I could have made the round of the Union army, and passed every picket. Much more would depend upon my conduct than the sight of the pass.

I was ready at last to proceed on my way, and stepped off in the darkness toward the town. I knew that the village was held by a strong force, there to guard the ford, but I plodded along with the step of a soldier safe within his own lines, and soon entered the eastern outskirts of the village, without having encountered a single person, as there were no pickets out in that direction, or I was lucky enough to pass them, if any were there. Getting into the town, I found plenty of soldiers and civilians abroad. The hotel was full of men, there was a saloon or two where soldiers were drinking, and I ran across them at every point. Passing by the hotel two or three times, and seeing that the bar-room was crowded, and hearing the men talking in loud tones, as if arguing some matter, I concluded to go in. There was nothing hazardous in the project, for it was not likely that any one would give me particular notice so long as I was a listener and not a disputant. Waiting near the door until I saw two soldiers about to pass in, I joined them, and we all went in together. The room was full of tobacco smoke, nearly every one was drinking, and I took a seat by the stove, without attracting any notice.

"The war" was the topic of conversation with every one. Some believed that peace would soon come, others that the South was getting badly worsted, and must quickly submit, and some of the disputants displayed considerable temper. A little ragged darkey stood near me, and I sent him to the bar for some cigars. When he returned I offered one to a sergeant of cavalry who sat next to me, and after we had commenced smoking a conversation began. He addressed me as "Lieutenant," and had not the least suspicion that I was other than a Confederate officer. However, my face was new to him, and he presently inquired:

"You are from up the road, are you not? I do not remember of having seen you down here before."

"Yes," I replied, "my regiment is in quarters near Old Tavern, and I am on a furlough. Do the Yanks over the river bother you much this winter?"

"Not much, but we look for lively times next month. It seems to be generally understood that Grant will try to go to Richmond by this route when the campaign opens, and if you have just come down the road, you saw what preparations have been made to defend the route. I was up at Mine Run a few days ago on furlough, and I think the Yankees will have hot work when they come this way."

It was evident that the Confederates realized the necessity of holding every foot of the road, and the sergeant's talk led me to believe that it was being fortified, and the number of defenders increas-

ed. He told me the strength of the force in Stevensburg, the location of various corps, the number of troops in the immediate vicinity, the number of batteries, and during our hour's conversation I gained much valuable information from him.

He had said that he must return to camp, and all the commissioned officers had left the hotel, when two half-drunken soldiers got into a hot dispute about the battle of Sharpsburg, and one of them appealed to me to decide if the battle was not a victory for the Confederates. I replied that the fight had always been considered a "draw," when he immediately blustered up and shouted:

"Who in— are you? I never saw you before!"

"I don't want you to talk that way to me, sir!" I replied, rising up, and looking at him in a threatening way.

"You don't, eh?" he replied, being just drunk enough not to care what he said or did. "Well, I will talk that way, and I should like to see you stop me!"

"If you repeat your words I will have you arrested and court-martialed!" I exclaimed, looking around as if about to carry my threat into execution.

"No you don't!" he replied, throwing off his overcoat, and getting nods of encouragement from half a score of his companions. "You don't belong here and I don't know as you are a lieutenant, at all! I'd as quick believe you to be a Yankee spy!"

It needed only this declaration to set nearly every one in the room against me. While the man had no reason to believe me a spy, and did not utter his words from any such belief, the rank and file of the army always had a certain antipathy for officers, arising, perhaps, from jealousy, and the men in the room hoped to see a fist-cuff fight between us two.

"That's it, Tom! Go for him! Smash his nose! He's—a Yankee!" were expressions heard all around the room; and I saw that serious trouble was coming.

"The men are drunk, lieutenant," whispered the sergeant, "and that fellow is going to make you trouble. Back into the corner, and I'll stand by you!"

He drew his sabre, I drew out my "Colt," and we retreated until it was not possible to attack us except in front. The movement put every man in the room against us. Some had guns, some sabres, and nearly all had revolvers, and the weapons came out with haste. Holding a heavy sabre in his hand, "Tom" headed the crowd now advancing across the room, and a row seemed imminent.

"Tom Ferguson, you'd better look out!" warned the sergeant, as their sabres were about to cross. "It will be death to you and all the rest if you strike the lieutenant!"

The words were timely, and the men no sooner realized their force than they ceased to crowd forward, and there was a chance for a parley. Seeing an opening, I was not long in taking advantage of it by saying:

"As for this man, I shall have him arrested and court-martialed. The rest of you are not so much to blame; and if any of you believe that I am a Yankee spy, as he has asserted, here is the proof to the contrary."

I put up my revolver, brought out the pass having the signature of "Uncle Robert," handed it to the nearest man, and in two minutes they had me at the bar drinking, and were nearly crowding me on top of it. Not one of them doubted the genuineness of the signature, but all saw that I must be in good standing to be able to secure a pass directly from General Lee. All was excitement for the next fifteen minutes, and not until I would agree to forgive and forget, would they let me go. Just as we were getting ready to leave a soldier came in with the information that the man Tom Ferguson, who had caused all the trouble, had been shot. Fearing that I would carry out my threat to have him court-martialed, he had sneaked out of the hotel, made for the ford, and was shot by the Confederate pickets while in the act of deserting to the Union lines.

When the men had all left I had a short conversation with the landlord, who claimed to be my friend all the way through the trouble, and then I was tucked away for the night in one of his best rooms. I had made my debut, had passed an "examination," and, as I could see little of Stevensburg during a dark night, I had made up my mind to have a rest, and to prosecute my observations by daylight. For experience had convinced me that a bold "braisy" course was the best course for a spy in the enemy's camp.

After a round sleep and a fair breakfast, I went out upon the street, informing the urbane landlord that he might expect me back to dinner. I intended to make a thorough examination of the town, and to do it openly. The main thing was to see what works had been thrown up along the river.

Sauntering down the main street, I presently came in sight of several earthworks mounting guns, and noticed a line of breastworks and a number of rifle-pits. Walking close down to the ford I was entirely away from cover, when a bullet from a Yankee musket came singing close to my ears, and a soldier shouted to me to jump behind the breastwork.

"You must be new here, lieutenant," he remarked, as I sought cover. "Why, it's a great wonder that you did not get a bullet in your body!"

I explained to him that I had recently arrived at Stevensburg, and was not aware of the danger I ran in approaching the ford. The gun from across the river provoked a return fire, and for half an hour the pickets wasted their ammunition in attempting to do each other injury. During the firing a lieutenant-colonel came along down behind the defences, and coming over he shook hands with me and began a conversation. He asked after my regiment, division, commanders, etc., and I thought I had answered all his questions satisfactorily, when he suddenly turned upon me and remarked:

"There's nothing strange in your being granted a furlough or being assigned to other duties; but our location here, right in the face of the enemy, compels us to carefully scan such faces as we do not know. I suppose you have your documents with you?"

"Certainly I have," I replied, lugging out my pocket-book, and preparing to open the paper.

"No, lieutenant, beg pardon; I do not mean to question your word. Of course you are all right; and I hope you will have a pleasant visit to your friends, and find your new position all that you hope for."

I had mentioned to him in our conversation that I was going to Richmond, had been transferred to the Quartermaster's Department, and that I had many friends in Richmond. The alacrity displayed in producing my document seemed to disarm his suspicions, and he invited me to lunch with him at his tent at 2 o'clock. After promising to be there on time, I explained to him that I was looking around to gratify my curiosity, and resumed my stroll, taking mental notes of all I saw.

The place was very well defended, and it was certain that the Confederates, who had much advantage in the make of the ground, could hold the ford against superior numbers. A large force of men were then busy adding to the defences, and with several soldiers with whom I conversed I found that they were every day expecting that the Union force opposite would make an aggressive movement.

It was noon when I had completed my examinations, and I returned to the hotel for dinner, calculating to leave the town directly after and proceed up the road. There were very few people about the hotel, and no one seemed to give me any thought. While eating, I found that some of my notes were slipping from my memory, and so I went to my room to write them down. Procuring paper, I made a drawing of some of the defences, jotted down all that the general would care to know, and then folded up the paper and prepared to secrete it. I had unscrewed the heel of my left boot, deposited the paper in the cavity, and was about to affix the heel again, when I caught a side glance of some one at the door. Concluded next week.

**Durability of Different Woods.**  
Experiments have been lately made by driving sticks made of different woods, each two feet long, and one end one-half inch square, into the ground, only one-half inch projecting outward. It was found that in five years all those made of oak, elm, ash, fir, soft mahogany, and nearly every variety of pine, were totally rotten. Larch, hard pine and oak wood were decayed on the outside only, while acacia, with the exception of being slightly attacked on the exterior, was sound. Hard mahogany and cedar of Lebanon were in tolerably good condition; but only Virginia cedar was found as good as when put in the ground.

Love matches are often formed by people who pay for a month of honey with a life of vinegar.