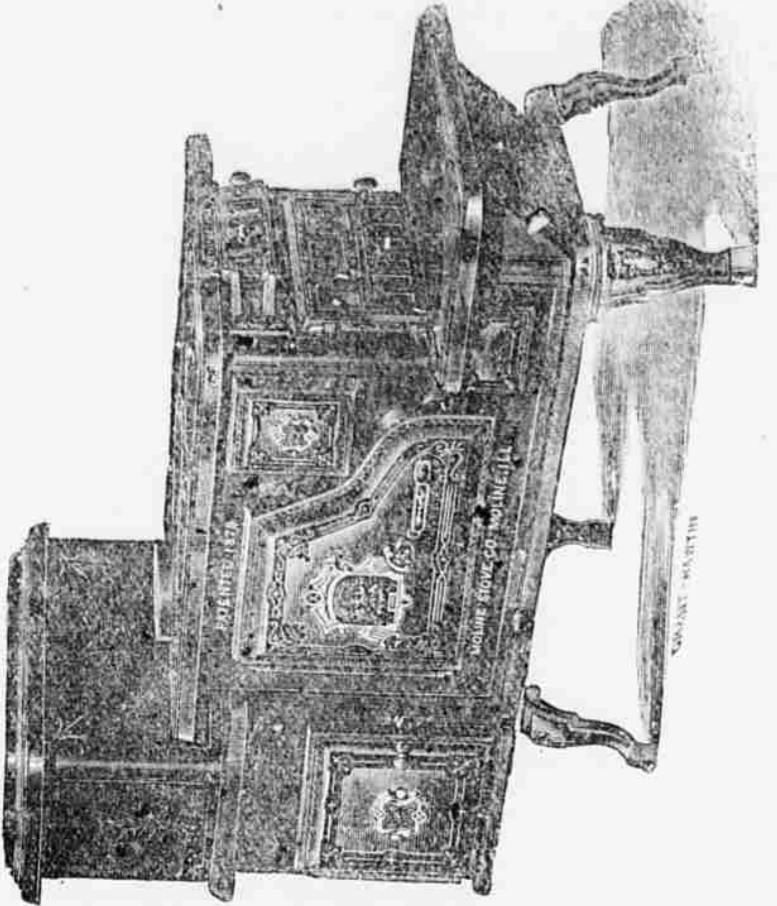


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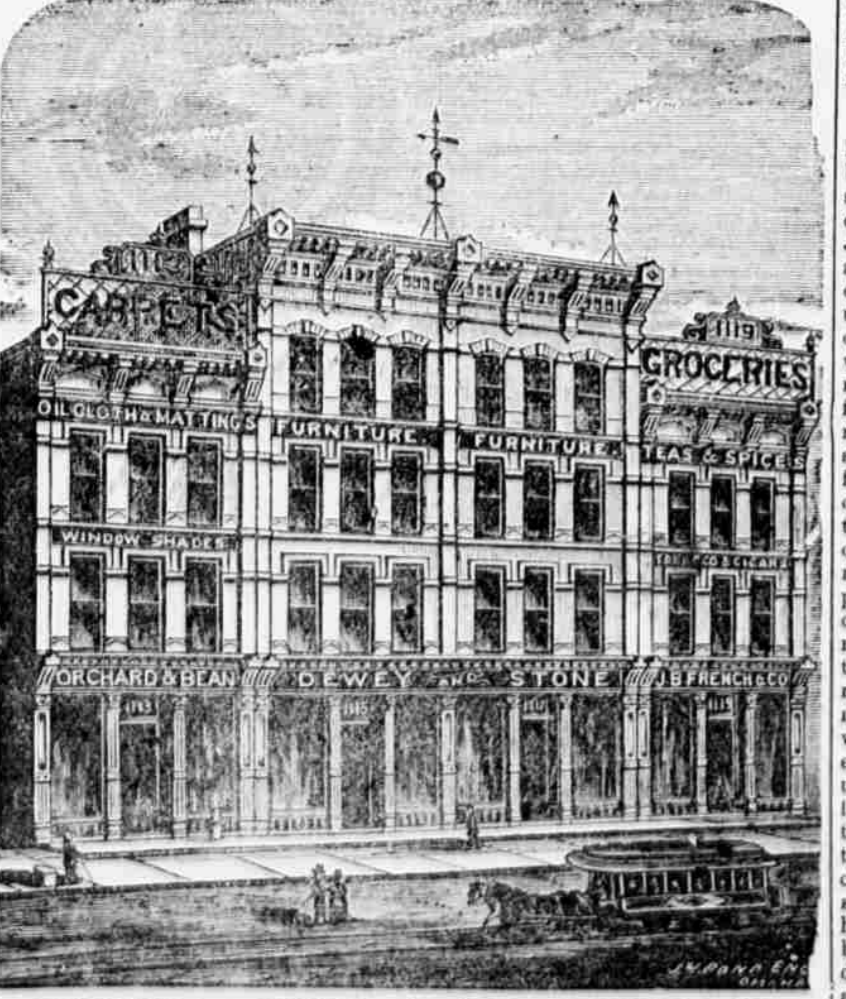
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FROM THE OHIO TO THE SEA.
The Battle of Perryville—The First Fight in Kentucky.

Where Bragg Counted on an Easy Victory and Found Himself Driven Three Miles
Detroit Free Press.
Had the war begun with the battle of Perryville as it did with Bull Run history would have given it pages instead of lines, and yet it was one of the best fought and most gallantly contested fights of the whole war, and its results were a hundred times greater than Frederickburg, Chancellorsville or Cold Harbor. It was Bragg's first grapple with the federal commanders who were to work his downfall, in after months, and it was a movement on his part destined to dispel the confederate illusions that Kentucky had only to see the southern flag to rally by thousands.

It was September, 1862, Kirby Smith had fought Gen. Morgan at Rogers's Gap and defeated him, and pressed on to Rogersville and met and scattered the forces of Nelson, and had then taken a position at Lexington. From this point he gathered supplies, recruited several regiments, and made such cavalry demonstrations as to seriously annoy Cincinnati. Bragg had pushed down and captured Munfordville and its garrison, and had then turned from the road to Louisville and established himself at Bardston. Buell's advance at early day drove him from his position, and it was not until the 7th of October that Bragg concentrated at Perryville for battle. Believing that he had Buell's forces so widely separated that he would have to deal with only a single corps, his plan was to concentrate, attack, defeat and then make a junction with Kirby Smith and walk over the forces in that general's front.

McCook had come up slowly, skirmishing heavily, and it was noon of the 8th before he swung into position on the federal left. One can yet trace his line these long years after. The woods in which his first line of skirmishers was placed have disappeared and given place to fields of corn, and some of the houses, and barns are no longer there, but the stone walls and the hills and the shade trees tell the story. It was a strong position, so strong that before Hardee moved forward to the attack he had a council with his division commanders and warned them that the attack must be made with a rush to be successful. Two hours after noon Hardee, with his three divisions, moved out in splendid style, and the first musket fired from the federal skirmishers in the woods along Rousseau's front killed a captain in Buckner's division. With that shot all the federal batteries in position opened fire, and the confederate broke from "common time" to "double-quick," and rushed to the attack.

At the bridge Cheatham's division had come down the Maxville highway, and as they now called it, they were the only federal force in their front, and the fight began in bitter earnest. The stone walls behind which the federals were posted stand to-day, showing the marks of hundreds of bullets, and so fierce was the fire from behind these defenses that line upon line of confederates prostrated themselves until its fury should pass. From their positions along the banks and in the timber they soon opened a galling fire in return, and before the fight had lasted thirty minutes they were gaining ground. Many of the federals on the hill above the federal position were silenced by the fire of the sharpshooters, and when it came to be shouted along the lines that Jackson had been killed, the raw troops in his division, many of whom had never fired a gun before, began to flutter. If they gave way they would open a fatal gap. A dozen officers rushed to rally them, and the confederates were near enough to hear a captain crying out in stentorian tones: "Stand firm, boys—for the love of the dear old union don't give way!" Jackson's troops rallied, even though some of the regiments were in full retreat, and they stood to the stone walls and poured in such volleys that the confederate advance was paralyzed. A captain of Buckner's division, in describing this part of the fight, said: "We saw Jackson's men giving way and with loud cheers we pushed forward to drive them. My company was within fifty feet of the wavering blue line, when all of a sudden it rallied and gave us such a volley that nearly half my seventy men were killed or wounded, and our advance fell back in the greatest disorder."

A PANIC AMONG REGIMENTS.
Terrill's men had the strongest kind of a position, and two batteries behind them were so posted as to sweep the entire front. When the confederates were forced back by Jackson's men they rallied and moved at an oblique against Terrill. In his division were several regiments never under fire before. They waited like old veterans for the advance, but when the confederates broke into a run and began yelling, the raw men fell back without discharging their muskets, and the enemy's bullets no sooner struck among them than they fell back in a panic that carried their officers with them. Where the batteries were posted is now a field of oats. As the crowd surged back Terrill rode to and fro, commanding and pleading, and just beside a tree since dead and chopped down he fell mortally wounded. This completed the panic, and most of the divisions rushed pell-mell for the rear, hardly a man taking his gun with him. Then was seen a brave sight. Starkweather's brigade was in reserve. It moved up in gallant style, opened ranks to let the frightened recruits pass through, and then steadily advanced to the walls and rifle pits, drove the confederates out, and planted themselves there to stay. McCook's left had been fairly turned, but this one brigade stood in the way. A whole division was hurled against it time after time, but it clung to the walls and maintained such a fierce and rapid fire of musketry that Buell supposed McCook's whole division was hotly engaged. For an hour and a half this

gallant brigade repulsed every assault made, but then had to fall back to a shorter line to prevent a flank movement.

FRANCE FROM AN EMBRY.
A confederate colonel who wrote a newspaper account of that battle said of Starkweather's brigade: "We had McCook's left fairly beaten and one whole division on the run, when a single brigade planted itself across our advance. Such nerve and gallantry will seldom be witnessed again. I myself was in four of the charges against their position, and twice I thought we should swarm right over them, but each time we were driven back by their cool and terrible fire, leaving the ground covered with our dead and wounded. Hardee raved and stormed, and charge after charge was made, but the blue coats could not be driven. When they finally shortened the line they moved back under fire in a manner to reflect credit on the best troops Napoleon ever commanded."

FROM CREEK TO HILL.
Rousseau occupied a ridge partly crowded with trees and partly under cultivation, crossed by two highways and offering shelter for his infantry and good positions for his batteries. In his front was Crazy creek, half hidden with willows and its banks forming splendid breastworks. Beyond were fences, walls and fields. Where Rousseau formed his lines of battle twenty years ago the corn grows rank and the wheat stands high. Where Rousseau pushed forward and the brigades of Lytle and Harrison to hold a skirt of woods, the May breeze rustled the ripening oats as I looked down from the spot where Sloan's battery was stationed. There were many raw regiments in Anderson's division, a number of the companies being totally un-drilled, and only three regiments having been in any previous engagement. Regiments were massed for the attack under artillery fire, and as the bugle sounded its notes the entire division moved forward.

REPULSE AND VICTORY.
The two federal brigades were firmly rooted, and not a musket cracked until the confederate lines were within pistol shot. Then a rush was made, but it was met by such a fire that the men were appalled. Held to their work by their officers, many of them fired in the air, while other companies in some cases charged bayonets at each other in the smoke. Some of the veteran regiments, however, displayed the greatest gallantry, charging square up to the federal position, and fighting on either side of the walls and fences. It was a terrific fight for fifteen minutes, and when the confederates retired the ground from hill to creek was thickly strewn with bodies. In a few minutes the gray lines were reformed for another advance, this time resolved not to be halted. Without stopping to fire they swung up the slope with yells and cheers. The weight was overpowering, and the federals fell back to the main line.

A DESPERATE STRUGGLE.
The confederates were pushing on when another federal brigade hurried down, and every piece of artillery which could be brought up was soon in position and using grape and canister. Anderson brought forward his guns, and for half an hour there was a desperate struggle. Bragg's force was more than any portion of the battle of Chickamauga, when an entire corps was ordered to retreat. A fourth federal brigade had been advanced the confederates in their turn had to give ground. They were followed up briskly until Rousseau's line rested where the fight opened.

SINGULAR INCIDENTS.
When the Fifth Wisconsin battery came into action one of the guns threw a solid shot, which struck a soldier full in the breast, crushing him to a pulp. His musket flew to the rear, whirling savagely through the air, and it crushed the skull of one soldier and badly injured another. The shot directed to the left after striking the first man, and it then mashed a lieutenant's hip, broke the leg of a private behind him, and rolled along the ground and crushed the head of a wounded man. A shell, fired by Sloan's battery, struck a stone weighing about fifty pounds, and while the shell failed to explode, the fragments of stone killed and wounded several men. A confederate shell which fell among Jackson's men alighted in a little creek at which scores of men were filling their canteens. It came down in a group of ten or twelve men, and plunged into the spot where a canteen had just been filled. While the shell did not explode, its fall splashed water over 50 men. An ex-confederate captain now living in Atlanta, who lost his arm in that battle, had a button cut from his breast by a grape-shot, his scabbard struck by a bullet, and his cap knocked from his head before receiving the bullet which crushed his elbow. A gun in one of Anderson's batteries had a right wheel shivered by a solid shot. It had scarcely been replaced by the spare wheel when another shot crushed the left wheel. The men were trying to drag the gun back, when a shell struck it fair in the mouth and split it for a distance of three feet. None of the men around the gun were hurt by this shell, but three soldiers in line over 200 feet away were struck down. A confederate shell sent into Siedman's brigade, exploded over the heads of a company advancing, and while no one in that company was hurt, four men in the center of the next company behind were mortally wounded.

ATTACKING SHERIDAN.
Failing to drive Rousseau, Hardee massed everything against Sheridan's division, and for a few minutes drove it before him. Sheridan called upon Mitchell for reinforcements, rallied his line across the Springfield pike, and after a quarter of an hour of hot work he ordered an advance of his whole division, McCook's right swinging at the same time. At some points the confederates stood until bayonets clashed, but the impetus of the mighty wave swept field and wood and highway clear of confederates, and as they began to give way the federal cheered along the whole front.

FIGHTING OVER PRISONERS.
This was the first battle in which federal and confederate regiments fought in Kentucky with placed opposite to each other. Both realized this fact and they fought with a bitterness

which other regiments could not feel. In the last advance about a dozen men belonging to an Ohio regiment rushed ahead so rapidly that they suddenly found themselves surrounded and taken prisoners. Before they could be sent to the rear a company of federal Kentuckians advanced to rescue them and at the same moment a company of confederates raised in the same county rushed forward to hold the men. One of the confederates, now living in Franklin, Tenn., says of the struggle which took place: "We did not stop to fire, but rushed forward with the bayonets. In a moment we were all mixed up, jabbing and prodding with bayonets, and striking each other with the butts of muskets. A federal, who had formerly lived within two miles of my farm, made a push at me, and his bayonet passed between my right arm and side, and went through my coat. Before he could withdraw I hit him a blow with my fist, and he fell. I piled on to him and held him down, although he bit my thumb to the bone. We were having it hot and heavy when our folks fell back and left me to be captured. In those few minutes I saw the bayonet used at least twenty times, and I believe that at least thirty men were struck with muskets."

BACK THROUGH THE TOWN.
The confederates were being pushed, but they were giving ground rather slowly, still fighting, when unexpectedly certain brigades began to march out of the fight. It is charged that Polk lost his head and ordered a retreat to a new line. Polk laid the blame upon Bragg, and an effort was made to hold Hardee responsible. No matter with which officer the fault was, the confederates began falling back, and once the retreat was begun it ended in a helter-skelter rush through the town, and in the rapid pursuit and capture of many prisoners and a considerable quantity of war material by the federals. At night, against the protest of the division commanders, the confederates were withdrawn and the entire field left to the Union forces.

WHAT BRAGG LEARNED.
Previous to this fight Bragg encouraged the idea that a confederate army could easily clear Kentucky of any federal force and keep it clear. He promulgated the doctrine among his troops that they had only to charge the federal lines to scatter them, and his men were led to believe that they had only to fire a few volleys to win a battle. Indeed, his plan was to whip the federal army in about an hour and then make a rapid march to join Kirby Smith, who was held at bay elsewhere. Polk had the same contempt for the blue coats, and Hardee had often been sneered at for asserting that Northern men would stand up in line of battle. The results of Perryville were a bitter dose in several respects. The confederate soldier realized that he had been deceived and defeated where he had expected an easy victory. Bragg and Polk had their plans disorganized, and the idea of holding Kentucky had to be abandoned.

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