

disposed to the right and left along the river. The levee was about a hundred and fifty yards in the rear, and beyond that were the open fields of Carter's plantation. Thus disposed, the Confederates awaited the enemy's approach, beguiling the time by picking the luscious blackberries found here in great profusion.

They had not long to wait, as the Federal vessels soon appeared. The Crescent City, a side-wheeler which had formerly plied between New Orleans and Memphis, led the van. She was now employed as a transport, and was loaded down with troops, the whole vessel being blue with them. They covered the entire hurricane deck and crowded the water deck below, packed and jammed in a way that only pleasure-seekers can tolerate and enjoy. Behind the Crescent City, at a distance of about half a mile, was a gunboat, and following that at regular intervals four more transports. The number of troops aboard the five vessels was estimated at about four thousand infantry and cavalry. As the first transport — its decks a scene of jollity and animation — drew near the Confederate battery, the latter opened on her with a rapid fire of shell and cannister, the effect of which on the Yankees was, of course, startling. They jumped and rushed with pain and fright to the opposite side of the boat, thus careening it fearfully and exposing its hull to the artillerists on shore. The latter proceeded at once to fire shell into it, till the Yankee officers got the men back and righted the boat again.

The infantry aboard returned the fire and wounded three Confederates. As soon as the gunboat came within easy cannister range, the artillery withdrew behind the levee in the rear. While this was going on below, the transports above came to the shore, threw out their stages, and speedily landed a force of three thousand cavalry and infantry to capture the pestilent Confederates. The latter withdrew their artillery at once across the open fields in the direction of Greenville, while Major Bridges, with the sharpshooters, remained at the levee to cover their retreat. To cover his own he ordered Lieutenant Ritter to halt his section of artillery at a bridge across a bayou half a mile in the rear, and await further orders. He himself withdrew by another road over a bridge half a mile farther up the bayou, while the enemy, in line of battle, advanced along both roads. As there was no force to hold the upper bridge, the way was open to Lieutenant Ritter's rear; and yet no "further orders" came. The enemy had actually crossed the upper bridge and were nearing their line of retreat, when the Third Maryland limbered up and passed down the road at a gallop. At the same moment, seeing Lieutenant Ritter's peril, Major Bridges ordered a countercharge of his cavalry, on the other road, and thus held the enemy in check until the section was out of danger of capture.

Passing through a strip of woods into an adjacent plantation, the Confederates drew up in line to await the enemy. They not appearing, the retreat was continued by the artillery. The latter had not proceeded far, however, before a hurried order