
MEMOIR OF GENERAL LYON.

**Memoir of Gen. Nathaniel Lyon, of the
first brigade, Missouri volun-
teers. Slain at the battle of Wilson's
creek August 10, 1861
Woodward, Ashbel**

CLASS NO.

TITLE

L. C. CARD

SPECIAL

AUTHOR

LIST PRICE

PUBLISHER

YEAR 1866

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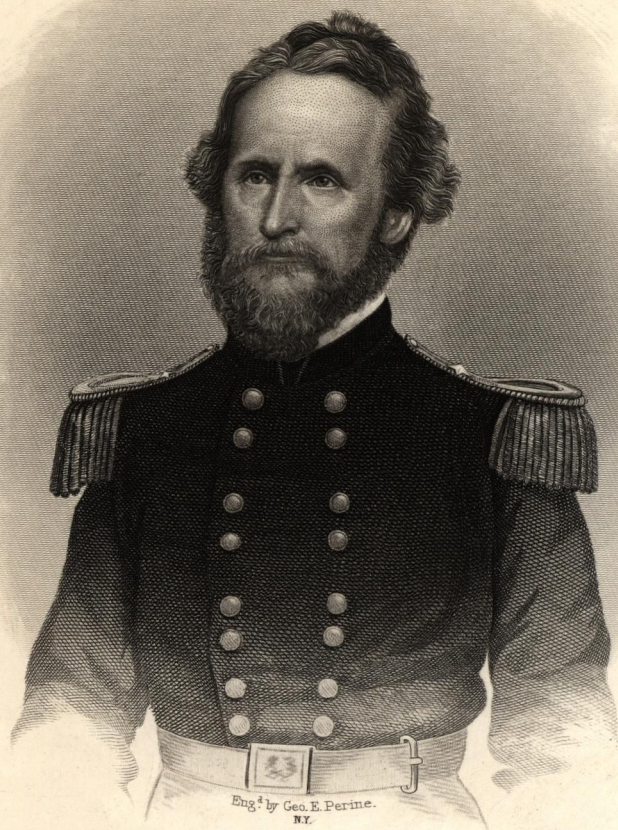
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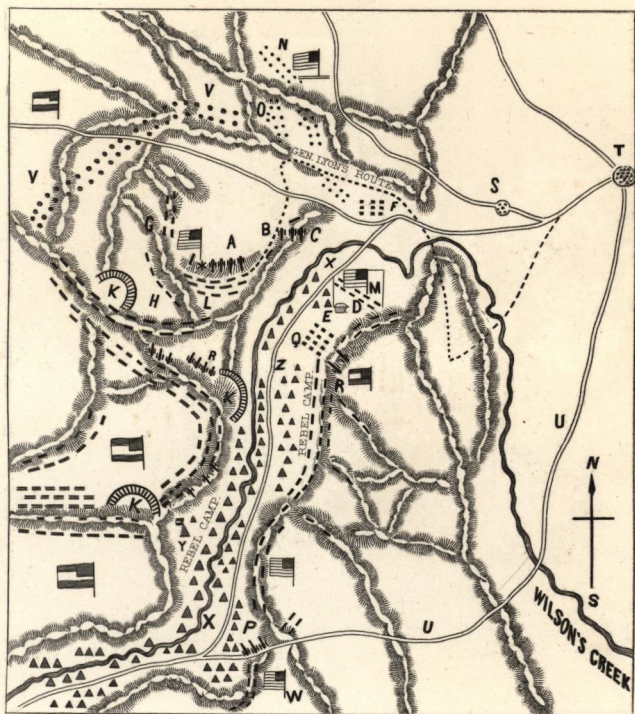
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Yours truly
N. Lyon



Yours truly
N. Lyon



PLAN OF THE BATTLE OF WILSON'S CREEK MO.

EXPLANATION OF DIAGRAM

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <i>A</i> Capt. Totten's Battery. | <i>O</i> Kansas Rangers-mounted. |
| <i>B</i> Section of Capt. Totten's Battery. | <i>P</i> Col. Siegel's position. |
| <i>C</i> Capt. Dubois's Battery. | <i>Q</i> Train of rebels part. |
| <i>D</i> Corn-field-hotly contested. | <i>R</i> Concealed battery-rebel. |
| <i>E</i> Log house-hotly contested. | <i>S</i> Town of Little York. |
| <i>F</i> Ambulances for Sick. | <i>T</i> Springfield. |
| <i>G</i> Second Missouri Volunteers. | <i>U</i> Fayetteville road-the road by which Col. |
| <i>H</i> Second Kansas Volunteers. | Siegel advanced upon the rebel camp. |
| <i>I</i> *Spot where Gen. Lyon fell. | <i>V</i> Rebel cavalry-1200 strong. |
| <i>K</i> Masked rebel batteries. | <i>W</i> Siegel's Brigade-Third and Fifth Missouri. |
| <i>L</i> First Kansas, First Missouri, First Iowa. | <i>X</i> Road through rebel camp. |
| Capt. Steele's Battalion. | <i>Y</i> McCullough's head-quar. |
| <i>M</i> Capt. Plummers Battalion. | <i>Z</i> Rains's head quarters. |
| <i>N</i> Home Guards-mounted. | |

MEMOIR

OF

GEN. NATHANIEL LYON,

OF THE

FIRST BRIGADE, MISSOURI VOLUNTEERS.

SLAIN AT THE BATTLE OF WILSON'S CREEK
- AUGUST 10, 1861.

BY ASHBEL WOODWARD, M.D.

[Reprinted from the NEW ENGLAND HISTORICAL AND GENEALOGICAL REGISTER for April, 1866.]

BOSTON:
PRINTED BY D. CLAPP & SON.
1866.

MEMOIR.

No martyr in the late struggle for union and nationality fell more widely or sincerely lamented than Gen. Nathaniel Lyon. His military career in Missouri opened brilliantly, and was accepted as a prophecy of signal usefulness and honor. Through his foresight, decision and activity St. Louis was saved from the hands of the enemy. Menaced on all sides, surrounded by secret and open foes, and not knowing whom it was safe to trust, he managed the scanty resources at his command so skilfully that the secessionists of the city were baffled at every point, and compelled either to submit to the federal authority, or to seek distant fields for carrying into effect their hostility to the government.

The importance of the successes achieved by Gen. Lyon in Missouri can hardly be exaggerated. Elsewhere, with trifling exceptions, the tide of war set strongly against the union cause. Our losses of prestige and material at the outset of the conflict were fearful. Privateers roamed the seas with impunity, burning our commerce; a large proportion of our small navy was sacrificed at Norfolk; the Army of the Potomac that marched forth exultantly to the sound of triumphal music, fled in disastrous panic from the passes of Manassas. The heart of the nation was afflicted with sorrows. It was needful to succor the unionists of the border States, and deprive the rebels of the advantages of possession. Had they once gained a secure foothold in St. Louis, the State of Missouri would not have furnished fifty thousand soldiers to uphold the eagles of the Republic. Her sons would have been dragged into the rebel armies in a mass, and this difference alone would have weighed heavily in deciding the issue of the conflict.

From the first Gen. Lyon appreciated the character and magnitude of the struggle, and foresaw the necessity of decisive measures. His short but daring and successful campaign in Missouri, affords the best evidence of the accuracy of his forecast.

Gen. Lyon was born of an ancestry famous in Colonial and revolutionary wars. His paternal grandfather, Ephraim Lyon, served twelve months in the struggle for independence, and subsequently settled down into a substantial farmer at Ashford, Conn. He had considerable knowledge of law, and was very shrewd in unravelling knotty complications.

Among Lyon's maternal ancestors are to be found several soldiers of eminence. Col. Thomas Knowlton, who commanded the left wing of the provincial army at the battle of Bunker's Hill, and who fell at Harlem Heights, Sept. 16th, 1776, universally lamented by his countrymen, was uncle to Gen. Lyon's mother.

Lieut. Daniel Knowlton, elder brother of Col. Thomas, was the grandfather of Gen. Lyon. He served in several campaigns against the French and Indians, and was especially distinguished for courage and sagacity. Adventures are still related in the locality of his birth to illustrate the shrewdness and resolution with which he tracked the ruthless savages of the frontier through their pathless haunts.

Nathaniel Lyon was born in Ashford,* Conn., July 14th, 1818, the seventh child of Amasa and Keziah (Knowlton) Lyon. In boyhood he was diligent and studious, improving faithfully the opportunities for acquiring knowledge which the schools of the neighborhood afforded. He listened with intense interest to tales of the French and Indian wars from the lips of his mother, never tiring of the repetition. In this way both the love of country and the spirit of martial enthusiasm were stimulated simultaneously. Young Lyon early resolved to become a soldier, and in the aspirations of boyhood kept that object steadily in view. As a son and brother he was remarkably affectionate, and always ready to incur personal sacrifices if he could thereby promote the happiness of other members of the family.

Lyon's preparatory education was obtained in the old brown school house of his native district, supplemented by a few months at the Academy in Brooklyn, Conn. He entered the West Point Military Academy in the autumn of 1837, determined to make the best use of his time and opportunities. Always modest and retiring, he distrusted his ability to compete with youth who had enjoyed greatly superior advantages, but this feeling of personal distrust only served to intensify his energy. He graduated June 30th, 1841, ranking eleventh in a class of fifty-two. He was commissioned Second Lieutenant, in the Second Regiment of Infantry, July 1st, 1841.

* Ashford was divided in 1847, the homestead of the Lyon family being in the present town of Eastford.

In the month of November following, Lieut. Lyon left home to join his regiment, which was then operating against the Seminole Indians in Florida. The government underrating the numbers and resolution of that tribe, had determined upon its destruction. A long and costly war followed, which devoured troops by the thousand and money by the million. The hardships of our troops were incredible. In the face of a vigilant and unsparing enemy, they were often compelled to traverse swamps, paved with the sharp points of cypress roots, and interlaced with an almost impenetrable net work of vines. The serrated edges of the saw grass put ordinary clothing to scorn, often tearing off outer garments and cutting painful wounds in the flesh. The savages, emerging occasionally on destructive raids among the settlements, habitually fled to the most inaccessible places.

In January, 1842, Lyon's company formed a part of the force which started to hunt the famous chief, Halleck-Tustenuggee. This warrior was six feet two inches tall, and powerfully formed. His mind, naturally strong, had been disciplined in the school of wrong and vengeance. For a long time his craft baffled the resources of the government. Thirty-five desperadoes followed his fortunes blindly, obeying his commands without question.

We have not space to follow Lyon through the incidents of that long and wearisome chase. After several months of fruitless pursuit, Tustenuggee and his followers were at length caught by treachery. Col. Worth invited the chief to Fort King, and he accepted. While there, he and all his followers were seized, and afterwards sent west of the Mississippi.

During this campaign, Lyon was always at the post of duty, vigilant and faithful. Notwithstanding its hardships, the novelty of scene and incident rendered it a pleasant one to him. While serving in Florida the Second Infantry lost one hundred and thirty-three officers and privates from disease and battle. May 27th, 1842, the regiment embarked at Palatka, Florida, for Savannah, and thence proceeded to the northern frontier.

For several years Lyon was now stationed at Sacket's Harbor, on Lake Ontario, where was passed by far the easiest and most tranquil period of his life. His leisure was devoted to study and reading, law and moral philosophy affording his favorite fields for investigation.

At the outbreak of the Mexican war Lyon was kept busy in recruiting and drilling men to fill up his regiment. The companies of the Second Infantry, scattered along the northern frontier, were soon collected and sent to Mexico. Gen. Taylor had occupied Monterey before this regiment arrived on the field.

Four companies, including that of Lieut. Lyon, left Camargo Dec. 8th, 1846, and proceeded by way of China and Mont Morelas to Monterey, where they arrived the 20th. Their sojourn in this neighborhood, however, was short. The Washington government had decided to place Gen. Scott at the head of the army of invasion, and to transfer the base of active operations to Vera Cruz.

On the morning of Dec. 23d, the Second Infantry, in company with other troops, started from Monterey to reinforce Scott, and reached Tampico January 23d. The commander in chief arrived at this town February 19th, and ordered the immediate embarkation of all the troops collected there, for the general rendezvous at Lobos Island. Then came the siege and capture of Vera Cruz, followed by the bloody but triumphant march of the American army to the capital of Mexico.

The advance division to which Lieut. Lyon was attached, started for the interior April 8th. His journal during this period abounds in interesting sketches of events, and comments on the appearance of the country. After a slow and toilsome march over the hot sands of the low country, the army found the passes to the highlands of the interior strongly guarded. On the 17th, the victory at Cerro Gordo was won, and our troops emerged into the healthy hill country. In this engagement it was Lyon's brigade, under the guidance of Capt. Robert E. Lee, of the Engineers, that pushed forward by a circuitous route and seized the road in the rear of the main body of the enemy. The companies of Capt. Canby and of Lieut. Lyon were detached from this brigade to assault a Mexican battery of three guns, planted at the extreme west of the battlefield, and designed to cover the retreat of the enemy in case of defeat. The small band dashed forward impetuously, while the garrison fled in a panic. At this point was found the carriage of Santa Anna, freighted with valuable papers. The unlucky President escaped on a mule, and plunging into a difficult pass, gained the road to Orizaba. On the day of the battle, Lyon hastened on in pursuit of the fugitives, eight miles from Cerro Gordo, as far as the village of Encerro.

Lyon was promoted to a First Lieutenancy Feb. 16th, 1847.

Lyon's division reached Puebla, seventy miles southeast of the valley of Mexico, May 29th. Here it rested for reinforcements till the 7th of August. Meanwhile ineffectual peace negotiations had been conducted by the Washington Cabinet through its agent, Mr. Trist. August 7th, the march was resumed, and on the 10th, having crossed the crest ten thousand feet above the level of the sea, our troops came in sight of the valley of Mexico. In the centre, environed by lakes and marshes and volcanic remains, stood the far-famed

capital. The sanguinary battles that followed form a familiar part of American history. Riley's brigade, to which Lyon belonged, won the battle of Contreras, and the same day shared in the bloody attack on Cherubusco. Capt. T. Morris, acting commander of the regiment, in his official report of the part taken by the Second Infantry in the events of the day, says, "Capt. Casey, among the first to enter the works (at Conteras), captured two pieces of the enemy's artillery, driving him from them, and then pushed forward with a detachment of the regiment, accompanied by Capt. Wessels and Lieut. Lyon, and pressed hotly upon the rear of the enemy, who soon raised a number of white flags, and their surrender was immediately accepted, when about two hundred prisoners, together with two pieces of artillery, were taken."

Capt. Morris continues—"I here take the opportunity of recommending these two officers (Captains Casey and Wessels), together with Capt. J. R. Smith and First Lieut. Lyon, to the *special notice* of the Colonel commanding the brigade."

Lyon was promoted Brevet Captain Aug. 20, 1847, "for gallant and meritorious conduct in the battles of Contreras and Cherubusco, Mexico;" and Captain in full, June 11th, 1851, by regular promotion.

Col. Riley's brigade having taken no part in the engagements at Molino del Rey or Chapultepec, was moved forward Sept 13th, to storm some of the positions within the city. Having halted over night within the gates Belin and San Cosmo, they started the following morning, in expectation of gaining peaceful possession of the city. The enemy, however, fired upon them from the tops of houses and from numerous hiding places. The compliment was returned with interest, and many Mexicans perished. During the skirmishing of the 14th, Lyon was wounded in the leg, his subsequent exertions provoking inflammation which disabled him for several days. The occupation of the capital virtually ended the fighting.

On the first of November a valuable train was to leave Mexico for Vera Cruz, and Lyon volunteered his services in the escort. The journey to the coast and back occupied nearly two months, and was accomplished without resistance.

A treaty of peace having been ratified by the U. S. Senate, March 10th, 1848, the American army prepared to evacuate the country. Lyon's regiment reached Vera Cruz on the homeward march July 2d, and on the 8th, six companies embarked for New Orleans, on the Robert Parker. Arriving at New Orleans the 17th of the same month, they left the next day for Pascagoula, Miss., but were almost immediately ordered to return. They were now sent up the Mississippi river, to quarters at Jefferson Barracks, near St. Louis.

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preparations for the final attack were made. Thus far the savages were not aware that any force except the cavalry threatened them, and the failure of Lieut. Davison the previous autumn had filled them with derision for that branch of the service. While the horsemen were making dispositions to cut off their retreat, they gazed with contempt upon the manœuvres, challenging the soldiers to come over and fight. But when the boats hove in sight, howls of despair rose from all quarters of the island. They did not give up, however, without a struggle. Showers of arrows were hurled against the troops, but to little purpose. Reeds were no match for bullets. The well directed fire of the infantry cut down the enemy by scores. After suffering fearful losses the remnants of the band cast aside their weapons, and fled into the neighboring marshes for shelter. Lyon now directed his men to sling their ammunition around their necks and follow. He was determined to finish the work thoroughly, and to convince the savages of California that the murder of whites would not go unpunished. In water up to their armpits the troops pressed eagerly on, destroying nearly a hundred of the enemy without the loss of a man. The huts and stores of the tribe were destroyed.

Having used up this band, Lyon, without pausing to rejoice over victories or to rest from the fatigues of the march across the mountains, pushed on in pursuit of other miscreants who were supposed to be collected near the sources of Russian river. But the wigwams of the enemy were found deserted, and by careful search none were discovered. He then descended the stream twenty miles to visit a gang particularly notorious for their atrocities. The savages retired to an island in Russian river, covered with thick undergrowth, and surrounded by a disagreeable slough, where they made some preparations for defence. Trees were felled and the interstices filled up with a net work of vines. A well armed and resolute body of men could have held the place against great odds.

On the 19th the Indians were discovered, and the attack followed almost immediately. The fight lasted but a short time. A hundred Indians were killed, while our loss was confined to two wounded.

After the battle the cavalry returned to Benicia, and Lyon recrossed the mountains between the valley of Russian river and the lake, reaching Anderson's Rancho at the end of a two days' march.

Gen. P. F. Smith says, commenting on the campaign the facts of which he learned "from the officers who have returned this day, (May 25th), they all unite in awarding to Capt. Lyon the highest praise for his untiring energy, his zeal and skill, and attribute his success to the rapidity and secrecy of his marches and skilful dispositions on the ground."

The veteran general cannot let the mail leave without expressing his "highest praise of Capt. Lyon's conduct."

Capt. Lyon was ordered to return to the sources of Pitt river to punish the murderers of Capt. Warner. A few bands were overtaken and dispersed, but the great body fled in hot haste to remote haunts far from the sound of danger. During the march Lyon had several personal encounters with the enemy. At one time three mounted Indians came upon him suddenly. A bullet despatched the foremost. With the quickness of thought Lyon dropped his pistol, and aimed a thrust at the heart of the second, which was averted by the thick blanket of the savage. Catching the fold at the neck with his left hand, and making a quick pass with his right, Lyon now thrust his sword through the body of his antagonist. The third, seeing the fate of his comrades, fled.

This campaign lasted nearly five months, having terminated September 25th.

Lyon was afterwards transferred to San Diego and to other stations in Lower California, and for the few months following his career was diversified with no incidents of permanent interest.

The winter of 1851-2 was wearing away monotonously, when intelligence came from his distant home, which overwhelmed Lyon with sorrow. On the 24th of January he received a letter announcing briefly the mental decay of his mother. With him, from his boyhood to the full maturity of life, filial affection had continued the ruling passion. He never wearied in devising means to promote her comfort and happiness. The next day he wrote that this was the severest shock of adversity that had yet befallen him in a life of many vicissitudes. Any other calamity save this alone, he could have borne with fortitude. He wrote in conclusion, "Mother, must the evening of thy life close in wild wanderings? O Heaven, where is thy mercy! O God! mysterious are thy providences, and thy ways past finding out. I have attempted to reflect upon and revolve this subject in my mind for the last twenty-four hours, but with swelling heart and maddening brain, I am lost in the absorbing thought, that Mother is wandering in clouds of mental darkness. O Mother, my dear Mother."

By the next mail Lyon applied for leave of absence in order to hasten to the side of his beloved parent. He travelled night and day, but hardly had the wearisome journey commenced when his mother breathed her last, having died Jan. 31st. Mrs. Lyon was a woman worthy of such a son—plain and unknown out of a narrow circle, but pure, generous and noble, whose whole life abounded in benefactions.

Capt. Lyon spent the summer in travelling at the east, and returned to California in the fall. Nearly a year after his mother's death, he wrote as follows: "A sacred and most endearing link of our family circle—the last that bound our affections to a common centre—is now broken. Of our excellent parents, the last survivor, our beloved mother, is no more. The high-toned purpose and unswerving resolution to pursue the pathway of duty, must needs yield to the conqueror of all. The example of her unwavering confidence in, and patient submission to the providences of the God she so deeply loved and sincerely worshipped, is indeed lost to us, while a greater joy, we trust, remains to her. Even in our loss we have much to cheer us—rich memories, affectionate precepts, bright examples of parents, of which the noblest aims in life can alone prove us worthy heirs."

Having spent several years on the California frontier, the company of Capt. Lyon was unexpectedly ordered east in the autumn of 1853. The following spring he was ordered to Fort Riley, in Kansas. In the struggles which ensued between the settlers from the free and slave States, he espoused zealously the cause of the former, and devoted no small share of his personal income to the relief of their necessities. His correspondence during this period shows how intensely his feelings had become enlisted in the conflict which was destined soon to involve the entire country. Subsequent events proved that his prognostications were singularly accurate. In the summer of 1856, through fear of being ordered to aid in enforcing the laws passed by the pro-slavery legislature of Kansas, which owed its election to non-resident voters, Lyon thought seriously of resigning his commission. At this juncture he was fortunately ordered to Nebraska, and the alternative was not presented.

During the next few years Lyon was laboriously engaged on the Indian frontier, doing severe service and enduring many hardships. As the civil war approached, his feelings became more and more intense. January 27th, 1861, he wrote,—“It is no longer useful to appeal to reason but to the sword, and trifle no longer in senseless wrangling. I shall not hesitate to rejoice at the triumph of my principles, though this triumph may involve an issue in which I certainly expect to expose and very likely lose my life. I would a thousand times rather incur this, than recal the result of our Presidential election. We shall rejoice, though in martyrdom, if need be.”

January 31st, he received orders to go to St. Louis, and starting the next day, reached that city Feb. 7th, and took quarters at the Arsenal.

The subsequent events in the career of Gen. Lyon are still so fresh in the memory of the people, that we shall pass them briefly.

When Mr. Lincoln entered upon the duties of the presidency, Capt. Lyon succeeded Major Hagner in the command of the St. Louis Arsenal. The city was in imminent peril, a small garrison being encompassed by a multitude of open and secret enemies. The wealth and influence of the place sympathized more or less heartily with the secession movement. From the outset Lyon fully appreciated the dangers of the situation, and prepared vigorously to meet them. Vigilant and versatile, he discovered and thwarted the plans of the enemy at every turn. To magnify the strength of his command in popular estimation, he often sent forth in the dead hours of night squads of soldiers with orders to rendezvous at distant points, and to march back in the morning with drums beating and flags flying. No precaution for defence was neglected. The union men of the city were rapidly organized into companies, and thoroughly drilled.

On the night of April 25th, by a happy stratagem, the valuable public property at the St. Louis Arsenal was placed on board the steamer City of Alton, and carried to Alton, whence it was conveyed to Springfield, Ill., in a freight train which was waiting to receive it.

May 6th, the Police Commissioners formally demanded of Capt. Lyon that the federal troops should be withdrawn from all places outside the Arsenal grounds. The demand was peremptorily refused.

Meanwhile Gov. Jackson was busily plotting to drag Missouri out of the union. In pursuance of this object he ordered the State militia into encampment for discipline and drill. A military bill had been pressed through the legislature to facilitate the movement. By evasion and by avoiding open collision with the federal troops, he hoped to raise a sufficient force to secure Missouri to the Confederacy. A camp was organized near St. Louis, under the auspices of notorious secessionists, and called "Camp Jackson," out of compliment to the executive. Arms, stolen from the Government Arsenal at Baton Rouge, had been sent up the river in boxes marked "marble," to equip the men. The hostile intentions of the leaders in the affair were unmistakable.

Capt. Lyon determined to nip the scheme in the bud. Several thousand troops were suddenly assembled May 10th, near the Arsenal. In the afternoon they marched out with twenty cannon and surrounded the encampment. The guns were planted on neighboring eminences, and all avenues of ingress and egress closed. The excitement in the city was intense. Crowds, maddened by momentary frenzy and armed with every variety of weapon, hurried to the scene of action to aid the State troops.

Arriving on the ground, Lyon sent a missive to Gen. Frost demanding the immediate surrender of his command, and allowing thirty minutes for deliberation. Gen. Frost accepted the terms offered to him. Quite an outbreak occurred later in the day, provoked by the jeers of the populace, in which several were killed and wounded, the soldiery having fired upon the crowd. Capt. Lyon was thrown from his horse at Camp Jackson, and carried from the field insensible.

The night after the Camp Jackson affair, Gen. Harney arrived at St. Louis and took command.

Shortly after Lyon was elected Brigadier General, First Brigade Mo. Volunteers. May 17th, the Secretary of War officially notified him that he had been appointed Brigadier General, to rank as such from the same date.

May 21st, Gen. Harney entered into a neutrality compact with Gen. Price. The arrangement was highly odious to the loyal citizens, and led to the speedy recall of that officer. The command now devolved on Gen. Lyon, whose accession filled the secessionists with terror and dismay, as he had already given numerous proofs of his ability.

June 11th, Gov. Jackson went to St. Louis, in company with Gen. Price, to have an interview with Gen. Lyon. That functionary wished to pledge the State to neutrality, provided the Government would disband the Home Guard and agree not to occupy any places in the State not then occupied by them. His propositions were rejected. Gen. Lyon claimed the unequivocal right of the General Government to march and station troops wherever it saw fit. The craft of Jackson failed to entrap his strait-forward antagonist. The same night the executive party returned in a special train to Jefferson City.

June 13th, Gen. Lyon started with fifteen hundred troops for Jefferson City. Gov. Jackson retreated to Booneville, forty miles higher up the river, taking off cars and locomotives, and destroying the telegraphs and bridges. Jefferson City was occupied by the federals on the 15th, without opposition. The following day Lyon left, with nearly two thousand men, in pursuit of the enemy, the troops being conveyed by steamers. A few miles below Booneville the expedition came in sight of a rebel battery. The boats fell back to a secure place, and the troops disembarked. The battery was protected on the flank by a strong body of militia. The enemy did not long withstand the steady advance of our forces. After a few shots they fled in dire confusion. While the enemy were throwing away their arms in a panic, Capt. Totten's battery continued to pour shell into their broken ranks. At this juncture Lyon rode in front of the

line, shouting at the top of his voice, "Would you slay them like sheep? Do you not see they are throwing away their arms? Stop firing."

Near Booneville Gen. Lyon was met by a delegation of citizens who came out to surrender the town. Several cannon and a large variety of small arms fell into our hands as trophies of the victory.

During his short stay at Booneville, Gen. Lyon not only won the esteem of the people, but also made many converts to unionism. His kindness to the sick and wounded, his lenity to prisoners, his courtesy to those who had reviled him bitterly, and the invariable impartiality and generosity of his bearing towards all classes, contrasted strongly with the language and conduct of leading rebels.

While at Booneville Gen. Lyon made the following reply to a near relative who had often been asked for points in his early history. June 28, 1861, but six short weeks before his death, the General wrote:—"I have your two notes asking for points of my military service. I have not answered, because I have no time, and do not think the subject of the least importance. This great and most wicked rebellion absorbs my whole being, to the exclusion of any considerations of fame or self-advancement. In this issue, if I have or shall have a conspicuous part, I would share it and the honors of it equally with every one who contributes to sustain the great cause of our country which I have so much at heart. I have not received your notice of me in the *Journal of Commerce*. Most of the notices by the press are more or less erroneous. But, alas! the past is nothing—painfully indeed unfruitful of benefits to our race. It is with the present we are dealing, and let us devote ourselves to it with a view to secure the future. And let that future be blank and forever oblivious rather than our cause fail before the unscrupulous villainy now at war upon it. Of the ultimate result I have no doubts, though unfavorable incidents may arise under frauds, and misrepresentations, and a heretofore demoralized sentiment at the North, so unfortunately auspicious to our enemies. I am now deeply involved and concerned in the issues before me. My exertions and will shall not be wanting, though they may not go far to effect the result."

Two weeks were consumed at Booneville in collecting trains for the coming march. Owing to the vigor of Gen. Lyon, most of the State was now held in federal control.

On the 3d of July, Lyon, with an army of twenty-seven hundred men, and four pieces of artillery, started for Springfield in South Western Missouri. On the 13th they encamped at Little York, twelve miles from that city, having marched nearly two hundred miles and crossed two swollen rivers in eleven days. Such celerity in the face

thin, seldom speaking, yet giving vigilant attention to every duty. His mind labored with preternatural activity, giving him little rest night or day. With feelings akin to agony he realized that he was left in a hostile country, hundreds of miles from succor, with a rapidly wasting army, to contend unaided against the gathering hosts of the rebellion. One of the greatest mistakes of the war lay in not hurrying competent reinforcements to Lyon at this juncture. In that event the contest west of the Mississippi would have been finished two years earlier than it was.

We have not the space to describe in detail the battle of Wilson's Creek. On the 7th of August, at a council of war, nearly all favored the evacuation of Springfield. The town, located on a plain without commanding eminences, was indefensible. Our army numbered but little over five thousand. At this juncture Lyon resolved, by striking first, to make a desperate push for victory. He divided his little army into two columns, in order to attack the rebel camp at two points. One he led in person; the other was intrusted to the command of Col. Sigel, who was ordered to advance by the Fayetteville road, so as to fall upon the encampment on the right and rear. The main body left Springfield at five o'clock, p. m., August 9th, and came in sight of the rebel camp fires at one in the morning. Here the troops slept on their arms till daybreak, when the advance was resumed. McCulloch had arranged to attack Springfield at the very same time, and had drawn in his pickets preparatory for the movement. Just at night the order was countermanded, and as no danger was apprehended, he had neglected to throw them out again. Thus our forces were enabled to take the enemy completely by surprise. Gen. Lyon's advance was within gun shot of the camp before the rebel officers learned of its approach.

Wilson's Creek flows somewhat tortuously through a narrow valley, inclosed by gently sloping hills, covered at intervals by groups of low trees. The encampment extended for several miles on both banks of the stream.

The battle opened furiously in front. Totten's artillery and the superior arms of our forces made terrible havoc in the ranks of the enemy. The rebels made repeated charges in overwhelming numbers, but in each instance were repulsed with fearful carnage. Our troops in turn advanced and fell back, as the line of battle swayed to and fro in doubtful conflict. Gen. Lyon kept in the thickest of the fight. His horse had been shot under him, and he had received three wounds, one in the ankle, a second in the thigh, and a third which cut the scalp to the bone. Friends urged him to retire from the front to have his wounds dressed. But regardless of all personal considerations, he

mounted another horse, and riding along the line rallied the shattered ranks. Coming up to the First Iowa which had made three gallant but unsuccessful charges upon the enemy, he ordered them to charge again. The men answered, "General, we have no leader." Lyon, with countenance blanched from the loss of blood, and haggard from anxiety, waving his hat shouted, "Come boys, I will lead you." Inspired by the magic of such a presence, the regiment rushed forward a fourth time, scattering the enemy like chaff. But their courageous leader was no more. While his arm was still uplifted, pointing the heroes around him to victory, the fatal ball struck him, and he fell, dying, into the arms of his faithful servant, Albert Lehman. Thus passed from earth one of the purest of patriots and most magnanimous of men. Endowed richly with the rare and precious qualities that make up the hero and martyr, he lived only for right and country.

Meanwhile Sigel's column reached the points where it was to commence the attack in excellent condition, and opened in beautiful style upon the enemy. Completely surprised, they scattered in a panic. At this juncture Sigel's infantry broke ranks and rushed in to secure plunder. While thus basely occupied, the southerners rallied, captured the battery and a large number of prisoners, and put the rest to flight. Sigel afterwards retook a single gun. He himself made quick time to Springfield in a terribly demoralized condition. Had Sigel carried out as he ought the part assigned to him, he would have turned the right wing of the enemy so as to enfilade the ravine, or failing in that, would have joined the main body near the northern line of battle.

After the death of Lyon, while the federal officers were deliberating on the proper course to pursue, a column, dressed evidently in federal uniform and bearing the federal flag, were seen advancing from the quarter whence Sigel was expected. From the belief that they were friends, preparations were made to effect a junction. But the treacherous foe, having employed this deceit to gain an advantageous position, suddenly opened upon our lines with Sigel's lost ammunition and guns. The battle was now renewed furiously, and continued till the entire rebel front rolled back in routed and disorganized masses.

The victory was fairly won by the union army. The enemy set their wagon train on fire to avoid capture. Gen. McCulloch afterwards said to Mrs. Phelps, "we were whipped all to pieces, had the Fed's only known it."

Our army of five thousand two hundred men, twelve hundred of

whom were practically lost through Sigel's cowardice, attacked four times their number on ground of their own selection, and won a decided victory. At first the rebels thought the retreat of the federals was a mere ruse to draw them on to other dangers. They were greatly surprised to find Springfield evacuated.

Through the ceaseless vigilance of Mrs. Phelps, whose services to the union cause entitle her to the lasting gratitude of the American people, Gen. Lyon's body was saved from insult, and secretly interred. A few days afterwards his friends started west in quest of the remains. On their way east multitudes turned out to do homage to the memory of the martyr.

On the 5th of September, 1861, the last funeral rites were performed over the body of Gen. Lyon at the village of Eastford, Conn. Many thousands gathered from near and far to drop a tear at his grave. He sleeps his last sleep beside his beloved parents, on the spot of his own selection, among the hills which he trod in boyhood, and to which he ever turned wistfully in later years.