

Lt. Col. Moses Tandy Pryor

KENTUCKY CAVALIERS IN DIXIE.

53

CHAPTER VI.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL, MOSES TANDY PRYOR.

"Theirs was the glee of martial breast,
 And laughter theirs at little jest;
 And oft Lord Marmion deigned to aid
 And mingle in the mirth they made;
 For though, with men of high degree,
 The proudest of the proud was he;
 Yet, trained in camps, he knew the art
 To win the soldier's hardy heart;
 They love a captain to obey
 Boisterous as March, yet fresh as May."

AS we turn back the hands on time's dial thirty years, we behold a knightly cavalier suggestive of the romantic age of chivalry. No more valorous knight e'er laid lance in rest, or more gallantly graced castle halls, challenging the admiration of fair women and brave men—a chevalier such as inspired the pen of Sir Walter Scott and the minstrel's tuneful lyre.

About thirty years old, with a tall, graceful, commanding figure, neatly attired in the uniform of a Confederate lieutenant-colonel, a clear, strong voice, and frank expression, make up the engaging personality of Colonel Tandy Pryor.

Through the instrumentality of General Wm. Nelson, early in August, 1861, the Federal Government introduced munitions of war into Kentucky, and distributed them to a class of men calling themselves "Home Guards," and, at the same time, secretly enlisted men into the Federal army, establishing a camp between Nicholasville and Danville known as "Camp Dick Robinson."

Regarding such procedure as a violation of Kentucky's assumed neutrality, the Confederates occupied Columbus, Ky., on the Mississippi River, September 3, 1861. Both Confederate and Federal partisans then actively began taking decisive positions.

A regiment of State Guards, under Colonel Roger Hanson, repaired to Camp Boone, in Northern Tennessee, and became a nucleus, around which gathered battalions and

companies of the Kentucky State Guard, and individuals seeking service in Dixie.

General Simon Bolivar Buckner, an accomplished man of affairs, a graduate of West Point, had been inspector-general of the State Guard, with the rank of major-general. He also went to Camp Boone and took command of the troops assembled there. At this camp the Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Kentucky regiments were organized.

It was to Camp Boone that M. T. Pryor and his two brothers-in-law, Henry L. Giltner and Gideon B. Giltner, James G. Owen, Nathan Parker, Love Garriott, Wm. D. Ray, Sam P. Duncan, and others from Carroll, Trimble and Henry counties, repaired in September, 1861. Gid Giltner soon took typhoid fever and died at the residence of a relative in Southern Kentucky. Pryor and his associates attached themselves to the famous Buckner Guards, an organization that attained an enviable reputation at Shiloh, April 6 and 7, 1862.

Shortly after the battle of Shiloh, Colonel Pryor visited his home at Carrollton, secretly remaining with his family four days. He again visited his home August 9, 1862, when he, Giltner and Parker proceeded to recruit the Fourth Kentucky Cavalry. With a part of the regiment they started for the Confederate lines September 9, 1862, just one month after Colonel Pryor's return to his home.

Colonel Giltner having been promoted to the command of the brigade, Colonel Pryor commanded the Fourth Kentucky during much of its fighting career.

On the battlefield Colonel Pryor was a favorite with the men, especially when there was a demand for quick, decisive, intelligent action. Intuitively he seemed to know what to do, and his promptitude inspired his men with a confidence that made his rapid movements irresistible.

When a boy I had read much of the enticing literature of the age of chivalry, and had also been a fascinated reader of the history of Napoleon and his marshals. Colonel Pryor's personality and bearing as a cavalry officer reminded me of Murat and Dessaix, and of the cavaliers of whom the epic poets were wont to sing and whose chivalric deeds inspired the lyrics of wandering minstrels.