

stamped with the magistrate's seal. The paper had a rough, woolly surface where the erasure had been made, and the impression of the seal had not smoothed it down. This was held by those who wanted to avoid the bond to be an evidence that the erasure had been made after the seal was put on. I tested this under the microscope and made experiments with a seal, demonstrating that the seal was put on top of the erasure. Cases of this sort are very numerous and some of them get to be interesting. But forgeries are not as easily detected in the signatures as in the body of the manuscript. The dotting of 'i's' and the crossing of 't's' show most. There are, however, many characteristics in most signatures that can not be counterfeited so as not to show the fraud if tested by a microscope."—*Washington Star*.

HOW THE PICKET QUAILED.

An Amusing Adventure on the Advance Line During the Late War.

One cold and cloudy night in the early part of the winter of 1862 Bill — was on picket at an outpost near the little "Brick Church" known to comrades of the Army of the Potomac as "Hartwoods." He had backed his mare into the edge of a piece of woods, from which he had a view of a large open field in his front; to his right at a short distance was a road leading to "Kelley's Ford" and one to Warrenton. In the vicinity of these cross-roads there had been at divers times shots fired out at pickets in the night by unseen persons (guerrillas), which caused the pickets to be more vigilant than in the daylight. Not more than half an hour had elapsed since the comrade whom Bill had relieved had left and returned to the "reserve," some half-mile distant, when Bill's ear caught the sound of stealthy treading upon the dry twigs and dead leaves directly in the rear of where he was posted.

It was a common thing in those days, in that part of the country, for hogs to be seen running at large in and around the woods, consequently at the first sound of this treading that reached his ears Bill paid little heed, thinking it was a hog rooting the leaves. Presently the same noise was heard. At this second interruption his mare pricked up her ears and made an uneasy shake of her head, as was her custom when on such duty and any strange noise reached her

keen ear. At this uneasiness of his dumb companion Bill stroked her silky neck to assure her he was on the alert. Again the noise had ceased, but Bill had made a knot in his bridle rein and placed it over the pommel of his saddle, examined his carbine near the hammer, put his hand to his holster to make sure the revolver was in a handy position, and assuring himself that all was right as regards firearms, cautiously peered into the darkness on all sides in hopes that he might discern the intruder of his quietness.

Again was heard the mysterious treading sound! Bill pressed the sides of his mare with his legs, and she instantly wheeled "right about" and faced the woods.

"Halt! Who comes there?" Bill called aloud. All was as quiet as the tomb.

There sat Bill facing the woods, with a deadly aim of his carbine in the direction from which the sounds had come, feeling as though he weighed 200 pounds (actual weight 135) and could blow any three "guerrillas" out of existence. Once more he heard those steps so lightly crushing the twigs and leaves.

Click! went the hammer of the carbine.

Whir-r-r! whir-r-r! sounded the rush of the unseen bodies. The mare raised herself and struck at vacant space with her fore feet. Bill felt his hair standing on end as he grasped the butt of his revolver, and waited the expected attack.

The discharge of the carbine had aroused the "reserve," and the sound of galloping horses' feet and the clanging of sabres against the riders' spurs Bill distinctly heard as the "reserve patrol" drew nearer and nearer to his rescue. He could hear the pickets on his left challenging the horsemen as they approached their posts.

Presently he heard his nearest comrade inform the sergeant that "Bill had been shot or had fired at some d—d guerrilla."

He had faced the mare once again toward the open field, and was quietly laughing to himself as he stroked the neck of his faithful companion.

"Halt! Who comes there?" Bill was heard to again call forth.

"Sergeant with 'picket patrol!' " was the reply.

"Dismount, sergeant! Advance and give the countersign!"

The order was obeyed and an explanation made. The patrol was notified to