

OUR CORRESPONDENCE.

From the Volunteers.

CAMP KEYS, WASHINGTON, D. C., July 27, 1861.

When I wrote you last, we were in the full tide of victory. The ebb was more sudden and overwhelming than the flow, and we have been thrown back in two short days to a point from which it will require weeks to gain our former position. We are now lying much in the same way as we were at Camp Welles—waiting for orders. The enemy, meanwhile, are encamped on our old ground at Falls Church, and doubtless are as vigilant in their picket guard in this direction as were we in the other; and our side is as active in felling trees and obstructing roads on Arlington Heights, as the secessionists were a few weeks since in the roads to Fairfax. But such is the fortune of war, and it is not for me to criticise the actions of those who are responsible,—but will be content with giving the experience of the Connecticut regiments in the great battle of Bull's Run, last Sunday.

We fell in at 3 o'clock P. M., on Saturday, expecting to march immediately, as the advance guard of Col. Hunter's column. When we were ready to move, the order was countermanded, and we were instructed to be in readiness at 2 in the morning. At that time we were awakened by a succession of long rolls and bugle calls from the various regiments bivouacked near, and in a few moments the shining camp fires, the glittering bayonets and the multitudes of men as they moved about in confused masses, in all directions, as far as the eye could see, revealed the fact of a general movement. Order soon came out of this chaos, and directly the crowd was transformed into straight black columns, who stood in silence, awaiting the order to march. This was soon given, and with no other music than the rattle of the soldiers' canteen and cup, we marched on up the hill, and down through the little village of Centerville toward Manassas, and, as then we fondly hoped, to victory. Our position in column had been changed during the night, and most of the regiments that had been posted in advance of us—the 69th and 79th N. Y., and several others, were already ahead. After proceeding about two miles, the Connecticut brigade was halted, and the whole division filed past, and, with a regiment of regulars, we took the position of rear guard.

The narrow road (the roads in Virginia all seem to be scooped out to the width of one carriage,) did not allow any other style of marching than four abreast, and it was nearly 10 before the last regiment had passed, and the baggage wagons and ambulances began to make their appearance. We took our position, and had moved on nearly a mile, when off to our left, in the direction of the battle of Thursday, we heard the boom of a single cannon, which was soon followed by several others, apparently further to the left, a mile or so in advance of the first. As we had understood that other columns had advanced in that direction, we were not surprised, and as we had become accustomed from our Thursday's experience to the distant roar of battle we were not startled, and marched on. There was considerable firing in that direction for half an hour, when on a sudden our division was halted, and in a few minutes the jar of Sherman's 32 pounder at the front, announced to us that we had the enemy at bay; and that the battle had commenced. The firing soon became incessant, but that on the left ceased entirely. Our brigade was drawn into a piece of woods at the side of the road, and the men were soon seated at their ease in the shade, eating their dinners, and filling their canteens, awaiting their turn in the contest, which was then hotly raging in front. About noon an aid-de-camp came galloping down the road, with orders for our advance. From a quickstep with which we started, our pace soon changed to a double-quick, as we neared the scene of action, and the sharp rattle of musketry became audible in the intervals between the discharges of artillery. We soon came to the top of a hill, where stood a small white church, and one or two houses, and from which the battle could be distinctly seen. For a distance of perhaps three miles, there was a succession of hills, thickets and ravines, while at our feet lay the stream, small in size but great in historical importance, of Bull Run. Close at hand, in a piece of woods on our right, lay one of our batteries of rifled cannon, which was playing on one of those of the enemy, located on a hill about half a mile off, which was answering, gun for gun, with great spirit. In the distance could be seen an ominous cloud of dust, which I noticed more than one general closely scrutinize with his glass, then consult with another, who in turn would take a long gaze in the same direction. Their anxious looks convinced me that the dust was not caused by the approach of Gen. Patterson's division, as was

ing cross-fire which would have inevitably cut us to pieces before we could have accomplished our object. We moved cautiously up to reconnoiter, and finally pushed boldly through the woods into a notch of open field, to the support of the 14th New York, who were here engaging a force of twice their number. Hardly had our whole regiment got out, when a battery of rifled cannon at less than two hundred yards distance, and which had not before been seen, commenced pouring grape and canister into our ranks. The first fire was fortunately aimed so low that but one man, in Company I, was killed, and several wounded. The next was aimed as much too high as the first was too low, and passed harmlessly over our heads. We were under cover of the woods before the next fire, which was as ineffectual as the two first. The situation of ourselves and the 1st Connecticut was now very critical: The artillery and cavalry were evidently working around to cut us off from the rest of the army. Gen. Keyes held a consultation with Tyler, and it was decided to retreat, and, as we supposed, by a flank movement unite with other regiments and continue the battle. What was our surprise to find on filing back over our old ground, that a general movement of our forces was taking place in the same direction, and that amid a shower of shot and shell from the enemy, who seemed rapidly approaching.—Most of us then supposed that we were being withdrawn to commence some new movement, or at most to bivouac near, and renew the engagement in the morning.

We had nearly reached the little church—now used as a hospital for the wounded—and were moving off in good order through the woods, wondering where we should stop for the night—for at that time it was generally supposed that we were to do no more fighting that day—when all of a sudden there appeared to be a general movement of teams down the road, and immediately after, two pieces of our light artillery came dashing through the crowd, breaking up the ranks of several regiments that were between us and the road. These were followed by a body of the Black Horse cavalry, the sharp volley of whose carbines and crack of whose sabres could now be heard. The fire was answered with spirit from our side, and they were retreating with two-thirds of their number killed, when the cry arose,—“For God's sake, hold on! You are firing on your own men!” The confusion was now at its height. Some cried one thing and some another, but all had something to say. The numerous regiments at our right, breaking through our ranks, and the stampede of some few cowardly spirits, who, I am ashamed to say were in the Connecticut regiments, temporarily disorganized us, but through the efficiency of our leading officers our regiments were soon marching away in good order. We shortly crossed a small stream, and stood on the brow of a hill on the other side. At this point, some field officer, I did not understand of what regiment, was vainly endeavoring to rally the broken masses, and form a line to command the retreat from more cavalry, which it was understood were rapidly approaching, accompanied by a piece of artillery. A shell which struck in our immediate vicinity made this almost certain, but all the effect it produced on the men was to make them run the faster. Our regiments wheeled into line on each side of the cannon, placed to cover the road where were the retreating soldiers and teams. The approaching cavalry was successful only in taking many of the stragglers in the rear, and attendants in the hospitals, prisoners. If our line had not commanded the rear, the havoc made by a charge of dragoons must have been tremendous. If it had been followed by a piece of artillery, as we are assured one was drawn up for that purpose, it is impossible to tell where it would have ended. Our whole army would have been at their mercy. Thus, if the Connecticut brigade cannot boast of having been in the hottest of the fight, it certainly was instrumental more than any other in saving our retreat from becoming an utter rout.

THE RETREAT. One does not know his capability of enduring fatigue until he has been forced to a trial. Our men, when they left the field, seemed utterly prostrated. Owing to the intense heat of the day, and the peculiar thirst which is experienced nowhere but on the battle-field, caused by the sulphurous smell of powder, all seemed ready to drop in their tracks from sheer exhaustion, and when they arrived at Centerville, four miles back, and were marched on to our old place of bivouac, as we supposed to stop for the night, we lay down at once, supperless, to sleep. In less than fifteen minutes, however, we were again on the march, and at sunrise next morning we were at Falls Church—having marched thirty-one miles during the night, without stopping but once for rest, and then only a few minutes! There were no baggage-wagons or ambulances to pick up those who fainted by the way, they having either gone ahead, or been smothered by the mob.

mination to retrieve our honor. U. S. soldiers will not run again.

INCIDENTS.

An instance of cool courage occurred in our Co. (Co. F). James Woodruff on our retreat dropped out of the ranks at Vienna, and lay down at the foot of a tree for a little rest, thinking to regain his company in the morning. He had not lain long, before a party of the enemy came up and made him prisoner. They took away his rifle and left two of their number to guard him, while the remainder of the company went on after more captives. One of the guard after a time left, charging the other to take good care “that the d—d Yankee did not get away.” Jimmy had a pistol under his haversack which in disarming him was not discovered, and watching his opportunity he sent a ball whistling through the skull of his captor and made the best of his way on to Falls Church.

All agree that the “Boyd pistol” which you will recollect was to be presented to the bravest man in the company, is due to A. H. Conklin, of Mill River, Mass. From the effect of new boots his feet were so sore as to render it impossible for him to wear them. The second day of our march he went barefoot, and determined not to be cheated out of his fight, on the day we went to battle, he wrapped them in a pair of coat sleeves, which he tied on with a string, and thus hobbled about all day, and at night marched with us to Falls Church, without a word of complaint. I venture to say that he is the only man in the regiment who would have done it.

Lieut. Morse of Co. K, was wounded early in the action by a cannon ball striking a rail fence and throwing a piece with violence against his back. Some one stopped to pick him up, but he told them to win the battle first, pick him up afterwards. He afterward was got into a baggage wagon and was carried to Alexandria, and is now with his company.

Sergeant Major Jared B. Lewis of our regiment, who had but just donned the triangular chevron, was so frightened that he did not stop retreating until he arrived at New Haven. He was reduced to the ranks yesterday, and the Grays to which company he belongs voted him out of the ranks. The best of it was that he was not on the field at all, and only got near enough to participate in the retreat. He spins a long yarn which I notice is published in the N. H. papers. C. E. P.

THE Winsted Herald.

Winsted, Litchfield Co., Ct.

FRIDAY, JULY 26th, 1861.

The Blame attaching to the Great Defeat at Bull's Run is pretty equally divided between the four Generals—Scott, Patterson, McDowell and Greeley. To Scott for not having been better informed in relation to the defenses at Bull's Run, and the Confederate forces there arrayed against us: To Patterson for not engaging Gen. Johnston, at whatever cost, at Winchester, and thus preventing his return to Manassas and consequent participation in the battle of Bull's Run: To McDowell for general non-management. The morning attack was well planned, but after the separation of the three columns in the morning, all further attempts to guide and control the Federal army seem to have been abandoned, and the separate regiments left to fight or run, as their courage or fears might prompt them. Orders for the retreat seem to have been given without plan or method of whatever kind, and officers vivid with the rank and file in the hot race for some point, furthest from the enemy. It is clearly apparent that as many lives were lost after the retreat began, as during the battle. Many were run down and trodden under foot in that terrific flight. Many were cut off unresisting. Now and then a sturdy, gallant fellow, scornful to run, remained alone and sold his life as best he might upon the battle-field. But there was no formidable pursuit. A well-managed retreat before the odds against which we contended, would have shed lustre upon the day's proceedings. Such a fight, its unmanly disregard of the wounded, its abandonment of arms and munitions, its devil-take-the-hindmostness, was ignominious beyond all known lan-

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As we came in front of the church, the enthusiasm of the crowd of soldiers and civilians collected around, was without bounds. Every tree had its occupant, who shouted out each movement of the enemy to the spectators below, whose range of view was more limited. One fellow cried out as we passed—"Hurry up, boys; we've got 'em! They're surrounded on three sides, and are running like the devil!—You won't get a chance at 'em if you don't look out!" Sure enough, the enemy could be seen—a hill full of them—running up its side toward some woods, with headlong speed. The heat was excessive, but our men quickened their step, unslung their blankets and throwing them one side, and some even threw in away their coats and haversacks as useless impediments to their progress. The enemy hid got a view of us also, as was seen by a shell which exploded near, but fortunately doing no damage save covering us with dust. A change in the position of one of our own guns, threw us between it and the enemy, and we were obliged to file round to its rear, thus losing some fifteen minutes. We rushed on, however, and were soon on what had been the battle ground at the beginning of the fight, and from which the enemy had been driven. The desperate character of the action was now to be seen at every step. Dead, wounded, and sun struck men were scattered all along, sometimes singly, but oftener in groups, showing where a shell had exploded, or the ground of some desperate charge. "We won't get a pop at 'em," was constantly heard along our line, and our step increased from a double-quick into a run. We were soon close on to their left flank, and separated from them by a piece of woods, through which rifle, musket, and cannon balls were whistling constantly. The 1st Connecticut regiment was on the brow of a hill in front, at right angles with our line, and exchanging a fire of musketry with a line of the infantry of the enemy. Further on, the gallant 69th (Irish,) and 78th (Scotch,) New York regiments were engaged, while at our left the Fire Zouaves were at work, now charging some battery, now repelling a charge, but in all cases fighting desperately, and with tiger-like ferocity. Each of them had loose powder in his pocket, with which he besmeared his face, and as they rushed on with their peculiar Zouave cheer and Fireman's *à la*, they seemed more like demons than men. No wonder that their ranks were so thinned—as each one seemed to fight as though the whole issue of the day rested with him alone.

The enemy soon retreated from this part of the field, and we filed off to the left down into a ravine where Gen. Keyes purposed to concentrate his forces, make a charge on one of the enemy's principal batteries, take it at the point of the bayonet, turn the guns upon them and thus decide the day. An order was given to an aid to bring the 2d Maine and 8d Conn. in for this purpose, but on his arriving where they were, he found them under the direction of Gen. Tyler, charging on another battery. This caused a delay, and before they could be brought around where we were, the enemy had planted three or four guns in such a position that the contemplated charge of Gen. K. was impossible, without subjecting us to a

fast. Our regiments wheeled into line on each side of the cannon, placed to cover the road where were the retreating soldiers and teams. The approaching cavalry was successful only in taking many of the stragglers in the rear, and attendants in the hospitals, prisoners. If our line had not commanded the rear, the havoc made by a charge of dragoons must have been tremendous. If it had been followed by a piece of artillery, as we are assured one was drawn up for that purpose, it is impossible to tell where it would have ended. Our whole army would have been at their mercy. Thus, if the Connecticut brigade cannot boast of having been in the hottest of the fight, it certainly was instrumental more than any other in saving our retreat from becoming an utter rout.

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We reached Falls Church, as before stated, about sunrise. The camp guard left at that place, had some hot coffee prepared,—but our rest was not to be there. We were the rear guard. Tents were struck, and everything packed for transportation, but there were no wagons. To obtain these according to the red-tape system we were to go through with the form of a requisition—receipt, and counter-check—and there we stood all that rainy day, with fixed bayonets, in momentary expectation of a charge of cavalry, reports of whose approach were brought us from time to time. After dark we had the satisfaction of seeing pretty much all our camp equipage under way, and we started through mud, ankle deep, toward Ball Cross-roads, where the deserted Ohio and 2d New York camps were located. The First and Third stopped at that occupied by the Ohio, and the Second pushed on half a mile further to that of the 2d New York. Wet to the skin as we were, yet all could sleep, and the night was passed without alarm. It took till the next night to get the camps we occupied cleared up and on our baggage-wagons, and we slept that night under the guns of Fort Corcoran, fagged out, but with the satisfactory thoughts of being the last regiment to leave an advanced position, and of being the means of saving the Federal Government at least \$100,000 in stores and camp equipage. The next night we encamped on Meridian Hill, Washington, where we now are. We have named our encampment *Camp Keyes*, after our acting Brigadier General, who is beloved by us all, and to whom, more than anyone else, is due the credit of extricating us in safety from the clutches of the enemy.

Most of the stragglers who were put down as missing when our rolls were first called, have turned up since our arrival here. There are a few, however, who are without doubt in the hands of the enemy. Among these we fear is the Rev. Hiram Eddy. He was at the hospital with the wounded all day, and was not seen since the last charge of cavalry. One of the best men of Company F is also missing.—Samuel A. Cooper, of West Winsted. He had been promoted to the post of General's Orderly, and was not with the company during the action. The last seen of him was at the hospital, whither he had been sent on some errand by Gen. Keyes, just before the stampede. Both are probably prisoners, and ere this at Richmond. The loss of the army in this way will probably reach 1,000.

All the three months troops are to be mustered out at once, and our turn will probably come some time this week. All are a little loth to leave at this juncture, and many will re-enlist at once, or after a few weeks of furlough. There seems to be a general feeling as if our army had been disgraced, and a better

informed in relation to the... Bull's Run, and the Confederate forces there arrayed against us: To Patterson for not engaging Gen. Johnston, at whatever cost, at Winchester, and thus preventing his return to Manassas and consequent participation in the battle of Bull's Run: To McDowell for general non-management. The morning attack was well planned, but after the separation of the three columns in the morning, all further attempts to guide and control the Federal army seem to have been abandoned, and the separate regiments left to fight or run, as their courage or fears might prompt them. Orders for the retreat seem to have been given without plan or method of whatever kind, and officers vied with the rank and file in the hot race for some point, furthest from the enemy. It is clearly apparent that as many lives were lost after the retreat began, as during the battle. Many were run down and trodden under foot in that terrific flight. Many were cut off unresisting. Now and then a sturdy, gallant fellow, scornful to run, remained alone and sold his life as best he might upon the battle-field. But there was no formidable pursuit. A well-managed retreat before the odds against which we contended, would have shed lustre upon the day's proceedings. Such a flight, its unmanly disregard of the wounded, its abandonment of arms and munitions, its devil-take-the-hindmost-ness, was ignominious beyond all known language to describe. Heaven pity us when Wm. H. Russell's description comes back from across the water, in the pages of the *London Times*. Much of the blame attaching to this mortifying termination to an otherwise glorious battle-day, is due to the incapacity of the officers in command, McDowell in chief. Greeley's share in the lamentable result, arises from his early-given and constantly iterated orders of Forward to Richmond. Greeley however frankly owns up, raises a row in his *Tribune* ex-bibit, pledges himself to be more humble in the future, and turns over a new leaf. The army meanwhile goes into summer quarters on the banks of the yellow Potomac, awaiting Jack Frost and Gen. Scott.

STATE ITEMS.—The Army worm, a very destructive little creature of about an inch in length, with white spots, is making its appearance at various points in New England—at Middletown in this state. Its periodical reappearance is greatly dreaded.—The weevil has made its appearance in the grain-fields of Gen. Jarvis Case of Canton.—The farmers are bound to get up some sort of a scare-crow to raise prices. Arn't sure as we blame 'em.—Lieut. Francis of Capt. Hawley's Hartford Company was saved from death by a ricochet at Bull's Run, by ducking his head. It took his hat off.—The Conn. Shore Line railroad has taken the contract for carrying the midnight mail between New York and Boston.—The other route, via Springfield, will knock off its night train in consequence.—The new military law in this state does not suit the officers of the "Old Millish," who, it is said, are generally resigning. A good sign, certainly.—Mason C. Hill, of Mystic, has been appointed inspector of the new gunboats now building for the government; salary \$5 a day and expenses.—A union camp meeting of the Methodists in the New Haven and Bridgeport districts will be held in the town of Milford, commencing Monday, Aug. 12th, and closing early on Saturday morning, 17th. The ground is on the line of the Naugatuck railroad—the same that was used last year.

A DISTRESSING COMPLAINT.—It is stated that many regiments in the battle of Bull's Run were almost destitute of captains, from the prevalence of an obstinate diarrhea which seemed to single out that grade of officers for its attacks. Thus the Conn. 2d regt. had but 6 of its 10 captains in the field on that fatal occasion—Kellogg being a prisoner at Richmond, and 4 of his fellow captains being down with the complaint alluded to.

We are indebted to Hons. O. S. Ferry and Geo. C. Woodruff for valuable public documents.