

WAR CORRESPONDENCE.

From Chain Bridge, 9 miles above Washington, on the Potomac, to within 4 miles of Manassas, Virginia, July 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th, 1861.

EDITORS STANDARD: It is 24 o'clock, P. M., Tuesday, July 16, and all is bustle and excitement at the camp of the Onondagas. All who are well are preparing themselves for a march. Guns and equipments are put in order, haversacks are filled with 3 days rations of bread, crackers and meat canteens with coffee, and blankets are rolled snugly cornerwise, tied together and swung diagonally across the body, resting on one shoulder, extra clothing, &c., are all packed away, and at the call of the drum 700 Onondagas march out on the color line, and in response to the clarion voice of our gallant Colonel, "right face" and file away to the appointed place for our regiment join our brigade in the line of march in the direction of the enemy. Lieut. Wiburt is placed in command of the camp, and those who are unfit for the fatigues of the march, with Dr. Todd as physician, hobble out to cheer us on and prove the chagrin which they feel at not being able to go with us. Our ladies have preceded us to the bridge to take leave of us at the farthest possible point. The 2d and 3d Michigan file across the bridge, passing our front, lusty cheers being exchanged between our regiments. Affecting leave taking occurs between our ladies and their husbands and daughters, (and in this connection I must mention the heroic composure of Mrs. Captain Brower and her, as well as our daughter Miss Ada,) and we "forward, file right," on to the bridge which connects loyal and rebel soil. Reaching the center of the bridge we send back 3 hearty cheers to our old camp flag which floats from the bluff, which is answered by our "cripples" and the loud mouthed guns which command the bridge. Virginia's "sacred soil" is reached, and we file slowly up the hills and along the fertile fields, and valleys of this old commonwealth, once the pride of Americans, now the meanest of the rebel States.

Scarcely a male adult is to be seen, all who are able to bear the musket having volunteered or been pressed into the service in the confederate army. The women look from their windows with sorrowing countenances, while the slaves hang upon or grin through the fences, evidently uncertain in what sentiment to indulge. One beautiful young lady stands at her gate with a defiant air, but her unusual beauty is all that some of our gallants discovered, and they are at once "thirsty." She complies with their request for water, but at the same time gives them to understand most emphatically that she is opposed to the invasion of the Northern troops, and is decidedly a "secesher." But few slaves are seen along our route, but many deserted houses are found, some elegantly furnished and provisioned. Most of the families found represent themselves to be of strong Union sentiments. One man sitting on a fence, points out the house in which the poll of the precinct was held at the election for or against secession, and informs us that it is the only precinct that gave a Union majority in Eastern Virginia. The boys gave three hearty cheers for the precinct, and at the request of our informant, 3 more for Western Virginia.

Our route extends through a beautifully wooded country, though everything about the improvements betokens a laxity in farm management which is not found North.

At about 7 miles from our start, we fall in with the skirmishers of the 79th Highlanders, and further along the 79th and the N. Y. 2d—come in in advance of us from near Alexandria. Carlisle's battery rolls past us, the heavy guns looking like ugly customers to face. At 9 P. M. Vienna is reached, and the various regiments encamp in the open fields on the ground. Pickets are thrown out, company A, of the Michigan 2d and company I, of our regiment, are detailed as pickets to guard the General's (Tyler) headquarters. Col. Walrath and all the officers camp on the ground with the men.

The Col. tells a good story of Adjutant Titus, who rouses up at about midnight, seizes his revolver and challenges "who comes there?" It was his horse which had got hold with his teeth of the oat bag, which the Adjutant was using for a pillow, and was shaking it up for supper.

Here is where the rebel battery opened on the Ohio boys under Gen. Schenck. The charred remains of the cars which were burned are seen at the right of the road. Rveille beats at day-break of the 17th, the numerous regiments form in line, preparatory to an advance. Our brigade is ordered to take the right. The 12th is in line, and in 4 minutes, being ready in advance of the other regiments, we are placed on the right and lead our brigade. Other brigades file into the road, and the body move slowly forward. The five miles from Vienna to Fairfax is traversed, and at 11 A. M. we are in sight of the batteries and entrenchments. The various brigades ployed to the right and left and formed by regiments in column of division, and rested in order of battle, awaiting the command for attack. The rebel flag is in plain view, flaunting defiance to the old stars and stripes. A hurried movement of the confederate troops is observed, and in a short time a courier arrives and announced that the enemy had evacuated the town, and our troops soon marched in and took possession. Obstructions of trees and earth works are formed along the road at every commanding point, and it is found that they have left three miles of entrenchments. We pass through the camp ground of the confederates, from the extent of which I should judge that a large force had been in possession. Some lawless soldiers, not however belonging to our brigade, set fire to several houses, which act is strongly denounced by all. Stringent regulations have been made which will prevent all depredations, even to entering the houses of the inhabitants.

Two confederate soldiers from South Carolina, were found in a house sick. They are not molested. Our march is continued, and three miles beyond Fairfax we encamped upon an open space of several hundred acres, at about 5 P. M. We have been joined by large bodies of our troops, and the view as they all take positions is worth a year's existence to observe. Bodies of cavalry, artillery and infantry, to the number of over ten thousand, covering hill, valley and plain with horses, cannons, wagons, and stacks of arms, was truly an imposing sight. Each regiment busies itself with rations and supper. Camp guards and pickets are posted. Capt. Brand's company being detailed from our regiment as pickets, the wearied men roll themselves in their blankets and the bosom of mother earth furnishes them a resting place for the night. Deep slumber holds us all, save the watchful guard, till 3 P. M. of the 18th July, when the sharp report of a picket's rifle, followed by another and another, and then a volley, followed by the "long roll" from 20 bands. Every man

springs to his feet, seizes his sword or musket, and regimental lines are formed in the briefest time possible, and await orders.

Day-break soon reveals the camp. The alarm seems to be nothing serious, and rations and breakfast is the next thing in order. At 8 A. M. the column advances, our brigade in front. Manassas Junction is seven miles ahead, where the enemy has assembled in force. A mile and a half from the Junction, and at noon we halt. The artillery is rapidly moved in front. Aids gallop back and forth, every thing betokening an attack on the enemy's lines. Five hundred mounted riflemen ride past at the top of their speed. At 1 o'clock, P. M., a deep mouthed report is heard, and then the sudden bursting of a shell informs us that our artillery has commenced to feel the pulse of the confederates. After several shots our fire is returned, which shows the location of their batteries. Our brigade is ordered to advance, and we take position in an open field in rear and to the left of our battery, which is planted on a hill within half a mile of the lines of the confederates. We are supported by a heavy force in our rear and on our right and left rear. An uneven open space some half mile square, surrounded by woods, divides the opposing forces. Our battery is planted on a hill on our side of the field, and our brigade rests under cover of the hill and on the rear left of the battery. Our skirmishers go round the field on the left, through the woods, and reconnoiter the enemy's position. They bravely approach within 25 feet of their line, and exchange shots with them. Having found their location, they retire, and the 1st Massachusetts and our skirmishers are ordered forward to attack at the right of their center. They file down across the field, form in line of battle and advance steadily into the woods.

A cannon ball from the enemy brings down one of our men at our battery, and an ambulance hurries up to bring him off. Now from the woods comes the report of continuous volleys of musketry, a dozen ambulances hurry down to the scene and return with the wounded; and after some minutes the 1st Massachusetts and our skirmishers retire, having been confronted by an overwhelming force. Two field pieces are hurried forward into the woods to silence their battery, but the odds are too heavy against them, nearly all their men are killed, and several horses, and the pieces in great danger of capture, when up gallops an aid to our position and gives the command, "forward the New York 12th to the rescue."

The clarion voice of our gallant Colonel rings out the command, "attention—forward, double quick, march," and we file down across the field, near to the woods, forward into line, and march shoulder to shoulder into the thick underbrush, about thirty rods, and cover the safe retreat of the piece. We continue, and advance still farther into the woods, when, on reaching the edge of a deep gully, a murderous fire opens on us, which brings to the ground several of our brave fellows, and wounded others. We returned the fire, and at the command we fell on our faces, and loaded and fired in this position until it became apparent that we were fighting against immense odds, and a concealed foe who knows our position while we are ignorant of theirs. Still the Col. cheered us on, and our boys poured in their volleys in the direction of their reports. A heavy body of cavalry, stationed near to cover our retreat, if forced into one, gallops away, to avoid the deadly volleys from the concealed battery, which pass through our ranks, when one of the line officers, through a mistake, gives out the word that the Colonel has ordered a retreat, when the regiment, except the two right companies and part of the third, breaks and flees in great confusion, running down the Colonel, Major, and Adjutant, who again and again try to rally them, but in vain.

The mistaken command allows the line to break, and once broken and in confusion, with the volleys from the enemy's infantry and battery pouring in, a panic seems to seize the men, and a rally, except when entirely out of danger, is evidently an impossibility.

Company A, Capt. Church, company I, and part of company E, Capt. Brower, stand their ground, and continue to return the fire of the enemy. At this time Lieut. Upton, aid of Gen. Tyler, rides up to us, and exaggeratedly praises our bravery, and cheers us to the work. He evinces wonderful coolness and bravery, and tells us he too is of New York, (Batavia) and her sons should not flinch before the rebels, who were perhaps the treacherous South Carolinians. One of the Captains asks him what we shall do; whether to stay, and risk a charge and capture, or retire, so as to be covered by our cannon. He replies that he will report our condition to the General, and return to us, and wheels on his horse and gallops away. We continue our fire until that of the enemy ceases, when, supposing they are preparing to charge on us in force, we arise, "bent face," "right dress," and "forward, guide right," till we emerge from the bushes and woods, where we halt, and Col. Richardson rides up to us and tells us to stand till further orders. Soon Adjutant Titus comes, and orders us back to our first position before the attack. The balance of the regiment form on us, and at nightfall we retire a couple of miles, and encamp.

A host of incidents occurred during the day, which I have not time to mention. The attack was a trying ordeal for our raw troops, and army officers say that no regiment of regulars would have stood longer than did ours; though Gen. Tyler censured our Colonel for our retreat. Army regulations will not allow me to safely speak as I think of the management of the General in command, but it will be sifted.

Every one is loud in their praise of the daring and courage of those who stood till the fire of the enemy ceased. I must also particularly mention Capt. Church and Lieut. Wood, of company A, Lieut's. Combe and Drake, of company I, and the men under their command, as well as those of company E, who remained, and those of other companies who singly joined us. Veterans of a hundred battles could not have shown more coolness and bravery. Capt. Brower, of company E, had two men shot near him, who threw up their arms, exclaiming "I am shot." He and Lieut's. Horner and Abbott tried to prevent their men from breaking, and followed them only to attempt their rally.—Capt. Brower and Lieut. Abbott came back, but were so overcome with the excessive heat and fatigue that they had to be assisted from the field. Several of the men belonging to the companies that fled, came to us and asked for a place in our ranks, and fought bravely till the end.

H. A. B.

The following is a list of the killed, wounded and missing, as far as could be ascertained in the confusion following the battle:

Company A.—Geo. N. Cheney, missing; Joe LaBeff and Snyder, slightly wounded.

Company I.—Michael Murphy, of Fulton, killed.