

Extract from a Private Letter.

CAMP UNION, Va., July 18.

DEAR MOTHER: The whole regiment left day before yesterday, with the exception of the sick and one able-bodied man from each company. I was detailed from our company to stay. I do the cooking for five sick men and do guard duty at night. The weather is warmer than I ever experienced in this country. The first potatoes I have seen since leaving Elmira, I obtained in a foraging expedition to-day. They were very acceptable. Last night one hundred and fifty wagons, loaded with provisions for the advancing army, passed this camp. When last heard from, our regiment was in the best of spirits and anxious for a fight. The army, as it marched from here, presented a fine sight. The column marched four abreast, and extended a distance of six miles. There were in all some 35,000 men. Some of our men came back sick to-day, unable to go any further. None of our company (SCHOEFFEL'S) have returned. I would like to see more than those from the country. Nine out of ten of the sick in our regiment are from the country.

Blackberries are exceedingly plenty here. A few mornings since I picked a six quart pail full in half an hour. The nights are very cool, and the variations of temperature, day and night, are quite trying to the endurance of the men, who serve night and day. The heat at Panama I endured much better than I can this climate; still I am quite healthy. Some of the flies here are as large as honey bees, and annoy us very much. A fine creek nearby gives us a chance to bathe, which I do as often as convenient. We have also a spring, which affords water equal to filtered water you have at home.

Tell F. that his old friend Major TERAY has resigned, at the request of all the Captains, excepting Captain SMITH, of the "Smith Rifles." Government offers a bounty of \$100 to each of the three months volunteers who will re-enlist for the war.

WAR CORRESPONDENCE.

Important Letters from Capt. Adolph Nolte. A Graphic and Concise Description of the Great Battle. The Irrepressible Thirteenth in Action. Their Achievements. No Reinforcements. The Retreat, Etc.

(Translated for the Evening Express, from the Rochester Observer.)

CAMP UNION, July 23, 1861.

As you perceive from this letter, we have returned sooner from Virginia than we entered.— In entering we occupied three days; for leaving, one night. Nevertheless, we can maintain that we have lost the battle with honor, and that the cause of our defeat is owing to nothing but the defective disposition of our forces, to the lack of ammunition, and to the fatigue of our troops. The general course of the battle you will learn in detail from the newspapers, and the official reports. So I will inform you briefly only as follows.

From 7 o'clock in the morning, till 3 in the afternoon, (of Sunday,) we drove the enemy out of every position. He made a stand nowhere in the open field. The flight and pursuit continued over hill and dale, through valley, defile and forest, until we came upon his strongest batteries, at 3 o'clock, three miles this side of Manassas.

Instead of resting the troops, who from 2 o'clock in the morning had been upon their legs, in the most terrible heat, almost unprovided with water, and very little biscuit, they were ordered to storm the batteries lying opposite. In the enthusiasm of victory they rushed fiercely upon them. However, they were received by a fearful fire from heavy artillery, and from firmly placed batteries, at which the enemy had a stand. Our artillery, light six-pounders, began to play against the heavy artillery of the enemy. But their heavy calibre was immensely superior to ours, and our ammunition, which had been employed during the day, was falling.

From this moment forth, we were in the hands of the enemy, who rained upon us a hail of balls, bombs and schrapnels, as far as their heavy artillery could reach. Nevertheless, we advanced once more, about a half of a mile, and captured one of the nearest posted hostile batteries. However, we could not retain it without artillery, and were compelled to get out of the reach of the enemy's artillery, after being completely showered with a flood of balls.

Here we met with the severest blow. We had no reserve, neither infantry or artillery, which could have stood against the enemy, and behind which we could have reorganized. Our battalions were, singly, as they advanced, thrown against the batteries and driven back. Of a reserve no one had thought. Now every one knows, who has any knowledge of war, that dissolved battalions behind sufficient reserves, upon the battle field, can again be brought to a stand and to order—but never when they are upon the march. A retreat followed, and from this moment forth, were all the regiments and arms a

promiscuous, irregular heap—fired to death, and retreating upon the narrow mainway, blockaded by hundreds of wagons, and through the close woods.

The Thirteenth Regiment.

Now, with reference to our regiment. We left our camp Sunday, the 21st, at 2 A. M. After we marched a few miles we met the enemy. Our position was at the extreme right wing—beside us the 80th and 79th. After that the artillery had opened fire, and several regiments of the rebels had been scattered by well-thrown grenades, and after that Lieut. HUNTER'S brigade had flanked the enemy on the left, we advanced and drove the enemy by our fire. They nowhere made a stand. They were defeated everywhere, and the pursuit was over hill and valley.

Having arrived at Bull's Run—a river not deep, but shut in by steep banks—the most of our troops *refused the pontoon bridge and sprung as if mad through the creek.* Having reached the opposite high, our fire commenced anew upon the flying and distracted columns of the enemy, until they had got beyond reach of shot. Here Gen. McDOWELL and Col. SHERMAN, our Brigade commander, met and shook hands in the salutations and our hurrah were a little too early. The command to advance was given. Our fatigued regiments, who from 2 A. M. till noon, had been in a terrible heat upon their feet, stimulated by the enthusiasm of victory, ran down the mountain and up another high, when, as we were crossing the summit of the same, we came within shooting distance of the enemy's chief battery, and the balls began to fly around us thick as hail. We formed division columns and made an advance march down the hill. *Here fell two of our company, (the GERMANS) the first in the Regiment, the shot striking about three yards from me in the rank. It splintered the right thigh of private NATHAN, and the right foot of young WERNER. The pieces of the shell whirled about our ears like hail.*

We marched under the continuous rain of balls—which bore down many others of the regiment—to the left over the way, and took position behind a small high. The divisions of the regiment, changing positions, advanced to the top of the slope and from thence fired upon the hostile position. Finally came the artillery, and posted itself upon the back of the hill, in order to answer the fire of the battery. We remained in our position in order to cover the artillery, and had the satisfaction of receiving all the shot which was intended for them. *A mass of men fell here.* Unfortunately, the artillery had exhausted its ammunition, and returned to the left. We began our fire afresh, advanced over the hill, and drove the enemy through a hollow lying behind, where we took possession of a stone house, which had served them as a protection.

From here we advanced through a hollow, up another high, on whose left side a deserted block-house, surrounded by fences, also served as a defence for the enemy. *While we were scaling the fences, Sergeant BRACKER received a ball in the right shoulder. I held him for a moment, with the assistance of Sergeant Major SCHREIBER, and whilst the latter was tying him up, I followed quickly the remainder of our companies, which had just posted themselves behind the above mentioned block house.*

mentioned block house.

Already on the advance, was our regiment, likewise the 69th and 70th—entirely separated! Our assault was made, not in column, lines, or in any regular manner, but in a promiscuous and confused mass. I met here men from the companies of CAPTS. LEWIS, WILLIAMS, HYLAND and Lieut. GRICK, in confusion. They had posted themselves partly behind the house, partly behind the fence, and stood upon the enemy, whose cannon and musket balls whizzed about us like hail. *Here private BAUMAN fell*, hit in the breast by a ball, and breathed his last. This last result WAS THE TURNING POINT OF THE BATTLE. The other wing was thrown back and fled, and so was our little heap—if it were not to be cut down entirely—compelled to seek safety in flight. We retreated across the field toward the defile, and it is a mystery to me to this hour, *how one single man got away safely* from the awful grape shot and musketry.

When I leaped the fence bordering the defile, I was compelled to remain for several minutes behind a small hill, before I could venture forth; for had I during this time only raised my head, it would have been riddled by a dozen balls.

At last we got through the valley behind the opposite heights, where the balls from the batteries could no longer reach us. Here I met private STUCKMEN, whose foot was smashed, and who had been carried away by a few of his comrades. On the opposite plateau our troops reorganized to some extent, but as we had no reserve, it was impossible to bring order out of confusion. The retreat took place without the enemy's daring to follow with his infantry. We dragged ourselves, fatigued almost to death, about twelve miles back, towards Centreville, and from thence in the same night, to camp Union.

So far as concerns the wounded of our company, we have brought with us but *one*, Sergeant BEEKER, who could march. The remainder have fallen into the hands of the enemy. Not TWENTY OF OUR COMPANY WERE TOGETHER AT EVENING, and I fear that more have fallen than above mentioned.

All the wounded of our company fell at the attack—none on the retreat. Of the whole regiment, I was not able to find together at evening, *so much as fifty men*. The rest were scattered in every direction, like the other regiments; and on Monday noon there was not as many as eighty men in camp Union.

In regard to the retreat, I shall write in my

next, since this letter will otherwise be too late for the mail. We were from Sunday morning to Monday morning on the march, without eating or drinking anything, except a little sea-biscuit and a little dirty water. We were during this time, from seven to eight hours, under fire, and had marched fifty miles. Let those answer for the result who have sent 20,000 exhausted troops, with light, half provided artillery, against an enemy of 60,000, well entrenched, and well provided with the heaviest artillery.

The March from Camp Union, and the Battle of Thursday.

From the same Correspondent.

CAMP NEAR CENTREVILLE, }
July 20, 1861. }

I wrote in my last that we left Camp Union on the 16th. The columns started at 2 P. M., during the greatest heat, and marched through a dense forest, that was interrupted only by few farms, towards Vienna, where, as is well known, Gen. BOURNICK attacked a masked battery with a locomotive.

We encamped with our tents in a swampy meadow ground, and at 6 o'clock next morning started again. Our march was a very difficult and tiring one. Artillery, baggage, cavalry and infantry crowded each other in a miserably narrow and rough forest road, which was seldom wide enough for two wagons to pass each other. Every moment the column halted. They had to stop and start again on a trot, stop again, and then march for miles in the greatest heat of the sun and without a drop of water. The march was executed without the least regard for the men. Where there was water, we passed by.-- Where there was none, we halted for hours in the most burning heat. If a well or spring was found at a little distance from the road, they said there was *no time* to bring water, and when an hour in the burning heat.

During the march we were informed that Fairfax Court House had been evacuated, and accordingly our column passed along more to the right on the direct road to Manassas Junction.-- In the afternoon we passed a rebel intrenchment which had been abandoned. The wood was blocked up at several places, with fallen trees, and their removal took considerable time. Towards evening we passed a place of about 20 houses, from which all the inhabitants had left. Only few negroes remained. It seems as if the inhabitants had left in the greatest haste, and detachments of the 70th regiment began knocking to pieces everything left, and finally set fire to a house, which burned down.

On the approach of night, we came to a place where, on the very same day, the rebel troops had been encamped. We found their fires still burning. That day we had gone at least 16 miles in the greatest heat and heavily loaded, and we threw ourselves, completely tired, upon the ground. In the same night we were twice started up by false alarms. The next morning we marched upon Centreville, which is situated about seven miles from Manassas Junction. Before Centreville we found some intrenchments abandoned by the rebels. Most of the inhabitants had left the place, and nothing was to be got there. Even the pump handles had been removed from the pumps.

moved from the pumps.

At the head of the column marched a Wisconsin and the 12th Syracuse regiments. The latter came out from the forest about a mile and a half from Centerville, upon a plateau, which formed a hill towards the opposite forest. It was suddenly saluted with a hail of canister and musket balls, which, from a masked battery and position, fell suddenly upon them. In spite of the experience of Bethel and Vienna, our Syracuse friends had unheedingly fallen upon the enemy's cannons and muskets. The command was given to advance in battle order. The regiment formed with difficulty and advanced, but when it had come to within fifty paces of the enemy's position it was received with such a shower of canister and musket balls that it dispersed in all directions. They scattered through the whole forest, and five hours later, when we met with the rest of the regiment, there were not 200 men together.

One will ask now, why was not this attack supported? The answer is, because the brigades which followed were nearly three miles behind.

After the Syracuse regiment had been repulsed a light battery was pushed forward to disperse the enemy's artillery.

Our regiment, with the rest of those that constituted the brigade, lay about three miles behind the scene of action. We heard the cannon fire for nearly two hours until about 2 o'clock we received orders to advance. We advanced by way of Centerville and then we marched in quick and double quick time for two miles upon a narrow path through the dense forest. The heat was horrible and the dust was so that we nearly suffocated. I washed my mouth several times with a draught from my canteen, and from the pap that I spit out, one might have almost baked together a whole German Principality. When we arrived at the border of the forest, before which our guns operated, our regiment was placed to right and left of the road in the wood to await farther orders. We were about 20 paces from the border of the forest. The cannonading was redoubled and balls from 6 and 12 pounders and canister, whizzed like hail over our heads or struck the ground a few paces behind us. This cannonading kept up about an hour, more or less. Take it all in all, our men behaved well under their first baptism of fire.— We lay flat on the ground. When the first balls struck the branches and trees above our heads, it is true that several polite bows were made to these coarse fellows. Once when a charge of canister whizzed over the heads of the middle division, about half a dozen tried to fall back in the rear. But half a score execrations brought them back immediately into line. Several of the men made curious faces behind the trees, but most made fun of it; and more quietness and indifference was shown than could be expected from green troops. In this position, in which we received all the balls that were intended for our artillery, which was placed on the border of the forest, we remained for more than an hour. In vain we hoped for an order to advance and try our Remington Rifles. Toward four o'clock, the artillery fire on our part was stopped, ostensibly because our guns could find no position to fire with advantage upon those of the enemy.

At last we found our column again, and went slowly back through the forest without having lost a man. On the way we found the dead and wounded of the Syracuse Regiment, 15 or 20 in number. With those of other regiments, the Ohio and Wis. there may have been thirty. One of the Syracuse regiment had one half of his head torn away sideways by a 6 pounder, so that upwards from the under jaw, there was nothing to be seen but a mass of raw flesh, blood and crushed bones. Another had his abdomen torn by a piece of a shell, in a most horrible manner. The poor fellow begged for a drink of brandy, which I gave to him, as the surgeon told me he could not live another hour. Others had musket balls in their breast or shoulders, and some had their feet crushed.

We went back to Centrovillo and from there a mile in advance towards the right flank of the enemy, where we took up our position. We spent here the 10th of July under huts or bushes—and to-day the 30th, we are not likely to go further. Since yesterday considerable reinforcements have come from Washington, so that the army will be 60,000 or 70,000 strong. Some heavy howitzers have also arrived to enable us to fire upon the enemy's batteries from a greater distance. Our regiment lies to-day at the extreme advance post of the right flank, and when we move will be the vanguard. We shall then see whether we shall fare any better than the Syracuseans.

Manassas is about 7 miles from here, and the entrenchments of the enemy are not a mile from us. We do not expect any movement to-day, but to-morrow (Sunday) we shall have a horrible sacred concert in spite of the ordinances of his Honor the Mayor of Rochester. Until then, good bye,

After the Battle—Letter from Wilbur D. Cook, of Capt. Schouler's Company.

Mr. Cook, who was left in charge of the camp and the sick, writes to his parents as follows:

CAMP UNION, VA., }
Monday, July 22—10 A. M. }

I suppose you are aware that our troops have been beaten, and have retreated to their old camp. I never saw such hard looking men in my life, as those that came out this morning.— We have lost batteries, wagons and many of our men are taken prisoner. Our loss in killed and wounded, so near as we can find out, is about 1,000. Only half of our company have returned;

but we know of but one of them being killed—
WALLACE SHOVE. He was shot in the breast.

Gen. SCOTT has made an order forbidding any of the troops crossing the river; and it is thought that Washington is now in danger of being taken.

Our regiment was the last one to leave the field, where they did good execution. Tell the people of Rochester that their colors are safe yet, though there are some bullet holes in them.

The sight of the returning troops was one I never saw before, and I never wish to see the like again. Apprehensions were entertained that Fort Corcoran will be attacked by the Rebels to-night or to-morrow night, and we shall fall back into that place in an hour or two.

I am well, but greatly fatigued.

Your Son, W. D. COOK.