

The Fifth Virginia Regiment in the Battle of Manassas.

Early Sunday we were aroused by the drum beating the long roll, and we immediately formed in line of battle. Soon the enemy commenced a heavy cannonading on our right, which our accomplished Generals soon discovered to be a feint made by the enemy to attract our attention in that quarter, while their real attack would be made on the extreme left. We were immediately ordered to take position several miles to the left. We had not been in position long, before it became evident we were in a warm neighborhood. The enemy's artillery, just in our front, but hid from our sight by a skirt of woods and an eminence between us, thundered forth its deadly missiles, and presently, too, the sharp, ringing crack of the rifle was heard, showing that the advance guard of skirmishers had met. Cavalry scouts could be seen, galloping within the lines, when a terrible volley of musketry, immediately in our front, assured us that the ball had opened, and the fight had commenced in right good earnest.

Between 9 and 10 o'clock A. M., the enemy, in tremendous force, advanced his right against our left, with the view of turning our left wing and getting position in the rear of the "Junction." They were met by several South Carolina regiments (including Hampton's Legion) and the Alabama 4th, our regiment (the 5th Virginia) being held in reserve; but soon we were ordered forward to support the 4th Alabama. On our way to take position on a hill we were met by a portion of a South Carolina regiment who had been compelled to fall back by an overwhelming force, and who informed us that the 4th Alabama was being literally cut to pieces. Here, also, we met two pieces of the Washington (La.) Artillery retiring, having expended their stock of ammunition. This was by no means encouraging, but we felt the necessity for greater exertion on our part, and forward we rushed to the assistance of our friends. Amidst perfect

tion on our part, and forward we rushed to the assistance of our friends. Amid a perfect shower of musketry and cannon balls the command to halt and lie down was given, as it was impossible for us to return the enemy's fire, they being completely sheltered by the hill. Not being able to return the enemy's fire, or even see them our men cried out to be led forward or taken back to the foot of the hill; but our gallant Col. Harper assured us that he had no orders to advance, but was directed to occupy this position until the enemy should make their appearance, when we were to fire and charge bayonets.

Finally, the order to advance was given, and under a perfect shower of shell and shot we arose and started up the hill. A portion of our regiment misunderstanding the order, we were thrown into temporary confusion; but soon rallied, and our gallant Major Wm. S. H. Baylor, taking the lead we rushed forward and gained the position on the hill behind some old houses. Before we gained position, however, the Fourth Alabama Regiment had been compelled to retreat, and we found ourselves face to face with a powerful force of the enemy, and conspicuous among them was the famous Ellsworth Zouaves. Just in our front was the Second New York Regiment. On the left of them the Zouaves were stationed, while on our right, and completely flanking us, was the First or Second Maine Regiment. We fired a telling volley of musketry into the regiment in our front, which drove them rapidly to the rear. This drew the fire of those on our left upon us, and while engaged with them, the Maine regiment on our right, (whom we supposed at first to be friends,) advanced rapidly upon us, and sheltering themselves by lying down behind a fence, they poured a most destructive fire into our ranks, and here some of our best and bravest men fell. Here the noble and brave Billy Woodward exclaimed, "I will never retreat. 'Give me liberty or give me death.'" His lips had scarcely given utterance to these heroic words, when a ball pierced his brave heart. It soon became evident that with our single regiment it was impossible to maintain the position, exposed as we were to a central and two raking flank fires from at least four times our number.

We therefore fell back to a skirt of woods some hundred yards in the rear, where we were joined by a portion of the Alabama 4th, who had fought so gallantly and suffered so terribly at the house on the hill before we came up. A portion of a South Carolina regiment also joined in with us here, and during the rest of the evening we fought side by side.

In every part of the field the contest now raged, and desperate efforts were made by each party to gain some decided advantage, without apparent success, though they greatly outnumbered us, and I looked on at the terribly and desperate strife without being able in my own mind to determine which would be victors.

Greatly to the encouragement of our brave troops, who were so heroically struggling against superior numbers, several fresh batteries made their appearance and took position on an eminence just to our left.

These opened upon the enemy, whose main column was sheltered behind a gradually sloping hill, thickly covered by small timber, and protected by a part of the celebrated Sherman Battery. A tremendous cannonading now took place that far surpassed anything I ever imagined. It appeared to me as if Heaven and earth were being rent asunder, so terrible was the crash and roar of the monster instruments of death. Several times the enemy attempted to rally for a charge on our batteries; but whenever their lines came within the terrible discharges of round shot and canister from our batteries swept them like chaff before the wind, their long and spledidly-formed lines fairly melting away. Yet the tremendous force before us seemed not to diminish, and every inch of ground was contested with sullen and determined force, our brave troops fighting with renewed energy and vigor. Being parched with thirst and almost exhausted, I ran down to what appeared to be a branch or mud hole, and drank copiously of the muddy water, and was just returning to my regiment when I met Gen. Johnston, who inquired of me to what regiment I belonged.— I told him. He then inquired how Gen. Jackson's Brigade was getting along. I told him we were fighting bravely.

were fighting bravely and well, but against large odds, and needed help. He at once said, go join your regiment and tell them to hold their position, and in a few moments I will send reinforcements to their aid. I hurried back to my regiment with a lighter heart than I left it.

On reaching the top of the hill, I could see in the direction of Manassas Junction a large column of men approaching, and filing past them, with the swiftness of the wind, was a splendid body of cavalry, numbering probably a thousand. These came rushing on like a mighty torrent, with drawn sabres glittering in the evening's bright sunbeams, mounted on steeds which seemed to be maddened by the contest that was being waged by man against his fellow man. I soon recognized this to be the splendid body of Cavalry commanded by the gallant Col. Stuart, of which the excellent company from Augusta (Capt. Patrick's) forms a part. In the meantime, Gen. Beauregard appeared on the field in person, and approaching our regiment inquired who we were, and on being informed, he address-

ed us in the following cheering language: "Fight on, brave Virginia boys; the day is ours everywhere else, and it must be here also." He then commanded us to follow him, and, with a loud cheer, we rushed forward, determined to do as commanded, or die.

By this time Sherman's battery had evidently become somewhat disabled, and had slackened its fire a little. Our course was turned directly in that direction. We reached the top of an eminence, fired a volley and at a charge bayonets rushed down upon it. We found that every horse attached to the battery was either killed or disabled and not a man, except the dead and wounded were left with the guns.

Almost every company in the regiment claim the credit of first reaching the battery. I would not do injustice to any. But a proper regard to truth, and honor to whom honor is due in this particular act, compels me to say that the left of the regiment, under the command of Major Baylor, was the first to reach the immediate vicinity of the battery, and corporals R. T. Bucher, of the West Augusta Guards, Capt. Waters, and John Sutz, of the Augusta Rifles, Capt. Antrim, were the first men to reach the captured guns.— Corporal Pucher sprang astride one of the pieces and fired his musket at the retreating enemy.

By this time the reinforcements I referred to coming from the direction of Manassas, had arrived on the ground, and, unperceived either by us or the enemy, marched rapidly to our left and to the right of the Federal forces under cover of a skirt of woods. These troops consisted of three Tennessee and one Virginia regiments; from this position they poured into the ranks of the enemy (who were partly concealed by thick undergrowth,) the most terrible and deadly volley of musketry I ever witnessed; and then, with a shout that rent the air, they rushed in one grand sweeping charge upon them. The enemy, terror stricken, broke ranks and fled in the

one grand sweeping charge upon them. The enemy, terror stricken, broke ranks and fled in the wildest confusion over the hill; the cavalry charged upon them, sending terror and dismay among their already confused and broken ranks; the guns of the captured batteries were turned against them; batteries were run upon eminences which commanded roads along which they retreated, and which raked and crushed their disordered columns dreadfully, and shout after shout rent the air from the victorious Southern troops.
