

Letter from W. H. Westcott.

Eds. EXPRESS:—As the EXPRESS has a large circulation in Clarendon, its readers may be pleased to read this letter from THOS. WESTCOTT private in Capt. H. Smith's Company.

Truly yours, H.

CAMP UNION, July 21, 1861.

DEAR BROTHER:—Yesterday I returned to this Camp from a hard, long and bloody battle. The Clarendon boys have all arrived safe and sound. Tell Mr. COPELAND that I saw ALDER after the fight; he is alive and well.

I will now try and give a little account of the fight. We started from Fairfax, or near there, Sunday morning at 2½ o'clock. I assure you it was the most awful Sunday I have ever seen or hope to see again. After marching six miles beyond Centerville, we fled off the main road into a large wood, then marched at left flank until we reached the edge again. Here we lay about two hours, then Gen. Tyler ordered two companies of our regiment to a hill. Those ordered were ours (Capt. Smith's) Co. G, and Co. A.—Upon arriving on the hill, we then caught first sight of the enemy. We commenced firing on them as soon as they opened on us, but without any effect. While we were there the enemy marched towards the east and way off to the right. We saw one of our divisions advancing towards them, soon two batteries of our Brigades belched forth furiously on them, but they did not return the fire.

On this little hill we remained two hours, then returned to our regiment, and staid about half an hour; now the heavy cannon thundered, the long and steady cracking of musketry told plainly the work had commenced. Orders came for us to march forward as fast as possible. We did so, making good time, until we reached a wide creek, which we forded without much delay. No place could be found to get the batteries across, as the banks of the creek were high and steep. This caused us to fight with great disadvantage. On this eminence could be seen the batteries playing from both sides; soon the enemy began to retreat in great confusion, and the principal thing going on, was taking rebel prisoners.

Forward, march!—and now we are in the thickest of the fight. O, the destruction of men and horses! What a sight! I revolt to tell particulars. Stopplug a few moments urged the enemy to open on us a terrific fire. The ground

was heaving and flying in every direction. We were ordered to march toward the battery—but halted in a gully. Here we lay until one of our batteries passed up the hill to play on the enemy. While we were here, Col. Slocum and regiment passed. I watched for ALDEN COPELAND; soon he came along looking pretty hard. We managed to speak and shake hands. I asked him how he liked the "fellers" whistling over us, and whether they made him dodge or not. He said the balls from cannon he dreaded, but the bullets could he get along with well enough.

While marching along, I looked up and saw two balls coming that had struck the ground and were on the bound. They were about 20 feet in air and 20 feet apart. Says I to CLINTON, "Look at those balls!" They passed over our heads and struck in Capt. NOLTE'S Company.— They hit the first men I saw fall in our Regiment. The battery of the enemy now ceased firing and we were ordered to march across the creek and up the hill, passing along for 40 rods, were ordered to the left flank, right-wheel, we did so, halted, dropped down, and waited for the enemy. While laying here, the 27th marched on up the road to support our battery, working on the enemy whose battery raked ours, killing all the horses that were there to draw the pieces. Two regiments supporting the rebel battery, moved towards us on the brow of a hill. Here, for the first time, I saw the rebel flag or rag, as it soon became when in sight of our regiment.— Here our company suffered; two were wounded—one in the arm, the other in the neck and arm. The closest cut I got, was by the ball that took effect in the poor fellow's neck; it passed through my cape which was wound around my blanket, and slung across my shoulder. We lay there pouring bullets on them like hail. I was our rebel flag bearer shot down. Our cartridges were nearly gone so we retreated a short distance and made a stand, firing away our last cartridge.

About this time the enemy received large reinforcements—what an awful volley of balls were poured down on us—we were compelled to retreat, leaving many dead and wounded on the field. We were not scratched, but to see horses running away, tearing everything to pieces, was frightful.

Fighting.

We left for Centreville about six o'clock, and there met reinforcements which went on to Bull Run to guard the wagons. That evening we marched to Fairfax, where I fell out of rank and made up my mind to go no further that night. I soon found a barn, a buffalo skin, and laid down for the night, not caring for the consequences. At six in the morning I awoke hungry and sore.

I made up my mind I never could walk to camp, so a conveyance was found, and I rode in to camp about noon. The most of the boys returned bare-footed, their feet being much blistered. I think the loss in our Regiment is about 50 killed and wounded.

I have always had a strong desire to see a fight. I have now seen it. Now I have a desire to have just one more chance at them, then I am done. I don't like to fight where the balls are only bullets. They are of no consequence.

I staid last night in a corn house with some South Carolina prisoners. Our forces brought away many such fellow some New Orleans Zouaves and here. I have no more time to write, so wait a little while longer.

From a "Broth of a Boy" in the 13th.

We have been shown a letter from private Ansel Hobart, to his mother, in which he describes the events of Sunday, and the share which his own company took in the engagement. We copy a single paragraph *verbatim*:

"In the first place we stopped on a hill where we did not have a fair sight at the rebels. We thought to take them, when they run, but we got sucked in, for we could not see them nowhere. Well, then, we run four miles further, when we got a fair swing at them—then we gave them a—l on all sides, until balls flew about our heads like hailstones. Then our Captain gave the order to retreat, which made all of us as mad as so many crazy devils, but we had to do it. We are going to try them agalu in a few days, and I hope the Lord will spare my life till I see the Stars and Stripes flying all over the whole world. If He does, I shall feel happy when I die."