

## FROM THE SECOND VERMONT REGIMENT.

ALEXANDRIA, VA., July 23, 1861.

ALBERT CLARK, ESQ. :—

Dear Sir— \* \* \* \* \* When the head of our column came up to theirs, they opened on us with their artillery. We had then marched fifteen miles, were all out of breath, had had no breakfast except hard crackers which we eat on the march, had drank nothing but muddy water, and the last two miles of our march we had made on the "double-quick;" but notwithstanding all that, we went into them, and drove them back to their stronghold. There they drew on us and gave us the best whipping an army ever had. But we fought until we were ordered to retreat, and then came bitter disappointment to crown a day of severe fighting, hard labor and dreadful misery.— They followed us up with artillery and cavalry in the rear, while they sent a force around to cut off our retreat where we had to cross a bridge; but they did not cut us up very badly there, for we took to the woods. We could not return the fire, for we had no ammunition.

The number of killed and wounded is not known, for we had to leave them all, poor fellows. Only two of them, in a shed that I stopped in on our retreat, had their wounds dressed. I think there must have been fifty in that shed, and they were only a small portion of what were on the field.— Our Orderly Sergeant [of the Fletcher Company] had his arm shot through. I took him off the field and helped our surgeon perform the amputation; and just as we had got through and got it done up the order came to retreat to our old quarter; but when we got there we found that no place would be safe for us short of Alexandria, and so we kept on; and a longer road, for one that had no more miles in it, I think I never saw. We arrived here about 11 o'clock on Monday forenoon, making about thirty-six hours that we were under arms, marching in the time at least fifty miles, and fighting severely about half an hour. When I say this, I mean the Vermont regiment; you will see by the papers how long the fight lasted, from 7 A. M. to 4 P. M., I think.

When we arrived here we were tired, hungry and wet; our feet were blistered and bleeding.— All the wounded came on that were able. To-day we are sore and lame; not a man of us can walk without limping.

We expect the wounded that we left are all murdered; for we showed a flag of truce on the field, and they fired into it. I nailed a white flag on the door of the shed where some of the wounded were, and left with our Orderly two canteens of water, a filter to drink through and some hard crackers—all I had. Then I had to leave or be taken prisoner. The poor fellow *begged* of me to get a team and take him along, but that was impossible. I had to leave him to the mercy of a *southern chivalry*. I have heard since that the building was blown to pieces by their artillery and the wounded all killed.

Our Surgeon lost all his instruments and had to run for dear life. I could write a whole week of incidents which came under my observation, but I am tired and weak, and must close. More anon.

Yours truly,

ABRAHAM FORD.

The above letter inclosed a photograph of Col. Ellsworth, which the author found near the body of a fire Zouave who had been killed in the battle. It was taken in New York, by J. Gurney & Son, as their card is on the back of it.