

A pretty good account of Blackburn's Ford and Bull Run from Lyman Stowe of the 2d MI. Includes many references to Israel Richardson.

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RECITALS AND REMINISCENCES.

Stories Eminently Worth Telling of Experiences and Adventures
in the Great National Struggle.

THROUGH BALTIMORE.

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Editor National Tribune: I am reading The National Tribune and noting carefully everything in it, and find it so interesting I can hardly wait for the day to come around for its weekly appearance.

You will please excuse me if I am stirred to give a little of my experience, as one of Dear Old Uncle Sam's boys. I must, however, give it as a private soldier. I was not a General, Colonel, Lieutenant or even a Corporal, but am proud to say I was the first man in the city of Flint, Genesee Co., Mich., to enlist under Lincoln's first call. I have often longed to see the statement in The National Tribune of how some of the boys came to enlist and how they felt on that occasion.

My father was an old line Whig. I have before me a circular letter, date 1848, from Zach Chandler and others, to my father in regard to what should be done to elect Gen. Winfield Scott. My father was bitterly opposed to slav-



'I SAW A MAN WALK

ery, and, of course, as a boy I heard much concerning it.

When five years old, or in 1848, a brother but five years older than myself, in talking to another boy, said: "This slave question will surely bring on war. I may not live to see it, but my brother here will," pointing to me. Well, yes, I did see it, and he, poor fellow, did not. I write this to call attention to the feelings even among children in the North of that time. You see, I was a born Abolitionist, too young to vote, but sang in a glee club for "John C. Fremont is the man we want. He's the man, too, who can wear the traces," etc., etc.

I was also too young to vote for Lincoln in 1860, but when Fort Sumter was fired on it set ablaze every drop of blood in my veins, and when our militia company, the Flint Union Grays, called a rallying meeting, I made a little speech, and begged that my name be the first on the list of enlistment for the war from that locality. We were sworn into State service April 20, 1861, for three months' service, and rendezvoused at Detroit, Mich. Meantime the Government refused to accept any more three-months men. As Michigan had already one regiment of three-months men in the field we were compelled to disband and go home or enlist for three years or during the war. Many went home, but many of us remained, and the skeleton of our company was quickly filled up and became Co. F, 2d Mich. Col. Dick Richardson was our Colonel. Afterward Gen. J. B. Richardson, killed at Antietam. Had this grand man and noble soldier lived he would have been made Commander of the Army of the Potomac.

Our regiment left the State June 6, 1861, and with much anxiety and expectation we arrived at the Relay House near Baltimore, Md., near sundown, June 9. It has been claimed ours was the first regiment to go through Baltimore after the hard usage of the 6th Mass. Whether so or not I do not know, but I do know our Colonel drew us up in line, division of two companies, front, and addressed us as follows:

"Second Michigan, we may now meet our first engagement. You will at the command load at will, and be careful none of you get the ball down first. Let every man keep his head. Do not get excited, and do not fire unless you receive orders. We will march through the city company division front, where possible; where not, break into platoons. As you march let the first four men on right and left flanks watch the roofs and windows, and if attacked see that you bring down the assailant, be it man or woman."

At this point the Chief of Police came up with a large squad of men, and said he came to escort the regiment through the town. The Colonel answered in these words:

"You can march ahead if you want to, but my men came here prepared to take care of themselves."

After carefully loading our old Harper's Ferry muskets the Colonel remarked:

"Now let them attack us and we will show them what a ball and three buckshot will do."

We had no occasion to fire a shot; in fact, we hardly saw a person except the police and railroad men.

We took the train for Washington on the other side of town, and were all night pulling through, arriving at Washington at 7 o'clock on the morning of June 10. In the afternoon we marched in review before President Lincoln and Gen. Scott.

I wonder if any comrade could ever forget such an experience; in fact, could any person who ever saw either of those men once forget the event. Or could he doubt that God Almighty raises up the right man in the right place when wanted?

We went into camp just below Georgetown, and two days later moved down to Camp Scott at Chain Bridge, where we lay guarding the bridge until we took up our line of march out the Georgetown road for Bull Run.

To Bull Run.

It was the 16th of June, 1861, the Army of the Potomac, under Gen. Irvin McDowell, took up its line of march toward Richmond, 30,000 strong, in four divisions commanded by Brig.-Gen. Tyler and Cols. Hunter, Heintzelman and Miles; Miles on the extreme left on the old Braddock road, which becomes the Warrenton turnpike after passing through Fairfax Court House. Heintzelman, with the leading portion of the left wing, took the Little River turnpike, while Hunter, with the center, took the Leesburg and Centerville road; Tyler, with the right wing, took the Georgetown road. There could not have been much secrecy in regard to the order of march, because private soldiers were discussing it together with other phases of the campaign.

Col. Richardson had been placed in command of the brigade consisting of the 2d and 3d Mich. and 12th Mass.

regiments. We were a part of Tyler's Division.

We did not break camp until 2 o'clock in the afternoon. I having been sick with diarrhea since our arrival, but all the time doing duty, I was ordered to report to the hospital and remain behind, but after some pleading with my Captain, William R. Morse, he consented to let me go. We marched out as far as Vienna Station, where some weeks before Col. Hatch attempted to reconnoiter with a train of cars, and backed his train up and into a masked battery. Here was an experience, our first bivouac and our first field breakfast of coffee, hardtack and boiled salt pork.

When the sun was an hour high we moved out of Vienna and pursued our way toward Fairfax. About 1 o'clock we came in sight of Fairfax. As we came out of a woods road and onto a hill from which we could see a long distance, we saw troops moving in several lines, and to our right we saw burning buildings with great clouds of black smoke rising high in the heavens, and we could hear the crack, crack, crack of musketry in the distance. The burning buildings was Germantown. The division was drawn up in line of battle, bugles were sounding and a battery of artillery came dashing through a wheat field, where the wheat was cut and standing in shocks. The artillery drew into line and prepared for action.



TALK TO THE EDGE OF THE HILL AND

This was truly a magnificent sight. It was the spectacular side of war. But soon an Aid came dashing up to the General, and we then understood the columns to the left and in front were the left and center of our army, which had arrived at Fairfax ahead of us. The enemy had retreated, leaving every obstacle possible in our way, and many in their haste had left behind clothing, broken-down wagons, flour and a thousand and one things as evidence of their mad flight. To my mind this far exceeded the destruction of property by the retreat of our own army a few days later. We slowly moved on and finally went into camp three miles from Centerville. I must here relate the most ridiculous or funny experience of my soldier life.

First Foraging.

After going into camp and a little before sundown, a Sergeant of my company was ordered to take a detail of men and go out and see if he could not pick up some fresh meat, as our wagon trains were not yet up. I very much desired to go too, but was not one of the detail, and the Captain refused to let me go. Finally the detail started, and I picked up my gun and stole out of camp in an opposite direction. After traveling some time I saw a barn in the distance, and made my way toward it. Noticing a small pen which contained a large fat hog, I first thought of killing the hog, but upon thinking of how little of it I could carry

to camp alone, I continued on to the barnyard. I now heard voices, and not knowing whom it might be, I stole cautiously along until I could get a view of the talkers, and there in the barnyard stood a fine, gentle steer and at his head were two boys in blue, one holding him by the horns and gently talking to him in a language I could not understand, but knew to be German, which told me those two men were some of our German-American soldiers. The second man seemed to be intently rubbing the steer's throat with the supposed edge of one of the sheath knives Uncle Sam had furnished each soldier for the purpose of carving his meat, but was hardly sufficient an instrument for butchering and in that peculiar manner. The steer seemed to really enjoy the rubbing, for he stuck his nose out and stretched his neck as if to say, "Go ahead, boys; this is nice." Well, the boys went ahead until the old knife began to wear its way through the thick skin, when the steer's tail and head went up and he gave a tremendous snort and bellow, and one soldier went one way, the other another way, but both rolling in the soft earth of the barnyard, while the steer sailed over a low bar and ran down the pasture bellowing at every jump. I stood laughing at this strange spectacle, until, hearing voices, I looked up and saw the Sergeant and his detail still in search of fresh meat. After expressing surprise upon seeing me and laughing at the recital of my story, I directed them to the pen of the fat hog, and we had fresh pork for supper.

Our camp was situated in the meadows on both sides of the road, my regiment on a little rise of ground where we could overlook the whole camp. I awoke just before dawn on the morning of the 18th. The horses and mules stood like statues, all fast asleep; not a soul of that vast camp was stirring. Long rows of men lay wrapped in their blankets, and the long rows of stacked arms seemed to be keeping guard alone, for if there was a camp guard there was not one that I could see. It is not possible for pen to describe such an imposing scene, much less the great transformation about to follow.

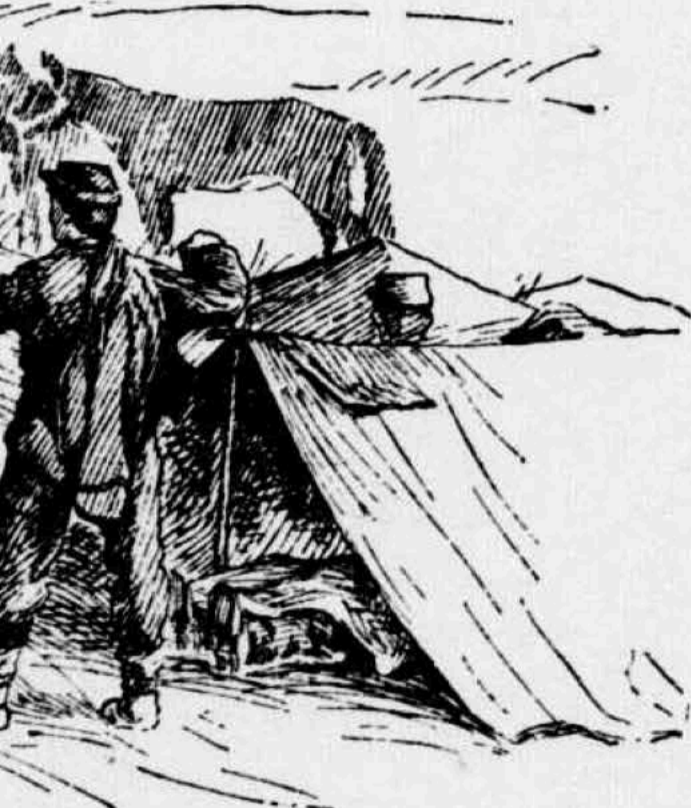
Blackburn's Ford.

Away over on the other side of this camp was another eminence still higher than ours. Here was pitched the General's tents, and the only ones to be seen. Midway between and along either side of the road the artillery and a company of cavalry were camped, while farther to the rear and right were camped the small wagon train we had with us, together with the ambulance. I saw a man step away from one of the tents and walk out to the edge of the hill, then lift his bugle to his lips and blow the reveille. The sound from his horn had not died away when bugle after bugle mingled their sounds with those of the cavalry and artillery and with whinnying horses and braying mules. An army of men, like magic, seemed to be arising from the ground. The camp was full of orderly life and animation. When the sun was two hours high at the sound of the bugle this truly grand army seemed at once to be in motion, all taking their places in line, banners flying, bugles sounding and arms flashing under the bright morning sunlight. It was a sight once beheld could never be forgotten. Though I afterwards saw far greater numbers march in review, I never saw such an imposing sight as I beheld this July morning. And this was the armed mob we have read so much of since the first battle of Bull Run. We marched

past Centerville and down the road to Blackburn's Ford. Here we had our baptism under fire; though a mere skirmish, it was a pretty sharp one, and we lost a hundred men on our side. Where my regiment lay we could see a house with a rebel flag flying. I well remember how Ayres's Battery came into position, and we were so close that we could hear Col. Richardson as he said, "Capt. Ayres, can you see that flag on that building?" "Yes, sir," was the reply. "Well, can you bring it down?" "I think so." And he spoke to a Sergeant, and a gun was trained on the flag. The first shot went high, the second one went through the building and the third shot the flag went down. It was afterward said Beauregard and staff were at dinner in that house; whether so or not I do not know. While the skirmishing was going on our brigade was drawn up in line, expecting every moment to be called into action. Blackberries were thick all around us. We had been without dinner and were very hungry, and though bullets were spattering spitefully about us, we kept pretty busy picking and eating the berries, sometimes, of course, getting out of line; but there was no disorder that was not righted at the first command, notwithstanding frequent statements published to the contrary.

Finally we were ordered back to Centerville. The attack had been made by Gen. Tyler without authority. We bivouacked at Centerville and remained until Saturday night, drawing and cooking rations. We again moved down toward Blackburn's Ford, and remained until after sunrise on the Sunday morning of the 21st. Finally the whole army was in motion and every heart beating with excitement, for now a great battle was to be fought.

In that great army was there a single soldier who thought defeat possible? I do not think so. Had we not a greater



BLOW THE REVEILLE."

army than Gen. Scott had when he took the City of Mexico? Besides, was he not our General? To be sure he was not with us, but we had every confidence in McDowell. I believe every private soldier understood that Patterson was expected to hold Johnston's forces at Winchester, yet among the private soldiers there were expressions of doubt of the loyalty of Patterson and that he might fail to keep Johnston busy, and we would have his forces to fight as well as Beauregard's army. Yet there were no doubts concerning the outcome. Maj. Williams, in command of our regiment, ordered us to leave our blankets, rolled in light marching order at his headquarters under a large oak tree, so we would be unencumbered when ordered into the fight. But all day long we lay listening to the battle on our right, expecting every minute to be called into action. Occasionally we

... into action. Occasionally we would go out on a hill overlooking the battlefield, and while watching the battle, discuss the wisdom of the plan of battle, or, rather, lack of plan, for there really seemed to be no plan of action but the sending in of a regiment or brigade and a helter-skelter fight until it became necessary to relieve them by others.

About 2 o'clock in the afternoon we heard continual whistling and thundering of railroad trains, and we knew that Beauregard was being reinforced by Johnston's forces. Patterson had failed to entertain Johnston.

Retreat From Bull Run.

About 6 o'clock orders came for us to move, and we expected to be ordered into battle. We marched past the Major's headquarters, and could easily have taken our blankets, but still expecting to go into battle, we marched past them and turned down toward the ford, when Col. Richardson came riding up and cried, "Maj. Williams, where are you taking that regiment? About face!" Only for this we should soon have been game for the masked batteries. The Colonel was hatless, coatless and without his sword, for Col. Miles, whose commission was two hours older than Richardson's, had ordered Richardson under arrest. But Miles was drunk, and Richardson would not see his regiment led to destruction. We were ordered to about face, and by the left flank we double-quickened back to Centerville. It was intensely hot, and the dust was so thick one could almost cut it with a knife.

Arriving at the heights of Centerville, we could look back and see the whole army in disorderly retreat and being pursued by cavalry. Col. Richardson seemed to be in command of the rear guard, for as far as we could see all seemed to be disorder except our brigade, and we under the command of an officer not in possession of his sword, but under arrest.

Richardson ordered a battery of artillery to take position on a hill and send a few shots into the pursuing cavalry, which sent them back in a hurry. Our brigade now marched over the hill, regimental front, down into a ravine; then by the left flank around the hill, where we again faced the enemy, marched over the hill with colors flying, again by the flank and so on, repeating the maneuver at least a dozen times. This no doubt was the reason Johnston did not pursue us farther, as his report, published in Appleton's Encyclopedia, says that because of his men being worn out and the Federals massing large forces at Centerville he did not think it expedient to follow the forces to Washington, which was well fortified and manned.

We now marched into a cornfield, and lay on our arms until about 2 o'clock next morning. We then arose and in an orderly manner slowly marched out into the road and stood until daylight, my regiment being the very last to leave the field; there was no running, no excitement, we never saw another reb in pursuit, nor was there any whirlwind retreat to Washington. There came up a light rain, and we marched very slowly back to Washington by the way of the Fairfax road, arriving at Arlington Heights at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, July 22. Col. Richardson was court-martialed for disobeying a superior officer, and was promptly promoted to Brigadier-General.—Lyman E. Stowe, 131 Catherine St., Detroit, Mich.