

THE TIGER RIFLES.

A GRAPHIC DESCRIPTION OF THEIR FIGHT AT MANASSAS.

The following letter has been kindly placed at our disposal. It was written by a non-commissioned officer in the Tiger Rifles, to a friend in this city, and furnishes a truly graphic description of the actions of the Tigers on that memorable battle-field :

BATTLE GROUND, NEAR STONE BRIDGE, }
July 27, 1861. }

Friend Tom—You must pardon my seeming neglect. The arduous duties imposed upon me by the position I hold, and the circumstances attending active service are the excuse I offer for having so long deferred fulfilling my promise to you. Since I last saw you I have had many an adventure, some of such a nature that I have no desire to re-enact the part I took in them. We left Camp Moore, "Tangipahoa, Louisiana," on the 13th day of June, and arrived at Manassas on the 19th of that month. We were ordered to a position of honor at the most advanced post on the extreme left wing of the Confederate army. We have been now nearly seven weeks in active service, first in the state of Virginia. During that time we have been engaged in two fights—the first at SennecaJam, where we attacked the enemy, six hundred strong; the last, the battle fought on the ever memorable 21st of July. During our journey in this direction, we were received by the citizens of the various towns and cities, and persons residing along the route we were travelling, in a most enthusiastic manner. Floral offerings were freely showered on us, and cheer upon cheer saluted us, as we were borne rapidly forward toward the great centre of interest at the present time.

It would be useless to attempt to enter into details concerning our trip, suffice to say it proved highly gratifying to our feelings, and the tediousness and monotony of a trip by rail was relieved by many pleasing incidents, the result of which has been to imprint indelibly on my heart kindly feelings toward the whole southern people.

I shall endeavor to give you a brief account of the part our battalion took in the fight on Sunday last. We were under arms all day on the 20th inst., and at night my company, the Tigers, were thrown forward about a mile and a quarter in advance of the main body to defend a ford and act as a picket guard. About sunrise in the morning, we descried a body of cavalry approaching our lines, our second platoon advanced to meet them, but as soon as they saw our troops they retreated in the direction they had come from; shortly after we received orders to fall in with our battalion, and acting as skirmishers annoy the enemy, and if possible hold them in check until sufficient reinforcements could be brought up to prevent their outflanking us on the left, as was evidently their intention. As we were crossing a field from one point of woods to another, distant about one hundred and fifty yards, we were fired upon (through mistake) by a company of South Carolinians, who were also acting as skirmishers. Immediately after, the enemy opened on us, and we had the honor of opening the ball, receiving and returning the first volley that was fired on that day, which resulted so gloriously to our cause. After pouring in a volley, we rushed upon the enemy and forced them back under cover. We fought them for some time, but they were too strong for us; they drove us back beyond our old position. The battle was raging by this time on every hand, and upwards of sixty thousand men had mingled in the strife for victory. Our major was shot through the body and carried from the field in a dying condition. Our captain had his horse shot from under him, and we thought he was killed. Our first lieutenant, gallant old Tom Adrian, was laying on the ground shot through the thigh, and numbers of our men lay around dead and dying. We gained a piece of woods, and the New York Fire Zouaves, whom we had been fighting against, seeing our momentary confusion, gave three cheers; it was the last cheer many of them ever uttered. Our lieutenant, old Tom Adrian, then whom a braver man never wore hair, shouted out "Tigers; go in once more, go in my sons, I'll be greatly gloriously God d—d if the s—s of b—s can ever whip the Tigers." Our blood was on fire, life was valueless, the boys fired one volley, then rushed upon the foe with clubbed rifles beating down their guard; they then closed upon them with their knives. "Greck had met Greck;" the tug of war had come. I have been in battle several times before, but such fighting never was done, I do believe, as was done for the next half hour; it did not seem as though men were fighting, it was devils mingling in the conflict, cursing, yelling, cutting, shrieking; no thoughts of nor chance for backing out. Just then we heard a loud shout, "Hurrah for the Tiger Rifles, charge for the Tigers and for Louisiana." We knew our friends had come, the gallant old Seventh regiment of Louisiana, who had marched "in double quick time for nine miles, came rushing on the foe. The job was done, the victory ours. The enemy fled, throwing down their arms, equipments, clothing, and everything. We followed for several miles, taking a great many prisoners and then returned to the field of battle, and were thanked by Gen. Johnston, (President Davis being present.) The wind up of his remarks were nearly in the following language: "Soldiers! you have had a hard day's work, and have gained a glorious victory. When I witnessed the gallant, I may say desperate, stand you made against such fearful odds, I felt that you added a greater brilliancy to the galaxy of southern chivalry contending for their rights, and this day each of you had written his name upon the brightest page of that history that records the deeds done in this our struggle for our own, our birth-rights." Gen. Beauregard sent word to Major Wheat, "for this day's work, you and your battalion shall never be forgotten by me."

Tom, it is no use talking, the boys surpassed my expectations; I knew we had good men, but they were more; in their efforts to make victory perch upon our banner, they were supermen. They went in on their war cry, "Victory or the grave, win or die." I cannot give you the number of our killed and wounded; this the telegraph will inform you of ere this letter reaches you. Our battalion is very badly out up, particularly our Tigers. They have lost thirty-three killed, missing and wounded. I want you to write to me and let me know what is transpiring in your section. Direct to me, Tiger Rifles, care of Maj. Wheat, First special battalion Louisiana volunteers, Manassas Junction, Va. Remember me to all enquiring friends, and for yourself, believe me, I remain, as ever, your sincere friend,

R. R.