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FRIDAY, AUGUST 23, 1861.

Correspondence.

Army Correspondence.

FORT CORCORAN, Aug. 1st. 1861. }
2d Maine Regiment, Co. B. }

DEAR BROTHER WILL:—I received your letter yesterday desiring a description of the late battle, yet you did not know then as I could give you one, but I am alive and will try.

When I first got to Alexandria I was too tired to write anything. First we started at 2 o'clock and marched near to Ball Run where the rest of our brigade was, halted and the other troops went by us leaving a reserve in sight of 1100 men. The roads were cleared and the cannon were hauled up where they could play on the woods. They fired and fired, but could get no answer. A few men could be seen near where we supposed the batteries were, and then four regiments were ordered to charge on them. They had to go over a small hill and make a circuit of some distance to ford the stream; then the rebels opened their fire on our troops; our artillery men could then see where to shoot and they silenced the battery before the troops got there. I was not in sight of this all of the time, but was on the ground soon, for we marched double quick for 1 1-2 miles, the rebels running without giving us much chance to shoot, although as they left their batteries our boys poured in a little cold lead. We could see them run and some fall—this was in the woods. Soon not a man was left under the hill, and we were ordered to the top of the hill, our regiment on the left of the right wing. We went over the plain in haste, for we exposed ourselves to the hill which was so full of men that we could not see the awful cannon shot come sweeping past like something you never saw. Still on we went and clear from those shot, for not a man was killed in our regiment. We then climbed up the side of the mountain where the rebels supposed none were able to and passed half to our rear, and halted in another hollow—the place is full of hills and runs—then we took a rest having run in all 2 1-2 miles—Some of our men were at them in their batteries when out rushed a Georgetown regiment to charge on us. We let them come near enough to distinguish them then fired "pell mell." To tell you how I felt then is more than I know how. If you ever had a horse on the point of jumping on you and crushing you to the earth then you can begin to guess how we felt. They did not stop long, only let us get one shot at them, then left for their batteries and we after them, came close up to them and halted.—Not any of our company killed yet at this

junction. General Keyes came to Col. Jameson and said, "Will you storm that battery?" Jameson answered, "What alone?" The General repeated, "*will you storm that battery?*" "Yes," said Jameson, "storm it—*if you say so.*" And then, "boys, forward, double quick." There were some who might well tremble. We advanced about 30 rods when they opened an awful fire upon us, killing and wounding many. Three of our boys fell there. Then we laid down on the ground, loaded our guns and rose to shoot. One of the three, John Dealing was on the point of firing when he was hit through the breast. He gasped but twice and died. We were ordered to fall back to the point of woods and fence, which we did, keeping up a fire as we could see them. They thought we were whipped and sent a company of cavalry on us, but we beat them off killing them like birds. I saw over 30 of their horses run from the field riderless, and more horses killed than riders. They were attacked by three other regiments and we all drove them from their works. One more of our boys fell at this time, Eben F. Perkins of Brooksville. The ball did not kill him dead, he lived to be carried from the ground and soon died. When they ran we gave them some awful shots; they killed but few of us compared to what we did of them. We went to the top of the hill and fired into the other batteries. Company B. was sent to carry off the wounded left where we charged on the batteries. I was one and at that time the shot and shell were coming over and killing many of the strong men on the field. We were so near them that we were overshoot by most of their rifles and cannon. Well, it was dreadful to see, yet we could walk among the dead and dying and not be moved—the shot flying thick, none moved any faster or slower—lost all fear. Soon it was rumored that Patterson was coming and our boys "halloed right out." But alas! it was Johnston the rebel, and we fought them *hard* about 40 minutes, when the left wing broke and retreated, then the right gave away slowly at first. At that time I was at the stone Hospital carrying up the wounded—George Hall was with me. As our regiment passed he left me. I was fixing a bier to carry off some of my friends, all wishing to be carried off or killed, to save the rebels the opportunity of performing the horrid work. While I was

thus engaged the cry came, "the cavalry! the cavalry!" Now, Will, that struck terror to us all, there was a large body of them to flank us—it was fight or die, no other alternative. I felt then as good as done for. About 500 of us boys, with the wounded, half armed, no head nor tail, but there were no cowards now for they had left, and I left friends for foes. The fire began left, right and centre; it was *deadly too*, and I got four shots at them. A boy from Ohio who stood along side of me killed two at one shot. I took good aim and fired at one about 80 yards but would not say I killed him, yet **some were killed**—the last fire over 20 fell. About that time one of our men said that 60 fell on the ground, but I am not one who see things so sure as to the number. They were shelling us all the time from their batteries—now all ran for their lives to overtake the big crowd. As I ran with a New York boy a shell came whizzing—we dodged—it struck my friend's head scattering his brains and blood all over me. I passed on; he was the only man that I know of being killed on the retreat. We were chased and harassed some distance, and I never was so tired before in my life as when I got to Centreville; then we were stationed to guard a park of artillery. At about 10 or a little later, we took up march for Alexandria. Now we find our regimental loss of killed and missing to be 88 and 26 wounded, we have with us making in all 114. I took pains this morning to find out the exact number let the papers say what they will and that is so. We lost in all at the battle, one battery of 6 guns and a part of another, in all 10; a large number of small arms, about 1000 fell and 500 taken prisoners. That is as near the matter as we can come, perhaps it is less, but a doubt if it is much, we do not miss them in regard to number. As a general thing they are getting over it every day, but my health is poor, weigh 129, not quite 160. Tell Capt. Forhen I did what I could towards killing a Southerner for myself and him too.

Hoping to see you again, I am your brother

R. A. FRIEND.