

The Ledger.

LANCASTERVILLE, S. C.

WEDNESDAY MORNING, Aug. 14, 1861.

VIRGINIA CORRESPONDENCE.

[FOR THE LANCASTER LEDGER.]

MANASSAS BATTLE GROUND, July 23.

DEAR EDITOR: We have fought the great fight and the day is ours. One of the fiercest battles in the annals of American History has been fought and a signal victory gained; and now while I write, the dead and wounded and dying are being borne from the field—taken up from among the bushes, from the open field, and from among the corners of the fence, where the poor fellows have crawled to avoid being overridden by the cavalry and artillery.—What a terrible illustration of the horrors of war! what heart sickening evidence of the folly and wickedness of the enemy who seek our subjugation!

I will not attempt to give you all the details of the battle, for after dividing and subdividing for exaggeration and misrepresentation, it would be hard to elicit from the network of rumors such a fabric of truth as would be proper and reasonable.

Bull Run is North of Manassas Junction. The nearest point is Mitchell's Ford—distance about three miles, the place where, if you remember, we built breastworks in June. The creek runs due east. Some five or six miles in a North-westerly direction from the Ford and along it is the battle ground of the 21st.

The battle of Sunday commenced at the ford by a heavy cannonade from a battery of rifled cannon 6 pounders and a one 32 pounder. These opened at 8 o'clock in the morning and played incessantly on for three hours, the object being if possible, to draw us from our position and show our force, and to divert our attention from the left wing of our army that Scott might be the better able to execute his well concocted plan. The enemy were in line of battle along the Run from Stone Bridge to Union Mills—a distance of eight or ten miles. Their army was supported by heavy artillery. Our forces were stationed in the same manner along the creek, supported by artillery. The main attack commenced on the left about 10 o'clock a. m., by an advance of Gen. Jackson. Our brave fellows fought gallantly. They maintained their ground for hours against a force of five to one; but at last being overpowered and worn out with

fatigue, they were compelled to fall back on our own side of the creek, where they again made a bold stand, but were compelled to retreat again and this time left the field entirely. Not however, until Col. Kershaw and Cash. Kemper's Battery and Preston's Virginia Regiment came to their relief. Without doubt, when we arrived on the field the day was lost. Three regiments we met retreating in confusion.

These facts, together with having to march five miles and a great part of it double-quick to get to the battle ground, are the discouragements under which we went into battle. I do not know as I can describe our fight exactly, as it was not a very seasonable time to make observations. We were first drawn up in line of battle along the brow of a hill, where we stood a galling fire from the enemy. At last we received the orders to advance and with a stern resolve to *do or die*, every man marched promptly forward. We met the foe in a narrow strip of woods; they were concealed behind the trees, brush and fence. We charged them from the woods, but some of the villains fooled us in one particular, by falling down upon their backs, beg us for a drink of water as we passed (which we gave them) and after we had passed, they would rise up shoot us and run. We were engaged about 30 minutes in a sort of hand to hand fight. I had almost forgotten to tell you that those fellows we caught in the woods were old Abe's "Pet Lambs." But I have not forgotten that according to their own statement, only 200 out of 1200 are left to clothe his Majesty next winter. When those cut-throats were stationed at Falls Church, they would send word to the 2d (Kershaw's) Regiment, particularly the Palmetto Guards, that we were the boys they wished to get hold of. Now they have met us, and we are waiting patiently to hear their report.

We next met the Regulars at a distance of five or six hundred yards further on.—Our Col. formed his regiment in an old road which proved to be the very place for us, as we could lie down and load, rise and fire.—only being exposed long enough to get a

—only being exposed long enough to get a good shot. Things went on in this manner for about an hour and a half, when we were ordered to cease firing and remain lying, so that the Artillery could play on them from our rear. A few rounds of grape and canister from Capt. Kemper's well directed guns completely routed them. Then we pursued, playing on them with cannon at every opportunity. Such human destruction I never before witnessed; at every discharge of the cannon whole ranks would tumble to the ground. The pursuit lasted for three miles when we were drawn back to rest for the night, and that was my last sight of the enemy. I heard they went into Alexandria in the greatest confusion, their officers could not command them—When they were ordered to go into the trenches and fight, they refused, saying, "it is no use to fight the rebels, they never can nor never will be conquered."

Between Stone Bridge and Centreville, a distance of three miles, the scene presented is indescribable. Your correspondent saw scattered every article that could enter into the composition of a well equipped army. Cannon, baggage wagons, ammunition wagons, ambulances, blankets, shoes, haversacks, knapsacks, muskets, cartridge boxes, medicine chests, and several thousand handcuffs, intended to be used upon their prisoners. One of the valuable articles captured was a batch of paper, evidently the property of a General officer. It contained the whole plan of the campaign—stated that

the attacking force should consist of fifty three thousand men, enumerating the regiments. We found at Centreville two boxes, one directed to Gen. Winfield Scott, Richmond, Va., the other to the Junction. He did not contemplate a defeat. He expected to march on our left wing, break it with ease, come up in our rear, cut us to pieces, have a picnic same day at the Junction, and the following Wednesday night a big ball in the Capitol at Richmond. Another indication of his contemplated success was, that he had along a great many ladies and gentlemen. Perhaps the former to welcome the "heroes" on their return and the latter to witness the fight. Many of them were members of Congress.

Our loss in Sunday's fight is between 1500 and 2000 in killed and wounded. The enemy between 10 and 12,000 killed, wounded and prisoners. Kershaw's Regiment lost about fifty killed and wounded—five killed and the rest wounded. Our company had four wounded—none killed. Capt. McManus, shot in the arm; D. A. Williams, color-bearer, shot in the leg; T. J. Welsh, shot in the arm, and Richard Kennington, shot in the groin—none are dangerous.

Everything is going on right again. The health of the regiment is not so good, but I think it is caused by fatigue and exposure and will soon disappear.

Our men have not yet completed the burial of the enemy's dead. They remain in scores on the field, where they fell, black, mangled and putrifying masses of what was once humanity, filling the atmosphere with stench. It is worthy of notice, that many of the enemy's wounded had near them a pile of crackers and a cup of water given to them by our volunteers as sustenance until they could be removed from the field and better cared for. Wounds could be seen of every variety. The Surgeons say that our wounded are much worse than the enemy's. Ours being shot with the oblong ball and theirs with the common round ball. The conical ball makes horrible ghastly openings, especially, if they hit anything hard to cause them to zigzag through the body. When this is the case mortification is also certain.

Your humble servant,

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