Wichita Eagle

FATE AGAINST THEM.

GALLANT WORK BEFORE MARYE'S HEIGHTS AT FREDERICKSBURG.

Heroic, Bloody but Useless Charges of French's and Hancock's Divisions. Where Leaders and Men Went Down in Thousands.

[Copyright by American Press Association.]

WHEN the Army of the Potomac was led by Gen. Burnside to the Rappahannock, opposite the Confederate camps at Fredericksburg, it took position on Stafford Heights and could look down upon some of the most formidable of the enemy's works. The atmosphere was clear, the view unobstructed, and it was a fascinating pastime to study the ground at safe range, and let fancy play with things that might come to pass. The ground was too low, as we saw it from above, to give an idea of danger, and its sloping front looked to be [illegible]ssable, so far as natural obstruc[illegible]ere concerned. The Confederate [illegible], with the exception of a few guns [illegible]arth batteries, was masked, and [illegible] whole length of line to be de[illegible]y the Confederates was taken into [illegible] it did not seem unusual that this [illegible]ar stretch should be so moderately [illegible]. In truth, the conclusions we ar[illegible] while looking down upon the [illegible]nd foothills where we were to meet the enemy were all to be upset on closer inspection of his position. To the crossing of the river by Burnside but little opposition was made. The Confederates had one brigade on picket in the town, which reaches the river bank where the ground is favorable for bridging, and while our engineers were throwing across pontoons they were many times driven from their work by bullets fired from the houses along shore. Finally, toward the close of the day, Dec. 11, 1862, volunteers from the Seventh Michigan, Nineteenth Massachusetts and Eighty-ninth New York braved the sharpshooters' fire and pushed across in boats, driving off the riflemen, Barksdale's Mississippians, and completely clearing the river for the engineers.

The army was nearly all across by midday of the 12th, and deployed on the plains around and below the town. A heavy fog hung over the valley during the forenoon, and when it cleared away we saw for the first time that go which way we would it would prove uphill work to dislodge the battalions of Lee. From the point of view we now had on the plains what before had looked like knolls became hills and hills became mountains. Marye's Hill, or Height, did not extend over more than a division front of our troops, and a division was not a twentieth part of the army. But slight though it appeared against the great background of hillside its situation between two hills, Taylor's and Telegraph (afterward called Lee's), made it a key, and that fact, together with its evident importance to Lee, shown by the care expended on the defenses around it, caused the soldiers who considered it as a point to be passed, of course at any hazard, to scan it minutely. It did not compare with South Mountain, Maryland, in height, nor in abruptness, and the majority of them had taken part in the assaults there, a few weeks before, in the Antietam campaign.

The day of crossing passed without attack, but our whole line was subjected to artillery fire. Early on the 13th the Union left wing advanced direct in front and fought a desperate battle with "Stonewall" Jackson and were repulsed. While this movement was in progress against Lee's right flank the troops in front of Marye's, who had been ordered into readiness to charge, stood in suspense. They were the divisions of French and Hancock of the Second corps, at this time commanded by Gen. D. N. Couch. The order to advance came to the troops about noon as they were in close column on the edge of the town. No reconnaissance of the ground to be gone over had been made, for the reason that it was under fire of the enemy and was exposed to a scrutiny through the field glass that seemed to uncover every obstacle important to be considered. Apparently it was a clear field except the usual fences and small buildings, and when this cleared ground should be passed a short sharp run would take the assailants up the slopes to the Confederate lines.

The storming column was led by Gen. Nathan Kimball's brigade, the Fourteenth Indiana, Twenty-fourth and Twenty-eighth New Jersey, Fourth and Eighth Ohio and Seventh West Virginia. Then followed Col. O. H. Palmer's brigade, the Fourteenth Connecticut, One Hundred and Eighth New York and One Hundred and Thirtieth Pennsylvania. Col. John W. Andrews' brigade, the First Delaware, Fourth and Tenth New York and One Hundred and Thirty-second Pennsylvania, [illegible]osed the division of French, who opened the ball, moving at what is called brigade front, the several regiments of each brigade in a line. Kimball had not proceeded over 300 yards before the first hidden obstruction of the field destroyed his formation. This was a canal too wide and deep to be passed without breaking up the column and moving by the flank across some narrow bridges. The new movement exposed the men to the fire of artillery on the heights. But shot and shell, though ploughing their ranks, did not stop them. On they went to a slight rise of ground 150 yards to the front, where they reformed, and then for the charge.

KIMBALL'S CHARGE.

The enemy on Marye's Heights have been waiting hours and hours for just this. Longstreet's excellent division, under McLaws, with the famous Washington artillery, have the stronghold in their keep. Kimball's men move on with a "Hi! hi! hi!" bayonets at a charge, battering down fences with clubbed muskets as they go. Scores of our cannon from Falmouth and Stafford Heights fire upon the Confederate guns on the hill. The screaming of shells, the roar of cannon, make a terrible din, but the men have their orders and see their goal and press on without specific commands. Soon the Confederate gunners change their ammunition from shot and shell to canister and spread great havoc in the ranks of the devoted brigade, but the survivors go on until they are staggered by an unexpected volley of musketry almost in their faces. The second hidden obstacle, most desperate of all, has been met, the sunken road and stone wall alive with Confederate riflemen, who till now have held their fire. Kimball's men look around for their supports and see none at hand. Half of the line has fallen on the way across the plain, and now the regiments plant their colors and lie down, covering themselves as best they may from the withering fire and awaiting some reenforcements. The brigades of Andrews and Palmer followed Kimball's with the same experiences, and they, too, halted and lay in their tracks.

To the enemy on the hill and behind the stone wall this appeared bloody work indeed. They noted and admired the remarkable coolness of Kimball's men in planting colors to mark their alignments within stone's throw of the wall, where the muskets were kept hot with the rapid firing. Then when Kimball's line vanished, the colors still standing and held by stout hands lying prostrate on the ground, their comrades of Andrews' and Palmer's brigades repeated the daring advance, receiving the punishment of their temerity with marked coolness. The Confederates all of this time knew the grim hopelessness of the task before their opponents. At the base of Marye's a sunken road runs the whole distance parallel with the crest, and on the side toward the town this road is protected by a high stone wall. There being a gentle terrace from the base of the hill to the crest, this break in the surface is not discoverable for the eye at a casual glance. When Kimball's men reached it and recolled the Union army knew that the enemy had not permitted the easy crossing of the river and the approach to the heights without a purpose. Marye's Heights was a "slaughter pen," and but one division of infantry and a battalion of artillery was required to hold it against an army of assailants.

The Union order for attack had been that Hancock's division should follow French, and unappalled by the experience of that division these noble troops took up the fight. Gen. John C. Caldwell led with his brigade, the Fifth New Hampshire, Seventh, Sixty-first and Sixty-fourth New York, and Eighty-first and One Hundred and Forty-fifth Pennsylvania. Following him was Meagher with the Twenty-eighth Massachusetts, Sixty-third, Sixty-ninth and Eighty-eighth New York, and One Hundred and Sixteenth Pennsylvania, the Irish brigade at its best. Last came Col. S. K. Zook, Twenty-seventh Connecticut, Second Delaware, Fifty-third, Fifty-seventh and Sixty-sixth New York, and Fifty-third Pennsylvania.

It would simply be a multiplication of words to attempt a description fitting what followed. Zook swept along with a line as even as though on parade, and at every step the men of French, who had covered themselves on the field, arose and fell in, literally taking the place of those of Hancock's men killed on the way up. Kim-

THE IRISH BRIGADE.

ball's few survivors, still clinging to their colors, were the last to fall in. But the Confederates have been re-enforced at the stone wall and their ammunition replenished. Such daring as French's men have shown and Hancock's will imitate has fairly alarmed the Confederate commanders, and the stone wall and sunken road are strengthened for the next charge. Zook's men recoil before the stone wall after going within pistol shot, and then comes the Irish brigade with a cheer. From the heights above the green flag of Erin is recognized.

After them Caldwell sweeps up, gathering men from all the other commands and pressing up to within twenty and even fifteen yards of the wall. At this point dead men of the four brigades of Kimball, Zook, Meagher and Caldwell were found at the time of burial.

Other charges were made by Howard's division of the Second corps, and by Sykes' and Humphreys' of the Fifth. They were brave movements in the face of the dreadful havoc that had gone before, but the deeds of French and Hancock could not be surpassed; their heroic dead marked the limits made in the advance. No embellishment could be added to their simple record more startling than the actual figures of losses in Hancock's division, where they equaled those in any two of the others.

Hancock took into action 5,000 men and lost 2,000 in killed and wounded. The Fifty-third Pennsylvania lost 8 officers out of 14 and one-half its men. The Seventh New York lost 18 officers out of 25 and very nearly half its men. The Fifth New Hampshire lost 17 officers out of 23 and over half its men. It had five commanders during the action, the first four being killed or wounded. The Sixty-ninth New York lost 16 officers out of 19 and over half its men, and had four commanders in the action. The Eighty-eighth New York lost half its complement of officers and men. The One Hundred and Forty-fifth Pennsylvania lost nearly 50 per cent, and the One Hundred and Sixteenth lost heavily, having four different commanders during the engagement.

The Twenty-eighth Massachusetts lost nearly half its number, and the Second Delaware suffered severely, having two of its commanders wounded. The Eighty-first Pennsylvania lost twelve officers out of sixteen and over half its men, and had three commanding officers wounded. The Fifty-seventh New York lost nine officers out of eleven, two of its commanders among them. The Sixty-sixth New York lost heavily and had three commanders killed or wounded. There was none of the excitement of a hotly contested battle to inspire these men, no dazzling prize balanced in the air to be seized by the bravest and the quickest. Before them lay the stubborn hills, the silent cannon and the sullen enemy. In marching on them they marched into the jaws of death as grandly as ever men did on earth.

GEORGE L. KILMER.

Reckoned He Could.

Western Parent—Say, teacher, do ye reckon ye kin make my boy smart?

Teacher—Wal, I reckon I kin, if this birch rod of mine holds out.—Epoch.

A Master of Language.

Bronson—Is Jones a linguist?

Smiley—Well, I should think so! You should have heard him just now, when he sat down on a tack!—Light.

"No Contributions Returned Unless," Etc.

She (after a lovers' quarrel)—You may return my letters.

He (editor)—Did you inclose stamps?—Harper's Bazar.

Part of Him, at Least.

Miss Fannie—Young De Mente is a regular swell, isn't he?

Her Brother (gruffly)—His head is.—Washington Star.

the proverb ran-"The pan says to the pot, Keep off or you'll smutch me."

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HUNTING WILD PONIES.

ELUSIVE MUSTANGS RUN DOWN BY FLEETFOOTED INDIANS.

Whole Herds Are Captured by "Walking"—The Solitary Hunter Secures His by Shooting—The Indian by Chasing. Details of the Best Method.

There are still a few bands of mustangs or wild ponies roaming the Texas staked plains. They are now and then made prize and captured by men who covet them. There are several methods in vogue for capturing wild ponies. If the hunters are ambitious and looking toward taking in the whole band they go at it with preparation and in a business way. These bands of ponies are not wanderers, going up and down the western earth, but possess a residence and cling to a locality, so that, their whereabouts once known, the hunter is certain of finding them at any time thereafter. This gives the mustangers ample chance for preparation.

The necessities of a mustang hunt conducted on wholesale lines include a corral, a grub wagon and team, and three hunters. When all is ready the hunters arrange themselves in as many watches of eight hours each; one drives the wagon, the second sleeps in the wagon, and the third "walks" the mustangs. "Walking" mustangs is simple. The theory of the hunt is to keep the wild ponies on the walk night and day, without food or water, until they are exhausted. As far as may be they are walked in a circle so as to be near the corral intended as the final goal of this go-as-you-please match against nature. The process is this: The hunters with their wagon drive in sight of the mustangs and the first man takes their trail on foot. For eight hours he walks after them, keeping them constantly on the move, and as much as possible from feeding and from water. This last is not so difficult in a land where watering places are exceptional. In the beginning the foolish mustang kicks up his joyous heels and curvets about, tossing his mane in contempt of this solitary, slow pursuit; but as the hours wear on and the dusty plodder, sticking like a bad habit, is not to be shaken off, the fugitives become less gay. They sober down to a walk and are not so prone to light and frivolous exercises.

CAPTURED BY "WALKING."

At the end of eight hours the wagon drives up and number two of the hunters begins his eight hour walk. At its close number three assumes the pursuit and so, changing every eight hours, the weary march keeps on. All that day and night the ponies are kept moving. All the next day and night sees the programme repeated, and the work continues until, without having had food or water, without having closed their eyes or rested their tired legs since the hunt began, the starved and sleepy mustangs totter along, almost as lame as house dogs, and fairly dead on their feet. When reduced to this condition, sapped of that gay, brisk nature which distinguished them at first, the hunters turn their drooping, drowsy heads to the corral and drive them in as unresisting as sheep.

When some solitary hunter is looking to capture a wild horse and has no aid to assist him, a favorite method is "creasing." The mustanger, finding the watering place of the band, puts himself in ambush. With his rifle ready, he sprawls in his covert, awaiting the coming down of the ponies. Along toward the close of the hot afternoon the trampling of the eager hoofs of the thirsty band is heard. Led on by some wise stallion, whose mane and tail sweep the grass, and whose sagacious eye, while soft and deep, is full of a cautious suspicion, born of the responsibilites of leadership, they come tumbling down and bend their free, wild necks to the element.

This is the hunter's opportunity. Hastily selecting some young and well muscled mare, his rifle comes to his shoulder; for the part of a second his practiced eye ranges the sights and then a puff of smoke, "bang!" and a mustang is sprawling and kicking convulsively in the mud and water. Before it can recover the hunter runs forward and buckles a pair of hobbles on its fore legs and nooses a lariat to its neck. In two minutes the pony regains consciousness and its feet, but the hobbles and the lariat make the hunter's title sure.

CREASING AND COURSING.

"Creasing" requires skill with the rifle and an accurate knowledge of horse anatomy. The bullet is made to graze the spinal column well up on the neck. The lead must be placed just so or loss results. If it strikes too low the spine is broken and the pony is a thing of the past, if too high it results in nothing but a wounded pony flying with frightened feet, but if placed aright the shot simply stuns for a few minutes. The pony drops as if struck in the head with a maul, and will remain unconscious about two minutes—time enough to secure it.

Indians, afoot and desirous of a mount, have been known to literally and actually run a wild pony down. They take one by sheer endurance. There is, of course, as great a difference in stamina and staying powers among Indians as among the whites, but almost any village or camp will furnish one or two, or even three bronze athletes who are good and game at a day's running, to run a hundred miles from their last repast. A wild pony cannot do this.

Unpracticed, grass fed and soft, he shows no such strength or bottom. Should necessity point and occasion offer, one of these savage Mercurys will undertake a mustang's capture on foot, coursing him by sight as grayhounds course hares. The dime selected is after a light snow—this on account of the plain, open trail it shows in the event of the pony getting out of sight at any time during the chase. Then, again, the running Indian can scoop up a handful of snow as he flys and make it take the place of water.

When such a chase is arranged for the Indian or Indians who are to do the coursing, camping the night before near the band of mustangs, arise in the earliest gray of morning and, stripped of everything but their moccasins, begin the hunt. They select their victim, "cutting it out" of the "bunch," and pursue it straight away. They never circle it, as that would make the Indian's run a greater distance than the pony's. Away across the country goes the astonished pony, with the runners square on in its trail, pushing forward in silence. Sullenly they cling to the trial, no matter where it leads. Up hill and down, among rocks, across streams—where the pony goes they go, tireless as fate. At last, broken in heart and strength, unable to struggle further, the mustang is taken. Unless far stronger than usual, he will run down within the first fifty miles.—Kansas City Star.

According to a rough estimate which a statistician has made concerning thefts from singers and actresses, jewels of the value of £15,000,000 have been stolen during the last decade.

The Smallest Flowering Plant.

The smallest flowering plant is Wolffia microscopia, a native of India. It belongs to the duckweed family. It is almost microscopic in size, destitute of proper stem, leaves and roots, but having these organs merged in one, forming a frond. There is a prolongation of the lower surface, the purpose of which seems to be to enable the plant to float upright in the water.

The fronds multiply by sending out other fronds from a slit or concavity, and with such rapidity does this take place that a few days often suffice to produce from a few individuals enough similar ones to cover many square rods of pond surface with the minute green granules. Small as these plants are they bear flowers. Two are produced on a plant, each of them very simple, one of a single stamen and the other of a single pistil, both of which burst through the upper surface of the frond.—London Tit-Bits.

Science in Domestic Life.

Mrs. Professor Howe (drowsily)—Did you lock the windows and put out the gas, John?

Professor Howe—No, I had lost my key and I fastened them; as for putting out the gas I did just the opposite. It was coming out and I closed the aperture internally, thereby keeping it.

But Mrs. Howe had gone to sleep.—Lowell Citizen.

Would Let Him Ride with the Humans.

"Must I take a dog ticket?"

"Oh, no; you can travel as an ordinary passenger."—Philadelphia Times.

There are at least six first class ocean steamers leaving New York every week, and as many on the other side—say twelve in all. An average of $100 each for the concerts given on board these steamers is a very low estimate. Now, $1,200 a week amounts to $62,400 a year, and the old mariners and orphans of Liverpool have been receiving this annual sum, and more, for upward of ten years.

Mount St. Elias must take a fall. It is not 19,500 feet high, as given in Uncle Sam's books, but 5,000 feet less. This discovery was made by the United States geographical survey under Professor Russell, and information of it was brought to Washington by Mark Kerr, who was associated with Professor Russell in the expedition.

According to an eminent French physiologist the wing of an ordinary house fly makes 330 strokes in one second; the wing of the bumble bee, 240; the honey bee, 190; the wasp, 110; the dragon fly, 28; the sparrow, 13; the wild duck, 9; the pigeon, 8 and the owl, 6.

Children Cry for Pitcher's Castoria.

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At the funeral of an aged lady at Woolwich, England, her seven sons, all clergymen of the Church of England, were present.

An Ancient Custom.

"Fans, my dear Lulu," said Miss Uncertainage, as she slowly waved her fan back and forth, "fans, I am told, were used by the ancients as early as 166 B. C."

"Indeed," replied the vivacious Miss Lulu. "It is remarkable how tenacious of habits we are."—Chicago Times.

Our Intelligent Judiciary.

Judge Stuffy—Have you anything to say before sentence is passed upon you?

Prisoner—The ring I am accused of stealing is not gold, your honor. It is fire gilt.

Judge Stuffy—Gilt being acknowledged, I will give you only six years.—Jewelers' Weekly.

A Queer Purse.

Children—Please, sir, give us twenty-five cents' worth of molasses in this jar.

Storekeeper—All right, little one. See, the jar is full. Now give me the money.

Children—Please, sir, the money is at the bottom of the jar.—Fliegende Blaetter.

Paradise.

"Did you enjoy it off in the country, Jimmie?"

"Did I? Had a bully time. I used to get up before anybody in the hotel, and change all the boots and ring the fire alarms, and I broke nine panes of glass in one week."—Harper's Bazar.

Why He Carries It.

"Do you notice that Juggles always carries a cane nowadays?"

"Yes. It was voted to him at a church fair for being the ugliest man in the county. He wants to meet once more the man that made the presentation speech.—Chicago Times.

Tit for Tat.

He (bitterly)—It is curious to notice the strange affinity between women and cats.

She (sarcastically)—Do you really think so? But how about the affinity between some men and puppies?—Harper's Bazar.

Always Needed Rescuing.

Scollops—That's a fine dog you have there. What do you call him?

Taggs—Emin Pasha.

Scollops—Why do you call him that?

Taggs—Because I've had to spend so much time finding him.—Boston Courier.

A Boston-Chicago Match.

Hotel Clerk—See that couple there? They have just been married. The bride is from Boston and the groom from Chicago.

Friend—That so? Sort of pork and beans as it were, eh?—Life.

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