

FIGHTING THEM OVER.

What Our Veterans Have to Say About Their Old Campaigns.

IN KENTUCKY

During the Early Days of the War. TO THE EDITOR: In the Summer and Fall of 1861 a Federal camp was formed at the Olympia Springs, quite a noted watering place in Bath County, Ky., before the war. At this place soldiers were mustered for the Union army, and drilled by Leonard H. Hunt, who afterwards became Colonel of the 24th Ky. At this place I saw for the first time a regiment of soldiers—the 24th Ohio, Col. Harris commanding. Here preparations were made for an assault on the mountains in Eastern Kentucky to break up the camp John C. Breckinridge and others were forming at Prestonsburg on the Big Sandy.

To this place Nelson came, and from here we started on our first campaign. Our force consisted of the 24th Ohio, two or three companies of the 21st Ky., before the regiment was organized, and a few companies of Col. Metcalf's Kentucky Cavalry. Our first camp after leaving the Springs was about 20 miles up in the mountains. The camp, I think, was called Camp Hazard. Here Gen. Nelson organized several scouting parties.

The rebels were now rendezvousing at Hazel Green, about 25 miles from our camp, and also at West Liberty. Hazel Green was on the Licking River, about 15 miles northeast of Hazel Green. One of these scouting parties was sent by Gen. Nelson toward Hazel Green, and I was directed by the general to follow. I was accompanied by my acquaintance with the country. We proceeded in the direction of Hazel Green, passing through the neighborhood where my family lived, and saw a number of rebel camps. They believed we were going to kill every one of them. When we arrived within two or three miles of Hazel Green, the detachment stopped at the house of a Union man, John Beckman, for refreshments. Capt. Goodpastor, who was in command, sent three of the boys ahead for a mile and a half, where they could ascend a hill and look over into the town and see the rebel camps. The boys had not proceeded more than a mile when they met a man, and he no sooner saw the bluecoats than he jumped the fence and ran toward the mountains. The boys yelled the faster he ran. They let loose their guns, and I'll venture he never made time than he did then across that bottom till he reached the timber on the river. He was shot, and he fell down the bank into the river, and that is the last I ever saw or heard of Joe Ross.

We now received orders to counter-march. We came back to the house of a Union man, the 24th Ohio had gone, with two pieces of artillery, toward West Liberty, and our orders were to follow. There we had our first experience in night marching through rain, mud and pitch darkness. We continued our weary march until nature was exhausted, and at the old Grassy Creek Church we turned in for a nap.

We arose about two hours before day and continued our march through the darkness and mud. When within three miles of West Liberty it was daylight, and we were within about six miles of the rebel camp. It was the first time the most of us had ever heard the noise of battle. Some of us became very nervous and anxious, and some of us were so nervous when we came to the battleground the fight was over and our boys experienced the sensations of a first victory. We thought then it was considerably better, when in fact it was but a light skirmish.

Judge Burt, a noted lawyer and rebel, lived in West Liberty, and he, like a great many Southerners, thought that in these mountains "a few bushwhackers" would do the work of a regiment of disciplined soldiers. So he had this mob of civilians with their shotguns, corn knives and squirrel rifles, form on a ridge in the timber south of the town. The 24th Ohio marched along a narrow defile at the base of the ridge, they opened fire on them, but not having any experience in war they overshot our boys, and instead of hitting the rebels down the fence, ran their artillery out on a narrow bottom between the hill and the river, and opened fire on these brave citizen-soldiers with shot and shell. The rebels, who were a mob and scarcely a shelter for his family, but fled and hunted for a living. When the war broke out he was a great trader because he had a few bushwhackers, and he was a great trader to prevent his fleeing "all our niggers," he went in to fight the Yanks. When he heard of these cannon for the first time, he yelled at the top of his lungs, "Let's see what a gun! Let's see what a gun!" and he did run, and that was the last battle Lish Prather ever fought to keep "our niggers" from getting away. He yelled he gave on the hill that morning was the last I have ever heard of him.—W. B. BENTON, Co. K, 24th Ky., Baldwin, Kan.

Notes from a Musicians' Regt.

TO THE EDITOR: Like your suggestion regarding communications from members of the Army of the Potomac, and I believe I will try to give you a sketch of how and where my regiment joined the Army of the Potomac.

We were stationed at Winchester under Gen. Milroy until January, when we were ordered to a visit, but as he came in the city from the south side we went out at the north, and made Harper's ferry by the route of the Potomac, and then we went on to the north side of the river. We were assigned to the Third Corps at Middletown, Md.; then, in March, 1862, assigned to the Sixth Corps. After the Wilderness campaign we were ordered to the front of Valley as a full-fledged Sixth Corps regiment. Being a musician, I had a good chance to see what the Eighth Corps boys did at the beginning of the battle of Gettysburg.

I say that the Eighth Corps boys skedaddled in a lively manner that morning, and I will wager 100 subscriptions to THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE that they were in compliance, will be placed where we got our first marching order, and they did. I have read Courade Dry's letters with much interest, and I do not think one of the old Sixth Corps boys wishes to take a single laurel from the brow of the new Sixth Corps. Comrade Dry's regiment, for I know many of the 123d Ohio, and know just what kind of material it was composed of.

One thing more to the Editor: I believe in honor to whom honor is due. Now, if Gen. Wright did not have the line of battle formed and the entire rebel force brought to a standstill before Gen. Sherman's army, I believe for the past 20 years been laboring under a mistake.—JESS S. LANGSTON, Musician, 11th Ohio, Kansas City, Mo.

The Hanging of Serg't Ferguson.

TO THE EDITOR: I have noticed two communications recently in reference to the hanging of Serg't Ferguson during the siege of Knoxville, Tenn. He belonged to the 11th Ohio, and had been detailed, with a brother of his, for duty with Co. A, of the Pioneer Corps, of which company I was a member. After leaving Kentucky, on that march, as was a tall man with black whiskers, and shortly before the siege of Knoxville came to me and said that if he could get back to his regiment he would be glad to see me. I told him that I did not like to spare any of my men, but would stand in the way of the promotion of no man; and he went. His brother remained in the ranks. When Longstreet left, some of my company came from a foraging expedition and reported that Ferguson was hanging to a tree, with a placard on his back, which read "Serg't Ferguson, Co. A, Pioneer Corps, 11th Ohio, who was killed by the rebels on the 11th of October, 1864, at Knoxville, Tenn. He was a brave and gallant soldier, and his death was a great loss to the Union army." I was very much interested in this, and I went to investigate the matter, and reported the facts as above. It was reported in camp that the Sergeant had appeared at the picket-line of the rebels a few days before the siege was raised, dressed in butternut clothes, such as Tennessee farmers wore, and was straggling in front of the picket-line. He passed the picket, when a rebel officer appeared and remarked the picket for permitting him to pass, and called him back and compelled him to take off his boots, and found the dispatch from Grant to Burnside, as stated by your correspondent.

Would like to hear from Serg't Hinton or any of those Kentucky boys, or any one of the old Pioneer Corps, Lyon, Kan.

TAKING OF CHATTANOOGA.

How Gen. Rosecrans First Learned of the Whereabouts of Bragg's Army. TO THE EDITOR: When the Army of the Cumberland commenced its great campaign in 1862 from Murfreesboro against the Army of the Twenty-first Corps, under Gen. Crittenden, constituted the left wing of the army. Crittenden's Corps crossed the Tennessee River at Chattanooga, 65 miles below Chattanooga, and then advanced up the river northwesterly, directly toward Chattanooga—the objective point of the campaign. On the 9th of September the advance of Crittenden's Corps occupied a position on the face of Lookout Mountain overlooking Chattanooga. Harker's Brigade of Wood's Division being in the advance. From that point we moved on to the north, and were ordered to indicate that the enemy had evacuated Chattanooga. A body of troops could be seen opposite Chattanooga, on the west side of the Tennessee River. The officers who were with me at that time as to where had the troops were.

Col. Charles G. Harker, who commanded the brigade at the head of the column, directed the advance of the column, and I was with him. We were following the left bank of the river, and we were moving forward a few paces in front of their line and lay down. Then the familiar words passed along the line to "Give 'em hell, boys!" and we did seem to lead for all that was in us; but the hell seemed to come the other way, for the faster we fired the hotter they poured their shells and shot. The enemy was successfully and handsomely maneuvered out of Chattanooga, and Gen. Rosecrans, and hence its easy capture and occupation by the troops operating directly against it. It was critical for the rebels to suppose the enemy to be in full retreat into the interior of Georgia.

The following day two brigades of Wood's Division, in the command of the division of Ringgold, via Rossville, Wagner's Brigade of Wood's Division was left to garrison Chattanooga. When some 12 or 15 miles east from Chattanooga the column of the division of Ringgold, via Rossville, Wagner's Brigade of Wood's Division was left to garrison Chattanooga. One of them was an old man, whose team and wagon were standing near. The negroes were evidently much surprised, and our inquiry was made of them as to where they had been. The old man replied that he had just been "down to Marsa Bragg's army with tin snips" (supplies). We received orders to counter-march. We came back to the house of a Union man, the 24th Ohio had gone, with two pieces of artillery, toward West Liberty, and our orders were to follow. There we had our first experience in night marching through rain, mud and pitch darkness. We continued our weary march until nature was exhausted, and at the old Grassy Creek Church we turned in for a nap.

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DEATH OF GEN. HAYS.

Where and How He Fell at the Battle of the Wilderness. TO THE EDITOR: I see Comrade Myron Failing, in your issue of 18th Nov., that he was where Gen. Alex. Hays was killed, and what his command was. Oct. 29 Comrade Berry gave the correct composition of the brigade; also, Comrade L. Catlin, in your issue of 11th Nov., the correct date, May 5, 1862. On the morning of May 5 we left our bivouac among the skulls and skeletons of our comrades on the old Chancellorville battlefield, and moving by the old Farmhouse through the woods, and by the old mines. After marching a long way we were counter-marched and took a road further to our left. We followed this road until we came into a clearing, and the woods were filed right and followed a road along the edge of the woods. As we went along the boys were joking one another, and some claimed they could see the rebel camp. A broad expanse of clear country away toward us as far as the eye could see. We felt glad that we had got through the woods into clear country, and that we were near the enemy, but we were disappointed. The road we were following led us back into the Wilderness. The order was given to double-quick, and we ran a long way until we crossed the plank road through the woods, and we were halted and moved by the left flank in line of battle into the woods, which was very thick and difficult to advance through. We moved to the right, and were being fired at by the rebels. We were ordered to double-quick, and we ran a long way until we crossed the plank road through the woods, and we were halted and moved by the left flank in line of battle into the woods, which was very thick and difficult to advance through. We moved to the right, and were being fired at by the rebels. 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