# Story of 1000 IRISHMEN.

By Capt. M. H. MACNAMARA, 9th Mass.

Having again settled ourselves down at Falmouth, in front of Fredericksburg, we cast about for something to vary the monotony of camp life. The first thing to be done, however, was to prepare for Winter, which was now upon us. We therefore went to work, erected log foundations over deep cellars, fixed our wall and shelter tents upon them, devised and built practicable fireplaces with mud chimneys, and soon began to feel very comfortable.

Our evenings in camp were spent cheerfully and pleasantly.

LIFE IN CAMP AT FALMOUTH.

Before a blazing fire of no ordinary dimensions, half a dozen of us would be seated under the canvas shelter in front, watching with profound interest the solemn and systematic proceedings of one of "ours." From one pocket he would take a few lemons, which he would place, with considerable dignity, upon the bed. Then, stooping down and making a few vigorous dives under that rustic couch, he would reappear with two or three suspicious-looking canteens; these, with a mysterious wink, he would deposit beside the lemons; this done, half a dozen anxious voices would cry out simultaneously, "Harry!" The individual addressed, whose optics were rather sharp, and whose sense of smell was rather keen, would unthinkingly expose his proximity by instantaneously introducing his head through the partial opening in the tent. "Well, gemmen?" "Bring—the—sugar—Harry—and—one spoon—and, my 'Child of the Forest,' be expeditious!"

Harry was commonly known as the Child of the Forest. He looked more like a victim fresh from the rack. He was a huge, ungainly, loose-jointed fellow, and always, when walking, seemed to proceed sideways, like a rooster preparing to fight. Well, Harry would produce the sugar from some mysterious corner, which was placed beside the other necessaries.

Then a few anxious voices would insinuatingly hint, for the edification of one of our circle (who had joined the Child of the Forest within), "I'd make it pretty strong, Nick, if I were you."

"O, yes," the balance would chorus, "make it hot and strong;" and then another ominous silence would ensue, every eye being bent on the dignified compounder. Soon the mysterious decoction would be completed; then half a dozen drinking tins would be filled with the steaming and fragrant beverage yclept "punch," and soon, very soon, emptied—Harry looking on at the rapid consumption with what we should imagine to be a fair resemblance of the grin of a pleased demon displayed on his huge face; and with a chuckle, would turn about and shuffle away to his cook-house, hidden in some remote part of which he would watch the advent of some daring fellow who would come to abstract some of the articles of the mess, and, when he appeared, pounce on him with a tragic growl, and a "I've got yer now!" but sometimes, before he had concluded the sentence, he would be knocked into a kettle of his own soup!

A draught from the steaming jug of punch completely changed the scene. Good humor sparkled forth on every face, the bright glow from the fire seeming to increase in warmth, till we moved back our seats, and threw ourselves into more comfortable attitudes. Conversation would soon merge into relations, home, friends, and country; occasionally the narratives would take a cheerful tone, then melancholy, and at times even terrible; and, amid a breathless silence, the narrator would proceed till our interest had been thoroughly excited, and then abruptly stop; and we all laughed merrily to think that we had so soon been interested; then songs would be sung—for many of our circle were good singers; then came solos, glees, quartets, and choruses, that would, for power and energy, if not for melody, rival the elaborate concerts of our own dear little city of Boston.

RECONNOISSANCE TO KELLEY'S FORD.

Thus the time passed on, varied by some slight marches and reconnoissances. One of the latter we well remember; it was made by our brigade, under the command of Gen. Barnes, to Kelley's Ford, on the other side of which the rebels were in force, facing rifle-pits upon the banks of the river.

We started early on the morning of Dec. 30, and, after marching rapidly many miles, halted for the night; and, as we could not light fires for fear of attracting the attention of the enemy, we were compelled to go to bed supperless, but, being very weary, slept soundly. A very heavy mist fell during the night, and when we awoke in the morning our blankets were saturated. We continued our march, and reached the ford, our cavalry, who were in advance of us, capturing four or five rebels.

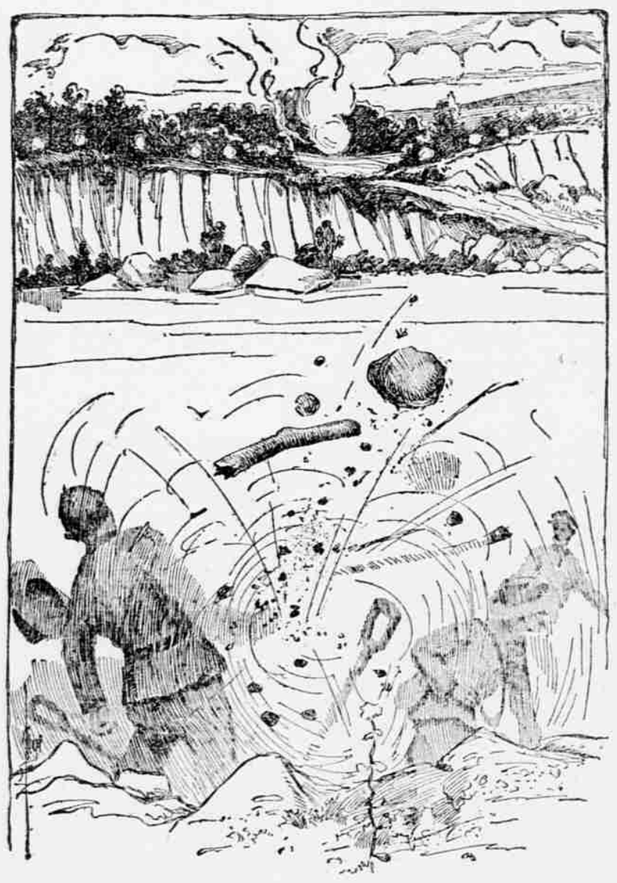
Having accurately ascertained the enemy's position, we started back the same morning for our camp; continuing on our way, our men showing evident signs of exhaustion, we arrived near Harwood Church, 10 miles from our camp. Here choice was given us, either to encamp for the night, or march onward to camp.

After some consideration, the decision was, "keep on;" this we did, and reached our quarters at Falmouth about 8 o'clock. That reconnoissance was the hardest march performed by any brigade in the Army of the Potomac.

We marched 54 miles in less than 31 hours; deducting from that the eight or nine hours we rested on the first night, there will be left, we think, a record of endurance highly creditable to those who took part therein.

A HORSE-RACE.

After this tough sample of military labor, we were allowed to rest, and pass away the time as best we could. One of our principal sources of amusement was horse-racing.



"FORTUNATELY NO ONE WAS HIT, AND OUR WORK PROCEEDED."

The regiment boasted many remarkable specimens of horse flesh, all of them being, in the estimation of their owners, something extraordinary. Among these was one called the "Cat," which, in the language of one of our men, "wasn't much to look at, but the devil's own boy to go."

Where the Cat came from, to whom he belonged, or where he finally went, nobody knows. Dr. Ryan, however, introduced him to our regimental turf; the Doctor swore that the Cat was sired by one of the best stallions in the country, and foaled by a mare that would knock bright spots out of Flora Temple. As the Doctor was "up" on horse flesh, no one contradicted him; but when they went away they would silently gyrate their thumbs upon the nose and invest their pile upon the other side. Ryan generally rode the Cat, and by some hocus-pocus always managed to come in ahead. So it was that the fame of the wretched-looking Cat went up. There was another noted horse we saw there, rejoicing in the modest appellation of the "War Horse." Tradition said he was very fast, but the old fellow never would verify tradition. He was matched against the Cat, but the tremendous gap intervening between the latter and himself completely destroyed his reputation for fleetness.

It is but justice, however, to the old War Horse to say that he always held his character for being a "fast eater."

Many very fine races were run there, however, in which the horses of Gen. Griffin, our division commander, took part; the white Arabian of Col. Guiney; the fine animal "Dick" of Lieut.-Col. Hanley, and, between horses, the property of other officers of the brigade. Very exciting times we used to have; and the brigade would turn out en masse to witness these racing carnivals, which helped to pass time pleasantly away.

CELEBRATING ST. PATRICK'S DAY.

In this manner we jogged along until the month of March, when we began to make preparations for the celebration of St. Patrick's Day. Arrangements on an extensive scale were made for a pleasant celebration. "Goodies" were brought from Washington by the sutlers, and a large wall tent erected, in which, after the festivities of the day, the officers and their friends and guests were to assemble and spend the evening. The morning of the 17th came upon us bright, beautiful, and gracing, and found the camp in a fine state of cleanliness, and tastefully decorated with evergreens and appropriate mottoes. A tall pole was erected on a vacant spot, opposite the regimental quarters, which was thickly greased; on the top of the pole was a furlough paper for 10 days, which was to be the prize for the successful climber.

One tall, stout fellow made a desperate effort to lift himself from the ground, and, after trying for about half an hour, was reluctantly compelled to give it up, having in that time achieved only about an inch; he looked wistfully at the paper fluttering above him, and then turned away to give room to an ambitious youngster, who succeeded in getting half way up, when, coming to a spot greasier than the rest, he began to slip, and did not pause until he came to ground, amid the roars of the crowd.

Several other enterprising spirits attempted the task, but the pole slipped through their hands, and the furlough fluttered tauntingly above them, until, at last, no more could be found to make the attempt, and then the crowd adjourned to the race ground, where several fast runners were in line; an exciting race was then run, when the grand event of the day came off—a horse-race, in which several of the fastest horses of the brigade were entered.

It was in this race that Quartermaster Thomas Mooney received the fearful injuries which eventually terminated his life.

The Irish Brigade at this time was encamped about two miles from us; they also had a grand celebration, at which Gen. Hooker was present; some splendid samples of horse flesh were brought upon the ground, and, in addition to flat races, a steeplechase was run in presence of an immense assemblage.

That Winter at Falmouth was the most genial and comfortable one we ever spent; and, after the toil of marches and the ordeal of battles, we gladly look back on it with feelings of pleasurable satisfaction.

While at this camp we were honored by the presentation to our regiment of a splendid green flag, of great value, by the Irish Brigade. The names of all the battles we had passed through were inscribed on the face of it in letters of gold, while, on the reverse, a large gold harp was embroidered of exquisite beauty and workmanship.

The gratifying presentation took place in the center of a square formed by our regiment, and the flag was turned over to Col. P. R. Guiney by Gen. Meagher, in one of those magnificent rhetorical efforts for which he is distinguished, and appropriately responded to by Col. Guiney in the name of the regiment.

The remainder of the Winter months soon passed away.

Gen. Burnside, having resigned his command, was succeeded by Gen. Hooker, and preparations were then made for a Spring campaign, which culminated in the battle of Chancellorsville.

AT CHANCELLORSVILLE.

On April 27 our army, under the command of Gen. Hooker, moved from Falmouth in the direction of Kelley's Ford, on the Rappahannock, which we crossed, surprising the enemy and driving him back upon the formidable works in his rear. The army then crossed the Rapidan at Ellis's Ford, and marched to a place called Chancellorsville, in Orange County, Va. Here we halted, and soon our forces were in position, and prepared to give battle to Gen. Lee. The engagement was commenced by the artillery of the Union troops, which kept up a continuous fire throughout the day.

The Fifth Corps, under the command of Gen. Sykes, commenced the conflict; and succeeded in driving the rebel force from its position. A large number of the Zouaves, a fine regiment from New York, were killed and wounded. They fought magnificently that day, and succeeded in maintaining the position they had so bravely won. The 9th, upon the extreme left of the right wing, had thrown up strong breastworks facing the enemy's center, which they had been instructed to maintain to the death.

The columns of Jackson, escaping the clutch of Sedgwick, at Fredericksburg, changed the face of affairs, however, making it necessary for our division to leave their works, and march on the plank road to intercept Jackson, and keep him from the field until the forces of Lee, in the front, were beaten by Gen. Hooker.

By some mistake upon the part of subordinate commanders, a wrong route was taken, and Jackson, in full possession of the plank road, marched without interruption to the support of Lee, and succeeded in repulsing the main force of Hooker, compelling him to take up a new position on the fields in front of the Chancellor House, where a portion of our artillery was posted, and about a quarter of a mile in the rear of our original line. The fine fighting of our troops, however, preserved all our original advantages of position, and the general feeling among them was that Lee would be defeated. The movements of Gen. Hooker were characterized by celerity and decision, and the troops had the fullest confidence in his ability; and, being in the best of spirits, the defeat of the rebels was anticipated. From prisoners that were captured we learned that the rapid movements of Hooker had taken Lee completely by surprise; and many of them further remarked that we had "taken the right way to master Lee;" in fact, they all seemed to believe that Chancellorsville was the beginning of the last days of the Confederacy.

Our regiment was engaged a great part of the time in supporting Griffin's Battery and doing picket duty. Two of the companies of our regiment, while on picket, were engaged with the enemy, and handsomely repulsed him. The battle of Chancellorsville occupied about three days, when Gen. Hooker found it necessary to fall back, the army crossing safely at the United States Ford on the morning of May 5, having marched all night without being harassed by Lee's forces, to whom our retreat was entirely unexpected.

The battle cost a great many lives, and following as it did upon the heels of Fredericksburg, seemed to leave our army in a very bewildered state. They could scarcely understand how these consecutive defeats had occurred, after all the splendid fighting they had done and the extraordinary marches they had performed.

INCIDENTS OF THE BATTLE.

We are reminded of an incident of that battle which may be worth relating. We were engaged on the provost guard of the First Division, Fifth Corps, and we had charge of a number of rebel prisoners who had been taken in the first day's fighting. When this division moved in the direction of the plank road, so called, one of the prisoners remarked to us, "You are going to intercept Jackson; you have missed him, however; while you are marching this way he is coming down the plank road, beyond those hills," pointing to a range about a quarter of a mile distant, "and will form a junction with Lee's main body before you can turn back and catch him." It proved to be very true; the junction was formed, and the Army of the Potomac was repulsed.

An amusing incident came under our notice during the progress of the engagement at Chancellorsville, which may prove interesting. A large number of wounded had been brought in from the front upon stretchers, and carried to the hospital tents about a quarter of a mile in the rear. These tents were pitched in the woods, and were supposed to be out of reach of the enemy's fire. About noon, however, of the second day's fight, the heavy guns of the enemy opened fire, and threw their shells right into the wood and surrounding places.

It was a curious sight to see the wounded men, who, a moment before, seemed unable to rise up, scramble from their stretchers, and hobble farther to the rear; to see the Surgeons display extraordinary agility in packing up their murderous-looking instruments, strike their tents, and follow their astonished patients to a place of greater security.

It was "Take up thy bed and walk" most comically illustrated. The poor, wounded fellows no doubt thought that it was enough to get struck in action, without waiting to be demolished in their beds; and they were right. No one was hit, however, and they succeeded in making their retreat in good order, the soldier with his "kit," and the Surgeons with their implements of torture.

BACK AT THE OLD CAMPS.

On the evening of May 6 the whole army, after a tiresome march over rough, muddy roads, found themselves back in their old camps, anxiously speculating as to who would be the next commander of the Army of the Potomac, for, in the terse and expressive language of the 9th, Gen. Hooker was "certainly gone up."

On the 28th of the same month our army was again on the move; as usual, the roads were very bad; after a march of about 10 miles our regiment encamped at Harwood Church. Early the next morning the march was resumed, and, after bivouacking one or two nights, we arrived at Ellis's Ford, on the Rappahannock, and established ourselves in camp in the woods, close to the river. We then sent two companies of ours out on picket to guard the ford, and men were detailed from the remainder of the regiment to throw up breastworks along the edge of the river. The enemy, who were posted on the summit of the bluff on the opposite side, opened fire upon our working party with musketry, and afterwards brought up a piece of artillery, and fired two charges of grape and canister. Fortunately no one was hit, and our work proceeded.

The following description, from the note-book of an officer, of Ellis's Ford, may be found interesting.

"I have not stated anything of our stay at old Ellis's, at the ford, and the friendly converse maintained with him, and the inexpressible pleasure I enjoyed in sleeping on his comfortable sofa, and occasionally reclining even on his soft and downy bed. The old man, somewhat of a cripple, did not like the idea of remaining in his chamber during the night, lest an engagement might take place between the opposing forces, and an accidental shot might send him, not prematurely, to the dominions of Pluto; he would find himself between two fires, and the situation might not be considered enviable. He was, therefore, careful to vacate the premises each evening and hobble to the rear, where he found rest, and imagined he found security in the house of one of his employees. Before leaving, he would regularly hand over the key of his chamber, which was just inside the piazza, to the officer in command of the post, with liberty to enjoy the comforts of his bed or sofa. These were a rich treat to the soldier long accustomed to nothing but the greensward or hard boards; however, I always remarked I slept better on the hard boards outside on the platform of the piazza, or on the green grass, than on the old man's luxurious couch. Old Mr. Ellis is a perfect Croesus—rich in land, money and negroes. But I think he suffers from a want of the necessaries of life, as his supplies are, to a great extent, cut off by the occupation of his territory by the conflicting forces. He was never married."

Ellis's house was situated within a few yards of the river bank, along which our forces had thrown up rifle-pits. The ford was about 30 feet wide, and the rebel picket on the other side was within speaking distance. During the daytime no shots would be exchanged, though at night the stillness would sometimes be broken by a few straggling rifle-shots, and sometimes by a volley when the rebels apprehended an attack from our side. Nothing of interest or importance took place while we were there, the general position of the opposing forces being still the same as when we first moved down to the ford. We left that place about June 5, and moved on to Kelley's Ford, and remained there for three or four days, engaged in duties similar to those at Ellis's. On the morning of the 9th we crossed the Rappahannock via Kelley's Ford, to support our cavalry, which had crossed the river in great force under Gens. Gregg and Kilpatrick. They encountered the enemy near Brandy Station, some 10,000 or 15,000 strong, and a fierce fight took place. The 9th and 32d regiments were ordered farther to the front, in support of our cavalry, and we passed on for about five miles. The 1st Mich. followed, and protected the road over which we had passed to prevent our retreat being cut off. The cavalry engagement was commenced by a heavy artillery fire. About 4 o'clock the former became engaged, fighting until dark, when the enemy fell back badly beaten. Several wounded men of both sides were carried to the rear, where we were held in reserve, and they represented the fight as the greatest cavalry engagement that ever took place on this continent. The number of saber cuts on heads and arms proclaimed the severity of the contest and the close proximity of the combatants. We returned the same night to Kelley's Ford, and marched shortly afterwards to Morrisville. From there we pushed on, and marched day after day, with irregular intervals of rest, via Warrenton, Manassas and Centerville to Gum Springs, Aldie, Va. During these marches the heat was unusually oppressive; many poor fellows dropped down exhausted by the roadside. Many men died, overcome by the intolerable heat and the weight of their knapsacks and other habiliments of a soldier. While we were marching in the direction of Bull Run, a remark reached us from one of "our" comical characters. On leaving Catlett's Station it became evident where we were bound.

"Where's the grand army going now, Pat?" queried one of the other.

"O, then, don't you know," was the reply; "we are going to Bull Run to get our annual batin'?"

(To be continued.)

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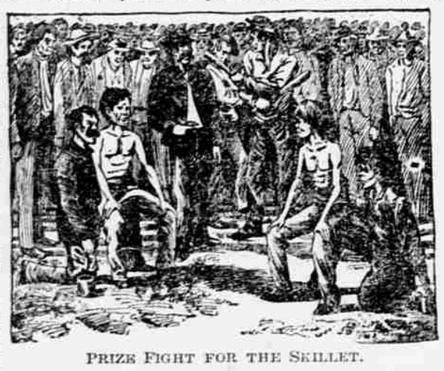

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