

The Twenty-Fourth Iowa Volunteers

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THE TWENTY-FOURTH IOWA VOLUNTEERS.

FROM WINCHESTER TO DAVENPORT.

BY CHAS. L. LONGLEY.

WINCHESTER AND FISHER'S HILL.

The unfinished narrative of Sergeant T. L. Smith, the last installment of which appeared in the October (1893) number of the "Annals," left the Twenty-Fourth Regiment of Iowa Volunteer Infantry encamped near Charlestown, West Virginia, on the first day of September, 1864. It belonged at this time to the Fourth Brigade, Second Division, Nineteenth Army Corps—the Brigade being composed of the 24th and 28th Iowa, and the 8th and 18th Indiana Regiments. The Brigade was then a part of the Army of the Middle Military Division, better known as the Army of the Shenandoah Valley, the command of which was assumed by "Little Phil" Sheridan on the 7th of August preceding. The Nineteenth Army Corps was commanded by Major General W. H. Emory, the Second Division by Brigadier General Cuvier Grover, and the Fourth Brigade by Colonel David Shunk, of the 8th Indiana. Lieutenant Colonel John Q. Wilds was at this time in command of the 24th Iowa, with Major Ed Wright for his Lieutenant. A search in the archives of the Adjutant General of this State—perhaps the only similar office in the country to which regiments in the field were required to send, or did send, duplicates of monthly consolidated reports—reveals the fact that the total strength of the 24th at this time (August 31st report) consisted of twenty-nine commissioned officers and six hundred and sixty-eight enlisted men, of whom six commissioned officers and two hundred and forty-two enlisted men were absent, sick or on detached service, leaving twenty-three commissioned officers and four hundred and twenty-six enlisted

men present. As one of the former is reported on special service, and eight of the latter sick, the aggregate actually present for duty was twenty-two officers and four hundred and eighteen men, which may be taken as substantially the number participating in the battle of Winchester, three weeks later.

The Regiment moved to Berryville September 3d and remained there until the morning of the 19th, participating meanwhile in several exhaustive marches and stirring reconnaissances; but as no casualties resulted, an attempt at detail will be unnecessary. Upon the 18th of this month came the significant order to send back everything that could not be carried upon the persons of the men or the horses of the mounted officers, and to be ready to march at two o'clock next morning with three days' rations in the haversacks. The historic interview between Grant and Sheridan had just taken place, which resulted in the most laconic instructions ever given by a Commander-in-Chief to a subordinate who, with a large army, was just opening an independent and vastly important campaign. Cæsar himself ceased to be the model of terse brevity when at this time General Grant said to General Sheridan, "Go in"! The loyal Winchester girl, Miss Rebecca Wright, had just communicated to General Sheridan information of the movement of General Kershaw's Division of the Confederate Army, then under command of General Jubal A. Early, toward Richmond; and on the third day after the interview with General Grant, General Sheridan *went in*.

Under the orders already noticed the 24th Iowa moved out of its camp at Berryville at three o'clock on that pleasant Monday morning, September 19th. After marching some two miles on the Winchester pike a halt of two hours was made to permit the Sixth Corps to take the advance through the narrow defile known as Berryville canyon and leading toward the left of Early's forces, then camped a short distance south of the town of Winchester. It was after sunrise before the command was again put in motion, and toward eleven o'clock, when, turning to the right, it was deployed on the right of the Sixth Corps—the Second Division constituting the right of

the Nineteenth Corps, and the Fourth Brigade the right of the Division, which was not at this time connected with, upon its right, or supported by, any other command, although the First Division and farther back, the Eighth Corps, were held in reserve.

In a paper like this it would be neither practicable nor desirable to attempt the presentation of the formation of the entire army nor of the details of the battle. Our concern is with the 24th Iowa, including only such outside facts as are necessary to a tolerable degree of intelligibility. An hour or more had been consumed in getting into line as stated. The rattling fire of skirmishers and the shuddering cry of the cannon have for some time told of the presence of the enemy in a belt of woods to the front and right, when, at twenty minutes before twelve o'clock, the order for a general advance is given. The 24th Iowa never moved into an engagement in better shape than on this occasion. Every man was in his place, and the line started across the open in as fine form as if it was only out upon parade. The fire that met its first advance and grew hotter constantly, together with inequalities of the ground and other incidents of such a time and place, were not without effect; but it was still a good line before which Kamseur's men recoiled and from which went up the premature cheers of victory. For the departure of the enemy uncovered the enfilading fire of a well-placed battery of seven guns, while a brigade of Rhodes' Division, just arrived upon the field from Stevenson's, pressed in between the Sixth and Nineteenth Corps, and the order to fall back was followed by a race against death or capture. A little point of timber just beyond the most vicious sweep of that enfilading fire was a natural rallying place; and, according to an incident of this battle given by one of General Emory's Staff Officers and published in Harper's Monthly for December, 1864, which is reported in Greeley's "American Conflict," it was first utilized by Captain W. E. Rigby, of the 24th, who, with a dozen men, came marching deliberately to the rear and here halted, faced the front and called for three cheers; his little line forming a nucleus which

grew rapidly into a formidable one. It is at all events certain that a rally was made here and was at once joined by many of the officers and men of the 24th as well as of the other regiments; and that this line was held against a sharp attack for some time and until the arrival of the reserves.

It was from this point that Major Ed Wright started back after much needed ammunition and had ridden some distance when a solid shot, having passed over the line, ricocheted from the ground and, striking his horse between the hams, passed clear through his belly and lodged between his fore shoulders. The old fellow spread his feet, stiffened himself, stood fast while the Major dismounted and remained standing like a statue while the saddle and bridle were taken off—dying on his feet before the collapse came. The Major gave the saddle and bridle into the charge of a convenient darkey, who was just then making great haste to change his location, and went on after the ammunition—bringing back a box of cartridges on his shoulder, instead of on "Old Jack" as he had anticipated doing.

But the Eighth Corps finally came up, formed on the right of the Nineteenth and attacked vigorously, while still farther to our right the cavalry of Crook and Averill made its presence felt. This was the beginning of the end. One more grand effort from right to left and the Confederate legions gave way, and, as the day ended, went "whirling through Winchester," to quote Sheridan, in full retreat. The victory was a notable one, and coming from the Shenandoah valley, whence heretofore had been heard only notes of defeat and retreat, the news was exultantly received throughout the country—Grant's army at Petersburg firing a salute of one hundred guns, all shotted and pointed toward the enemy!

The tired troops rested that night at Winchester, but next morning pressed on down the valley after the retreating columns. Arriving at Strasburg on the evening of the 20th, the next day was spent in getting into shape to attack the very strong position now occupied by the enemy on Fisher's Hill. In this attack, which took place late on the 22d, the 24th, with

the other regiments of the division, formed in front of the entrenchments and skirmished sharply but without serious casualty until the Eighth Corps began its unsuspected advance from a flanking position on the enemy's left. A grand rush then swept everything in absolute rout, sixteen cannon being left in battery near the pike and great captures of men and material resulting.

Pursuit was at once taken up by the Nineteenth Corps and continued through all sorts of obstacles until 3:30 the next morning. The 24th held the advance during this trying night march, and several times received out of the bewildering darkness the fire of the Confederate rear guard. In one instance only was this attended with serious results, when a section of artillery and a line of infantry fired so nearly into the faces of the officers riding at the head of the regiment that the flash of the guns stampeded the horses and sent them crashing back through the crowded roadway. But although the darkness made the scene a trying one, it hid the men aimed at as well as the gunners, and the injury actually received was, under the circumstances, surprisingly small. Four enlisted men were slightly wounded and one officer, Captain S. J. McKinley, of Company A, very seriously hurt by a bullet which shattered his thigh.

Some strange fatality seemed malignly to follow the brave and capable officer last named. Desperately wounded at the first severe battle in which the regiment was engaged, at Champion Hill—a bullet in his face and his skull broken by a fragment of shell, insomuch that his recovery was thought impossible—he, nevertheless, returned to duty the following spring and attempted to join his regiment at Alexandria, La. While on his way up Red River the boat was fired upon by guerillas, and, as the "boys" said, "of course McKinley was hit," being again severely wounded, this time in the arm. At the time now under consideration he had just joined his command after convalescence from the Red River wound, and was walking in the very rear of the regiment, which was marching left in front. Yet the only serious injury was sustained by

poor McKinley; who, as the troops were without ambulances or conveyance of any kind, had to be left at the roadside in the care of a couple of the regimental musicians. And what is more, the details of the experience of McKinley and other wounded, thus left, for the next forty-eight hours, would fill greater space than is allowed in this paper and prove vastly more thrilling. For Mosby's guerillas came upon the scene and actually ended the suffering of some of the poor fellows by firing at them as they lay upon a hovel floor, under which the rest were hidden. Captain McKinley, however, survived and recovered and for some years appeared to be a well man; and although later in life more than half a hundred bits of bone from that shattered thigh worked out at different portions of the limb, and he walks to-day with two crutches, he is still a very live man, as many of his Iowa friends can testify. The pursuit of Early was continued down the valley to Harrisonburg, but the active work of this part of the campaign was concluded with Fisher's Hill—the regiment being authorized by general orders to have the names of both the battles here noted and emblazoned upon its colors.

In the two engagements the 24th sustained serious losses among its best officers and men, as follows: *Killed*:—Captain J. R. Gould, Company D; First Lieutenant S. S. Dillman, Company E; and privates W. H. Davis, J. W. Arbuckle, W. B. Bricker, A. D. Carmichael, Theo. Stinger, H. M. Reed, G. F. Coleman, C. H. Dean, Harvey Williams. Four officers were wounded, including Captain McKinley, Lieutenant R. S. Williams and Adjutant D. W. Camp, all severely—and Lieutenant W. W. Edgington, slightly. Fifty-six enlisted men were also wounded, very many of them severely, and three were taken prisoners, bringing the total casualties up to seventy-four officers and men. To the list of the killed should also be added the names of seven men returned as "wounded," but who died of their wounds within the next few weeks, namely: William O. Miller, C. F. Bumgardner, Samuel Godlove, Israel M. Ritter, Cornelius M. Westfall, John W. Carmichael and Sergeant C. L. Foote.

The two company officers who have given their lives to the cause of their country were among the best of many good ones in the regiment. Joseph R. Gould, Captain of Company D, was born in Massachusetts and was at this time 30 years of age. He enlisted at Pedee, Cedar County, August 11, 1862, and was mustered in as First Lieutenant of his company. He was a competent and considerate officer, and withal as brave as a lion. He was shot through the abdomen by a musket ball; and although he lived until the next forenoon, those who lay near him through that terrible night on the battle field will never forget the cries of anguish and pleadings for relief that were wrung from him by the torture of those sluggardly hours. Sylvester S. Dillman, among many students, was the most scholarly man in the regiment. Born in Ohio in 1828, he graduated from college and entered upon the profession of teaching, to which he was only less attached than to the wife and little ones he left behind when he entered the service. Quiet, refined and thoughtful, there was nothing alluring to Lieutenant Dillman in the life of a soldier. He enlisted strictly from a patriotic sense of duty; his business was to put down the rebellion, and to it he devoted himself with careful and persistent attention to every duty, and quiet but invincible bravery, and finally sealed his devotion with his life.

Of each one of the sixteen enlisted men whose lives were given in this engagement, especial mention might well be made did the scope of this paper permit. So also of the nearly three score wounded, who were next day gathered, with those from the 28th Iowa and some others, into a brick church in the town of Winchester, which was soon transformed into a well organized and excellently conducted hospital. Chaplain Simmons, of the 28th, always stayed on such occasions to look after the temporal as well as the spiritual welfare of his "boys," and the members of the 24th never failed to come in for a share of his attention. It has already appeared that, out of the fifty-six men who were so seriously hurt as to be officially returned as "wounded" in this battle, seven died of their wounds. This was not a large per cent., the conditions as to location, weather

and care, all being favorable after the establishment of the church hospital. And the weary days of pain spent there were brightened by hope and comradeship as convalescence became general, until some of the jolliest reminiscences with which the members of the 24th regale each other in their reunions of this later day find their rise here. For instance, it is told how "Jack" Pitman, of company B, one day came hobbling into the main ward having in tow a countryman who was carrying a sack of peaches just taken from the nondescript vehicle standing at the door. Jack saw the process of distribution among those present fairly started, but when the bottom of the bag was reached could not be found by the now anxious vendor. After considerable fruitless search, the latter appealed to the surgeon in charge of the hospital on whose order Jack appeared and was confronted by the irate Virginian. The latter explained in a broad local dialect, how Jack had bought his peaches and refused to pay for them. "See here, old man," said Jack when his turn came, "when you drove your old shebang up here I was standing on the steps outside, wasn't I?" "I reckon so, sah." "And you asked me, if I didn't want some peaches, didn't you?" "Yes, sah!" "And you brought me one to try, didn't you?" "Yes sah!" "And I told you you better carry them inside, I thought the boys would take some, didn't I?" "Yes, sah!" "Well, what you growling about—didn't they take 'em?" The old man's jaw was already fixed for a yet more emphatic affirmation, but dropped with astonishment at this audacity; and while Jack limped away the surgeon explained that as the boys evidently thought they were being treated to the peaches, he did not see that he could do anything.

The regiment remained at Harrisonburg until the 29th, then moved on "up the Valley" about seven miles, being stopped by the destruction of the bridge over North River, this being the extreme point reached by the infantry. On the 30th we moved back to Harrisonburg and remained there until October 6th, beginning the work of destruction which had been agreed upon as absolutely necessary in order to end the Confederate

use of that rich country as a supply depot, as well as a provisioned route through which to make raids and forays. In this way the retrograde movement was leisurely conducted through Newmarket, Mt. Jackson and Woodstock, stopping a few days near Strasburg and finally, on October 10th, making an entrenched camp on the east bank of Cedar Creek just at its confluence with the Shenandoah river, where the next great act in the drama was played.

REV. SAMUEL CLARKE.

THE PIONEER METHODIST CLERGYMAN OF SOUTHEASTERN IOWA.

BY HON. SAM. M. CLARK.

About the time of its date, the following communication appeared in the Burlington *Hawkeye*:

DES MOINES, March 8, 1894.—*Editor Hawkeye*: The Historical Department is engaged in an effort to secure as far as possible oil portraits of the men and women who bore distinguished parts in the early history of our state. Among these, it is especially desired to obtain portraits of the early representative clergyman or missionary of each of the great religious bodies. We now have fine portraits of the Rt. Rev. Henry W. Lee, First Protestant Episcopal Bishop of Iowa, and the first Catholic Bishop of Dubuque. Several others are promised at no distant date. After much inquiry, I have no doubt that the foremost Methodist Episcopal clergyman of early Iowa was the Rev. Samuel Clarke, whose arduous labors are well remembered by our surviving pioneers. My purpose in writing this communication is to call the attention of the Methodist Episcopal Conference, which is to meet in your city the present year, to this subject, in the hope that some action may be taken in the matter of securing Mr. Clarke's portrait.

Very respectfully yours,

CHARLES ALDRICH,
Curator of Historical Collections.

Samuel Clarke (that is the way he always spelled his name, and his father before him) was born near Winchester, Virginia, October 9, 1799. His father, George Henry Clarke, was born

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