

## THE TWENTY-FOURTH IOWA VOLUNTEERS.

FROM MUSCATINE TO WINCHESTER.

BY THAD. L. SMITH.

NOTE.—The following history of the 24th Iowa Infantry was written by Mr. Smith, a private, while in the service, before the close of the war, beginning with the organization of the regiment, and closing September 1, 1864. It was Mr. Smith's intention to complete it after the close of the war, but sickness delayed the work, and death came before he was able to finish it. We are indebted to John S. Ring for the copy, which is now for the first time published, after a lapse of more than twenty-eight years since it was written. Mr. Ring has preserved this most interesting paper all these years, having copied it into the regimental record book, and now hands it over to the Historical Department.

Soon after the proclamation of the President in July, 1862, calling for three hundred thousand additional troops, Eber C. Byam, of Mount Vernon, Linn county, obtained a commission as colonel to raise a regiment to be called the "Iowa Temperance Regiment." Accordingly, circulars were issued and distributed through counties adjoining Linn, announcing the name and character of the regiment. Parents who had thus far withheld their consent to the request of sons who wished to assist in defending the safeguard and palladium of their liberties, more through fear of vices and temptations of camp life than of the enemy's missiles, now gave them the parting blessing and bade them go forth with the Temperance Band. By the middle of August more than double the required number of companies were reported as full, organized and ready to march to the appointed rendezvous. Out of those reported as ready, the following were chosen: three from Linn county (F, G, and H), under Captains Dimmitt, Vinson and Carbee; two from Cedar county (B and C), under Captains Rathbun and Johnson; one from Johnson county, Company D, under Captain Casebeer; one from Tama, Company E, under Captain Clark; two from Jackson county, A and I, under Captains Henderson and Martin, and one from Jones county, K, under Captain Williams. Those thus selected were ordered to report

at the place of rendezvous, Muscatine, on the 1st of September. After medical inspection and the discharge of all not able bodied, many of the companies were still full to overflowing. Those companies having more than the requisite number were compelled to transfer to our neighbors of the 35th Iowa.

Camp Strong is situated about one and a half miles southwest from Muscatine. New barracks had been constructed for our reception. They formed two sides of a square by connecting with those prepared for the 35th Iowa, forming a right angle triangle fronting on a level green parade ground. In the center a pole had been erected for the purpose of floating the stars and stripes, and afterwards used also as the center of a circle about which refractory soldiers were made to revolve. At the foot of the pole a very diminutive piece of artillery announced the ascent of the stars and stripes at sunrise, and their descent at sunset.

The organization of the regiment was effected on the 13th of September, and it was mustered into the United States service on the 18th of the same month, by Captain H. B. Hendershott, of the 1st U. S. Artillery. The organization when effected was as follows :

## REGIMENTAL ORGANIZATION.

<i>Names.</i>	<i>Rank.</i>	<i>Postoffice Address.</i>	<i>Remarks.</i>
Eber C. Byam . . . . .	Colonel . . .	Mt. Vernon, Linn Co.	Resigned June 30, 1863.
John Q. Wilds . . . . .	Lt. Col. . . .	Mt. Vernon, Linn Co.	Wounded in action Oct. 19; Died Nov. 18, '64.
Ed Wright . . . . .	Major . . . .	Tipton, Cedar County.	Appointed Lt. Col. Nov. 19, 1864.
John F. Ely . . . . .	Surgeon . . .	Cedar Rapids, Linn Co.	Resigned June 9, 1863.
John M. Witherwax . . . . .	Ass't Sur. . .	Davenport, Scott Co. .	Appointed Surg. July 15, '63; resgd. Nov. 4, '64.
Henry M. Lyons . . . . .	Ass't Sur. . .	Cedar Rapids, Linn Co.	App'd Sur. Dec. 1, 1864.
Charles L. Byam . . . . .	Adjutant . . .	Mt. Vernon, Linn Co.	Resigned July 25, 1863.
Luke Baldwin . . . . .	R. Q. M. . . .	Marengo, Iowa County	Died March 1, 1863.
Daniel W. Camp . . . . .	Ser. Major . .	Mt. Vernon, Linn Co.	Promoted to Adj. Sep. 10, 1863; res. Nov. 16, '64.
John H. Maxon . . . . .	Com. Srgt. . .	Mt. Vernon, Linn Co.	Died March 1, 1863.
Albert B. Eshleman . . . . .	Q. M. S. . . .	Marengo, Iowa County	Promoted to R. Q. M. March 23, 1863.
Samuel J. Starr . . . . .	Hos. Stwd. . .	Lisbon, Linn County .	Discharged M'ch 20, '63.

## COMPANY ORGANIZATION.

<i>Names.</i>	<i>Rank.</i>	<i>Com- pany.</i>	<i>Rendezvous.</i>	<i>Aggre- gate.</i>	<i>Remarks.</i>
S. H. Henderson	Captain	A	Sabula, Jackson County.	94	Resigned August 22, 1863. Killed in battle of Champion Hill, May 16, '63.
C. Lawrence	1st Lt.				Appointed Captain Nov. 1, 1863; resigned.
S. J. McKinley	2d Lt.				Resigned Dec. 20, 1862.
S. W. Rathbun	Captain	B	Tipton, Cedar County.	101	App't'd Capt. Jan. 1, 1863; died Aug. 5, '63.
B. F. Fobes	1st Lt.				Appointed Captain Oct. 1, 1863.
W. T. Rigby	2d Lt.				Killed in battle of Champion Hill, May 16, '63.
S. D. Johnson	Captain	C	Tipton, Cedar County.	98	Appoint'd Capt. May 17, '63; killed Nov. 2, '63.
I. C. Gue	1st Lt.				App. 1st Lt. May 17, '63, and Capt. Dec. 10, '63.
E. H. Pound	2d Lt.				Resigned June 23, 1864.
J. B. Casebeer	Captain	D	Iowa City, Johnson Co.	93	App't'd Capt. Sept. 5, '64; killed Sept. 9, '64.
I. R. Gould	1st Lt.				Resigned Nov. 8, 1862.
J. H. Branch	2d Lt.				Appointed Major Nov. 19, 1864.
L. Clark	Captain	E	Marengo, Iowa County.	95	Resigned April 4, 1863.
I. W. Strong	1st Lt.				App't'd 1st Lt. July 26, '63; killed Sept. 19, '64.
S. S. Dillman	2d Lt.				W'nd'd and capt. April 8, '64; died May 4, '64.
W. C. Hayzlett	Captain	F	Mt. Vernon, Linn Co.	97	Resigned July 31, 1863.
I. G. Bradshaw	1st Lt.				App. 1st Lt. Nov. 5, '63, and Capt. July 1, '64.
C. B. W. Vinson	2d Lt.				App. Chapl'n Oct. 1, '62; resigned Jan. 20, '63.
F. W. Smith	Captain	G	Cedar Rapids, Linn Co.	100	App't'd Capt. Nov. 1, '62; capt'd Oct. 19, '64.
W. W. Smith	1st Lt.				App. 1st Lt. Nov. 1, '62; resigned July 27, '63.
R. McNary	2d Lt.				Killed in battle of Champ. Hill, May 16, '63.
Wm. Carbee	Captain	H	Springville, Jackson Co.	96	Appointed Captain May 17, 1863.
A. R. Knott	1st Lt.				Resigned June 27, 1863.
I. V. Dutton	2d Lt.				
J. W. Martin	Captain	I	Maquoketa, Jackson Co.	97	Resigned Feb. 5, 1863.
A. E. Tubbs	1st Lt.				App. 1st Lt. June 11, '63; resign'd July 31, '63.
Wm. Lane	2d Lt.				Resigned Dec. 1, 1863.
J. D. Williams	Captain	K	Wyoming, Jones County.	99	Resigned June 10, 1863.
Thomas Green	1st Lt.				App. 1st Lt. July 26, '63, and Capt. July 21, '64.
A. M. Loomis	2d Lt.				

The time here was spent in drilling, parades, etc., preparatory to taking the field. Our camp was carefully guarded by soldiers armed with wooden swords at first. The lines were as regularly visited each night by the officer of the day as though an enemy were at hand, and liable at any moment to pounce upon us. Many were the amusing scenes that occurred during these excursions, while teaching the soldier

the important duties of the sentinel, the instructors and soldiers being alike novices in the art.

During this period many took advantage of the weakness of the mode of opposing them and escaped the restrictions of the camp by breaking guard, but none for any other purpose than that of an hour's pleasure in the city—whence they returned as they came, sometimes pursued to their bunks by the corporal of the guard.

Thus the regiment paraded and drilled with wooden swords and guns until the middle of October, when it was armed with new Enfield rifles. During our stay here the citizens of Muscatine ministered in various ways to our physical wants. Our patients in the hospital received every attention from the kind and hospitable ladies of that place that could be expected. Our neighbors of the 35th joined us in all our sports, which were generally of manly character and tended to strengthen our muscles for the endurance of hardships soon to come. The water at this camp was extremely bad. It must have been an oversight on the part of those selecting the site of the camp. A species of quicksand mingled with it and was productive of much sickness, principally that scourge of all new soldiers, diarrhœa. But the most fatal scourge of our camp here was measles. Had the small-pox visited the regiment it could hardly have been more destructive in its effects. In some of the companies nearly one-fourth were suffering from it at the same time. Its severity made many who were spectators to the scene rejoice that they had passed through that ordeal in childhood's years; still those that had it bore it cheerfully, and thought they would soon be well again. But in this hope we were all disappointed. Could they have received the careful nursing of home, they might have recovered entirely. Not so, however, with the great majority of those taking the chance nursing of the camp.

There were about fifty cases in all. More than forty of that number either died of diseases having their origin in the measles, or were soon afterwards discharged for disability. But seven so far recovered as to be of further benefit to the service. There were a few cases of typhus fever at this camp, two

of which proved fatal. Marching orders were received about the 19th of October and the regiment embarked on the following morning, Oct. 20th, for St. Louis, expecting to be landed there; but sad was the disappointment experienced by all when orders came to report forthwith to the general commanding at Helena, Ark. The six left companies were immediately transferred to the steamer Empress, and placed under command of Lieut. Col. J. Q. Wilds. The remaining four companies, under command of Major Ed Wright, were embarked on board of the steamer Imperial. They were joined by the 26th Iowa on the next morning. The steamer, packed with about 1,200 troops, departed for Helena. Snow had fallen during the night and the morning was very cold. The steamer, though one of the largest, was packed above and below and on every side. This was the introductory step of the regiment to the hardships of the soldier's life. The entire command disembarked at Helena October 28th, and encamped about one mile south of town on the river bank. The army which had come through from Batesville with Gen. Curtis was then there. They had constructed winter quarters, upon which business the "forty dollar men," as they termed us, immediately embarked. The regiment was assigned to the brigade commanded by Gen. McGinnis, then Colonel of the 11th Indiana. The regiment was now about 950 strong, including officers and men. The health of the men was good when they first arrived, but their late exposure on the steamer, and the effect of the water from the river and the malaria arising from a cypress swamp about a mile in the rear of the camp, soon swelled the sick list to more than a hundred. Whether these evils could have been avoided at that time or not it is useless to inquire. The operations then pending against Vicksburg, via Holly Springs, doubtless rendered the concentration of all the available forces within reach necessary. Helena was probably the best objective point, for any forces not connected with those under the immediate command of Major General Grant. On the 17th of November an expedition was sent out under command of Brig. Gen. A. P. Hovey, of which the 24th Iowa formed a part. After being out three days and going to

the mouth of White River, it returned without having been disembarked or having seen the enemy. Another expedition left Helena on the 28th of November under command of Gen. Hovey for Cold Water, Miss., where they arrived the 30th of November. Cold Water is about forty miles from Delta, the point of landing on the Mississippi river. In this march the regiment received its first experience of that nature. Although the knapsacks proved to be a very inconvenient and troublesome method of transportation, they kept pace with the western troops without much difficulty. The force at Cold Water was intended to check the retreating force of the enemy until General Grant could come up and "bag" them, or at least cut them off from Vicksburg. One brigade remained here, while another with a small force of cavalry advanced to Oakland, about 20 miles further. On the afternoon of the 1st of December cannon were heard in the direction of Oakland—the first sound of hostile greeting between foemen that had yet reached the ears of the 24th. The troops were immediately ordered into line and started on the double-quick to the scene of action.

Crossing the Tallahachie, a few hundred yards below the mouth of Cold Water, on a pontoon bridge, all were rapidly hurried to the front. After advancing about seven miles, a messenger arrived from the front announcing the discomfiture of the enemy, and capture of 40 prisoners. The advancing column immediately about-faced and returned to their former camp through a drenching rain. Thus terminated the first prospect of the 24th to participate in an engagement with the enemy. Being joined by the comrades from Oakland, the expedition returned to Helena, where it arrived the 7th of December. Another expedition was next fitted out under command of General Gorman, an energetic, violent officer, who could not spurn the rich offerings of King Cotton, on account of which innocent weakness he subsequently received a polite dismissal from the service, by being kindly advised to resign. This expedition was intended to co-operate with a force under General Sherman which had previously gone up the Arkansas River. The fleet sailed for the mouth of White River on the morning

of January 11th, 1863. News of the reduction of Arkansas Post by the forces of Sherman was received on the following day while near the mouth of White River. It then advanced to Duvall's Bluffs, arriving the 16th and expecting to move thence upon Little Rock, Arkansas; but after having reconnoitered and waited for three days, the expedition for some reason was abandoned, and we set sail on the 19th for Helena.

The weather was unusually severe during the entire period for this climate, and much suffering was experienced by the troops. The regiment could hardly have suffered more in loss of men in an ordinary engagement than it did from the effects of this severe and unaccustomed exposure to cold and rain. Many who had withstood all former changes and exposures unscathed, fell under this. Immediately after arriving at Helena, January 22d, it became apparent that a change of camp would be necessary in consequence of the rising waters of the river and streams in the vicinity. The encampment was immediately transferred from the river bank to the first line of hills in the rear of Fort Curtis. But although able to escape from the water, it was impossible to escape from the mud which seemed unfathomable. It soon became necessary to raise and pike the road leading to Helena, about one mile distant, from whence the supplies must come. Helena itself soon became a semblance of Venice. Main street could be traveled only in canoes. The citizens could get to market and visit their neighbors only in canoes. The Mississippi poured its mighty flood in front of the town, while its back waters forced their way through its streets and formed a broad expanse of water far away to either side. Much difficulty was experienced in landing and securing the necessary government supplies. The spectacle presented when these waters subsided may be better imagined than described. As soon as the streets became navigable for six-mule army wagons, they were called into requisition. The wet ground soon became an impassable slough. Boards were stuck into the ground all over the place with the warning motto of "No Bottom" painted on them. The sick list, which had been fearfully large ever since the arrival of the regiment, was swelling to still greater proportions.

The average of fatality was not less than one per day in our regiment alone, while the hills rising high in our rear were being rapidly dotted over with new-made graves from those around us. This was to us the darkest period in the history of our military experience. Numbers were dropping into their last long sleep, not upon fields hallowed by the victors' blood shed in defense of our country's honor, but by the slow and certain power of disease.

The skill of the surgeons, although unremitting in the discharge of their laborious duties, seemed almost powerless. Chronic diarrhoea and camp fever (an admixture of all fevers) bore away many of the strongest men. Soon after our arrival in the new camp the 24th was transferred to the brigade then commanded by Gen. Fisk. He was a man of medium height, fine form and noble bearing. A countenance at once frank, benevolent and intellectual, having upon it the stamp of thought and decision. He soon became very popular in consequence of his well-known moral character, and his constant interest in the welfare of those under his command. Under his immediate command the regiment departed with the expedition fitted out by Gen. Washburne for opening the Yazoo Pass. It left Helena on the 15th of February and arrived in the Pass on the following day. Here they were engaged until the 23d in endeavoring to render it navigable. A vast amount of labor was necessary for the removal of trees which the enemy had fallen across the narrow stream for the purpose of obstructing the passage of vessels. Ropes were fastened around the bodies of the trees and they were thus drawn out upon the main land. From thence the boats passed into the Cold Water and Tallahachie, the way being thus opened to the Yazoo River. Having effected its purpose, the expedition returned to Helena on the 23d. The fleet had been dreadfully shattered in the Pass. The guards, wheel-houses and smoke-stacks of the steamers had been wholly raked off of most of the fleet by the overhanging branches of the trees. There were none of the fleet that escaped uninjured.

Spring now began to make its appearance and the waters to recede from the streets of Helena. About this time Luke

Baldwin, R. Q. M. of the regiment, fell very ill with dysentery. Despite the utmost care under the circumstances, and the best skill of our surgeons, he rapidly declined, and died on the first of March. He was the first officer of the regiment called upon to seal his devotion to our common cause with his life. He was eminently fitted for the position he had occupied. He had always been careful, skillful and honest in the discharge of his duties toward the government and his regiment. In addition to his business qualities, being of a cheerful disposition, quiet and gentlemanly in his manner, his sudden and unexpected death was a matter of sincere and earnest regret among his brother officers of the regiment.

Albert B. Echleman, the Q. M. Sergeant, who had been his faithful and unremitting assistant, was promoted to the vacancy occasioned by his death.

Drilling, which had been abandoned in consequence of the severity of the weather for some months, was again resumed with renewed diligence. The regiment rapidly acquired a perfection in this under the skillful and experienced instructions of Lieut. Col. J. Q. Wilds, which on several occasions of general reviews elicited the warm commendation of Generals Gorman and Fiske. The pride taken by all in keeping their arms in excellent condition contributed greatly to its appearance, and its estimation with those inspecting it. Meanwhile preparations were being made for opening the spring campaign. A thorough organization of the troops at Helena was effected about the first of April. The 24th was transferred to the second brigade of the 12th division, 13th Army Corps, under command of General J. A. McClernand. The 12th division was placed under command of Brigadier General A. P. Hovey, while Colonel J. R. Slack, of the 47th Indiana, commanded the second brigade, composed of the 47th Indiana, the 56th Ohio, and the 28th and 24th Iowa regiments. All hailed the hour of our approaching departure with joy.

Vicksburg was known to be the point of attack, but how or where no one was able to discover. The sufferings which all had experienced from the unhealthiness of the climate at

Helena invested the final day of departure with a deep and solemn interest.

There were none who had not a brother or favorite comrade sleeping the sleep that knows no waking on the bluffs above us or in the vale by the river bank below. During the three months of January, February and March alone, fifty of our comrades were interred at Helena, besides a great number that were sent to the hospitals at Cario, Memphis and St. Louis. When the fleet was ready to sail from Helena on the morning of April 11, 1863, the regiment could muster but little more than six hundred rank and file. The fleet joined that of General Quimby on the next day about five miles below Helena. There was great difficulty in obtaining serviceable vessels to convey the troops. Four companies under command of Capt. Henderson, of Company A, were put on board of a vessel which had had its smokestacks, wheelhouses and guards raked off in the Pass. The pilot declared the craft unsafe and refused to go with her.

After having been delayed several hours after the departure of the fleet, it was determined to man the boat from the troops on board. Accordingly Willis Vance, a private of Company G, volunteered as pilot, and the boat joined us on the morning of the 14th, having made the trip as soon as any of the fleet. We reached Milliken's bend on the morning of the 14th of April, without any misadventures. Here the troops all disembarked and went into camp. Preparations were immediately begun for marching. All surplus baggage was stored in an old barge—the only means at hand of disposing of it. The column moved out on the morning of the 16th, and reached Richmond, a small inland town, early in the afternoon of the same day. The march was again resumed on the next day. The column advanced slowly in consequence of the heavy roads impeding the progress of the train. The country through which we were now passing is one of the richest and most valuable in Louisiana. An annual overflow by the waters of the Mississippi was prevented only by a succession of levees. We reached Smith Plantation, on Vidal Bayou, on

the afternoon of the 17th. Up to this time the divisions of Osterhaus and Carr were in our advance.

The original intention to move to Carthage was changed at this time by reason of several breaks in the levee along Bayou Vidal, which placed Carthage on an island. On the morning of the 20th, our division (General Hovey's) took the lead. We arrived at Nolan's Plantation on the 22d. Cavalry swam the bayou in the morning to reconnoitre the country, and beyond a bridge was immediately commenced. Timber for its construction was obtained from a cotton gin on the plantation, and such other buildings as were at hand.

All the force that could be used was called into requisition. The bayou was very wide at this point, but less rapid than anywhere else. Parties were dispatched in all directions to procure boats and material upon which to build a floating bridge. These were securely fastened by a network of ropes to the trees standing in the stream, and arranged in the form of an arc with the circumference up stream. Upon this the bridge was built, which when completed measured between five and six hundred feet in length. The train and artillery were all drawn over by hand.

The project, as well as the route, being one of our General's own choice, the troops labored assiduously to accomplish the undertaking, while the General himself hurried up the work, being almost constantly present, as though nothing less than the capture of Vicksburg depended upon the speedy success of his project.

Our division succeeded in getting over, and encamped about four or five miles beyond the bridge on the evening of the 27th. Next day we moved to Perkins' Landing, and immediately embarked on board the steamers which had a few days previously run the blockade at Vicksburg. Each steamer had a barge or two in tow, which were also loaded with troops. All transportation, horses of field and staff officers, etc., were left behind. Our destination was Grand Gulf. The gunboats moved out in advance, followed by our little fleet of steamers and barges. We reached a point within four miles of the batteries at Grand Gulf on the morning of the 29th. The gun-

boats were to engage and silence the batteries on shore, and we were then to land under cover of their fire, and carry the place by assault. It was a clear, bright day, and the enemy's works were clearly visible from where we lay. The gunboats formed in line of battle, and dropped down slowly and cautiously upon the enemy's works. The enemy was the first to open the ball. One, two, three, four wreaths of smoke, and as many bright jets of water spring into the air. Still the sullen turtles deigned no reply, as the enemy's missiles failed to reach their advance. Another roll of thunder, more bright jets of water start up. This time discloses the approaching foe, yet still they were silent. But now the leading vessel began to leave the west bank of the river, bearing off to the left of their works, followed by the others. Having formed a line immediately in front and to the right and left of their works, they squared across the mighty current, and then came the loud response to the enemy's taunts.

The compliments of the Admiral and his men having thus been presented to the enemy, the vessels separated and each began the battle on its own account. Some running directly under the guns of the fort and delivering their heavy broadsides at pistol range, others with guns of heavy calibre anchored out in the river, as if for target practice, settled themselves quietly to the work. The air seemed alive with a thousand devils, screeching, howling and hissing, while the roar of discharging cannon and bursting shells was loud and incessant. Through the black clouds of smoke lifting from the scene of the battle could be seen the meteoric pathway of fuse shells, which either bounded harmlessly from the iron mail of the turtles or went skipping over the smooth waters miles away from their intended object. An occasional discharge of grape shot would make the water boil around the approaching vessels.

Meanwhile parties were detailed on board our vessels and sent to the holds with tow and cotton, and carpenter's tools were in readiness to stop any unlucky perforation of the enemy's balls in that region when it should come our turn to meet their fire. Guns were all loaded and officers and men at their posts, in momentary readiness for an order to advance. The

steamers stood out in the middle of the river, slowly paddling the water to prevent their floating too near the scene of action for safety before the gunboats had accomplished their mission. We could see there was great danger to be encountered in getting there, but knowing something of the indomitable will and perseverance of our leader, we did not doubt for a moment but that it would be done. It were needless then to be fearful of consequences, and each braced himself with a determination to do his best, for in speedy victory alone there appeared safety. For four hours the battle had raged and the enemy's position had been raked from every quarter. Still the saucy guns from the fort belched forth their fire and smoke and storms of missiles. They could not be silenced. The brave tars had done all in their power to accomplish the purpose. Meanwhile our interest had become so great as to forget all else around us. The steamers drew up to the landing at Hard Times, which had the appearance of having maintained a very poor family in a very poor way, and much to our surprise we were ordered to disembark. After marching down the levee about three miles we encamped for the night on the river. We were now very unexpectedly several miles below Grand Gulf. So sharp was the bend of the river to the right of Grand Gulf that we could not perceive its direction during the day. We then for the first time comprehended the full strength of the position chosen by the enemy. Soon after darkness set in, the gunboats again opened vigorously upon the enemy. The enemy replied slowly but determinedly. The transports, which had already run the blockade at Vicksburg without serious injury, now under cover of their fire sped rapidly by the rebel fort, followed by the fleet of ironclads. The bold adventure was as speedily and successfully accomplished as it had been planned, without further injury than the killing of a few battery horses on board the transports and cutting the hog chain of one of the rams. The return of daylight revealed the entire fleet anchored near the encampment.

The divisions of Carr and Osterhaus and Hovey embarked on board the transports and gunboats, landing at Bruinsburg, about 12 miles below, about noon. Here three days' rations

of hard bread, sugar, coffee and salt, were issued as quickly as they could be landed from the vessels, and at 4 o'clock P. M. the column was en route for the rear of Grand Gulf. About 9 o'clock the column, having reached the highlands of Mississippi, were halted for supper. An hour later, it was again in motion. The divisions of Carr and Osterhaus were in advance, followed closely by that of Hovey. Not knowing at what point to expect the enemy, the advance moved forward cautiously and slowly. Every soldier has cause to remember that this feeling for the enemy in the dark is by far the most laborious and fatiguing duty that can be imposed on an army. It is a movement that requires constant readiness and cautious dealing, while the drowsy powers are busy in their efforts to weigh down the eyelids during the intervals of its many halts.

Occasional shots far in advance will create murmurs among the massed hosts in the rear like that of a dreamer disturbed by familiar sounds in his slumbers. By daylight the skirmishing in front had become quite brisk, announcing the presence of the enemy in force. Halting at the foot of Thompson's Hill, the troops were rapidly preparing their breakfast. The General, riding along the line, put a sudden stop to these operations by orders to fall in immediately. Cannon were booming on the hill, the divisions of Osterhaus and Carr being already partially engaged. The column moved rapidly up the hill, and were immediately formed in two lines of battle on the right of Magnolia Church, the first brigade, under command of Gen. McGinnis, in advance. Although within rifle range of the enemy's position, the thick foliage and dense undergrowth completely hid his lines. The country was exceedingly broken, there being a continuous succession of knobs and precipitate hillsides, while almost impenetrable canebrakes choked up the deep, narrow ravines. An effort to turn the enemy's right resting on Bayou Pierre had failed, and by means of posting small bodies of men on the knobs he was enabled to develop a long line to the left. From these knobs then he must be driven. Small parties of skirmishers were now sent out to discover his position and practicable routes leading to it on our right, while our left held the enemy in

check, preventing any effort that might be made to assail and turn it. By this means the several knobs were successfully charged, and the enemy's left made to retire. The enemy stubbornly resisted every advance, and would abandon his position only when forced to. To the regiment or brigade nearest the most practicable route would be assigned the duty of charging the enemy from his position. During the day there was considerable strife among field and staff officers as to which regiments or brigades should have the honor of assailing the enemy's positions when more than were required were at hand. An amusing incident of this nature occurred about 8 o'clock A. M. The line in struggling forward through a canebrake had become much confused and broken up, the men of the 28th and 24th Iowa regiments becoming mingled.

Lieut. Col. Wilds, presuming Col. Byam to be at the center of the regiment and regulating the line there, mistook the colors of the 28th Iowa for our own and followed them with the four right companies. But it was afterwards ascertained that Col. Byam had left the field, having become sick and faint, and much to his own injury had failed to have the fact reported to Col. Wild, upon whom the command now devolved. Major Wright on the left, with the colors and the six remaining companies, bore to the left in order to pass around the canebrake, thus dividing the regiment. A similar accident happened to the 34th Indiana, of the first brigade.

The six companies under Major Wright and five companies of the 34th Indiana arrived first in an open space beyond the canebrakes.

Here General Hovey ordered Col. Cameron of the 34th Indiana to charge a battery which the enemy had planted on the crest of the hill. Col. Cameron remarked that there were but five companies present, but that he would charge it if the General so ordered.

Col. Slack, commanding our brigade, proposed uniting the two parts of regiments. To this the General objected, desiring that our regiment should do it. Col. Slack then eagerly responded: "Then let the 24th Iowa go in. Six companies can do it. The Hawkeyes will do it." But the

General refused, and the remaining five companies of the 34th arriving soon after, the regiment was ordered to advance to the charge. About this same time two regiments of Carr's division, the 8th and 18th Indiana, charged the same point from another direction, the three regiments carrying the point, and each claiming the honor of the victory. The battle continued in this way until nearly nightfall, no regiment on either side being exposed to fire at any one time very long, owing to the broken nature of the ground. At intervals a deep, sudden roll of musketry and artillery, followed soon after by a shout of triumph, announced the capture of some advanced position by our forces. Then a lull, during which the enemy took a new position, while our artillery and infantry were advanced. One point after another was gained in this way on the right, until the enemy began to entertain fears of being cut off from the Port Gibson road. The entire right of this line had been forced back until it was nearly at right angles with the line on the left. The retreat soon after began in good earnest. The victory was won. Several hundred prisoners, part of his train and much of his artillery fell into our hands. The primary object of the battle was accomplished. Grand Gulf was evacuated. The whole loss in the 24th Iowa was but one killed and seven wounded. It was a hard battle, but bloody only at intervals. The difficulties of approaching the enemy's several positions were almost insurmountable. The field upon which the battle was fought is exceedingly picturesque and beautiful. The many knobs are crowned with the most beautiful of all trees, the magnolia. Their rich, polished green leaves glisten brightly in the sunshine, as if always bathed in dew, while their large, fine white flowers load the air with sweet fragrance.

This battle is memorable as the first in that brilliant series of conflicts resulting in the capture of Vicksburg. As it was the first battle in which most of the troops enlisted in '62 had participated, the Generals, whose reputation rested upon their success, preferred that the veteran troops of '61 should lead the charges, supported by the less experienced in battle; a distinction, however, that was never repeated. The courage

displayed by them on this day, whenever opportunity offered, convinced them that this distinction would hereafter be wholly unnecessary.

It is not necessary to criticise the conduct of Col. Byam in this engagement. It is, perhaps, fair to presume that what he said of himself was true. He was sick and faint, or, as the boys would have it, sun-struck at 8 o'clock in the morning, reporting at the hospital, two miles away, for medical assistance. As for the rest, both officers and men conducted themselves with the customary valor of Iowa's sons, receiving their just meed of praise in their brigade commander's report of the engagement. Wearing almost to exhaustion by the day's labors, and suffering for want of sleep, the men lay down on their arms, in support of a battery planted on a hill above us. It not being certain that the enemy had gone, and fearing, too, lest he might be re-enforced during the night, everything was in momentary readiness for an attack. All around was silent until midnight, when the pickets in front were falsely alarmed by some means, and discharged their pieces. A moment later and the line was in complete readiness to repel the advance of the enemy, should he come. But the alarm proving to be a false one, we lay down again, and rested without any further disturbance until daybreak. Learning soon afterwards that the enemy had evacuated Grand Gulf, and were flying towards Vicksburg, we took up our line of march for Port Gibson, about four miles distant, where we arrived about noon, and encamped in the streets. The town is situated on Bayou Pierre. It is tastefully and regularly laid out, containing originally perhaps four thousand inhabitants. It had no defenses, and our visit was evidently a very unexpected, as well as unwelcome event. It had never been occupied by any troops of either army before, and had a neat, cleanly appearance. Preparations were being made for a grand ball to come off the evening of the 2d, in honor of the victory gained over our fleet at Grand Gulf, but alas! the intended guests, such as had passed unscathed the ordeal of battle on the previous day, were tripping the "light fantastic toe" towards some distant point of safety from the "Yankee vandals." A vast amount of

provender had been prepared for the anticipated regalement, much of which had been distributed among the forlorn guests, as they hurried through the town. The remainder was claimed as the spoils of battle and was appropriated without further ceremony.

We crossed Bayou Pierre, on the 3d, on a floating bridge, and marched to Willow Springs. Here the column was halted for three days to await the arrival of the 15th and 17th Army Corps. Foraging parties were sent out to procure supplies. There being no transportation with us, and all private horses being left behind, the parties were instructed to forage teams and horses for mounted officers, which was accordingly done. All the mills in the vicinity were immediately set in motion. By this means a sufficient supply of meal was obtained. There were plenty of cattle in the country for beef, and the smoke-houses were full of pork. Bacon, salt, sugar and molasses were abundant, besides an abundance of poultry and many other luxuries not known in the government ration.

Foraging parties usually returned to camp mounted on mules or horses, or in fine carriages, to which were hitched horses or mules, or one of each as circumstances favored, set off with plow-harness or silver-mounted harness, again governed by circumstance. The riders sat in the midst of a heap of poultry and sacks of provender, while the elegant vehicles were freighted with all kinds of delicacies. Where the people remained at home private property was seldom disturbed, but the greater portion of the planters having hastily abandoned their homes, thus furnishing direct proof of disloyalty, everything valuable or sweet to the taste was forthwith appropriated. No dwelling, however, was burned during this march, nor cotton destroyed. Forage of all kinds was found in abundance, and the army fared sumptuously. It was a wealthy cotton-growing region, and the accumulation of a two or three years' crop had piled their cotton sheds full of that coveted article.

On many plantations from one to three hundred bales were thus stowed away in complete readiness for market. None of

this was disturbed by the passing troops. The dwellings of the planters were large-sized, airy mansions surrounded by magnificent flower gardens and groves of evergreens, in the latter of which flourished pines, cedars and magnolias, wreathed about with tall thick rose hedges, which were just beginning to bloom. The dwellers in these Arcadian abodes, when found at home, seemed to possess all the pride and culture usual among the Southern aristocracy, and presided over their dusky harems with much the same dignity that would become a Turkish prince. In most cases they were masters of the situation, and although evincing much chagrin at our unwelcome visits, from motives of policy usually treated us with a gentlemanly dignity becoming their station. The women were less guarded in their manners and language, and frequently treated us to a torrent of abuse, unequalled since the days of Shakespeare's Queen Margaret of Lancaster. A hearty laugh was the usual response to these tragic outbreaks of indignation, but they seldom had the effect of preventing the capture of favorite carriage horses, and the driving away of live stock. About this time an important capture was effected by Captain Smith, of Company G, while in charge of a foraging party. The party came to the abode of a wealthy planter, who had departed with all else valuable, except a favorite carriage horse, left for the use and in charge of his wife. Without provocation, the good lady began reviling the captain and his band before any seizures were made. Accidentally coming upon the horse, one of the band concluded it would be easier riding than walking into camp, and having the means at hand, made preparations accordingly. The vigilant keeper objected seriously, by intermingling passionate entreaty with the most bitter invectives. But plea, however eloquent, was of no avail, and the animal sacred to the household was ridden off in triumph. He was immediately purchased from the Government by Col. Wilds, and has ever since been a faithful and constant member of the regiment. He passed through all the battles up to Cedar Creek unscathed. Here he was seriously wounded, at the same time with his master. Having conceived a strong affection for Brownie, a mare brought into the

service by Major Wright, he was immediately purchased by him after the death of his lamented master, and having recovered from his wound, although deprived of the use of his caudal extremity in consequence thereof, is still performing duty in the regiment. There is something remarkable in the fact that although these parties, during the entire campaign, were constantly wandering away from camp, and scouring the country for a distance of 7 or 8 miles from its limits, they were never attacked or in any way disturbed. We broke camp on the morning of the 6th and reached Rocky Springs early in the same day, a very small village, having originally but one trading store and few dwellings. Here about one and one-half days' rations were issued, the first that had been received by the command since leaving Bruinsburg. Next day we were advanced about three miles to a place called Big Sandy, and took position in readiness for an attack, which it was rumored would soon be made. Next day the troops were reviewed by Gen. Grant in person. A few more rations were issued while at this point, the last we were to receive until after the capture of Haines' Bluff. We remained here until the 10th, foraging as usual, and saving rations for a march by this means.

We moved near to a small town on the 10th, called Cayuga. Here we were joined by the corps of McPherson and Sherman, which were formed on our right. The evening was clear, pleasant and beautiful. Here for the first time was assembled the grand army.

Miles away to our right gleamed the bright camp-fires of more than 50,000 armed men, while hill and dale rang with the inspiring chorus of national airs being discoursed by more than a score of brass bands. How strong we felt! How unimportant we thought our enemy! We no longer entertained any fears concerning the result.

We moved out again on the morning of the 12th, encountering the advance cavalry of the enemy's forces at Fourteen Mile creek.

The columns were wheeled into line, skirmishers thrown out, and the advance began. An open field intervened between

the place at which the lines were formed and a narrow strip of woods along the bank of the creek in which the enemy were posted. A sharp skirmish ensued, when a charge was ordered. Without waiting to give or receive a volley, the enemy withdrew to the opposite side of the creek. We encamped on the ground which the enemy had occupied and halted for the night. Next morning we crossed the creek and discovered the enemy's pickets about two and one-half miles beyond. Our division (Hovey's) formed in line of battle, and threw out a skirmish line nearly two miles in length and drove in the enemy's pickets. The remainder of the force withdrew in the direction of Raymond. Skirmishing continued until noon, at times very severe, there being several wounded in the division. Meanwhile the Pioneer Corps were busily engaged in cutting a road through the woods to the right. The whole force of the enemy, probably 25,000 strong, were not more than two miles in advance of our line. Had they been apprised of our position and number, they might very easily have captured, or at least utterly routed, our little force of 4,000 men. About 1 o'clock an order was received to move out by the right flank through the road cut out by the pioneers. When the column had gotten finely in motion the long line of skirmishers was withdrawn, and followed quickly after. This feint which resulted so successfully was made to prevent the enemy from sending reinforcements towards Jackson, in which direction the columns of McPherson and Sherman were pressing. Marching rapidly, we encamped about dark in a corn-field about seven or eight miles from where we had been menacing the enemy. Scarcely had we broken ranks when a terrible rain-storm set in, flooding the ground and drenching us completely. We had no reason to complain of the lack of softness in our beds that night. The wet and newly ploughed ground yielded to the pressure of tired limbs rather more readily than was desirable. Still there was no help for it, and each comprehending the necessity submitted to the soft embrace of his muddy couch without a murmur. Resuming the march on the following morning, we reached Raymond about noon of the same day. Halting about an hour, we had time to inspect the

battle field of the 12th, where a portion of our forces under McPherson had routed two brigades of the enemy under Generals Gregg and Walker. We there saw the prisoners captured by General McPherson. The citizens here talked ominously of an overpowering force which the enemy would hurl against us if we advanced any nearer their stronghold, Vicksburg. By the aid of this force they expected Divine Providence would utterly destroy and annihilate General Grant and his army. They seemed anxious to prevent so great a disaster, and kindly advised us to be warned and retire in time. Raymond was something smaller and less neatly built than Port Gibson. Having been occupied by Confederate troops for some time previous, it had that untidy appearance which the occupation of a small place always presents. It was defended by a single line of rifle pits from which the enemy were dislodged on the 12th, with considerable difficulty. Taking the road leading to Clinton from this place, the column moved out four or five miles and encamped for the night. During this march another Mississippi flood descended upon us. The roads were flooded with water in some places for a distance of nearly half a mile, from 10 to 12 inches in depth. This time we encamped in the edge of the woods and had wet leaves for our beds. Here a plentiful supply of beef, bacon and mutton was obtained, and also sweet potatoes, but no meal, from the surrounding country. Advancing on the 14th to Clinton, a very scanty supply of meal was obtained and issued. The negroes were able to furnish us with a very moderate supply of corn bread as we marched along, and upon these we were mainly dependent for this very essential article of subsistence until the opening of communication via Haines' Bluff. The negroes everywhere exhibited the most extravagant joy upon our approach, and were ever ready to impart all the information concerning the movements of the enemy that they possessed, and the character of the country. Although instructed by their masters to flee to the woods when we should approach, and told that they would be plundered and butchered by our soldiers, they, so far from having any fear of us, hailed our coming as the certain dawn of the "year of jubilee." They readily exchanged their

cornbread for a little bacon from their masters' smokehouses, which, although they had not dared to touch it themselves, they considered safe to take from us in this way.

Clinton is a small dilapidated village composed mainly of small wooden buildings, although possessing a few elegant residences in its outer limits. The next morning our division was placed in advance on the main road leading to Vicksburg. Skirmishers were kept well in advance of the column and a few shots exchanged, the enemy's cavalry prowling in our front. Marching slowly, we reached a point about one mile to the left of Bolton Station.

During the day's march a tall Lieutenant of the regiment, in search of what he might find, stumbled on what appeared to be an abandoned wagon-maker's shop, and finding it locked, became convinced in his own mind that it must contain something very valuable. Calling for some assistance from our passing column, a sturdy, raw-boned, two-hundred-pound Dutchman volunteered his assistance. Having arranged that there should be an equal distribution of the supposed spoils, they proceeded to break open the doors. The carefully concealed treasure welcomed their entrance with a hoarse bray that seemed to awaken the echoes of the forest for miles around. They brought forth their captured prey in triumph—an ass of ponderous proportions, and declared by the lucky captors to be worth \$2,000 anywhere on the continent but in the particular vicinity of his seizure. A loud shout of laughter from the column was immediately answered by a louder bray. What was to be done? He was too valuable to leave behind, and it was determined the brawny Dutchman should lead him. Advancing to the head of the column, the sequestered prize treated the field officers to a lengthened operatic flow of original music, assisted by the jubilant Dutchman, the burden of whose song was "Wo," "Wo dare," "Vat you means?" Half an hour of this was all the weak nerves of the Colonel could endure, and declaring the seizure illegal, he ordered it to be taken to the rear and released, charging the long Lieutenant with the execution of the order.

*(Conclusion in next number.)*

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