A WAR DIARY OF 1861 his regiment. I was in too much pain

BATTLEFIELD REALISM WRITTEN ON THE SPOT.

Story of a Volunteer at Bull Run-Oue of New York-Wounded, Captured and Taken to Libby Prison.

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APTAIN W. H. MERRILL, U.S. A., retired, who died a few weeks since, opened his tright military career as a common soldier in the Twenty-sev enth New York volunteers. At a reunion campfire of the regiment many years ago - the captain handed to me, to use for historical

purposes, a copy of his diary from July 21, 1861 (the date of Buil Run), nutil his release from Libby prison, the winter following I make this extract re-lating to the battle of Bull Run as an example of realism in war as a soldier saw it and recorded it on the spot.

Says the diary: "It was my good fortune to be selected as one of the color guard of the Twenty-seventh. The first member of the color goard who was 'struck' was Corporal Fairchild. The regiment had for a moment halted, when the corporal staggered back, crying, 'Ob, boys, I am struck!' Placing his hand upon his breast, with the expectation, as he afterward said, of 'finding it covered with blood,' he accidentally felt the ball (a grapesbot) in his shirt pocket. He immediately pulled it out, exclaiming, 'Thank God, I am safe!' It was a spent ball The corporal survived the battle to become a prisouer at Richmond.

"In the mountime the action had be come fierce and sanguinary, and every soldier in the ranks realized that his regiment was quite as severely 'exposed' as the most ardent minded and valorous could desire. Our members were greatly diminished, and though our discharges were rapid they had become irregular, and the men loaded and fired promiscuously. An incident may be related in this connection of rather a novel character. Corporal ------ of Rochester, a young man who since his enlistment had been somewhat distinguished among his comrades for a religious zeal, fought manfully and with the 'full assurance of faith.' With every load of his musket he uttered an audible prayer to this effect, 'O Lord. send this bullet to the heart of a rebel and spare my life!' A Manxman who stood beside him, and who was quite as energetically engaged in the 'discharge' of duty, censoriously retorted, 'Hoot, mon, shoot more and pray less!' Shooting was evidently the most pressing business in hand, but our Manman was probably not aware that a Yankee seldom attempts to do one thing at a time, and that it was quite proper to put two irons in the fire when the confisgration was so general and extensive,

'The Twenty-seventh regiment continued to march unflinchingly forward, literally amid a storm of 'leaden rain and iron hail.' Indeed it seemed as though we were confronting an avalanche of bullets. Many were mowed down. I think that but one of our line officers then deserted his post of duty, and a few days since I met him in the streets of Rochester wearing the uniform of a private. To my inquiries upon this subject he admitted that he had been cashiered in consequence of his behavior on that occasion, and that he afterward returned home. 'But,' said he, 'I could not help it. I ran despite myself, for we were marching into the jaws of death. I am not a coward, and I mean to prove it. Therefore I have enlisted as a private soldier, and if I ever participate in another battle I mean to stand my ground.' "In less than half an hour the ranks of the color guard were reduced from nine to two. The colors were large and weighty, and, Sergeant Freeman having become quite exhausted and myself too much so to relieve him, Major Baltsett, who perceived the situation of affairs, came to our assistance. Riding along the line and waving the colors thove his head, he shouted, 'Boys, will jou fight for this? The response was general and enthusiastic, "A large number of the enemy were discovered in the front, and the Twenty-seventh advanced toward them, Sergeant Freeman being again in possession of the colors. At this juncture, while my piece was leveled, I received a ball in my breast and fell, remarking to my comrade that I should have to leave him. The sergeant gave me a glance so full of sympathy at my misfortune that I never can forget it, and with the regiment passed on to meet the enemy. I crept to a rail fence near by and lay insensible about 15 or 20 minutes, as I should judge, and upon regaining conscionsness discovered that I was surrounded by numbers of dead and wounded. The immediate vicinity was not then occupied by troops. "While still lying in my position I beheld another Union soldier at a short distance climbing the fence. He held his musket in his right hand, but while astride of the fence, and in the act of getting down, a cannon shot struck the rail, shattering it in pieces and sending its rider whirling and somersaulting in the air, with a velocity that would have astonished the most accomplished acrobat. He gathered himself up with almost an equal degree of alacrity and started on 'double quick' toward our own forces. He had proceeded but a few feet, however, when he came to a halt. Casting his eyes over his shoulder and perceiving that he was unpursued, he scratched his head thoughtfully for a moment and theu ran back and recovered his musket and started again for

nd Lowederment at the time to fully appreciate the conciculity of this performance, but have since enjoyed many a hearty chuckle upon its reflection

"There were a great deal of skirthe Color Guard of the Twenty-seventh mishing on the field and many instances of personal bravery particularly worthy of remark. I noticed, for example, oue soldier leave his regiment and, crossing the field and leaping the fence, load and fire several times at a squad of cavalry. He was finally discovered, and three or four of their number rode down upon him. One who was in advance of the rest came upon 'our hero' as he was in the act of loading. He had driven the ball home, but had not withdrawa the ramrod. The borseman raised his saber, and the next instant, as it appeared to me, the volunteer was to be shorn of a head, but instantly inverting his musket he dropped out the ramrod, and in the twinkling of an eye emptied the saddle and started back to his regiment. After proceeding a few rods and finding that the enemy had given up the chase he started tack to recover his runted. and with it returned in triumph to his regiment, where he was greeted with rousing cheers.

"But it is needless to multiply instances of this nature, many of which I saw. The movements upon the field had in the meantime changed in such a manner that I found the spot where I lay exposed to the cross firing and accordingly crept to the cellar of 'the old The passage was not unstone house.' attended with danger, the rebels making a target of every living object upon that section of the field, from which our troops had retreated, and their balls whizzed briskly about me. The cellar in which I found refuge was already occupied by many other wounded Union soldiers, who had likewise sought its shelter. They were lying in the mud and water upon the ground.

"The cross firing of the troops continued, and the rattle of musket balls against the walls of the building was almost incessant. A number of them entered the windows, wounding three of the inmates. A cannon shot also passed through the building, but inflicted no bodily injury. Pending these occurrences two rebel soldiers entered the cellar, one of them seeking shelter in the fireplace. They were both unwound-ed. The occupant of the fireplace, however, had not fairly ensconced himself when a musket ball passed through his leg. The other, who was lying by my side, was also severely wounded, a fitting penalty for their cowardice and desertion.

"Finding that the building was likely to be destroyed by the continued firing, one of our number went to the door, and, plecing a havelock on his bayonet, waved it aloft in the air. This hospital signal was greeted with a shower of balls from the Confederates, and he was compelled to retire. Subsequently a yellow flig was displayed from the floor above, but it was likewise disregarded.

"The wounded were perishing with thirst. At the distance of about two rods from the building was a pump, and one noble fellow, whose name I regret that I have forgotten, took two canteens and went out to obtain water. While so doing he received five or six musket balls in different portions of his body from the rebel forces, yet was not fatally injured. Though very low, he was still alive, an inmate of prison hospital No. 2, when I left Richmond. He will ever be remembered with gratitude and affection by those who witnessed his noble conduct and shared in the benefits of his exploit. It is my opiniou that between 50 and 60 men fell in the immediate vicinity of the pump and 'the old stone house. "While our forces were on the retreat, pursued by the rebels, a body of troops halted at the stone building, entered with bayonets and demanded a surrender! They were to all appearances as much intimidated as though they had anticipated a successful resistance. None was made, however. No violence was offered to the prisoners, and in this connection I may state that I saw no 'bayoneting' whatever committed by the enemy at Bull Run. Our arms were delivered np, and a few moments afterward I was led and half carried away to the quarters of General Beauregard, situate at a distance of perhaps half a

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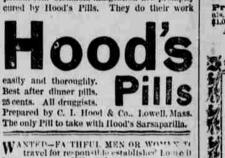
SHOT DOWN AT THE WELL.

mile. Before reaching there we encountered General Beauregard, flanked by Johnston and Davis, riding across the Their countenances were illumfield. ined with a mingled feeling of joy and exultation, and they could well afford, as they did, to salute an unfortunate prisoner. The headquarters consisted of a large white house. It was filled with wounded soldiers, undergoing surgical attention. Fragments of human bodies were strewed upon the veranda and about the building, and large numbers of both Union and rebel wounded lay outside upon the ground."

Corporal Merrill was taken to Richmond in the first squad to be incarcerated in the eld tobacco warehouse which became famous as Libby prison.

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