REPORT

OF THE

Twenty-Ninth Annual Reunion

OF

The Survivors' Association

Seventy-Seventh Regiment
New York Infantry
Volunteers.

1901.

A SCENE AT THE WILTON RE-UNION.

THE SURVIVORS' ASSOCIATION

OF

THE SEVENTY-SEVENTH REGIMENT

NEW YORK INFANTRY VOLUNTEERS,

In their Twenty-Ninth Annual Reunion at Wilton—Roster of Those Present—Letters from Absentees—Retrospect of Original D, Wilton, Company by the Secretary—Address by a Former Surgeon of the Regiment, Dr. George T. Stevens—Full Report by Secretary E. H. Fuller.

In response to the invitation of former members of D company present at our last reunion at Gansevoort, to be their guests at Wilton the last Wednesday in September, 1901, surviving members ofthe 77th N. Y. S. Infantry Volunteers Wednesday, September 25th made Saratoga Springs their rendezvous as they did forty years since. This time the Town Hall corner was their 'Camp' from which six omnibuses, loaded so that they could not hold the proverbial one more, beside other conveyances, left between nine and ten o'clock a. m. It was a clear, crisp fall morning, not a cloud to veil the blue sky or the refulgent rays of old Sol, and as the half dozen busses nearly two hours later arrived at the Wilton Hall, only seven miles away, there was an assemblage of several hundred, at least half of whom were of the fair sex, and though they out-numbered the veterans over two to one, they faltered not before the men of 1861-5.

At 12 m. the members meeting, in Wilton Hall, which was filled to not even standing room left, was called to order by

Danville, Va. Served three years and eight months. Never was in a hospital, never fell out on a march, never was put in a guard house."

James A. Lawrence, "A," the only survivor of the three Jims writes:—"I was captured at the Golding Farm hospital on the evening of June 26th, 1862, the first of the Seven Days' battle and for the sixty-two days subsequent had the limits of Libby Prison, when I was paroled with four thousand other prisoners taken to Annapolis, Md., later to Alexandria, Va., where we were exchanged, I getting back to the regiment just after the battle of Antietam. Thereafter I participated in all the battles of our regiment until at Petersburg, June 21st, 1864, a shell took off my leg and the other two Jims. December 1899 with Washington, D. C. as my headquarters I visited Meridian Hill (where we first camped after leaving Saratoga Springs, which is now built over in all directions,) Alexandria, Falls Church, Leesburg Turnpike, Chantilla, Fairfax County places, but saw little evidence to recall the period of 1861-5".

Fred W. Perkins, 'D' writes: "While on picket the morning John Ham was killed, I captured the first prisoner taken by any one in our company on the second day of the seven days fight. As I came in with my prisoner the regiment was in line. Colonel McKean rode up to me and asked, what are you doing out there?' I replied, 'I do not go out hunting without bringing in some game'. The Colonel turned to the regiment and said: 'give three cheers for Perkins', which they did, which no doubt some of the boys will remember."

Frank Whitney, 'C' who is such a cripple, writes: "I have not seen the green fields this year, I think last year's report was fine, the best one we have had."

Secretary Fuller then said that on the 15th of April, 1861, President Lincoln issued his proclamation calling for seventy-five thousand volunteers to help put down the rising rebellion.

Eighteen days later, May 3rd, the President issued a second call for troops for three years unless sooner discharged. It was under the second call that our regiment was raised. August 21, 1861, Hon. James B. McKean, the representative in Congress from this, then the fifteenth congressional district, counties of Essex, Fulton and Saratoga, issued a letter to his constituents

to help organize a Bemis Heights Battalion for the defence of the Union. Meetings were soon after held in the various villages in the district, and with the flag, and fife and drum helping to enthuse, aroused the martial spirit. So prompt was the response that "Camp Schuyler" became a rendezvous for the BemisHeights Battalion—the Seventy-seventh regiment, New York State Infantry Volunteers. Into this place came the Wilton company, Septmber 24, 1861, forty years ago yesterday, with Winsor B. French as captain, John Carr, as first lieutenant and Chester H. Fodow, as second lieutenant, and fifty-two non-commissioned officers and privates.

On the organization of the field and staff, James B. McKean became colonel and Winsor B. French, first lieutenant and adjutant.

When the regiment marched out of Camp Schuyler for Washington, the morning of November 28th, 1861, the Wilton, thenceforth D. Company, had the following named on its muster-in roll, from November 23d, 1861, eighty-seven men, nearly all of whom had been enrolled by Winsor B. French.

Where are they now?

Captain French became adjutant, Major and Lieutenant Colonel, (July 18th, 1862,) in command of the regiment, mustered out December 13th, 1864, is present.

First Lieutenant Carr, promoted to captain, resigned May 18th, 1862, is dead.

Second Lieutenant Fodow, promoted to first lieutenant, resigned May 31st, 1862, is dead.

Orderly Sergeant Deyoe, promoted to captain, discharged July 26th, 1864, because of wounds, is present.

Sergeant Lockwood, mustered out December 13th, 1864, is present.

Sergeant VanDerwerker, promoted to first lieutenant, mustered out December 13th, 1864, is alive.

Sergeant Norton, in the hands of the enemy, of wounds, June 2 ,1864, died.

Sergeant Smith, of fever, January 22d, 1862, died.

Corporal Skinner, promoted to second lieutenant, discharged February 8th, because of wounds, is dead.

Corporal Smith, promoted to sergeant, of typhoid pneumonia Septemer 27th, 1862, died.

Corporal Ott, promoted to Sergeant, mustered out December 13th, 1864, is dead.

Corporal King, promoted to sergeant, discharged because of sickness, February 28th, 1862, is present.

Corporal Reed, mustered out December 13th, 1864, is dead.

Corporal Nisbeth, of fever, May 15th, 1862 died.

Corporal Deuel, discharged because of sickness, Nov. 11, 1862, is dead.

Corporal Sexton is dead.

Erskine B. Branch, present; William Brown, dead; Jesse Burlingham, dead; William Beagle, alive; Edward Bobenreath, dead; Henry Clunis, alive; Charles Cork, alive; James S. Clothier, dead; Charles Cornell, dead; James L. DeGroff, present; Chester Doud, dead; William Dorvee, present; Samuel E. Davis, present; Walter Dwyer, dead; Harvey J. Davis, dead; Thomas Dwan, dead; William H. Deyoe, dead; Charles E. Deuel, dead; George R. Deyoe, dead; Michael Dowling, dead; George Deal, dead; John E. L. Deuel, present; James Ellison, dead; Thomas Fowler, alive; William W. Finch, present; James Galusha, dead; Henry N. Gilbert, present; George Galusha, dead; Jesse Gower, don't know; James K. Galusha, present; Edwin Ham, present; Charles Holden, dead; John W. Ham, dead; George L. Heyden, dead; John W. Hill, dead; Myron B. Hall, dead; Freeman E. Hopkins, dead; Jonathan Hopkins, dead; George Lawson, dead; Edwin A. Lockwood, alive; Ambrose B. Milliman, dead; William H. Monroe, dead; William W. Milliman, alive; John L. Monroe, dead; Ira McNeal, alive; Amaza M. Morgan, dead; Edward McPherson, don't know; Jonathan Morgan, dead; John W. Palmer, dead; Lewis Mackay, dead; Fred N. Perkins, alive; Robert Price, dead; Harmon E. Perry, present; James Pixley, dead; Jarvis W. Russell, alive; Henry Royce, alive; Alfred M. See, dead; Joseph R. Ray, dead; William H. Sexton, dead; Andrew J. Smith, don't know; Thomas H. Sexton, dead; Charles A. Stewart, alive; Hiram Tyrrell, dead; William O. Taylor, present; Stephen D. Velie, dead; William H. Tate, don't know; George W.

Winnie, dead; Amos Wheeler, don't know; George Van Antwerp, dead. Unknown, 5; alive, 13; present, 16; dead, 53.

Dues were paid to the treasurer, Charles D. Thurber, who reported $38.14 on hand.

The next order was dinner, on which the veterans made the assault led by the regiment's former Commander, French, and Surgeon Stevens, to the former home of the late Dr. Taber Reynolds, now occupied by Henry Wandell, who had kindly tendered the use of the house and grounds for the occasion. Five long tables, on which covers had been laid for sixty people each loaded with toothsome eatables, the like of which were not found at a company mess in 1861-65, were surrounded by the one hundred and thirty veterans and their friends. After an invocation the boys started in and quickly demonstrated to the onlookers that they were veterans indeed; and the others were not distanced. It was estimated that between five and six hundred were fed.

After dinner the business meeting was resumed. A committee to draft resolutions on the death of members was appointed by President French, who then stated that instead of reminiscences by comrades, this year we have our old surgeon, George T. Stevens, with us for duty, but not in the capacity for which he became famed in the old days of war, though he doubted not if any comrade desired the use of his knife he can accommodate us as of old. Dr. Stevens has consented to address us.

OUR CAMPAIGN IN THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY.

Address at the Twenty-Ninth Reunion of the Veterans of the Seventy-Seventh Regiment New York Volunteers, September 25, 1901.

BY SURGEON GEORGE T. STEVENS.

We have, for our reunion today made a pilgrimage to a spot hallowed by associations of the most sacred character. We are here on this mount, not the mount of transfiguration but the mount of transition where one of the world's greatest heroes passed out of the realms of earthly action and into the world of history.

There, in the cottage just beyond the trees, Grant, the man of integrity, the statesman of prudence, the soldier of marvellous foresight and determination and the conquerer unsurpassed in victory, spent the most remarkable epoch of one of the most illustrious lives known to modern or ancient times.

With his great soul in the agony of tormenting anxieties and with his body racked by the anguish of appalling pains, the hero of Shilo and of Donelson, of Vicksburg and the Wilderness and the victor who had received the surrender of a great army and had brought to a successful close a great war at Appomattox, came to this place to finish his last work and to enter up on the unequal contest with the universal conqueror both of the great and the humble.

Death has rarely vanquished a more heroic subject than he who yielded to the irresistible summons to surrender on this hill now famous in all lands and for all time.

A world watched the bedside of the sufferer who uncomplainingly and undauntedly, with an energy and perseverance almost unknown in the annals of suffering wrought and contended with fate for the good of the world which he knew he was about to leave.

Comrades of the Old 77th, we knew this hero; some of us saw him as he rested at the foot of the great tree in the battle of the Wilderness when panic had seized the right wing of our

army and hundreds of men, pale even in spite of the grim of battle rushed past where he reclined. We saw his unperturbed face, firm but thoughtful, calm and self-possessed. We watched him as he gave his orders to this, then to that officer and hurried them to the distant parts of the field. We watched the fortitude with which he heard the messages brought from this general and that one who was too hard pressed, and we saw in all this the cool-headed, unimpassioned and firmly determined soldier who was ready to turn adversity into victory.

Then we saw him as he calmly disposed of his forces at Spottsylvania and the presence of mind not unmingled with deep solicitude as the clash of arms sounded at the dreadful angle.

So we saw him at Cold Harbor and at Petersburgh—always quiet, never ostentatious, always composed but always alert,—and we learned that where Grant pointed the way, however hard or perilous it might be, that was the path of duty, that was the road to honor.

Then some of us saw him and all of us watched his career as the Chief Magistrate of the great nation which his genius had done so much to preserve. We rejoice with a sense of personal pride when as he passed in his wonderful trip around the world we saw all the great and noble of all the nations doing homage to this unassuming man of the people—this private American citizen.

Then we knew of his base betrayal by an unprincipled knave and his humiliation, and our hearts went out to him in his deep mental anguish

We followed him with loving thoughts as he was brought to this retired place above the tumults and the pushings of the world, and then many of us saw and some of us were a part of that unprecedented and wondrous pageant which led and followed his earthly remains up Fifth Avenue and to Riverside Park, and we knew that this incomprehensibly vast concourse of men from the East and the West, from the North and the South who marched in that long drawn out procession contained but a small percentage of the hosts of mourners who were that day sorrowing as for one near and dear to themselves.

Comrades! Our great leader has gone before us. He has shown

us how to live as a soldier and he has taught us how to die as a hero.

Let us all as we gather here today salute the memory of our departed Commander and of our well beloved companion, Ulysses S. Grant.

Comrades, how many things we have come to this historic place to do.

Now that we have come to take each other by the hand, to exchange greetings and to renew our old comradeship, we pay our homage to our great leader and we may also celebrate the anniversary of a series of events of the most startling and of the most momentous character.

The nineteenth of September! Who of those who were still a part of us in those stirring days can ever forget the nineteenth of September in the Shenandoah Valley? Then, indeed, commenced the turning point of the great war; then the spirits of the Union soldiers rose to the highest fervor; then the indomitable will of one of the most active and one of the most irrepressible of soldiers took possession of the men of every rank, and the world was startled by a succession of brilliant events which had rarely been equaled in history. These events we celebrate today.

Thirty-seven years ago in the month of September, 1864, occurred the first of a series of victories which were critical in the history of our nation and in that of the world. A month later, on October 19th, in that same beautiful Shenandoah Valley a little army, led by a commander as wise as he was bold, snatched honor from defeat and turned an inglorious rout into one of the decisive victories of a great war.

Thirty-seven years makes a good stretch added to the lives of those who were identified with that exciting campaign in the Shenandoah Valley and especially of those who participated in the remarkable experiences of that 19th of October, and as I look upon the faces of those who were comrades in those days, I see that a change has come over the faces and forms of those who were so fresh and so erect in the exuberance of youth, and in the strength of young manhood. Yet changed though we may be, the memory of those days is not dulled and the thrill of supreme exultation which extended all through the North as

the news flashed over the land and the bitter disppointment that seized the other party and that spread over the South as the tidings passed more slowly, have not been forgotten either by those of us who were immediately engaged in the events or by those who learned of them more indirectly through the media of telegraphs and newspapers.

So we who meet today to talk of our old experiences, may well recall the occurrences of a most eventful month; and others who may have been on fields far removed, or who may have been on the other side in the conflict, or still that larger class who have come upon the stage of action since those stirring times, may well recall at this time the scenes and the events of thirty-seven years ago.

To speak of all that happened in that memorable summer and autumn would be an easier task were it not that after so long a period events crowd in such rapid succession that details in some measure fade from the memory.

The events, when we attempt to recall them one by one, have, like the features of a distant landscape, blended into a harmonious whole. Yet as I glance back over the scenes of those days, memories which have long remained passive, but have never been effaced, crowd upon me and I have collected for this day's recital, not the history of the campaign ending with Cedar Creek, but some reminiscences from the standpoint of one who saw what many of you, comrades, saw, but also failed to see some of the things which you will remember. I shall remember some things which you have forgotten, just as you, looking from a little different standpoint, will remember things which have passed from my mind, or which I could not observe.

In telling the story of a series of great events a difficulty presented itself in knowing just where to begin. Washington Irving in relating the history of New York successfully solved the question by beginning with the creation of the world. In these reminiscences today, I shall commence considerably later, but you will, I am sure, pardon me if I go back some weeks before the real beiginning of this campaign in order that we may refresh our minds concerning some things which led up to it.

I shall begin with an event which every comrade of the Old

77th will remember well, the departure of our Sixth Corps from the Army of the Potomac which was then engaged in the siege of Petersburg.

The change of base of a considerable command was, perhaps, in those days, more a matter of course than it seems to have been in more recent times. I suspect that we who marched in the old Sixth Corps are inclined to curl the lip a little when we hear or read of the exploits of our younger brothers in the re cent unpleasantness. However that may be, receiving our orders at nine o'clock on the evening of July 9th, we were on the road before midnight and after a night over roads ankle deep in dust we had made the distance of fourteen miles to City Point by early dawn and before noon of the 10th, the men, horses, baggage, and all the belongings of the thirty regiments were on board the transports which were to take us to our new scenes of action.

We heard the drowsy songs of the negro stevedores as they worked in loading their ships and our own brigade bands struck up a hearty good-bye to the field of our recent labors and privations and as our fleet steamed down the James River we indulged in mental revivals of the campaigns of previous years.

There at our left, almost as soon as we were under way was Harrison's landing, the camping ground of two years before and the last one on the Peninsula up which our army had marched so proudly, an army at last crowded here for protection before marching back in retreat. Cruising up and down the fine river or resting at anchor were the Union gunboats, some of which had not long since changed both names and flags. As we watched them we thought of the Gun boat Teaser, which treated us to our first knowledge of real live hundred pound shells, as we bivouacked at Newport News in the early spring of 1862. Then further down the river was Hampton, the scene of our earliest Peninsular experiencs, the bay at Newport News made famous by the Monitor and the Merrimac, and I strained my eyes to get a glimpse of the little hospital at the river bank where I had been accustomed to see the men who were wounded on the sunken Congress and Cum-

berland, and to hear from them their story of the marvelous fight.

There, pointing above the waters of the bay the masts of the Cumberland still told of the most memorable sea fight that had ever occurred in western waters or in fact in any waters.

Then, as we passed Old Point Comfort and around into Chesapeake Bay, a goodly part of our number commenced with the determination and bravery of old soldiers, to try to conceal the fact that the qualms of disgust at water transportation had fastened their sickly grip on them. Sea sickness is bad enough under favorable circumstances, but when one has scant standing room, to say nothing of room for repose the malady of a choppy sea is at its worst.

At length we were in the waters of the Potomac, and still other recollections pressed upon those of us who were not asleep in our berths. The bells of our transport ships tolled as we passed the resting place of Washington at Mt. Vernon, and at length our vessels very early in the morning were all gathered at the appointed rendezvous near the foot of Seventh Street in Washington. President Lincoln stood on the wharf, as we left our ships, and watched the process of disembarking with deep interest, chatting now with this soldier and now with that one, and, to show that he was in sympathy with the men in all sorts of ways he nibbled at pieces of hard tack as he chatted.

All being landed, we took up the line of march through the city. No man who took part in that remarkable march up Seventh street in Washington on that twelfth day of July, 1864, will ever forget the scene while he is in possession of his faculties.

Thousands of people were gathered along the route of march, for Washington was in a state of panic and the advent of veteran troops was a matter of no small interest. The Confederate general, Early, had reached the suburbs of the city and was threatening its capture. An improvised army of treasury clerks, invalid corps men and citizens had been quickly collected, and these hasty levys had been sent as rapidly as possible to the forts about the city as reinforcements to the few disciplined troops already stationed there. As we marched

between the crowds of eager spectators, many of whom were women holding children in their arms, the veterans with bronze faces and with uniforms worn and grimed by a campaign lasting from the Wilderness through Cold Harbor and Petersburg, were the subjects of intense interest and curiosity. We heard, repeated from mouth to mouth, over and over again as though it were one continuous chorus: "Thank God! We are safe now!" "Its the old Sixth Corps. They say that they are regular devils!" "Them's no clerks," exclaimed one in my hearing, "Them's fighters!"

The afternoon of the 12th came. A large part of our Second Division was in the vicinity of Fort Stevens. With my associates I had arranged a Division hospital in the barracks just in rear of the fort. In front of the fort and within bullet range, the confederate advance had been occupied during the day in picket skirmishing with our own outposts.

At four o'clock a carriage in which were seated President and Mrs. Lincoln, attended by none but the coachman and footman, halted in front of the improvised hospital. I was standing there at the moment and the President and his affable wife entered at once into conversation, inviting me to take a seat in the carriage as it would be more sociable. They flattered me by showing that they well knew the record of our men and they assured me that the people of the country knew and appreciated the wearers of the Greek cross, the badge of our corps. For nearly an hour we chatted on various topics, mostly relating to army life until General Wright and his staff arrived. Then we all went to the fort. President Lincoln took his stand on the earth works where he could view the manoeuvering, and then a fine brigade of veterans, our own old Third Brigade, commanded by as brave a man as ever led a brigade into battle, dear, noble, General Bidwell, marched past the fort and out to the front. At the signal the guns of the fort opened fire and the veteran brigade dashed forward. Bullets whizzed past the President and an assistant surgeon standing near His Excellency was badly wounded. General Wright suggested to the President that he should descend, but when the latter did not heed the warning the General said: "Mr. President it is my duty to insist that you descend from

this place of danger." To which the President replied, "General Wright, I always obey the orders of my superior officers!" and he got down.

It was a short fight but a brilliant one and the men fought perhaps with more ardor, because they knew that their President was watching them. The little brigade, already before the battle reduced in numbers to about a thousand men, had lost in this short encounter two hundred and fifty in killed and wounded.

Of our 77th men four lay dead upon the field and many were brought to the hospital, some with serious and some with fatal wounds. How well do I remember some of those wounded men and how satisfied they seemed to be that they had given themselves for their country in sight of the President of that country. Even now I seem to see the pale face of Private Lattimore of Company G through whose chest a minnie ball had passed, ploughing a great hole through the lung, as he lay upon the table while I stripped away his bloody garments, drew from the wound shreds and masses of clothing and dressed his wounds. There was no flinching, no repining; he said that he meant to get well, and the boy whose body was shot through in July, shouldered his musket in September and in the great battle of Cedar Creek in October, Corporal Lattimore stood shoulder to shoulder with his comrades of Company G. of the 77th.

The confederates, those who were neither killed, wounded nor prisoners, escaped at night and made their way towards Harper's Ferry. The prisoners declared that they did not expect to meet veteran soldiers and inquired, referring to the Greek crosses worn by our men, "How the devil did you Catholic fellows get here?"

We had no sooner buried our dead on the following day than we were on the march on the trail of the retreating enemy. Then we turned our course more southward in order to enter the Shenandoah Valley before them.

The picturesque scenery as we toil up the ascent of the Blue Ridge and entered the gorge of the mountains is a charming memory, and I can hardly resist the temptation to stop long enough to speak of our marches through Snicker's Gap and then

A SCENE AT THE WILTON RE-UNION.

back towards Washington whence we were on the point of reembarking for Petersburgh, and then back to Harpers Ferry, and up and down the Valley until we acquired the pseudonym of "Harper's Weekly," how in some of these marches we hardly knew rest night or day, how the horses, as they stood under the saddle or before the guns poured sweat like rain from their sides and the men who had made the famous march to Gettysburgh begun to feel that that marvellous achievement was being eclipsed by this perpetual series of forced marches for nearly a month, how we looked half in pride and half in envy at the extravagant camp equipage of the Headquarters of the Middle Military Division where Sheridan and his staff indulged in the luxury of a single wall tent and two tent flies, while we, officers of brigades and regiments were long obliged to be content with the canopy of Heaven as our only shelter.

But we have no time to dwell upon the events which succeeded Fort Stevens up to the battle of Winchester, except to mention that to the command of the army which had now been gathered in the Valley, consisting of the 6th, 8th, and 19th corps and three divisions of mounted troops, had been assigned the impetuous cavalry rider, and resolute commander, Philip H. Sheridan, whose reputation for coolness and daring had preceded him.

And another thing which I can not forbear mentioning and which you would hardly forgive me for forgetting, is the fact that our army before and after the battle of Winchester, had several occasions to pass through the village of Charlestown, the scene of the trial and execution of John Brown.

Comrades, those who were not in our little army may think that they have heard sung the refrain, "John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave; his soul goes marching on;" but we can all assure them that they never have.

From every instrument of every band, from the throats of every one of the thousands in those exulting columns, arose the music of this grand chorus with a spirit and an enthusiasm which it would be imposssible to rival in any other spot in the world. Over and over again as we marched through the streets of the town was repeated the song, "John Brown's body." The short but bloody fight at Charlestown would,

in most wars be a subject for long description and eulogies, but we can only allude to it.

The 19th of September came and with it the brilliant battle of Winchester; a battle resulting in a victory for our forces and which was the beginning of a series of most remarkable victories, a series of events which startled two continents, which gave to our little army a renown among the armies of the Union, and which established the reputation of our Chief as one of the foremost generals of any land.

We have no time to speak of the details of that battle; I shall only stop to recall some of the events.

Do you remember how we left our pleasant camp at Berryville at two o'clock in the morning, and how our Sixth Corps leading the army, and our own Third Brigade leading the Corps, we marched through the fields and over hills and then down into a deep valley where we forded the broad but shallow stream?

On a steep elevation just below this crossing General Sheridan took his stand and as I galloped up to the brow of the hill, I could look over the roughly uneven country where shortly was to be fought a most notable battle. But the column with our own men at the head did not halt here; they pushed on through the tortuous wooded ravine for a mile and more, and then were face to face with the enemy.

I shall not stop to tell of the morning attack, of how our Division forced back everything before it, but I must not forget to relate how, after one wing of our army had suffered a repulse and had been again brought into position, Sheridan came dashing along the line of our Sixth Corps.

He drew up for a moment as he reached his friend and our Division General, Getty, and shouted to him so loudly that hundreds could hear, "General, I have put Torbert on the right and told him to give 'em hell and he is doing it. Crook is on the right, too, and is giving it to them! Now, press them, General, they'll run; I know they'll run!"

And they did run. Over the long stretch of open plain, down into the deep hollow, up again and over the rolling ground past the white farm house, on the wearers of the Greek cross went.

At first, when the confederates would reach a commanding position, they would turn their guns upon us for a parting salute, but soon the flight became uninterrupted.

It was a glorious day for our little brigade, but it was a costly one.

The list of those of the 77th whose lives were lost on that field is a long one, and the register of the wounded included many of our best men.

The gallant Lieutenant Ross with a shattered shoulder, Britton of Co. C., with his arm torn off by a shell, Bowers with a bullet through his forearm, these were a few who lived to remember this notable 19th of September.

After a night and a day of pursuit we came up with the fleeing confederates where they had found, as they thought, a position easily defensible, at Fisher Hill.

The Blue Ridge mountains and the Alleghanies approach each other there making the valley narrow. Then, as if to interpose an impassable barrier to an attacking army, a mountain. Fisher Hill stretches across the valley and a branch of the Shenandoah River forms a moat in front of a large part of this hill.

Upon this point of vantage the fleeing army had taken position in earthworks long ago prepared. To tell how Sheridan sent a division over a spur of the mountains to flank the enemy, and all of the inspiriting details of Fisher Hill would keep me too long. We heard shots far to the right, then the right wing of our forces began to move forward down into the valley and up the steep slope toward the enemy. I stood upon a rock overlooking the valley; a few feet distant stood Sheridan and Getty. They were conversing earnestly, and as they talked they looked up the valley toward the right. Suddenly Sheridan threw his arms around Getty and leaping and whirling about like a lunatic shouted, "My God, General! See 'em run! See 'em run!"

Up the valley flew Early's men with our cavalry at their heels; hundreds of prisoners, many battle flags, about twenty guns and any number of wagons were left behind. We pursued far up the valley and when it appeared that it was cleaned out to its northern extremity, we came back, our cavalry stopping

long enough to administer a parting admonition to some Confederate cavalry that had the temerity to follow along in our rear, and we, after some marching and counter marching, took our position along the line of Cedar Creek.

On our return march toward Cedar Creek, many barns, mills and stacks were burned and the Valley was desolated, except that quantities of grain enough for the absolute necessities of the people were left.

Hundreds of refugees accompanied us as we fell back, mostly negroes escaping to the north. Huge Virginia wagons with a horse and a mule attached, some with two, some with four mules or broken-down horses as propelling power, would be crowded to the utmost capacity with their loads of colored humanity.

Our army was arranged along Cedar Creek from left to right; first, General Crooks' 8th Corps, holding the left flank, facing eastward and southward; then the 19th Corps, holding the turnpike and facing directly up the valley, its line occupying high bluffs which overhung the creek. On the right of the 19th Corps and almost at right angles with, facing almost westward, was the Sixth Corps, its line extending along the creek as the latter took nearly a northward course. On each flank of this line of infantry was a body of cavalry. Merritt and Custer were at the right of the Sixth Corps, and a small detachment was on the left of Crook. Thus was formed a line much resembling a horseshoe.

In placing my own quarters, I had selected a point of rather elevated ground considerable in the rear of the center of the line of the Sixth Corps, and thus almost exactly in the center of this horseshoe. I mention this not as having an important bearing on the fortunes of the coming contest, but in order that you may see from my point of view what occurred.

Our army rested along the banks of Cedar Creek, with a sense of perfect security. We amused ourselves in visiting the caverns which abounded in the vicinity, and in strolling among the pleasant groves along the shady borders of the stream.

Sheridan had left the front to consult in regard to his future movements, and General Wright had temporary command of the army.

On the evening of the 18th of October, we threw ourselves upon the ground, wrapt in our blankets, as free from anticipation of impending danger as though we had retired to our chambers at home. It is true that there had been some picket firing in different parts of the line for a day or two past, but we felt quite sure that it had no very serious meaning. In the meantime, however, Early had been reinforced and he was preparing to send us down the valley with as little ceremony as we had been sent up.

When, at two o'clock on the morning of the 19th of October, we heard rapid firing, where Custer and his cavalry held the right; and on the left where Powell's men were posted; we men of the infantry turned over in our blankets and said, "The cavalry is having a brush," and we went to sleep again. And then at a later hour, at four in the morning, when those on the right of the line heard brisk firing in front of the Eighth and Nineteenth Corps, we imagined that there was a picket skirmish. It required but a short time to learn our mistake.

Permit me to describe what I saw from my point of the horseshoe.

My tent-mate, always an early riser, after going outside pulled open the flies and called to me, "Get up quickly, there is trouble brewing." I did not start till he called again; this time in urgent tones. I arose and looking out upon the field saw a sight such as I never witnessed before. Amusement and consternation, if such a combination can be imagined, took possession of us. Hundreds of men were going with hasty steps and lengthy strides to the rear. Stragglers in all stages of deshabille filled the space in the concavity of the horseshoe and far to the rear. They went each man by himself; some without hats, others without coats or boots, some with suspenders dangling behind, a few with guns, many wearing the shoulder straps of officers, but all, whether in full dress or most scantily clad, all were bent upon one object, namely, to get the greatest distance toward Winchester in the shortest space of time.

By the time I had taken a glance at this extraordinary scene, turning toward the left, I saw the Confederates pouring toward the Winchester turnpike and presently heard the whistle of

many bullets about my head. Gathering my company of assistants and attendants, we made as dignified a retreat as possible toward our own Corps, but we had not gone far before that Corps was advancing rapidly toward us, so that we were sandwiched between our own men and the advancing lines of the enemy.

I need not now tell you men of the 77th the story of the surprise, of the stampeding of one corps and the demoralization of another; of the sudden right-about face of the Sixth Corps and of its meeting the onset of the advancing forces like an unyielding wall, arresting single-handed the further advance of the Confederates; of their charges against it three times repeated and three times withstood, and of its orderly and well conducted retirement to a stronger position where the shattered remnants of other infantry corps were rallied to its rear. All this you have heard many times and all this most of you saw.

It was a magnificent task for a single corps, for during some hours a part of that corps supported by a few regiments of cavalry stood as the only organized barrier between the forces of Early and distant Harpers Ferry. It was a magnificent task to stop that rout, and it was magnificently accomplished. Many brave officers of the panic stricken corps and many colorbearers, too proud to join the fugitives, had formed in line irrespective of corps, brigade or regiment in the rear of the Sixth Corps. Up to this time 18 pieces of artillery and thousands of men had been taken by the victors from the 8th and 19th corps.

And now, while this single command holds the enemy in check, let me turn again to some of my more personal experiences.

No sooner had my little company found a position somewhat beyond the contesting lines than we proceeded to organize an open air hospital. My operating table was placed upon the ground and the process of affording relief to the wounded was commenced at once. Not long after an aide rode to me saying that General Bidwell, then commanding our Second Division of the Sixth Corps, the division now holding the enemy, was seriously wounded and was calling for me. I left my table in charge of others and mounting, rode at once to

where the General was. An ambulance had already arrived and the General, who was a very large man, had been placed in it.

He had fallen while directing a charge of the Second Division against the enemy.

As I mounted the step of the ambulance, I saw that the whole of the right shoulder had been torn away by a shell. The wounded man said, "Doctor, I suppose that there is no hope of recovery?" When I replied that I feared that there was no hope, he exclaimed, "Oh, my poor wife!" And then, after a moment, "Doctor, won't you see that my record is right at home; tell them I died at my post, that I did my duty." Yes he died at his post and nobly had he done his duty, for it was the division under his command which was now holding back the whole army of Early.

I returned to my extemporized field hospital, consisting of an operating table and surgical appliances. I had just finished the amputation of the arm at the shoulder joint of brave Captain Orr and was applying bandages when looking down the turnpike, where there seemed to be something of a commotion, I saw Sheridan riding to the front. There was a line of ambulances along the pike, filled with wounded men. As Sheridan came on, every man in those ambulances who was able to rise joined in the shout of welcome and some even leaped out of ambulances.

Everybody knows of that ride of Sheridan, and of his famous black horse, but few outside the army in the Shenandoah have formed a very correct picture of the man and the horse.

Sheridan was a small man, especially short in the legs. His horse was a big black animal, not very handsome, but a good goer. When Sheridan sat on the horse, especially when the horse was at full speed, it did not form a picturesque group but somehow one felt that it was bound to get there. When he arrived in the vicinity of the army that day his horse was not black, nor was it as poets and imaginative people have described, covered with white foam. It was simply a dark horse, very dusty and dirty, and Sheridan bounced along at a fine rate of speed, but not at any break-neck rate. But the cheers and the huzzas were of the wildest, and stragglers turned back, and

even some of the slightly wounded turned about to get a whack at those who had served them so badly. Perhaps it may be of interest to add that among those who were striving to rally their men in the rear of our Second Division and of those who personally met and welcomed Sheridan as he rode to the front, were Colonel Rutherford B. Hayes and Major William McKinley.

Soon Sheridan, Wright, Emory, Custer and other leaders were busily engaged in re-forming the broken army. It must not be thought that this work had not already been commenced by General Wright. Much had already been done and the troops were gathering to the lately deserted standards before Sheridan arrived. General Wright would have made an attack had he been left to himself. Yet there was an enthusiasm and fighting ardor aroused in the men by the presence of Sheridan which could be inspired by no other man. So the fugitives began to return. The Corps were re-formed, and after these arrangements were well under way Sheridan rode along the line, hat in hand, encouraging the men, firing their zeal and declaring, "We'll whip yet, boys." "We shall sleep in our old quarters tonight," shouted he, while the men threw their hats high in air and leaped and danced in a frenzy of joy.

About noon the Confederates made a demonstration in our front, at first stealthily, then with the well known yell, "Hi, hi, hi," which was answered first by a well directed volley from the Union lines, and then by the loud "Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah," of the Yankees.

Late in the afternoon the preparations were all complete for testing the question whether we were to fall back to Winchester, beaten and humiliated, or return to our bivouack along the banks of Cedar Creek.

Sheridan was near and in the rear of our division.

By the fall of our lamented Bidwell, our regimental leader Colonel French was in command of our Third Brigade. He had fought with his regiment too often not to be known to the Old Brigade, and all knew that he was worthy to command and ready to go where his men were sent.

Word at length ran along the lines that the army was to advance. Men adjusted their equipments, pulled their hats tight

on their heads, rammed the charges into their muskets and got themselves ready for the fray.

Presently the word was given to our brigade commander and the command was given to move forward. "Steady, men, steady", rang out the call from the voice of the tall, erect and sturdy commander of the 77th, Captain Caw, "Steady, forward, guide left, march," and the regiment, the brigade, the division, and the whole line of the army were pressing forward.

Soon there commenced the wildest race that had ever been witnessed in that valley, so famous for the flight of beaten armies.

The Confederate lines were broken and now, in uttermost confusion, every man of Early's army was going in greatest haste towards Cedar Creek. The Union men with shouts and cheers encouraged the flight of the enemy who, a few hours before, had driven us so unceremoniously from our camps, and who were now routed and broken.

Over the plain and down the pike the panic stricken army took its flight, while our men, having no time for loading, charged batteries with empty muskets, and seized prisoners by the hundred.

When night came, the moon shining brightly over the battle field, revealed the camps of the living side by side with the resting places of the dead. Hundreds of lifeless faces looked upward in that moonlight, while behind each cluster of bushes or near each hillock or large stone, lay in piles and groups the bodies of men who had fallen.

As our infantrymen threw themselves down on the ground to rest that night the spades of the pioneers opening shallow graves for these our departed friends and foes, sounded a doleful concert in their drowsy ears.

As for myself, soon after the arrival of Sheridan on the field, a tent was erected for operating purposes, and there, during the remainder of the day and during the whole of the night, I worked with those mutilated men.

I seem even now to see the faces of those intensely anxious men who were brought into the operating tent and placed on the ground, side by side, to await their turn at the table. Here was one awaiting the amputation of an arm; there one expect-

ing to lose a leg, but each with intense longing for his turn. To look down into one of those pleading faces, as one or another with terribly wistful looks and with earnest voice said tremblingly, "Doctor, can't you take me soon?" was something not to be quickly forgotten.

To tell all the sad incidents of that long night, or to describe the scenes when I stepped out of the tent in the morning, looking about where many lay who had been brought for the aid of the surgeons, but who had not lived to receive it, would require time which is not at our disposal.

President Lincoln wrote to General Sheridan:

"With great pleasure I tender to you and to your brave army the thanks of the Nation and my own personal admiration and gratitude for the month's operations in the Shenandoah Valley, and especially for the splendid work of October 19th, 1864.

Your obedient servant,

ABRAHAM LINCOLN."

It was a glorious victory, but at what a cost had it been won!

Brave, modest Captain Lennon, and the genial Lieutenant Belding, both of Company I, were among the slain. The brave sergeant who carried the flag of the regiment was struck down, and the colors were seized by another sergeant, who fell with his colors clasped in his hands, Then the handsome, young and fearless Adjutant Thomas, seizing the fallen colors and calling to the men to press on, fell dead, with the folds of the flag about him.

I seem even now to see the handsome face of Root, of Company H, as he lay bleeding from the severance of one of the great arteries.

Captain Orr, Clayton and Winchester, each left a leg or an arm on that field, and many another comrade of the 77th paid the price of victory on that memorable day.

The battle of Cedar Creek has been regarded as a most brilliant achievement of a high spirited army, led by a most accomplished strategist, dashing soldier and inspiring leader. The praises of the army and its General have been sounded in

song and story, and it ranks, the world over, as one of the most dramatic of the world's battles. But was it only this? Had it no more influence on the history of the country and of the world than other victories which have not been followed by the immediate closing of hostilities.

To these questions I reply in the most emphatic terms that the battle of Cedar Creek was one of the great decisive battles of history.

It was an event on which hinged the destiny of this great republic.

There are many contingencies to be associated with this battle, and many phases of contemporary history which in the public mind have received scant consideration.

It is important, in fixing the historical rank of such an event, to take into consideration not only the immediate but the more remote results which are effected by the event.

Let us glance for a moment at the condition of affairs both in the community at the North and in the army, at the time when the campaign ending with Cedar Creek was in progress.

From the beginning of the war there had been a party at the North strongly opposed to its prosecution. Although, in the early history of the contest, public enthusiasm had carried the great majority into the ranks of the war party, the partisans of peace were persistent and untiring in the advocacy of their views. After two years of campaigning, when the Confederacy seemed to be stronger than at the beginning, and the Union less able than when it set out to crush the rebellion, many intelligent, conservative people, loyal to what they believed to be for the best interests of the country, although a large proportion of these were not in full sympathy with the leaders of the peace movement, felt that the war which was costing so much, and which seemed to be accomplishing so little, should be brought to an end. And now that four years of war had passed, and the period for electing a president and a congress had returned, there can be little doubt that public sentiment was very nearly equally divided and that the margin, even if that margin was narrow, was on the side of the discontinuance of hostilities.

With the history of thirty-six years upon which to base our judgment we can now, without attempting to convict one-half of the people of the Northern States of a want of patriotism, see that a change of policy at that contingency would have meant a radical change in the whole subsequent history of this country, and it is needless to add, a most unfortunate change.

It is startling when we consider how near the country came to making that change. As a matter of fact, when the election did occur, a change of about 65,000 votes, not including the votes of the soldiers, would, if properly distributed, have retired Mr. Lincoln to private life, and have turned the government over to those who had resolved that "in view of four years of failure to restore the Union by the experiment of war, * * * * humanity, liberty and the public welfare demand that immediate efforts be made for a cessation of hostilities." It was well understood that, on the part of the Confederacy, no overtures for peace would be considered which were not based upon the condition of absolute independence from the Union.

It cannot for a moment be doubted that the series of successes including Winchester, Fishers Hill and Cedar Creek turned to the Union side more than enough votes to turn the scale of public opinion in favor of carrying the contest to a finish.

From a military point of view the results of these victories were no less decisive.

The battle of Gettysburgh, which had occurred more than a year before, had for a time revived the prestige of the Army of the Potomac, but the Wilderness, Cold Harbor and Petersburgh, with the enormous sacrifice of life and the apparently slight advantage gained, had cast a gloom over the North. That grand army had left thousands upon thousands of its dead to mark its progress from the ford of the Rapidan, where it had crossed early in May, to the banks of the James at Charles City Court House, and now at Petersburg, where the army had not recovered from the miserable affair of the mine explosion, the men were suffering behind their breastworks.

The Confederates at this juncture had staked much upon the success of their army in the Shenandoah. They had sent into

the Valley the flower of the Confederate army, under the command of one of the most skilful and alert of all their generals. The fact that Early suffered defeat after defeat has led to the impression that he was not a great general. As a matter of fact he was a leader of extraordinary ability, of undoubted courage and of abundant resources.

With the signal defeat of Early's army, and with the destruction of the Shenandoah Valley as a source of supply for the Southern army, there remained no danger of further incursions into the North through the Valley, and Sheridan was able to transfer an army of mounted men, 11,000 strong, and a large force of infantry, to the Army of the Potomac. Not only could he send this large body of troops, flushed with the enthusiasm of victory, he was able to go himself, and he was in himself a host. With these new elements of strength Grant was enabled to push forward, while Sherman was marching from Atlanta to the sea, and on the 3d of April to enter Richmond, and on the 8th of that month to receive the surrender of General Lee and his veteran army.

In the language of General Wright: "To the Sixth Corps had fallen the opportunity of striking the decisive blow, not only at Petersburg on the 2d of April, but at Sailor's Creek on the 6th."

Thus it appears that not only was the battle of Cedar Creek a victory of the most brilliant order, but that it opened the way to the ending of the war and the restoration of the Union.

Those who have watched the history of this country since the close of the civil war have seen with pride, and even with amazement, the enormous strides with which it has progressed in power and influence. And those who have observed critically have seen that for much of this marvelous progress the country is indebted to the spirit of enterprise and manly courage which was developed in the hard school of army life.

The men who fought with Lee and Longstreet, with Sheridan, Sherman and Grant, became a resistless force in civil as they had been in military life.

These men had been drawn from quiet homes in the country, or from busy shops or offices in the city, to gain in the exciting

fields of active war broader views of life than those which they had dreamed of before, and to acquire the stamina resulting from the more strenuous and more self-reliant modes of thought and action than those which they had experienced in the tranquility of peaceful days. They overran the country, East and West, North and South, carrying with them the indomitable purpose and the resistless energy which had been impressed into their characters during four years of most strenuous living, revolutionizing the business, professional and social life of the nation.

When, twelve days ago, a cloud of unspeakable sorrow settled over this great land, the people looked into the past for light to penetrate the gloom. The thoughts of many old soldiers turned back to that day at Cedar Creek. They seemed to see again the brave and determined young staff officer, as he strove to rally and encourage the panic-stricken regiments of his Division, and they saw that the qualities which enabled the young Captain to render important aid in that great emergency had fitted him in more mature life to rally men to sound political principles, and to become the wise, true-hearted and progressive president, and the beloved and cherished idol of the American people.

Today this Nation, saved and reanimated by the men who braved the dangers of battle, is not only a world power, it is unique in being the only world power that fears no other power, or combination of powers.

With wisdom and with prudence, with unselfishness, moderation and firmness, it is destined soon to take its place as the leader of the nations, foremost in the paths of literature and arts, of science and of commerce, and holding up the light to all the world that shows the way to the highest civilization and the most perfect liberty, and to ever increasing prosperity.

Comrades E. H. Fuller, Sidney O. Cromack and Charles E. Houghtailing submitted the following memorial, which was adopted:

The death since our last reunion of Comrades Isaac Boise, Adam Flamsburgh, Isaac S. Hodges, Mark C. Harris, Joseph C. Henderson, John S. Harris, Theodore L. Hermance, James McIntosh, Stephen Mab, Henry Morgan, Terrence McGovern, Oliver Myers, Emmett J. Patterson, Jeremiah Stebbins, Horace L. Styles, M. F. Tripp, Levi Van Schaick, Augustus R. Walker, remind us particularly that death is fast claiming the 1861-65 defenders of the Union. Recalling their affection, their unselfishness, their fortitude, and their bravery, the sincere sympathy of this association of their surviving comrades is extended to the families of the deceased.

Gettysburg Veteran Medals were given to Comrades Henry Barker, Henry Bradt, Nathan S. Babcock, Charles Blanchard, Joseph Dorvee, William Dorvee, John Y. Foster, Thomas King, Michael McGuire, Lafayette Myers, George S. Orr, Carlos W. Rowe, Seth B. Root, David Stringham, George Scott, William W. Worden, William Williams, and James N. Slingerland, they not having one.

It was voted to hold our next reunion in Schuylerville, the 17th of September, 1902, a day of much interest to K Company, which went forth from there in September, 1862. John B. Welsh, Charles McNaughton, John P. Burns, Alonzo Hammond, Andrew V. Leonard, S. S. Squires, Thomas Whitman, were appointed the Executive Committee therefor.

The cordial thanks of the association were sincerely given to the Wiltonians, who seemed to have turned out as one, for their excellent and bounteous spread, their kind and efficient attention to every veteran, some of whom had come from adjoining states, a few a thousand miles away, to meet and greet their comrades of shoulder to shoulder. Cheering wishes from each to each, with the hope that we may meet again, as hand clasped hand at parting.

It has become the opinion of many of the veterans that the object for which we meet—the renewing of our soldier days of 1861–5—is abridged in various ways, and that the Executive Committee might better hereafter arrange for a dinner at, not

to exceed fifty cents a head, some hotel where all the boys could visit each other.

At our last reunion as at the previous one, which were a fair sample of others, the work of the reunion was borne by a few, who were tied to their duty of arranging a dinner, (at which there were not over one hundred and forty veterans) and consequently do not get the time to avail themselves of the opportunity of visiting with their comrades, some of whom wero their tentmates, as they long to, and as is the main object of our reunion.

So it is desirable that hereafter we do as do other regimental associations, and as we did in 1892, when we had our business meeting first; when concluded marched in a body to the Hotel at which the Executive Committee had arranged for dinner, at which each one paid for his own, and where we sat for over two hours, and where each comrade had the chance to again be elbow to elbow, and live over again the time when soldiering for the defense of the Union was our business.