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COMMUNICATIONS.

From the 4th North Carolina.

Camp near Bunker's Hill, Va.,
July 20th, 1863.

For more than two years the Confederacy has been floating on a current comparatively smooth; nothing has impeded our progress save here and there a snag in the shape of Yankee armies, a few gun boats and such like; but all at once we were plunged into a whirlpool from which I fear we shall never be able to extricate ourselves. The news of the fall of Vicksburg and Port Hudson has startled us like a clap of thunder on a cloudless day. We were not prepared for such intelligence. Why have we been told that those places were impregnable,—that they were abundantly supplied with rations and ammunition, and that the garrisons were in such splendid trim? Why have our journalists attempted deception when they knew that the truth must eventually leak out? As yet we have learned none of the particulars; we only know that one of the main pillars under our new government has been removed, and that its removal has caused a mighty tottering among others, the most serious of which is the stagger that this blow has given to our currency; it is evidently tumbling, and there is no reason why our officials should shut their eyes to the fact. But it is not expedient for me to proceed farther on this subject at present, still I must say that to every observant mind a depreciating currency is the first sign of decay. During the last two weeks a wonderful change has been effected on our men in ranks,—I did not think it possible in so short a length of time; then, bright hopes and prospects buoyed them up and spurred them on; now, desperation seems to have settled on every countenance, and a determination to push affairs to a speedy, perhaps a fearful crisis.

In our department battle has become quite an every day thing. Fighting does not seem to do a particle of good, for no sooner is one bloody struggle over than preparations are made for another. No strategical points are gained by either party, and this way of standing off and firing into each other for days and nights at a time, or rushing on batteries through the horrid hissing of a thousand death missiles don't pay the South; with the North it matters but little; there, armies spring up like Jonah's gourd vine, in one night,—they seem to rise like mushrooms out of the earth. There they have lost near half a million of men, but what of that? Their places are filled to a great extent by fresh importations from Europe, while we might as well expect reinforcements from the moon as to look beyond the confines of our own territory for help. This morning I heard "intelligent contraband" say that "de whites in de Souf would soon be played out, and de white army was goin' to bust up, den dey would have an army ob niggers an' I's goin to be a major general, yah, yah, yah!" There is no doubt but the negroes in the army hate Yankees just as intensely as our soldiers do. While we were in Pennsylvania if any had desired to do so they could have left us, but instead of that they were afraid to venture beyond sight of camp for fear they would be kidnapped. What conclusion shall we draw from what has been said above? Several; first, that our situation is growing alarmingly critical; second, it is high time some method was adopted by which our men might be saved, and not needlessly sacrificed; and, third, since butchery and loss of life seems to be doing no good whatever, why is it that the diplomatists are not at work to bring about a settlement. It is folly for the North or any other people, to talk about conquering the spirit of the people at the South. We admit that by overwhelming numbers we may be temporarily subjugated; and it is a fact indisputable that those who are laboring to depreciate our currency are doing more for our utter ruin than the whole Yankee nation; but granting that they succeed in

establishing their abhorrent rule over us, will it then be a union? The people of the United States remind me of a man who whips his wife to make her love him. The people of the Confederate States, the Confederacy, allow me to turn prophet for a few moments, and acting in that capacity I would predict no peace for the South for the next twenty years. Our newspapers would be filled with accounts of foul murders, insurrections, plots and rebellions,—and the deplorable state of affairs generally would be too horrible to contemplate.

But let us turn from the future to the present. It has been said that Gen. Lee's army retired in great confusion from Gettysburg. This is not so, because I consulted a mite in that army myself, and I believe that my opportunities for seeing and learning were as good as those of any man in the army. Some of the divisions suffered severe losses, but I can assure my readers that our loss in killed and wounded was no greater than the enemy's, while his loss in prisoners was much heavier than ours. The principal reason for the falling back was that our lines of communication in rear of the army were too long and too much exposed, which we learned to our cost. Another reason was the immense number of prisoners in our hands. They refused parades on the field, or any where else except at Richmond, consequently they had to be guarded back to that place. I saw not less than ten or twelve thousand, and was told that there were other gangs on their way Southward. Instead of "confusion" the whole retreat was conducted with remarkably good order. We seldom traveled more than eight or ten miles in twenty-four hours, but those marches were made mostly after night. The main body of the Yankee army attempted to cut us off before we reached Hagerstown, Md., but failed, while small detachments were continually harassing our rear, doing no damage however, but rather a favor, by hurrying up our wagons and the few stragglers who were behind. One day while we were yet in Pennsylvania I noticed the road blocked with wagons for two miles. A pelting rain was making the mud and things in general worse every moment. But there were, and had been for two hours waiting for the wagons to get out of the way. The men were getting impatient,—waggon masters were galloping about whooping and hawking, swearing at the drivers and hurrying them up, but it did no good. Presently a Yankee battery hove in sight, took its position on a hill and began "tossing" shells at the whole train; they burst and whizzed and sparkled about uncomfortably near, which, some how, impressed the minds of the wagoners the idea that the atmosphere was unhealthy—and such an everlasting getting away never was heard tell of,—it is well that the train was not loaded with glass ware. The horses were whipped into a gallop, and the wagons seemed to bounce half a rod without touching the ground. In twenty minutes not one could be seen, but this and similar skeddaddles no doubt gave rise to the reported confusion. The infantry, the bone and sinew of the army, was in no instance hurried or hard pressed.

Near Hagerstown we lay in line of battle two days and nights waiting for the enemy to attack us. Instead of advancing on us they crossed the Potomac below us, thus endeavoring to cut us off again. Lee kept his eyes open, and pushing his own army across headed them and beat them at their own game. But armies now confront each other near Bunker Hill, a small town midway between Winchester and Charlestown. We expect an engagement daily.

Bivouac near Chambersburg, Pa.,
June 29th, 1863.

MR. BRUNER:—

We are now in the State of Pennsylvania, and the past few weeks has witnessed the transfer of the Army of Northern Virginia, from the banks of the Rappahannock to the vicinity of Chambersburg. A very few days and the Army of the Confederate States will again have to try strength with the Federal Army, but none on the offensive. We are now in the enemy's country and several hundred miles from our supplies, and, subsisting on the enemy's country. Fortunately for us it is very rich, the wheat crop here is now ready to harvest and the large and spacious barns are an unmistakable evidence of the fertility of the soil.

The system of Agriculture here is in a more advanced stage than with us, but it does not near come up to my expectations. You still find nothing but the old zigzag fencing such as is familiar to every Western Carolinian where wood is abundant and used without any economy. But here

it is far different, wood is becoming so scarce that many farmers use coal for fuel. The best improved farms that I have seen are along the tropic leading from Williamsport, Md., to Gettysburg, Pa. The farms on this road are enclosed with well built fences of Blue Limestone or bonds nailed on Black Locust posts, making of the first named materials, a fence that will last for ages, and of the second one that will last for many years. The barns thro' the same section of country are built on most of the farms of Blue Limestone laid in Lima mortar which gives them a very handsome appearance, and on the other farms they are built of brick, all very large and spacious, none of them less than one hundred feet in length and of a proportionate width and many that will reach from one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet in length and proportionate width and height. In this country every thing is stored in the barn and horses and cattle are taken care of in such a manner as to be a great source of profit; a half dozen cows here constitute the stock of large farms, and the farms vary in size from twenty to one hundred and fifty acres. Some fewer less than the least named and a few higher than the highest, but with few exceptions they will come between the figures mentioned.

The dwellings when compared with the farms are small buildings, but sufficiently large to be comfortable and very neat, but with very few exceptions there is nothing tasteful or decorative about them. Occasionally you will find a cottage with some points of the South style about it, but I have not seen as yet but one cottage with anything like what an architect would call style about it, and I include the towns as well as the country houses. They are neat and very cleanly in their appearance and seem to be regularly painted or white-washed, both dwellings and out houses.

The horses in this country are very large and muscular and have great strength. There are a large number of "Pennsylvania Conscrip'ts" as the boys term them now doing service in our army, and I am inclined to think that before we leave this State many more will be enlisted in our service. I have not yet seen any of the fine horses about here as they have all been sent off. I understood that yesterday a party of our cavalry surprised a party of bushwhackers and drove them off, and captured three hundred and fifty splendid horses. The people here expected much harsher treatment from our troops than they have received. If any of our troops wish to buy any thing they generally give them the article without charge, sometimes they take pay, but not often.

July 17th, 1863.

Again I resume my letter. Considerable time has elapsed since first commenced but it being of rather a descriptive character, I don't suppose age will injure it. But we are now at Bunker Hill near half way from Martinsburg to Winchester, being ten miles from the first, and twelve from the latter place, and mail facilities again established.

Since we left Chambersburg, Pa., we have fought a heavy battle. One which in our own country would have been a victory, as it was, our commissary supplies were nearly exhausted and our ammunition also low, so much so that the reserve trains were emptied of all the ammunition for artillery use that they contained, and in this condition our forces were unable to remain in the position we then held for any length of time. But I will give you some of the details of that fight of which I was an eye witness and which other parts as I think I have reliable information of.

We left our Bivouac near Chambersburg on the morning of the 30th ultimo, and marched some four or five miles on the pike leading to Gettysburg and halted and went into bivouac. Here we remained till the afternoon of the 1st inst., when we again moved forward and crossed the mountain, passing by several iron establishments which has been consumed by the flames a few days before, we halted that night at about 12 o'clock and on the morning of 2d at about 2 o'clock we again took up the line of march and arrived at the border of yesterday's battle field early in the forenoon. Here we remained till near noon, then our Division (Gen. Hood's) marched to the extreme right of the Confederate forces and opposite to the strongest point of the enemy's line. The Division arrived at this point between three and four o'clock. The batteries commanded by Capt. Rife, Latham and Gordon, were immediately placed in position and opened fire on the enemy, who replied with spirit, but in a short time two of his was silenced, and after a brisk fire of some

fifteen to twenty minutes on our side the order to cease firing rang out as the long line of infantry came on a line with the batteries. The Artillery ceased to belch forth the missiles of death, but held their work of destruction as soon as an opportunity should offer, after waiting for some time and no opportunity offering to renew the fire, the guns were withdrawn, except one of Capt. Reilly's, which had an axle shot off. About five o'clock Capt. Reilly's Battery took a position some two or three hundred yards to the left of its first position, and sent forth a destructive fire of shells over the heads of our infantry into the Yankee lines, and continued the fire until the Confederate troops ascended up near the top of the first hill. During the firing from this position, one of the three inch rifle guns burst, and fortunately, wounded slightly but one man. Night soon closed the bloody drama for that day, and the success of our division was the capture of three 10 pounder Parrott Rifle Guns, and driving the Yankees from the top of the first hill, which was from forty to fifty feet elevation above the low ground between the two armies to the second, which was some fifty or sixty feet higher than the first, and immediately in its rear. The front of both hills was very steep, amounting almost to cliffs. Before dark, Captain Reilly's disabled gun was brought off the field and next day was repaired, and one of the captured guns took the place of the bursted gun and the Battery was again ready with its full complement of guns for the fight on the third. On the morning of the third, early after the fight, the enemy commenced making demonstrations on our right when Capt. Reilly and Bachman were placed in position to protect that flank. The plan of attack first proposed, but afterwards rejected, was to turn the enemy's left flank. The plan finally adopted, a general attack along the whole line, and the signal for the attack was two guns in quick succession. Before the signal, the two Batteries protecting the right flank were compelled to open, and the skirmishers had got to be very annoying, which after a few rounds, scattered them. But before this had been accomplished the signal guns had been fired, and at the cessation of the fire on the flank, the hills seemed almost to be trembling beneath the heavy concussion of the numerous guns that were then being served in the most gallant manner. Although the infantry were actively and hotly engaged, not a musket or a rifle could be heard. The roar of artillery drowned all. I have been in all the heavy battles in Virginia and Maryland, with the exception of Cedar Mountain and Chancellorsville, but never have I heard such artillery firing before; the smoke arose in clouds above the tree tops and was wafted about by the breeze as the rain cloud drifts before the wind. The sturdy oaks that have stood the storms for ages trembled under the roar, and fell as they were cut off by the cannons' shot. It is needless for me to add, that while this horrid and unearthly scene was being enacted, that man, the agent, who put in motion these destructive engines was suffering. The numerous little mounds that spot the fields of Gettysburg, bear ample testimony to the fact, and the crowded state of the Hospitals show that many have won honorable scars. While this scene, which I have described, was being enacted along the front line, the Yankee cavalry attempted to turn our flank, but in their first advance they met a Regiment of Gen. Anderson's Brigade, Hood's Division, which gave them such a warm reception that they soon retired; they then dismounted a portion of their men and sent them out on foot to feel our lines, when they discovered a gap in our lines between two Regiments, they suddenly dashed in with about four hundred mounted men and rode straight for the Batteries, which opened on them with shell and canister, and while they were advancing on the Batteries in front, the infantry closed in their rear and placed them between two fires. There was none of them nearer than thirty or forty yards to their right and all were killed, wounded or captured, except eighteen, which managed to get out. This affair closed the fight on the flank, and the day closed with the enemy driven back at all points from his first position. After dark, our right was withdrawn and extended to the right and rear in an oblique line from the main line—here we remained all day Saturday. The prisoners said that the Yankees would give us a genteel thrashing that day, because it was the fourth of July. But it proved otherwise; they lay all day as mute as possible, not even firing a national salute at meridian. Near about that time we fired them a salute, but were

not particular as to the number of guns, as our desire was to disturb some of their formations which they suffered to become visible, a few rounds, some ten or twenty had the desired effect, and did not draw a shot from the Yankees.

The day wore quietly away, and after dark we took up the line of march, and marched about two miles. Our troops had gathered up the arms that lay scattered over the field, and there was nothing to prevent our holding the position we occupied, but the simple fact that we were subsisting on the enemy's country, and the supply in the vicinity of the army was nearly all consumed and our Ordnance trains were pretty well exhausted—nearly all the Artillery ammunition was expended, and for some kinds of Artillery every shot was out of the trains. So you can very easily see that there was but one course to pursue. That was to bring supplies to us or we go to the supplies. The first was impracticable, if not impossible, as our communication was cut off and could be re-opened only by force, and hence, what would have been a success at home is turned out a reverse abroad.

Sunday the 5th, early in the morning, we started on the road to Hagerstown and encamped on the top of the Blue Ridge. Monday the 6th, we resumed the march and arrived in Hagerstown, where your correspondent and his command was ordered on picket, supported by General Anderson's Brigade, at a bridge, between Funkstown and Hagerstown. Tuesday the 7th, we remained on picket. Wednesday the 8th, in the afternoon, the Yankees were reported advancing, and I bro't my field glass to my eye and soon discovered the blue uniforms. They were from a mile and a half to two miles from where I stood. A cavalry regiment, near by, immediately moved out, and after an absence of two hours returned, bringing in fifty-two prisoners and an equal number of horses and horse equipments. Thursday the 9th, I was relieved and went to bivouac. Friday the 10th, formed line of battle. Saturday the 11th, erected some earthworks on the line in front of the guns of the battery. Sunday the 12th, remained in position. Monday the 13th, remained in position till about dark, then took up line of march for a point on the Potomac, known as the Falling Waters, marching and halting all night, in all, about four miles. Tuesday the 14th, crossed the Potomac on a pontoon bridge, marched six miles and bivouaced. Wednesday the 15th, marched eight miles and bivouaced on the road from Martinsburg to Winchester. Thursday the 16th, marched two miles and bivouaced at this place.

I send you a list of the killed and wounded of the Rowan Artillery.

Killed—Privates Henry Owens and Wesley Hoffman.

Wounded—Sergeant J. D. J. Louder, slightly in shoulder; Corp'l H. H. Crowell, contusion; Corporal J. Hardister, both legs severely; privates W. A. Campbell, left arm severely; Moses Frick, right hand severely; Andrew W. Howard, near the spine, severely; Jesse Trexler, left foot slightly; David Trexler, right side severely; Sylvester Thompson, head slightly; Tobias Weaver, left leg severely; M. G. Braddy, contusion slightly, from bursting of a gun.

Major McLeod Turner, of the 7th N. C. Troops, is severely, if not mortally, wounded, and in the hands of the enemy. The above comprise all that I have heard of as yet from the immediate vicinity of Rowan. IOTA.

A WORD FROM THE PEOPLE.

The time has come when our armies must be recruited, not merely by conscription, but by volunteering, or our cause is lost. This assertion may appear strong, but he who will look attentively at the events of the past month, will see that it is true. Johnston was unable to retain Vicksburg, for the want of men. Bragg fell back before Rosecrants, for the want of men. Lee failed in his invasion of Pennsylvania, for the want of men; and is returning to the defence of Richmond, because there are not men enough there to defend the city. Beauregard wants more men at Charleston; and we want more men to defend the east, against the raids of the enemy, and to secure the capital of the State against arson and rapine. There is a class of men who has hitherto vindicated their loyalty to the south by urging others to go to the war; but the time has come when that subterfuge will answer no longer. Those who now urge others to go—who say "fight it out boys"—must go themselves. Our condition is growing desperate; and those who really prefer death to subjugation must now go