

Interesting Letter from a Wisconsin Boy.

Below we publish an extract from a letter written by Lyman H. Smith, an Orderly Sergeant in the Second Wisconsin Regiment to his sister, Mrs. Williams, of Richford, Vermont. Mr. Smith formerly resided in Richford from whence he went to Wisconsin some six years ago, and as a member of the 2d Wisconsin Regiment was engaged in the sanguinary conflict at Bull Run on the 21st of July:

HEADQUARTERS SECOND WISCONSIN REG'T. }

FORT CORCORAN, July 24, 1861. }

DEAR SISTER: I was happily surprised to receive a letter from you, it being the first for a long time. I am glad to hear you are well. You will probably learn, ere this letter reaches you, of the terrible battle which has been fought near Manassas in which our Regiment took a prominent part, and suffered a severe loss. It was the greatest battle, I think, ever fought in the United States, and I trust the hardest that will be fought. We started from camp at three o'clock in the morning and marched on the enemy. At eight o'clock we met the enemy and commenced firing. The battle was hotly contested for nine hours with but little intermission. When the action commenced we had only twelve thousand troops on the field while the enemy had seventy thousand. At eleven o'clock we had apparently fairly won the day. About this time we discovered a large force advancing in the direction whence we expected reinforcements, which, however, proved to be reinforcements of the rebels. These fresh troops fell upon us, and our men fell like sheep at the slaughter, but our brave troops stood their ground, expecting help, until seven o'clock in the evening, when not receiving reinforcements we were obliged to abandon the field and retreat. When we had retreated about a mile I was informed that my messmate had been wounded and was left upon the battle field. I went back to the field determined if possible to find him, but after searching in vain for half an hour, was obliged to run for life amid showers of shot and shells. In the meantime the Regiment had got out of sight and I was left alone to make my escape as best as I could. In a short time I came up with the wagons containing our dead and wounded. About this time the rebel cavalry charged upon us. We escaped to the woods, a distance of thirty-five miles, without anything to eat, arriving here at Fort Corcoran at eight o'clock the next morning where I remained with the two New York Regiments. I never passed through so much in any three days of my life as on that day. Just think of standing right under the cannon of the enemy for nine hours, their shot falling like hail among us! I received two shots, one grazing my head the other my ear; they did not hurt me much, only enough to make me fight harder.

When our Regiment had fallen back to let another take its place, I went with the Fire Zouaves and we charged upon a battery, when we succeeded in getting inside. Such a sight as was there presented I never wish to see again—the dead piled in every direction. This time we fairly drove the enemy from their guns, but their overwhelming force was more than we could stand. I have read a great deal of the horrors of the battle field, but one from reading, can imagine nothing of its real horrors. There were the dead and dying in every direction; some calling to be relieved from misery by being shot; others imploring help; while others were urging their comrades on to battle. One young fellow from Massachusetts lay dying his comrades trying to sooth him. He said to them, "Go on and save Massachusetts; don't stop for me I shall soon be out of trouble." I expect we shall have to fight again to-morrow. We suppose there is fighting going on to-day about twelve miles from here, as cannon are heard and two Regiments have been sent from here to-day to assist our troops. Our men are nearly worn out and can hardly walk, but we must fight. You ask if we have plenty to eat? No! we do not have half enough and what we have is very poor; but we are soldiers now, and not human beings!