

a company to relieve the skirmishers of the sixth corps in its front, it happened to be the turn of company I to go on that duty. This company (Captain E. F. Anderson) was raised in the neighborhood, and most of the men had harvested or hunted over the ground. Ridges of limestone cropping out here and there furnished accidents of position of which the skirmishers of both sides made it a point to avail themselves quite liberally. Lee was at that moment preparing to withdraw his army across the Potomac, a fact unknown to our side, and he was holding his entrenchments only to cover the retreat. Accordingly, the work of our skirmishers went on prosperously and they advanced gradually, pressing back the enemy's skirmishers. The next morning Company I, with a loss of only one man wounded (Scoffin), was relieved on the skirmish line by Captain Bennett, Company E.

A marksman on the other side had been observed to make several close shots, one of which had grazed Captain Bennett's ear and drawn blood. The latter stationed one of his best shots behind a wheat stack, with directions to shoot that man the next time he showed his head above the rifle pit. The captain then lifted his cap slightly on the point of his sword, and instantly the Confederate marksman showed himself, but before he had time to pull, corporal Mahaney, of company E, resting his rifle through the stack, had anticipated him, and he was seen to leap from out of the rifle-pit and fall forward upon his face. The corporal was afterwards killed in the Wilderness.

One of the incidents of this skirmish was a struggle for the possession of Stover's barn, which was finally carried by our men, when the barn was opened on by the enemy's artillery. After this, the enemy sent out a flag of truce to get the body of one of their officers.

Retreat of Lee.

During that night the retreat of Lee's army was ascertained by the pickets of the Maryland brigade, who captured a number of stragglers. The next day, 14th of July, 1863, the 1st Corps, following the sixth, marched through the two strong lines of earthworks just abandoned by the enemy, the men noticing the fresh graves of a number of Confederates who fell during the two days' skirmish.

On the 15th the march was resumed to Crampton's Gap, some twenty-five miles, passing a brigade of prisoners captured at Falling Waters. Another day's march brought the corps to Petersville, where the wagon trains came up, and a brief interval was employed in resting and refitting.

Advance into Virginia.

On the 18th the Potomac was crossed at Berlin on a pontoon bridge, and Middleburg was reached on the evening of the 20th, where the officer in charge of the brigade picket experienced the luxury of posting pickets after dark in a strange country, among woods tangled with under-growth, and meadows treacherous with ditches and swamps. The command stayed at Middleburg all the next day, indulging in blackberries to an unlimited extent, which, as a sanitary measure, was a success.

Rappahannock Station.

The march was resumed through White Plains and Warrenton Junction, reaching Rappahannock Station on the 2d of August, 1863, where a brisk cavalry skirmish was