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CHAPTER XXII.

THE EIGHTH REGIMENT.

Sketch of Colonel Thomas—Organization—Rendezvous at Brattleboro—Departure for the War—At Ship Island—At New Orleans—At Algiers Reconnoissance to Thibodeaux—First blood shed at Raceland—Expedition to St. Charles C. H. — Disaster at Boutte Station and Bayou des Allemands—Brashear city—Assigned to the Nineteenth Corps—Steamer Cotton—Bisland—Red River Campaign—Siege of Port Hudson; First and Second Assaults; Incidents and Hardships—Back to the Teche—Re-enlistment and veteran Furlough—Return to New Orleans—ordered to Washington—Under Sheridan in the Shenandoah Valley—The Opequon—Fisher's Hill—Cedar Creek—Ordered to Savannah; order revoked—The last Reviews—Return Home—Muster out—Final Statement.

The Eighth regiment was designed from the outset for General Butler's New England Division. Its colonel was selected by General Butler; and, unlike the Seventh, its officers and men not only understood that they were to be assigned to General Butler's command, but as a body were glad to be so assigned. It was the only Vermont regiment which retained its first colonel throughout its three years' term; and it was fortunate in having throughout so long a period these leadership and example of a man of such genuine courage, patriotism, honesty, truth and devotion to duty—qualities which largely impressed themselves upon his command.

Stephen Thomas was the first Vermont colonel who was appointed directly from civil life and without previous military experience. He was born in Bethel, Vt., and inherited an honored name, his father having been a soldier of the war

of 1812, in which he fell in battle, while his grandfather was a lieutenant of a New Hampshire regiment in the war of the Revolution. He was of sturdy Welsh stock on the paternal side. His mother was of a good Massachusetts Family. At the age of eighteen he was apprenticed to a manufacturer of woollens, and subsequently became a manufacturer on his own account. Early interested in politics, he became successively sheriff, judge of probate, and member of the Legislature. He had been six times elected to the House and twice to the State Senate, before the war. He had been a delegate to three National Democratic conventions, and had been twice the Democratic nominee for Lieutenant Governor.

In November, 1861, during the session of the Legislature, in which Judge Thomas represented the town of West Fairlee, General Butler visited Montpelier, and tendered to him the colonelcy of the regiment which the Legislature had authorized to be raised for Butler's division. He hesitated, for he doubted his fitness for military life; but his patriotism overbore all his doubts, and at the age of 51—being over ten years older than any other Vermont colonel except Colonel Phelps, he undertook the command of a thousand Vermonters, recruited for special service in the far South.¹

The recruiting officers for the Eighth were selected by Colonel Thomas, as follows: Chas. B. Child, Derby Line; Henry E. Foster, St. Johnsbury; Cyrus B. Leach, Bradford; Edward Hall, Worcester; Hiram E. Perkins, St. Albans; Sam'l G. P. Craig, Randolph; Henry F. Dutton, Townshend;

¹ Colonel Thomas's record in brief is as follows: Commissioned as colonel November 12th, 1861. Military commandant at Algiers, La., in 1862. Engaged in the operations in Louisiana, and in the siege of Port Hudson, in 1863. In the Shenandoah Valley under Sheridan in 1864. Mustered out as colonel January 21st, 1865. Appointed Brigadier General of Volunteers, February 1st, 1865. Mustered out as Brigadier General August 24th, 1865. After the war, General Thomas was twice elected Lieutenant Governor of Vermont. He was also United States Pension Agent for several years and has held other offices of honor and trust.

William W. Lynde, Marlboro; and John S. Clarke, Lunenburg. The work of enlistment went rapidly forward. On the 23d of November Frederick E. Smith of Montpelier was appointed quartermaster and proved a most efficient colaborer in the task of equipping and supplying the regiment. Colonel Thomas gave his personal attention to the task of recruiting the regiment, visiting the recruiting stations, holding war-meetings and pushing the work forward with characteristic energy. The rendezvous was fixed at Brattleboro, and during the first week in January, 1862, the companies began to arrive, and went into camp on the level field southwest of the village, occupied by the Fourth Vermont four months before. It retained the name of "Camp Holbrook," given to it at that time. On the 7th six companies were in camp and on the 23d the last company arrived. They came from the counties of Franklin, Lamoille, Orleans, Essex, Caledonia, Orange (which furnished two companies), Washington, and Windham. Though recruited upon ground that had been already six times canvassed for recruits, the rank and file were of the best material—healthy young men, full of loyal spirit. For their shelter at Camp Holbrook, portable wooden houses had been provided, built in sections so that they could be taken apart and transported, and provided with bunks in tiers along the sides. Going into camp in the heart of a winter of unusual severity, many fell sick and Surgeon Gale and Assistant Surgeon Gillett, who had been commissioned on the 10th of December, found plenty of business on their hands. Within the first week in camp fifty men were placed in hospital. Measles and mumps ran through the regiment, and chills and fever and diphtheria prostrated a few; but the men had good medical care and no deaths occurred.

On the 9th of January Edward M. Brown, then adjutant of the Fifth Vermont, was appointed lieutenant colonel. He was editor of the *Montpelier Patriot* when the war broke

out, and was appointed adjutant of the Fifth Vermont when that regiment was organized. He had had three of four months' service in the field, at Camp Griffin, and as the only field-officer of any military experience thus far appointed to the Eighth, he was a welcome accession. On the 19th of January, Captain Charles Dillingham was commissioned as major. He was a son of Hon. Paul Dillingham, and was studying law in his father's office at Waterbury when Sumter was fired on. He at once dropped his studies for the sword, was active in recruiting a company for the first three years regiment, went out with the Second Vermont as captain of company D, and had shared the experience of that regiment in camp and battle. About the middle of January the arms (Enfield rifles), furnished by the government, were received, and squad and company drill became the business of each day. A regimental band was organized, which subsequently attained high proficiency. The first dress parade took place on the 16th, at which the news of the capture of Fort Donelson, with 12,000 prisoners, by General U. S. Grant, was read to the regiment by Colonel Thomas, who told the men that if they did not start soon for the front, the Western men would end the war and have all the glory. After some delay, due in part to the unwillingness of Governor Holbrook to permit the regiment to leave before the expenses of recruiting it, which had been borne by the State, had been reimbursed by the government, the regiment was mustered into the service of the United States, on the 18th of February, by Lieutenant J. W. Jones of the regular army, United States mustering officer for Vermont. On the following day the list of field and staff officers was completed by the appointment, ad adjutant, of John L. Barstow, a young farmer of Shelburne, who subsequently won distinction both in military and civil life, and became a respected and popular governor of the State of Vermont.

As thus completed, the organization of the regiment was as follows:

Colonel—Stephen Thomas, West Fairlee.
 Lieut. Colonel—Edward M. Brown, Montpelier.
 Major—Charles Dillingham, Waterbury.
 Adjutant—John L. Barstow, Shelburne.
 Quartermaster—Fred E. Smith, Montpelier.
 Surgeon—George F. Gale, Brattleboro.
 Assistant Surgeon—Heman H. Gillett, Corinth.
 Chaplain—Francis C. Williams, Brattleboro.
 Company A, Captain Luman M. Grout, Elmore.
 Company B, " Charles B. Child, Derby.
 Company C, " Henry E. Foster, Waitsfield.
 Company D, " Cyrus B. Leach, Bradford.
 Company E, " Edward Hall, Worcester.
 Company F, " Hiram E. Perkins, St. Albans.
 Company G, " Samuel G. P. Craig, Randolph.
 Company H, " Henry F. Dutton, Ludlow.
 Company I, " Wm. W. Lynde, Marlboro.
 Company K, " John S. Clark, Lunenburg.

The non-commissioned staff were George N. Carpenter, sergeant-major; J. Elliott Smith, quartermaster sergeant; Lewis Child, commissary sergeant; Gershom H. Flagg, drum major; Samuel H. Currier, hospital steward.

The departure of the regiment, after it was otherwise ready, was delayed by a deficiency of medical stores, until Colonel Thomas and Surgeon Gale succeeded with difficulty in obtaining a limited supply. At last, however, on the 14th of March, 1862, the regiment, ten hundred and sixty strong, together with the First Battery, which had been raised meantime for General Butler's division and reported to Colonel Thomas at Camp Holbrook, took train and departed for the field, with the usual demonstrations on the part of the citizens. The sectional houses, in which the men had been quartered, were taken with them to New York, but were never used by the troops after they left Camp Holbrook. The journey by rail down the Connecticut valley was attended by the customary demonstrations. At Northampton, Mass., much enthusiasm was excited by the exhibition of a rebel flag which had been captured by a Massachu-

setts regiment, and sent home as a trophy. At Springfield the ladies served refreshments. At New Haven, at nightfall, the regiment went on board the steamer Granite State and the men awoke next morning in the East River. As the steamer neared the dock at New York the sailing transports James Hovey and Wallace, were seen at anchor in the stream, and it was soon learned that they were waiting for the regiment and battery. The regiment landed and marched to city Hall barracks, for rations, and had a warm greeting during the day from the Vermonters in New York. That afternoon the regiment embarked. In the evening, the field, staff and line officers, were tendered a dinner at the Metropolitan Hotel, by the Sons of Vermont, at which patriotic speeches were made by Hon. E. W. Stoughton and Colonel Frank E. Howe, to which Colonel Thomas returned a fitting response.

On the afternoon of the 9th of March, the Hovey, bearing the colonel, major, quartermaster, assistant surgeon and six companies, and the Wallace with the lieutenant-colonel, adjutant, surgeon and the other four companies and the battery, set sail. A heavy gale at once separated the vessels. When out of sight of land, the sealed orders under which they had sailed were opened and it was found, as had been expected, that their destination was Ship Island. Their voyage was long and stormy, the ships crowded, and everybody sea-sick. Fears of capture by Confederate gunboats prevailed—especially one day when an armed steamer bore down on the Hovey. It proved, however, to be a Union gunboat. On the 6th of April, after a voyage of twenty-seven days, the Hovey and the Wallace, arriving a few hours apart, dropped anchor at Ship Island. Enos L. Davis of company I, a boy of 18 years, of Newfane, died of prostration on the voyage and was buried at sea.

At ship Island the regiment was assigned to the command of General John W. Phelps. The men had hardly

pitched their tents on the white sand, when one of the severest storms known for years, burst upon the island. The camp of the Eighth was overflowed by the rising sea, the men retreating with their baggage to higher ground, and there was serious apprehension that the whole island might be submerged; but the gale abated, and the troops took courage. Daily drills were now resumed, and on the 8th of April the Eighth participated, with 14,000 other troops, in a grand review of the division, by General Butler, which was an imposing sight to the eyes of the Vermonters, unused as yet to the pomp and circumstance of war.

On the 18th all listened with suppressed excitement to the booming of heavy guns which came from the southwest, where, sixty miles away, Porter's mortar boats were bombarding the forts below New Orleans; and in due time the occupation of that city was chronicled on the island, in the *Soldiers' News*. This was a little newspaper, printed by Alfred W. Eastman of company K, on a small printing press and outfit of type, which, through some unusual provision against possible needs, had been brought along with the camp equipage of the Eighth. Its publisher claimed with perfect truth, that it was "the best paper ever published on Ship Island."

Before General Butler had fairly occupied New Orleans, he sent to Ship Island for the Eighth. The regiment struck camp on the 6th of May and embarked before daylight next day on the *Hovey*, and set sail for the mouth of the Mississippi. A number of sick men were left behind, as were the bodies of two of their comrades,² who died of disease on the island and were buried in its shifting sands.

At night of the 8th, the *Hovey* reached the Southwest Pass and rode at anchor off the mouth for two days till a steamer came to tow her up to New Orleans. The passage

² Corporal George Walker, company G, and Charles S. Lamb, company D.

up the river was full of interest and excitement. The semi-tropical vegetation; the levees, filled to the brim with the vast volume of waters, on which the ship rode high above the rice plantations; the shores strewn with the wrecks of the Confederate gunboats destroyed in the naval fight; the forts on either hand over which now flew the stars and stripes; the throngs of blacks along the banks, who hailed the troops with every sign of welcome,—were new and interesting sights to the Vermonters. A little before sunset of the 12th, they first caught sight of the Crescent City, still canopied with smoke from its burned warehouses and smouldering docks. It was filled with multitudes of unemployed workmen and roughs, most of whom made no attempt to conceal their hatred toward the Union troops. The richer and influential citizens excited rather than soothed the passions of the mob. The women were bold and persistent in their insults. The entrance on such a scene was not likely to be forgotten by any of the Vermonters. Colonel Thomas reported to General Shepley, who had arrived two days before and had been appointed military commandant of the city, and in the evening of the 12th the regiment landed, loaded muskets in the street, and marched, to the strains of Yankee Doodle, which drowned the secession songs with which the crowds around them greeted the new comers, to the Union Cotton Press, close to the river, where the regiment was temporarily quartered. They were in a hostile city; and there was no sleep for the officers and little for the men, that night.³ Strong guards were posted and the men felt under little temptation to leave quarters. One man, however,⁴ undertook to run the guard, was challenged by the

³ "We find," said General Butler, in his General Order of May 9th, '62, "substantially only fugitive masses, runaway property-burners, a whiskey-drinking mob and starving citizens with their wives and children. It is our duty to call back the first, to punish the second, root out the third, feed and protect the last."

⁴ Victor Rotary of G company.

sentinel, and refusing to stop, was fired on and received a wound from which he died three weeks after. On the 17th the regiment was established in permanent quarters in the large building of the Mechanics Institute and in the adjoining Medical College of Louisiana. These buildings afforded airy and convenient quarters; rations were ample, and the men made themselves thoroughly comfortable. The regiment began at once to take its share of the police and provost guard duty, which, with the distribution of food to the starving citizens, formed the occupation of the garrison of New Orleans. General Butler's orders were strict, for his soldiers as well as for the citizens. Officers must not appear on the streets alone or without their side arms. All must pass through the streets in silence, take no offence at insults and threats, and if any violence was attempted must simply arrest the offenders. Obedience to these orders formed a severe test alike of temper and of discipline. Rumors of a projected rising of the citizens and of the return of General Lovell with his army to recapture the city, were rife⁵ and night after night the troops slept on their arms, in readiness for instant action.

In the organization of police districts Major Dillingham was appointed commandant of a district, and each captain was assigned to a sub-district, the soldiers taking the place of the city police, which had been disbanded by General Butler. Large details were made each morning to protect public and private property, to seize concealed arms, and to arrest disorderly and suspicious persons. General Butler began early also to select men of the Eighth for special service. Needing a practical telegrapher and a man of capacity, for superintendent of the telegraph lines, of which he

⁵ General Lovell states in his report to the Confederate War Department, that he made formal offer to the mayor and to prominent citizens, to return "and not leave as long as one brick remained upon another" if they desired. They, however, he says, "urged decidedly that it be not done."

had taken possession, he made inquiry of the commanders of the regiment for such a man, and found him in the person of Q. M. Sergeant J. Elliott Smith, of the Eighth. Sergeant Smith was thereupon promoted to a lieutenancy on General Butler's staff, and appointed military superintendent of the telegraph lines, and of the fire alarm telegraph of the city.⁶ He selected his operators and assistants, some forty in number, largely from the Eighth; instructed them in practical telegraphy, and soon had the lines working to Camp Parapet, at Carrollton, eight miles north of the city, where General Phelps was stationed with the Seventh Vermont and other regiments; to Milnburg on Lake Pontchartrain; to the passes of the Mississippi; to Forts Jackson and St. Philip, Berwick Bay, Thibodeaux, Rigolets, Donaldsonville, and other points.

Corporal Wm. H. Gilmore of company D was appointed quartermaster's sergeant, in place of Sergeant Smith. The Eighth remained in New Orleans nearly a month, when Colonel Thomas was ordered to take his regiment across the river to Algiers, a suburb of New Orleans and the terminus of the New Orleans and Opelousas railroad, to relieve the twenty-third Indiana, which was sent to General Williams at Baton Rouge. On the 31st of May, leaving company D behind as provost guard in the city, the Eighth crossed the river and took up its quarters in the large railroad depot in Algiers. This with its broad sheltered platforms and ample rooms, amid surroundings of green grass and shade trees, afforded healthy and agreeable quarters for officers and men. The regiment was the only Union force on that side of the Mississippi, and Colonel Thomas had general charge of the district of country around Algiers, in a semi-civil as well as military capacity, with his own provost judge and marshal—

⁶ Lieutenant Smith was a brother of Quartermaster Smith. Since the war he has been for many years the capable superintendent of the fire-alarm telegraph in New York city.

the latter being Captain Charles B. Child of company B. The only hostile force in the region was an irregular body of mounted men, armed with fowling pieces. These general kept at a safe distance, and confined their operations to occasionally tearing up portions of the railroad track. Pickets were thrown out along the railroad to La Fourche Crossing, some fifty miles out. The track to that point, which the enemy had destroyed, was repaired; and practical railroad men were found in the ranks of the regiment, by whose exertions, under the directions of Lieutenant Kilburn Day of company G, who was made engineer of the road, the tracks and rolling stock were put in order, and military trains, on which civilians were permitted only by special permission, were run regularly between Algiers and La Fourche. At about the same time the following men were detailed for the signal service: Lieutenant F. D. Butterfield, of company B; Lieutenant G. F. French, of company K; Chas. F. Russell, of company A; H. C. Abbott, of company C; C. G. Tarbell and George Graves, of company G; O. N. Webster, of company I; and H. K. Stoddard, of company K. June 6th, First Lieutenant E. B. Wright resigned, and Sergeant-Major George N. Carpenter was promoted first lieutenant of company C.

As in the case of every occupation of territory in the slave States by the forces of the Union, the question of the "contraband" at once presented itself, and with greater pressure here in Louisiana than anywhere else. General Butler's position at this time, in regard to this question, was, that he would employ as many of the negroes who thronged into his lines as he had any use for; and thousands were so employed as cooks and laborers. Those for whom employment could not be found, were not to be harbored in the camps. This latter rule afforded all the permission desired by regimental officers who were fond of declaring that this was no "abolition war," to return fugitive slaves to loyal owners. The Eight had a number of officers and some men who held the

conservative side of the slavery question; and several negroes—how many is not known; no many, however—were delivered to masters who came to claim them, upon proof that the claimant had taken the oath of allegiance to the Government. The majority of the regiment, however, shared the anti-slavery feeling of the great mass of the people of the State whose first Constitution, in its first article, forbade property in man; and this returning of fugitives aroused intense excitement. One day a negro, bearing the marks of shackles on his ankles, as followed into the camp of the Eighth by his master, who ordered him to return with him to the plantation. The black man refusing to go, the white man began to enforce his authority, as of old, with force and a leathern strap. The sight and sound of the flogging drew at once a crowd of Vermonters, who promptly kicked the white man out of camp and led the fugitive to a place of safety. The regiment was thereupon called into line by Lieut. Colonel Brown, and after a severe lecture on their conduct, the men were informed that they were not to interfere with the personal property of citizens, "whether in slaves or anything else." The mass of the men, however, declined to accept either the rebuke or the instructions. Indignation ran high, and a number of the men, expecting an order to deliver up the negro, who had been secreted in the camp, pledged themselves to protect him and to refuse obedience to any such order, even at the cost of trial and punishment for mutiny. No such order came, however, and the slave owners soon learned that the camp of the Eighth Vermont was not a good place in which to search for slaves. Many black men were passed on by the men to the camp of General Phelps at Carrollton, where they were safe from all claimants, loyal or disloyal; and it was not long before all surrendering of fugitives ceased.

About this time, General Phelps began to organize and drill the negroes as soldiers; and when his requisition for

muskets for three regiments of colored men was disallowed and he was peremptorily ordered by General Butler to desist from organizing colored troops, he resigned his commission; and the Government, which before the war closed had 175,000 colored men under arms, thus lost the services of as brave, faithful and patriotic an officer as it had in its army; one whose only fault as a soldier was that he was a little in advance of his superiors, in willingness to accept the aid of all loyal citizens, white or black, in the overthrow of rebellion. Before long Colonel Thomas, whose personal sympathies were on the side of liberty and humanity, also concluded that the black could and should be used as soldiers. He urged the point with General Butler, and his arguments, combined with the logic of events, brought the general to the same conclusion. General Butler began enrolling and arming colored regiments; and was shortly on record in as serious an admonition, addressed to General Weitzel, for declining to command colored troops, as he had administered to General Phelps for organizing such troops. Colonel Thomas, however, had no scruples in regard to commanding black soldiers; and he later earned the right to be proud of the fact that under him the first actual service of a colored regiment in the field, in the war for the Union, took place.

As time went on, the number of negroes who gathered about the Union camp at Algiers increased to thousands of men, women and children, who received daily rations from the quartermaster. Nor was care of them confined to preserving them from starvation. Details of men from the regiment were made to look after them. Private Rufus Kinsley and others taught many of them to read; "Father" Blake gave them religious instruction; and such care did not altogether cease with the sojourn of the regiment in Louisiana, for two colored boys, Scott and Henry Montgomery, were educated in Northern schools by officers of the Eighth, in order that they might educate others of their race; and they became,

after the war, one a teacher in Washington, D. C., and the other a professor in a college for colored students in Mississippi.

During the last week in May Lieut. Colonel Brown was detailed by General Butler to take editorial charge of the new Orleans Delta. This leading daily journal having violated General Butler's proclamation forbidding the publication of rebellious articles, was taken possession of by General Butler, and transformed into a loyal sheet. Lieut. Colonel Brown was assisted in the editorial department by Major J. M. Bell, provost judge of New Orleans (formerly of Haverhill, N. H.), and Captain Clark of General Butler's staff; and an issue of 10,000 copies daily, in two editions, gave due circulation to the numerous orders and proclamations of the general commanding.

Early in June a reconnoissance was made by Lieut. Colonel Dillingham, with three companies, to Thibodeaux, four miles north of La Fourche Crossing. The village was found deserted by the white men; an iron foundry which had been employed in casting shells was destroyed; a young ladies' seminary was serenaded with Yankee Doodle and other martial airs; and an old cannon was found and brought away as a trophy.

The large details from the Eighth for guard duty and special service, which commonly left but three or four companies in camp at any one time, of course interfered with drill; but the men nevertheless made fair progress in the duties of the soldier. As yet, however, they had hardly seen an armed enemy. The first actual fighting, on the part of any portion of the regiment, took place on the 22d of June. A few days before this the enemy became active in front, under orders from the Confederate Governor Moore, to General Martin, commanding the Louisiana militia, directing him to attack the Union outposts and destroy the railroad. On the 20th Colonel Thomas withdrew the three companies

stationed at La Fourche Crossing. Two of the companies returned to Algiers, leaving company H, Captain Dutton, at Bayou des Allemands. On the 22d, having learned that the rebels were tearing up the track to the west of him, Captain Dutton sent out Lieutenant Franklin with thirty men to reconnoiter. The party was placed in a passenger car, which was cautiously backed up the railroad. No enemy was discovered till, as they approached Raceland station, seen miles out from Bayou des Allemands, a mounted man was seen to ride across the track. Franklin halted and sent forward an advance squad of six men under Sergeant Smith, following him slowly with the train. Suddenly a volley burst from behind the fringe of wild cane along the side of the track, and a shower of buckshot whistled through and around the car. Lieutenant Franklin, who stood on the platform of the car with Private Richardson by his side, received five buckshot wounds in his breast, side and arms, while Richardson fell forward on the track, a dead man.⁷ Though severely wounded, Franklin did not lose his presence of mind. Ordering his men in the car to kneel and fire from the windows, he himself sprang from the car and ran to the engine. The fireman lay dead upon the tender and the engineer was crouching in the iron-clad cab of the locomotive. Franklin ordered him to put on steam and the train was soon in motion to the rear. It ran through a party of the enemy, who had begun to tear up the track behind it, before they had time to displace the rails, and sped back to Bayou des Allemands. Lieutenant Franklin, Sergeant Smith and the unwounded men of the advance squad boarded the car as it started back. The bodies of Corporals McClure and Saunders, who were killed on the track, and of Private Richardson, were left where they fell and were buried by the enemy. The casualties by this unfortunate affair were five men killed, including the fireman, and two officers,

⁷ Franklin still carries some of these shot in his body.

Lieutenants Franklin and Holton, and seven men wounded.⁸

The Confederate force engaged in this affair was a company of Louisiana militia under command of a Captain Dardon. It was learned afterwards that they lost three men killed and several wounded by the fire from the car windows. The wounded men of the Eighth were sent on at once to Algiers, where their arrival created great excitement, and companies A, C and I were at once sent out by train to reinforce the rest of company H at Bayou des Allemands. The enemy, however, did not appear at that outpost.

June 24th Surgeon George F. Gale resigned and soon returned home. Resolutions were adopted by the line officers, expressing their confidence in him and regret at his departure. Assistant Surgeon Gillett succeeded him as surgeon, and Hospital Steward Samuel H. Currier (of West Fairlee) was appointed assistant surgeon.

On the 27th Andrew McKenzie of company B, a boy of 19, was drowned while bathing.

During July and August the regiment picketed the right bank of the Mississippi for thirteen miles from the "Cut-off Road, Va." below Algiers to the canal above; guarded the railroad for thirty-two miles, to Bayou des Allemands; maintained order in the town, and arrested many citizens who attempted to pass out of the lines. Serious illness prevailed in the command, and three line officers, Lieutenant Rand, Child and Kellogg died within three days, July 220024. The vacancies were filled by the promotions of Sergeant Dennis Buckley to be second lieutenant of company D; First Sergeant L. M. Hutchinson to be second lieutenant of com-

⁸ The killed were Corporal Henry K. McClure, Corporal John W. Saunders, Lowell M. Richardson and Marshall W. Wellman. The wounded were First Lieutenant A. B. Franklin, seriously; Second Lieutenant W. H. H. Holton, Sergeants S. E. Howard, W. H. Smith and George M. Allard, and privates Clark B. Akeley, Ebenezer Oaks, Jr., Andrew J. Wood and Calvin L. Cook.

pany A; First Sergeant A. J. Sargent to be second lieutenant of company E.

The regiment shared the excitement attending the battle of Baton Rouge, in the first week of August, and the general concern of all Vermonters over the misfortunes of the Seventh Vermont—heretofore related.

Information having been received that the enemy were collecting cattle, at a point about forty miles above Algiers, for the use of the Confederate army on the east side of the Mississippi, Colonel Birge of the Thirteenth Connecticut, the brigade commander to whom Colonel Thomas reported at this time, directed the latter to take a suitable force and proceed thither. Colonel Thomas accordingly started, on the morning of August 28th, with company A, Captain Grout; company C, Captain Foster; two pieces of light artillery in charge of Lieutenant Morse of company I, and a company of the Second Massachusetts Cavalry, 200 men in all. They went by rail to Boutte Station, twenty-four miles out, and thence marched to St. Charles Court House, where they camped for the night. Starting next morning at daylight, and passing on the way a drove of 500 cattle which had arrived there the night before from Texas, Thomas proceeded towards Bonnet Carre, where the Confederate force, reported by the negroes to be 300 strong, was encamped. About eight miles from the Court House, the cavalry scattered a small Confederate force, and captured two prisoners. The artillery was brought forward, and shelled the main body out of a cane field near by, wounding one man, who was captured. The rest scattered into the swamps. Colonel Thomas went on two miles, and finding no enemy, turned back, collecting horses, cattle, mules and sheep in large numbers from the plantations on the way. Three white men were taken prisoners on the return. Marching through the following night, and using the contrabands who joined him to help in driving the cattle and

sheep, Thomas returned to Algiers in the forenoon of the 30th, heading a procession three miles long, comprising five hundred negroes, nearly a thousand head of cattle and hundreds of sheep and mules. The march home, of forty miles, was made in twenty-eight hours. No one was hurt and there was no straggling, though the heat and dust were severe; and all concerned won much praise.

The Opelousas railroad, which for thirty miles was held by the Eighth, was the passage-way to a fertile country, important to both armies as a source of supplies. To guard it effectively required large details for pickets and train guards. At Bayou des Allemands, the farther outpost, one hundred and fifty men were stationed, of companies E, G and K, under command of Captain Hall of company E. Trains started daily from Algiers and Bayou des Allemands, passing each other at Boutte Station. These two stations were the scenes of the heaviest loss of men ever suffered by the regiment in one day.

Shortly after the close of the Peninsular campaign in July, General Richard Taylor, son of President Zachary Taylor, was detached from Lee's army at Richmond, and sent down to his native State, to raise recruits for the Confederate army in Western Louisiana, and to command the Confederate forces in that region. He arrived on the ground in August. His home plantation was in St. Charles Parish, near Bayou des Allemands; and his property had been confiscated, his cattle taken to feed the Union soldiers, and his house rifled by the latter. Familiar as he was with the region, he was not slow to perceive that the outpost at Bayou des Allemands was exposed to attack, nor unwilling to pay off his private score by its capture. He sent thither, for that purpose, from Donaldsonville, fifty miles up the river, Waller's battalion of mounted Texan riflemen and a force of Louisiana militia under General John G. Pratt. Waller, moving rapidly by night, reached Boutte Station in the early

morning of the 4th of September, captured the picket guard at that point, disarranged the switches, hid his men in the bushes by the side of the track, and awaited the train from Bayou des Allemands. This consisted of platform cars, on which was a train guard of sixty men, under Captain Clark of company K. they had with them a 12-pound howitzer, mounted on the forward car. As the train ran upon the side-track at the station, the concealed enemy opened a murderous fire. All of the artillerists, twelve in number, and a number of the others, were killed or wounded by the first volley. A moment later the train collided with an empty passenger car, left standing on the siding, with force enough to knock some of the men from the cars. The men returned the fire, and the engineer kept the train in motion, in order to take it out of the range of the whistling bullets, when a new danger presented itself in the open switch at the other end of the siding. The derailment and destruction of the train seemed inevitable, when private Louis J. Ingalls, taking in the situation at a glance, leaped to the ground, ran swiftly in advance of the moving train, through a shower of bullets, and replaced the switch. His escape from death was marvelous. He received four bullet wounds, one ball carrying his silk handkerchief, knotted about his throat, into his neck, and a wound in the side from which Father Blake picked 22 bird-shot; but he was able to board the car as it passed him; and the train, thus heroically saved from destruction, was soon out of rifle rang with its load of dead, dying and wounded. A mile below the station, the train met the train coming from Algiers. The engines were reversed in time to prevent a collision; and the two trains made the best speed possible to Algiers, to carry the news of the disaster, and of the danger awaiting the detachment at Bayou des Allemands. Of the sixty men on the train, but twenty-five escaped unhurt. Fourteen were killed or mortally wounded,

twenty-two others wounded, and several unwounded men were captured.⁹

After plundering the killed and the prisoners, firing the station, and destroying track and culverts for several miles, Waller started up the track, his men marching dismounted, to Bayou des Allemands. Coming in sight of the Union picket, he sent forward a flag of truce to summon the outpost to surrender, representing that he had a thousand men with him; that he had captured the train and howitzer which left Bayou des Allemands that morning; and that resistance was useless and escape impossible. After some parley, through Lieutenant Green, who was sent out with a flag of Captain Hall, the demand was complied with. For this surrender, Captain Hall was much blamed by General Butler, and it cannot be denied that there was some ground for the censure. The position of Bayou des Allemands was approachable from that quarter only by the railroad track, which was too narrow to permit the deployment of any considerable force. Hall had a 12-pound howitzer and two Ellsworth machine guns, the latter throwing ounce balls a mile. Had he made the utmost resistance possible, he might have repulsed an attack, and perhaps have held out till help came. On the other hand, it is to be remembered that he and his men had never been under fire. Their position was not entrenched,

⁹ The killed were: Company A, Sylvanus F. Ailes; company E, Simon E. Bailey, John S. Colgrove, Wm. R. Gray, Fred Greenwood, Henry McGookin, and Louis Brust; company K, Charles R. Carroll, George J. Corson, and Charles F. Stone. The wounded were: Company C, George Clapper; company E, John P. Jones, Andrew J. Morse, Benjamin F. Morse, Geo. H. Poor, Leander Shontell, Edwin H. Nelson, and Lorenzo S. Warren; company F, John M. Goodchild; company G, G. H. Farmer; company I, George P. Burrows; company K, Corp. Chauncey M. Snow, Corp. George W. Hill, Henry C. Woodruff, Ezra S. Pierce, Gilbert Leed, Arthur M. Raymond, John G. Gordon, Pierre Placette, Henry Roseblade, Charles F. Presbrey, Ethan P. Shore, Lewis J. Ingalls, and Auguste Lamont. Of these George Clapper, George H. Farmer, G. H. Poor and A. Lamont died of their wounds.

no spades having been supplied, and their orders being to evacuate when threatened in force. Their supply of ammunition was short, some of the men having only eight or ten rounds in their boxes. The howitzer was trained upon the track; but Hall hesitated to fire, because Lieutenant Green was in front, held between two mounted officers the enemy was evidently present in vastly superior force; and the Union officers thought that their only alternative was death or capture. Captain Hall subsequently proved himself to be a brave and capable officer; and he fell in battle, at last, in the gallant discharge of his duty. With greater experience he probably would not have surrendered without a fight.

The forces which surrendered at Bayou des Allemands consisted of four officers—Captain Hall and Lieutenant Sargent of company E, and Lieutenants Green and Mead of company G—and 138 men. Lieutenant Morse, who had charge of the artillery, escaped while the surrender was in progress, and taking a boat, rowed three miles up the bayou, where he landed and hid for three days in a vacant house. He finally made his way through the swamps to the river, was taken on board a passing steamer, and reached the camp at Algiers, after a week of hardship, hatless, barefooted and suffering from a fever which kept him for some days in hospital. A careful list, reported by Adjutant Barstow, October 1st, gave the names of 151 officers and men reported missing, of whom nine came in later, making the number actually missing 142, and the total of casualties 178.

This affair caused no little rejoicing among the Louisiana rebels.¹⁰ It also occasioned a spicy correspondence between Generals Taylor and Butler. Having learned that pictures,

¹⁰ “This trifling success, the first in the State since the loss of New Orleans, attracted attention, and the people rejoiced at the capture of the des Allemands garrison as might those of Greece at the unearthing of the classic thief, Cacus. Indeed, the den of that worthy never contained such multifarious ‘loot’ as did this Federal camp.”—General R. Taylor: *Destruction and Reconstruction*, p. 111.

keepsakes and clothing, taken from his own mansion with a disregard of the rights of personal property which became too common on both sides as the war went on—though in this case the taking was considered lawful by the boys, since Taylor's property had been confiscated by former order—had been found in the captured camp at Bayou des Allemands, General Taylor sent Ex-Governor Wickliff, of Louisiana, to General Butler, under a flag of truce, with a letter informing Butler that his troops were conducting marauding expeditions and appropriating private property, and saying that he might feel compelled to deal with the men captured at Bayou des Allemands as robbers rather than as soldiers. To this letter General Butler replied as follows:

The troops at Bayou des Allemands were an advance post, guarding a railroad bridge, and not an expedition at all, nor were they allowed to go on any expedition up the coast or elsewhere, so that upon this topic I am constrained to believe you were misinformed. I need not say that acts such as you describe are neither ordered or tolerated by the government or by myself. That unlicensed acts are committed by troops upon marching service is the well-known fact of all civilized warfare. If any deeds such as you describe have been committed, and you will send me the written evidence that you have, together with the parties, my acts heretofore should convince you that they will be properly punished. Therefore if you have the guilty parties, you will do well to allow them to be exchanged, as it will be impossible for me to ascertain their guilt if you retain them. I could have wished that this answer to your communication could have ended here, and that you could have contented yourself not to threaten. It is true you have 136 men duly enlisted in the Eighth Vermont regiment, including their officers; but how captured? A part by ambush of a supply train. This savors rather of savage than civilized warfare. 'But the worst remains behind.' I am informed that the guerrilla force which made the capture of the post at des Allemands raised a flag of truce; that it was answered by another flag from my men, the bearers of which were either seized or detained; that a second flag was sent out to demand a return of the first, and the bearers of both were placed at the head of the advancing column, so that my men could fire

only upon their friends. Is this civilized, or savage warfare? It reads precisely like the history of similar strategy by Toussaint L'Overture toward the French forces in San Domingo, and would seem, therefore, to be not even original. I have within my lines five times 130 officers and men of the Confederate service as prisoners of war, from a brigadier general to the inconsiderate lad of sixteen. I shall treat these with every courtesy due their position. No hair of the head of one of my captured soldiers ought to be touched upon any pretext of reprisal or retaliation. I trust you will reconsider your determination to do so, in an event. That I punish marauders with promptness, the women and children of New Orleans, who sleep in calm quiet under our flag, will tell you; that I deal generously with my enemies, a thousand and nineteen families of Confederate soldiers now being fed from my rations, will testify; that I will protect and avenge the wrongs and lives of my fellow-soldiers committed to my care, you, as a soldier, can judge. I have the honor to be your obedient servant.

BENJ. F. BUTLER,

Major General Commanding.

General Taylor says in effect that he did not receive this or any reply from General Butler; but it was a document which he would prefer to forget, if he could. That it answered its purpose is certain, for no Vermonter was punished by him for any alleged robbery.

With the exception of some Germans who were held and executed as deserters, the men taken at Bayou des Allemands received fair treatment from their captors. They were marched to Fort Pratt, near New Iberia, a hundred miles distant. Thence, after six weeks, they were sent to Vicksburg, where they remained several weeks in a wretched condition, robbed of everything except the rags which covered them, and herded in the prison yard, exposed to storms and cold. Finally they were paroled; but before starting for New Orleans they were compelled to draw lots to decide who should remain and be shot in reprisal for the execution of some guerrillas by General McNeil in Missouri. The men so selected were Charles R. Wills of Randolph, and Edward Spear

of Braintree. They were finally released by order of Jefferson Davis, and Wills returned to his regiment, but Spear died before reaching the Union lines. Wm. H. Brown and Dennis Kean, who had joined the regiment at New Orleans, and who were recognized at Vicksburg as Confederate deserters, were also retained, and were shot March 7, 1863. Four men, James S. Hartwell and O. N. Parker of company K, and David E. French and Ephraim Webster of company E, died in the Vicksburg prison, between the 5th and 11th of November. The remainder, four officers and 122 men, were sent to Algiers, and thence to Parole Camp at Ship Island, where they remained till February, 1863, when they were exchanged and rejoined the regiment, then at Camp Stevens, near Thibodeaux, La.

There was great excitement in the camp of the Eighth in the afternoon of September 4th, when Captain Clark arrived with the train which had been fired into at Boutte Station, and the bloody evidences of the skirmish. General Butler ordered Colonel Thomas, with the portion of the regiment remaining at Algiers, to start early next morning to the support of Captain Hall by train, while the Twenty-first Indiana was directed to proceed by boat to Boutte Station, where the two regiments were to unite and go on to Bayou des Allemands. Colonel Thomas accordingly started next morning with 400 men and a section of Nim's (Second Massachusetts) Battery; but when half way to Boutte Station, the locomotive and several cars were thrown from the track by running over a cow. One man was killed and a number injured by the accident, four of whom died of their injuries.¹¹ Two cars were utterly wrecked, and it was three o'clock in the afternoon before the locomotive was replaced upon the track. In the meantime, Colonel Thomas had learned,

¹¹ Killed—Alonzo Silver, company A. Died of injuries—Sergeant J. E. Thayer and Geo. N. Poor, company E; Sanford Dewey, company F; and Joseph Leary, company K.

through a negro, that the outpost at Bayou des Allemands had surrendered, and had also discovered the track and bridges were destroyed for several miles between him and Boutte Station. He accordingly returned to Algiers, in order to take boat for Boutte Station. As he was about embarking, the Twenty-first Indiana returned, having also learned of the surrender of Captain Hall; and the attempt to rescue the latter was abandoned. The Indiana regiment brought to Algiers with them five severely wounded men of the Eighth, who had been left at Boutte Station by the Confederates. One of these, E. H. Roseblade, of company K, had six gunshot wounds, and a sabre-cut in his shoulder, received from a Texan as he was trying to escape. Another man, Corporal Geo. W. Hill, of the same company, received five shots in the legs and hips.

The next day Waller and his Texans came to grief. They had moved from Bayou des Allemands to the west bank of the Mississippi, and gone down, by a road along the shore, between the river and the swamps which cover so much of the face of that country, to a point near St. Charles, about twenty miles above Algiers. Their presence at this point being reported to General Butler, a force of several regiments, with artillery, was sent up from Carrollton by boat, in two bodies, one of which landed above and the other below Waller's camp. Thus trapped, the only resource for the Texans was to abandon their horses and baggage and scatter into the swamp. Eight of them were killed and wounded, and over forty captured; and the expedition returned, bringing 300 horses, found saddled and belly-deep in the swamp, two Confederate flags, and a quantity of arms and stores taken from the Confederate camp. Thereafter Colonel Waller ceased to be heard of as a disturbing element in that region.

A shocking sequel of the affair at Bayou des Allemands must be here related. Among the men who surrendered on the 4th of September, were seven Germans who had enlisted

in New Orleans. Their looks and speech betrayed them, and when their comrades were sent to New Iberia, they were held for trial as deserters. Seven weeks afterwards, General Weitzel, in an expedition into the La Fourche district, found at La Fourche Crossing a quantity of papers thrown away by the enemy in their retreat from Bayou des Allemands;--and among them the records of the trial by court martial and sentence of these seven Germans. The they had ever been in the Confederate service was not proved; but their names were found in the Confederate conscription lists, and in spite of all their protestations of innocence, they were condemned to death. The sentence was carried into execution on the 23d of October. The details of their murder were obtained by Colonel Thomas about the same time, from some prisoners taken by the Union fleet at Brashear City, who were sent to him for safe keeping. Some of these were participants in the proceeding, and when sternly questioned by Thomas, related how the Germans were compelled to dig the trench which formed their grave, and were then ranged along its bank, where a firing party detailed from a Louisiana regiment shot them to death.¹² The men thus murdered were Bernard Hurst, Diedrich Bahne, John Leichleider, Michael Leich-

¹² Colonel Homer B. Sprague, of the Thirteenth Connecticut, who was stationed subsequently at Bayou des Allemands, alludes to this tragic affair in his history of that regiment. He says; "The desolate spot has a mournful interest. Overgrown with weeds, it is yet easily recognizable beside some trees, nearly abreast with the earthworks on the right side as you go from Algiers. The traveler who has either sentiment or patriotism will hardly restrain his tears, when he stands there and listens to the strain of the father's anguish, as he shoveled the dirt away, to find the mouldering remains of his handsome and noble boy. Will not the great Republic some day rear a monument to mark the last resting-place of the seven martyrs, who died for her at Bayou des Allemands, in the summer of 1862?" Commenting on this, Captain Geo. H. Carpenter says in his history of the Eighth: "The 'handsome and noble boy' to whom the writer refers was an only son, scarcely nineteen years old, whose aged father with much reluctance allowed him to enlist in order that he might escape Confederate conscription, and not be forced to fight against a government to which both father and son were loyal. Few narratives can be more pathetic than this."

leider, Michael Mosman, Frank Paul, and Gustave C. Becker—all members of company E. The transaction aroused intense indignation throughout the whole department, and General Butler was preparing to make it the subject of a court of inquiry, when he was superseded by General Banks, and this military murder went unpunished.

After the occupation of Bayou des Allemands by the enemy, General Butler discovered, what he ought to have known before, that it was altogether too exposed a position, and the outpost was withdrawn to Company Canal, ten miles out from Algiers. To this point the railroad was kept open without trouble and many Confederate prisoners were taken, while endeavoring to escape through the lines. Contrabands continued to pour in till the number in camp to whom the quartermaster of the Eighth issued rations at Algiers, was reported at 5,000.

In September, Captain Godfrey Weitzel, a young officer of U.S. Engineers, a West Point graduate of the class of 1855, who had been chief of engineers on General Butler's staff, and had exhibited remarkable capacity for responsible command, was appointed a brigadier general of volunteers, and assigned to the command of what was called the Reserve Brigade, then at Carrollton.¹³ To General Weitzel was assigned the command of the first formidable expedition sent out from New Orleans for the permanent occupation of any considerable portion of Louisiana beyond the immediate vicinity of that city. In this expedition the Eighth Vermont co-operated with Weitzel's brigade, and thus first came under the orders of an officer, who afterwards became a favorite command with them. The objects of the expedition were to disperse General Taylor's forces stationed at Donaldsonville and Thibodeaux; to occupy the La Fourche district, in order to cut off the enemy's supplies of cattle from Texas;

¹³ Comprising the Eighth New Hampshire, Twelfth and Thirteenth Connecticut, and Seventy-fifth New York.

and to open the New Orleans and Opelousas railroad so that loyal planters might have an opportunity to send their sugar and cotton to the New Orleans market. These objects accomplished, the expedition was to proceed into the region of the Bayou Teche, and, perhaps, if circumstances should favor, thence make an incursion into Texas. It was arranged that General Weitzel, with the main body, should go up the river to Donaldsonville by boat, dislodge the enemy there, and then proceed by the country roads down the Bayou La Fourche, while Colonel Thomas with the Eighth Vermont and a regiment of colored troops which General Butler had recently organized, should move out from Algiers along the railroad, dislodge the enemy at Bayou des Allemands, and advance to La Fourche Crossing. The two columns, uniting there, were to proceed to Brashear City, the western terminus of the railroad, on Berwick Bay. A fleet of four gunboats was meanwhile to pass up the bay to Brashear and cut off the retreat of the enemy. On the 24th Weitzel landed at Donaldsonville with 3,000 infantry, two batteries and a battalion of cavalry, marched down the Bayou La Fourche, and on the 26th met and defeated the enemy, under General Mouton, at Labadieville, eight miles above Thibodeaux. Mouton had four regiments, two batteries, and two companies of cavalry, numbering in all about 1,800 men. Weitzel took 208 prisoners and a 12-pound howitzer, and Mouton retreated across Berwick Bay, at the same directing four regiments of Louisiana militia, which, under a Colonel Vick, had been holding des Allemands and other points on the railroad, to fall back, in order to escape capture, and join him.

On the 24th, the First Regiment Louisiana Native Guards, 1,500 strong, Colonel Stafford, reported to Colonel Thomas. This was the first regiment of colored troops actually armed in Louisiana, though General Phelps had organized and tried to arm a colored regiment two months before.

The first actual service of colored troops in the field thus took place under the command of a Vermonter. On the 25th, the two regiments began their march from Algiers. As Thomas's orders were to put the road in repair as he proceeded, the progress of the column was necessarily slow. A heavy growth of the long grass of the region had covered the rails with a matted mass which blocked the wheels of the construction train. This was pulled up by hand with immense toil. Bent rails were straightened and relaid, missing sleepers replaced, many culverts rebuilt and fifteen miles of telegraph line reconstructed. It took three days of hard work as well as marching to reach Bayou des Allemands. As a thought Louisiana militia had been at that point for some time, Thomas expected a fight for its possession. He mounted two field pieces on a platform car, formed his regiments, made the colored troops a speech, in which he joined moral and physical incitements to action by telling them that they now had a chance to avenge the wrongs of their race, and informing them that the man who flinched would be pistolled on the spot. They responded with a cheer, and at the word the two regiments went forward side by side; but found no enemy. Vick had spiked his artillery and departed the night before, after firing the station and burning behind him the long bridge over the bayou. Thomas and his men spent two days in rebuilding the bridge, with timber brought by train from Algiers, and then pushed forward to La Fourche, where he arrived on the first of November.¹⁴ At La Fourche Crossing, Thomas rested a day, and then continued his march along the railroad track to Brashear City, repairing the road

¹⁴ "The command pulled the luxuriant grass from over twenty miles of track, built eighteen culverts from ten to twenty feet in length; rebuilt what was estimated as four miles of track; rebuilt a bridge four hundred and seventy-five feet long; drove the enemy from the road, and captured seven cannon, all in one week."—Colonel Thomas's Report.

"I cannot too much commend the energy of Colonel Thomas, with his regiment, the Eighth Vermont, we have in six days opened 52 miles of road, built nine culverts, rebuilt a bridge (burned by the enemy) 435 feet long, besides pulling up the rank grass from the track, which entirely impeded the locomotives all the way. In this work they were assisted by Colonel Stafford's regiment, Native Guards (colored)."—General Butler's Report, Nov. 2.

as he advanced. At Bayou Bœuf, the railroad bridge, 675 feet in length, had been burned; but in five days a new one was finished, the timber for which was in large part cut by the Vermonters in the adjacent woods. While here one of the sentinels, George Hutchins, of company E, fired on a Union officer who refused to obey his order to halt and give the countersign, wounding the latter in the shoulder. Hutchins was promoted sergeant for his resolute discharge of his duty. Among other incidents of this time was the explosion of an ammunition train near La Fourche Crossing, November 7th, by which Luther Peabody of company D was killed, and Second Lieutenant Carter H. Nason of company F was severely injured. The bridge completed, troops and train proceeded, and arrived at Brashear City on the 8th of December, having in two weeks repaired and re-opened eighty miles of railroad track, and re-established railway and telegraphic communication from Algiers to Berwick Bay.

No enemy was found at Brashear City, as the gunboats under Captain Buchanan had been delayed by a storm and arrived in Berwick Bay too late to prevent the escape of General Mouton, who crossed the bay with his command two days before and retreated to the line of the Bayou Teche. The Eight remained at Brashear City more than a month, doing picket duty along the bay and bayou and running the railroad, Captain H. E. Foster being appointed superintendent of motive power.

During this time several important changes of field and line officers took place. Lieut. Colonel Brown, who had been in charge of the New Orleans Delta and absent from the regiment since May, resigned December 23d. The promotion of Major Charles Dillingham to the vacancy; of Captain

Grout, of company A, to be major; of First Lieutenant McFarland, to be captain; of Second Lieutenant Hutchinson, to be first lieutenant, and or Corporal H. K. Cooper, to be second lieutenant, co company a, followed. On the 18th of November Lieutenant Adoniram J. Howard, acting quartermaster in the absence of Quartermaster Smith, who had been detailed by General Weitzel as brigade commissary on his staff, died, and Lieutenant Squire E. Howard was appointed acting quartermaster.

On the 16th of December came a sudden change in the command of the Department of the Gulf, attributed to the influence of the French Government, or of the French Minister at Washington, representing the wishes of the French residents of New Orleans who were not pleased with General Butler's methods. By an order of President Lincoln, the substance of which General Butler first learned from his spies in the Confederate camps, General Butler was on that date superseded by General Banks. The retirement of General Butler was a matter of sincere regret to the men of the Eighth; for the regiment had always stood high in his regard and he in theirs; and they took their share of the words of praise and friendship in his farewell order.¹⁵

¹⁵ "You have deserved well of your country. Without a murmur you sustained an encampment on a sand-bar so desolate that banishment to it has been the most dreaded punishment inflicted on your bitterest enemies. * * * At your occupation—order, law and quiet sprang to this city, filled with the bravos of all nations. * * * You have preserved your ranks fuller than those of any other battalions of the same length of service. * * * You have met double numbers of the enemy and defeated him in the open field. I commend you to your commander. You are worthy his love."—General Butler's Farewell Order.

"No better men than the Eighth Vermont as a body ever entered the service of the United States. * * * I remember the high encomiums given to the regiment by General Weitzel, and the regiment never had anything else for its behavior in any position in which it was placed. I would speak of its officers by name, but there is no need of specifying the officers, when all did their duty so nobly and well."—B. F. Butler to Geo. N. Carpenter, Boston, Nov. 16th. 1865.

General Banks assumed command under orders to give his first attention to the opening the Mississippi, and next to send an expedition up the Red river, to open an outlet for the sugar and cotton of Northern Louisiana, and to form a base of operations against Texas. Before these objects were accomplished, however, some active operations took place in the region of the Teche, in which the Eighth took part. At the opening of the year 1863, the regiment was in camp at Brashear City, and its morning report showed an aggregate of 728, with 629 officers and men on duty, and 66 sick. In the reorganization of the 40,000 troops of the Department of the Gulf, under General Banks, announced December 31, 1862, the Eighth Vermont is classed as an independent command. General Weitzel was holding the La Fourche district, with about 3,500 men, his headquarters being at Camp Stevens, near Thibodeaux. Thirteen miles west of Berwick Bay, at a point where the firm ground between Grande Lake and Vermilion Bay is reduced to a strip a mile and a half wide, divided lengthwise by the deep and narrow Bayou Teche, General Mouton was in camp with 1,500 men. He had thrown up an earthwork on the Bisland estate and breastworks across the neck, armed with ten 24-pounders, and was further protected by the steamer Cotton. This was a large Mississippi steamer, named after its owner, John L. Cotton, which had been converted into a floating fort, protected with cotton bales and a casing of railroad iron, and heavily armed. She was commanded by a resolute man, and had stoutly resisted the entrance of the Union gunboats into Berwick Bay two months before. Driven out of the bay, at that time, she had backed up into the Teche—being too long to turn in the bayou—to the position above described. Here she remained, a constant terror to the Union forces, till about the first of January, having learned that her armament had been increased, and that Mouton was about to attempt some offensive operations with her aid, General Weitzel decided to at-

tempt her destruction or capture. For this purpose his command was increased by two regiments, and with some 4,000 men, including the Eighth Vermont, and three field batteries, and assisted by the gunboat fleet under Commander Buchanan, he started for the Teche on the 13th of January. The action which followed exhibited the peculiar combination of land and naval warfare, possible in a region full of narrow navigable water courses. The infantry and artillery were ferried across Berwick Bay, and marched up the right or southwestern side of Bayou Teche, preceded by the four gunboats, which passed up the channel to the enemy's position. Here the bayou was obstructed by a small steamer filled with brick and sunk across the channel. Beyond this, bows on, was the Cotton, flanked with field batteries, guarded by rifle pits lined with sharpshooters on each side of the bayou, and further protected by torpedoes planted in the bed of the channel.

Weitzel's force bivouacked on the night of the 13th a little below the enemy's position. Next morning the Eighth Vermont was taken across the bayou by an attending steamer, and, while the gunboats and batteries engaged the Cotton, pushed forward and drove the enemy from the rifle-pits on the east side of the stream. At the same time two detachments of sharpshooters attacked the Cotton. Her two pilots and a number of her crew were killed, and her captain, Fuller, had an arm broken; but he took the wheel himself, turning it with his feet, and backed his boat out of range. In this action Commander Buchanan was killed by a rifle bullet. During the night Mouton decided to retreat, and the Cotton, crippled by the loss of her captain and many gunners, was set on fire and burned. The object of the expedition being thus accomplished, General Weitzel returned, taking with him about 50 prisoners, almost all of whom were captured by the Eighth Vermont.

To describe more in detail the part taken by the Eighth

the regiment bivouacked, with the rest of the expedition, on the west bank of the Teche, during the night of the 13th. Next morning, before starting forward, General Weitzel rode in front of the regiment, and read to the men a resolution of thanks for their services, adopted by the Legislature of Vermont, a copy of which had been received by him. He added that the time had come to prove themselves worthy of the confidence thus reposed in them. The cheers of the men gave a hearty response. Sixty good shots were then detailed as sharpshooters to pick off the gunners of the Cotton, from a much larger number who volunteered for the service, and were placed under command of Captain Dutton of company H. The regiment then went on board the gunboat Diana, which moved up the bayou. The sound of the cannonading in front, where the gunboat Calhoun had engaged the Cotton, soon became heavy; and, impatient of the slow progress of the boat, Colonel Thomas landed the regiment on the east bank—leaving Dutton and the sharpshooters to go on by boat—and started for the scene of action, three miles away. They went at double-quick, by a road running along the shore of the bayou, hurried forward by messages received from the gunboats along the way, to the affect that the Calhoun, the flagship of the fleet, was aground in front; that Commander Buchanan had been killed; that the guns of the Calhoun had been silenced by the first from the rifle-pits; and that she was in great danger of capture. Arriving on the spot the regiment was formed in line of battle, hidden in part from the rifle-pits by rising ground and a group of buildings surrounding a large sugar house. The order, "forward," had just been given, when Dutton and his sharpshooters, who had been landed from the Diana, came running up, with guns at trail, and joined the line. With cheers, echoed by the fleet, the regiment now dashed at the rifle-pits. The Confederates, of the Eighteenth Louisiana, who occupied the pits, intent upon their attack on the Calhoun, paid no attention to their rear,

till the Eighth was close upon them, when they threw down their guns , and took to the swamp through a field of cane, close by. They were not quick enough, however, to prevent the capture of a lieutenant and 41 men (three of whom were wounded) by the Eighth, in the rifle-pits. The bodies of several Confederates, killed, lay behind the breastwork, and nearly 200 muskets, thrown down by the Louisianans in their flight, were gathered on the ground by the Vermonters.

The charge of the Eighth, combined with a similar movement made by the Seventy-fifth New York on the opposite bank, relieved the Calhoun from danger, and her antagonist, the Cotton, was glad to retire. She backed slowly up the bayou, t the protection of the redoubt on the west bank. Fro the captured rifle-pits, the Eighth pushed on in line of battle, Dutton's sharpshooters in advance as skirmishers on the left, and company A, Lieutenant McFarland, on the right, till they were confronted by the breastworks crossing the neck. These were undefended, the troops in them having retired by a floating bridge to the other side of the bayou, and the regiment halted, while Captain Dutton and Adjutant Barstow went to the bank of the bayou, to reconnoiter the other side. They found that Weitzel's brigade had not made a corresponding advance on the west side; and the appearance of some mounted Confederates on the opposite bank indicated the near presence of the enemy. This was further evidenced by the whizzing of shells from two rifled pieces, which now opened from the earthworks, upon Thomas's line. He accordingly withdrew his regiment out of range. His position, as the night fell, seemed far from secure. An unfordable channel separated him from the main body. By the bridges in front of him, protected by the enemy's guns, a heavy force might be thrown upon him from the confederate main body. The night was dark and rainy and the wind blew cold from the north. Thomas built a long line of camp fires beyond his picket, which mouton, as it was intended

he should, took to indicate the presence of at least a brigade; and he not only refrained from attacking Thomas, as it was afterwards learned he had planned to do, but prepared for immediate retreat. The Cotton was scuttled and set on fire; and about midnight she came drifting down the bayou, wrapped in flames, burned to the water's edge, and sank. Her destruction removed one cause of apprehension for Thomas; but there was no sleep and little rest for the officers and men, and all were glad when morning brought the daylight and an order from general Weitzel to fall back to the gunboats, and embark for Brashear City, as the object of the expedition had been accomplished. The regiment accordingly withdrew to the gunboats, a mile below, firing the barns filled with corn and hay on their way. A squadron of Confederate cavalry followed them; but the gunboat bearing the Eighth, which brought up the rear of the fleet, easily checked pursuit by the use of her guns.

The action of the Eighth in this affair has honorable mention in various reports and histories. General Weitzel said of it, in his report: "The Eighth Vermont, Colonel Thomas, for the first time in action as a regiment, reflected the highest credit upon itself by the splendid manner in which they cleared the enemy's rifle-pits on the east bank and afterwards pursued them. This regiment took 41 prisoners, three wounded, and killed four of the enemy. This regiment lost none, because it flanked and surprised the enemy completely." A correspondent of the new York Times, with the Fifteenth New York, said: "But for this sudden and gallant assistance from the Eighth Vermont, there can be little doubt that the Calhoun would have been lost." General Weitzel mentions Lieutenant Fred E. Smith, chief commissary on his staff, as distinguishing himself by coolness, bravery and promptness in conveying orders. Colonel Thomas, in his report, commends Major L. M. Grout, Adjutant Barstow, Captain Dutton and Lieutenant McFarland, for distin-

guished conduct. Sergeant S. E. Howard, company H, of Dutton's party, was subsequently promoted to a lieutenantcy for gallantry in landing from the Diana in a small boat, and taking a message to Colonel Thomas through a shower of bullets.

The entire loss of Weitzel's command was a lieutenant and four men killed, and 27 men wounded almost all of the Seventy-fifth New York. He reported the enemy's loss on shore and on the Cotton as fully treble his own; but his estimate is not borne out by the statements of casualties on the other side.

The regiment returned, after this expedition, to Camp Stevens, where it enjoyed a quiet rest for several weeks. During its stay there the following promotions were made: George O. Ford, of company K, to be second lieutenant; Adjutant J. L. Barstow to be captain of company K; John M. Pike of company G, to be second lieutenant; Second Lieutenant John B. Mead, of company G, to be first lieutenant. The last two were soon after further promoted, Mead to be captain, and Pike first lieutenant, of that company.

About this time, the Eighth was formally attached to Weitzel's Brigade, which was composed from that time on of the Eighth Vermont, Twelfth Connecticut, and Seventy-fifth, One Hundred and Fourteenth and One Hundred and Sixtieth New York,¹⁶ and formed the second brigade of the First Division of the Nineteenth Army Corps, comprising the troops of the Department of the Gulf.

During the month of February, in the movements of troops to guard against rumored offensive operations on the part of the enemy, the Eighth was moved from Camp Stevens to Brashear City, and thence back to Camp Stevens. On the 17th of this month 120 of the men who were

¹⁶ The Eighth Vermont, Twelfth Connecticut and One Hundred and Sixtieth New York thenceforward served together until the close of the war.

captured at Bayou des Allemands, having been exchanged, returned to duty. Lieut. Colonel Dillingham, who had been on a military commission in new Orleans for four months, also returned to the regiment at this time.

The month of March was occupied on each side with preparations for active operations in West Louisiana, a region called by the Confederate general Sibley "by far the richest in the Confederacy." General E. Kirby Smith had been sent thither from Richmond and placed in command of the district west of the Mississippi, with his headquarters at Alexandria, La., and the Confederate forces in that quarter were heavily reinforced. The fortifications across the neck at Bisland were strengthened and armed with guns taken from the wreck of the cotton, and from the United States gunboat Diana, which, having been sent up the Teche to reconnoiter one day, was attacked by Taylor's infantry and a field battery, and captured. General Taylor had been reinforced by a brigade of mounted Texans, and he had 4,000 men or more with which to hold this line. On the other side, General Banks was preparing a powerful expedition to clear the Confederate forces out of the region of the Teche and of the portion of Louisiana between that and the Red River. Weitzel's brigade was to form part of the expedition, and was accordingly concentrated at Brashear City. In this concentration the Eighth moved from Bayou Bœuf, nine miles east of Brashear, where it had been for several weeks, to Brashear City, on the 2d of April. On the 8th General Banks arrived at Brashear City, and was joined there next day by the larger portion of Emory's and Grover's divisions from Baton Rouge. The latter division at once embarked on transports and was sent up Grand Lake to Franklin, above Bisland, in order to intercept the retreat of the enemy stationed at that point. On the 9th, 10th and 11th, Emory's division and Weitzel's brigade, with a siege train, were taken across Berwick Bay, and on the 11th, at

Noon, the march up the Teche began, Weitzel's brigade leading the column, with the Eighth Vermont in advance. Captain Dutton with company H, deployed as skirmishers, soon struck the enemy's pickets, which retired before them, and at night the troops bivouacked in line of battle, a short distance from Pattersonville.

BISLAND.

On Sunday, the 12th, the march was resumed, the command moving with great caution. Company K, Captain Barstow, was deployed as skirmishers and had several skirmishes with the enemy's pickets. At 3 o'clock the fortifications at Bisland confronted Weitzel; and, as the head of his column came within range, the enemy's batteries opened with shells, solid shot and grape. Weitzel's batteries replied and from 5 o'clock till dark the artillery firing was continuous on both sides. During this time the Eighth supported Bainbridge's battery in an advanced position, and had several men wounded by fragments of shells. The men behaved remarkably well, encouraged by the example and words of Colonel Thomas, as he rode slowly along the line, saying: "Steady, men! Stand firm! Old Vermont is looking at you!"¹⁷ At dusk Weitzel withdrew out of range of the enemy's guns, and the brigade bivouacked, in two lines, on the left of Emory's division. Next morning the artillery fire was resumed, the Eighth Vermont still supporting Bainbridge's battery, which was advanced within rifle-range of the Confederate

¹⁷ "But two or three officers remained on their horses. Among them, very conspicuously sat, perfectly upright and still, Colonel Thomas of the Eighth Vermont. His regiment was at the extreme right, and supported 'A' battery, where the shot fell the thickest. Not a single man ran, or showed any disposition to do so. Twice during the heavy cannonading, General Weitzel sent Lieutenant Smith of his staff to warn the colonel that he was exposing himself unduly, and begging him to dismount. The reply of the great-hearted officer was: Colonel Thomas sends his compliments to General Weitzel, and begs to inform him that he did not come down here to get off his horse for any d—d rebels."—Correspondence *Boston Traveller*.

Works. The regiment lay all day in some plantation ditches, which afforded shelter from the volleys of musket balls which trimmed the bushes above the prostrate ranks. Several times orders came to prepare to charge, but the men were soon ordered down again. About three o'clock on the afternoon the "rebel yell," heard now for the first time by most of the Vermonters present, came shrilly from the timber on the left, as the enemy was trying to turn the flank of General Weitzel's brigade. The movement was, however, repulsed by two of the New York regiments. During the day the gunboat *Diana*, which the enemy was using as a floating fort, was disabled by a 32-pound shot, which raked her from stem to stern; and the Union lines were advanced to within 400 yards of the works, on both sides of the bayou, preparatory to a general assault, ordered for next morning at daylight. But that evening General Taylor learned that Grover had landed above him with 4,000 men and was moving to Franklin in his rear; and at midnight he hastily abandoned his line at Bisland, and fell back to New Iberia, slipping, in the hours before daylight, through Franklin, beyond which place Grover had unfortunately halted.¹⁸ When Weitzel's skirmishers advanced at daylight of the 14th, they found the works in front deserted, and without waiting for breakfast, the brigade was ordered forward in pursuit. The Eighth Vermont again led, with company H thrown forward as skirmishers. The enemy's rear guard, of cavalry, with a section of artillery, was soon overtaken, and driven through Franklin, where Grover joined Banks that day; and the Eighth bivouacked that night, with the brigade, a mile beyond Franklin. The results of this operation against Bisland, though resulting in the capture of several hundred prisoners and eleven pieces of artillery, and the destruction of the *Diana*, which was blown up

¹⁸ "It was a wonderful chance. Grover had stopped just short of the prize. Thirty minutes would have given him the wood and the bridge, closing the trap on my force."—General Richard Taylor.

by the Confederates, fell far short of what might reasonably have been expected. Had Grover occupied Franklin as planned, Taylor's force must have been captured entire. The loss of the regiment at Bisland was one man, Adolphus Blanchard, company G, killed, and seven wounded.¹⁹

Taylor fell back from New Iberia to Opelousas, burning the bridge behind him; and Banks followed. For six days the regiment was now on the march to the north, often leading the advance, and averaging about fifteen miles a day. On the night of the 15th it bivouacked half way between Franklin and New Iberia; the next night two miles beyond Iberia; the next five miles from Vermilion Bayou; the next near Vermilion Bridge; the next just beyond Carrion Crow Bayou. The next day, Monday, the 20th, it passed through Opelousas, lately the seat of the Confederate State Government, and encamped in the outskirts of the city, with headquarters in the yard of the Mansion House. It was the longest march the Eighth had taken, and the men asserted, with some facts to back them, that they had fewer sick and fewer stragglers on the march than any regiment in the column.

General Banks claimed as results of his expedition the capture of 2,000 prisoners, 1,000 stand of small arms and 20 heavy guns; the destruction of foundries at Franklin and New Iberia, and the salt works below New Iberia; the capture of two steamers, and the destruction of three gunboats and ten or twelve transports. General Taylor admits the loss of three gunboats and four smaller steamers, and of five siege guns, abandoned at Bisland; but claims that his entire force was under 3,000, and that it was certainly not all captured. As usually, however, he greatly underrates his force, which his superior officer states at 5,000 effective men.²⁰

¹⁹ Banks's loss was 40 killed and 184 wounded, of which numbers 12 killed and 58 wounded were in Weitzel's brigade.

²⁰ "General Taylor had done everything possible with the resources at his command. His effective force in the district was not over 5,000."—Report of Lieut. General E. Kirby Smith.

May 14th, the day before the regiment left Opelousas, Captain Samuel G. P. Craig, of company G, died of disease. He was a young lawyer (of Randolph) in the prime of life, a thorough disciplinarian, and a superior officer. He was buried in the cemetery near the old church in Opelousas. About this time also the sad news was received of the death of Captain John S. Clark (of Lunenberg), company K, a good soldier and true gentleman, who died in the hospital Hotel Dieu at New Orleans, on the 20th of March, and was buried in Girod Cemetery in that city. These deaths were felt to be a great loss, which found expression in some resolutions of respect and sorrow, adopted by the line officers. The regiment spent two weeks at Opelousas, in a pleasant camp, where fresh provisions were plenty, and then started, on the 5th of May, with the army, for the Red River.

Starting at 5 P.M., it marched all that night and the next day; bivouacked in line of battle on the night of the 6th, and at night of the 7th led the brigade into Alexandria. It had marched thirty-three miles that hot and dusty day, and made the ninety miles from Opelousas in less than three days, almost overtaking Dwight's brigade, which left Opelousas the day before them and had six miles less to march. The men were thoroughly exhausted on reaching Alexandria, and glad to drop to rest, in a field, without supper. Next morning the brigade marched through the city of Alexandria, and went into camp in a pleasant grove on the bank of the Red River. Admiral Porter's gunboat fleet, after silencing and capturing the enemy's batteries at Grand Gulf on the Mississippi, had passed into the Red River, and arrived at Alexandria the day before, and lay in the stream just below the camp; While Kirby Smith and Taylor, having evacuated Fort De Russy, had retreated up the river to Natchitoches and Shreveport. Alexandria was found almost deserted, the citizens having fled from their homes on the approach of the Union forces. After two days' rest, Weitzel's brigade

Was sent after Taylor, and marched up the river some thirty-five miles; but Taylor had too long a start to be overtaken, and the brigade returned to Alexandria.

General Grant was now conducting the wonderful campaign in the rear of Vicksburg which established his military reputation. He wanted Banks to join him and assist in the capture of Vicksburg. Banks at first declined to go, for want of transportation; but concluded, later, that he could do so; and on the 13th of May put his army in motion down the Red River, aiming for Simmesport, on the Atchafalaya near its junction with the Mississippi, where he hoped to obtain transports to take him to Grand Gulf. Before leaving Simmesport, however, he had concluded, in view of the danger of leaving New Orleans at the mercy of the strong Confederate force at Port Hudson, that it would be best for him first to reduce the latter place. Obtaining Grant's concurrence, he accordingly moved from Simmesport down the Mississippi to a point opposite Bayou Sara, fifteen miles above Port Hudson, where he crossed, and moved against Port Hudson from the north, while Generals Augur and Sherman moved up from Baton Rouge with 3,500 men and invested the stronghold from the south. In the movement to Port Hudson, the Eighth left Alexandria on the 17th with Weitzel's brigade, which covered the rear of Banks's arm, and marched by easy stages to Simmesport. Here the sick men and the superfluous baggage were placed on boats to be taken to New Orleans; and the brigade took transports for Bayou Sara, the brigade trains being sent by land with the main body of Banks's force, which marched thither down the right bank of the Mississippi. The Eighth landed at Bayou Sara at midnight of May 25th, and two hours later started toward Port Hudson. The brigade marched five miles down the river that night, and joined Grover's division next day. Grover and Dwight, the latter commanding Emory's division, Emory being sick, had already driven the enemy within his main line of works;

and on the 26th the investment of Port Hudson was completed.

PORT HUDSON.

This stronghold was not an easy nut to crack. Resting their control of the Mississippi on Vicksburg and Port Hudson, the confederates had for a year been fortifying the latter point, by the labor of slaves, and had constructed a series of works of remarkable strength. Along the bluff, 80 feet above the river, which here turns at a right angle, were planted batteries armed with siege guns; and a line of redoubts and bastioned forts, connected by earthworks, encircled the town, extending from the mouth of Thompson's Creek, above the town, to Ross's Landing, a mile and a half south of the village. Two months previous there had been over 20,000 men within the works; but the garrison had been reduced to reinforce Pemberton at Vicksburg, and at the time of Banks's investment it numbered about 8,000, under command of Major General Frank Gardner. General Gardner had fifty pieces of artillery, twenty of which were siege guns. General Banks's army numbered in round numbers 30,000.²¹ Within the lines the ground permitted prompt transfers of troops from point to point, while without, a broken surface, seamed with ravines and heavily wooded in portions, offered strong natural obstacles to the besieging force. In the investment of the place, General Weitzel was assigned to the command of the division which manned the Union lines north and northeast of Port Hudson. His own brigade was nearly opposite the main angle by which the enemy's works turned to the south, and two other brigades and two colored regiments extended his line to the right, to Thompson's creek.

²¹ General Banks states that his losses in the operations on the Teche and from sickness occasioned by the long and exhausting marches to and from the Red River, had reduced his effective force to less than 13,000; the official tables give him over double that number.

Colonel Thomas succeeded Weitzel in the command of the brigade and Lieut. Colonel Dillingham commanded the Eighth. As soon as his troops were in position General Banks ordered a general assault, not doubting that his force

was sufficient to overwhelm the garrison. His orders, issued on the night of the 26th, directed a general cannonade from the guns of the fleet and his field batteries, under cover of which a simultaneous assault was to be made on all parts of

the enemy's works. For this, Weitzel's division was formed before daylight, in the woods and along some broken hills, in column of brigades, Van Zandt's brigade constituting the first line, Paine's the second, and Thomas's brigade the third. The division moved to the attack soon after sunrise. Its experience in the next hour was thus summarized by an eye-witness:²² "Over hillocks and ravines tangle with forests, through roaring, shrieking, whistling storms of great guns and musketry, amidst the crash of gigantic beeches and magnolias cut asunder by shot, Weitzel's division drove in the enemy's sharpshooters, slackened its speed under the friction of obstacle after obstacle; passed in driblets through a vast abatis of felled trees, and spent itself in reaching the base of the earthworks." In the operation thus described, the first line was met by a fire of artillery and infantry so deadly that it halted in serious confusion. The second line closed up on the first and also halted. Then came the turn of Thomas. His brigade moved forward till it came up with the first and second lines, when it halted, under fire, for a few moments, which were spent by Thomas in exhorting the officers and men of the other two brigades to follow his line when it should take the front. Then, led by Thomas, on foot—the field officers having all been directed to leave their horses in the rear—his brigade passed through and over the men in front, and, closely followed by the latter, charged at double quick. In this movement the Eighth Vermont, after passing through the lines of the Ninety-first New York and another regiment, charged upon a line of the enemy, posted in some uncompleted entrenchments, drove them out of thee and through a slashing of felled timber, and followed them through a hollow and up a wooded hillside, beyond the crest of which was a plateau of open grounds extending to the enemy's main line of works, perhaps twenty rods away. The opposing fire of

²² Captain J. W. Deforest, Twelfth Connecticut.—*Harper's Magazine*.

Grape and musketry was fearful, and the Union batteries, tardy in taking position, were making no effective reply. Thomas accordingly halted his line and its supports, below the crest, and reported the situation to General Weitzel, who ordered him to make no further advance, as the other divisions were accomplishing nothing in the way of effective co-operation; but to hold his ground, and await further orders. He accordingly directed his men to throw up some hasty breastworks in the edge of the timber, and the position thus gained by him was maintained to the close of the siege. The further fighting on the part of his brigade this day, consisted in picking off every Confederate who showed himself above the opposing works. The shooting on the enemy's side was equally sharp, and probably more fatal.²³

Colonel Thomas never doubted that if the assaults from the centre and left had corresponded with Weitzel's in point of time, he might have gone into Port Hudson that morning. But as Augur and Sherman did not attack till the afternoon, Gardner was able to move his troops where they were most needed, and to meet each of the successive attacks with an ample force of defenders.²⁴ At nightfall the attempt to carry the place by assault was abandoned, and Banks withdrew his lines to the cover of the woods and hills, with a loss of 2,000 men, and without securing any important advantage, except the advanced position gained by Thomas.

²³ Two of General Weitzel's staff, Captains Hubbard and Wrotnoski, sent to Thomas with orders this day, were killed, at an exposed spot in the line, which came to be known as "Deadman's Corner" from the number of men who fell there.

²⁴ "Speaking of the fight on the 27th a Confederate officers said that when the attack was made so vigorously from Weitzel's front, they all thought their game was up. But observing no similar movement along other parts of our line, they moved up eleven pieces of artillery and two large battalions of their best troops so that they were able to offer effectual resistance in that quarter."—Port Hudson letter, in *New Orleans Era*.

"The attack on the right commenced with vigor early in the morning. Had the movement upon the left been executed at the same tie, the assault might have been successful."—General Banks's report.

Of Colonel Thomas's conduct this day, one of his line officers, Captain Barstow, said: "No words can do justice to it. He virtually commanded the division from the time we came up with the first two lines. Being on foot, and having but a single staff officer, the physical labor performed by him was tremendous, and his bearing was most heroic and gallant, as it always was when he had any fighting to do." The Eighth sustained this day its first serious loss in battle, having 88 men killed and wounded. Of this number 51 fell in the first charge. Colonel Thomas received a slight wound on his left temple. Captain H. E. Foster, company C, and Lieutenant James Welch, company G, were wounded.²⁵

On the 28th, there was an armistice of three hours to collect the wounded and bury the dead. This over, General Banks, fully undeceived in regard to the strength of the garrison, prepared for a protracted siege. This formed in some

²⁵ Killed, May 27th, 1863—Company A, Jos. O. Kimball and Zolvey Sargeant; company C, David N. George; company D, Henry Butterfield, Jr.; company E, Geo. E. Wedgewood; company F, Edward Ducharme and Peter Henchey; company G, George W. Battles and Dennis Ryan; company H, Charles Bartlett and W. F. Bowker. The rank and file wounded at Port Hudson, May 27th, were: Company A, Charles W. Boynton, John B. Chayer, Wm. W. Kinsley, Moses Larue and George Remick; company B, Sergeant H. H. Holt, Corporal Henry M. Foss, Carlos J. Barnes, Daniel J. Covey, Samuel Guthrie, Wm. Horn, Thos. W. Page, Walter W. Parsons, John R. Robinson; company C, Newell H. H. Adams, Chas. Boodry, Chas. Collins, Joseph Colcott, Corporal W. H. Jones, Nathan P. Jay, Andrew J. Keith, Robt. C. Morse, Chas. A. Newman, Henry K. Page, Harvey G. Perigo and H. W. Prisby; company D, First Sergeant Nathaniel Robie, Asa S. Emery, Charles G. Emery, Mason B. Jenkins, Norbit Lahas and Edmond L. Wheeler; company E, Ira Holmes, Geo. Maxham, Julius McMurphy, Chas. Smith and Francis Y. Snow; company F, Chas. A. McClusky and Thos. H. Henchy; company G, Chas. W. Battles, Paschal Bissonette, Daniel W. Eaton and Lyman B. Evans; company H, Sergeant Wm. H. Smith, Samuel S. Childs, James Frascovia, Amos L. Jenkins, George R. Harrington and Cyrus M. White; company I, Henry G. Baldwin and Geo. J. Bishop; company K, Charles Drown, Deming D. Fairbanks, John A. Ryder, Wm. H. Silsby and Henry Woodruff. Hollis W. Prisby died of his wounds August 23d and Henry Woodruff, Jul 4th, and several men were transferred to the Veteran Reserve Corps, in consequence of disability from their wounds.

respects the most trying period in the history of the regiment. Some of the features of the life of the troops at this time, are vividly presented in a letter written by Quartermaster Fred E. Smith, under date of June 27th:

"Our officers and men lie quietly down, day and night, week after week, with hundreds of rifle-balls whistling within a few feet, often a few inches, of their heads. And when from necessity, they must leave their posts, they have to crawl behind logs, and through ditches and ravines to get to the woods in the rear. Perhaps on the way they must cross a knoll or a ridge of land, when –whist! Whist! Whiz-z-z! go a half dozen bullets from sharpshooters, who are constantly watching every such exposed place.

The men of this command have been confined for more than a month to the ditches in which they live, sleep, eat and fight. In front are embankments of their own building, on the top of which are sand-bags and logs, forming loopholes through which they watch the enemy, and shoot at the sight of anything that moves. These are in many places within twenty rods of the earthworks behind which lie the enemy, keeping as close watch of us as we do of them. A continued roar of musketry is kept up on both sides while the bullets clip the leaves and branches overhead almost constantly. Along a large part of the line the men are obliged to approach the trenches crawling on their hands and knees. Here, too, they sleep, if they sleep at all, in such an inclined position that morning finds them several feet lower down the bank than when they lay down. If the night be ever so rainy, all they can do is to lie or stand and take it. When the ground gets very slippery, so that they slide too much, they must drive some stakes to brace their feet against. Many of the men have dug holes in the bank large enough to admit their whole bodies, so that they literally live in caves of the earth. The cooking has to be done half or three-quarters of a mile in the rear, out of range of the guns, and the food is carried in by cooks and negroes. You can easily imagine the men are of necessity very dirty and ragged, for their clothes soon get terribly filthy, or wear out. So much is their appearance altered that you would recognize but few of the men or officers of the old Eighth. Occasionally, a few get out, stretch their legs and get washed, and those who are fortunate enough to possess a change of shirt, put on a clean one. But as a rule the poor boys are unshaven, their hair is long and frequently uncombed for a

week or more; and if close inspection were made, it might surprise their wives or mothers to find vermin living on their heads and bodies. Their food is, of course, very plain and very poor. The water they get is very bad even for this country, and the best they are able to procure would be thought unfit for cattle in Vermont. This is the actual state of things, only a deep shade too faintly pictured."

This sort of life lasted for forty-four days, varied on the early morning of the 11th of June, by an abortive attack. This was made between midnight and daylight, and was intended to be a surprise; but the enemy was fond on the alert; and the skirmishers, who at some parts of the line reached the opposing abatis, were recalled. During this period four men of the Eighth were killed or mortally wounded in the trenches,²⁶ and several others less severely wounded.

As Banks's troops were diminishing rapidly under exposure and fatigue, and there was great dissatisfaction, amounting in some cases almost to mutiny, among the nine months regiments, of which there were twenty in his command whose terms had expired or were expiring, he decided during the second week in June, upon a second and more careful attempt to carry Port Hudson by general assault. Before it was made, he, on the 13th of June, summoned General Gardner to surrender, saying that he had become aware, through some intercepted despatches, of the number and condition of his (Gardner's) command; that the prolonged resistance of the garrison had fully vindicated their courage and endurance; but that it was folly to hold out longer in view of the great superiority of the investing army, and that he demanded the surrender of the place in the interest of humanity and to prevent unnecessary effusion of blood. Gardner replied that his duty did not permit him to

²⁶ Killed—George Renfrew, company D, June 3d; Porter J. Whitney, company I, June 11th; Eben Pond, company K, June 12th; Con Carmody, company G, died July 23d of wounds received May 29th.

entertain any such proposition. General Banks at once issued orders for the assault on the morrow.

This was prepared with especial care. The main attack was to be made on the right, by Weitzel's and Paine's divisions, while Augur made a demonstration on the left centre, and Dwight was to endeavor to force an entrance through a ravine on the left. The point of attack was the portion of the enemy's works opposite the advanced position secured on the 27th of May. From this crest a piece of almost level open ground extended right up to the Confederate earthworks, and the endeavor to carry thee, requiring the utmost efforts of the most resolute men, was committed to Weitzel's brigade. Colonel Thomas was now seriously ill in hospital; and the command of the brigade devolved upon Colonel E. B. Smith of the One Hundred and fourteenth New York. Lieut. Colonel Dillingham commanded the Eighth Vermont. Captain Barstow had succeeded Captain Hubbard, killed in the former assault, as assistant adjutant general on the brigade staff, and distinguished himself throughout the day. The preparations for the attack, which was to be made in the morning twilight, were elaborate. Two regiments, the Seventy-fifth New York and Twelfth Connecticut, were to form as skirmishers in front. The Ninety-first New York, each man carrying a five-pound hand-grenade in one hand and his musket in the other, were to follow close behind the skirmishers and throw their grenades over the parapets to scatter the Confederate troops in the trenches. The Twenty-fourth Connecticut were to come next, carrying bags filled with cotton, with which to fill the ditch and enable the storming column to scale the parapets. This column consisted of the Eighth Vermont, One Hundred and Fourteenth New York and One Hundred and Sixtieth New York. If successful in effecting an entrance they were to be supported by Kimball's and Morgan's brigades.

There was no sleep for the troops so selected, that

Night. At two o'clock in the morning coffee and hard bread were served to them; and before dawn the lines were formed and moved into position. The Twelfth Connecticut lost its way in the darkness, and its place was taken by the Ninety-first New York.²⁷ The regiments moved out in the dusk, made darker by a morning fog, through a sunken way, which had been cut from the edge of the timber to within one hundred and fifty of the enemy's breastworks, and deploying on open ground beyond, pushed straight for the hostile works. Arduous as the undertaking was expected to be, it proved even harder in reality. The surface, which had appeared unbroken to the eye, was found to be seamed with ditches filled with brush, which formed serious obstacles, though they were too shallow to afford protection from the volleys which burst hotly from the opposing lines. A few of the skirmishers picked their way to the works only to fall or be driven back by the murderous fire from the parapets. The hand-grenade experiment was an entire failure, the few grenades that were hurled over the breastworks being for the most part thrown back by the enemy, before they exploded. Most of the grenadiers halted before they reached the works and fell back on the men with cotton bags, who in turn faltered and then halted in huddled groups.

Though the measures taken to prepare the way for them had all thus failed, the storming column was now ordered forward. The Eighth Vermont led the way. Marching by the flank up a ravine through which the enemy had an enfilading fire, the regiment deployed into line on the brow of the hill and moving out over and past the fragmentary lines of the regiments that had preceded them, made a resolute effort to charge across the open. In the next five minutes sixty Vermonters dropped dead or wounded under the storm of lead and iron which swept the ground in front. The regiment halted and fell back into the cover of a ravine.

²⁷ Correspondence of the *New York Herald*.

Here the line was re-formed and attempted a second advance to the left of the hill; but this too failed. A few men succeeded in reaching the ditch. The rest fell back and sought such shelter as they could. The other regiments had a similar experience. Colonel Smith, commanding the brigade, fell mortally wounded with a ball through his spine, and Lieut. Colonel Van Petten of the One Hundred and Sixtieth New York succeeded to the command. Two or three brigades, advanced at other points, were almost as roughly handled. Nowhere was any entrance to the works effected; and the effort was abandoned. The assault cost General Banks another 2,000 men, killed, wounded and missing. It ended at ten o'clock in the forenoon; but no recall was possible till nightfall for large numbers of men, who had reached spots from which they could neither advance nor retreat without fatal exposure. Parties which attempted to remove some of the wounded, were fired upon, and wounded men were slain upon the stretchers. All the rest of the day, in gullies and behind trees, hundreds of wounded and unwounded men lay in the hot sun, the former suffering untold agonies from thirst and the festering of their wounds. The Eighth Vermont as a body lay where a slight depression of the ground afforded partial cover. Only after dark was it possible to move, when the regiment resumed its former place in the besieging lines, and its officers could count the cost of the day. The regiment took 350 men over the crest, and lost 99 killed and wounded. The saddest loss to the regiment was that of Lieutenant Stephen F. Spaulding. When Adjutant Barstow was transferred to the brigade staff Lieutenant Spaulding was appointed acting adjutant. He performed the duties of the office with characteristic coolness and courage, encouraging the men by voice and example. At the first halt of the line beyond the ravine, he snatched a musket from a wounded man and stepping forward was in the act of discharging it when he fell forward

with a minié ball through his brain, and died without a word.²⁸ Among the wounded were Captain Hall and First Lieutenant Sargent of company E, and First Lieutenant Pike of company G.

Of the rank and file 16 were killed and 78 wounded.²⁹

²⁸ Stephen F. Spaulding was a native of Montpelier. He was a graduate of the University of Vermont and was a law student in New York city and not yet of age, when Fort Sumter was fired on. Seven days later he was on his way to Washington as a private in the Seventh New York regiment. Returning to New York after the three months' service of that regiment ended, he resumed his studies for a time; but soon decided to re-enlist, and in a Vermont regiment. He was active in raising company B, of the Eighth Vermont, and was its first lieutenant. At Algiers, when Captain Child was detached as provost marshal, he commanded the company and was recognized as one of the most spirited, intelligent and capable officers in the line. He had a presentiment that he should not survive the assault, and remarked the night before to his friend Captain Barstow: "I shall not spend another night with you." His body was recovered and was sent to Vermont for final interment.

²⁹ Killed, June 14th, 1863—Company B, Horace D. Bancroft, Geo. W. Brown, Jason C. Farewell; company C, Loren F. Kelley and Wm. T. Pettee; company D, Henry J. Thompson; company E, Ira Barrett and Wm. Jones; company G, Joseph Becotte, Henry Coles, Wm. Johnson, George Kendall and Solon Parker; company H, Henry W. Crocker; company I, Sergeant Edward R. Pratt and Henry C. Blashfield.

Wounded—Company A, Jephaniah Carpenter; company B, Sergeant John Bisbee, Sergeant William H. Spencer, Sergeant George Collier, Corporal Charles P. Church, Corporal Myron P. Warren, Corporal William H. Henry, Orville R. Brooks, George W. Barnes, Charles S. Barrett, Edward Bellville, Joseph Baraby, Edward L. Carpenter, John R. Dawson, John Fox, William S. Lee, James Smith, John B. Tucker, Charles Wheeler and Alfred Wells; company C, Sergeant J. A. Ripley, Corporal George C. Goodell, Joseph S. Bailey, Denslow Barber, Edward Boodry, Henry A. Crane, Joseph Colcott, Charles E. Dunton, Charles E. Hardy, George W. Hadlock, James Hubbard, George H. Haselton, William H. Jones, A. Montret, Jacob L. Pettee, Harvey G. Perigo, Cornelius H. Putnam, Martin Rosebush, Lawrence Swinger, Levi W. Skinner, Ransom W. Williams and John M. Waldron; company D, Henry E. Ring, Lorenzo Robbins and Edward White; company E, Lewis Amel, Aleck Brandt, Jason Drury, Thomas F. Ferrin, Charles E. L. Hills, James W. Howard and Julius McMurphy; company F, Corporal Ezra E. Janes, Charles A. McClusky and Noel Reneaud; company G, John Davis, Fabien Dupuis, Corporal Dudley C. Woodbury, Francis S. Hull, George R. Howe, Louis Hoezle, Langdon Kemp, Oscar Kemp and John Sullivan; company H, Sergeant George M. Allard, Samuel S. Childs, Albert O. Evans and George R. Harrington; company I, Oscar B. Hescocock, Willard W. Sawyer and Austin H. Ward; company K, Sergeant Perry Porter, Jr., Corporal John Petrie, Paschal P. Shores, Frank Ward and John E. Woodsom.

The following men died of their wounds:

Lorenzo Robbins, July 3d; Edward White, June 25th; Jason Drury, September 25th; James W. Howard, June 24th; Charles E. L. Hills, July 3d; Louis Hoezle, June 28th; William S. Lee, July 3d; Jacob L. Pettee, July 6th; Martin Rosebush, July 5th; Langdon Kemp, July 15th.

Colonel Thomas lay in the hospital that Sunday morning, till finding the suspense unendurable he ordered his horse, and, against the orders of the surgeons, mounted and rode to the front. Learning there that the assault had failed, he reluctantly returned to the hospital.

On the 15th General Banks issued an order, saying: "We are at all points on the threshold of the enemy's fortifications—one more advance and they are ours," and calling for a forlorn hope of a thousand men to lead another assault, with promises of promotion to the officers and medals of honor to the privates who should volunteer for this desperate duty. The troops did not welcome this proposition. One officer and five men of the eighth offered to join the storming party; but less than 300 names in all were enrolled for it; and the project was abandoned.³⁰

Twenty-four days of active siege operations followed the assault of the 14th of June. Parallels and saps were advanced, a mine excavated under the enemy's strong-

³⁰ "I notices that the regiments which had suffered most severely hitherto sent up very few names for the 'roll of honor.' For instance the Eighth ---, of one the most gallant organizations I ever knew, but which had already lost two-thirds of its numbers in our unhappy assaults, did not furnish a single officer or soldier."—Captain J. W. De Forest, 12th Conn.

If the Eighth Vermont was the regiment thus referred to, as it doubtless was, there being no other Eighth in the brigade to which Captain De Forest belonged, he was slightly in error. Captain John L. Barstow, Sergeant George G. Hutchins of company E; Corporal A. N. Flint, L. P. Luce and G. W. Coles of company G, and George H. Ormsby of company H, sent in their names for the forlorn hope.

est fort, known as "the Citadel," and new batteries mounted. The artillery fire was constant; the sharpshooting on each side, along the works, which in many places were within pistol range of each other, was incessant; night skirmishes were frequent. Little rest was permitted to the besiegers and none to the enemy. The only variety from these operations, for the eighth, during this period, was an expedition directed against the enemy's cavalry, which were operating in the rear. Colonel Thomas commanded the brigade on this expedition, though scarcely able to sit upon his horse. The brigade marched two days without discovering the enemy, and then returned. The privations and exposures of this period greatly swelled the sick list. July 1st, it numbered 289, the largest number sick at any time in the history of the regiment. At this date the morning report showed an aggregate of 732—only 435 of whom were reported for duty, and some of these were not fairly fit for service.

The following promotions were made during this time: Captain H. F. Dutton of company H to be major, vice L. M. Grout, resigned; First Lieutenant A. B. Franklin to be captain, and Second Lieutenant S. E. Howard to be first lieutenant of company H; Second Lieutenant F. D. Butterfield to be first lieutenant, and Orderly Sergeant John Bisbee to be second lieutenant of company B; Second Lieutenant George O. Ford to be first lieutenant of company K. July 12th, H M. Pollard was commissioned first lieutenant of company I.

The fourth of July was celebrated by a general salute from the Union batteries, the First and Second Vermont Batteries being among the number, with shotted guns. Three days later came more joyful occasion for salutes and shouting, in the news that Vicksburg had fallen. The cause of the cheering which echoed all along the Union lines, was soon learned by the garrison of Port Hudson, and that night General Gardner's proposition to surrender was received by

A flag of truce, which was received and conducted to General Augur's headquarters by Lieutenant Chase of the Second Vermont Battery. The surrender was probably only hastened three or four days by the fall of Vicksburg; for the garrison were living on mule meat and rats, and were well nigh exhausted. Colonel Thomas was the officer of the trenches, on the last day of the siege, and superintended in person the placing of thirty barrels of powder in a mine under the principal work in front. While there he could hear the conversation of the Confederates over his head, their talk indicating that they were aware that the fort was mined, and moreover that they would welcome any end of the siege.

General Weitzel, in his report, commends the Eighth Vermont for its courage and endurance, during the siege; and adds: "I should not do justice to my convictions of duty did I fail to mention Colonel Thomas for his coolness and gallantry at all times."

On the 9th, the Union troops marched unopposed into Port Hudson, and 6000 men of the garrison grounded their arms, in addition to 500 sick men surrendered in hospital. The stars and strips were flung to the breeze from the highest bluff, and Port Hudson was restored to the Union, and the Mississippi ran free from Cairo to the Gulf. The same day Weitzel's brigade, with portions of Grover's and Dwight's divisions, was sent down the river, by transports, to Donaldsonville, to put a stop to the operations of General Taylor, who during the siege of Port Hudson had reoccupied the Teche, captured Brashear City with its garrison and stores and occupied the La Fourche district, almost unopposed. The men of the Eighth were glad to get away from Port Hudson. They had been through the entire siege, with no protection from the storms and the scalding sun except such as they could gain from the shade of the breastworks and from burrowing in the ground. Their days had been filled with hard and exposed duty. Their rest at night

had been uncertain. The fighting had been hard and unfruitful of results. Besiegers and besieged were alike glad that the siege was over.³¹

Weitzel's division reached Donaldsonville July 10th. The following day there was a sharp engagement with a Confederate force of 1,500 cavalry under General Green, supported by a large body of infantry, which drove in Grover's advance, consisting of Dudley's brigade, and captured 150 prisoners. During this action the Eighth Vermont was held in reserve. Next day Taylor retreated to Berwick Bay, ran the engines and cars on the railroad into the bay, and retired up the Teche. The Eighth then marched with Weitzel's division to Thibodeaux and went into camp there July 31st. It had now its first period of rest since April 9th. The regiment was reduced in numbers by deaths, discharges and furloughs, till some companies had not more than a dozen privates present for duty, under command of a sergeant. Colonel Thomas went to Vermont to recruit his health. Some of the best officers were absent on sick leave.

At this time, July 12th, "Father" Blake received his commission as chaplain of the Third Louisiana (colored) regiment and took leave of the Eighth, much to the regret of officers and men.³²

³¹ The following men were killed at dates subsequent to the last assault; July 17th, Felix Marchand of company C; June 20th, Samuel O. Horn of company B.

³² Rev. Isaac Blake was a preacher, of the "Second Advent" persuasion, in northeastern Vermont, and had reached nearly three-score, when the war broke out. Having preached the duty of sustaining the government by arms, he enforced his teachings by his example, and at the age of 58 years enlisted, at Derby, in company B, of the Eighth Vermont. He was not much of a shooter, but he could play the fife, so he went to the war as a fifer. His age and earnestness and faith distinguished him, not less than his music, among the men of the regiment. Before the regiment left the State, it was paraded, once cold December Sunday, at Brattleboro, to receive some orders. No chaplain had been as yet appointed. Colonel Thomas remarked to some of the captains that he wished they had a chaplain to offer a prayer. Captain Child thereupon said he had a minister in his company, and Fifer Blake was sent for, and was asked by the colonel to make a prayer, with the injection to "make it short, but to put in all the powder he had a mind to." Father Blake prayed and few who heard it ever forgot the prayer. When in subsequent months and years the regiment was without a chaplain Father Blake not only conducted religious services, but officiated in care of the sick and other duties commonly performed by chaplains, drawing of course only a private's pay. After his appointment, as chaplain of the Third Louisiana U. S. C. T., he served eight months, and then resigned, in consequence of impaired healthy, and returned to Vermont, where he lived to be upwards of 80 years old. He was a man of marked character, and many of his good deeds and speeches are treasured by his comrades. It is related of him that after his appointment as chaplain his regiment was under fire one day from a Confederate battery to which the Union guns made no reply, till Father Blake went to the captain of a battery and told him he thought this was one of the times when it was "more blessed to give than to receive!" The batterymen took the hint, and with a cheer for the old chaplain, soon silenced the opposing artillery.

On the 15th of August a detail consisting of Captain C. B. Leach of company D, Lieutenant George N. Carpenter of company C, Lieutenant A. K. Cooper of company A, Sergeant W. H. Spencer of company C, Sergeant Charles R. Wills of company G, Corporal F. R. Carpenter of company F, Corporal H. B. Brown of company H, Corporal L. H. Parker and Corporal Ezra S. Pierce of company K, were sent to Vermont on recruiting service, and proceeded to Brattleboro. Lieutenant Carpenter, however, did not serve on this duty, but was ordered to Norfolk and Alexandria, Va., in charge of the recruits and conscripts for Vermont regiments in the Army of the Potomac. He returned to his regiment in December. A second detail, consisting of Lieutenant Colonel Dillingham, Lieutenant and Acting Quartermaster S. E. Howard, Sergeant Ezra H. Brown of company A, Sergeant George Collier of company B, Sergeant John A. Ripley of company C, Sergeant Edward F. Gould of company D, Sergeant George G. Hutchins of company E, Sergeant William T. Church of company F, Sergeant Joseph N. Dunton of company H, Sergeant Francis E. Warren of

company I, and Sergeant N. C. Cheney of company K, went to Burlington for the same purpose. In February, 1864, these two parties returned to the regiment with 304 recruits. During the month of August the regiment led a comparatively uneventful life at Thibodeaux; and, with no service more severe than drill and picket duty, the men gained rest and strength.

On the 1st of September the Eighth joined the ill-conducted expedition under General Franklin against Sabine Pass on the coast of Texas. General Franklin made no use of his land forces, and denied Weitzel's request to be permitted to land and attack the works with the Eighth and two other regiments of his brigade. The gunboats were repulsed with serious loss, and General Franklin returned ingloriously to New Orleans. The Eighth did not leave the transport Cahawba during the expedition. IT disembarked at Algiers on the 11th and moved thence by rail to Brashear City, on the 15th, whence it moved to Tarleton Plantation.

In October, in order to mask his long contemplated movement against Texas, General Banks pushed a heavy force under General C. C. Washburn up to Opelousas. Weitzel's brigade formed a part of this force; and the Eighth, having the advance of the brigade, marched up the Bayou Teche once more, over familiar roads, via Franklin, New Iberia, Vermillionville and Opelousas to Carrion Crow Bayou, driving before them Taylor's cavalry and taking several prisoners. November 1st, Washburn, having been ordered to withdraw, commenced his retreat to the Teche, and the Eighth moved with the brigade, November 2d, to Vermillion Bayou. Taylor and Green had a large force of infantry and cavalry in front, and lost no chance to surprise and cut off detached portions of Washburn's command. On the 3d they surprised General Burbridge, who was at Bayou Bourbeau, three miles south of Opelousas, with 1,000 men, and captured over half of his brigade. Weitzel's

division received orders that night to move to Burbridge's assistance, and starting at three o'clock next morning, the Eighth marched 14 miles in three hours, to the scene of the action, to find that the enemy had retired with 500 prisoners and a field-piece. On the 16th the regiment moved from Vermillion Bayou to Camp Pratt and New Iberia, where it remained for seven weeks, guarding the town and doing heavy picket duty, during a time of remarkably cold weather for that region, with frequent alternations of frost and mud.

During the closing months of 1863, many changes took place among the filed, staff and line officers of the regiment. November 30th Quartermaster Fred. E. Smith resigned and received an honorable discharge. A man of marked business ability, he had been in all respects a model quartermaster. His interest in the regiment was always strong and his departure was felt to be a great loss. The vacancy was filled by the appointment of Edward Dewey of Montpelier as quartermaster. December 12th the resignation of Lieut. Colonel Dillingham deprived the regiment of a brave and efficient field officer. Major H. F. Dutton was thereupon advanced to the vacancy, and Captain Barstow of company K was promoted major. During the least half of the year the following promotions and appointments took place: Lieutenant Geo. N. Carpenter to be captain of company C, vice Henry E. Foster resigned; Lieut. L. M. Hutchinson appointed acting adjutant, vice Lieutenant Carpenter promoted; O. E. Ross appointed assistant surgeon September 17th; Second Lieutenant W. H. Smith to be first lieutenant of company F; S. W. Shattuck appointed adjutant October 20th; First Lieutenant H. M. Pollard to be captain of company I, vice W. W. Lynde resigned; Second Lieutenant John Bisbee to be first lieutenant of company B; Second Lieutenant Geo. E. Selleck to be first lieutenant of company I; First Lieutenant F. D. Butterfield to be captain of company B; Commissary Sergeant Lewis

Child to be first lieutenant of company C; Second Lieutenant A. J. Sargent to be first lieutenant of company E; First Lieutenant Geo. O. Ford to be captain of company K; Sergeant William H. Spencer to be second lieutenant of company B; Sergeant John A. Ripley to be second lieutenant of company C; Sergeant Nathaniel Robie to be second lieutenant of company D, and Sergeant Joseph N. Dunton to be second lieutenant of company H.

January 1st, 1864, the regiment was still at New Iberia, with about 500 men present for duty and a sick-list of 100. The weather continued severe, with continuous rain and frequent sleet. Under such circumstances the question of re-enlisting, under the offer of the War Department of special inducements to re-enlisting regiments, came up for practical decision. With this was complicated the question of the date of expiration of the term of service, already explained in the history of the Seventh regiment. The men generally preferred to be mustered out in June and go home, if that was to be permitted. If on the other hand they must stay eight months longer, to fill out the full term of three years, they were willing to re-enlist and secure the bounty and veteran furlough. The matter was still in suspense, when, on the 6th of January, the regiment was ordered to break camp and march to Franklin, where it remained two months. Here Colonel Thomas rejoined the regiment in February, in renewed health, and with a body of 304 recruits, obtained in Vermont. These were allotted among the companies and brought the aggregate of the regiment up to 915, with 805 reported present for duty. During the colonel's absence the matter of the expiration of the term had been referred to the War Department at Washington, which decided, as in the case of the Seventh, that under the enlistment contracts the men were entitled to discharge June 1st, 1864. this decision was announced at dress parade by Colonel Thomas, who accompanied the news with a speech,

in which he asked the men to consider that each veteran was worth three new recruits to the government, and urged them to re-enlist, as they would have done if they were to be held eight months longer. The response to the proposition, however, was not encouraging, and for a time it was doubtful whether enough would re-enlist to entitle the regiment to a veteran furlough. During this time, at the request of many of the men, Colonel Thomas again returned to Vermont, in order to secure for the re-enlisting men the town bounties offered by many towns to new recruits. He was successful in securing such bounties for a number of the men. Under all the inducements presented 321 men re-enlisted, being enough to secure the title and furlough of a veteran regiment. The proportion of men re-enlisting was pretty uniform throughout the companies, ranging from 22 in company E to 42 in company K.³³ The Eight was the second Vermont organization to thus secure the honorable title of "Veteran Volunteers" and was complimented in special order by General Emory, for its patriotic example.

In March the veterans began to make preparation for their furlough of thirty days. On the 8th of March the regiment moved back to Algiers, where the re-enlisted men were paid and on the 7th of April embarked with the Ninth Connecticut Veteran Volunteers, on the steamer Constitution, to which they were escorted by the other troops of the brigade, and sailed for New York. Arriving there eight days later, the regiment reached Montpelier in the evening of July 16th and received an enthusiastic welcome. Hon. Charles Reed welcomed them in an appropriate address, and a generous banquet was prepared for them at Depot Hall. On the 18th they departed to their homes under orders to report at Brattleboro, May 19th. Reassembling at that date, they

³³ Captain McFarland of company A says that of the seventeen men who originally enlisted under him from Waterville, fourteen re-enlisted. Of the other three, one died in the service, one was promoted and one discharged for disability.

waited at Brattleboro six days for transportation and then were taken to New York. On the way Henry B. Wheeler of company F fell from the cars and was left seriously injured at Springfield, Mass. At New York the veterans took the steamer McClellan for New Orleans, where they arrived June 3d.

After the departure of the re-enlisted veterans the rest of the regiment, numbering 560 men, remained in camp at Algiers for a month under command of Major Barstow. Much sickness prevailed among the recruits before they became acclimated, and there were heavy details for detached service. Under these hindrances, the recruits were carefully drilled, especially in target practice, and thorough discipline was maintained.

On the 6th of May Major Barstow was ordered to Thibodeaux with his battalion and took command of the post, in the absence of Colonel Day of the Ninth New York, commanding. The position was threatened by a body of Confederate cavalry that night, and the troops, consisting of 250 men and a section of a battery in addition to the Eighth, were disposed to meet it. Finding them thus on their guard the enemy retired without attacking. Companies C, D, F, I and H, were detached about this time to guard the railroad to Brashear City, all rejoining the regiment on the 29th of May.

On the 24th of May the original members who had not re-enlisted, comprising Major Barstow, Captains Leach and Foster, and 168 men, were ordered to proceed to Vermont to be mustered out. They left Camp Hubbard, at Thibodeaux, on the 5th of June, and when to New Orleans, where, on the 6th, they met the veterans who had just arrived from Vermont. After a brief greeting they sailed on the steamer Daniel Webster for New York. Their departure took some of the best soldiers in the regiment, and the loss of Major Barstow, whose condition of health forbade a prolonged stay in that

climate, was especially felt to be a severe one. They reached Brattleboro on the 15th of June and were mustered out June 22d.

The recruits at Camp Hubbard were left for a few days under the command of a major of the Twenty-sixth Illinois. They joined the regiment a little later and it was sent up the Mississippi by transport, to join the Nineteenth Army Corps, then lying at Morganzia, after the close of Banks's second Red River campaign. The regiment arrived at Morganzia June 11th and the same day was reviewed, with the corps, by General Emory, commanding the corps. They found here the Second Vermont Battery, now attached to the corps. On the 12th the regiment went down the river to Waterloo, to disperse some guerrillas but found no enemy and returned to Morganzia. On the 19th, 20th and 21st, the regiment accompanied the division on an expedition to Tunica Bend and Fort Adams, Miss., where the enemy was reported to be in force. The Eighth scouted in detachments in various directions; but found no enemy except one man, who was firing a bridge, and again returned to Morganzia. It remained here two weeks longer.

ORDERED TO THE NORTH.

General Banks, having lost the confidence of General U. S. Grant, who was now commander-in-chief, was superseded about this time in the command of the Department, and on the 19th of June, all were stirred to excitement by the news that the corps was ordered to the North to reinforce the Army of the Potomac.

July 2d the Eighth took transports down the river, and camped the next day for the last time in Algiers. It remained here until the 5th, when it embarked on the steamship St. Mary and sailed to report at Fortress Monroe.

The voyage to the North was pleasant, and on the 12th the St. Mary anchored in Hampton Roads. Early's raid

against Washington was now in progress, and as General Grant has directed the Nineteenth Corps to join the Sixth, for the protection of the capital, Colonel Thomas found orders awaiting him, to proceed to Washington with his regiment without disembarking. Resuming her voyage the St. Mary arrived at Washington next day, where Colonel Thomas reported to secretary Stanton with the Eighth, as the advance of the corps. Early had been repulsed the day before; and, General Emory not having yet arrived, Colonel Thomas was ordered to join the Sixth Corps, in the pursuit of the enemy, with his regiment and a few other troops of the same division which had reached Washington, making a body of about 700 bayonets. The regiment marched through Washington and past the White House, cheering President Lincoln, who stood in front and lifted his hat to the Vermonters, who never lacked a greeting from him. That night they overtook the Sixth Corps at Tenallytown, Md., and the next day, with other troops of the Nineteenth Corps which had come up, went on to Rockville and next day to Poolesville. The marching pulled hard on the men and they were glad to rest there a day. On the 16th they marched to the Potomac at White's Ford, forded the river and bivouacked at Leesburg, Va., after a long and dusty march. Here under orders from General Emory, Colonel Thomas searched the houses for concealed arms and arrested every man capable of bearing arms. On the night of the 18th the Eighth bivouacked at Snicker's Gap after a tedious march of twenty-five miles. Moving on again after a day's rest, the division climbed the mountains and at daylight of the 20th the men of the Eighth had their first view of the Shenandoah Valley. Forging the Shenandoah they halted near Berryville on the pike until evening, when the army counter-marched, recrossed the Shenandoah, swollen by a thunder storm till it was barely fordable; marched along the sandy roads through Snicker's Gap, and on all night, and the next day

back through Leesburg—with only a single halt to make coffee, the solid rations having given out—to Goose Creek. This forced march of thirty-four miles with its accompaniments of heat, dust, hunger and blistered feet, was one of the severest experiences in the history of the regiment. Moving on again they re-crossed the Potomac at Chain Bridge on the 23d, and encamped on Georgetown heights for two nights.

On the 26th the brigade marched twenty miles to Hyattstown; camped without supper; started before daybreak next day and marched another twenty miles to Monocacy Junction and thence through Harper's Ferry to Halltown, Va. Then, counter-marching, with no time for rest, in the flurry caused by McCausland's raid into Maryland, they were marched, on half rations, back into Maryland, and to a point three miles beyond Frederick City, where they were permitted to camp and rest for four days. None who shared the toil and hardship of this period ever forgot the month of July, 1864, which brought them from Louisiana to Maryland and gave them three weeks of the hardest marching they ever experienced.

On the 4th of August the corps moved back to Halltown, and was there on the 7th, when General Sheridan took command of the Army of the Shenandoah. In this army the Eighth was part of the Second brigade (McMillan's) of the First division (Dwight's) of the Nineteenth Corps, under General Emory.

Moving with the corps, on the 10th, up the valley, the first sight of the enemy in the valley was had on the 12th, when the skirmishers of the eighth had a slight encounter with the enemy's cavalry near Cedar Creek. On the 13th the regiment picketed the corps front on the Front Royal Pike. In the night of the 15th the corps moved to Winchester and on the 21st was back at Halltown, while the old brigade was fighting at Charlestown. The lines were en-

trenched at every halt, and the Eighth did its part in digging, as well as in marching and skirmishing, during the various movements to and fro of Sheridan's army. But the old soldiers in its ranks well knew that the time of manœuvring would not last forever, and that the two armies facing each other from the opposite sides of the Opequon would not separate without fighting; and they understood what it meant when, on Sunday, the 18th, an arrival of extra supply trains and a removal of the sick to the rear followed a visit of General Grant to Sheridan's headquarters. There were many grave faces in the ranks that day as the regiment gathered for a short religious service, read from the prayer book by Quartermaster Dewey, the regiment having been without a chaplain since Chaplain Williams was mustered out, three months before. Anticipation became certainty, in the afternoon, when orders came to be ready to move in light marching order at two o'clock the next morning, with two days' cooked rations and 100 rounds of ammunition to a man. At nightfall the men rolled up their little shelter tents instead of crawling under them, and slept an uneasy sleep upon their arms.

BATTLE OF THE OPEQUON.

At two o'clock in the morning all were roused and hard bread and coffee were served, and at three o'clock the first two brigades of Dwight's division, the third being left at Halltown, formed in the darkness and took their way to the battlefield of the Opequon. Dwight's column followed Grover's division, which, after a halt of two hours on the Berryville pike to allow the Sixth Corps to pass, followed that corps across the Opequon and through the defile beyond, and deployed at 11 A. M. on the right of the Sixth Corps and of the pike, for the assault. How steadily Grover attacked and how terribly he was repulsed cannot be related here. For an hour the sounds of the strife in their

front came back to the men of Dwight's division over the rolling crests which hid the scene of action from view. Then came the turn of that division. The First brigade moved first over the crest of a hill in front. Then McMillan's brigade, of which the Eighth Vermont was a part, was ordered to the right and then forward into a wood, on the farther verge of which Grover's men were endeavoring to rally. Bearing still to the right, the brigade came out into open ground and in full view of the fighting in front, where the First brigade was resisting Gordon's advance from the woods he had retaken from Grover. McMillan's brigade was now wanted in several places at once, and was divided, two regiments remaining to support the First brigade, while the Eighth Vermont and Twelfth Connecticut were taken to the left, where Birge's brigade had made a stout fight and been badly shattered and where Molineux's brigade was in danger of entire destruction. Cannon shot tore through the trees as the regiment advanced, killing and wounding several men, but the line moved forward steadily, with company F, Captain W. H. Smith, thrown forward as skirmishers, through the woods, and out into the open ground, strewn with the dead and wounded of both armies. It came at once under heavy fire, both of musketry and artillery. Lieut. Colonel Dutton here had his arm broken by a ball, and was taken to the rear. For a moment the regimental line faltered, but became firm at once under Colonel Thomas's shout of "Steady, men!" In front, at the base of a descent, lay a thin line of men, firing feebly. The Eighth, followed by the Twelfth Connecticut, hurried at double-quick to their aid, rescuing on the way the colors of the Fourteenth New Hampshire, which, with their color-guard, were taken into the line of the Eighth. The regiment halted within musket range of the woods in front, in which Gordon had halted to await the arrival of Breckenridge. There was sharp musketry fire from Gordon's line in the edge of the wood,

perhaps 200 yards in front, and Colonel Thomas ordered the regiment to lie down in the long grass. But as the enemy were on higher ground, only partial shelter could be secured, and the bullets of the Confederate marksmen found a number of victims. The fire was returned by the men of the Eighth, and doubtless with effect, an ascending range being commonly more effective than a descending one. This position, far in advance of the main body of the Nineteenth Corps, was maintained by the regiment for more than two hours, while Crook with the Eighth Corps, was making his detour. At three o'clock Crook's lines advanced to the attack on the enemy's left and were received with a fire from the edge of the woods, as continuous and deadly as was ever delivered. It was described by an eye[witness as "in uninterrupted explosion, without break or tremor." The diversion of Gordon's fire from the Eighth to the division, Thoburn's, which was advancing nearest them, gave Thomas an opportunity to assist the latter, which he was quick to seize. He ordered the Eighth Vermont and Twelfth Connecticut to charge with the bayonet, and himself led the way. He prefaced his order by a little speech. "Boys," said he, "if any of you are in the habit of praying—and I hope you all are—pray now, and pray quick and hard. Remember Ethan Allen and Old Vermont; and we will drive those fellows to hell, where they belong." The Eighth, accompanied by the Connecticut regiment, charged at double-quick, drove the enemy from the woods in front, and passed on through the timber to the farther edge. This was a very valuable piece of service; and it is doubtful if Thoburn's charge would have been successful without it.³⁴

³⁴ "The bayonet charge of the Eighth Vermont regiment, led so splendidly by Colonel Thomas, was undoubtedly one of the best achievements on that brilliant field, and proved to be a large factor in the decisive movement. The regiment was so pushed to the front that it became a pivot on which the Eighth and Nineteenth Corps swung up to victory."—Captain F. H. Buffum, 14th New Hampshire.

"Thomas's bayonet charge was the iron prow to Crook's engine of war. It gave force to Crook's assault. It relieved him from the withering flank fire. It broke the enemy's main line of battle in front, resulting in the swift overthrow of Early's entire army. It was like running a rapier into the vitals of the enemy, and holding it there until the Eighth Corps came rushing in on our right, the Sixth on our left, and the Nineteenth in support."—Herbert E. Hill.

Beyond the woods a second line of the enemy was now visible, about 400 yards to the left and front. Wheeling the Eighth to face this Thomas opened fire and soon dispersed it. But several guns of Braxton's artillery remained on the left, and were at first taken by Colonel Thomas to be a battery of the Sixth Corps. General Upton, who knew better, rode forward to Thomas and ordered him to "fire on that battery," as he wanted to move his brigade in there. Thomas declined, saying that he thought it was one of their own batteries. Upton threatened Thomas with arrest, if he did not obey, but Thomas still declined. The dispute was ended by the clearing away of the smoke and disclosure of a Confederate flag borne by the infantry support of the battery; and Thomas at once turned the fire of the Eighth upon it and cleared the ground for Upton's advance. His lines now came up on the left of the Eighth; and soon Torbert's cavalry appeared to the right, charging full upon the enemy's left and rear. "No man," says Captain S. E. Howard, "ever saw a more thrilling sight than that cavalry charge." Early's lines now broke in utter rout, and the Vermonters pressed forward with the rest in the final charge of the three corps which swept over the works and through Winchester.

The details of this battle, as seen from the ranks of the Eighth Vermont, are thus graphically described by Herbert E. Hill, of company I, who, then a boy of 19 years, was a gallant actor in these memorable scenes.

The line of battle is formed. We march to our position in the first between nine and ten o'clock. The rebels are in the field and woods in front, but we cannot see them distinctly. Their cannon fire shell and solid shot. A shell comes crashing into our midst, literally throwing one man into the air, taking the leg off another, and tearing open the

abdomen of a poor fellow, so that his backbone protrudes in a shocking manner. It is useless to fire, for we can see only smoke. One of our batteries, of six pieces, is stationed a little to or left, exposed to a terrible fire from the enemy. Spiteful puffs of smoke are seen constantly over the guns and horses, and rebel shells are bursting. The horses rear and plunge, and occasionally one falls, or is cut loose by the bursting shells. The artillery men flit like spirits from caisson to gun, while cannon belch forth their death missiles, then recoil ten or fifteen feet. A man drops dead here and there, or crawls away wounded and bleeding. This is the Fifth Main Battery.

We are under fire, but not firing ourselves. Some of the men laugh; possibly one weeps; the face of another is pale as death; his next neighbor's is flushed; one man swears a fearful oath, while his right-hand man is praying silently; the next is excited, fretful, and crowding. Here and there one is calm and cool, as if marching in review before his commander. There is absolute equality for the time being. All are on the same plane, so to speak, the rich and poor, the high and low, the learned and unlearned. The minié ball and the screeching shell make no distinction, but plough their cruel furrows until exhausted, or pass on like invisible fiends.

We move to the right, over a rolling field, then forward again under a heavy fire into a sheltering timber. The bullets spatter against the trees and glance off, and then a sharp cry of pain is heard. Shells tear through the tops of the trees over head, severing the limbs, which drop upon the men below. On again, through the timber to the opening, and we see the line of battle we are to relieve. It is being literally cut to pieces by the enemy, who are massed in the woods in front. Into this fatal clearing and beyond, the brigades of Birge, Molineux, and Sharpe, of the second division, had gallantly charged and been driven back with great slaughter. Wounded men and fragments of decimated regiments are passing back through our line to the rear. The flags of an almost annihilated new Hampshire regiment of Birge's brigade approach, and Colonel Thomas instantly adopts them with the quick indorsement of General Dwight, only a few feet away with General Emory, who says: "Yes, fall in with the Eighth Vermont; I'll guarantee you will be taken care of there."

Now the One Hundred and Sixtieth New York, of our brigade, is hastily ordered off to fill a gap elsewhere, while the Forty-seventh Pennsylvania is used in connection with the first brigade of our division.

We can see squads of the enemy crowding out from the woods toward us. Thin clouds of white smoke rise rapidly from the muzzles of Molineux's rifles, as his men valiantly continue their desperate struggle. We are needed at once, and on the double-quick we rush forward nearly across the bare field, greeted by a fierce wail of musketry from the second woods, while the remnant of Molineux's line we relieve, rise from the ground and passes quickly back to the timber we have left. The Twelfth Connecticut is soon sent to our support and stationed at our right. Our fresh volleys come none too soon, but they are heeded, and the enemy's advance is checked in our front. A tall man near me receives a bad gash in his forehead; the crimson blood flows down his face and bosom. Another has his chin shot away, leaving his tongue dangling exposed over his throat. Both must probably die; but life is dear, and with a beseeching, parting look, they crawl back to the rear and from my sight forever; but their faces are imprinted in my memory.

We are in an open field. The enemy are strongly posted in the woods only a few rods in front, and nothing between them and us but thin Virginia grass. What a change comes over the men. No more of that strange, helpless feeling. Now every man can fight for himself. All fear is gone; in grim silence the men load their guns while lying on their backs, rise quickly to their feet, glance across the gleaming barrel, and fire. The first man to die on this spot is Walter Pierce, who had the strange presentiment of his fate last night. A mine bullet strikes his face as he rises to fire for the third or fourth time. Not one word escapes his lips as he falls lifeless to the earth.

In front and rear Confederate and Union batteries are firing over our heads. The shells have an awful, unearthly, issuing sound, like the terrible rush of escaping steam from a boiler, only a thousand times greater. A desolating fire of musketry sweeps across the exposed ground we occupy, the bullets sounding like angry hornets, as they cut the air so close to the face as to be felt. Men tear a cartridge and ram home the ball, and speak to their comrades about home or matters of interest a thousand miles away. Now word is passed along that Charles Blood is killed. Another is wounded, and we wonder who will be the next, when Corporal James Black settles slowly to the ground. And still the ugly work goes on. Colonel Thomas sits like a statue on his horse, refusing to dismount, encouraging the men within sound of his voice. Sergeant Francis E. Warren is at

my side, and has partly risen to watch the reel movements, when a bullet enters the socket of his eye, and comes out near his ear. With a groan he bows his head between his knees, and drops at my feet. The next to fall is Edmund Fisher, a man past fifty years of age, and never yet absent from his post of duty. He rises deliberately, takes careful aim, and fires his last shot; a rebel bullet pierces his right hip. He exclaims "I'm killed! I'm killed! My home! My home!" I hastily examine his wound, and find the ball protruding from the hip bone. With my thumb and finger I press the bullet out and show it to him. He is so delighted to find his hurt so slight that he draws up his paralyzed limb to hobble away. In vain I advise him that to needlessly expose himself as a target will be sure death. He rises slowly to his feet, takes on e anxious step to the rear, I distinctly hear a dull thud, as the leaden death messenger enters his back, and he falls a dead man. Our rifles become so hot and foul from constant and rapid use, that we are obliged to abandon them and take others from the dead soldiers lying within reach. But our ammunition is giving out, and Sergeants Henry Downs and Lamb volunteer to cross the open field to our rear for more, and soon return with a fresh supply; but none too soon, for the lull in our firing is evidently taken advantage of, and the rebels swarm out from the woods and charge towards us with wild yells. But they are quickly driven back by the fierce volleys along our line. Company I is losing heavily; four of their men are shot dead, and the captain falls and is supposed to be dying. A bullet strikes Sergeant Thorn, glances and wounds Corporal Eddy, and others are wounded. Three times, after continued firing, our ammunition is exhausted, and Colonel Thomas calls for volunteers to go for more cartridges, exposed to a raking fire. Downs and Lamb nobly respond. Among those who respond to Thomas's call for men to crawl out in front and watch the enemy's movements are Sergeant Halide of company B, and Daniel Martin of company I, who after the war enlisted in the regular army and died with Custer in his last fight in the Plains.

The First brigade, having repulsed the foe in their own front, have moved back to the woods as a reserve, and the Eighth Vermont and Twelfth Connecticut are now alone on this advanced line. Upton's troops of the Sixth Corps are on our left and rear, with quite an interval between us. It is three o'clock. The enemy are pressing out towards us from the woods in front. At this moment, some distance to

our right and rear, great cheering is heard, and we discover a body of troops advancing in magnificent array in solid column, with banners flying aloft, and moving rapidly up, with intent, as we suppose, to take position on our right as reinforcements to our thin line. It is Colonel Thoburn's division of Crook's corps, and as the solid column advances, the terrible flank fire from the enemy in our front mows them down like grain, leaving literally a swath of dead in their wake. Colonel Thomas is not idle. The moment the enemy's fire is turned away from us, he makes a daring move on the checker-board of war. He sees an opportunity to hurl two veteran regiments like a thunderbolt against the enemy, which is concentrating every available gun to break Crook's exposed flanks. "Boys," says he, "what we can't give them for want of powder and ball, we'll make up in cold steel. Fix bayonets!" It gives on a peculiar sensation to hear the sharp rattle of steel, and the whole scene changes. It is ugly work, but the regiment and up and ready for the conflict. Colonel Thomas walks in front of his own regiment and talks tenderly with the men, as though they were of his own flesh and blood. He passes down in front of the Twelfth Connecticut, whose colonel has been killed, and asks the officer in command if he and his men are ready to join the Eighth Vermont in a bayonet charge. Many of the men respond by springing to their feet. The captain explains that his ammunition is exhausted. "So is mine," said Colonel Thomas. "Three times my regiment has fired the last cartridge." "So has the Eighth Vermont," said their gallant old leader. Then walking back, he determines to lead his own regiment to the charge, and leave the others, believing they would follow. He moved forward, holding his sword high in air. His faithful men spring to the line, their bayonets glistening in the sunlight. The Twelfth Connecticut, inspired by this courageous dash, soon follow, and the enemy are driven at the point of the bayonet from their works in the timber, our own regiment capturing scores of prisoners who could not get away, so sudden and desperate was the assault. In vain do staff officers and General Macmillan himself ride furiously after the men, shouting to Colonel Thomas to halt his lines;³⁵ the brave old commander—
God

³⁵ General Emory is reported to have said to General McMillan: "They [the Eighth Vermont and Twelfth Connecticut] will be cut all to hell if they go there," and ordered him to stop Thomas; but McMillan did not reach the latter till after he had made the charge.

bless him!—is riding with drawn sword, in front of a line of steel bayonets, and cannot be reached. Nor do they halt until the colors they bear are planted on the open plain in sight of Winchester. Not a Union flag to be seen in the wide sweep to the left, not a Union flag in front, not a Union flag to the right; only rebel flags and batteries one above the other, with infantry massed between, frowning down upon us, who are amazed at the grandeur of the scene. The regiment awaits the next order, while their leader hastily scans the field, which at that moment his men hold in sold possession.

A flash, and an angry roar and a horrid screeching sound is heard, as a shot tears through the air a few feet over our heads, and then we discover immediately on our left and front two pieces of artillery. The enemy we have driven back has retreated to the battery. Quickly Colonel Thomas orders the regiment to double-quick to the tall trees ten or fifteen yards to the left, form on the colors, and give them a volley. In scarcely more time than it takes to write it, the regiment obeys, and the order to load and fire is accompanied by a queer remark about “riddling their shirts.” It is literally carried out; for the volleys which follow instantly silence both pieces, and sweep every sign of life from the guns. Among those killed here was Charles Jenks of company I. When the line reached the timber, where the enemy's dead and wounded were lying as they had fallen, showing the effect of our rifles, the attention of the regiment was attracted to a strange scene;--a dead rebel lay stretched on the ground and in front of him sat a little brown dog, trembling with fear, bolt upright but facing square to the front, faithful unto death. Not a bayonet or a foot touched the faithful creature; the line of steel parted and the human wave rolled on through the woods, leaving the little sentinel undisturbed in his death-watch.

This exciting affair is hardly over when white puffs of smoke dot the plain, and a storm of iron hail is rained upon our uncovered heads from guns planted further up the plain, one above and back of the other, and from different points, which bids fair, for a few moments, to completely wipe us out. But the Twelfth Connecticut has joined us on the right, and the advance lines of Crook's corps are rushing in from the same direction. Plunging shot and shell are creating terrible havoc in the tree-tops over our heads, when a Union flag bursts from the woods into the opening on our left; then another and another, and the plain for a long dis-

tance to our left swarms with Union troops of the Sixth Corps, the flags and regiments appearing *en echelon*, while almost at the same instant the cannonading concentrated on us is suddenly distributed along the whole line.

Now we realize for the first time how far the rushing bayonet charge has carried our regiment in advance of the main army. Meanwhile General Upton of the Sixth Corps, whose men are coming up on our left, rides up through the regiment and engages in hasty conversation with Thomas, concerning troops obscured by smoke still further to the left. When the cloud-wreaths lift, and we catch sight of the familiar southern cross on the enemy's battle flags, the colonel orders the sights on the muskets raised, and one or two quick volleys are fired upon their confused lines. But our flanks are now up, and with infantry in front, cavalry and infantry on the enemy's left flank, with one grand rush the Union troops close on the Confederate army, and the finishing charge is sharp and crushing. Brave Colonel Van Petten, although wounded, moves to the right of the Eighth Vermont with the one Hundred and Sixtieth New York, and, connecting with the right of Upton's troops, we advance rapidly toward the enemy's left centre, in the direction of their retreat, delivering an enfilading fire as we advance, and receiving in turn a heavy artillery fire. Men from Crook's corps, without any formation whatever, join us till we come to a stone wall, passing the bodies of the dead artillerists. But the enemy's artillery breaks down the wall, the stones of which flew in all directions under their fire, when we move back a few yards and then charge over beyond; and by this time the entire rebel army is on a race for life, and soon after Sheridan is able to telegraph to the war department that he has sent the enemy "whirling through Winchester," and that "this army fought splendidly."

Horace Greeley, in his carefully prepared *History of the Great Civil War*, has singled out this bayonet charge as one worthy of special mention, for its national importance.³⁶

³⁶ "Colonel Thomas, Eighth Vermont, ordered his men to charge at double-quick with the bayonet. In vain general officers shouted 'Halt!' 'Lie down!' 'Wait for supports!' etc.; for, while some were still confused and vacillating, a staff officer from the right galloped in front, and pointed with his sabre to the woods which sheltered the enemy. At once all dissent was silenced, all hesitation at an end; the whole centre, as one man, swept forward cheering and plunging into the woods, meeting there Crook's corps, charging from the flank. All the rebel s who could still travel were by this time going or gone."—Greeley's *American Conflict*.

In fact, it was the only actual bayonet charge in the great battle. Colonel Thomas simply anticipated Sheridan's plans, and by this charge accomplished exactly what Sheridan wanted, to wit, to break the rebel left; and the important thing desired by General Sheridan was secured in twenty minutes after Thomas's regiment was once under way. And when Thoburn's gallant men reached the enemy in the woods in their own front, they found his line to the left utterly shattered for more than three hundred yards by Thomas's bayonet charge.

During the charge Lieut. Colonel Babcock of the Seventy-fifth New York, who had received a terrible and mortal wound, and a prisoner in the hands of the enemy till now, raised himself from the ground, in the woods, while his life blood was ebbing away, and waved us on, shouting: "Colonel, you are doing it gloriously! When you are through, remember me." Thomas waved his sword back to his dear friend, and answered: "My dear fellow, I'm sorry for you. I'll remember you." He kept his word and sent Sergeant Bowman back with a detail, and had Colonel Babcock carried from the field; and while in the hospital the dying officer remarked that he never experienced a happier moment in his life than when he saw Thomas leading that bold and successful bayonet charge.

The loss of the regiment in this battle was surprisingly small considering its very exposed positions. That it did not suffer more while confronting Gordon was largely due to Colonel Thomas's care. While exposing his own person recklessly, he kept the men close to the ground, directing them to load while down and to rise only to fire. The list of casualties was 7 killed and 33 wounded. Among the wounded were Lieut. Colonel Dutton, one of the most efficient and popular officers of the regiment, who received a ball through his right forearm, which shattered the radius and occasioned his honorable discharge a month later; Captain Geo. O. Ford of company K, slightly in the arm; Lieutenant Wheaton Livingston, company B, severely in the chin, and Lieutenant Nathaniel Robie, company I, severely in the leg.³⁷

³⁷ Killed—Corporal Marshall W. Wells and Lawson Whittemore, known to have been wounded and supposed dead, of company A; Edmund Fisher, Charles J. Blood, Walter W. Pierce, Charles E. Jenks and Corporal James F. Black of company I. Wounded—Sergeant Kirk F. Brown, Corporal Roger Hover, Gilman W. Blood, Michael Hurley, Wm. B. Page, Wm. H. Palmer and Carlos S. Clark of company A; corporal Wm. H. Henry and Edward Bellville (died from wounds) of company B; Corporal Lawrence Swinger, John Miller and Henry A. Dow of company C; Sergeant Jacob Mills, Jr., Edgar Barstow and James Casey of company D; James W. Averill and Thomas F. Ferrin of Company E; Paul Bouskay and D. L. Payne of company F; Fabian Dupuis of company G; Sergeant Francis E. Warren, Corporal George P. Eddy and Sergeant Charles S. Smith of company I; First Sergeant Perry Porter, Jr., Corporal George Furbush, Samuel T. Penfield, Simon Scheikert, Corporal Wm. H. Silsby and Lewis J. Ingalls of company K.

In reporting his list of casualties, colonel Thomas was able to say: "I am happy to say that every officer and man did his whole duty. As an evidence of their attention to duty I am proud in behalf of Vermont to say, when we bivouacked for the night we had not a man missing. Those who have fallen, fell as a soldier should fall, face to the enemy."

THE EIGHTH AT FISHER'S HILL.

In the pursuit of Early next day, the Eighth marched with the Nineteenth Corps, crossed Cedar Creek in the afternoon, and bivouacked with the army just north of Strasburg, the Nineteenth Corps being in front, in the meadows on each side of the pike, with its headquarters in the village. The next forenoon the lines of both corps were moved forward to the high ground on the north side of Tumbling Run, facing Fisher's Hill on the other side of the run, where Early had taken position. Dwight's division was on the right of the pike, with the Sixth Corps on its right, the two corps being massed opposite the enemy's centre. At four o'clock in the morning of the 22d, McMillan's brigade was moved forward into the woods, where shovels were supplied, and the men threw up some slight breastworks. Behind these they lay for nine or ten hours, while Crook was making his detour around Early's left. This movement of the Eighth Corps was as un-

Known to the men of that part of Sheridan's army as it was to the enemy, and they waited and wondered why nothing was done. Suddenly, between four and five o'clock in the afternoon, the Union batteries broke out furiously, and General Dwight ordered the expected advance. At Colonel Thomas's command, the men of the Eighth sprang over the breastworks, deployed into line with the brigade, in the open ground in front, and all started forward. Soon the heights in front, along with Early's artillery flashed and roared, came plainly into view. To storm them looked like a desperate task. But the enemy, though firing rapidly, was firing wildly, and the losses were small. Suddenly General McMillan rode up, shouting: "Crook is shelling their rear." The men could scarce understand this; but they pressed on with increased speed. Then Captain Wilkinson of Emory's staff dashed down the line, waving his hat and shouting: "they have left their guns and are running like cowards!" General Sheridan and one or two of his aids followed, urging everything forward. The lines of cheering troops rushed down the slope, crossed the run, climbed the ascent beyond, and could scarce credit their senses when they found themselves inside the works of Fisher's Hill, and no enemy there. Twenty Confederate cannon stood undefended, where they had been last fired. "Right where my company jumped over the works," says Captain S. E. Howard, "was a brass piece with the shot half driven home and the rammer still in the gun. Materials of war were scattered about everywhere. The camp kettles hung over the fires, with the half-cooked supper still boiling in them. The blouses of the men hung on the low limbs of some trees. The dead and wounded lay as they had fallen, but the living enemy had fled in utter rout. Then it was Winchester over again. Line after line dashed forward, and battery after battery boomed its parting salute to the flying enemy."

The Nineteenth Corps led the pursuit that night, and

the Eighth Vermont led the column of the corps, for twelve miles, to Woodstock, in darkness so dense that it was impossible to keep the proper distance between the skirmishers and the head of the column. As it drew near Woodstock it has a skirmish with Early's rear guard. This episode is thus described by Captain Howard: "Marching over and down a considerable hill, we noticed a light spring up in a small house by the roadside at the foot of the hill; and just as our regiment reached the house we were opened upon by a battery stationed on some high ground in advance of us. At the same moment, the timber which flanked the road on each side of us, at a little distance, was lit up by a blaze of musketry. The battery had our range, and burst its first shell directly over us, wounding several men. The position was unpleasant. My company was directly in front of the house where the light was, and I made a rush for it, and, finding the door fastened, dashed out a window, and reaching through, overturned the light with my sword. Colonel Thomas ordered the regiment to charge up the bank to the left, which was done with a rush, and the temerity of the enemy was punished by the cutting off and capturing of about 250 of their men, in command of a major." A shot from a Union battery had come up, completed the discomfiture of the rear guard of the enemy, and the brigade followed the latter to Woodstock, marching through the village just before dawn and bivouacking in a field beyond. In this little affair Lieutenant Edward F. Gould and two men, George Remick of company A; and J.B. Thomas, company F, were wounded. John F. Morrill of company G, straggled and was captured this night, and died several months after in the hands of the enemy.

The Eighth marched with Sheridan's army to Harrisonburg, and on to Mount Crawford, and back to Cedar Creek; and a detail of the Eighth was on picket near Tom's Brook on the 9th of October and saw the cavalry fight, in which the

First Vermont Cavalry had a gallant share, when General Rosser "lost everything he had on wheels," and learned not to crowd upon Sheridan's rear.

CEDAR CREEK.

On the 10th of October the Eighth went into camp with the Nineteenth Corps on the plateau north of Cedar Creek west of the pike, the right of Dwight's division resting on Meadow Brook. It lay here, intrenching and doing picket duty, till the battle of Cedar Creek, in which it was to have so brilliant a share, took place. The main features of this battle have been described in previous pages of this history, and need not be repeated here. It is worthy of note that as the field officer of the day for the Sixth Corps, on that famous 19th of October, was a Vermonter, so the field officer of the day for the Nineteenth Corps was a Vermonter; and that it was not through the portions of the picket line in charge of these two officers that the entrance of the enemy was effected. The latter was Colonel Stephen Thomas, and so far from being surprised, he was especially on the alert. During the afternoon previous, while examining with his field glass the ground in front of his picket line, Thomas had noticed two men, on foot, apparently reconnoitering the Union position. The circumstance looked suspicious, and he reported it to General Emory, who asked him to mention it to General Wright, then commanding the army, in Sheridan's absence. General Wright did not consider the matter especially important; but Thomas was far from easy in his mind. He posted his line with unusual care that night; and two hours before daylight next morning he was in the saddle and rode out upon the line, accompanied by Lieutenant Howe. All seeming to be quiet, he crossed the creek and rode up the pike a short distance beyond his picket line, to see what could be seen. Suddenly he was halted by an order, coming from a small body of cavalry, hardly visible in the fog and

darkness: "Surrender, you d---d Yankee!" "Not just yet; it's too early in the morning," replied the colonel; adding, as he wheeled his horse; "Besides, your language is not respectful." Putting spurs to his horse, Thomas made a hasty retreat, followed by several bullets. Satisfied that some hostile enterprise was on foot, Thomas now hurried back to the camp, which by that time had been aroused by the firing in the camp of the Eighth Corps. The troops of the Nineteenth Corps were falling into line; and as General McMillan, in the temporary absence of General Dwight, was commanding the First division, the command of the Second brigade fell to Colonel Thomas, and Major Mead took command of the Eighth Vermont. Two hundred men of the regiment were out on picket, leaving with the colors 16 officers and 150 men. These promptly fell in with the rest of the brigade, and were awaiting orders, when General Emory directed McMillan to send the brigade cross the pike, to check the Confederate columns, which, having overwhelmed the Eighth Corps, were advancing almost unopposed upon the front and flank of the Nineteenth Corps. To attempt to stop them was a desperate endeavor.³⁸ The portions of three brigades which were available for the purpose, had each to confront a division or more, and must fight without supports. Thomas's brigade was not full, one regiment, the Forty-seventh Pennsylvania, having been detached temporarily, while the other three—

³⁸ General Emory said to Colonel Thomas, when they met upon the same field many years after: "I never gave an order that caused me more pain than the one I gave you that morning. I knew it was sending you into the jaws of death, and I never expected to see you again." In a letter to Captain Geo. N. Carpenter, the historian of the Eighth, General Emory says: "When I sent the heroic colonel of the Eighth Vermont, Colonel Thomas, across the pike at Cedar Creek, I was immediately occupied in defending my own headquarters, and in changing the front of battle of the Nineteenth Corps, which was assailed in the rear by the total collapse of the Eighth Corps. But I well new the gallantry of the eighth Vermont and of the officers who commanded it; and I felt safe in doing the only thing that could have been done under the terrible circumstances surrounding us.

the Eighth Vermont, Twelfth Connecticut, and One Hundred and Sixtieth New York—did not take into line over 800 muskets all told. The brigade was ordered into a piece of woods beyond a hollow. Breasting the tide of fugitives of the Eighth Corps, which, thus divided, rolled by on either side to the rear, the brigade moved steadily to the position indicated. With company G advanced as skirmishers, the Eighth pushed into the woods, where it was at once assailed by overwhelming numbers. Flanked on the left by Ramseur, and charged in front and on the right by Kershaw, it was swept back through the woods, and as it came back its ranks were enfiladed by a line of the enemy, which had formed across the hollow through which they had advanced. The Eighth did not fall back without hard fighting. The opposing troops actually intermingle dunt he woods, and again in the ravine, and at one point a hand-to-hand struggle took place for the possession of the colors of the Eighth. After a bull-dog fight of half an hour's duration, the brigade, with the loss of half its fighting men—the loss of the Eighth Vermont being in still greater proportion³⁹—fell back to the pike, where it made a second stand. Driven from this position, it fell back from point to point, repeatedly halting to face the enemy, till it joined the division a mile and a half to the rear. Ramseur's and Kershaw's advance was thus delayed till the Sixth Corps could get into the position where it made its first stand, and the time thus gained was otherwise of the utmost consequence in enabling the Union generals to make their dispositions to say the general rout.

While Getty's division was making its fight east of Middletown, the Nineteenth Corps was ordered back by General Wright to a point a mile or more to the north, where it halted till Sheridan came up. During this halt, the portion of the regiment which had survived the fight on the “hill of

³⁹ “I never on any battlefield saw so much blood as on this. The firm limestone soil would not receive it.”—Captain De Forest.

sacrifice” was joined by the pickets, under Lieutenant Henry Carpenter—less some twenty of their number who were captured on the picket line in the early morning by Wharton's advance. This accession about doubled the number of bayonets in the line of the regiment. When Sheridan came the Nineteenth was advanced and formed the right of the general infantry line. Gordon's lines were within musket range in front, and there was some sharp exchange of musketry fire between the enemy and Thomas's brigade, which had hastily thrown up some frail breastworks of stones and rails, for its protection. About this time General Dwight returned to the division and General McMillan to his brigade, and Colonel Thomas resumed command of the Eighth, which after Major Mead was wounded in the early morning, had been commanded by Captain McFarland, a brave and capable officer. At last the order forward came; and springing over the breastworks, with the rest of the line, the Eighth dashed eagerly at the enemy. In the grand advance of Sheridan's lines the Eighth Vermont was, as it is believed, the first to break the enemy's line. The portion of this which it struck was Evans's brigade of Georgia troops, which gave way before the charge and inaugurated the rout of Gordon's division. General Early says: “A portion of the enemy penetrated an interval which was between Evans's brigade on the extreme left and the rest of the line, when that brigade gave way and Gordon's other brigades soon followed. But the “interval” which the Eight Vermont penetrated, was one which it made with its bayonets. A portion of Evans's brigade, thus cut off from the rest of Gordon's line, opened fire on Thomas from some timber in rear, whereupon, changing front to the right, he drove them from the position. Then turning back and joining the brigade in a half wheel to the left the Eighth followed the retreating enemy from point to point, taking many prisoners and halting at dusk in its camp of the morning. The work

of the Eighth this day has been vividly described by Herbert E. Hill. Of the stand made by Thomas's brigade in the early morning east of the pike, he says:

The Eighth Vermont, under Major Mead, occupied the most exposed position in the brigade, as the enemy, with deafening yells, were moving swiftly in from front and flank. As the great drops of rain and hail precede the hurricane, so now the leaden hail filled the air, seemingly from all directions, while bursting shell from the enemy's cannon on the opposite hill created havoc on our only flank not yet exposed to the rebel infantry. Regiment after regiment of the Eighth Corps had crumbled away and gone past to the rear; our two companion regiments, the Twelfth Connecticut and One Hundred and Sixtieth New York, terribly smitten, clung tenaciously to us, their love as cordially reciprocated; yet the sudden rush of the enemy from every direction, in their yellowish suits breaking through even the short intervals between the commands, forced each regiment to fight its own battle; and so the Eighth Vermont was practically alone for a time, as the swarming enemy broke upon it with almost resistless fury.

Suddenly a mass of rebels confronted the flags, and with hoarse shouts demanded their surrender. Defiant shouts went back "Never!" "Never!" And then, amid tremendous excitement, commenced one of the most desperate and ugly hand-to-hand conflicts over the flags that has ever been recorded. Men seemed more like demons than human beings, as they struck fiercely at each other with clubbed muskets and bayonets. A rebel of powerful build, but short in stature, attempted to bayonet Corporal Worden of the color-guard. Worden, a tall, sinewy man, who had no bayonet on his musket, parried his enemy's thrusts until some one, I think Sergeant Brown, shot the rebel dead. A rebel soldier then leveled his musket and shot Corporal Petrie, who held the colors, in the thigh,--a terrible wound, from which he died that night. He cried out: "Boys, leave me; take care of yourselves and the flag!" But in that vortex of hell men did not forget the colors; and as Petrie fell and crawled away to die, they were instantly seized and borne aloft by Corporal Perham, and were as quickly demanded again by a rebel who eagerly attempted to grasp them; but Sergeant Shores of the guard placed his musket at the man's breast and fired, instantly killing him. But now another flash, and a cruel bullet from the dead rebel's companion killed Corporal Per-

Ham, and the colors fell to the earth. Once more, amidst terrific yells, the colors went up, this time held by Corporal Blanchard—and the carnage went on. Lieutenant Cooper was seen to raise his arm in the air; and shouting, “Give it to them, boys!” he too was stricken with a death wound, and his white, sad, dead face is one of the living memories of the spot. Lieutenant Cooper's death was instantly avenged, however, by Sergeant Hill of company A, who shot the rebel. Hill then turned to assist a wounded companion who had fallen at his side, when an excited enemy made a lunge at him, his bayonet gliding between the body and arm. He sprang quickly away, and by an adroit movement knocked the rebel down with clubbed musket, and continued fighting until surrounded, and forced into the enemy's ranks, but refused to surrender, when a side shot tore away his belt, cartridge-box, and the flesh to his backbone, which crippled him to the ground, but when Gordon's divisions swept the spot, some of the rebels wearing blue coats supposed to be taken from Crook's men, Hill rose and joined them in the charge, shouting with the rebels, and actually firing harmless shots at his own regiment. He was once challenged by a rebel officer, to whom he answered that he belonged to the fourth Georgia. At the next stand made by the brigade on the pike, Hill rushed into the Union line, although exposed to the fire of his friends as well as his foes, and continued fighting till he sank to the ground from loss of blood, fell into the enemy's hands, and was again rescued at night.

The fight for the colors continued. A rebel discharged his rifle within a foot of Corporal Bemis of the color-guard, and wounded him, but was in turn shot dead by one of our men. A little later, Sergeant Shores and Sewall Simpson were standing together by the flags, when three rebels attacked and ordered them to surrender; but as they (the enemy) had just discharged their pieces, Simpson immediately fired and shot one, while Shores bayoneted the other. Sergeant Moran whose devotion to the flag was intensified by the regiment's forty-four days' heroic action before Port Hudson, marvelously escaped, for he was in the hottest of the fight, and held the United States flag all the while, several times assisting in protecting the colors. Twice during the morning the write was ordered to surrender, but respectfully declined. But as the enemy crowded on, a hundred rebels took the place of the dozen grasping for the flags. Sergeant Lamb, a noble, generous fellow, was shot through the lungs and taken prisoner, but later he fell into our hands again,

And then died in great agony. Captain Howard was twice wounded while within a few feet of the flags, and almost in the centre of the savage melee, but he managed to hobble away when the regiment was swept back. Captain Hall, honest and fearless, whose memory is sacred, gave his last order as he yielded to a deadly wounds. Captain Ford was shot through both legs by bullets coming from opposite directions, and fell flat on his face, but refused to surrender, struggled to his feet, and escaped in the excitement. Captain Smith, who so coolly led the skirmish line at Winchester, swells the bloody list. Major Mead, while fearlessly facing the enemy, was badly wounded in the side, and shortly turned the command over to Captain McFarland.

Later on, the brigade flag was in imminent danger of being captured by the enemy, when Captain Franklin, with half a dozen of his company, furiously attacked the rebels who were struggling for it, and rescued it from their clutch. Moving back he was wounded, but gallantly remained with the regiment during the afternoon. Lieutenant Cheney was mortally wounded and fell heavily to the ground. Lieutenant Bruce, while beating back a fore with his sword, was severely wounded. Lieutenant Welch, who so gallantly led the skirmish line at daybreak, and was then fighting like a tiger, was shot in the thigh, but stood his ground till the regiment went back. Private Austin received a terrible blow on his head from the butt of a rebel musket, instantly killing him. Captain Shattuck, after receiving a bad wound, bravely continued with his men, and Lieutenants Sargent and Carpenter joined the list of heroes who shed their blood around the flags; while scores of brave fellows in the ranks were torn and shattered in a manner fearful to behold.

Over one-half the regiment was wounded or killed, when the third color-bearer, Corporal Blanchard, was also killed, and the silken colors, their soft folds pierced with bullets and their third bearer, weltering in his blood, bowed low to the earth amidst triumphant yells of the enemy; but to their chagrin in a few seconds it was again flaunting in their faces. Bleeding, stunned, and being literally cut to pieces, but refusing to surrender colors or men, falling back only to prevent being completely encircled, the noble regiment had accomplished its mission.

Colonel Thomas with his immortal brigade blocked the advance of the rebel divisions, and actually held the Confederate army at bay until the Union commander could form the lines of grounds of his own choice. Is this terrible charge

the Eighth Vermont, the Twelfth Connecticut, and the One Hundred and Sixtieth New York were almost annihilated. Our own regiment lost over 100 gallant fellows, out of 159 engaged, and 13 out of 16 commissioned officers, who were killed or wounded in the fearful struggle, and many of those who fell had been shot several times.

It was useless to stand against such fearful odds; and the regiment, which had maintained its organization and gloriously performed its mission in holding the enemy in check, now almost completely surrounded by dense masses of rebel infantry, was for a few moments tossed about as a leaf in the small, fitful circle of a whirlwind, and then by a mighty gust lifted from the ground and swept back on the field; but not without the flags.

When nearly encircled and driven from the pike, the command of Colonel Thomas made another stand northeast of Sheridan's headquarters, to support the only piece of Union artillery that had not been withdrawn from the field. For this purpose the colonel collected fugitives from the Eighth Corps, and with his own brigade formed a line, and held the position until a portion of a wagon train entangled in Meadow Run could pass on and escape. Then instead of moving directly to the rear, as the rest of the Union troops had done, Thomas took his command round the front of the Belle Grove House, and made a second stand just west of it. Then he crossed Meadow Run and made a third stand in the rear of the camp deserted by the Sixth Corps, fighting the enemy all the way back for a mile.

Still, notwithstanding the advantages gained and the gallant contest for every foot of ground, the enemy was haughty, arrogant, and aggressive, and our army had been driven back several miles, when Sheridan, at 9:45 o'clock, mounted on his black horse Winchester, swept up from the pike amid great cheering into the midst of his broken regiments,--a great light in a dark valley. The despair of the morning's awful struggle was now soon to give way to the ecstasy of victory.

Sheridan hastily formed a line across the valley for the purpose of checking the advancing foe, and to that end phantom breastworks had been hurriedly thrown up by means that under almost any other circumstances would have been thought out of the question, and useless. Small trees were cut down and thrown in front; with bayonets earth and stones were dug up or loosened, and with coffee cups this was thrown in among the brush and leaves, together forming a slight protection against the enemy bullets, whenever he should ad-

vance again. Imagine then the surprise and amazement when Sheridan dashed over the field and gave us the order to advance and meet the enemy in open fight.

It was now life or death, and every man knew it. The order was instantly obeyed, and what were left of the Second brigade sprang over the little earthworks, and moved rapidly to the front until they approached the timber. Here were scattering trees with thick underbrush, from which there suddenly burst a sheet of flame and smoke, before which the regiment slightly recoiled. Crashes of musketry rolled down the entire line to the left. Sheridan was riding furiously among the troops. Regimental officers were shouting their commands, and the hideous "rebel yell" rent the air.

Quickly the regiment dashed into the thick cedars, pouring a rapid volley into the very faces of hidden foes. This rush brought us into close quarters; and, our own volleys exhausted, we again met spattering crashes of musketry following in quick succession, and the regiment once more partially recoiled before the withering fire. Commanding officers vied with each other in urging the men on, and the instant the enemy's volley slackened, the regiment swept forward and upon the rebel line, which was only a few yards distant and in plain sight; only the low cedar bushes separated us. A mighty shout went up, and at that instant we realized that the enemy's line was giving way, and we occupied the ground they held a moment before.

It is useless to attempt to describe the excitement of the next few moments, as the regiment flung itself, so to speak, upon the enemy. After the terrible experience in the morning, it was but natural in this moment of victory that the men should go to the opposite extreme of exultation; and again, as in the morning, virtually we were fighting alone, for the woods to our left shut off the main army from our view; but by the roar of battle and the wild shouts and yells which rose above the din of artillery, we could easily determine the position of the Union and rebel lines to our left.

As a fact, there was a continuous line along our entire front; and as far as we could see to the left and some distance beyond our right flank we had driven this line back, but as yet were unable to pierce it. Every inch of the ground was stubbornly contested. The opportunity time for the brigade had come upon which we now entered. Owing to the clearing and favorable condition of the ground, Thomas's own regiment gained a decided advance, pierced the enemy like an arrowhead, and had the fortune to witness the first

break in their line. We emerged from the woods, and to our front was an open field for a quarter of a mile, unobstructed save by the tall dried grass and fragments of a zigzag rail fence. The brigade swept into the field on the run. Owing to the nature of the ground, the men crowded together, but just as the rebel line was reached it broke and with wild shouts the brigade dashed ahead. We pierced the enemy's line of battle, and from that moment his doom was sealed. All was now confusion; a portion of the enemy's line surged down to the left and into the woods. Others retreated on the run in our front, while another portion, perhaps to the number of two or three hundred, rushed to the right and into the timber, which offered the most natural and immediate protection.

In the meantime Colonel Thomas's horse was shot and fell to the ground. Suddenly, spattering shots, quickly increasing to a rapid fire, came down from the trees on the right, where a body of rebels had boldly returned to the attack and opened a murderous fire into the right flank and rear of the brigade.

I stood near our regimental colors, which had halted, probably on account of the accident to the colonel, and shouted to the men to return or the flags would be captured. The sharp firing from the right instantly attracted the attention of the regiment, and in squads and singly within five minutes most of them returned to the colors. The enemy's fire was rapidly returned, the men firing at will, when by order of Colonel Thomas the brigade with shouts and yells charged into the woods. The enemy broke in great confusion and ran to the south and west. The brigade then swung to the front again, and with excited shouts and cheers, accompanied by Colonel Thomas on foot, rushed on after the now thoroughly defeated and disheartened foe.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ "The attack was brilliantly made; the enemy's resistance was very determined. His line of battle overlapped mine, and by turning with that portion of it on the flank of the Nineteenth Corps caused a slight momentary confusion. This movement was checked, however, by a charge of McMillan's brigade on the re-entering angle, and the enemy's flanking party was cut off."—Gen. Sheridan's report.

"Then followed one of the most extraordinary reversals in the history of any war. Sheridan moved around our flank, swept down it, and broke our line all to fragments."—Gen. Gordon's account; Burr's history.

"The contest was very close for a time, but at length the left of the enemy's line broke and disintegration soon followed along the whole line."—U. S. Grant; personal Memoirs, Vol. II.

"In the final attack of the day, which decided the fate of Early, it was an attack by Dwight's division which made the beginning of the end."—B. W. Crowninshield.

It was a singular coincidence that the brigade which marched out and met the fiercest fire in the morning, and suffered the heaviest loss, was the first to pierce the enemy's line in the afternoon. There was also a grim satisfaction in knowing that the swath was being cut through the identical divisions from which we received the combined assault at early dawn.

Here again human nature showed itself as some of the men jumped up and down, shouted, and threw their hats or caps into the air in their excitement. I remember distinctly at that moment looking back and seeing a line approaching from the rear and left, which I suppose to have been the troops General McMillan mentions in his report as the two regiments of the First brigade, ordered to swing to the right and assist in dislodging the hidden foe. But as a fact they did not come within hailing distance until after we had charged and routed the enemy.

Early's left flank (Evans's brigade) was not completely shattered, and his demoralized forces retreated rapidly toward his centre, with the exception of the few who went off to the right. Then we charged down into Gordon's other brigades, and soon found ourselves passing down diagonally in front of the main army. Sheridan was in at the break. He was mounted on his gray charger, to which he had changed from the black horse Winchester, and once during the fight was no near we could have touched him.

After this there were vain attempts to check our onward course; but there was hardly a halt of the regiment as we pressed through timber or clearing with two or three exceptions,--the first, when we encountered two pieces of artillery, and on one occasion felt almost sure they were within our grasp; but after emptying themselves of grape and canister, they were hauled off to our left and front, to annoy us again further on. The second, when we were crowding on them too closely, they savagely turned and shot down Corporal Worden,⁴¹ our temporary color-bearer. This only seemed to rouse the regiment to further effort, and it pressed fiercely on again.

Wounded and dead men marked the enemy's pathway as we rushed over logs, fences and through thickets, till the regiment emerged from the timber and came out on the brow

⁴¹ Worden carried the ball in this thigh for over nineteen years, when it was removed by a surgeon in New York city

of a hill, in advance of any other Union troops, and in full view of almost the entire rebel army. What a sight! Such as our army never beheld before, and never would again; the event of a lifetime. We had completed so much of a turn as to face nearly east, and double the enemy's left back upon their centre, and stood on their flank overlooking what then became a great, rushing, turbulent, retreating army, without line or apparent organization. At that moment, the Sixth Corps, seeing our men across the skirt of the meadow, mistook them for Confederates, and fired upon them. But the regiment ceased firing, and waved its flags, to enable the Sixth corps to identify it.

This danger soon past, the regiment resumed firing with a vengeance, only to attract the attention of the enemy's artillery; and a battery of two guns opened on us from a little eminence opposite our right and across the meadow. The first shot buried itself in the bank below; then a second, and a little nearer; while the third plunged underneath us, tearing up the ground and whirling the writer completely about. The regiment at this point lost several badly wounded, and two or three were killed.

An officer rode up from the rear and hurriedly ordered Colonel Thomas to charge and take the battery. "That's what we are after, sir," replied Thomas; "I'm only waiting for support." As a fact, the Eighth regiment at that moment was entirely alone. But the order to move forward was given, and the regiment dashed down the bank skirting the meadow and alongside the flying fragments of rebel regiments, closely followed by the Twelfth Connecticut, cheering as they ran. The battery saw us coming, and fired with redoubled energy, but our close proximity and the depression of the ground saved us from loss, and in their confusion the gunners fired wildly, so that most of the storm intended for us fell short or swept just over our heads. The guns were hastily hauled down the opposite slope out of our clutches, to join in the grand rush across Cedar Creek, under a shower of bullets from our victorious rifles.

As the pursuing infantry reached again the ground where their morning camp had stood, the Eighth Vermont still in advance, a halt of half an hour was made, for bringing in our wounded men, some of whom fell in the morning and had lain all day on the disputed field, and were shivering in the raw night air. Fire was built, and coffee prepared for the refreshment of the men after their long fast; but be-

fore it could be served, orders came to advance again, and, leaving the wounded to the surgeons, and the dead uncared for, on we went again, after the flying foe.

The enemy crossed Cedar Creek, hurried on and entrenched near midnight behind their old breastworks, beyond Fort Banks and Strasburg. But our regiment followed closely, and, crawling up under their works, found themselves on the very spot they had occupied the night before the battle of Fisher's Hill. The men lay on their arms, under strict orders to observe silence and not even to speak aloud. But before daylight Thomas moved his regiment back to Fort Banks. Rosser's cavalry still hovered on the pike below, and the Union cavalry coming up, the regiment had a chance to watch from its position a brief but sharp engagement before the rebel horsemen fled.

The Eighth Vermont entered the fight nearly two hours earlier than the other Vermont troops. It received the fiercest charge of the day. Its relative loss of numbers actually engaged in the morning fight was heavier than that of any other Union regiment. It led the charge back, and was a part of the "arrow-head" which had the honor to first pierce the enemy's line of battle in the afternoon;--maintaining that advance, it was at midnight farther to the front in pursuit of the enemy than any of Sheridan's infantry. Thus closed the battle.

With not over 350 effective men on the field, and at no time having in line over 200 bayonets, the Eighth Vermont this day lost 15 killed, 82 wounded and 2 missing—total, 124; a percentage of casualties only exceeded among the Vermont regiments by that of the Fifth regiment at Savage's Station.

Among the killed were Lieutenant A. K. Cooper of company A; Captain Edward Hall of company E, received shot through the bowels, from which he died nine days after; and First Lieutenant Nathan C. Cheney of company K, also received a mortal wound, from which he died two days after. Among the wounded were Major Mead, who received a flesh wound in the side in the morning, but after having his wound dressed returned to duty at night; Captain A. B. Franklin, in the leg; Captain W. H. Smith, in

head and arm; Captain G. O. Ford, shot through both thighs; Captain S. E. Howard, who received two wounds, one a severe one in the arm, which occasioned his discharge six weeks after; Adjutant S. W. Shattuck, leg; First Lieutenant A. J. Sargent, severely in hip; Lieutenant James Welch, severely in leg, occasioning his discharge four months later; Lieutenant Wm. H. Spencer, severely in thigh, occasioning his discharge five months after; Lieutenant Franklin R. Carpenter; Lieutenant Henry H. Newton, leg broken by fall of his horse while on detached service; and Lieutenant Lewis Child, on the brigade staff, also injured by the fall of his horse, which was shot under him. The officers thus killed or permanently disabled were among the most meritorious officers in the line, and their loss was deeply felt in the command.⁴²

⁴² The casualties among the rank and file were as follows: Killed—Lucius Estes of company A; Corporal George F. Blanchard, James S. Bigelow and William J. Fadden of company B; John H. Day of company D; George E. Austin of company G; Sergeant Jonathan V. Allen and George E. Ormsby of company H; Sergeant Lewis H. Lamb, Alonzo Mills and Charles F. Phillips of company I; Corporal Lyman F. Perham, Franklin Russell and Paschal P. Shores of company K.

Colonel Thomas, in his report, recommended Captain Franklin for promotion, at the first vacancy, making especial reference to his service in rescuing the brigade headquarters flag from capture; he also made especial mention of Captain McFarland for brave and efficient conduct in command of the regiment.

With Cedar Creek the hard fighting of the Eighth Vermont ended, and nor more men fell in its ranks by hostile bullets.

On the 12th of November the regiment was at Newtown in the valley, with the Nineteenth Corps, when Merritt and Custer engaged Rosser's and Lomax's cavalry. In this action a New York infantry regiment, which had been advanced to support the cavalry, was driven in through the picket line of the Nineteenth Corps. This was held near the turnpike by the Eighth Vermont; and the men piled some breastworks of rails, and kept back Payne's Confederate cavalry till Sheridan sent out supports, and the enemy were driven across Cedar Creek.

During November and December the following promotions took place: Major J. B. Mead was made lieutenant colonel; Captain A. B. Franklin, company H, major; First Lieutenant Henry Carpenter, company F, adjutant; First Lieutenant L. M. Hutchinson, captain of company E; Adjutant S. W. Shattuck, captain company H; M. L. Hodgkins, first lieutenant company F; James Welch, company G, first lieutenant; Second Lieutenant Joseph N. Dunton, company H, first lieutenant; Second Lieutenant Ezra H. Brown, company A, first lieutenant; Henry H. Newton, company A, second lieutenant.

When the Sixth Corps left the valley, the Nineteenth remained with Sheridan, and the Eighth Vermont lay for five weeks at "Camp Russell," at Newtown, throwing up breastworks and preparing winter quarters. It was not to winter there, however. On the 20th of December came orders to

Break camp, and in the afternoon the Eighth started down the valley with the corps, marched through Winchester in the evening, and continued on till nearly midnight, making a march of about twenty miles. The men bivouacked on frozen ground, woke in a severe snowstorm, and pushed on next morning in the snow to Summit Point, half way between Winchester and Harper's Ferry. Here the troops stockaded their tents and built block-houses along the railroad—five miles of which were guarded by the brigade—for protection against Mosby's irregular cavalry.

The most exciting event at Summit Point was the capture by guerrillas of eleven men of a party of twenty who were out chopping wood. These were taken to Richmond, but were soon after exchanged and rejoined the regiment.

The first of the new year, 1865, found the regiment at Summit Point, with 675 men on the roll, of whom 470 were reported present for duty. During the month of January the regiment was orphaned by the departure of Colonel Thomas, whose three years' term was about to expire. Under the rules of the War Department he could not be re-mustered with his present rank, as the regiment did not have men enough to entitle it to a colonel; and it already had a lieutenant colonel. Under the circumstances, Colonel Thomas felt constrained to apply to be mustered out. With what reluctance his request was granted, is shown by the endorsements of his brigade and corps commanders. That of General McMillan stated that he forwarded the request "with great regret, as Colonel Thomas is a most valuable officer to the service, and his place cannot be easily filled." General Emory's was as follows: "The general commanding regrets exceedingly to lose the services of Colonel Thomas, whom he has twice recommended to be brevetted for gallantry and meritorious services; and he yet entertains the hope that Colonel Thomas will receive the promotion that he merits, and return to the corps." Ten days afterwards Thomas was ap-

pointed brigadier general, his commission bearing date of February 1st, 1865. Before he was again assigned to active service the war ended, and he did not return to the field. It is the simple truth to say that few, if any, officers in the army had more of the respect and affection of the officers and men of their commands than he.

Returning to Vermont, Colonel Thomas interested himself in procuring recruits for the Eighth, enough of whom joined the regiment the last week in February to enable Lieut. Colonel Mead to be mustered as colonel on the 4th of March.⁴³

On the 5th of March more recruits arrived, carrying the aggregate of the regiment up to 781, with 662 for duty. April 4th the regiment with the rest of the corps and other troops, under General Hancock, General Sheridan having left the valley with the cavalry corps, moved up the valley to Newtown; and a week later returned to Summit Point.

The following promotions in the regiment were made early in the year 1865: February 23d, Second Lieutenant Geo. G. Hutchins, company E, to be first lieutenant; Sergeant Francis E. Warren, company I, to be first lieutenant, and then, April 18th, to be captain; Sergeant Newell H. Hibbard, company E, second lieutenant; Sergeant George W. Hill, company K, second lieutenant; March 3d, First Lieutenant Joseph N. Dunton, company H, captain of company C; Hospital Steward Wm. H. Haskins, captain of company D, vice Captain A. E. Getchell, whose term had expired; Lieutenant James W. Smith, company K, captain; Lieutenant Waitstill R. Pettie, company H, first lieutenant;

⁴³ Colonel Mead was a native of Stratham, N. H., but came to Vermont in his boyhood, and at the opening of the war was a farmer in Randolph, Vt. He enlisted, at the age of 30, in January, '62, went out as second lieutenant of company G, and rose by merit through the intermediate grades to the colonelcy, sustaining always the character of a capable officer, a good disciplinarian and a Christian gentleman. He was prominent in civil life after the war, and died at Randolph, in December, 1887.

Sergeant Martin L. Bruce, company G, first lieutenant; Sergeant Horace P. Emerson, company D, second lieutenant; Sergeant Hymenius A. Davis, company H, second lieutenant; Sergeant Abner N. Flint, company G, second lieutenant. April 6th, Sergeant Curtis W. Lynn, company B, second lieutenant; April 18th, Sergeant Henry W. Downs, company I, second lieutenant.

Rev. Thomas Bayne of Irasburgh, was commissioned chaplain, February 23d.

April 15th the regiment, with other troops, was hurried to Washington by rail, and formed part of the cordon of infantry that was drawn around the city of Washington to prevent the escape of John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of President Lincoln. The men stood on guard through the night. Next day it became known that Booth had escaped beyond the encircling line, and the regiment returned to Summit Point. At this time the last squad of recruits, 21 in number, joined the regiment, bringing its aggregate up to 847, with 713 for duty.

April 21st the regiment left the Shenandoah Valley for Washington, where it encamped at Brightwood, near Fort Stevens, and during the trials of the assassins of President Lincoln and Secretary Seward, it was stationed, as part of the military reserve, near the Arsenal, in which the assassins were confined.

May 23d the regiment participated in the review of the Nineteenth Corps by President Johnson.

June 1st Dwight's division of the Nineteenth Corps was ordered to Savannah, and the men of the Eighth, much against their will, for they had seen enough of the South as soldiers, embarked at Alexandria, in a steamer which was to sail next morning.

But almost at the last moment, Governor Smith, who was in Washington, procured from the Secretary of War a revocation of the order, so far as the Eighth Vermont was con-

cerned. At two o'clock next morning, two hours before they were to sail, Colonel Mead received an order to report to General Wright, commanding the Sixth Corps, and the regiment joyfully disembarked. This order detached the regiment from the brigade, division and corps with which it had so long been associated. It parted from them to their sincere regret and with the respect and esteem of all. "The Eighth Vermont," said General Emory in a letter to Captain Geo. N. Carpenter, written in 1885, "was a solid and reliable regiment, that could be depended on under the scorching heats of the South as well as in the rigorous winter climate of the Shenandoah." After a week in a pleasant camp near Alexandria, the regiment joined the other Vermont troops in camp with the Sixth Corps near Munson's Hill. Here it participated in the review of the Vermont troops by Governor Smith on the 7th of June and in the review of the Sixth Corps by President Johnson on the 8th. The men took especial pains to prepare for these reviews, and the regiment was highly complimented for its fine appearance.⁴⁴

The regiment remained two weeks longer at Munson's Hill, when the recruits whose terms would expire within three months were mustered out on the 21st of June. A week later the remainder were mustered out. The regiment left Washington next day, June 29th, and arrived at Burlington July 2d, with 650 officers and men. Marching to the City Hall, the regiment was received by Colonel L. B. Platt, of the citizens' Reception Committee, and welcomed home by Rev. N. P. Foster. Colonel Mead, who was present, though suffering from injuries received in a railroad accident on the way home, from which he narrowly escaped with his life, responded fittingly. A collation was served in the hall

⁴⁴ "The Eighth Vermont, a veteran regiment, four years in the service, commanded by Colonel John B. Mead, was especially noticed for its excellent marching and the perfect alignment of its bayonets. Every soldier bore in his cap a sprig of cedar, emblem of this State."—*Washington Intelligencer*, June 9th, 1865.

By the ladies, and the soldiers acknowledge their welcome by hearty cheers for the ladies and citizens of Burlington, adding three cheers for their old commander, General Thomas. On the 8th and 10th of July they were paid off, and departed for their homes.

The final statement of the regiment shows that a larger number of its members re-enlisted than of any other Vermont regiment except the Seventh; and that more men of the Eighth were promoted to be officers in other regiments than of any other Vermont regiment, no less than 33 of its members receiving commissions in the regiments of the United States colored troops, which were officered by white men. Those so commissioned were Henry C. Abbott, Samuel H. Bailey, Charles W. Blake, Isaac Blake, Orwell Blake, Frank Brown, Lucius N. Bissell, Rufus H. Clark, Charles C. Cotton, William K. Crosby, Charles A. Cutler, Charles B. Fullington, Oscar W. Goodridge, Hiram P. Haney, Augustine P. Hawley, Lucius C. Herrick, Harvey O. Kiser, Rufus Kinsley, Sumner W. Lewis, James A. Matthews, Edward D. Mooney, James Noyes, Parker J. Noyes, William S. Peabody, George W. Peavey, Hiram E. Perkins, William F. Peters, Elijah K. Prouty, Harvey L. Smith, Stillman Smith, Warren B. Stickney, John M. Thompson, Lewis R. Titus, Michael B. Tobin, William G. Westover, Azariah F. Wild, Lemuel I. Winslow, and Charles G. Wood.

The list of battles and actions in which the Eighth Vermont took part is as follows:

THE BATTLES OF THE EIGHTH VERMONT.

Occupation of New Orleans,	May, 1862.
Boutte Station and Bayou des Allemands,	Sept. 4, 1862.
Steamer Cotton,	Jan. 14, 1863.
Bisland,	April 12, 1863.
Port Hudson, assault,	May 27, 1863.
Port Hudson, night engagement,	June 10, 1863.
Port Hudson, assault,	June 14, 1863.
Opequon,	Sept. 19, 1864.
Fisher's Hill,	Sept. 21 and 22, 1864.
Cedar Creek,	Oct. 19, 1864.
Newtown,	Nov. 12, 1864.

The final statement of the eighth regiment is as follows:

FINAL STATEMENT.

Original members—com. officers, 36; enlisted men, 980; total	1016
Gains	
Recruits, 752; transfers from other regiments, 4; total	756
Aggregate	1772
Losses	
Killed in action—com. officers, 2; enlisted men, 69; total	71
Died of wounds—com. officers, 2; enlisted men, 31; total	33
Died of disease—com. officers, 6; enlisted men, 207; total	213
Died (unwounded) in Confederate prisons, 20; from accident, 8; total	28
Total of deaths	345
Honorably discharged—com. officers, resigned, 16; for wounds and disability, 6; enlisted men, for wounds, 12; for disability, 244; total	258
Dishonorably discharged—cm. Officers, 3; enlisted men, 6; total	9
Total discharged	267
Promoted to U. S. A. and other regiment—officers, 3; enlisted men, 35; total	38
Transferred to Veteran Reserve Corps, signal service, regular army, etc.	62
Deserted, 86; dropped from the rolls, 1; unaccounted for, 4; total	91
Mustered out—com. officers, 46; enlisted men, 923; total	969
Aggregate	1772
Total wounded	236
Total re-enlisted	231