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From the 9th Regiment.
Macomb, Ill., Jan. 11, '63.
Mr. Editor:—You have no doubt seen this had an account of the advance of Gen. Rosecrank's army from Nashville; of the great battle of Stone's River, near Murfreesboro, and the final success of the army, after five days' fighting; but probably have not heard where the 9th Illinois was, nor what share it had in the terrible drama. Of this we know very little, and we are glad to see the precise arrangement of the army corps and divisions on the march, and during the battle, but I do know where the third brigade, Gen. Gross commanding, of the 2d Division, Gen. Palmer's was, and what it did—and especially our own regiment, 51st and 52nd, and the 53rd, which were all advanced from Nashville on the morning of Dec. 29th. Gen. McCook's on the right, Gen. Thomas' in the center, and Gen. Critchfield's on the left. Gen. Palmer's division was in the latter, and the third brigade, in which we are, was near the center of the corps. Some 10 miles from Nashville the enemy's pickets were driven in, and a sharp skirmish was continued till we came in sight of Lawrence, 15 miles from Nashville, when the enemy made a stand. The 2d Division was not engaged, and our brigade halted for the night, on the left of the pike, about 3 1/4 or 4 miles from the town. It had rained nearly all the night and continued a good part of the night. The morning of the 27th was foggy, and very little advance was made until near noon. About this time the enemy were driven from the town, and the army again advanced along the pike—some skirmishing in the advance. We halted for the night near Stewart's Creek, some five miles from Lawrence, and ten miles from Murfreesboro. We had rained all the afternoon, and we thought we were having a pretty rough time of it. Our camp was on one side of a large creek, and the enemy had the three were not yet out. The creek was about a mile in our front, and we could see the camp fires of the enemy across the bluffs on the opposite side. On the morning of the 29th we were moved to the brow of the hills, bluffs of the creek, and formed in line of battle, where we remained all day, the enemy's pickets in full view on the opposite bluffs. On the morning of the 29th the 36th Indiana formed in line of battle on our right, and we advanced, our left resting on the pike. We waded the creek about waist deep, and advanced down the pike in line of battle. Heard heavy skirmishing several miles to our right, and knew that the whole army was in motion. We started in line of battle at day-break, our brigade (4th) arranged as follows: Mendell's Battery on the right, 34th Illinois, 36th Indiana and 24th Kentucky in front line of battle, 6th and 8th Ohio in the second line of battle, some 50 or 100 yards in front. Two companies of each advanced regiment were some 4 or 5 hundred yards ahead as skirmishers, and three or four times during the day were engaged, but as soon as a gun of the battery could get into position the enemy fell back. At dark we were about 2 miles from Murfreesboro and within about a half mile of Stone's River, our regiment's left resting on the pike, our right in the edge of a thick cedar grove, the 36th Indiana in the cedars, the 24th Kentucky and 6th Ohio. Immediately in front of our regiment was a cotton field of some 40 acres, at the southeast corner of which a very large brick house was burning when we came up. I learn the enemy set fire to the outbuildings to make room for a battery and the house caught fire accidentally from them. The railroad from Nashville runs a short distance to the left of the pike, opposite where we lay, and crosses the pike some sixty rods below the cotton field; from this intersection of the railroad and pike the river is about half a mile. The river is very crooked, and the bend where the pike crosses is the nearest point to Murfreesboro. The railroad for a mile or more back of the intersection of the pike, runs nearly parallel with the general course of the river.

On the morning of the 30th the 6th and 24th Ohio took position about 150 yards in our advance and were skirmishing all day. On our right we heard constant skirmishing, occasionally artillery, and once in the afternoon quite an engagement took place—understood that Gen. McCook was getting

his corps into position. We had two men wounded in skirmishing yesterday, and today the 6th and 24th Ohio lost several men. The enemy had a line of sharpshooters lying behind the railroad in wide pits, which harassed our front line, and many a ball during the day whistled through the lines of the 24th. We knew a great battle was about to be fought and the boys were anxious for the ball to come. On the morning of the 31st the 6th and 24th Ohio, and our brigade were retired about 300 yards.

At daylight the fight had commenced on the extreme right of the army and gradually grew nearer, and partly to our rear. At 8-1/2 or 9 o'clock stragglers and runaways began to come from the right who said their regiments and brigades were cut all to pieces. It was evident the whole army had been flanked during the night and we since learned that Gen. Johnson's division was surprised and cut to pieces, almost without firing a gun. Our front was now changed to the west and we lay parallel with the pike about 75 yards from the 6th and 24th Ohio in our front, in very thick cedar woods. Now came a host of fugitives from the broken corps on our right. Terrible fighting, hundreds, yes thousands of men, many of whom had thrown away guns, cartridge-box and knapsacks, each looking as though he expected death at the next moment; terror the only expression on their countenances, as through our lines they came, on a run or a brisk walk, panting from fear and fatigue, and they could not get away. Soon the firing told that the enemy were sweeping all before them, and coming directly upon us, from our new front and right. Soon the regiment of our brigade, 6th and 24th Ohio, were engaged, and for a few minutes we hoped they would be able to hold the thick cedar woods. They fought well, but were soon driven to fall back. Their officers tried in vain to rally them, they were rapidly getting into confusion and a run. Before they came out of the woods, our regiment had laid down to avoid the random shots that whistled over us. On came the 6th and 24th on a full retreat. Our officers joined in trying to rally the 24th, a part of which passed directly over our regiment, but could prevail upon but few to stop and fall in with us. They rallied and formed forty yards in our rear. Two batteries opened, throwing shell and grape directly over us. Soon the enemy came out of the woods, some 150 or 200 yards in front. Our boys raised with a shout and gave them a volley, then fell and loaded and fired again. We were partly protected by low ledge of rocks, and the boys fired as fast as they could load, and with the help of the batteries drove the enemy back into the woods, and soon after the fire ceased. The leaders chose which had fallen like hail for the present was ended, and we hoped the foe was effectually repulsed. While we were thus engaged, we had been exposed to a cross fire from a regiment of the enemy, who had advanced up the pike, on the left-hand side. We had several men wounded while in this position, but none killed.

Shortly after the enemy were driven back—our front was changed by a left half-wheel, and we marched forward in a line of battle, and were engaged by the enemy, and during the night. Across the cotton field on the left-hand side, (west) of the Pike a Regiment of the enemy had taken position, lying down, and on our right, which was in the edge of the cedar woods, we could see a heavy force apparently coming upon the Brigade at our right. Our Regiment opened a brisk fire upon them, as soon as they came into this position which told upon the Regiment across the Pike as we could easily see. After a few minutes, Col. Gross, commanding the Brigade retired, the right of our Regiment to make room for a battery which swept the advancing columns of the enemy as they rushed up towards the cedar woods. The Regiment immediately on the right of ours fired briskly for a few minutes, but for some reason fell back, fighting steadily as they came. Now the enemy came, into the cedars and the balls came upon us in a perfect shower from that direction. Our Regiment was now greatly exposed, the extreme right especially, for the enemy were coming in upon us through the thick cedars giving us a

perfect enfilading fire. Here we laid under the heaviest kind of a fire some minutes, and when the enemy were within about 40 yards, the right was retired so as to front the enemy, and fought desperately, every man working as though his life depended upon his own exertions. The enemy continued to advance, and were gradually coming into our rear, and our right was again retired to about some ten or fifteen minutes longer. The "Board of Trade" battery was now throwing shells, grape and canister over our right and Mendell's battery over our left, sweeping trees and chimney at each discharge. The enemy were giving us a most galling fire as we lay in this position, the balls falling like hail in a heavy storm. At last, when we had been the only Regiment west of the Pike for some 30 minutes longer, the order came to retire, which was heard and obeyed by the left and center, and afterwards the companies on the right followed across the pike, and then the railroad. The regiment was now in considerable confusion, from the fact that both wings had been severely retired, and the left and center had the start of the right. The Board of Trade battery saved us very much, as we were falling back, and deserves great credit for the pertinacity with which they held their position by the railroad. Our great loss was at the ledge of rocks, and in falling back to the railroad, here 25 of our regiment fell dead, and scores were wounded. The enemy had found the fire too hot for them, and about the time we fell back they retired into the cedar woods. Our Regiment rallied on the west side of the railroad where they were under the fire of one of the enemy's batteries, placed on the opposite side of the river. As we were marched back some distance, say half a mile northward, we were again engaged, and were driven to fall back. Our wounded friends—many of whom were suffering from the effects of the fire—were wandering about in confusion, and we were unable to find the balance of the regiment. The regiment was not engaged in the fighting that day—it had been under heavy fire more than two hours, and was badly cut to pieces, but the actual loss we could not then determine. The signal made by our brigade seems to have turned the tide of battle. Other divisions rapidly came to the assistance of Gen. Palmer's division, and the enemy were driven back, most of them across the river that evening. The next day, Jan. 1st, but little fighting was done, though there was a great deal of maneuvering for position, and some heavy cannonading. Our Regiment remained near the railroad near the river all day, and were not engaged. The wounded were being collected at hospitals, and numbered thousands. On Friday, 2nd, General Van Cleve's division crossed the river nearly opposite where we had the hard fight on Wednesday, and advanced a short distance toward Murfreesboro. Our Brigade crossed and took position on a hill as a reserve, the left of the 8th rested on the river bluff, and the right extended out across the hill, an open field in front, the 6th Ohio and 24th Ind., in the same line of battle. The 24th Ky., and 24th Ohio nearly at right angle with the 8th Ind., fronting east, or a little southeast. In the afternoon Van Cleve's division made a slight advance, and were attacked by Gen. Breckinridge with five brigades of Infantry, some artillery and a heavy force of cavalry. Van Cleve's division fought bravely a short time, and then fell back, brigade by brigade, losing most of their artillery—many crossing into the river where our main force lay. Out of the woods into the open field on our front they came, in the greatest possible confusion. The whole division was in full retreat, and taking one of those terrible stampedes which an army will when routed and pressed by the enemy. Each man seemed to be looking only for himself, and making every possible effort to get out of danger. Out of the woods, pursuing them came the brigades of the enemy in most splendid line of battle, their colors flying and victory apparently theirs. The 8th brigade had made a slight breastwork of logs, rails, &c., behind which they were lying, and was shot and fired until the enemy was within about 300 yards. Then the 8th Ill. and 6th Ohio rallied, with a yell and gave them a volley, and loaded and

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