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F. W. Haskell, Esq.

Waterville, Me.

My dear friend,

Thank you for your kindness. It is difficult for small men to write without being abusive. I have never seen a statement yet of what it was at Chancellorsville necessary to have done <sup>^^^</sup> excepting a multitude of suggestions of intrenchments, skirmishers, reconnaissances, etc etc, the things which were done. The Corps was just precisely where it was ordered, and there it could have made a good fight by simply using our reserves, infantry and artillery, to extend or to cover the right flank. As it was, a part of the Corps delayed Jackson for at least an hour. Could I have been given time to change front with a few regiments, and get support for my reserve artillery, we should have held the enemy in check much longer. The best defense however I think for our not obtaining a victory against Jackson's attack, is that he had over 25,000 men, and with them assaulted not to exceed 8,500. The implication is that <sup>neither</sup> Devens nor myself reported to General Hooker the information brought to us. As far as I am concerned the implication is simply not true. I did convey to General Hooker every particle of information that I could get. The theory of retreat on the part of General Lee, which the Wilderness favored, caused the displacement of Slocum's Corps, of Sickles's Corps, and of my general reserve. Had General Hooker (Hooker's) believed that Lee was massing the larger of his force beyond his <sup>^</sup> right flank; as I understand the geography of the field, he would have sent the 5<sup>th</sup> Corps to prolong that part of mine which was drawn back after crossing the flank and at Dondell's Tavern the other dirt road which <sup>^</sup> made a large angle with it; and he would have faced about the 3<sup>d</sup> Corps (Sickles) in support of our refused flank. No stronger formation could be suggested. To have retired my command from fear would not have been wise. To have advanced it would have been disobedient. To stay there and fight was a plain duty. Of course this I tried to do. Jackson, having three men to my one, struck my command, overlapping my right to some extent,



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8  
succeeded in displacing it and in putting a portion of it to flight. When a  
lad, a larger boy gave me a drubbing, but I grew in size and strength till he  
could do it no longer. The war experience of some of us was like that.

Hoping this will find you very well

I remain ever your friend

(sgd) O. O. Howard

Brig. Genl. U.S.A.

P.S. Please do not feel it necessary to say hard things in my defense against  
any prominent men or others. At Chancellorsville many were seized with panic  
but by the Divine blessing I was not so seized.

(sgd) O. O. Howard



Jan 2<sup>nd</sup> 1885

Miss M. Gertrude Smith

Care Mrs. E. P. Smith

Nurses Hospital - De Kalb Avenue

Brooklyn

Dear Gertie:

I wish you to have had  
a merry Christmas as I know you  
did it well, because merriness is in you  
you. And now I wish you a  
happy year, 1885. I hope you will  
not get a husband this year  
unless one most worthy, full of love  
& truth puts in an appearance. We  
came home all night and with Jamie  
& Miss Adelheid manage to fill up



that little house you moved us to,  
from base to top. The bedrooms are  
in the garret now finished off and only  
warmed by the ascending furnace  
heat of the rooms below. Chancy  
the South-East  
has ^ one, John another & Harry  
the biggest for study and Adelheid the  
guest chamber. She has given much  
German to the family & gets on nicely,  
but it is not Germany & so she is often  
a little homesick. Too bad that "home  
sweet home!" was ever written, it costs  
so much sadness & so many tears! Well,  
dear child, how about the school?  
Does the mistress give satisfaction?  
Is the mistress contented? Give her  
my best paternal love and tell her not



to get discouraged. In a few minutes  
I am off for Topeka, Kansas, and  
I wish you were here to go too - though  
I cannot say that it would be  
agreeable to you like [Niobrara ?] &  
Rose Bend! Col. Sumner often comes  
here. In a few days that eldest  
daughter Miss Sumner is coming  
to visit at the Mason's. We are  
about to court martial a young  
physician, Dr. Stephenson for  
neglect of duty. Gen. Carlin is inex-  
orable. He would prefer to strike  
the mild husband of the tall  
Mrs. Bill but he misses his aim  
& poor [S. ?] gets the blow between the  
eyes. Jamie, Chancy, Harry, John  
Bessie, Mamma, Guy, Jeannie &



their wonderful <sup>[so by Helen! that's the name!</sup> girl-baby (born the 5<sup>th</sup>

of Dec. last) would join me

according to their several abilities

in expressions of recognition & regard, if

they had a fair show, but I am at

the office on my way to Topeka

Kansas, having started by positive

misinformation two hours ahead of

time. So I return from the B. & M. Depot

to this Hd. qrs. Dept. Platte to visit first to

Gen. Grant & then to you. Give my

love to your dear Mamma and

always in the future wherever you move

keep a chamber for me. I am sorry

to tell you that my mustache & front

whiskers are getting gray, but I

can & do run up the Central

Schoolhouse hill at least twice

a day. Pleasant dreams. Adieu-

O.O.H.



May 22 [188]5

Dear Chas.:

Glad of your letter of 20<sup>th</sup>. Hope Mother & Lizzie will have good visits. The Dept. Commdr. G.A.R. of Nebraska is E. V. Cole Juniata, Neb. I have written him for names & will send them on receipt. I do not fully agree with you about Chancellorsville. Gen. Hooker's defeat was due almost entirely to Gen. Lee's superior Generalship. At first the Campaign was well planned and well commenced. But the instant on Friday May 1<sup>st</sup> that Hooker found that Lee had met him with vigor, back he came to "old positions", when his right flank was "in air". Again he had stripped himself of the aid of Stoneman's Corps of cavalry which had it been present on the 2<sup>nd</sup> (Saturday) would have been five miles to the south of me (the most of it) and would have visited & bothered Jackson so much that night would have brought him to a standstill, before he had reached my position (that of the 11<sup>th</sup> Corps). The instant Hooker found that Lee had taken the offensive he would naturally have sent the 5<sup>th</sup> Corps Meades followed by the 1<sup>st</sup> Corps Reynolds to occupy strongly the broad space of more than three miles between the actual right flank & the Rapidan. Again I have always thought in my heart of hearts that the 11<sup>th</sup> Corps might have made a better fighter than it did - for neither Devens nor Schurz were suprised. If all had done as well as part of it did we could not have beaten Stonewall Jackson who had 4/5<sup>ths</sup> of Lee's army in hand & assaulting but we could have held him back till dark.

But after all, the Confederates often gave way when Grant attacked them similarly assault upon us to Jackson's - Grant took the offensive at Belmont, Donelson's Ferry, Shiloh, Chattanooga & thro. the Wilderness & thro. Virginia till Appamattox. Hooker splendidly wanted to do so and could always with a division or Corps - but with the Army he was bold in maneuver, but had not the nerve for offensive battles.- Carrier seems changed, tells me he sometimes is profane he regards Christians as dishonest and all [?] men as his enemies. Let us not cease to pray for him. I cannot go to meet him in Chicago & do not know of his projects. I



have no evidence of his being dishonest - It is always a source of suspicion with me. When a man thinks other people dishonest. Yet it may be but an infirmity of a dark mind & heart.

Aff. yr. brother

O. O. H.