

Slide

No 9

Deposition filed No 9 War Campaign

Subject

Jackson's attack on the right at Chancellorsville

After

No 2

Aspermeas fruit had been damaged

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Jackson's attack on the right at Chancellorsville.

In order that the student of a battle-scene may gather any clear views of the story, he must in some way acquaint himself with the region of country where the battle occurred. But the country around Chancellorsville, being for the most part a wilderness, with but here and there an opening, affords a poor tract for neighborhood descriptions, pencil sketches, or shapely diagrams.

If, however, we consult the recent maps, no good ones existed before the battle, we notice that the two famous rivers, the Rapidan and the Rappahannock, join at a point due north of Chancellorsville; the waters, now in one river bed, the Rappahannock, run easterly four miles till suddenly at the United-States ford they turn and flow south for three miles, and then turning, again course to the east and north-east so as to form a handsome horse-shoe bend.

Here on the south shore was General Hooker's battle line the morning of the 2d of May 1863. Here his five Army Corps, those of Meade, Slocum, Couch, Sickles and Howard, were deployed. The face was toward the south, and the ranks mainly occupied a ridge nearly parallel with the Rapidan. The left touched the high ground just west of the horse-shoe bend, while the bristling front, fringed with skirmishers, ran along the Mineral Spring road, bent

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forward to take in the Cross-roads of Chancellorsville, and then stretching on westerly through lower levels retired to Dowdall's Tavern. Just beyond Dowdall's was a slight backward hook in the line, partially encircling Talley's hill, a sunny spot in the forest between the Orange plank road and the Pike. This Pike is an old roadway which skirts the western edge of Talley's farm and makes an angle of some forty degrees with the Orange plank road.

At dawn of this eventful day General Hooker was at Chancellorsville. Slocum and Hancock were just in his front; infantry and artillery deployed to the right and left. French's division was in his rear. Meade occupied the extreme left, and my corps, the 11th, the right. Sickles connected me with Slocum. Our expansion covered between four and five miles frontage, and Hooker was near the middle point. The main body of our cavalry, under Stoneman, had gone off on a raid upon Lee's communications, and the remainder of the Army of the Potomac was under the sturdy Sedgwick nearer Fredericksburg.

Our opponents under General Robert E. Lee, the evening before, about two miles distant toward Fredericksburg, were facing us.

His army was ^{thus} between us and Sedgwick. Lee had immediately with him the divisions of McLaws, Anderson, Rodes, Colston and A.P. Hill, and besides, some cavalry under Stuart. He held, for his line of battle, a comparatively short front between the Rappa-

forward to take in the cross-roads of Chambersville, and then
it started on rapidly through lower levels toward the
town. Just beyond Gettysburg was a slight backward look in the
line, partially reflecting Talley's will, a sharp spot in the
forest between the Orange plank road and the Pike. This line is
an old roadway which skirts the western edge of Talley's farm and
crosses the ridge of lower level, between with the Orange plank road.

At dawn of this eventful day General Hooker was at Chambersville.
His division and Hancock were just in his front, instantly and
artillery deployed to the right and left. French's division was
in his rear. He had occupied the extreme left, and by course, the
line, the right. Brackets connected me with Shuman. Our ex-
posed covered between four and five miles frontage, and Hooker was
near the middle point. The main body of our cavalry, under Stoneman,
had gone off on a raid upon Lee's communications, and the
remainder of the Army of the Potomac was under the steady command
of General Frederickson.

Our opponents under General Robert E. Lee, the evening before,
about the miles distant toward Frederickson's, were lying in
the army was between us and Gettysburg. Lee had concentrated
with him the divisions of Meade, Antietam, and Colston and
A. A. Hill, and besides, some cavalry under Stuart. The night, for
the line of battle, a comparatively short front between the

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hannock and the Catherine Furnace, not to exceed two miles and a half in extent. His right wing not far from the river was behind Mott's Run which flows due east; and his left was deployed along the Catherine Furnace road.

Could Hooker, the first day of May, have known Lee's exact location he never could have had a better opportunity for taking the offensive. But he did not know, and had decided not to take the offensive when he had that day disengaged the few troops which had met the approaching enemy and ordered all back to the "old position", the Chancellorsville line, which I have just described.

On the preceeding Thursday, the last of April, the three Corps which constituted the right wing of the army, Meade's, Slocum's and mine, had crossed from the north to the south side of the Rapidan, and by four o'clock in the afternoon reached the vicinity of Chancellorsville where Slocum, who was the senior commander present, established his headquarters. I halted my divisions at Dowdall's Tavern and encamped them there. Then I rode along the plank road eastward the two miles through the almost continuous forest to the Chancellorsville House. There I reported to Slocum. He said that the orders were for me to ~~come~~ cover the right of the general line, posting my command near Dowdall's Tavern. He pointed to a place on the map marked "Mill" near there, on a branch of Hunting Creek. ^{and said} "Establish your right there." General Slocum

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...his right wing not far from the river was ...
...which flows the east, and his left was deployed along ...
...Catherine Furnace road.

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...Hottel's Tavern. "Establish your right there," General Stoneman ...

H/

promised, with the Twelfth Corps, to occupy the space from his headquarters to Dowdall's clearing; but finding the distance too great, one of his division commanders sent me word that I must take the last three quarters of a mile of the plank road. This was done by a brigade of General von Steinwehr, the commander of my left division, though with regret on our part because it required all the Corps reserves to fill up that gap.

The so-called Dowdall's Tavern was at that time the home of Melzie Chancellor. He had a large family with several grown people. I placed my headquarters at his house. *Before us* ~~In front of me,~~ facing south along a curving ridge, the right ~~of~~ *is my front* von Steinwehr's division was located. He had but two brigades, Barlow on the plank road and Bushbeck ~~here~~ *is my front*. With them he covered a mile, leaving but two regiments for a reserve. These he put some ^{two} hundred yards to his rear, near the little "Wilderness Church."

Next to von Steinwehr came General Carl Schurz's division. First, was Captain Dilger's battery. Dilger was one of those *bran* handsome, hearty, active young men, that everybody liked to have near. He aimed his guns to the southwest, *also* and to the west along the Orange plank road. Next, was Krzyzanowski's brigade, about half on the front and half in reserve. Schurz's right brigade was that of Schimmelpfenning, disposed in the same manner, a part deployed and the remainder kept a few hundred yards back for a reserve. Schurz's front line of infantry extended along the old

arrived, with the 7th Corps, to occupy the space between
headquarters to Gumbell's clearing; and landing the machine gun

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The so-called Gumbell's Tavern was at that time the home of

Julius Chancellor. He had a large family with several grown boys.
I placed my headquarters at his house. In the morning

looking south along a curving ridge, the right of von Steinwehr's
division was located. He had but two brigades, Barlow on the

left and the 1st Division on the right. With them he covered a mile, from
the left to the right, for a reserve. These he put some distance

back to his rear, near the little "Widderman Church".
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First, von Steinwehr's division. But it was not at all
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near. He aimed his men to the southeast and to the west along
the plank road. Next, was Schurz's division, which

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the kind of German-Americans, stationed in the same manner, a

division and the remainder sent a few hundred yards back for a
reserve. Schurz's division was not at all

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Turnpike and faced to the south west.

The right division of the Corps was commanded by General Devens, who was our Attorney General in the cabinet of President Hayes.

Devens and I together had carefully reconnoitred both the plank^{road} and the old Turnpike for at least three miles toward the west. After this reconnaissance, he established his division, the second brigade under McLean next to Schurz's first; and then pushing out on the pike for half a mile he deployed the other, von Gilsa's "at right angles facing west" connecting his two parts by a thin skirmish line. General von Gilsa's brigade was afterward drawn back, still facing west at right angles to the line, ^{main draw back} so as to make a more solid connection, and so that, constituting as it did the main right flank, the reserves of the corps could be brought more promptly to its support, by extending its right to the north, should an enemy by any possible contingency get so far around. A section of Dieckman's battery which looked to the west along the old pike was located at the angle.

The reserve batteries, 12 guns, were put upon a ridge abreast of the little church and pointed toward the northwest with a view to sweep all approaches to the north of von Gilsa, firing up a gradually ascending slope. This ^{well marked} ridge, where I stood during the battle, was central and, besides, enabled the artillerymen to enfilade either roadway, or meet an attack from, south, west, or north.

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The first division of the Corps was commanded by General von
the 1st and 2nd Divisions General von the 3rd and 4th Divisions
the 5th and 6th Divisions General von the 7th and 8th Divisions
the 9th and 10th Divisions General von the 11th and 12th Divisions
the 13th and 14th Divisions General von the 15th and 16th Divisions
the 17th and 18th Divisions General von the 19th and 20th Divisions
the 21st and 22nd Divisions General von the 23rd and 24th Divisions
the 25th and 26th Divisions General von the 27th and 28th Divisions
the 29th and 30th Divisions General von the 31st and 32nd Divisions
the 33rd and 34th Divisions General von the 35th and 36th Divisions
the 37th and 38th Divisions General von the 39th and 40th Divisions
the 41st and 42nd Divisions General von the 43rd and 44th Divisions
the 45th and 46th Divisions General von the 47th and 48th Divisions
the 49th and 50th Divisions General von the 51st and 52nd Divisions
the 53rd and 54th Divisions General von the 55th and 56th Divisions
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the 61st and 62nd Divisions General von the 63rd and 64th Divisions
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the 69th and 70th Divisions General von the 71st and 72nd Divisions
the 73rd and 74th Divisions General von the 75th and 76th Divisions
the 77th and 78th Divisions General von the 79th and 80th Divisions
the 81st and 82nd Divisions General von the 83rd and 84th Divisions
the 85th and 86th Divisions General von the 87th and 88th Divisions
the 89th and 90th Divisions General von the 91st and 92nd Divisions
the 93rd and 94th Divisions General von the 95th and 96th Divisions
the 97th and 98th Divisions General von the 99th and 100th Divisions

and out on the side for half a mile to the right of the other, and
the 1st and 2nd Divisions General von the 3rd and 4th Divisions
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on the ridge
Here, epaulments for the batteries were constructed, and a

long line of cross intrenchments for the battery supports dug, extending from the little church northeasterly across all the open ground which stretched away from the Tavern to the right of Devens' line.

The lines of my corps including the reserves & cross-intrenchments thus formed a fairly good fort of large dimensions with an opening toward Chancellorsville house. This covered by a forest. To my great comfort General Sickles' corps came up on Friday with his corps who loved to do generous things and took from our left von Steinwehr's three quarters of a mile of

plank road. Thus he relieved from the front line Barlow's large brigade, giving me, besides the several division reserves, General Barlow with 1,500 men in reserve

These were massed near the cross-intrenchments and held avowedly to support the ^{reserve} batteries and protect General Devens' exposed right flank.

As to pickets, each division had a good line of them. My Aide, Major Howard, assisted in connecting them between divisions. and, during the second of May, that fearless and faithful staff officer, Major E. Whittlesey, rode the entire circuit of their front. The pickets and skirmishers to stimulate them to special activity. Those of Devens were * "thrown out at a distance from a half mile to a mile and stretching well around covering our right flank" and those picket-posts in front on the pike were over two miles beyond the main line.

The nature of the country in the neighborhood of the three adjoining farms, Dowdall's, Talley's and Hawkins' was well known

* See General Devens' report of Chancellorsville.

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The nature of the country in the neighborhood of the river
was very favorable to the Union. The hills and valleys were well wooded

to the Army of the Potomac in subsequent experiences, never to be forgotten. It is the terrible "Wilderness" of Spottsylvania, where, later in the war, so many brave men fell. Here were stunted trees, such as scraggy oaks, bushy firs, cedars and junipers, all entangled with a thick ^{almost} impenetrable under-growth and criss-crossed with an abundance of wild vines. In places all along the south-west and west front, the forest appeared impassable and the skirmishers could only with extreme difficulty work their way through.

To the offices ^{of} of the Eleventh Corps the position was never a desirable one. It presented a flank in the air. We were more than four miles south from Ely's Ford, where were Hooker's nearest Cavalry flankers.

In his report after the battle General Schurz says: "Our right ought to have been drawn back toward the Rapidan, to rest on that river at or near the mouth of Hunting Creek, the Corps abandoning so much of the plank road as to enable it to establish a solid line." [✓] Yes, but we were ordered to Dowdall's Tavern and not to the Rapidan 3 or 4 miles to our rear! And our right was fixed for us at the "Mill" which it is true no longer existed, but the point required was not doubted. Again, this position which Schurz recommended in his report, subsequent to our battle, was that very one into which Hooker's whole Army was forced. ^{finally} ^{Hooker} ~~He was~~

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so cramped by it that he did not dare to take the offensive. In that position, "solid" and fortified as it was, our army, more in number than Lee's, was so badly handled by the enemy, that Hooker at last decided it safer to take it to the north side of the Rapahannock.

The strength of Hooker's five corps, and still another, Reynolds', ^{which} ~~who~~ was not far behind, ^{had} ~~was~~ on the morning of the second of May, about ninety thousand effectives.

The right Corps, the Eleventh, had in all, artillery and infantry, twelve thousand men.

Lee faced us with his five large divisions, having on the spot about 40,000 rifles, with considerable artillery.

When a youth, my brother and I had a favorite spot in an upper field of my father's farm from which we were accustomed, after the first symptoms of a coming storm, to watch the operations of the contending winds; ^{copy} the sudden gusts and whirlwinds; the sideling swallows excitedly seeking shelter; the swift and swifter, black and blacker clouds, ever rising higher and pushing their angry fronts towards us. As we listened we heard the low rumbling from afar; as the storm came nearer, the woods bent forward and shook fiercely their thick branches, the lightning zizzagged in flashes, and the deep bassed thunder echoed more loudly, till there was scarcely an interval between its ominous crashing discharges. In

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some such manner came on that battle of May 2d to the watchers at Dowdall's Tavern and Talley's farmhouse.

The first distant symptom occurred the evening of May 1st. There was the sudden ^{crash} crack of rifle shooting. It began with von Steinwehr's skirmishers and then passed on to Schurz. Schimmelpfenning ^{forward} pushed out a brigade straight forward toward the southwest and received a sudden fire of artillery from the intruders. They left him and pushed on.

It was "a rolling reconnaissance" evidently to determine, for Lee's and Jackson's information, the position of our flank. They had, however, some more certain knowledge, gained from one or two of the enterprising residents let loose during that Friday by our general forward movement. We forgot these friends to Lee as we excitedly marched to Friday's battle. When we unexpectedly came back some of these residents, with little baskets of provisions in hand, were gone beyond recall. I suspect that the commander of the "rolling Reconnaissance" and the said residents formed part of the famous night conference of Lee and Jackson where cracker boxes served as seats and tables. General Lee says: "It was therefore resolved to endeavor to turn ^{Hookers} his right flank and gain his rear, leaving a force in front to hold him in check and conceal the movement. The execution of this plan was entrusted to Lieutenant-General Jackson with his three divisions."

at that manner came on that battle of May 24 to the water.
at Powell's Tavern and Talley's farmhouse.
The first distant explosion occurred the evening of May 19.
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Steinwehr's skirmishers and then passed on to Scherz. Scherz
planning pushed out a brigade straight forward toward the south-
west and received a sudden fire of artillery from the left.
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resolved to endeavor to turn his right flank and gain his rear,
leaving a force in front to hold him in check and control the river
mouth. The execution of this plan was entrusted to Lieutenant-
Colonel Jackson with his three divisions."

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Jackson's movement, a stronger indication of battle, began at sunrise, ^(Sat. May 2nd) Rodes, Colston and A.P. Hill, in order, following the old road by ~~then~~ the Catherine Furnace and then shoving off further south to get beyond sight of our men; and then ^{beginning} to sweep around by a cross-road, well known to them, up to the Orange plank; and then on, perhaps a mile further, through the wild forest till the old Orange pike was found and crossed.

4 Steinwehr's line

The Catherine Furnace nearly opposite Sickles' right and two and a half miles distant, gave an open reach and fully exposed the ^{moving} ~~movement~~ column to view. Except at that point the entire Confederate force was completely covered by woods and by Stuart's busy and noisy cavalry.

About sunrise at Dowdall's I heard cheering. It was a hearty sound with too much bass in it for that of the enemy's charge. It was occasioned by ^{the coming of} General Hooker, with Colonel Comstock, and a few staff officers, riding along slowly and inspecting ^{our} ~~the~~ lines. Sickles says of this: "It is impossible to pass over without mention the irrepressible enthusiasm of the troops for Major-General Hooker which was evinced in hearty and prolonged cheers as he rode along the lines of the Third, Eleventh and Twelfth Corps."

I was ready, mounted, and with my officers, joined the ever increasing cavalcade. Hooker observed the troops in position; Barlow, who joined me and filled the cross trenches an hour later,

...a movement, a stronger indication of battle, began to
...order following the old
...then the Catherine Furnace and then moving off farther
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...a cross-road, well known to them, up to the Orange plant, and then
...on, perhaps a mile farther, through the wild forest till the old
...Orange mine was found and reached.

The Catherine Furnace nearly opposite Stiles' camp and the
...and a half mile distant gave an open track and fully exposed the
...movement column to view. Except at that point the entire forest-
...state force was completely covered by woods and by Stiles' camp
...and heavy cavalry.

About midnight at Dowdell's I heard cheering. It was a hearty
...second with too much haste in it for that of the enemy's charge. It
...was occasioned by General Hooker, with Colonel Comstock, and a few
...staff officers, standing along slowly and inspecting the lines.
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I was ready, mounted and with my officers joined the cheer for
...crossing cavaliers. Hooker observed the troops in position; and
...too, who joined me and filled the cross trenches on both sides.

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had not yet come out of the front line, so that my reserves just at that time were small. He noticed the breast-works, unusually well built by Schurz and Devens. He passed to the extreme right and then returned by the shortest route. As he looked over the barricades, while receiving the salutes and cheers of the men, he said to me, "How strong! How strong!"

I still had much extension, so that there were gaps along Schurz's and Devens' fronts. Colonel Comstock spoke to me in his quiet way, "General, do close in those spaces!" I said ^{that} the woods are thick and entangled, will anybody come through there? "Oh, they may!" His suggestion was heeded.

During the forenoon General Sickles discovered Jackson's moving column. It was passing toward Orange Court House, so everybody said. Sickles ^{forwarded} all reports to General Hooker, now returned to Chancellorsville. ^{Hooker seemed} He tried to divine Jackson's purpose.

^(but was in error) Lee caught between us and Sedgwick an upper an neither millstone, was surely retreating

About twelve mid-day Sickles received General Hooker's orders to advance southward, cautiously. Soon after, perhaps by two P.M. there was a stronger apprehension of a conflict, for there was a sharp skirmish in the direction of Catherine Furnace. The rattle of musketry followed; then in a little time was heard the booming of cannon. I sent the news to every division and said "Be ready". Slocum went forward to the aid of Sickles, and Hancock was behind

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at that time were small. He noticed the breast-works, immediately
well built by Schurz and Devens. He passed to the extreme right
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I still had much extension, so that there were gaps along
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point, "General, be close in those spaces." I said the woods
are thick and entangled, will anybody come through there? "Oh,
they may!" His suggestion was heeded.

During the forenoon General Sickles discovered Jackson's new
column. It was passing toward Orange Court House, so every-
body said. Sickles forwarded all reports to General Hooker, now
retained to Chancellorville. He tried to divide Jackson's force

about twelve miles. Sickles ordered General Hooker's orders
to advance southeast, cautiously. Soon after, perhaps at 2 P.M.

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Sickles went forward to the aid of Sickles, and Hancock was moving

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him with support. Next, the enemy was reported to be in full retreat. General Hooker so telegraphed to Sedgwick; Captain Moore of his staff, who had gone out with Birney to see the attack upon Jackson, came hurriedly to me with an order from General Hooker for my reserve ^{general 1500 men} brigade, Barlow's ^{brigade,} ^{which immediately drew} ~~at~~ out ^{find} all in readiness.

Major Howard rode rapidly to Sickles that he might ~~point~~ out exactly where to locate the brigade. He was also to ascertain the nearest route so as to save time and not to weary the men by a circuitous march.

It was already past four. There was much excitement among the groups of officers at the different points of observation. We, who were at Dowdall's, had been watching the enemy's cavalry which kept pushing through the woods just far enough to receive a fire and then withdrawing. Devens and his brigade and regimental commanders, gathered, in various ways, all the information possible, while from a high point they obtained glimpses of a moving column crossing the plank road and apparently making off. I sent out scouts who returned with reports that the enemy was not more than three or four miles off and in motion. Schurz was anxious and, with my approval, moved a part of his reserves to the north on Hawkins' farm into good position to cover Devens' flank. Devens held at least two regiments, well in hand, for the same purpose, and von Steinwehr's whole division, I knew could just face about and

him with support. Next, the enemy was reported to be in full retreat. General Hooker so telegraphed to Sedgwick, Captain Moore of his staff, who had come out with Birney to see the attack upon Jackson, came hurriedly to me with an order from General Hooker for my reserve brigade, Balfour's, to move out at once. Major Howard rode rapidly to Sickles that he might point out exactly where to locate the brigade. He was also to ascertain the nearest route so as to save time and not to weary the men on a circuitous march. It was already past four. There was much excitement among the groups of officers at the different points of observation. We were at Bowdoin's, had been watching the enemy's cavalry which kept pushing through the woods just far enough to receive a fire and then withdrawing. Devens and his brigade and regimental commanders, gathered, in various ways, all the information possible, while from a high point they obtained glimpses of a moving column crossing the plank road and apparently making off. I sent word to scouts who returned with reports that the enemy was not more than three or four miles off and in motion. Schurz was anxious and, with my approval, moved a part of his reserves to the north on "Larkin's" farm into good position to cover Devens' flank. Devens held at least two regiments, well in hand, for the same purpose, and Schurz's whole division. I knew would be in position to support him with support.

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defend the same point. A few companies of cavalry came from Pleasanton. I sent them ^{to the woods} out. "Go out beyond my right; go far, and let me know if an assault is coming." All my staff, Asmus-^{Capt K}sen, Meysenburg, Whittlesey, C.H. Howard, ^{Schofield} Dessauer, Stinson, Schierer and Hoffman were keenly on the alert.

We had not a very good position, it is true, but we did expect to make a strong fight should the enemy come.

General Hooker's "joint order to Slocum and Howard" neither reached me, nor, to my knowledge, ^{did it come to} Colonel Meysenburg, my Adjutant General. From some confused notion, it was issued to "Slocum and Howard", when ^{General} Slocum was no longer within two miles, and had not been in command of my Corps ^{at all} after Hooker's arrival at Chancellorsville on the preceeding Thursday. Slocum, naturally supposing that I had a copy, would not think of forwarding a joint order to me after that, and certainly no such order came to me.

But yet Generals Devens, Schurz and von Steinwehr, my division commanders, and myself, did precisely what we would have done had that order come. The three reserve batteries were put in position and the infantry reserves held well in hand ~~for~~ the possible emergency.

My aide-de-camp had now returned from Sickles near the Furnace and reported in substance that he (Sickles) was glad to receive the help; that he was about to make a ^{more general} ~~grand~~ attack, having been

...the same count. A few companies of cavalry came from
...I sent them out. "Go out beyond my right; go far,
and let me know if an assault is coming." All my staff, ...
...Whitely, C. H. ...
...Hoffman were ready on the alert.
...it is true, but we had expected
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General Hooker's "Joint order to ..."
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ville on the preceding Thursday. Stoneman, naturally supposing
that I had a copy, would not think of forwarding a joint order to
me after that, and certainly no such order came to me.
But yet General Devens, Schatz and von Steinwehr, my division
commanders, and myself, did obediently what we would have done had
that order come. The three passive batteries were put in position
and the infantry reserves held well in hand for the possible emer-
gency.
The aide-de-camp had not returned from Sickles near the ...
and reported in substance that he (Sickles) was glad to ...
the help; that he was about to make a grand attack, having been

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for some time driving the enemy and expected soon a brilliant result; that he desired to place my reinforcement upon his right flank in the forward movement.

his A.D.C.

Such was the state of things, when, through Captain Moore, General Hooker directed to Sickles' attack at the Furnace all of my general infantry reserves, consisting of Barlow's staunch brigade.

Gen^l von Steinwehr and I, with Major Howard as guide, went far enough southward to see what was to be done with our men, and to see if ^{Steinwehr's whole} his division, as was probable, must ^{not up right} swing to the left in support of Sickles' promised attack. There was no real battle ^{away out there at the furnace} there, ^{Gen Steinwehr and I} so we returned rapidly to our post at the Tavern and dismounted.

masked by the thick woods

Meanwhile the Confederate General Rodes ^{masked by the thick woods} had been reaching his point in the Wilderness. At four P.M. his men were in position; the line of battle of his own brigade touched the pike west of us with its right end stretched to the north; beyond his brigade came Iverson's in the same line. On the right of the pike was Doles' brigade and to his right Colquitt's. One hundred yards to the rear was Trimble's division (Colston commanding) with Ramseur on the right following Colquitt. After another interval followed ^{ed} the division of A.P.Hill. The advance confederate division had more men in it than ^{whole} there were in the Eleventh Corps now in position. Counting the ranks deep of this formidable column, begin-

for some time driving the enemy and expected soon a brilliant re-
sult, that he desired to place his reinforcement upon his right
flank in the forward movement.

Such was the state of things, when, through Captain Scott,
General Hooker directed to Sickles' attack at the distance all of
my general in infantry reserves consisting of Barlow's attack brigade.
von Steinwehr and I, with Major Howard as guide, went far
enough southward to see what was to be done with our men, and to
see if his division, as was probable, was going to the left in
support of Sickles' promised attack. There was no real battle
there, as we retreated rapidly to our post at the Tavern and dis-

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Meanwhile the Confederate General Hooker had been reaching the
point in the Wilderness. At four P.M. his men were in position,
the line of battle of his own brigade touched the Pike west of us
with its right and stretched to the north; beyond his brigade came
Johnson's in the same line. On the right of the Pike was Dolson's
brigade and to his right Colquhoun's. One hundred yards to the
west was Trimble's division (Colonel commanding) with Ransom on
its right following Colquhoun. After another interval following
the Division of A.P. Hill. The advance Confederate division had
arrived in its front there were in the Eleventh Corps not in pos-
sion. Counting the ranks deep of this formation column, mean-

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ning with the enveloping skirmish line, we find seven, besides the three [^] ~~rank~~ ranks of file-closers. The majority were brought into a solid mass by the entanglements of the forest and gave our men the idea that battalions were formed in close columns doubled on the centre. With as little noise as possible, a little after five P.M. the steady advance of the enemy began. Its first lively effects, like a cloud of dust driven before a coming shower, appeared in the startled rabbits, squirrels, quail, and other game, flying wildly hither and thither in evident terror, and escaping where possible into adjacent clearings.

The foremost men of Doles' brigade took about half an hour to strike our advanced picket on the pike. This picket, of course, created no delay. Fifteen minutes later [^] ~~he~~ ^{Doles} reached our skirmishers, who seem to have resisted effectively for a few minutes, for it required a main line to dislodge them. Doles ~~says~~, concerning the ^{or} next check he received, ^{Says;} "after a resistance of about ten minutes [^] we drove him (Devens) from his position on the left and carried his battery of two guns, caissons and horses."

[^] at Dowdall's Tavern
This was the fire which von Steinwehr and I heard shortly after our return from Barlow. Somebody's guns thundered away for a few short minutes and then came the fitful rattle of musketry; and before I could again get into the saddle, there arose the ceaseless roar of the terrible storm.

men with the enveloping skirt-like line, we find seven, besides the

three ranks of life-keepers. The majority were brought into a

solid mass by the entanglements of the forest and gave our men the

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The foremost men of Golez, already about half an hour in

advance our advanced picked on the birds. This picked, of course,

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men, who seem to have resisted effectively for a few minutes, for

it required a main line to displace them. Golez says, concerning

the next check he received, "After a resistance of about ten minutes

we drove him (Golez) from his position on the left and entered

his battery of two guns, caissons and horses."

This was the first which von Steinwehr and I heard shortly

after our return from Barlow. Somebody's gun thundered away for

a few short minutes and then came the little rattle of musketry;

and before I could again get into the saddle, there arose the

continuous roar of the terrific storm.

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I sent out my Chief of staff, Colonel Asmussen, who was the first officer to mount,- "The firing is in front of Devens, go and see if all is in order on the extreme right." He instantly turned and galloped away. I mounted and set off for a prominent place in rear of Schurz's line, so as to change front to the north west of every brigade south east of the ^{front} point of attack, if the attack ^{perchance} ~~should~~ extended beyond Devens' right flank: for it was divined at once that the enemy was now west of ^{Devens. Very soon} him. I could see numbers of our men,-not the few stragglers that always fly like the chaff at the first breeze,-but scores of them, rushing into the ^{forest} opening, some with arms and some without, running or falling before they got behind the cover of Devens' reserves, and before Schurz's waiting masses could deploy or charge. The noise and the smoke thrilled the air with excitement, and to add to it Dieckmann's guns and ^{at all} caissons with battery-men scattered, rolled and tumbled like runaway wagons and carts in a thronged city. The guns and the masses of the right brigade struck the second line of Devens before McLean's front had given way, and quicker than it could be told, with all the fury of the wildest hail storm, everything, every sort of organization that lay in the path of the mad current of panic-^{from the extreme right} stricken men had to give way and be broken into fragments. ^{as at the close of "Bull Run,"}

My own horse seemed to catch the fury; he sprang, he rose high on his hind legs and fell over throwing me to the ground. My Aide-de-camp, Dessauer, was struck by a shot and killed, and for

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first officer to mount. - "The firing is in front of Devens, go and
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and galloped away. I mounted and set off for a prominent place
in front of Schurz's line, so as to change front to the north west
of every brigade south east of the point of attack, at the attack
extended beyond Devens' first flank for it was divided at once
that the enemy was now west of him. I could see hundreds of our
men, not the few stragglers that always fly like the chaff at the
first breeze, but scores of them, rushing into the opening, some
with arms and some without, running or falling before they got
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all the fury of the wildest hail storm, everything, every sort of
organization that lay in the path of the mad current of panic-
stricken men had to give way and be broken into fragments.
My own horse seemed to catch the fury, he reared, he rose high
on his hind legs and fell over throwing me to the ground. My
Albion, however, was struck by a shot and killed, and for

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a few moments I was as helpless as any of the men who were speeding without arms to the rear. But faithful orderlies helped me to remount. Schurz was yet doing all he could to face regiments about and send them to Devens' northern flank to help the few which still held firm. Devens, already badly wounded, and several ^{of his} officers, were doing similar work.

I rode quickly to the reserve batteries. A staff officer of General Hooker, Lieut-Colonel Dickerson, joined me there; my own staff gathered around me. I was eager to fill the trenches, ^{with the absent reserves} which Barlow would have held. Bushbeck's second line was ordered to change front there. His men kept their ranks, but at first ^{to my impatience} they appeared slow, - "Will they never get there!" Dickerson said, "Oh, General, see those men coming from that hill way off to the right, and there's the enemy after them? Fire, oh, fire at them! You may stop the flight!" "No, Colonel, I will never fire upon my own men!" As soon as our men were near enough the batteries opened, firing at first shells and then cannister over their heads. As the attacking force emerged from the forest and rushed on, the enemy's front men would halt and fire, and, while these were reloading, another set ran before them, halted and fired, these in no regular line, but in such multitudes that our men went down before them, like trees in a hurricane.

By extraordinary effort we had filled all our long line of

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18 ✓

cross intrenchments, mainly with fragments of organizations and individual soldiers. Many officers running away stopped there and did what they could,- but others said, "We've done all we can" and ran on. Schierer managed the reserve artillery fairly. Dilger, the battery commander on Schurz's left rolled his balls along the plank road and shelled the wood. General von Steinwehr was at hand, cool, collected and sensible. He had, like Blair at Atlanta, made his men, who were south of Dowdall's, spring to the reverse side of their intrenchments ^{face north} and ~~be~~ ready to fire the instant it was possible.

Let us pause here a moment and follow Doles who led the enemy's attack. He states that after his first successful charge: "The command moved forward at the double quick to assault the enemy, who had taken up a strong position on the crest of a hill in the open field." This position was the one on Hawkins' farm where Devens' and Schurz's reserves began their fight. But wave after wave of confederate infantry came upon them, ^{now} and even their left flank was unprotected the instant the runaways had passed it by. To our sorrow, we, who had eagerly observed their bravery, saw them too give way, and the hill and the crest on Hawkins' farm were quickly in the hands of the men in gray.

18

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18th
Doles,- who must have been a cool man to see so clearly amid the screeching shells, and all the hot excitement of battle,- says again: He (meaning our forces from Schimmelpfennig's and Buschbeck's brigades, and perhaps part of McLean's who had faced about and had not yet given away) made a stubborn resistance from behind a watling-fence on a hill thick with pine."

Among the stubborn fighters at this place was Major Jeremiah Williams. *of the 25th Wis.* The enemy was drawing near him. His men fired with coolness and deliberation. His right rested among scrubby bushes and saplings while his left was in comparatively open ground.

The fire of the enemy as he approached was murderous and almost whole platoons of our men were falling; but yet they held their ground. He waited, rapidly firing, till not more than 30 paces intervened and then ordered the retreat. Out of three hundred *and*

Belok, - the last have been a cool man to see so clearly and

the screaming shells, and all the hot excitement of battle, - saw

again: He leaping out from the Schmalenberg's and back-

back's position, and perhaps part of Schmalenberg's who had faced about

and had not yet given away, made a stubborn resistance from behind

a wall-fence on a hill back with pine."

Among the stubborn fighters at this place was Major Joris

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coolness and deliberation. His right rested among scrubby bushes

and saplings while his left was in comparatively open ground.

The fire of the enemy as he approached was unbroken and

about, those platoons of our men were falling; but yet they held

their ground. He waited rapidly firing, till not more than 50 yards

intervened and then ordered the retreat. Out of three hundred

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twenty-three men and sixteen commissioned officers in the regiment (25th Ohio), one hundred and thirty (including five officers) were killed or wounded.

Major Williams brought a part of the living to the breastworks near me, the remainder, he said, were carried off to the rear by another regimental commander.

By the delays we had thus far occasioned to the first division of our enemy, all ^{his} ~~the~~ rear lines had closed up and the broad mass began to appear even below me on my left front to the south of von Steinwehr's knoll. Then it was, after we had been fighting an hour, that Sickles' and Pleasanton's guns began to be heard, for they had faced about, near the Furnace, ^{and moved} obliquely toward the north west, and were hurrying artillery, cavalry and infantry, into positions to do what they could against the ^{of Stonewall Jackson} attack now reaching them. ^{where skirmished me}

I had come to my last practicable stand. The confederates were slowly advancing, firing as they came. The twelve guns of Schierer, the Corps chief of artillery, increased by a part of Dilger's battery, fired, at first with rapidity, but the battery men kept falling from death and wounds. Suddenly, as if by an order, when a sheet of the enemy's fire reached them, a large number of ^{my} ~~the~~ men in the supporting trenches vacated their position and went off. No officers ever made more strenuous exertions ^{and others about me} than those which my staff ~~and myself~~ put forth to stem the tide of

Twenty-five men and sixteen commissioned officers in the regiment
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than those which my staff and myself put forth to stem the tide of

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retreat and refill those trenches, but the panic was too great.

soon indeed

~~Then~~ our artillery fire became weaker and weaker. I next ordered

a retreat to the edge of the forest toward Chancellorsville, so as

to uncover von Steinwehr's knoll, the only spot yet firmly held.

The batteries, except four pieces, were drawn off and hurried to

the rear. The stand at the edge of the forest was *made, but* necessarily a

short one. von Steinwehr being now exposed from flank and rear,

having held his place for over an hour, drew off his small rem-

nants, and all moved rapidly through openings and woods, through

low ground and swamps, the two miles to the first high land south

of Hooker's headquarters. Dilger ^{ea} steadily kept ~~the~~ *to our* rear along

the plank road, firing constantly as he retired. The confederate

partaking of Stonewall's energy masses rushed after us in the forest and along all the paths and

roads with triumphant shouts, and redoubled firing, and so secured

much plunder and many prisoners.

It was after sundown and growing dark when I met General Hiram

commanding a brigade,

Berry *at G. ville.* as I was ascending the high ground ~~above named.~~ "Well, Gen-

eral, where now?" he asked. *I replied.* "You take the right of this road

and I will take the left, and try to defend it", ~~I replied.~~

Our batteries, with numerous others, were on the crest facing

to the rear, and as soon as von Steinwehr's troops had cleared the

way, *was begun* they began a terrible cannonade and continued ~~to~~ into the

night. *battery men* They fired into the forest, now replete with confederates,

all disorganized in their exciting chase, and every effort of the

retreat and still those trenches, but the panic was too great.
Then our artillery fire became weaker and weaker. I next ordered
a retreat to the edge of the forest toward the left, so as
to reach von Steinwehr's knoll, the only spot yet firmly held.
The batteries, except two pieces, were drawn off and hurried to
the rear. The stand at the edge of the forest was necessarily a
short one. von Steinwehr being now exposed from flank and rear,
having held his place for over an hour, drew off his small com-
panies, and all moved rapidly through openings and woods, through
low ground and swamps, the two miles to the first high land south
of Hooker's headquarters. I lined steadily kept the rear along
the plain road, firing constantly as he retired. The confederate
masses rushed after us in the forest and along all the paths and
roads with tremendous shouts, and redoubled firing, and we secured
each platoon and many prisoners.
It was after sundown and growing dark when I lost General Terry
as I was ascending the high ground above named. "Well, Gen-
eral, where now?" he asked. "Go take the right of this road
and I will take the left and try to defend it," I replied.
Our batteries, with numerous caissons, were on the crest facing
to the rear, and as soon as von Steinwehr's troops had cleared the
way they began a terrific cannonade and continued it into the
night. They fired into the forest, our rifles with confidence,
all characterized in their exciting chase, and every effort of the

21- Gen. Jackson

to advance in that direction in face of the fire was effectually barred by the artillery and supporting troops.

It was here that the gallant General Berry met his death. Stonewall Jackson also fell that evening from bullet wounds in the forest between Dowdall's Tavern and Berry's position. It was here that officers of the Eleventh Corps, though mortified by defeat, successfully rallied the scattered brigades and divisions, and, after sheltering the batteries, went eventually during the night to replace the men of the Fifth Corps and thereafter defend the left of the line.

Substantially

Twenty-two years ago in my report to General Hooker I wrote the following:

"Now as to the causes of this disaster to my Corps:

I was limited by orders to the position to be defended.
1st. Though constantly threatened and apprised of the moving of the enemy, yet the woods were so dense that he was able to mass a large force, whose exact whereabouts neither patrols, reconnoissances, nor scouts accurately ascertained. Jackson nearly 3 times my strength behind the forest succeeded in forming a column opposite to and outflanking my right. (from flank and rear)

2d. By the panic produced by the enemy's reverse fire regiments and artillery were thrown suddenly upon those in position.

3d. The absence of General Barlow's brigade, which I had previously located in position and en échelon with Colonel von Gilsa's, so as to cover his right flank. This was the only general reserve I had? (Gen. Devens right flank)

Stonewall Jackson was victorious. Even his enemies praise

...to advance in that direction in face of the fire and effect...

...ly carried by the artillery and supporting troops.

It was here that the gallant General Berry met his death.

General Jackson also fell that evening from bullet wounds in the

forest between Powell's Tavern and Berry's position. It was here

that officers of the Eleventh Corps, though mortally wounded,

necessitated the attack and secured a complete victory; and

after shelling the batteries, they eventually broke through the

lines of the man of the Fifth Corps and thereafter defend the

position of the Eleventh Corps.

Twenty-two years ago in my report to General Hooker I wrote

the following:

"As to the causes of this disaster to my Corps:

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...by the panic produced by the enemy's reverse fire

and artillery were thrown suddenly upon those in position.

...The absence of General Barry's brigade, which I had previously

...located in position and an echelon with Colonel von Meitz's

...to cover his right flank. This was only natural because I had

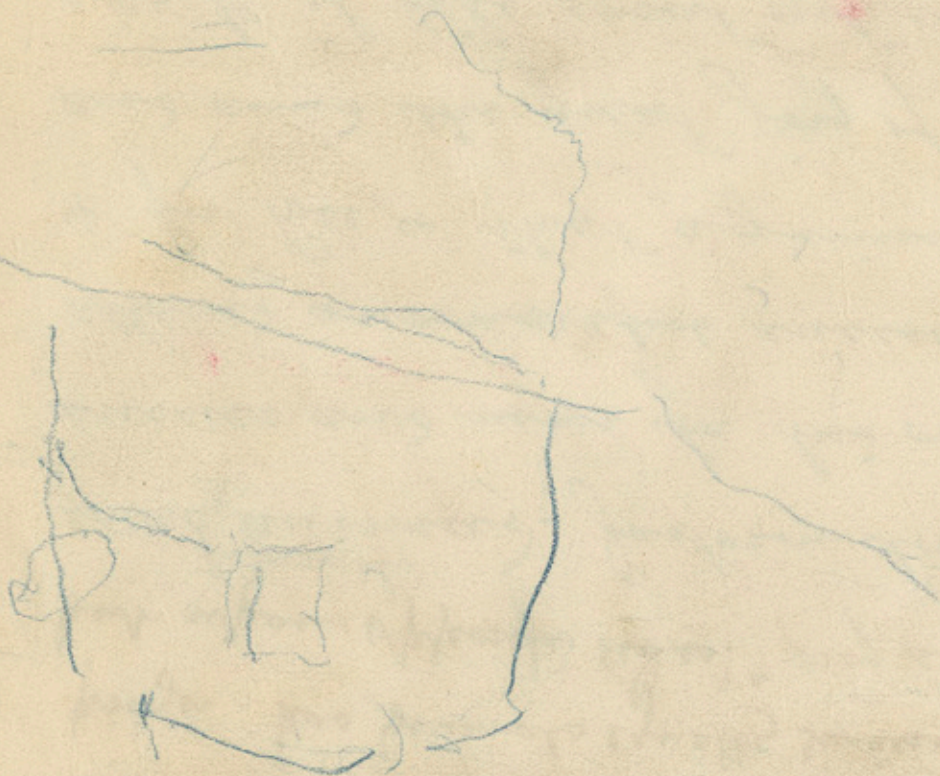
General Jackson and his divisions. Even his division

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him; but ^{fortunately} ~~providentially~~ for us it was the last battle which he
waged against the American Union. For, in bold planning, in en-
ergy of execution, which he had the power to diffuse, in indefat-
igable activity and moral ascendancy, Jackson stood head and shoul-
ders above his confreres, and after his death, General Lee could
not replace him.

Under Providence

Once I was asked: "How can you believe in
prayer - two Generals equally sincere both praying,
but upon opposite sides?" my response is, both
were ^{favorably} answered. Jackson doubtless pleaded for
success and never for his own life. He
attained a wonderful success for himself
& for Lee, & that against great odds,
and amid the great joy of victory his
spark of life went out in a meteoric
splendor. As for poor me, I was beaten,
mortified beyond expression, till like Jonah
watching Ninevah, I wanted to die;

But success followed success from that time to the end of the war so far as my Corps and my men were concerned, and though I went at Chancellorsville through the Valley of the Shadow of Death I lived to see my petition fully ^{and abundantly} answered in the success of the Union cause and the reunion of all the States.



Major-General Howard,

Washington, D. C., Dec. 4th, 1863.

To the Editor of the Evening Post.

Sir: In your issue of Monday last I read with equal surprise and regret, an article headed "The Eleventh Army Corps, and its General." In referring to its participation in the recent battle at Chattanooga you use the following language:

"We rejoice over this redemption of the Eleventh Corps. Its disgrace was a sad thought to everybody who had the honor of our arms at heart. That the Corps is now trustworthy is proof that its demoralization was the fault not of the men themselves, but of the officers under whose command they were. We are glad that to General Hooker belongs the credit of restoring this lost Corps to the confidence of the country."

You can hardly say too much in praise of General Hooker, whom all loyal men regard as among the most gallant and heroic leaders of our Army. But in praising Gen'l Hooker there is certainly no occasion for aspersing, even indirectly, the well earned and brilliant fame of other officers. You seem to have entirely forgotten - you certainly failed to mention - the important fact that, the immediate commander of the Eleventh Corps, at the time of its misfortune at Chancellorsville, and at the time of its magnificent feat of arms on the summit of Lookout Mountain, was one and the same man - Major-Gen'l Oliver O. Howard. In both of these battles General Hooker was General Howard's superior officer, and it has

Major-General Howard,

Washington, D. C., Dec. 4th, 1863.

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The gallant part borne by the Eleventh Corps in the battle of Gettysburg, is entirely ignored by you. The fierce rebel assaults on Cemetery Hill - the key to Meade's position - were repulsed by Howard's command with a bravery and skill which won universal praise, and at the close of that bloody contest, the Eleventh Corps had fought its way to the gratitude and admiration of all loyal hearts. The Corps went to Chattanooga, therefore, under its gallant young leader, with the glory of Gettysburg and not the failure of Chancellorsville inscribed on its banners. After the battle of Gettysburg, the President of the United States was pleased to send General Howard an autograph letter of thanks and congratulation for his consummate generalship on that field - a letter which the young hero's modesty has thus far kept from the public eye. And last August, in an address before the Alumni of Waterville College, Vice President Hamlin, speaking the opinion of two of the most gallant Generals who fought at Gettysburg, declared that when the history of that battle should be truthfully written, the great victory would be ascribed, so far as it could be ascribed to one man, to the heroic firmness with which Howard, with his Eleventh Corps, held

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I ask the insertion of this letter because General Howard's fame is dear not only to the country, but especially to his native state, which I have the honor in part to represent. He is my immediate constituent, my fellow towns-man, my friend. He has attained at thirty-three years of age, the eminent rank of Major-General, with the command of an Army Corps. He is an able, loyal, brave, Christian General, and I venture to say of him in the language of another, that at the close of this war, "few will leave a more splendid and none a more stainless name."

Very respectfully yours,

(Signed) J. G. Blaine.

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