

ARTICLE.

No. 3, Vol. 10.

SUBJECT.

CHANCELLORSVILLE.

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TABLE

CHANDLER

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A few years ago General Fitzhugh Lee, who commanded the cavalry force under Stonewall Jackson, was with me at Gettysburg studying the situation of his uncle's command during the battle there. Just before we parted Fitzhugh said: "General Howard, do you know that at Chancellorsville I was riding with my cavalry in the forest, beyond Jackson's left flank after he had gotten into position west of your command, I then discovered your right brigade under von Gilsa? It was seen from the top of a hill covered with trees. While I could see the men of the brigade very clearly with my field glass they could not see me. I rode back and told Jackson what I had discovered. His divisions were so located that they would have come smack against your front. Jackson rode with me to the woody height, took a good look and then went back and marched his command by the flank over to that place." This threw new light upon the whole march of Jackson's troops and modified the character of his last advance and attack of the 11th corps.

Any good map of Virginia will show where the Rapidan flows into the Rappahannock: this junction is just north of the hamlet called Chancellorsville. From that point the Rappahannock runs between three and four miles eastward to a ford and then flows southward for three miles more: it now turns eastward again and flows east and northeast so as to form a horse-shoe bend. On the south between the two rivers our readers will find the battle lines of the two armies, namely the army of the Potomac under Hooker and the Army of Northern Virginia under Lee. Hooker had five army corps namely

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the main face was eastward. The greater part of the command followed a ridge and the whole was east of the Rapidan; our left under Meade was at the horse shoe bend. The front of the skirmish line ran along the Mineral Spring road, covering Chancellorsville. The main line continued on westerly through lower ground and retired in the vicinity of Dowdall's Tavern: Beyond Dowdall's was a slight backward hook in the main line partially encircling Talley's farm. Here was a clear opening in the almost interminable forest between the Pike and the Orange plank road. The "Pike" is the old roadway running toward Chancellorsville; ^{it} touches the edge of Talley's farm and makes an angle of about 40 degrees with the plank road. ^P On the day of Jackson's attack, General Hooker was at Chancellorsville. Slocum and Hancock in his front with commands to the right and left. French's division was behind ^{the hamlet} ~~no~~ toward the Rapidan, and my corps the 11th, was on the right in the neighborhood of Dowdall's Tavern; Sickles ^{this} ~~three~~ corps connected mine with Slocum's ⁵⁰.

Hooker's whole line following the sinuosities, was between four and five miles in extent. His cavalry under Stoneman was ^{about} raiding upon Lee's communications. The remainder of the army ^{of} the Potomac was in the vicinity of Fredericksburg, operating against that city and the confederates near by. Lee's army the day before this battle was a little over two miles distant from our front, towards Fredericksburg and facing us,--it was between our army and Sedgewick. Lee's divisions which were large--, I mean those immediately with him were commanded by McLaws, Anderson, Rodes, Colston, and A. P. Hill. He had besides, ^{some} cavalry under Stuart. Lee had his front running from the Rappahannock to the Catherine Furnace-- two miles and one half in ~~extent~~. His right wing was behind Mott's Run

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which flows due east into the Rappahannock, and his left wing stretched along the Catherine Furnace wagon road.

Could General Hooker have had a clear cut map and description such as we have to-day, he could have assailed General Lee's position with every prospect of success; but he did not have them. He moved to attack, the first day of May, but just as soon as we were engaged in close conflict with ^{a Northern} ~~an operation~~ of the confederate army, Hooker ordered us ^{back} to the position which I have described,-- in fact, very many of our troops had not left that position at all. It was on Thursday before the Saturday's battle that the three corps Meade's, Slocum's and mine had crossed the Rapidan and reached the vicinity of Chancellorsville, where at first Slocum established his headquarters. I halted my corps near Dowdall's Tavern. Then I rode along the plank road eastward to the Chancellorsville House; there I met ^{Slocum} ~~Sickles~~ who was commanding the ^{12th} ~~6th~~ Corps. He ordered me to cover the right of the general line; he pointed to a place on the map marked "Mill," on a branch of Hunting Creek back of Dowdall's Tavern and said: "Establish your right there". Slocum promised to occupy the space ^{from} ~~there~~ as his headquarters to Dowdall's Tavern with the 12th corps. A little later he found the distance too great and so directed me to fill about 3/4 of a mile of that space along the plank road. I regretted this because it took from me a large proportion of the troops that I had relied upon as reserves, which I knew to be necessary to give ^{any sort of} security to the right flank of the army.

Dowdall's Tavern was the home of Melzie Chancellor, who had had a large family, many of them adults. I placed my headquarters near his house. Before me facing south was ~~the right of~~ von Steinwehr's division. He had two large brigades, Bushbeck in front and

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Barlow's near the plank road. Bushbeck held a mile of line with two regiments in reserve. His reserve was kept 200 yards behind us, near the little "Wilderness Church". Now ^{westward} came Carl Schurz's division; with Dilger's battery near by. We were all fond of Dilger, a tall, hearty and handsome young man. He directed his cannon toward the southwest and watched the plank road westerly. Next to Dilger was Krzyzanowski brigade, half in front and half in reserve. Schimmelpfennig's brigade was ^{next} beyond ; like the others, Schimmelpfennig's division ran along the old turn pike road, facing to the southwest. The ~~three~~ ^{other} division of the 11th corps was under Devens, afterward Attorney General in Hayes Cabinet. Devens accompanied me in my inspection of the plank road and ^{the} old turn-pike for at least three ~~miles~~ miles west of Schurz. When this inspection ~~was~~ made with much care, was finished, Devens put his second brigade, (McLean's), on the right; then ^{going} ~~coming~~ out on the pike one-half ~~X~~ mile, he located von Gilsa's at right angle to his line, facing a little northwest. ^{As} ~~he~~ he had not troops enough for a solid line, Devens ^{filled} ~~commanded~~ parts of it by skirmishers. ~~connection~~ Later von Gilsa's brigade was drawn back ~~so as~~ to make a more solid ^{connection} and so (as Devens thought) the reserves of the corps could be brought more promptly to its assistance, should the confederates, by any possibility, get so far round to the north. ^{A section} ~~The second~~ of one of his batteries located along the pike, ^{defended} ~~established this at~~ the angle ⁱⁿ ~~made by~~ Devens's line. A reserve ~~battery~~ ^{of} ~~furnishing~~ twelve cannon was put to the west of Dowdall's Tavern and pointed toward the northwest and north to protect von Gilsa's right flank. Just there, were some open fields and a ^{gentle} ~~greatly~~ ascending slope. ^{close beside} ~~where~~ these batteries ~~were~~, I stood during the battle. It was a central spot, quite elevated. From this position the assailed could enfilade either roadway, and could ^{meet an} ~~make the~~ attack from the south, west,

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or north by a slight change of front. Here near this spot some protection for the batteries was constructed and a line of cross-entrenchments prepared. These ~~extended~~ ^{the} from a little church to a ~~wooded~~ ^{wooded} field. The lines of my corps including the reserves ^{thus} occupied a position something like a large fort with an opening toward Chancellorsville. After, General Sickles came and generously took that 3/4 of a mile north of Dowdall's Tavern, I was much comforted; because it gave me all of Barlow's large brigade as a reserve, with which in case of any turning movement of the confederates, I could fill our cross-entrenchments.

With regard to our pickets and skirmishers, our brigade ^{numerous} ~~s~~ had a complete cover from them. My aide-de-camp Major C. H. Howard had faithfully located ^{those} the outer lines, and another excellent officer of my staff ^{major} Eliphalet Whittlesey had ridden the entire circuit of the pickets and found them alert and well placed for quick observation. General ^{Darius} ~~Devens~~ had covered the right division with skirmishers quite a distance beyond his position and had ^{put} picket-stations from a mile to a mile and a half ^{out} on the roads of approach.

The three farms Dowdall's, Talley's and Hawkins' beyond the visible openings of which we had glimpses from my headquarters, touched upon that great Wilderness which became so famous in the subsequent operations of ^{Gen. Grant} ~~our armies~~. In this singular woods were stunted trees, such as scraggy oaks, bushy firs, cedars and junipers, all entangled with a thick, almost impenetrable undergrowth and criss-crossed with an abundance of wild vines. Indeed the forest appeared impassable on all the south and southwest fronts, so that with extreme difficulty our skirmishers worked their way ^{through} even in the most favorable spots. The officers of the 11th corps were ^{never} ~~not~~ satisfied with the position and naturally so because we had a flank in air ~~which~~

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which was at least four miles from Ely's ford where was stationed General Hooker's ^{nearest} cavalry picket. General Carl Schurz ^{after the battle} criticised this location as follows: "Our right ought to have been drawn back toward the Rapidan to rest on that river which was near the mouth of Hunting Creek, the corps abandoning so much of the plank road as to enable it to establish a solid line." My answer to this: "We were ordered to Dowdall's Tavern and not to Ely's ford, four miles to our rear, and instructed to fix our right at a mill on Hunting Creek". We did not find the "Mill", but the ~~exact~~ point was not doubted, we ^{know} however, ~~and~~ that the position which General Schurz, after the action so ably recommended, was the very position ~~into~~ ^{and} into which Hooker's army was forced, by which he was so cramped that in his judgement he could not subsequently take the offensive.

Hooker's aggregate in the battles lines ~~was~~, I have described, was in the neighborhood of ninety thousand men. His right corps, the 11th had exactly twelve thousand. Lee had ⁱⁿ with his lines confronted us ^{ing} ~~with~~ about forty thousand ^{effective} ~~effectives~~; he had ^{always} ~~besides~~ cannon with his infantry and with his cooperating cavalry.

When quite young I remember well, that my brother and myself several times found our way to a shelving rock from which we could watch the wind and rain storms which would spring up from the mountains of New Hampshire, and sweep across the hills and valleys and rivers toward us; ever increasing in ^a breath and height as they approached; the sudden gusts and whirlwinds; the sideling swallows excitedly seeking shelter; the swift and swifter, black and blacker clouds; ever ascending 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, fiercely shaking their thick branches; the lightening zigzagged in flashes and the deep bassed

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thunder echoed more loudly, till there was scarcely an interval between the ominous crashing discharges. It was very like ^{these} ~~the~~ early storms to us as we intantly listened and observed from the high ground near Dowdall's Tavern; the first symptoms appeared to be far away. Then there was a rattling of rifle shooting like the hail on a flat roof. It began with Buskbeck's skirmishers and passed on to Schimmelpfennig's. Schimmelpfennig at once sent forward a brigade which soon encountered some confederate cavalry and artillery, which proved to be a moving reconnaissance passing along our entire front with a view of determining for Lee, as precisely as possible, the exact location of the 11th corps. He had, however, obtained better information from the civilians in our vicinity who had been freed from restraint by the forward movement of the day before. We had forgotten to take them with us. When we returned to the old position we found a number of the inhabitants, who were said to have taken with them small baskets of provisions, very suspiciously absent from their homes. I always believed that they were welcome visitors to the conference of Lee and Jackson, the night before, where chacker boxes were used for tables; ^{it was that} ~~the~~ conference ^{which} ~~that~~ was to result in a remarkable movement under the direction of "Stonewall Jackson" the next day. In formal language General Lee has recorded the result of this remarkable interview: "It was therefore resolved to endeavor to turn Hooker's right flank and gain his rear, leaving the 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.

Jackson's enterprise which was not clear to us began about sun rise of the second of May. His three divisions under, Rodes, Colston and A. P. Hill ³⁰⁰⁰ reached the Catherine Furnace road.

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Jackson's enterprise which was not clear to us began about sun rise of the second of May. His three divisions under, Rhodes, Colston and A. P. Hill reached the Catherine Furnace road.

From the Furnace the column ^{turned} continued toward the south, in order to mask Jackson's intentions. He appeared to be aiming for the Orange Court House. As soon as his advance was well covered by the ^{trees} forest, his men swept round the different forest routes toward the plank road. On they went at least a mile further, till the Orange pike was uncovered and passed. While Jackson was ^{thus} working his command ^{forward} and massing his divisions opposite the 11th corps, ^{away} several miles ^{from} where from Dowdall's Tavern, our men were taking their observations of these mysterious operations. The Catherine Furnace was about two miles and one half from Sickles and Steinwehr's positions and they ^{on a spot} had ^{an} open view of Jackson's moving brigades. With the exception of this exposure, the confederate movements were well covered by the thick forests and by Fitzhugh Lee's active cavalry.

Not long after sun rise, we heard some loud cheering. It was a hearty sound with too much bass in it to indicate a confederate charge. It soon proved to be the coming of General Hooker, his staff and escort. They were riding along the rear of our lines of battle and inspecting our situation and ^{preparation} ~~proportion~~ for action. General Sickles in his report notices this visit of the commanding general: "It is impossible to pass over without mention the irrepressible enthusiasm of the troops for Major General Hooker. It was evinced in hearty and prolonged cheers as he rode along the lines ~~of~~ the 12th, 3rd and 11th corps". With my staff, I joined the cavalcade. Hooker noticed our breast-works and such trenches as we had, and while we passed along from regiment to regiment, referring to our protecting ~~longs~~ and ditches he said: "How Strong!" "How Strong!"

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Colonel Comstock, Hooker's engineer observed the extension of my command and saw the frequent breaks in the line where there were no troops and said to me in his own quiet way: "General Howard, do close in those spaces!" I answered inquiringly, "Why Comstock, the woods are thick and entangled, could any body come through there?" He replied: "Oh! they might!"

~~A little later~~ I took pains to follow his hints.

(1) X Later in the forenoon Sickles and I observed the movement at the Furnace after Hooker had returned to his headquarters. From the turn that the confederate column made near the Furnace, everybody said "Lee is pushing toward Orange Court House." We forwarded every vestige of information obtained to Hooker's headquarters. Hooker thought as others ^{believed that} He ~~thought~~ ^{via} he devined Lee's purpose; but he was in error. "Lee", caught between us and Sedgewick as between an upper and nether Mill stone, was surely retreating, ^{Many observers so said}

At twelve mid day, Sickles received orders from General Hooker to advance his command southward, cautiously. ^{two miles and more} This he did. By two P. M. I concluded that a battle had begun, because there was a sharp skirmish going on near the Furnace. ^{there} Then, ^{there was} active musketry firing, which was quickly followed by a more pronounced cannonade. I sent this news to my division commander, with instructions to be ready for action. The enemy was ^{still} reported to be in full retreat. Sickles' operations and particularly the pushing ^{out} of ~~on~~ ^{almost an} Barlow's sharp shooters, which succeeded in capturing ~~almost the~~ entire regiment, appeared to have determined Hooker's mind, and he so telegraphed to Sedgewick: "Lee is in full retreat!" It was just then that Captain Moore of Hooker's staff in the name of his general directed me to send my largest brigade, Barlow's, to reinforce Sickles, near the Catherine

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Furnace. I sent my aide-de-camp to ascertain just where to locate this brigade, ~~on~~ his return, General Steinwehr and I accompanied the brigade part of the way, so that we could take in the situation of Sickles with reference to our own position. ~~It~~ It was past four O'clock when there was much excitement between groups of officers along our lines. It was occasioned by the reports of ~~scouts~~ ^{squads} of ~~cavalry~~ ^{cooperated} rushing down the roads toward us and then withdrawing. Devens and several of his officers sent information to my headquarters as they could gather it. From their highest point they had glimpses of troops passing across the plank road and moving northward. I then sent out scouts who in a short time returned with statements, that the enemy was not more than three or four miles from our front and was marching. General Schurz came to me and we had quite a lengthy conversation with reference to our position. We were both anxious with regard to ~~the advance and~~ ^{our right} flank, so that with my sanction, Schurz moved a part of his reserves into a fairly good position to cover ~~the advance~~ ^{that extreme} right.

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 with reference to our own position. It was past four o'clock when
 there was much excitement between groups of officers along our lines.
 It was occasioned by the reports of ~~groups of~~ ^{groups of} ~~officers~~ ^{officers} rushing down the
 roads towards us and then withdrawing. Deven's and several of his officers
 sent information to my headquarters as they could gather it. From their
 highest point they had glimpses of troops passing across the plank road
 and moving northward. I then sent out scouts who in a short time return-
 ed with statements, that the enemy was not more than three or four miles
 from our front and was marching. General Schurz came to me and we had
 quite a lengthy conversation with reference to our position. We were
 both anxious with regard to ~~the advance~~ ^{our right} flank, so that with my sanc-
 tion, Schurz moved a part of his reserves into a fairly good position
 to cover ~~the advance~~ ^{the right} flank.

Devens kept two good regiments in reserve for a like purpose, and, in fact, General Steinwehr's whole division could be faced about to meet anything coming from the north. About this time a few troops of cavalry were sent me by Pleasanton. I dispatched them to the woods. "Go," I said, "beyond my right; go far, and let me know if ^{an} the assault is coming". All of my staff, Colonels Asmus^W and Mey- senberg, Majors Whittlesey and Howard, Captains Schofield, Dessauer, Stinson, Schierer and Hoffman were keenly on the alert to carry my orders and keep everybody on the qui vive. We did not have a good military position for the corps; but we did intend to make a strong fight should the enemy come to any part of our front. It was uncertain just where the confederates would approach.

General Hooker's "joint order to Slocum and Howard" Schurz says, did come to my headquarters, and that he ^{showed} did shew it to me. If so, every word of it was carried out to the letter, so far as Hooker's I could do so, subject to his subsequent instructions.

Devens, Schurz and Von Steinwehr, my Division commanders and myself, did precisely and in detail all that that order required. The three reserve batteries were put in position facing northward and the Infantry reserve, all we had after Hooker had removed Barlow's last brigade, were held well in hand against any emergency. Sickles sent me word by Major Howard that he was about to make a general attack upon Jackson's troops not far from the Catherine Furnace; that for some time he had been driving with the confederates and expected very soon brilliant results; that he proposed to place my reinforcements (Barlow's brigade) upon his right flank in his forward movement.

Meanwhile, the confederate General, Rodes, masked, as I have shown by the thick woods, had reached his designated point

- b -

in the wilderness. By four in the afternoon his men were in position and resting; the line of battle of his own brigade touched the pike west of us with its right and stretched on to the north; just beyond this brigade came Iverson's in the same line. On the right of that brigade was Doles' and farther to the right, Colquitt's brigade. About one hundred yards to the rear of this well formed line was ~~Krisble's~~ ^{Fumble's} division, (Colston commanding), Ramser's brigade following Colquitt's. Behind another space of more than one hundred yards the division of A. P. Hill was located. The advance confederate division alone had in it more men than the whole eleventh corps which was in its front. Counting the lines of this formidable column ready for attack from front to rear, we ~~have~~ ^{find} seven ranks, without reckoning the file-closers. The majority a little later after the moving began were driven into a solid mass by the entanglement of the forest, and gave our skirmishers, as they approached, the belief that the battalions were formed in close columns doubled on the centre.

With as little noise as possible, shortly after five o'clock, the steady advance of our fearless confederates began. The first lively effect, like a cloud of dust driven before a coming storm, appeared in the startled rabbits, squirrels, quails, and other game, flying hither and thither in evident terror, escaping where possible into adjacent clearings.

The foremost men of Doles' brigade an half hour later struck our advance pickets along the pike. The pickets, of course, ~~created~~ ^{caused} against such a force little or no delay. Fifteen minutes afterward Doles again reached our skirmishers. They resisted his front lines a few minutes. Indeed it required a main line of confederates to dislodge them. Doles, concerning this check, remarked:

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"After resistance of about ten minutes we drove him (the Yankee enemy) from his position on the left and carried his battery of two guns caissons and horses." This was undoubtedly Von Gilsa's brigade and ^{the} section of a battery which he was supporting.

That was the firing which Steinwehr and I heard at Dowdall's Tavern. Immediately after our return from placing Barlow on Sickles right near the Catherine Furnace, somebody's cannon thundered away for a few minutes and then came the well known fitful rattle of musketry; Before I could get again into my saddle this firing increased, and then there arose the ceaseless roar of a terrible storm. Instantly I sent Colonel Asmussen, my Chief of Staff, the first to mount, saying; "The firing is in front of Devens; go and see if all is in order on the extreme right". Asmussen turned at once and galloped away. I mounted and set off with a view of reaching a high point of observation in rear of Schurz' line. I intended to change front to the northwest, using every brigade southeast of the front of attack, in case the attack proved to be beyond ^{the} right flank. I divined at once that the ^{confederates} ~~army~~ was now west and perhaps north of Devens. I had hardly turned my horse when I beheld a cloud of men, not the few stragglers which always fly like the chaff before the wind, but scores of men, rushing out into the forest opening, some with arms and some without. They were running, or falling, before they got behind the cover of Devens' reserves, and before Schurz' waiting masses could spring into line or charge. The noise and the smoke filled the air with excitement; Diekmann's guns and ^{caissons} ~~Karlson's~~, plunging along from the extreme right with their batterymen scattered, rolled and tumbled like carts and runaway wagons in a thronged city. The cannon and the masses of the right brigade struck the second line of Devens and quicker than could be

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told, with all the fury of the wildest hailstorm, smashed everything into broken fragments, no organization that lay in its path could stand the mad current of panic stricken men. It was like the terrible disorder which followed the first Bull Run.

My horse caught the fury; he sprang; he rose high on his hind legs and fell over, ~~thurling me~~ to the ground. My aide Dessauer, by my side, was struck by a shot and killed. For a few moments I was as helpless as the men who were speeding without arms to the rear; but faithful orderlies helped me to remount. At first Carl Schurz was doing all he could to face his ^{share} regiments about and send them to Devens' northern flank to help those who were still holding on. Devens himself, already badly wounded and several of his officers were doing their best.

When again in the saddle I rode to the reserve batteries. Lieutenant Colonel Dickerson, an aide-de-camp of General Hooker, met me there, and my remaining staff officers gathered around me. We were eager to fill those trenches which faced to the north, and - trenches not very deep, it is true, which Barlow, had he been there, would have held.

Bushbeck's second line, near the little ^{wilderness} church, I ordered to change front and face the storm. His men kept their ranks very well; it seemed to my impatience that they were not quick enough and I cried out, "Would they never get there?"

Dickerson kept near me, and when he saw our men in front of him giving way, cried to me, "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 answered, "I will never fire upon my own men." As soon as our men were fairly out of the way, we threw

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shells and then canister over their heads. The attacking force came out of the forest in remarkably good order, considering their hindrances. They would halt and fire from their advance lines, and while the first were reloading, another set ran before them, halted and fired. It was all regular enough, but the confederates came on in such multitude that our men went down before them like trees in a hurricane. By extraordinary effort my officers and myself filled up all the cross intrenchments, of course, with fragments of regiments and individual soldiers. Many line officers, who had run away, stopped there and did what they could, but others ran on saying, "We've done all we can." Shierer, my artillery chief, managed the reserve batteries fairly well. Captain Dilger rolled his *solid quills* balls back along the plank road and kept shelling the woods. General Von Steinwehr was cool, collected and sensible. He had, like Blair at Atlanta, caused his soldiers, who were south of Dowdall's tavern, to spring to the reverse side of his intrenchment, and, facing north, they were ready to fire the instant it was possible to do so without killing our own men.

We will now follow Doles, who led the confederate attack. Here is *his* statement in brief:

"After my first successful charge, my command moved forward at the double quick to assault the enemy (that is ourselves), who had taken up a strong position on the crest of the hill in the open field." This strong position was on Hawkins' farm, where Devens and Schurz began their fight, using their reserves. But wave after wave of confederate infantry came upon them; even their left flank was unprotected the instant the runaways had passed it, and hosts were far beyond their right. To our intense sorrow, those of us who stood by the reserve batteries and had eagerly observed their

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bravery, saw them also give way, till the hill and the crest on Hawkins' farm were quickly in the possession of the men in gray. Doles, who saw so clearly amid screeching shells and the hot excitement of battle, says again, "He (meaning our forces from Schimelpfennig's and Buschbeck's brigades and part of McLean's) made a stubborn resistance from behind a waddling fence on a hill thick with pine."

Among those stubborn yankee fighters was Major Jeremiah Williams of the 25th Ohio. The confederates were drawing near him. His men lowered their rifles and fired with coolness. His right rested among scrubby bushes, while his left was in open ground. The blows of the enemy were murderers in the extreme; whole platoons of his men were falling; yet they held their ground. Williams waited continually, firing till not more than thirty paces intervened between him and the confederate front; then he ordered the retreat. Of three hundred and twenty-three men and sixteen commissioned officers, one hundred and thirty, including five officers, were killed or wounded. Williams brought a part of the living to the breastworks where I was; the remainder, he declared, had gone off to the rear with another regimental commander. Now all the confederate rear lines had closed up, and the broad mass began to appear on my left front south of Dowdall's tavern. Then it was, after we had been fighting an hour, that Sickles and Pleasanton's guns began to be heard. They had faced about and moved obliquely towards the northwest and were hurrying artillery, infantry and cavalry into positions to do what they could for our relief.

Much mortified I had come to my last practicable stand. The confederates were still slowly advancing, firing as they came. The twelve cannon of Schierer increased by a part of Dilger's battery

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I next ordered a retreat to the edge of the forest toward Chancellorsville, eastward. This uncovered 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 that forest was necessarily a short one. Steinwehr now brought back his regiments and the whole eleventh corps moved rapidly through the woods and the opening, through low grounds and swampy places the two miles to the first high land west of Hooker's headquarters. Gilger, in a manly way, kept his guns to the rear of the retreating corps, firing constantly as he retired. The confederate masses, partaking of Jackson's energy, rushed after us with triumphant shouts and unceasing firing, so that they secured many prisoners and much plunder.

It was after sundown when, ascending the high ground not far from Chancellorsville, I met General Hiram Berry commanding a brigade.

"Well, General, where now?" he said. I replied, "General Berry, you take the right of this road and I will take the left and try to defend it." I meant the right when we faced to the rear.

Our own batteries with numerous others, extended along the crest of a ridge, and with Steinwehr's troops faced to the rear. Then a terrible cannonade ^{by us} was begun all along that formidable posi-


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tion and continued into the night. Everybody fired into the forest now replete with confederates ^{much} all disorganized in their exciting chase. The strenuous efforts of Stonewall Jackson to advance ⁱⁿ the face of that fire were effectually barred. It was in the edge of that forest where General Berry had entered, that he met his death. In there that evening Stonewall Jackson also fell, in front of Berry's command, said to have been fired on by mistake by his own men. It was here that officers of the eleventh corps successfully rallied their scattered brigades and helped in the defence, till they were sent, during the night, to replace the fifth army corps, which had been brought away from the left of Hooker's general line. Years ago I wrote concerning the causes of the discomfiture of my command as follows: ✓  ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓

1st. I was limited by orders to the position to be defended. Though constantly threatened and apprised of the moving of the enemy in a westerly direction, yet the woods were so dense that he was able to mass a large force (much larger than mine) whose exact whereabouts, neither patrols, reconnoissances, nor scouts actually ascertained. Jackson succeeded in forming a column about three times my strength in the forest opposite to and outflanking my right.

2nd. By the panic produced by the enemy's reversed fire (from flank and rear) regiments and artillery were thrown suddenly upon my men in position.

3rd. The absence of Barlow's brigade, which I had previously located in reserve and en echelon with Colonel Von Gilser's (Devens' right flank) so as to cover that position. This was the only general reserve which I had.

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In his prayers, I was told by General Colquitt, after peace came, that Jackson pleaded for success, but never for his own life. He attained marvelous successes for himself and for Lee, and the last one was indeed his greatest achievement. Amid the joy of victory his spark of life went out in meteoric splendor.

I was beaten; I was mortified beyond expression, till, like Jonah, watching Ninevah, I wanted to die. It was not to be. After that I had success after success to the end of the war. At Chancellorsville I passed through the valley and the shadow of death, yet I lived to see my own petition fully and abundantly granted in the triumph of the Union cause and the reunion of all the States.

End.

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