

General Pleasanton, too, succeeded in turning back a dozen pieces taken from the flying corps, and planting them in a favorable position, while he drew up his little brigade of cavalry, consisting of squadrons of the Sixth New York, Eighth Pennsylvania, and Seventeenth Pennsylvania, with drawn sabres to protect the guns, (a novel sight in battle.) Directing the pieces to be double shotted with canister, he swept the position occupied by the enemy with a murderous fire. The successful check of the advancing foe is in no small degree owing to the indomitable energy of this gallant soldier.

While this is going on the panic-stricken Dutchmen are sweeping past us, and round by headquarters, into the road leading to United States Ford. Many members of the staff of General Hooker, and other general officers, placed themselves in the road, and with drawn sabres smote and slashed the cowardly retreating rascals. It was all in vain, however. The road for two or three miles down toward United States Ford is now crowded with their shattered fragments. Gen. Hooker has, however, sent Sykes' regulars after them. As to the loss sustained by this corps, either in killed or captured, it could not have been great; they ran too fast for that. I have the mortification to add that they allowed twelve pieces of cannon to fall into the hands of the enemy.

What makes this retreat not only disgraceful, but well-nigh disastrous, is that it completely foiled a splendid manoeuvre which Gen. Sickles with his corps was engaged in executing. He had gone in on a branch road leading off from the main pike, pierced the enemy's centre, penetrated for a mile, cut them in two, and would have secured the key to victory, when the turning of Howard's position compelled him to make good his retreat, though he brought out with him four hundred rebel prisoners!

The artillery combat was prolonged till midnight, and the bursting of the shower of shells thrown by our batteries into the rebels made a spectacle that beggars all description.

During the whole crisis Gen. Hooker was under the severest fire, and his staff, made up of young braves, performed prodigies of valor.

The task to be accomplished by the commanding general during those night-watches is one to tax his best energies. The enemy has completely turned our fight, is now in our rear, and will, unless prevented, turn their immense advantage to account with the first dawn of to-morrow's light. He will, doubtless, draw in his line, bringing his right down perhaps to the neighborhood of Ely's Ford. He will replace the cowardly corps that has fled by Meade's corps, than which there is none better in the army, and reinforce it by that of Reynolds, which is coming up from the left, and is now within a couple of hours' march of here. If the enemy resume the attack in the morning, as there is every probability that he will, I predict a reception that he is not prepared for.

The conduct of the commanding general during the whole operations, and especially the amazing fertility of resources displayed in first checking what was well-nigh being a crushing disaster, and then making such an arrangement of his line as will render it stronger even than before, give him claims in rank as a first-class captain. He certainly shows powers and qualities that have been displayed by no general who has yet commanded this army. I have seen the cold pedantry of McClellan's mind, and the feeble well-meaningness of Burnside; but here is a man who, while dashing in the extreme, has resources that are inexhaustible; who has, in an eminent degree, that highest quality of a general—that of promptly changing his plans in the midst of battle; who holds the thunderbolts of war in his hand and wields them at his will.

THE GREAT BATTLE OF SUNDAY.

HEADQUARTERS IN THE FIELD,
NEAR CHANCELLORVILLE, VA., Sunday, May 3, 1863.

Another bloody day has been added to the calendar of this rebellion. Another terrible battle has been fought, and more fields crimsoned with human blood. A few more such days as this will find no armies left on either side to fight battles.

My last letter brought up the situation to Saturday morning. It was then certainly expected that the enemy would begin the attack as soon as it was day, and our dispositions were made accordingly. But the attack did not begin. Events proved that the enemy did not design to attack, but he chose to make that attack in a manner and at a point different from what had been anticipated by us on Saturday morning. Daylight grew broader, and yet no guns. Finally about 6 o'clock a brass Napoleon, looking down the plank road in front of the Chancellor House, saw a regiment come into the road, in column, and attempt to deploy. One or two doses of canister caused them to deploy rather

irregularly, and more like skirmishers on the retreat.

Soon after, General Hooker and staff began an inspection of our lines, which occupied full two hours. Every portion was visited, and the work of the night was closely inspected. On the extreme left new lines were chosen, and the engineer officers soon marked out the line and character of the defences to be erected. When the inspection closed, the intrenchments were pronounced to be of the very best character, especially those on the right, where the columns of Slocum and Howard were posted.

About 3 o'clock the pickets on the right of General Slocum's front reported that from a certain position wagons had been seen moving in a westerly direction nearly all day. It was at once surmised that this might be a retreat, but subsequent events proved that it was a part of an affair of altogether another nature. To ascertain, however, what it really was, Gen. Sickles, who was still in reserve, was ordered to make a reconnoissance in heavy force in that direction, who soon found that the "wagon train" which we had seen moving during the day was composed mainly of ordnance wagons and ambulances, and that Stonewall Jackson and staff were at the head of a column of troops which the wagons followed.

Nothing more was needed to convince us that this daring opponent was executing another of his sudden movements, and it was at once resolved to checkmate him. General Sickles was ordered to push on, and General Williams' division of Slocum's column was ordered to co-operate. Birney pushed ahead with great vigor, and with Randolph's battery soon sent to rear as prisoners of war the entire remnant of the Twenty-third Georgia regiment, numbering over four hundred officers and men.

But at 5 o'clock a terrific crash of musketry on our extreme right announced that Jackson had commenced his operations. This had been anticipated, but it was supposed that after his column was cut, the corps of General Howard (formerly General Sigel's) with its supports, would be sufficient to resist his approach, and finding that he was himself assailed in the rear he would turn about and retreat to escape capture.

But to the disgrace of the Eleventh Corps be it said that the division of Gen. Shurz, which was the first assailed, almost instantly gave way. Threats, entreaties, and orders of commanders were of no avail. Thousands of these cowards threw down their guns, and soon streamed down the road toward headquarters. The enemy pressed his advantage. Gen. Devens' division, disaffected by the demoralization of the forces in front of him, soon followed suit, and the brave general was for the second time severely wounded in the foot, while endeavoring to rally his men. Gen. Howard, with all his daring and resolution and vigor, could not stem the tide of the retreating and cowardly poltroons. The brigades of Cols. Bushbeck and McLeon only remained fighting, and maintained themselves nobly as long as possible. But they, too, gave way, though in good order, before vastly superior numbers.

Gen. Hooker now sent to the aid of General Howard the choicest division of his army, the creation of his own hand, the famous Second Division of the Third Corps, commanded by Major-General Berry. Captain Best soon moved his batteries on a ridge running across the road, and after a short, but sanguinary contest, the further advance of the enemy was stayed.

Of course this disaster compelled the recall of Sickles and Slocum, who had been pursuing their work with remarkable vigor. Gen. Williams' division returned only to find a portion of their works filled with the enemy. Sickles' division could not communicate with the rest of the army at all by the way they advanced, and only at great risk by any other route.

This was the position at dark, and it did not look very promising. But our energetic commander was more than equal to the emergency. New dispositions to repair this disaster were at once resolved upon. Communication was at once had with Gens. Birney and Whipple, and a night attack ordered, to restore the connection of the lines. Gen. Ward's brigade, of Gen. Birney's division, made the attack at 11 at night, aided by Capt. Best's guns, massed on the ridge in front of the enemy. Birney's position was on the extreme left of this new line of battle, but Ward's terrific attack was entirely successful, communication was restored, and in a charge made by the brigade, a portion of the artillery lost by Howard was gallantly retaken by Gen. Hobart Ward.

This night attack was the most grand and terrific thing of the war. The moon shone bright, and an enemy could be seen at good musket range. The air was very

still, and the roar and reverberation of the musketry and artillery was past all conception. Malvern Hill was a skirmish compared with this, save in the degree of slaughter. But it was successful—the enemy were driven back nearly half a mile, and our tired men once more slept on their arms. That night's work was ended.

Now I come to Sunday. It was perfectly evident, from the position of affairs on Saturday night, that there must be a change of our lines, which would throw the enemy out of our rear and into our front again. It will be seen by what skillful generalship the enemy was fought and checked on front, and flank, and rear, while this was being done.

Gen. Reynold's First Army Corps arrived at United States Ford on Saturday afternoon. It was immediately put into position on our right, which was withdrawn from the plank road to the Ely's Ford turnpike. This line was immediately formed by Gens. Reynold's and Meade, the latter's position, on the left, having been relieved by Gen. Howard's Eleventh Corps, which, notwithstanding its disorganized condition, was so far reorganized during the night as to be fit for duty again this morning. They were assigned the position on the left, where it was probable there would be little or no fighting, and were protected by the strong works built the day before by Gen. Meade's corps.

It was very evident at daylight this morning that the day would bring forth a terrific battle. We knew that the enemy had been reinforcing his line all night, at the expense, undoubtedly, of the strength of his force on our left. His intention was, evidently, to fight for the possession of the plank road, which it was perfectly apparent he must have, as that portion of it which we then held was subject to the enemy's assaults in front and on both flanks.

But the possession of this road was not obtained by the enemy save at our own time, at his severest cost, and after one of the most desperate, tenacious and bloody conflicts, for its short duration, of the whole war.

Our line of battle was formed with Gen. Berry's gallant division on the right; Gen. Birney next on the left, Gen. Whipple and Gen. Williams supporting. At 5½ a. m., the advance became engaged in the ravine, just beyond the ridge where Capt. Best's guns had made their terrific onslaught the night before, and where they still frowned upon the enemy and threatened his destruction.

The rattle of musketry soon became a long continued crash, and in a few moments, as battalion after battalion became engaged, the roar surpassed all conception, and indicated that the fight would be one of the most terrible nature. Gen. Berry's division, which had checked the enemy's advance the night before, engaged him again, and if it were possible for them to add more laurels to their fame, then they did it thrice over again.

The enemy advanced his infantry in overwhelming numbers, and seemed determined to crush our forces. But the brave men of Sickles and Slocum, who fought their columns with desperate gallantry, held the rebels in check, and inflicted dreadful slaughter among them. Gen. French's division was sent in on the right flank of our line at about 7 a. m., and in a short time a horde of ragged, streaming rebels running down the road indicated that that portion of the enemy's line had been crushed. At 8 o'clock a. m., General French sent his compliments to General Hooker, with the information that he had charged the enemy and was driving him before him.

Sickles maintained the attack upon his line with great endurance. The enemy seemed determined to crush him with the immensity of his forces, and, as subsequently shown from the statements of prisoners, five whole divisions of the rebel army were precipitated upon this portion of the line, for from these five divisions we took during the day an aggregate of over two thousand prisoners.

The exploits of our gallant troops in those dark, tangled, gloomy woods may never be brought to light; but they would fill a hundred volumes. It was a deliberate, desperate, hand-to-hand conflict, and the carnage was perfectly frightful. Cool officers say that the dead and wounded of the enemy covered the ground in heaps, and that the rebels seemed utterly regardless of their lives, and literally threw themselves upon the muzzles of our guns. Many desperate charges were made during the fight, particularly by Berry's division. Mott's brigade made fifteen distinct charges, and captured seven stands of colors, the Seventh New Jersey, Col. Francine, alone capturing four stands of colors and five hundred prisoners.

General Couch's Second Army Corps, though only in part present, did excellent

work. It was General French who charged and drove the enemy on the flank, and it was the indomitable Hancock who gallantly went to the relief of the hard-pressed Sickles.

The engagement lasted without the slightest intermission from 5½ a. m. to 8:45 a. m., when there was a temporary cessation on our part, occasioned by getting out of ammunition. We held our position for nearly an hour with the bayonet, and then, being resupplied, an order was given to fall back to the vicinity of the Chancellor House, which we did in good order. Here the contest was maintained for an hour or more, not so severely as before, but with great havoc to the enemy, and considerable loss to ourselves.

The vicinity of the Chancellor House was now the theatre of the fight, and my visits to that spot became less frequent. General Hooker maintained his headquarters there until 10 a. m., when it was set on fire by the enemy's shells, and is now in ruins. Chancellorville is no longer in existence, having perished with the flame, but Chancellorville is in history, never to be effaced.

Our new line was now so far established as to render it safe to withdraw all our forces on that front, which was accordingly done, and at 11:30 a. m. the musketry firing ceased.

The engagement had lasted six hours, but had been the most terrific of the war. Our artillery had literally slaughtered the enemy, and many of the companies had lost heavily in men themselves, but the guns were all saved.

The enemy was now no longer in our rear, but had been shoved down directly in our front, and is now directly between us and our forces in Fredericksburg, and we were again in an intrenched and formidably fortified position. The enemy has gained some ground, it is true, but at the sacrifice of the flower of his force, five of his seven divisions having been cut to pieces in the effort, and over 2000 of them have fallen into our hands.

Our right wing, under Gens. Reynolds and Meade was not engaged, save the division of General Humphrey's which went into the woods on the enemy's left flank, and fought valiantly under their brilliant leader, until their ammunition was exhausted.

During the afternoon the enemy has made several attempts to force our lines, particularly at the apex of our position, near the Chancellor House, but Captain Weed has massed a large quantity of artillery in such a position as to repulse with great loss everything placed within its range. The enemy tried several batteries and regiments at that point, at different times during the afternoon, and they were literally destroyed by the fire of our terrible guns. Nothing can live within their range.

Our troops are perfectly cool and confident. They have fought with great spirit and enthusiasm, and will continue to do so.

The rebel prisoners report that Gen. A. P. Hill was killed this forenoon, during the sanguinary conflict his division had with Gen. Berry's division. Gen. Berry was himself killed, while gallantly fighting his brave men.

An old woman was praising, in rather enthusiastic terms, the sermon of a Scotch minister, who had acquired a great name for depth and sublimity. The suspicions of her auditor were a little aroused, and she ventured to propose a question to her: "Well, Janny, do you understand him?" "Understand him!" holding up her hands in astonishment at the question—"me understand him! Wad I hae the presumption?"

A good story is told of an Irish hostler who was sent to the stable to bring forth a traveler's horse. Not knowing which of the two strange horses in the stalls belonged to the traveler, and wishing to avoid the appearance of ignorance in his trade, he saddled both animals and brought them both to the door. The traveler pointed out his horse, saying, "That's my nag." "Certainly, your honor. I knew that; but I didn't know which of them was the other five gentleman's."

A few years ago, a little fellow was taken by his father to a carpenter, to be bound apprentice to him, after the fashion of old times. In settling the business, the master, who was one of the stiff kind, observed: "Well, my boy, I suppose you can eat almost anything, can't you, I always make my boys live on what they don't like. 'I like everything but minth and apple pith,' lisped the boy.

Hartford has given the confederates—democrats, we mean—a municipal victory.

Wanted.

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