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THE WAR NEWS.

FROM THE POTOMAC ARMY.

HIGHLY INTERESTING DETAILS.

Under the above head the New York Times of yesterday publishes the following details of news from the army of the Potomac.

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The chief of this movement was the fact that Gen. Hooker had received information from his headquarters that the enemy had thrown the greater part of its force on the side of the fortifications; and had also removed many of the guns in the lower batteries, and placed them in position at the upper end of the town—thus indicating an intention of making an attack on us. He therefore suspended the preliminary attack at once, which had been arranged as a prelude to important operations elsewhere, and rightly surmised that if the enemy did really mean to attack us they would follow up our retirement.

At 2 P. M. he remarked, "I think I can make him come out and fight me on my own ground." In two hours the assertion was proved. The enemy mistook our voluntary retirement for a check, and followed us rapidly as we fell back.

Gen. Sykes' division had got in their old position, and pickets thrown out, when the enemy again appeared in force on the ridge, at the foot of which we lay. Our men had stacked arms and were at rest.—The whole division, save the Duray Zouaves, were lying at nearly right angles to the ridge. The Zouaves were parallel with the road. Quick as thought Gen. Sykes brought his men into line, the Zouaves on the left half-wheeling into line of battle like a machine. The rebels paused a moment on the top of the ridge, and to nerve them for the onset, gave one of their scattering, demonic yells, and then came down on the doublequick—shooting, capturing and literally running over our pickets, who scrambled behind all sorts of obstructions. But in an instant more a terrible crash resounded from the Zouave end of the line, and down the column rolled the most deafening roar of musketry that in all my war experience has ever met my ears. It did not last, apparently, two minutes, but its work was effective.

The attack was very fierce, and being so much nearer than the previous firing had been, created considerable commotion around the cross-roads. It at once brought Gen. Hooker into the saddle for the first time during the day, and things were speedily put in shape. This onslaught was for the purpose of retaking this very important point. The first thing done was the massing of artillery near the roads, and in fifteen minutes twenty-two guns were sending shell into the woods, and the roar of artillery became ten times more deafening than that of the musketry had been. The work was soon done. The contest lasted three quarters of an hour, and the enemy ignominiously retired.

Although this attack was so hand-some, it proved to be only preliminary to still greater operations. At 4 P. M., Col. Diven, who had cavalry skirmishers on the plank road, reported the enemy advancing in force and driving in his pickets. He was soon discovered deploying to the right, and Gen. Slocum promptly met the move by sending in Geary's division and Haupton's battery. The attack proved to be only a feeler, however, and the next thing was a development still further on our right, which was again checked by Gen. Williams, who, with three batteries of artillery and his own division, repelled very effectively to the enemy's fire, which was sometimes brisk, but never heavy. Beyond this he did not go, except to occasionally shell our extreme right, under Gen. Howard, but his troops were very placid, and the shells did no damage.

For a while there was a cessation of the desultory and spasmodic firing which had been going on for two hours. But at 6 o'clock a desperate charge was made for our batteries commanding the plank road. The rebels advanced through the woods at rapid pace, and got within point-blank range of our guns. A column, also, came up the road wildly. Geary met them with great promptness and wheeling a regiment into the road, a deadly volley was poured into their advance. At the same time Knapp and Haupton doubled-shotted their guns with canister, and for fifteen minutes there was another fiery episode. Of course the enemy were severely repulsed, and with heavy loss. They killed and wounded fell in the timber fell in front of our batteries, and leaves and bushes having been set on fire by our shells, the poor wretches are suffering a double death.

After this hour there were no more vigorous attempts on the part of the enemy. For an hour or more a sharp shelling was kept up against our extreme left, occupied by Gen. Meade. Gen. Couch's force were deployed early in the afternoon, and rendered effective assistance in supporting the centre. General Sickles' column acted as a reserve.

The centre operations of day indicate that the enemy was engaged mainly in feeling our lines, endeavoring to find a weak point, and to ascertain the strength of our position and forces, but he was repulsed at every point, particularly in his attempts to retake Chancellorsville, and in the insane charge upon our batteries. Every thing goes to show that Lee will open the attack early this morning. It is now 3 o'clock a. m. May 2. Our troops have been at work all night, and the woods around, with the ring of axes. Both parties are busy building earthworks and abatis. Certain changes are being made in our lines, and we shall be fully ready for any emergency.

Our losses yesterday are not yet known. We had about one hundred killed and wounded in Gen. Sykes' fight early in the afternoon. Capt. Marsh, of the Seventeenth regulars, was killed. Capt. Orenson, of Gen. Sykes's staff, was wounded, not dangerously; Lieut. Col. Walker, assistant Adjutant General to Gen. Couch, was wounded by a piece of shell in the arm—not seriously. The troops acted magnificently. Not a case of misbehavior has come to my

knowledge. They go into battle with enthusiasm, and one idea seems to animate every one—the idea of victory. L. L. CROUNSE.

TWO DAYS LATER. The Great Battle of Chancellorsville.

(Correspondence of the New York Times.) HEADQUARTERS IN THE FIELD, NEAR CHANCELLORSVILLE, Va., Sunday, May 3, 1863—6 P. M.

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 design to attack, but he chose to make that attack in a manner and at a point different from what was generally anticipated by us on Saturday morning. Daylight grew broader and yet no guns. Finally, about six 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 Gen. 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 entrenchments were pronounced to be of the very best character, especially those on the right, where the columns of Slocum and Howard were posted.

There had been only slight disturbances during the night, as both forces had been busy with their axes rather than their muskets. From General Howard's front came a report that the enemy was engaged all night in cutting a road past his picket line to the right. How much attention was paid to the fact at the time I do not know, but subsequent events proved that it was very significant.

The day continued to pass in a very dull manner for a day of battle, and only here and there was there anything more than desultory skirmishing and picket firing. About 3 o'clock the pickets on the right of Gen. 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 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 reconnaissance in heavy force in that direction. This was done with great promptness, and the divisions of Gen. Birney and Whipple, with Gen. Barlow's brigade, from Howard's corps, were pushed out to the front, Berdan's brigade of sharpshooters having the advance, and supporting Randolph's battery. Our troops moved rapidly and soon became more or less engaged, especially with the artillery and sharpshooters as skirmishers. Berdan soon sent in some sixty prisoners, belonging to the Twenty-third Georgia, including one Major, two Captains and three Lieutenants. Being upon the ground, I examined these prisoners, and 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. Gen. Sickles was ordered to push out, and Gen. 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 the rear as prisoners of war the entire remnant of the Twenty-third Georgia regiment, numbering over four hundred officers and men. The column of the enemy which had been moving up this road was now literally cut in two and Gen. Williams had commenced a flank movement on the enemy's right, which promised the most successful results.

But at five 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 Gen. Sigel's), with its supports, would be sufficient to resist the 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. Schurz, 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 arms, 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 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 Col. Rushbeck and Mc-

Lean 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 Gen. Howard the choicest division of his army, the creation of his own hand—the famous Second Division of the Third Corps, commanded by Major Gen. 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. General 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 Gen. Birney and Whipple, and a night attack ordered to restore the connection of the line. Gen. Ward's brigade of Gen. Birney's division, made the attack at 11 at night, aided by Captain 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 General 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 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. Reynolds' 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 Generals Reynolds and Meade, the latter's position, on the left, having been relieved by General 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 General Meade's corps. Our new line now assumed the shape of triangle, prolonged at the apex, the right of the line being some what longer than the left. As the position of the line on the right was new, time was necessary to fortify and entrench it, and the work was carried on vigorously by the Fifth and First army 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. At 5 o'clock A. M. the rebels could be plainly seen upon the plank road, about a mile and a half from the Chancellor House, which General Hooker still retained as his headquarters, though a shell had gone through it the evening before, and another had cut a tree directly in front of it.

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 5 1/2 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. Gen. 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, Colonel Francine, alone captured four stands of colors and five hundred prisoners. Gen. Couch's Second Army Corps, though only in part present, did excellent work. It was Gen. 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 5 1/2 A. M. to 8.45 P. 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 lay-onnet, and then, being resupplied an order was given to fall back to the vicinity of the Chancellor House, which we did in 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 Chancellorsville 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. Chancellorsville is no longer in existence, having perished with the flame, but Chancellorsville is in history, never to be effaced.

Our new line was now so far established as to render it safe to withdraw all our force on that front, which was accordingly done, and at 11 1/2 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 are again in an entrenched and a formidable 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 two thousand of them have fallen into our hands. Our right wing, under Gen. Reynolds and Meade was not engaged, save the division of Gen. Humphreys, which went in to the woods on the left flank, and fought gallantly 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 terrific guns. Nothing can live within their range.

Our present position is impregnable if our troops continue to fight as they have to day. Gen. Lee, the prisoners say, has issued an order that our lines must be broken at all hazards. Let them try it again with what they have left. They can, and perhaps will destroy themselves by making attack upon this position. 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 leading his brave men. L. L. CROUNSE.

STILL LATER. HEADQUARTERS OF THE POTOMAC, near Falmouth, Sunday Evening—10 P. M.

I have arrived here from Chancellorsville, and learn of the complete success of Gen. Sedgwick's attack upon the stronghold of the enemy at Fredericksburg Heights. The position was brilliantly carried by storm to day by Pratt's glorious light division of the Sixth Army corps, capturing two whole regiments of rebels the Sixteenth and Eighteenth Mississippi, one company of the famous Washington Artillery of New Orleans, and part of Alexander's Artillery, including in all eight guns and nearly one thousand prisoners. The storming force were aided by Gen. Gibbon, of the 2nd Army corps, who with a force, came upon the flank and rear of the enemy, planting the American flag upon their works before they had actually

ceased firing upon our charging columns. The captures were complete, and our loss only moderate. Gen. Sedgwick afterwards engaged the enemy and drove him back. At 6 P. M., he had advanced to the Brick Church, four miles and a half out on a plank road, towards Chancellorsville. Here he had a severe engagement with Early's division, reinforced by troops from Lee, but repulsed them, and sent in another lot of prisoners. The enemy is now hemmed in between Hooker and Sedgwick, and will, no doubt, fight with desperate tenacity to extricate himself from his desperate position, but the advantage seems to rest decidedly with us. L. L. C.

Latest Reports from the Battle-Field. NEAR THE BATTLE FIELD, Monday Night, May 9th.

Heavy firing in the direction of Chancellorsville began at an early hour to day, and has continued ever since. There has been a great battle in that immediate vicinity. Large reinforcements had come up for the enemy, apparently from Richmond, which seems to render it probable that the railroad had not been cut. In regard to what has been done in this expedition to cut the railroad, and as to the whereabouts of Gen. Stoneman, all is doubt and uncertainty. No positive advices of the success of that expedition have been received. We have only rumors and hopes. Gen. Stoneman's force met with disaster, we would have heard of it from the enemy's men. But, had it not, we ought to have heard of it in another way, and very practically, before this. Doubtless this failure in respect to time was severe on the plans of Gen. Hooker. Another delay was perhaps not less so.—General Hooker expected assistance from that Sixth corps in the fight on Sunday. He expected that that corps would carry the heights of Fredericksburg by way of man at or before daylight, march immediately down the plank road and fall upon the enemy's rear. Had this been done the Sixth corps would have assailed the rebel rear at the very time the rebels were temporarily successful against Hooker's right. A corps on their rear at such a time would have changed the face of affairs immensely. But the Leights were found to be a greater obstacle than they had been thought—and it seems very strange that they should have been under circumstances when the measure of their strength was so completely taken in December last. Reports from the field are favorable, and we feel every confidence that General Hooker will be able to hold his position in front of Ely's ford, which, though his right is swayed back somewhat, is essentially as dangerous a position for the enemy as the one he held at Chancellorsville. Beyond question, however, this must depend upon the extent to which the enemy has received or will receive reinforcements. They have the correct idea in this matter. They do not fear the loss of Richmond if they can beat Hooker, and they send forward every man, reckless of every other result. And sometimes a battalion more or less has changed the face of a battle. Large numbers of prisoners have been sent in. It is particularly difficult to form an estimate of the number of prisoners.—You see them always in scattered groups at different times, and you are very apt to forget how large the groups were and how many you had seen. So the estimate is as wide as between four and eight thousand.

There is reason to suppose that General Hooker has to day engaged the whole rebel army and fought one of the greatest battles of the war. Further BRACIES OF THE DRAFT.—It is now said that the payment of \$300 will clear a man only of the first draft, and that he is subject to the second, and all subsequent drafts precisely as if he had not been drafted at all. If there are three drafts ordered in three months, you are liable to be drafted three times in that length of time and be compelled to go into the ranks or pay your \$300 three times, or as many more times as a draft may be ordered. This seems to be now the generally received construction of the law. If such is to be the operation of the conscript law, it will prove more odious to the people than it has yet been supposed it would. The same construction, we presume, also applies to the provision respecting substitutes. If a drafted shall hire a substitute it will not exempt him from further drafts, and he may be called upon either to take his place in the ranks or furnish another substitute or pay another three hundred dollars a half dozen times in the course of a year. With this construction of the law—which the St. Louis Republic says is the true one, and which nobody has yet controverted, so far as we have seen—his operation upon the poorer classes will be onerous and oppressive in the extreme. In spite of all they can do, it will force them to become soldiers, and to leave their families to the cold protection of a most hopelessly blind and unconcerned charity. It is surprising that the poor laboring men of the country, without distinction of party, should be holding public meetings and denouncing this conscript law.

Of the ministers to England since the formation of the government, N. York has had 5, Massachusetts, 5, Pennsylvania, 4, Virginia, 3, Maryland, 2, New Jersey, 1, and South Carolina, 1. A contemporary instance a gentleman, Lake Champlain who takes a pair of skates and writes a four months' bill on the ice with such perfection that in less than an hour the ice liquifies it.