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## BATTLE OF CHICKAMAUGA.

ENGAGEMENTS ON SATURDAY AND SUNDAY.

### GRAPHIC DESCRIPTION OF THE CONTENT.

Special Correspondence of the Cincinnati Gazette.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE CUMBERLAND,  
Monday, Sept. 21st 1863.

#### SATURDAY'S BATTLE.

The shifting of Thomas' corps during the night of Friday placed it on the left line in the following order: Brannon on the extreme left, Baird next and Reynolds next. Negley was assisting Wood to hold the passage of Owen's ford and the position of Gordon's Mill which had now become our extreme right. One division of McCook's corps, (Johnson's) having come up to the new line sooner than the rest, reported to Thomas for orders and was assigned a position on the left between Baird and Reynolds. Two divisions of Crittenden's corps held the center of the line. Palmer on the right of Reynolds and Van Cleve next to Palmer. When the battle began, Davis and Sheridan, of McCook's corps were rapidly marching toward the left, to complete the line and take position on the right of Van Cleve. Generally, the line took the direction of the Chickamauga, withdrawn upon the left so as to follow for a considerable distance the course of the Lafayette road, which runs directly north and south.

The rebels had been manœuvring all day on Friday about the position at Gordon's Mill, and seeing its great strength had manœuvred our left flank, doubtless with the express purpose of compelling Gen. Rosecrans to abandon it. As the left must be protected at all hazards, their plan partially succeeded, and the immense transfer of Thomas from right to left on Friday night, so far suited their designs. But it rendered our own left so strong that it became impossible for the rebels to turn it, as they had all along hoped to do. The attempt on our part to hold Gordon's Mill after this transfer, perhaps occasioned too great a lengthening of our lines, and consequently too little solidity. True; it seemed every way adapted to prevent the enemy from flanking us upon the right, but the simple withdrawal of our right wing to the Mission Ridge, allowing it to rest there, would have fully secured that flank, enabled us to bid defiance to the rebels in that direction, greatly contracted our front and released for immediate service on Saturday the splendid divisions of Negley and Wood. The entire distance over which the line extended was little short of three and a half miles.

It was between 10 and 11 when Croton's brigade, of Brannon's division, going down to a ford over the creek, just opposite their position, encountered the enemy, who was advancing in force, and, after a gallant combat, was driven back. Reinforcements immediately coming up from the remainder of Brannon's division, the rebels were in turn driven pell-mell toward the ford. Another terrible charge by a largely increased force of the enemy, pushed back the whole of Brannon's division, involving General Baird, who at once became fiercely engaged. The Rebels, outflanked, after the withdrawal of Brannon's men, fought like tigers, but were rolled back and over Scribner's brigade—the right of which being rather too far advanced, was crumpled up, until, by unparalleled gallantry, it cut its way through. The storm rolling from left to right, fell next upon Johnston, and almost simultaneously upon Reynolds, who both fought with desperate valor, wavering at times, but again gaining their firmness, giving back a little but again advancing, until the troops of Brannon and Baird rallied by their able leaders, and by the personal exertions of Thomas himself, whose courage was as conspicuous as his coolness, came up once more to the work.

Then the order was issued for the entire line to advance, and nothing in history exceeds in grandeur the charge of that powerful corps. Longstreet's men from Virginia were directly opposed to the troops of Thomas, and although they fought with stubborn determination, they could not for an instant check the slow and stately march of our battalions. In vain they rallied and re-rallied; in vain they formed double lines, which fired simultaneously; in vain they wheeled their cannons in score of new positions. Thomas moved resistlessly on. Much of our artillery lost in the morning was recaptured. Seven pieces were taken from the enemy. They had been pushed already three quarters of a mile, and Longstreet was threatened with actual annihilation, when a new danger caused Thomas to halt.

While our left was so remorselessly driving the rebels, Polk and Hill collecting

their chosen legions, threw them with great impetuosity upon Palmer and Van Cleve, in order to effect a diversion in favor of Longstreet. An obstinate contest ensued, but the overpowering numbers of the enemy speedily broke to pieces large portions of our two divisions, especially Van Cleve's. In fact, the route of this part of our line was becoming as complete as that of the enemy's right, when Davis, who had been marching as rapidly as possible to intersect with Van Cleve's left, arrived upon the ground, went in most gallantly, and, for a time, restored in that locality the fortunes of the day. But the enemy knowing that all depended upon his effecting a diversion in favor of the defeated Longstreet, massed nearly the whole of his available force, hurled it upon Van Cleve, and Davis drove the former to the left and the latter to the right, and entered boldly the opening thus made. It was just at this juncture that Thomas' troops, whose attention had been called to the extreme danger of our center, began to return. Reynolds immediately sent the heroic Wilder to the assistance of Davis, and the celebrated brigade of mounted infantry at first scattered the enemy in terror before them. But the persevering rebels rallying again, and charging in fresh numbers, even Wilder began to fall slowly back. Gen. Sheridan, who had been following after Davis, now came up, and led Col. Bradley's brigade into the fight. It held its own nobly, until the rebels, in large force, getting possession of a piece of timber near its flank, compelled it to give way.

But now new actors appeared upon the scene. Wood and Negley, who had gallantly repelled the assaults of the enemy at Owen's Ford, (assaults intended as a feint to conceal the design of the rebels on our left) came up to the rescue. Their troops went to work with a will. The progress of the enemy against Davis, Van Cleve and Sheridan was speedily checked. Reynolds, returning from the pursuit of Longstreet, assisted in rallying the broken battalions of Palmer. Thousands of our scattered troops re-organized almost of their own accord. Baird, Brannon and Johnson resumed their places. A consuming fire swept all along our front. The rebels retired everywhere before it, and before sunset our line was again in battle array upon almost precisely the ground held that morning.

Just before dark the enemy, as if in spite of his unsuccessful efforts, opened a heavy fire of artillery and musketry upon these same troops, and continued it until after nightfall. But it was so promptly returned that he sustained certainly as much injury as he inflicted, and about six o'clock drew off entirely leaving the day clearly our own.

During the night of Saturday some change was made in the disposition of our forces, and the line was so far withdrawn that it rested along a cross-road running northeast and southwest, and connecting the Rossville with the Lafayette road.—By this arrangement the extreme right was made to rest on Mission Ridge, as it should probably have done in the first place. The new line that formed was a mile shorter than that of the day before. Gen. Rosecrans' headquarters were removed from a house belonging to widow Glenn, near the right of the line, to a point somewhat nearer the Lafayette road, and in view of the center, and every preparation was made that genius, science and patriotism could make, to beat back the avalanches of the enemy, should they venture upon an attack the next day.

The changes in the order of the different divisions made the new order stand thus. One brigade of Negley's division was near the extreme right; then came Johnson, then Baird, then Palmer, then Reynolds, then Brannon, then Negley's other brigades, then Van Cleve, then Wood, and then Sheridan. Wilder and Minty, with their mounted force held the extreme right. I have given only the general order of our line. Brannon and Van Cleve were really held somewhat in reserve. The other divisions had reserves detailed from their own regiments or brigades.

If any one wishes to get a general but at the same time a clear idea of the nature of the battle-field of Sunday, let him imagine two roads, the Rossville and Lafayette, gradually approaching each other as they run northward, the average distance between them over the space where the battle was fought being about two miles. As we look southward, the low wooded range of hills called Mission Ridge, is upon our right, and away to the left flows the Chickamauga. Between the ridge and the creek, and especially between the two roads, the country is mostly level and is covered with dense forests of oak and

pine, interspersed here and there with small cornfields. This is the general idea of a battle-field destined to be immortal in the records of the historian.

That indeed was a night of awful suspense which settled around us after the last gun had been fired on Saturday. It was very chilly and cold, and much suffering among the wounded was occasioned thereby. Those who were still alive and well, although they too were exposed to the numbing cold, thought but little of their physical condition. True, no warm fires kept the influence of the frost from their limbs, for fires were strictly forbidden. No blazing light helped to cheer their minds and dispel gloomy images therefrom. But still as they sank down in the darkness upon the hard, cold ground, they entirely forgot their bodily deprivations as they strove to imagine what might be the result to themselves, the country and the cause, of the struggle which might ensue on the morrow. No tongue can ever tell the yearnings of a soldier's heart for home and friends and as he lay on the ground that night grasping his musket. No pen or pencil can picture the emotions of his soul as he thought of his mother, wife or children, and reflected that ere the setting of tomorrow's sun thousands of such as he, and he himself, perhaps, would have passed beyond the possibility of ever again seeing those dear ones on earth. And who can fancy the varied feelings of apprehension, of agony or of hope which filled the patriot's mind as he thought that the evening of the coming day might see the banner of his country waving in the breezes of beneficent victory or dragged in the mire of disastrous defeat. And he, too, upon whom all the responsibility for success or failure rested, he who had never yet lost a battle, but was now confronted by such fearful odds that a triumphant issue seemed almost impossible—what were the reflections that coursed through the chambers of his soul on the night preceding that eventful day whose issue would confirm his title of one of the greatest of living generals, or write "failure" in burning characters upon his brow? And deeper than this solicitude for his own personal fortunes must have been his anxiety for the Republic; for the destruction of his army on the morrow would be a disaster to the nation well nigh irreparable, while a decisive victory would dispel the last lingering fears of the patriot, and make all liberty loving hearts in our own and all other lands to bound with ecstatic joy!

#### SUNDAY'S BATTLE.

The morning came. No sound of crackling musketry or roaring cannon, or bursting shell disturbed the peacefulness of that Sabbath morning. The Sabbath! yes, it was the blessed day of rest—rest given in mercy by kind Heaven to ungrateful man. Will the battle be renewed to-day? If so, it will be by the action of the enemy for Gen. Rosecrans does not willingly fight on the Sabbath. The first hour after sunrise passed. "Scarcely," said our officers and soldiers, "there will be no fight; for if the enemy had intended to attack us he would, following his usual tactics, have fallen upon us at daybreak."

Two hours more had gone by, and some dropping musketry began to be heard along the various parts of our line. Finally, at about 10 o'clock, there were several fierce volleys, and the loud booming of half a dozen pieces of artillery announced that the enemy had again, as on the day before, assaulted our left.

And now that the battle has begun, let us glance one moment at the contending forces. On one side is our old army which fought at Stone River, re-inforced by two divisions (Brannon's and Reynolds') of Thomas' corps, and Starkweather's brigade of Baird's division. But counterbalancing these to some extent, Post's brigade of Davis' division and Wagner's of Wood's were both absent. We might or might not also rely for assistance upon Steedman's division of Gen. Granger's corps.

Opposed to these was the old army of the Tennessee, which Bragg had so long commanded; Longstreet's formidable corps from Virginia; one-half of Johnson's army from Mississippi; Buckner's division from East Tennessee; Dabney Maury's division from Mobile; Brigadier General Lee's command from Atlanta, and from twelve to fifteen thousand fresh troops in the service of the State of Georgia—in all amounting to at least seventy-five thousand men. The Union army confronting them was certainly not more than fifty-five thousand strong.

The firing which had begun upon our left swelled almost immediately into a tremendous roar, which filled over the souls of the bravest with awe. Nothing that I have yet listened to since the break-

ing-out of the war, exceeding it in continuity and volume of sound. It was not a tumult which now rages and now subsides; but one which for two long hours, rolled incessantly all along the line of Thomas' seemingly devoted corps. So loud was the crash of musketry, that the discharges of cannon following each other in quick succession, could with difficulty be distinguished, and seemed only like more emphatic passages in the grand diapason of thunderous harmony which burst from the vast clouds of smoke and dust enveloping the contending hosts. The fight upon the extreme left commenced by a desperate assault of the enemy upon Gen. John Beatty's brigade of Negley's division. The brigade, as well as its famous leader, stood their ground nobly; but being somewhat isolated from the remainder of the line, finally retired. It will be remembered that the other brigades of Negley's division were posted much further to the right. A desire to re-unite the two portions of his command, induced Gen. Rosecrans to send Gen. Wood to take Gen. Negley's place in line until the latter should effect the re-union of his brigades. Wood proceeded immediately to execute the order, filling up the gap as Negley retired. The rebels understanding this movement of Negley's to be a retreat, immediately advanced their skirmishers, not only here, but all along the left, and the fighting at once became terrific, as I have described. The rebels, however, soon ceased to attack General Wood's front, and for a time appeared to devote their entire attention to Thomas.

Again and again the rebel lines advancing from the cover of the woods into the open cornfield charged with impetuous fury and terrific yells toward the breastworks of logs and rails, but each time the fiery blasts from our batteries and battalions swept over and around them, and their ranks were crumpled and swept away as a bank of loose clay washed by a rushing flood. But as fast as one line fell off another appeared, rushing on sternly over the dead and bleeding bodies of their fallen comrades. Longstreet's corps was seeking to regain its lost laurels of yesterday. D. H. Hill, at the head of Hardee's old corps, was lending them the assistance of a division, and Buckner's troops were throwing their weight into the scale.—Thomas fought only with his forces of Saturday weakened by Saturday's heavy losses. It was an unequal contest, and a pang of agony shot through my heart as I saw our exhausted veterans begin to waver.—To waver in the face of the charging, shouting, thundering host which confronted them, was to lose all, and the next moment wave after wave of the rebel sea came surging down to the breastworks, dashing madly against and over the barrier, and greedily swallowing up its defenders, with all their ammunition and material. Never was resistance more stubborn and determined, but never was attack prosecuted with more devilish pertinacity.

Meantime, as Gen. Reynolds was sorely pressed, General Wood was ordered to march instantly by the left flank, pass Brannon and go to his relief. Davis and Sheridan were to shift over to the left, and thus close up the line. As the occasion was urgent, Gen. Wood dived in his skirmishers with considerable haste, and the rebels for the second time mistaking a withdrawal for a flight, pressed forward in a torrent and poured into the flanks of Gen. Wood a storm of musket balls, canister and grape. Moving upon the double quick the men endeavored to keep their files in order, but as that pitiless storm of iron continued to be hurled against them, the regiments began to spread out like a fan, wider and wider until finally they were torn to shinders. This was especially the case with the brigade commanded by Col. Buel. The undaunted Wood, with Harker's brigade, comparatively intact, passed on to his destination.

Here was the great turning point in the battle. Here, indeed, the battle was lost. Davis, coming up to fill the vacancy occasioned by Wood's withdrawal, was caught upon the left flank by the fiery rebel torrent now pouring through the opening, and pushing off towards the right in utter disorder, like a door which is swung back upon its hinges, and shattered by the same blow. Van Cleve, and what remained of Palmer, were struck upon the other side, and shivered as a sapling by a thunderbolt. Even the personal exertions of Rosecrans himself, who, with drawn sword, and at the head of his devoted staff, endeavored to check the rout, were ineffectual.

After that fatal break our line of battle was not again reformed during the day.—The army was in fact out in two; McCook, with Davis' Sheridan and Wilder, being thrown off to the right, (Crittenden, except one brigade of Wood's, being broken in pieces,) and Thomas, with his indomit-

able corps, and Johnson's division of McCook's remaining alone upon the left. In the fierce tornado which had swept over his log breastworks, Thomas had been much shaken, all his divisions fighting desperately, all rallying at the earliest practicable moment, but only Gen. Reynolds' retiring from the works towards the hills in anything like tolerable order.

As soon, however, as the corps had reached the foot of Mission Ridge, it formed anew its broken ranks with an alacrity and rapidity, only less remarkable than the obstinacy with which it so long endured the assaults of the enemy upon the level ground below. The great leader himself, Gen. Thomas, assisted by Baird, Reynolds, Brannon, Scribner, Harker, Negley, John Beatty, Wood and Turbin, reorganized the brigades with wonderful celerity, and immediately began making head against the enemy.

From this time McCook disappeared from the general history of the battle; as, indeed, extricating himself from his demoralized and routed corps, he headed towards Chattanooga, and, at about one o'clock, disappeared entirely from the field. His two divisions, Davis' and Sheridan's, forced off towards the right, far behind their original position, were assailed by immense squadrons of the enemy, and fearfully battered. Each had but a handful left as it retired, toward nightfall, upon the Rossville road, and the men must have done gallant fighting or they would not have come off as well as they did. In fact, wherever Sheridan is, whether isolated or in company, and whether the odds against him be one or many there is certain to be a fight.

It was about half past twelve, when, leaving a heavy cannonade open upon the right, I galloped over in that direction to see what it might mean. A longitudinal gap in Mission Ridge, admits the Rossville road into Chattanooga valley, and skirts along a large cornfield, at the mouth of the gap. Looking across the cornfield from the gap, you see thick woods upon the other side. The cornfield itself is a sort of "pore" in the ridge, and here were numbers of all sorts of army vehicles mingled with the debris of dismantled and discomfited batteries. Fragments of Davis' flying squadron had also lodged in this field.

While I stood gazing upon this scene from the summit of the ridge, some rebel skirmishers appeared in the skirts of the woods opposite the gap I have mentioned, and flung perhaps a dozen musket balls into the field. Instantly men, animals, vehicles became a mass of struggling, cursing, shouting frightened life. Everything and everybody appeared to dash headlong for the narrow gap, and men, horses, mules, ambulances, baggage wagons, ammunition wagons, artillery carriages and caissons were rolled and tumbled together in a confused, inextricable and finally motionless mass, completely blocking up the mouth of the gaps.—Nearly all this booty subsequently fell into the hands of the enemy. Sickened and disgusted by the spectacle, I turned away to watch the operations of General Thomas' corps, upon which alone depended the safety of the army.

Gen. Thomas had withdrawn his men almost entirely from the valley, and taken up a position on the side of Mission Ridge. His left still rested upon the Lafayette road, and his right upon the ridge near the gap I have already spoken of. Here were collected the shattered remnants of the powerful corps which had so long breasted the fierce assaults of the enemy in the forenoon. Here was Johnson, who seemed to have done better work to-day and yesterday than ever before. Here was the unconquerable Wood, with Harker's brigade, and here were also such fragments of Crittenden's corps as could be induced to venture upon another stand.—The whole were drawn up in a line forming a circular curve, facing the southeast. A hill near the middle of the curve was the key of the position, and Harker's brigade was appointed to defend the same. Soon after the hill was occupied, a house upon its summit was set on fire by the enemy's shells, and continued to burn for a long time with great fury.

Not long was the new line of battle permitted to remain idle. Cannon belled against it; missiles of every kind were hurled into it; shells burst above it; rifle balls went tearing through it; but still it remained firm.

It was certain, however, as truth itself, that unless assistance should reach it from some quarter, and that right speedily, it must at length succumb, for the rebel leaders, emboldened by the rout of McCook and Crittenden, were gathering their hosts to hurl them in a last mighty effort against the feeble band that confronted them. Whence should that succor come?

Suddenly a vast cloud of dust was seen to rise above the trees, away to the left, and a few minutes afterward long lines of men emerged from the woods, crossed the Lafayette road and began advancing toward us over the fields. Their discipline seemed very perfect, and it was an imposing pageant when they came on, their banners fluttered above their heads and their glittering arms flashed back the sunlight through the thick clouds of dust.

Capt. Johnson of Gen. Negley's staff, who on being severed from his own division, had immediately reported to Gen. Thomas for duty, had already, at great personal risk, ascertained that the advancing battalions were infantry, and now the question arose, was in our own or the enemy's. Hope and fear alternately agitated our bosoms, until at last looking through our glasses, we could clearly distinguish the red and blue, with the white crescent. It was the battle flag of General Granger, and the troops we saw were two brigades, Mitchell's and Whittaker's, of Steedman's strong division. These were comparatively fresh troops. True, they had marched some weary miles over roads ankle deep with dust. True, they had hurried along rapidly to succor their comrades and participate in the fight. But they had not as yet been engaged that day, and hence they could indeed be considered help to the battle-scarred veterans who held the hill.

As soon as General Granger had reported to General Thomas for duty, he was sent by the latter to bring over an ammunition train from the Rossville road. The train had fallen into the hands of the enemy, but the march in search of it brought Steedman at once into contact with the rebels and a desperate conflict immediately ensued. It was now that the brilliant courage of Col. John G. Mitchell, commanding one of Gen. Steedman's brigades became conspicuous. Now General Whittaker had an opportunity of baptizing in glory the star recently placed upon his shoulder; and now the troops of the Reserve Corps, comparatively unused to battle, had an opportunity of testing their mettle. Nobly did all pass through the ordeal, and although once through into confusion by the concentrated fire from a score of rebel regiments and half as many batteries, they rallied under the fire, and drove the enemy from a hill almost as formidable as that which formed the key of General Thomas' position. The rebels made one desperate endeavor to retake this position, but were bloodily repulsed, and almost for the first time since the fight began there was a lull in the martial din.

An hour passed by, and it became evident that Gregg would not be foiled in his attempt to annihilate our gallant army without another effort. Polk's corps, assisted by the Georgia State troops, by Dabney Maury's division, and by various detached fragments of the rebel army were to try their hands upon the heroic band, as the forlorn hope of the army still held the hill. The thinned battalions were brought closer together. The dozen pieces of artillery were planted to sweep all approaches to the hill; and each man looking at his neighbor vowed, some mentally, and others audibly, to die right there if it were necessary for their country, their freedom, and for mankind!

All along the woods skirting the cleared fields at the southeastern foot of the hill; in the hollows and ravines to the right and away to the left, upon, and beyond the Lafayette road the rebel legions were seen gathering for the onset.

Just before the storm broke, the brave and high-souled Garfield, was perceived making his way to the headquarters of Gen. Thomas. He had come to be present at the final contest, and in order to do so, had rode all the way from Chattanooga, passing through a fiery ordeal upon the road. His horse was shot under him, and his orderly was killed by his side. Still he had come through, he scarce knew how, and here he was to inspire fresh courage into the hearts of the brave soldiers who were holding the enemy at bay, to bring them words of greeting from Gen. Rosecrans, and to inform them that the latter was reorganizing the scattering troops and as fast as possible, would hurry them forward to their relief.

At last a shell came hurtling through the air, and burst with a loud explosion over the hill. This was the signal for rebel attack, and at once the bullets flew thick and fast amongst us. My companion, the correspondent of the New York Herald, was struck by a spent ball and tumbled from his horse, and although him and I thought the chances were bad against our living to describe the contest, we felt that we could not do aught than watch it to its close.

Just upon the side of the hill to the left, and in the rear of the still smoking ruins of the house, was gathered a group whose names are destined to become historical—Thomas, Whittaker, Granger, Garfield, Steedman, Wood. Calmly they watched the progress of the tempest, speculated upon its duration and strength, and devised methods to break its fury. The future annalist will delight to dwell upon the characteristics and achievements of each member of this group, and even the historian of the present, hastening to the completion of his task, is constrained to pause a moment if only to repeat their names.