JOSEPH HOOKER.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

HOOKER IN COMMAND.—CHANCELLORSVILLE.

Hooker assumes Command.—Bad Condition of the Army.—Hooker's Measures of Reform.—Hooker's Plan of Operations.—Changes in the Commands.—Strength of the two Armies.—Hooker's Orders to Stoneman.—Cavalry Expedition postponed.—Hooker moves upon Chancellorsville.—The Rappahannock and Rapidan crossed.—Chancellorsville and the Wilderness.—Sedgwick crosses near Fredericksburg.—Hooker's Anticipations of Success.—Lee's Movements.—Hooker's Delay at Chancellorsville.—He advances toward Fredericksburg, then retreats.—Position of the Forces.—Lee and Jackson in Council.—A Flank Attack resolved upon.—Jackson marches.—Sickles attacks the Confederate Rear.—Jackson's March.—Lee's Operations.—Jackson routs the Federal Right.—Pleasonton checks the Confederate Advance.—Lee's Operations in Front.—The Advance of Birney.—Jackson Wounded.—Death of Jackson.—His Career.—Wishes the War to be without Quarter.—Hooker assumes a new Position.—The Union Line of Battle.—Birney's Night Attack.—*The Battle of Sunday, May* 2: Forces Present.—Stuart occupies Hazle Grove.—Assails Sickles.—Is forced back.—Sickles asks for Support.—Hooker Disabled.—Sickles falls back.—French attacks Stuart, and is repulsed.—Lee assails the Union Centre.—Unites with Stuart.—Occupies Chancellorsville.—The Federals Retreat.—Their new Position.—Sedgwick ordered up from Fredericksburg.—His dilatory Movement.—Storms the Heights and Advances.—Perilous Situation of Lee.—He sends Troops to meet Sedgwick.—The Fight at Salem Heights.—*The Battle of Monday, May* 3: Lee re-enforces McLaws.—Early retakes Fredericksburg Heights.—Howe repulses Early and McLaws.—Hooker's Orders to Sedgwick.—Sedgwick recrosses the Rappahannock.—The Council of War.—Hooker recrosses the Rappahannock.—Movements of Averill and Stoneman.—Losses at Chancellorsville.—Criticism upon Operations.—Hooker's Errors.—Lee's Errors.

FROM this survey of operations in the West we turn again to Virginia, where, at the opening of the year, the two great armies of the Union and the Confederacy lay confronting each other upon the banks of the Rappahannock.[1]

Hooker was invested with the command of the Army of the Potomac on the 26th of January. Just three days before, his predecessor had drawn up an order dismissing him from the service, and on the very day before it was doubtful whether that order should be put in force. But the transfer of command was executed with all due military courtesy. "Give," said Burnside, in his parting address to the army, "to the brave and skillful general

[1] The following are the leading authorities for Chancellorsville: Testimony before the Committee on the Conduct of the War, contained in volume i. of the second series (cited as *Com. Rep.*, ii.).—Lee's Report of Chancellorsville (cited as *Lee's Rep.*): it embraces his own report and those of nearly all of his principal commanders.—Hotchkiss and Allan, engineers in the late Confederate army, have put forth a monograph upon Chancellorsville. It is specially valuable for its elaborate maps, which clearly represent the topography of the region, and show every movement upon both sides.—Dabney's Life of Stonewall Jackson embraces some valuable information respecting the operations of that commander. The author had access to many materials which are now probably destroyed.

who has so long been identified with your organization, and who is now to command you, your full and cordial support and co-operation, and you will deserve success." Hooker, in assuming command, said that "he only gives expression to the feelings of this army when he conveys to our late commander, Major General Burnside, the most cordial good wishes for his future."

Hooker took command with a confidence in himself which contrasted strongly with the self-distrust which had been expressed by Burnside. The position had come to him unsought, but, as he believed, not undeserved. "No being lives," he averred, "who can say that I ever expressed a desire for the position. It was conferred on me for my sword, and not for any act or word of mine indicative of a desire for it."[1] He had, indeed, grave misgivings, not as to his own capacity, but as to the state of the force placed under his command.[2] Foremost among these causes of misgiving was the hostility of Halleck, who for six months had sat, and for thrice as long was to sit, under the title of general-in-chief, as an incubus upon the Union armies. Hooker knew, or at least believed, that Halleck had been hostile to him from the first, and the sole request that he made of the President was that he would stand between him and his superior in command.[3] The condition of the army was a still more grave matter for apprehension. Burnside had received it from McClellan strong in numbers, discipline, and spirit. In three months he transmitted it to Hooker reduced in numbers and impaired in efficiency. Much of this was owing to causes over which Burnside had no control. Lincoln's policy, as finally indicated by his emancipation proclamation, was looked upon with disfavor by a very considerable part of the army. Many of the officers in high command, especially those who had belonged to the regular army, were far from hostile to slavery. McClellan, just escaped from the Chickahominy swamps, had found time six months before to present his views of the principles upon which the war should be waged. "The rebellion," he said, "has assumed the character of a war; as such it should be regarded. It should not be a war looking to the subjugation of the people of any state in any event. It should not be at all a war upon population, but against armed forces and political organizations. Neither confiscation of property, political executions of persons, territorial organizations of states, or forcible abolition of slavery, should be contemplated for a moment. Unless the principles governing the future conduct of our struggle shall be made known and approved, the effort to obtain the requisite forces will be almost hopeless. A declaration of radical views, especially upon slavery, will rapidly disintegrate our present armies."[4] McClellan gave voice to the prevailing feeling among the leading officers of the army. No inconsiderable part of the private soldiers had been drawn from a class which looked with bitter aversion upon the negro. This was especially the case with the regiments raised in the large cities of the North. To them the very name of Abolitionist was a word of reproach. But now the proclamation issued on New Year's day of 1863 had solemnly pledged the nation to the abolition of slavery as an essential feature of the future conduct of the war.

For a time it seemed that McClellan's prophecy that a declaration of radical views upon the subject of slavery would be verified by the rapid disintegration of the Army of the Potomac. Officers high in rank openly declared that they would never have embarked in the war had they anticipated this action of the government.[5] When rest came to the army after the disaster of Fredericksburg and the failure of the mud campaign, the disaffected began to show themselves and to make their influence felt. The army fell into a course of rapid depletion. Express trains, and even the mails, were burdened with civilian clothing, sent to soldiers by their friends to facilitate their escape from camp. When Hooker took command desertions numbered 200 a day. In a week the army lost as many men as were killed in any pitched battle. What with deserters and absentees, 85,000 men, almost 4000 of whom were commissioned officers, wellnigh half the nominal strength of the army, were away from the field, scattered all over the country.[6] The great body of the disaffected, whether in or out of the army, believed that the government would soon be forced to restore McClellan to the command, and practically to abandon its declared policy of emancipation. By these men the appointment of Hooker was looked upon with no favor. They could not fail to remember the unsparing terms in which he had attributed the disaster of the Peninsular campaign to the utter want of capacity of their favorite commander.[7] They looked eagerly forward to the time when he should be placed at the head of the army, and thence, as political affairs seemed to be shaping themselves, raised to the Presidency of the United States. The feeling in the army and that in the country acted and reacted upon each other, and for a time it seemed that the policy of the government would be condemned alike by citizens and soldiers.

In spite of these untoward circumstances and the grave misgivings which he felt, Hooker grasped the command with a firm hand. It was midwinter, and operations in the field must be postponed until early spring should render the roads passable. In that interval much could be done. Hooker set himself strenuously at work to improve the condition of the army. At the very outset he broke up the grand divisions, and restored its former organization into corps, each being placed under the command of a general in whom he had confidence. Then the great evil of desertions was to be encountered. The loose system of furloughs was thoroughly revised. Hitherto the corps commanders had granted leaves of absence at discretion. By the new regulations no leave of absence could be granted except from head-quarters to officers of high rank. In no regiment could more than one field officer or two line officers be absent at the same time. Not more than two privates out of a hundred in any regiment could be absent on furlough at the same time, and no man could receive a furlough unless he had a good record for attention to his duties. The leaves of absence being of short date, fifteen days being the utmost limit, even these strict rules enabled all deserving men who wished it to visit their homes. Disloyal officers were carefully weeded out. Express trains were examined, and all citizens' clothing found therein was burned. The police and commissariat of the army received special attention. Comfortable winter huts were built; vegetables and fresh bread were ordered to be issued twice a week. The good result of these measures was soon apparent. Desertions ceased; absentees returned to their commands; the ratio of sickness sank from more than ten per cent. to less than five. The cavalry, which had heretofore been scattered among the grand divisions, was organized into a separate corps, and soon grew into a powerful arm, wanting only a fitting man to wield it; but Hooker was not, as commander of this army, to find such a leader. He did the best he could by giving the cavalry corps to Stoneman, with Averill next in command. Sheridan was yet to be brought from a subordinate position in the West. The outpost duty had been grossly neglected; the Confederates knew what was passing within the Union lines almost as accurately as did its own commanders. Hooker changed all this. The picket lines were rendered impenetrable. One division lay encamped on Falmouth Heights, opposite Fredericksburg, in plain view of the enemy. The camps of the other divisions, a score or more in number, covering a circuit of a hundred miles, lay beyond the wooded crests of Stafford. What passed beyond this screen was hidden from the keenest view which the Confederate commander could gain, saving when some ostentatious demonstration, or a sharp, sudden dash of pickets was made, with the object, as Hooker explained, "to encourage and stimulate in the breasts of our men, by successes however small, a feeling of superiority over our adversaries." Knowing, moreover, that idleness was the bane of all armies, every effort was made to keep the troops employed, and whenever the weather permitted they were engaged in field exercises.

As winter wore away and spring opened, the commander felt assured that he had at length "a living army well worthy of the republic," or, as he was wont to express it in larger phrase, "the finest army upon the planet." All through those winter weeks he had pondered the problem how and where he should strike.[1] His instructions were of the most general character. Halleck wrote: "In regard to the operations of your own army, you can best judge when and where it can move to the greatest advantage, keeping in view always the importance of covering Washington and Harper's Ferry, either directly or by so operating as to punish any force of the enemy sent against them."[2] Hooker had, however, caught the true idea of the work to be done. It was not so much to capture Richmond as to destroy the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia which lay in his front. Lincoln had months before vainly sought to impress this idea upon McClellan.[3] Grant seized upon it months later. In seeking to solve the problem of attack, Hooker soon came to the decision that it was impossible to cross the Rappahannock and assail the enemy directly in front. The misadventure of Burnside had demonstrated this point; and, moreover, since that luckless attempt, the Confederate position had been greatly strengthened. The mere passage of the river in front of the Confederate lines presented, indeed, no very serious difficulty, for Lee adhered to his former plan, rather inviting than threatening such an operation.[4] But his long lines of intrenchment, stretching for a distance of twenty miles along the sides and crests of the heights, were in plain view. Interspersed with the infantry parapets were epaulements for artillery which would sweep the hill-sides and bottom-lands over which an

---

[1] *Com. Rep.*, ii., 112.

[2] "I entered upon my duties with many misgivings and forebodings. When it was announced to me that I had been placed in command of the Army of the Potomac, I doubted, and so expressed myself, if it could be saved to the country."—*Ibid.*, 112.

[3] "I was informed by a member of the cabinet that [when it was first proposed to remove McClellan] the President and five members of it were in favor of placing me at the head of the Army of the Potomac, and one or two members of the cabinet and General Halleck were opposed to it." (Hooker, in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 175.)—"I had been reliably informed that I was again opposed by him on the removal of Major General Burnside." (*Ibid.*, 112.)—"In my interview with the President, among other subjects relating to the new position I had been called to fill, I stated that I hoped to succeed, provided he would stand between me and the commanding general of the army. This was the only request I made of the President in assuming command."—*Ibid.*, 111.

[4] McClellan to the President, July 7, 1862, *McC. Rep.*, 280–282.

[5] *Com. Rep.*, ii., 112.

[6] *Ibid.*, 112.

[7] "I do not hesitate to say that the failure of the Peninsular campaign is to be attributed to the want of generalship on the part of our commander."—Hooker, in *Com. Rep.*, i., 575.

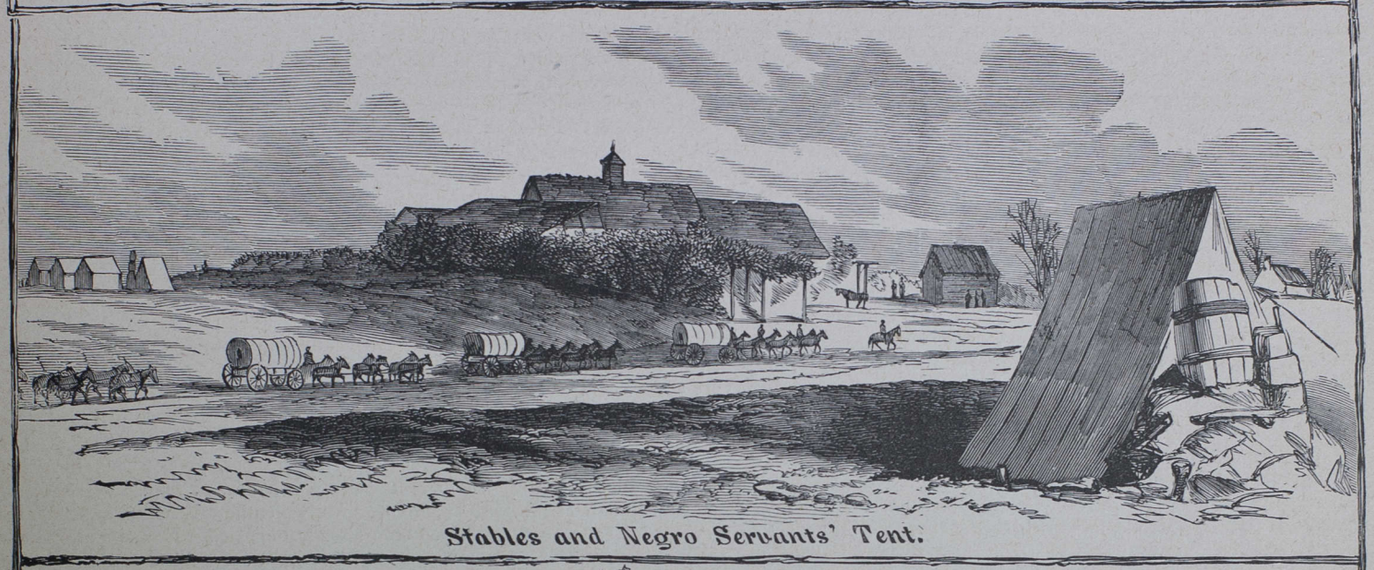
[1] "The subject of the campaign was one to which General Hooker gave much thought and attention. But, while getting the views of every body else, he did not give his own, but kept his intentions in regard to the proposed campaign entirely secret from every one, fearing that what he intended to do might come to the knowledge of the enemy. When he assumed command of the army there was not a record or document of any kind at headquarters of the army that gave any information at all in regard to the enemy. There was no means, no organization, and no apparent effort to obtain such information. We were almost as ignorant of the enemy in our immediate front as if they had been in China. An efficient organization for that purpose was instituted, by which we were soon enabled to get correct and proper information of the enemy, their strength and movements." (Butterfield, in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 74.)—"Knowing that the passage of the river would be resisted, and perhaps defeated, if brought to the knowledge of the enemy, I had taken every precaution to keep it a profound secret. I had not even communicated it to my corps commanders, or the officers of my staff." (Hooker, in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 118.)—A close examination of Hooker's dispatches and orders, compared with what is now known, shows that he was almost as well aware of the strength and positions of the Confederate force as of his own.

[2] *Com. Rep.*, ii., 115, 285.

[3] "I would press the enemy closely; fight him if a favorable opportunity should present. If he make a stand at Winchester, I would fight him there, on the idea that if we can not beat him when he bears the wastage of coming to us, we can never when we bear the wastage of coming to him. We should not so operate as merely to drive him away. As we must beat him somewhere or fail finally, we can do it, if at all, easier near to us than far away. If we can not beat the enemy where he now is, we never can, he again being within the intrenchments of Richmond. I think he should be engaged long before such point is reached." (Lincoln to McClellan, October 13, 1862, abridged, *Com. Rep.*, i., 525.)—"General Hooker finally determined upon a plan of campaign, the intent and purpose of which was to destroy the army of General Lee where it then was; not merely to fight a battle and gain possession of the battle-ground, and have the enemy fall back to Richmond, but to destroy him there; for General Hooker believed that we could better afford to fight the enemy nearer Washington than Richmond."—Butterfield, in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 75.

[4] "As in the battle of Fredericksburg, it was thought best to select positions with a view to resist the advance of the enemy than incur the heavy loss that would attend any attempt to prevent his crossing."—*Lee's Rep.*, 6.

Blacksmiths Department, Head-Quarters.



Stables and Negro Servants' Tent.

General Hooker's Tent.

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC.

assailing force must march. Abatis of fallen timber guarded every point between the impassable swamps at the foot of the hills, while in the rear these outer lines were covered by rifle-pits, and every little rise of ground bristled with intrenchments like a miniature fortress. To attack these works in front seemed hopeless. "Previous exposure in attempting it under Burnside, when the enemy's preparations were far less complete, had made this a conviction in the mind of every private in the ranks."[1]

The enemy could then be assailed only by turning his position either below or above. Against the former operation was the fact that the river increases so rapidly in width that it would require a thousand feet of bridging, and the pontoon trains and artillery must march twenty miles over a broken and wooded country, by roads still axle-deep with clayey mud. This march could not be concealed from the enemy on the opposite bank, who could easily extend his intrenchments down the river faster than the assailants could construct practicable roads. This movement was, then, clearly impracticable.[2]

It only remained to turn the Confederate right far above Fredericksburg, and this was possible only upon condition that the movement should be a surprise. Three miles above Fredericksburg, in a straight line, but twice as far following the bend of the river, is Banks's Ford; seven miles farther is the United States Ford,[3] neither of them to be waded except in the dry season; now the water was so high that the passage could be made only by bridges. These points were defended by works so strong and strongly held as to preclude all possibility of carrying them. A little above the United States Ford the Rappahannock receives the Rapidan, an affluent almost equal to itself. Here was the extremity of the Confederate lines, although small detachments were posted up the Rapidan for some miles. If the Rappahannock should be crossed above the position, the Rapidan was still to be passed. Lee never imagined that his opponent would attempt to turn his flank by marching such a distance, over roads almost impassable, into a region where his army must subsist upon what it could carry with it, crossing, also, two rivers which a single shower would so swell as to cut him off from his ammunition and provision trains. Yet this was the bold operation which Hooker resolved to undertake.

The army of Hooker was divided into seven corps. Many changes had been made in the principal commands. The Ninth Corps, which Burnside had brought back from North Carolina, and which had fought under him at South Mountain and Antietam, was detached from the Army of the Potomac, and, under the immediate command of W. F. Smith,[4] sent with its old leader to the West. Its place was supplied by the Twelfth, under Slocum, which had been posted at Harper's Ferry. The Eleventh, under Sigel, which had guarded the approaches to Washington, was brought down to the main army. Sigel had applied for leave of absence, and, at the urgent request of Hooker, the command of this corps was given to Howard. Butterfield was made chief of staff, and the Fifth Corps was assigned to Meade. Stoneman was placed at the head of the cavalry, and the Third Corps was given to Sickles. Sedgwick replaced Smith in the command of the Sixth Corps. Reynolds retained the First Corps, and Couch the Second. The army which Hooker had in hand numbered in effective men, "present for duty," 120,000 infantry and artillery, besides 13,000 cavalry.[5] The cavalry, excepting a single brigade of perhaps 1000, under Pleasanton, as we shall have to show, were sent away on an expedition in which they accomplished nothing, and so must be placed out of the account in estimating the effective force with which the opposing generals encountered each other in that series of actions which we call the battle of Chancellorsville. The Confederate force was far inferior.[6] Three months before it had numbered 80,000; but, confident in the strength of his position, and somewhat embarrassed by the scarcity of forage, Lee had sent Longstreet with half of his corps southward toward North Carolina, where offensive operations were threatened. There remained on the Rappahannock the divisions of Anderson and McLaws, and Jackson's entire corps, consisting of the divisions of A. P. Hill, D. H. Hill, Trimble (formerly that of Jackson), and Early. But D. H. Hill had been put in command of the Department of North Carolina, and his division was now under Rodes; Trimble was at home on sick-leave, and his division was commanded by Colston. Besides these, there was Stuart's cavalry, reduced to two brigades, and a strong reserve artillery. The entire effective strength of all arms was something more than 60,000 men. Anderson's and McLaws's divisions guarded the line from the United States Ford downward beyond Fredericksburg, a distance of ten miles; Early held the intrenchments at the foot of the hills opposite Franklin's Crossing; the remainder of Jackson's corps lay near Port Royal, twenty miles below Fredericksburg. Both armies had built for themselves comfortable winter huts in the wooded region on either side of the Rappahannock, which formed for the time a barrier which neither could overpass.

Hooker, having matured his plan of campaign, wished to commence its execution as early as possible. The term of enlistment of 40,000 men, a third of his army, would soon expire, and he knew that there was little use of putting troops into action just before the close of their time of service. Before the middle of April, though the roads were still too heavy for artillery and wagon trains, he thought that mounted men might move. On the 12th he ordered Stoneman to take the whole cavalry force, with the exception of a single brigade, 12,000 sabres strong, turn the hostile position on the left, throw himself between the enemy and Richmond, isolate him from his supplies, and check his retreat. Every where and all told, Stoneman could not encounter a force half equal to his own. In sharp phrases, which rang like battle orders, Hooker gave his directions to Stoneman: "Harass the enemy day and night, on the march and in the camp unceasingly. If you can not cut off from his column large slices, do not fail to take small ones. Let your watchword be Fight! and let all your orders be Fight! Keep yourself informed of the enemy's whereabouts, and attack him wherever you find him. Take the initiative in the forward movement of this grand army; bear in mind that celerity, audacity, and resolution are every thing in war." The primary object of this cavalry expedition, to which every thing was to be subservient, was to cut the enemy's communication with Richmond by the Fredericksburg route.[1] The movement was premature. The cavalry rode two days up the Rappahannock, and threw a division across, but a sudden storm swelled the capricious stream, and this division, in order to avoid being isolated, was forced to recross by swimming. The storm continued, the river became wholly impassable, and the cavalry were ordered to remain where they were.

A fortnight of genial spring weather now intervened. It seemed that the rainy season was over, the swollen river was confined within its banks, the roads grew firmer. Hooker in the mean while had matured his grand enterprise. "I concluded," he says, "to change my plan, and strike for the whole rebel army instead of forcing it back upon its line of retreat, which was as much as I could hope to accomplish in executing my first design." This plan was the one which has been already indicated. It was to ascend the Rappahannock beyond the hostile lines, throw a strong force across, which should sweep down the opposite bank, "knock away the enemy's force holding the United States and Banks's Fords by attacking them in their rear, and, as soon as these fords were opened, to re-enforce the marching column sufficiently for them to continue the march upon the rebel army until his whole force was routed, and, if successful, his retreat intercepted. Simultaneous with this movement on the right, the left were to cross the Rappahannock below Fredericksburg, and threaten the enemy in that quarter, including his dépôt of supplies, to prevent his dispatching an overwhelming force to his left."[2] How near this plan came of success, and how utterly it failed, is now to be shown.

On the 26th of April Hooker issued the orders which gave the first inti-

---

[1] Warren, in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 52. [2] *Ibid.*, 53.

[3] More properly, the United States Mine Ford; sometimes called the Bark Mill Ford.

[4] As it happened, however, Smith did not accompany the corps to the West. He remained at the East, and the command of the corps was given to Parke.

[5] There is no absolutely official report, to which I have been able to gain access, showing the exact strength of Hooker's army, but scattered through the testimony given in the Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War are data which enable me to fix it without possibility of any material error. Hooker (*Com. Rep.*, ii., 120) gives the strength "for duty" of the Fifth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Corps at 44,661—say 45,000. The Eleventh was the weakest in the army, numbering (*Com. Rep.*, ii., 121) 11,000. There remain 34,000 for the Fifth and Twelfth. These were apparently of about equal strength, 17,000 each. The Sixth was the strongest corps; Sedgwick, its commander (*Ibid.*, 95), places it at 22,000; Hooker (*Ibid.*, 128) says it numbered 26,233; but he adds, "not the whole of which, by a few thousands, it is reasonable to suppose, appeared in line of battle." This difference between 22,000 and 26,000 is about the normal discrepancy between those borne upon the muster-rolls as "present" and those actually at any moment "present for duty." Sedgwick, who had for a time the First and the Third, as well as his own corps, the Sixth, gives (*Ibid.*, 95) the numbers of the two former at 35,000. Sickles (*Ibid.*, 7) says that the strength of his corps, the Third, was 18,000, which would leave 17,000 for the First, that of Reynolds. There then remains only the Second Corps, that of Couch; of the strength of this I find no special mention. I assume it to have been 17,000, that being the average number of each of the other corps.

[6] Confederate writers usually place the numbers of Lee's army at 45,000. But the official returns (see *ante*, p. 381) show that on the 31st of March there were present in the Army of Northern Virginia 73,379 men, of whom 60,298 were present for duty. The force was certainly not diminished during the next month, for Longstreet was detached a month before. Lee says (*Rep.*, 5), "General Longstreet, with two corps, was detached for service south of the James River in February." I am inclined to suspect a clerical error here, and that for "two divisions" we should read "three;" for Longstreet's Corps consisted of five divisions, those of Anderson, McLaws, Hood, Ransom, and Pickett. Only the first two are in any way mentioned in the Reports of the Battle of Chancellorsville, and in the list of regiments I find none belonging to the last three divisions. Moreover, Dabney says (*Stonewall Jackson*, 664): "The three divisions of Hood, Pickett, and Ransom were absent in Southeastern Virginia, making a demonstration against Suffolk, whither they had been directed by the scarcity of forage and food in Spottsylvania." Dabney, who seems to have had access to authentic reports as to Jackson's force, says: "His four divisions now contained about 28,000 muskets, and an aggregate of more than 30,000 men and officers. They were supported by 28 field batteries, containing 115 guns; besides these batteries, the army was still accompanied by a reserve corps of artillery. Stuart's division of cavalry was also acting upon the left." Adding the artillery and cavalry to the 28,000 muskets and more than 2000 officers, will bring the strength of Jackson up to fully 35,000. This writer, indeed, adds: "Lee had, in all, an aggregate of about 45,000 men." But, even apart from the actual returns which have been cited, this is clearly an under estimate, for Longstreet's Corps was always much stronger than that of Jackson, and the divisions of Anderson and McLaws were much the largest in that corps, and had suffered less in the previous actions than the others. They probably numbered, including artillery and cavalry acting with them, fully 25,000 men; so that the most reliable indirect evidence attainable corroborates the accuracy of the official returns, which give Lee a little more than 60,000 men.

The foregoing was written before the appearance of Hotchkiss and Allan's work, previously noted. They give the force of each division as follows: Jackson's Corps—A. P. Hill, 11,100; D. H. Hill, 9000; Trimble, 6000; Early, 7400; in all, 33,500. Anderson and McLaws, 17,000; Artillery, 170 pieces, 5000 men; Cavalry, present, 2700—a total of 58,200. But it is expressly stated that these are the numbers of "muskets," that is, privates and non-commissioned officers. They add (page 24): "We have not the exact data on which to give the effective strength, but an addition of 4000 to the total above would be a liberal estimate." This addition to the "effective" must mean the officers, who are included in the Union returns. This statement differs only slightly from my estimate as to the total force, but makes that of Jackson larger, and those of Anderson and McLaws smaller. Anderson's division contained three more regiments than that of McLaws, and was probably the stronger by 1000. I adopt their statement, distributing the 3800 "additional," as nearly as may be, among the different organizations.

From these data is framed the following table:

FORCES AT CHANCELLORSVILLE.

UNION.		CONFEDERATE.	
REYNOLDS (1st Corps). *Divisions:*			
Doubleday, Robinson, Wadsworth..	17,000	A. P. Hill.....	11,800
COUCH (2d Corps). *Divisions:*		JACKSON'S CORPS. Rodes	9,600
French, Gibbon, Hancock	17,000	Colston	6,400
SICKLES (3d Corps). *Divisions:*		Early	7,800
Berry, Birney, Whipple	18,000		
MEADE (5th Corps). *Divisions:*			
Griffin, Humphrey, Sykes.....	17,000		
SEDGWICK (6th Corps). *Divisions:*		LONGSTREET'S CORPS. Anderson.....	9,500
Brooks, Howe, Newton.....	22,000	McLaws	8,500
HOWARD (11th Corps). *Divisions:*			
Devens, Schurz, Steinwehr.....	11,000	Artillery.....	5,400
SLOCUM (12th Corps). *Divisions:*			
Geary, Williams	17,000		
PLEASONTON (Cavalry).....	1,000	Cavalry	3,000
Total Force.....	120,000	*Total Force*.....	62,000

[1] Hooker's Instructions, in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 113. [2] Hooker, in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 116.

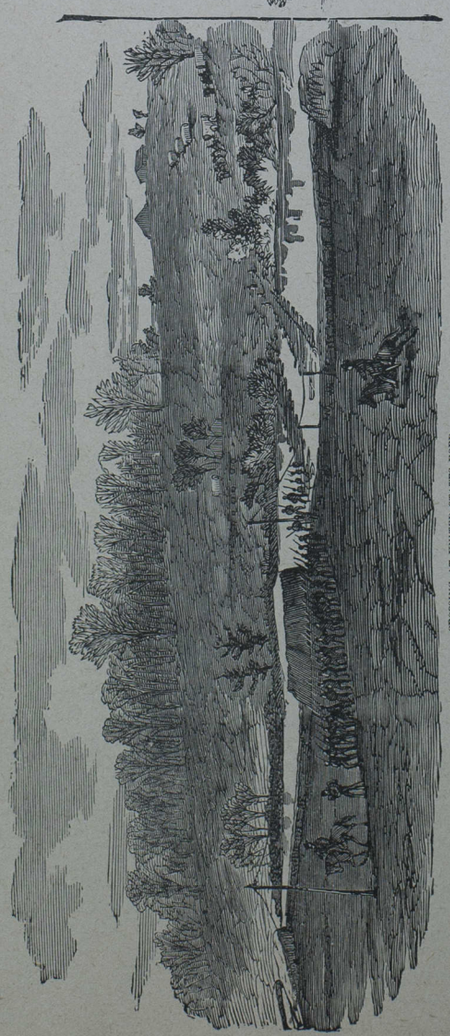
PICKET GUARD.

mation of his plan. The corps of Meade, Slocum, and Howard were to form the main turning column. They were to march at sunrise next day, ascend the Rappahannock to Kelly's Ford, twenty-seven miles above Fredericksburg, cross the river, and move for the Rapidan, cross, and sweep down its southern bank. They were to move as lightly as possible, the men to carry eight days' rations on their persons; each corps to have but a single battery and six ambulances, the small ammunition to be carried on mule-back. Most of the artillery, and several regiments whose term was about to close, being left behind, this column marched 36,000 strong. Couch, with two of his divisions—that of Gibbon being left opposite Fredericksburg—was to follow after as far as the United States Ford, there halt in readiness to cross the moment that the hostile force guarding it should be swept away. Sedgwick, with his own corps and those of Sickles and Reynolds, were to cross the Rappahannock below Fredericksburg, and make a vigorous demonstration to distract the attention of the enemy.

The main turning column pressed rapidly up the Rappahannock, and before night of Tuesday, the 28th, reached Kelly's Ford. The stream was unfordable, but a pontoon bridge was quickly thrown over, and early on the morning of the 29th the crossing was effected. The force, separated into two columns, pressed rapidly on to the Rapidan. Slocum and Howard crossed at Germania Ford; Meade at Ely's Ford, ten miles below. The Rapidan was hardly fordable, the water reaching to the armpits of the men; but they waded through, bearing their knapsacks on their bayonets. So wholly unanticipated was this advance, that a small party of the Confederates were surprised at Germania Ford in the act of building a bridge; these were all captured. Meade swept eastward down the right bank of the Rapidan, directly toward Fredericksburg, until he came in view of the United States Ford over the Rappahannock. Two Confederate brigades which had been guarding this point fell back. As soon as Couch caught sight through the mist of the head of Meade's column, pontoon bridges were laid, his divisions passed over, and all the four corps headed straight for Chancellorsville, their appointed place of rendezvous, where they were concentrated late in the afternoon of the 30th.

Chancellorsville was a solitary brick house, with a few insignificant outbuildings, standing in a clearing on the eastern verge of a wild, wooded region known as the Wilderness. Looking eastward toward Fredericksburg,

CAVALRY CROSSING AT ELY'S FORD.



CROSSING AT UNITED STATES FORD.

eleven miles distant, are two roads; to the right the Orange plank road, to the left the turnpike. These diverge for a space, and then, converging, unite half way between Chancellorsville and Fredericksburg. Both are excellent roads; the one planked, the other macadamized. Westward from Chancellorsville they run together for a couple of miles, and then separate, the turnpike running to Culpepper, the plank road to Orange Court-house. This road is the essential feature of the military position. From the north comes in another road, which after a mile divides, sending branches to the different fords of the Rapidan and the Rappahannock. The cleared fields around Chancellorsville have a circuit of a mile; the belt of woods surrounding them eastward toward Fredericksburg, and southward toward Spottsylvania, is a mile or two in breadth. Beyond this, in both directions, lies an open cultivated country.

The Wilderness, henceforth to be historic, stretches westward from Chancellorsville. The region for a space of a dozen miles is seamed with veins of iron ore. These have been wrought for five generations. Here indeed were erected the first regular iron furnaces in North America. The forests had been cut down to furnish fuel for these furnaces. The soil being generally too poor to repay culture, the region was left to Nature, which soon covered it with a dense mass of dwarf pines, scrubby oaks, chinquapins, and the like. Every stump left by the woodman's axe sent up a cluster of sprouts in place of the parent trunk. Whortleberries and brambles of every kind, availing themselves of the temporary flood of sunshine, twined and matted themselves into thickets through which the solitary huntsman could make his way only by dragging his rifle after him. The surface was an elevated plateau, swelling every where into low hills and ridges, with swampy intervales between, along which sluggish brooks made their way toward the Rapidan on the north and the Mattapony on the south. Here and there is a little farm-house, or tavern, or church, with a small clearing around it, surrounded by the forests, like an island in the midst of waters. Four miles west of Chancellorsville, the Brock Road, leaving the turnpike, runs southeastward. Besides these, other roads, mostly mere wood-paths, penetrate the thickets. In this Wilderness, and upon its eastern and western verge, Lee, with the Confederate army of Northern Virginia, was within a year and a day thrice to encounter and foil the Union Army of the Potomac under the successive commands of Hooker, Meade, and Grant.

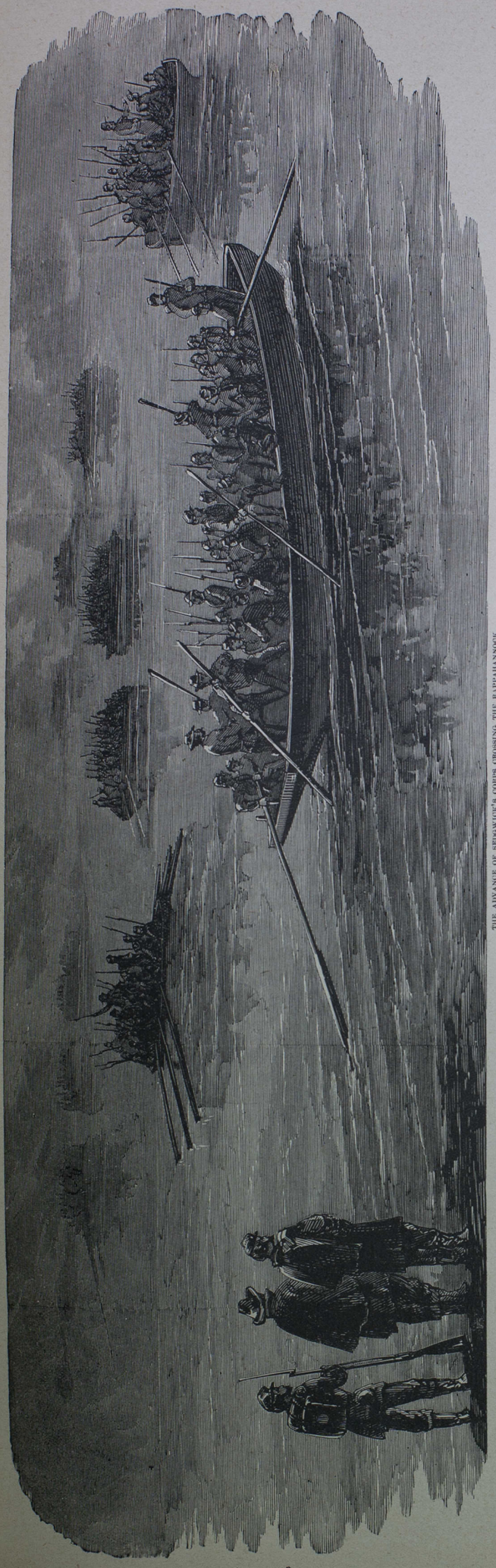
Hooker's turning movement, apparently the critical point of his whole plan, had been successfully performed. His wary opponent was taken by surprise. He knew nothing of it until it was practically accomplished. On the 28th, Sedgwick, with his own corps and those of Sickles and Reynolds, moved down the river, screened from the view of the enemy by the intervening heights. All that rainy night they lay upon their arms, with no camp-fires to betray their position. Before dawn, while the flanking column was crossing the river thirty miles above, the pontoons were borne silently to the river bank and swung across. When day broke, Jackson saw a great force of the enemy across the stream, holding the very ground from which they had dashed upon his lines four months and a half before. He sent the news to the commanding general. "I heard firing," said Lee to the messenger, "and was beginning to think it was time that some of you lazy young fellows were coming to tell me what it was all about. Say to General Jackson that he knows just as well what to do with the enemy as I do."[1] Noon came before Lee received tidings that Hooker had crossed the Rappahannock and was then pressing toward the Rapidan, the columns converging upon Chancellorsville. He sent a message to Anderson, who held the lines, sharply censuring him for his negligence.[2] During the night of the 29th Anderson's brigade retired from the ford to Chancellorsville, but, learning of the great force that was advancing against them, fell back the next morning six miles farther toward Fredericksburg, where they intrenched themselves. Saving some skirmishing between Pleasonton's cavalry and the retiring Confederates,[3] so slight that no Federal commander reports it, Hooker's columns reached Chancellorsville without opposition. To all human seeming, Hooker was justified in the congratulatory orders which he issued that evening. "It is with heartfelt satisfaction that the commanding general announces to the army that the operations of the last three days have determined that our enemy must either ingloriously fly, or come out from behind his intrenchments and give us battle on our own ground, where certain destruction awaits him."[4] To those around him he spoke in the same strain. "The rebel army," he said, "is now the legitimate property of the Army of the Potomac. They may as well pack up their haversacks and make for Richmond, and I shall be after them."[5] Sedgwick was ordered, should the enemy in his front show any symptoms of falling back, to pursue him with the utmost vigor along the road leading to Richmond; "pursue until you destroy or capture."[6] It was a foregone conclusion with Hooker that Lee must retreat the moment his flank was fairly turned. He hoped to force him to fall back toward Gordonsville rather than by the direct route to Richmond, for which place he would then strike, having fifty miles less to march. In anticipation of these results, he had a

[1] *Dabney*, 661.

[2] "During the forenoon of the 29th Stuart reported that the enemy had crossed the Rappahannock at Kelly's Ford on the preceding evening. Later in the day he announced that a heavy column was moving from Kelly's toward Germania Ford on the Rapidan, and another toward Ely's Ford on that river. The routes that they were pursuing, after crossing the Rapidan, converge near Chancellorsville, whence several roads lead to the rear of our position at Fredericksburg." (*Lee's Rep.*, 6.)—"I captured a courier from General Lee, with a dispatch in Lee's own handwriting. It was dated at 12 o'clock that day, and I captured it at one o'clock, only one hour from Lee's hand. It was addressed to General Anderson, and read: 'I have just received reliable intelligence that the enemy have crossed the river in force. Why have you not kept me informed? I wish to see you at my head-quarters at once.'"—Pleasonton, in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 27.

[3] "The enemy's cavalry skirmished with Anderson's rear-guard as he left Chancellorsville, but, being vigorously repulsed by Mahone's brigade, offered no farther opposition to his march."—*Lee's Rep.*, 6.

[4] Hooker's General Order, No. 47, April 30. [5] *Swinton*, 275. [6] *Com. Rep.*, ii., 103.



THE ADVANCE OF SEDGWICK'S CORPS CROSSING THE RAPPAHANNOCK.

million and a half of rations placed on board lighters, with gun-boats ready to tow them down the Potomac and up the Pamunkey, so that his advance would not be impeded by want of supplies.[1]

Hooker had done much, but he left undone the one thing which was needed to place his complete success beyond all reasonable doubt. On that Thursday night he halted his force in the Wilderness around Chancellorsville, where it was cooped up as effectually as though it had been on an island, instead of pushing forward another hour's march, which would have brought it into open country beyond. To oppose this march Lee had then at hand only the single division of Anderson. McLaws and Early were yet on the heights at Fredericksburg, the nearest troops fully ten miles away. The bulk of Jackson's corps were twice as far off. It was not until the night of the 30th was far spent that Lee was fully assured that the operations upon his front were a feint, and that the main danger was to come from his flank and rear. He was not minded to retreat without a struggle. The Union army was divided; if one half could be defeated, the whole would be neutralized, and if worst came to worst, he could retreat after a battle as well as before. Leaving Early's division and Barksdale's brigade —less than 10,000 men in all—to hold the line near Fredericksburg, Lee began at midnight of the 30th to concentrate the remainder of his force in front of Hooker. McLaws was hurried up from the extreme left, and Jackson, with the divisions of A. P. Hill, Rodes, and Colston, from the right. By eight o'clock on Friday morning, the first of May, the head of Jackson's column began to come up to Anderson, and three hours later all had arrived and formed line of battle at the very place upon which Hooker was now directing his advance.[2]

For now, as the morning was wearing away, Hooker began to prepare to move out of the skirts of the Wilderness into the open space beyond. He had ordered Sickles's corps to join him, and it had come up, raising his force to more than 60,000, a number greater by a quarter than Lee could bring against him after providing for the maintenance of the lines at Fredericksburg. There were three roads centring at Chancellorsville and running eastward. Upon each of these a column was to be pushed out. Meade's corps was to lead: the divisions of Griffin and Humphreys on the left, by the river road; Sykes, to be supported by Hancock, of Couch's corps, in the centre, along the turnpike; Slocum's corps on the right, by the plank road, while French's division of Meade's corps was to strike still farther south. Two o'clock in the afternoon was assigned for the completion of these movements. After that time the headquarters were to be at Tabernacle Church, close by the junction of the plank road and the turnpike, half way toward Fredericksburg.[3]

Hooker was destined never, during the war, to see the spot which he had assigned for his headquarters. The left column moved five miles down the river road, and came in sight of Banks's Ford without meeting an enemy. The right column marched unopposed half as far, when it was arrested by tidings from the central column. This column, Sykes leading, Hancock behind, had pressed down the plank road, and soon came upon the enemy's advance. Sykes drove them back for a space, and at noon gained the point assigned to him. After some sharp fighting he was forced back for a little, and took up a position which he desired to hold. But orders came that he, with all others, should fall back to the positions from which they had set out. Warren, who bore the order, had vainly urged that it should not be sent; Couch protested against it; Hancock thought they should advance instead of retreating.[4]

Thus, in opposition to the opinions of every general who had felt the enemy, Hooker withdrew his advancing columns, and instead of keeping up the offensive which he had assumed, threw himself upon the defensive. With

---

[1] *Com. Rep.*, ii., 145.

[2] "The enemy in our front, near Fredericksburg, continued inactive, and it was now apparent that the main attack would be made upon our flank and rear. It was therefore determined to leave sufficient troops to hold our lines, and with the main body of the army to give battle to the approaching column. Early's division of Jackson's corps, and Barksdale's brigade of McLaws's division, with part of the reserve artillery under General Pendleton, were intrusted with the defense of our position at Fredericksburg, and at midnight on the 30th General McLaws marched with the rest of his command toward Fredericksburg. General Jackson followed at dawn next morning with the remaining divisions of his corps. He reached the position occupied by General Anderson at eight A.M., and immediately began preparations to advance."—*Lee's Rep.*, 7.

[3] Hooker's Order, in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 124.

[4] "On gaining the ridge about one and a quarter mile from Chancellorsville, we found the enemy advancing and driving back our cavalry. This small force resisted handsomely, riding up and firing almost in the faces of the Eleventh Virginia infantry, which formed the enemy's advance. General Sykes moved forward in double-quick time, attacked the enemy vigorously, and drove him back with loss till he had gained the position assigned to him. This he attained at about 12 o'clock. No sound yet reached us indicating that any other of our columns had encountered the advance of the enemy. General Sykes bravely resolved to hold the position assigned him, which his command had so gallantly won from the enemy, and I set out with all possible speed to report the condition to the commanding general. From information received since the advance began, the general decided to countermand it, and receive the enemy on the line occupied the night before."—Warren, in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 56.

"I was in favor of advancing, and urged it with more zeal than convincing argument. I thought with our position and numbers to beat the enemy's right wing. This could be done by advancing in force upon the two main roads toward Fredericksburg, each being in good supporting distance, at the same time throwing a heavy force on the enemy's right flank by the river road." (Warren, in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 56.)—"The ground upon which I had posted Hancock in support of Sykes was about one and a half mile from Chancellorsville, and commanded it. Upon receiving orders from General Hooker to come in, I sent to him urging that on account of the great advantages of the position it should be held at all hazards. The reply was to return at once. General Warren also went in person and urged the necessity of holding on." (Couch, *Report of Chancellorsville.*)—"I have no doubt that we ought to have held our advanced positions, and still kept pushing on and attempt to make a junction with General Sedgwick."—Hancock, in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 66.

"At 11 o'clock the troops moved forward upon the plank and turnpike roads—Anderson, with the brigades of Wright and Posey, leading on the former; McLaws, with his three brigades, preceded by Mahone's, on the latter. Wilcox and Perry, of Anderson's division, co-operated with McLaws; Jackson's troops followed Anderson on the plank road. The enemy was soon encountered on both roads, and heavy skirmishing with infantry and artillery ensued, our troops pressing steadily forward. A strong attack upon McLaws was repulsed with spirit by Semmes's brigade; and Wright, by direction of Anderson, diverging to the left of the plank road, marched by way of the unfinished railroad from Fredericksburg to Gordonsville, and turned the enemy's right. His whole line thereupon retreated rapidly, vigorously pursued by our troops until they arrived within about one mile of Chancellorsville."—*Lee's Rep.*, 6.

LAYING THE PONTOONS FOR SEDGWICK'S CORPS.

a force largely superior, instead of attacking, he prepared to receive the attack of the enemy. His reasons, as stated by himself, were based wholly upon the character of the region. "The ground in our vicinity," he says, "was broken, and covered with dense forests, much of which was impenetrable to infantry. The ravines to the north of the road were deep, and their general direction was at right angles to the Rappahannock, affording the enemy a formidable position behind each of them. Here was the enemy's entire army, with the exception of about 8000 men which had been left to hold the line from below Hamilton's crossing to the heights above Fredericksburg, a distance of between five and six miles. The right and central corps had proceeded but a short distance when the head of the column emerged from the heavy forest, and discovered the enemy to be advancing in line of battle. Nearly all of the Twelfth Corps had emerged from the forest at that moment, but as the passage-way through the forest was narrow, I was satisfied that I could not throw troops through it fast enough to resist the advance of General Lee, and was apprehensive of being whipped in detail. Accordingly, instructions were given for the troops in advance to return and establish themselves on the line they had just left, and to hold themselves in readiness to receive the enemy."[1] But Warren, who had scanned the ground with the eye of an engineer, thought the physical conditions favorable to the Union force. "If," he says, "the attack found the enemy in extended lines across our front, or in motion toward our right flank, it would have secured the defeat of his right wing, and consequently the retreat of the whole. The advantages of the initiative in a wooded country like this, obscuring all movements, are incalculable, and so far we had improved them."[2]

The defensive position which Hooker now assumed formed a line of nearly five miles from east to west, running mainly parallel and a little south of the united plank road and turnpike. The left, a short distance east of Chancellorsville, was bent back a little northward; the right presented a similar

[1] Hooker, in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 125.

[2] Warren, in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 56.—Hancock indeed states that Hooker too late countermanded the order for withdrawal: "General Warren, who brought the order, suggested to General Couch that he should not fall back, although the order was to that effect. But General Couch did not feel at liberty to follow that suggestion, having received peremptory orders to fall back. It appears, however, that General Warren rode off to General Hooker and explained the advantages of the position we held, and came back with an order that it should be held. But, in the mean time, the position had been abandoned, and the enemy had taken possession of it."—*Com. Rep.*, ii., 68.

MAP OF THE REGION NEAR CHANCELLORSVILLE.[1]

curve. The general shape was nearly that of the letter C, the main front facing southward, the upper and lower curves looking west and east. The corps and divisions were somewhat broken up. The general placing in front was, Meade on the extreme left, toward Fredericksburg; Slocum in the centre; Howard on the right. The corps of Couch and Sickles were mainly in reserve, though a division of each was thrust forward into the front line, which was strengthened by abatis and breast-works. The right was weakly posted, but it was, in military phrase, flung out into the air; but as the enemy were wholly on the left, hardly reaching to the centre, it was thought that an attack was not to be looked for in that direction, and Howard gave assurance that he could hold his position against any force that could be brought against it.[2]

At nightfall Lee and Jackson, who had been engaged on different parts of the field, met upon the brow of a little hill covered by a clump of pines which had escaped the woodman's axe, whose annual shedding of leaves formed a soft carpet upon the ground. They retired apart to consult upon the situation. This was critical. They must either win a battle or retreat. Hooker having assumed the defensive, they must attack. The Confederate skirmishers which had been pushed into the belt of wood had succeeded in ascertaining that the Union lines were unassailable in front of Chancellorsville.[3] But Stuart, whose cavalry had been reconnoitring westward and northward, reported that in these directions the Federal camps were open, and that almost all of his cavalry force was absent. Jackson proposed that while a part of the Confederate force should demonstrate upon Hooker's front, the remainder should march clear around his line, and assail it upon its right flank and rear. The measure was hazardous in the extreme. The Federals, now in position, outnumbered the whole Confederate force, and this was to be divided. But it was certain that Hooker must soon learn how small was the force remaining near Fredericksburg, and would then bring up Sedgwick from the Rappahannock, increasing the disparity nearly two to one. And even if the flank attack should miscarry, the Confederate army, then separated into three portions, would still have lines of retreat as favorable as they now had. Jackson's three divisions would have the plank road westward, or the road southward through the open country; McLaws and Anderson had the latter route; Early could fall back toward the others, and the three bodies could reunite and make a stand upon new ground, or, if need were, press on to Richmond; so that, barring the risk, which must be run, of a total defeat, their position would be no worse than it now was.[1]

This plan was settled, and the two Confederate commanders lay down to rest without shelter upon the bare ground. Jackson had neither blanket nor overcoat. He declined an overcoat offered him by one of his staff. Thinking him asleep, the officer took off the cape, spread it over Jackson, and fell into slumber. Jackson rose and spread the cape over its owner, and laid down again uncovered. Before dawn he was seen sitting crouched over a scanty fire, almost hugging it, and shivering with cold, yet busy studying a rough map of the region, inquiring of his chaplain, who knew something of the country, if there were no roads by which the Federal flank might be turned. The chaplain only knew that a little beyond was a blind forest-path, which, by various windings and turnings, struck the plank road four miles west of Chancellorsville. The line was traced on the map. "That is too near," said Jackson; "it goes within the lines of the enemy's pickets. I wish to get well to his rear without being observed." An inhabitant of the region was now brought up, who said that the furnace road, upon which they were, ran southward for a few miles, and then was intersected by the Brock road from the northwest, which struck the plank road, so that by making a circuit of fifteen miles a point would be reached several miles above Hooker's extremest outposts. This was just what Jackson desired, and at sunrise he began the march with his three divisions.[2]

SATURDAY, MAY 2.

A mile of dense forest intervened between the road and Hooker's front, completely hiding the march from observation. But at one point the road crossed a bare hill just opposite Sickles's position. For two hours the long column, with its trains and ambulances, filed over the hill in plain view.[3] It was clearly a movement in force, but with what purpose was a matter of doubt. It might be for offense upon the right, and so Hooker directed Howard to be fully prepared, to keep heavy reserves in hand to meet it, and especially to throw out pickets in his front.[4] How utterly and criminally this order was disregarded remains to be shown. But the road on which the column was observed ran here due south, straight away from the Union lines; this indicated that the movement was a retreat. Sickles sent

[1] This map shows, in a general way, the topography of the region in which Hooker proposed to operate. Though not perfectly accurate, it is the best then accessible. Of the actual character of the Wilderness he was almost wholly ignorant, and had no means of becoming acquainted with it. The essential features of the map are the relative positions of Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, the fords by which the Rappahannock and Rapidan were to be passed, and the roads leading away from Fredericksburg by which it was supposed that the Confederate army must retreat. The roads are: (1.) The railroad to Richmond, and the Telegraph Road, running southwardly nearly parallel with it; (2.) The plank road and turnpike. These are represented on the map as one road from Fredericksburg to the point marked as the "Wilderness," where they diverge. The road from "Todd's Tavern" to the "Wilderness" shows nearly the line of Jackson's flank movement. With these exceptions, the roads laid down are mere rude country roads, hardly passable for an army with artillery and trains. In moving from near Falmouth, Meade, Slocum, and Howard crossed the Rappahannock at Kelly's Ford, north of Germania Ford, on the Rapidan; Couch, and subsequently Sickles and Reynolds, at United States Ford. Lee's chief dépôt was at Guinea's Station, on the railroad, near which Jackson's corps had its winter quarters; but they had been moved half way up to Fredericksburg, near which place McLaws and Anderson were posted. The distance between Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville is 11 miles, which will indicate the scale upon which the map is drawn.

[2] *Com. Rep.*, ii., 56.

[3] "The enemy had assumed a position of great natural strength, surrounded on all sides by a dense forest filled with a tangled undergrowth, in the midst of which breast-works of logs had been constructed, with trees felled in front so as to form an almost impenetrable abatis. His artillery swept the few narrow roads by which his position could be approached in front, and commanded the adjacent woods. Darkness was approaching before the strength and extent of his line could be ascertained; and as the nature of the country rendered it hazardous to attack by night, our troops were halted and formed in line of battle in front of Chancellorsville, at right angles with the plank road, extending on the right to the mine road, and to the left in the direction of Catharine Furnace."—*Lee's Rep.*, 8.

[1] *Dabney*, 672. [2] *Ibid.*, 675. [3] Birney, in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 34.
[4] Hooker's Order, 9.30 A.M., in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 126.

SEDGWICK'S BRIDGES LAID.

a rifled battery to a point where it could play upon this column, but the distance, a mile and a half, was too great to permit the fire to produce any serious effect. Birney's division, afterward followed by others, and Pleasonton's cavalry, were sent forward through the woods to reconnoitre. Birney passed down the blind road which Jackson had refused to take, fell upon a regiment of McLaws's division which had been placed there as a guard, and captured it. This movement of Birney's so seriously threatened Jackson's trains in the rear that two brigades were hastened back to protect them. As it happened, however, Birney did not follow after Jackson's column, and these two brigades, after seeing the trains well away, followed after, but were unable to get up in time to take part in the action of this day.[1]

Long before midday, Jackson's column—infantry and artillery, with Stuart's cavalry patroling the region between him and the enemy, in all 30,000 strong—were clear out of sight of friend and foe. The troops felt that they were upon one of those great flank marches which had more than once led them to victory, and they pressed forward with more than their wonted speed, every step for hours increasing the distance between them and Lee. Their march had been southwestwardly until they reached the Brock road; then it turned at a sharp angle to the northwest. At three o'clock they struck the plank road at the old Wilderness tavern. By this march of fifteen miles Jackson had passed clear around Hooker's position, and was in a straight line hardly six miles from the point from which he had started ten hours before. Here, like an oasis in the forest desert, was a broad clearing, which gave him ample space in which to form his corps in battle array. Barely two miles away, down the road, lay Howard's corps, forming Hooker's right. The Confederate pickets, creeping through the thickets, reported its position. Jackson from the summit of a little hill surveyed it, and made his dispositions for an assault.

His column was formed into three lines—Rodes in front, then Colston, and, last, A. P. Hill, stretching across the plank road for some distance on each side, completely overlapping the head of the Federal line, thus commanding it on front, flank, and rear.

Lee, with parts of the divisions of Anderson and McLaws,[2] not 20,000 men in all, had reserved to himself the less brilliant but not less critical task of keeping in check a force three times as strong. For a whole day the two corps would be isolated, neither being able to aid or even communicate with the other. If Hooker changed the position of his right, Jackson's meditated blow would miss its mark. If, divining the character of the movement, he should assail Anderson and McLaws either in front from Chancellorsville, or on the flank and rear by bringing Sedgwick up from Fredericksburg, their destruction was inevitable. Between Sedgwick's 30,000[3] and him lay only Early's 10,000, guarding a line of six miles. Lee confined himself during the morning to demonstrations all along Hooker's front. Early in the morning he got a few guns into a position which commanded the field in front of the Chancellorsville House, and drove all the wagons back into position. Then, at intervals, his infantry crept into the woods, delivered a yell and a volley, and disappeared, to reappear at a different point.[4] Sickles's advance was so threatening that Lee was obliged to resist it in force.[5] Sickles, with Birney's division, maintained his ground successfully, and sent back for re-enforcements; his other divisions were promised him, together with a brigade from Slocum, and one from Howard. Sickles was just about to open his attack with all this force, fully equal to the whole of Anderson's and McLaws's, when some officer came dashing up, breathless, with a report that Stuart's cavalry were moving in his rear, and might cut him off; that Jackson's infantry were very near; that the Union troops were retreating. Sickles disbelieved this story. Surely such a thing could not have happened without a serious engagement, and had there been a battle he would have heard the noise. But almost instantly an aid came up with tidings from Howard. The right flank had been turned; Howard's corps had given way, and Jackson was right on Sickles's rear. Hooker also sent word that he could not give the promised re-enforcements; he had to use them to check the enemy, who had broken through the Eleventh Corps. Sickles must withdraw his whole force, and save as many of them as he could.[6]

Jackson had struck his blow. A little after five o'clock he had formed his lines, and began to press through the dense thickets which skirted the plank road, down which, only three miles away, lay a part of Howard's corps, forming the extreme right of Hooker's army. No assault here had been dreamed of. Intrenchments had been thrown up, but they were left unguarded. The men had stacked their arms, and were scattered about cooking their suppers; ambulances, ammunition-wagons, pack-mules, and cattle were huddled together.[7] Not a picket was thrown out into the woods in front, nor even up the road, where for more than two hours Jackson had been deploying his divisions, hardly three miles away. The Union right was like a militia regiment at the close of a holiday muster rather than an army in presence of an enemy.[8]

---

[1] Thomas and Archer, in *Lee's Rep.*, 54–58.

[2] These divisions consisted of nine brigades; but Barksdale's, of McLaws's, had been left at Marye's Heights, and Wilcox's, of Anderson's, had been sent back to Banks's Ford.

[3] Reynolds's corps was withdrawn from Sedgwick that morning, and ordered to Chancellorsville, where it arrived during the night. Sedgwick had then his own corps and Gibbon's division of Couch's. [4] Warren, in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 45; Pleasonton, *Ibid.*, 27; Hooker, *Ibid.*, 127.

[5] "At midday the enemy appeared in some force at the furnace. Posey's brigade was sent to dislodge him, and was soon engaged in a warm skirmish with him. The increasing numbers of the enemy made it necessary to move Wright's brigade over to the support of Posey's."—Anderson, in *Lee's Rep.*, 25. [6] Sickles, in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 6. [7] *Com. Rep.*, ii., 45, 127.

[8] Devens, whose division occupied the extreme right, testifies (*Com. Rep.*, ii., 173): "About two or three o'clock in the afternoon, two soldiers, who had been sent out to observe the enemy's lines as spies from one of the other commands, came in and reported that the enemy were massing heavily on our right," and that he sent them to Howard with the tidings. But that no pickets could have been pushed out upon the road is evident. The attack which came down that road, and on both sides of it, was an utter surprise.

With a yell and a volley the Confederates dashed out of the woods into the open space occupied by this unsuspecting division. The regiments upon whom the onset first fell scattered without firing a shot, and rushed in wild confusion upon those behind them; these in turn gave way before the wild rush of their own comrades. Some of the regiments made a stand to stem the torrent; but it was vain, and the whole corps was soon streaming down the road, and through the woods toward Chancellorsville. Rodes, who commanded the front line of the Confederates, thus describes the conflict: "At once the line of battle rushed forward with a yell, and Doles at the moment debouched from the woods, and encountered a force of the enemy and a battery of two guns intrenched. Detaching two regiments to flank the position, he charged without halting, sweeping every thing before him; and pressing on to Talley's, gallantly carried the works there, and captured five guns by a similar flank movement of his command. So complete was the success of the whole manœuvre, and such was the surprise of the enemy, that scarcely any organized resistance was met with after the first volley was fired. They fled in the wildest confusion, leaving the field strewn with arms, accoutrements, clothing, caissons, and field-pieces in every direction. The larger portion of his force, as well as intrenchments, were drawn up at right angles to our line; and being thus taken in the flank and rear, they did not wait for the attack. On the next side, which had an extended line of works facing in our direction, an effort was made to check the flying columns. For a few moments they held this position; but once more my gallant troops dashed at them with a wild shout, and, firing a hasty volley, they continued their hasty flight to Chancellorsville. It was at this moment that Trimble's division, which had followed closely in my rear, headed by Colston, went over the works with my men, and from this time the two divisions were mingled in inextricable confusion. Pushing forward as rapidly as possible, the troops soon entered a second piece of woods, thickly filled with undergrowth. The right, becoming entangled in an abatis near the enemy's first line of fortifications, caused the line to halt, and such was the confusion and darkness that it was not deemed advisable to make a farther advance. I at once sent word to Lieutenant General Jackson, urging him to push forward the fresh troops of the reserve line, in order that mine might be reformed. Riding forward on the plank road, I satisfied myself that the enemy had no line of battle between our troops and the heights of Chancellorsville, and on my return informed the chief of artillery of the fact, and he opened his batteries on that point. The enemy instantly responded by a most terrific fire, which silenced our guns, but did little execution on the infantry. When the fire ceased General Hill's troops were brought up, and, as soon as a portion were deployed in my front, I commenced withdrawing my troops by order of the lieutenant general."[1]

Rodes was right. Between him and Chancellorsville, hardly half a mile away, there was no line of battle, and nothing from which to form one. Jackson was almost justified in declaring that with half an hour more of daylight he could have carried that place.[2] The check to the Confederate rush came from an unexpected quarter. When the tidings came to Sickles of the flight of Howard, Pleasonton, with two regiments of cavalry, was riding leisurely back to the rear, for in the dense forest there was nothing for cavalry to do. He found the open space which he had left a few hours before filled with fugitives, ambulances, and guns. He had with him a battery of horse artillery. The moment was critical. The enemy must be checked then and there, and to do it there was but this battery and those few horsemen. Turning to Major Keenan, he said, "You must charge into those woods with your regiment, and hold the rebels in check until I can get some of these guns into position; you must do it at any cost." "I will do it," responded Keenan, with a smile, though both knew that the order was equivalent to a death-warrant. The charge was made; a quarter of the regiment fell, their leader at their head. But ten priceless minutes were gained. Pleasonton brought up his battery at a gallop, double-shotted the guns with canister, and pointed them at the ground line of the parapet, telling the gunners to aim low. Then getting a score of guns into position out of the confused mass around, he had all double-shotted, pointed at the woods in front, and bade the gunners to await his order to fire. Hardly was this done when the whole forest, whose verge was a quarter of a mile distant, seemed alive with men. Just as he was about to give the order to fire, a Federal flag appeared on the front. He sent an aid to learn whether these men were friends or foes. "Come on," they shouted; "we are friends!" The order to fire was suspended for a moment. During that moment the woods blazed with musketry, and the enemy, leaping over the parapet, dashed straight up toward the guns. Then came the order to fire, and the low-pointed guns swept the whole line away like chaff. They returned again and again to the charge. At one time they came within fifty yards of the guns. Had they known it they might have captured them, for the artillery were utterly without infantry support. Pleasonton had left but two squadrons of raw cavalry. These he disposed in a single line, with drawn sabres, in the rear of his batteries, with orders to charge should the enemy come up to the guns.[3]

Lee had all day kept up demonstrations against Hooker's front. Anderson and McLaws had been ordered, as soon as the sound of Jackson's guns was heard, to press strongly upon the Union left, to prevent re-enforcements from being sent to the right, but not to make any attack in force, and inclining all the while to their left, so as to connect with Jackson's right, as he closed in upon the centre.[4] A fierce artillery fire from several commanding positions was kept up, accompanied by ostentatious infantry demonstrations upon the line held by Slocum and Couch. Meade had been posted upon the extreme Union left, quite out of the reach of the battle, so

[1] *Lee's Rep.*, 111. [2] Dabney. [3] Pleasonton, in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 28. [4] *Lee's Rep.*, 9.

ALFRED PLEASONTON.

that Hooker had at hand only Berry's division of Sickles's corps, and a single brigade of Couch's, which had been held in reserve at Chancellorsville. Berry's division was the one which Hooker had commanded, and it had never failed him. He pushed this forward at double-quick to meet the enemy. It was vain to attempt to check the wild rout of the Eleventh Corps. Hooker ordered the few cavalry with him to charge the flying mass, sabre in hand. Some of the fugitives were shot down by his staff, but no human power could arrest their flight,[1] though they had already outstripped their pursuers. Berry's division, with fixed bayonets, pressed through the flying mass, hoping to regain the high ground which they had abandoned. They were too late; it was in possession of the enemy. The most that he could do was to take a stand upon a ridge, known as Fairview, upon the hither side of the forest which bounded the clearing at Chancellorsville, and thence to pour a fire of artillery and musketry up the road and into the woods.

Night was closing in. The full moon shone brightly, throwing into deep shade the forests, just bursting into leaf. The divisions of Rodes and Colston, which had chased Howard's corps two miles through the dense thickets, had fallen into inextricable confusion. Seeing no enemy before them, they had halted, and there was a lull in the contest. Jackson, who had been urging on the pursuit, ordered A. P. Hill's division to come to the front and take the place of Rodes and Colston, and, accompanied only by his staff, passed down the road to examine the position. Some of his companions remonstrated against his exposing himself. "There is no danger," he replied; "the enemy is routed. Go back and tell Hill to press on." A few minutes after a musketry fire from Berry's pickets pattered among the trees. Jackson turned back toward his own lines. Some of Hill's troops were coming down from the opposite direction. Seeing this little group of horsemen, they mistook them for Union cavalry, and fired upon them. Half of Jackson's escort fell dead or wounded. He himself received three balls at the same instant. One passed through his right hand, a second through his left, while a third struck the left arm near the shoulder, severing the main artery and shattering the bone. His frightened horse darted back into the woods toward the Union lines. Jackson was bruised and almost dismounted by striking his face against the overhanging bough of a tree. His left arm was useless, but, mastering the horse with his wounded right hand, he turned back to the road, and fell almost lifeless into the arms of an aid, one of the two who had kept up with him. One of these remained, while the other rode off in search of a surgeon. Just then Hill, with his staff, came to the spot. With his own hand Hill bandaged the broken arm of his commander, and then rode off toward where the battle was about to reopen.

A little group was soon gathered around, and the wounded general was placed upon a rude litter and borne back toward the rear. They had gone but a few rods when Berry's guns poured a fierce fire up the road. One of the litter-bearers was killed, the others fled, leaving Jackson with but two companions. These flung themselves flat upon the ground to escape the canister which hurtled over them. The fire slackening for a moment, Jackson rose, and, supported on each side by an aid, staggered into the

[1] *Com. Rep.*, ii., 126.

THE STAMPEDE OF THE ELEVENTH CORPS.—BERRY'S CORPS CHECKING THE PURSUIT.

NEAR CHANCELLORSVILLE, MAY 1.

wood which bordered the road. He came upon Pender's brigade lying flat to avoid the shot pouring into the gloom. "I fear," said Pender, recognizing his wounded commander, "that we can not maintain our position here." "You must hold your ground," replied Jackson, for a moment blazing into his old battle-fire. This was the last order ever given by Jackson on the field. He was soon replaced in the litter and borne back through the tangled brushwood. One of the bearers stumbled and fell. Jackson was thrown to the ground, striking heavily upon his broken arm, and bruising his side. An ambulance was soon found, in which he was borne to the rear, where the broken arm was amputated. The operation promised well. Two days later he was borne to the hospital a score of miles away. But pneumonia set in, occasioned probably by the exposure of that Friday night before his great flank march, when he had slept unsheltered upon the bare ground, aggravated perhaps by the bruise which he had received when thrown from the litter. He died on Sunday, the 10th of May. When the supreme hour approached, his mind wandered. Visions of the battle-field and of Paradise mingled together. "Order Hill to prepare for battle—pass the infantry to the front rapidly—tell—" Then a change passed over his delirium; and murmuring gently, "Let us cross over the river and rest under the shade of the trees," he fell into the sleep which knows no earthly wakening.

The military career of Thomas Jonathan Jackson as a Confederate commander lasted just two years. On the 2d of May, 1861, he was placed in command at Harper's Ferry; on the 2d of May, 1863, he received his mortal wound in the Wilderness of Virginia. His great fame was won within the last year of his life, for in May, 1862, took place his operations in the Valley of the Shenandoah, wherein, by foiling Fremont and Shields, he showed that he possessed qualities higher than those of a stubborn fighter and a daring partisan. Born of a respectable family, fallen into decay, accident gave him an appointment as cadet at West Point. Passing in due course from the Military Academy into the army, he served with credit in the war with Mexico. Soon after he left the army, and became Professor of Natural and Experimental Philosophy and Artillery Tactics in the Virginia Military Academy at Lexington. Meanwhile a great change had occurred in his moral nature—that alteration which theologians denominate "a change of heart." He embraced that form of Christianity which finds its exponents in Calvin and Edwards. Major Jackson, Professor in the Military Academy, was also Deacon Jackson of the Presbyterian Church. His ten-years' career as professor was far from brilliant. He was rather a laughing-stock to the gay youths who thronged the Academy. That he was master of the management of guns was admitted; that he understood the science which he was set to teach was possible; but he had little faculty for imparting his knowledge. There were eccentricities in his mode of life, arising, materialists would say, rather from a disordered stomach than from a disturbed brain, but still sufficiently marked to furnish occasion for men to consider him as "half-cracked." The few who knew him well, however, saw that these eccentricities were but superficial; that underlying them was a firmness and persistence of character which would enable him to run a great career if an opening to such should ever occur. Few even of these few knew the boundless ambition, and the unquestioning, almost fatalistic self-confidence which lay hidden below all the outward manifestations of his character.

When the great rebellion broke out, any one would have been justified in assuming that Jackson would have taken sides with the Union. He had been educated by the Union; he had fought with honor under the flag of the Union; all his interests, and, as might be supposed, all his feelings, were with the Union rather than with the Confederacy. His personal concern in slavery was of the slightest. The region in which he was born and where he resided was farming rather than planting. Most of the owners of slaves wrought in the fields as laboriously as their servants. Unless, as was not often the case, they reared slaves for the Southern market, they would have been richer without than with the ownership of these laborers. Society in the Valley was constructed like that of Massachusetts rather than like that of South Carolina. But somewhere and somehow Jackson, during his quiet ten years as Professor, had become imbued with the extremest Southern ideas; not merely the "State-right" doctrine that the primary allegiance of the citizen was due to his state—that to the nation being secondary and dependent—but with the extremest views of the extremest men of the extreme South. As early as 1856 he was a Disunionist.[1] He spent a part of the summer of 1860 in New England, and on his return said that he had "seen enough to justify the division that had just occurred in the Democratic party, which resulted in the defeat of Douglas and the election of Lincoln—a division which, he predicted, would render a dissolution of the Union inevitable.[2]

When the war broke out, it would have been hard to find a man so fully prepared for extremes as Jackson. The deacon who had gone round asking for subscriptions of a few dimes from negroes in aid of the Bible Society—who had, with infinite misgivings, consented, upon the representations of his pastor, to "lead in prayer" at "evening meetings"—calmly declared that no quarter should be given. It was, he said, "the true policy of the South to take no prisoners in this war."[3] He threw himself

[1] *Dabney*, 143.

[2] *Ibid.*, 145.

[3] I venture this statement solely upon the assertion of Dabney, whose words I quote. This writer professes to give the substance of what was, months after, said by Jackson in justification of the ground which he had assumed. The war, he said, as reported by Dabney, "was different from all civilized wars, and therefore should not be brought under their rules. Its intention was a wholesale murder and piracy. It was the John Brown raid resumed and extended; and as Virginia had righteously put to death every one of those cut-throats upon the gallows, why were their comrades in the same crime to claim now a more honorable treatment? Such a war was an offense against humanity so monstrous that it outlawed those who shared its guilt beyond the

NEAR CHANCELLORSVILLE, MAY 1.

into the conflict with all the fervor of a firm but narrow mind, in which there was not room for doubt. In the long list of enthusiasts who have devoted themselves to a cause, there is not one whose faith was more undoubting than that of Jackson. From the moment that he took the field his hypochondria vanished. Heretofore he had timed his hours and measured his food; thenceforth the hardest lot of a soldier's life was endured without a thought. He left his home almost without warning, and never returned to it alive. He was never for a day absent from the field. The mooning professor was at once inspired with the genius of command.

In all the annals of war there can be found no general who held more absolute sway over his troops. Some have regarded him as the hand to execute what others conceived; but this certainly falls far below his military merit. Two great movements, each of which postponed for a year the issue of the war, were conceived as well as executed by him. The flank march whereby Pope was routed in the summer of 1862, and this of the spring of 1863, whereby alone, as it happened, Lee was saved from destruction at Chancellorsville, were Jackson's, both in conception and execution. The Confederates might better have lost a battle than this one man.

Hooker was greatly discouraged by the rout of Howard's corps. His first impulse was to withdraw from Chancellorsville and the road leading thence from the Wilderness; but he changed his plan during the night, and resolved to await the Confederate attack, meanwhile causing Couch to draw up an entirely new line, to which he might fall back in case of need,[1] and ordering Sedgwick up to his aid from Fredericksburg. The line of battle was necessarily somewhat contracted. What had before been the extreme Union right had been won, and was still held by the enemy. On the line now assumed, the right, instead of stretching westward parallel with the plank road, was bent sharply northward, directly across it. The position on the centre and left remained unchanged. Howard's corps, now partly reorganized, was sent to the extreme left, where no assault was anticipated. Reynolds's corps, which had come up during the night, was halted some two miles away from the actual right; Meade's was partly in reserve, and partly guarding the road leading to the river. These two corps took no part in the action which ensued.

The real line of battle for Sunday, the 3d of May, formed three sides of an irregular square. The left, facing eastward toward Fredericksburg, was held by Hancock's division of Couch's corps; the centre, facing southward, by Slocum's corps; the right, facing westward, by Sickles's corps, with French's division of Couch's corps. Sickles's extreme left, on a small plateau known as Hazle Grove, projecting southward beyond the general line, was somewhat isolated and open to assault; but it commanded the centre of the Union position. If the enemy won that, he could hold it with artillery, and pour an enfilading fire along Slocum's line. Hazle Grove was the key to every thing, and should have been held at every hazard;[1] but Hooker, knowing only of its exposure, and unaware of its vital importance, ordered Sickles to abandon it, and fall back to the line on the heights at Fairview. The movement began at daybreak, but before it was completed the battle of Sunday—the main action at Chancellorsville—was opened.

Jackson had fallen before he had accomplished half his plan. He had intended, after having driven in Hooker's right, to move still farther northward, and intrench himself at the point where the roads unite which lead from Chancellorsville to the river. He believed that he could seize and hold that point, which was vital, inasmuch as it commanded Hooker's line for supplies. "My men," he said, "sometimes fail to drive the enemy from their positions, but the enemy are never able to drive my men from theirs."[2] But the execution of this design was impossible, even had Jackson been there to attempt it, for Reynolds's corps had come up and occupied this very point.

Leaving Jackson wounded upon the battle-field, Hill had on Saturday evening pressed through the woods to the right, where Pleasonton had got his guns into position, and renewed the assault. This was repulsed, and

pale of forbearance." The war, he averred, would soon assume an internecine character; the North would arm the slaves against their masters; the Confederate States could not, and should not, submit to this, and should retaliate, rather, however, "against the instigators than the ignorant tools. But," he continued, "by the time this stern necessity had manifested itself, the Federal government might have many of our soldiers and much of our territory in their clutches, so that retaliation would be encumbered with additional difficulties. It would be better, therefore, to begin upon a plan of warfare which would place none of our citizens in their power alive;" and if, he concluded, "quarter was neither given nor asked," the Confederate soldiers "would be only the more determined, vigilant, and unconquerable;" while the Union soldiers "would be intimidated, and enlistments would be prevented" (*Dabney*, 192–194). It must be added, however, that when the murderous principle upon which Jackson wished the war to be carried on failed to meet the approval of the Confederate government, there was no general in their service who more strictly observed the amenities of warfare. When he lay wounded almost within the Union lines, he objected to being removed in case it would do him any injury. "If the enemy comes," he said, "I am not afraid of them. I have always been kind to their wounded, and I am sure they will be kind to me."—*Hotchkiss*, 124.

[1] "About midnight, or after, I was awakened by General Couch, who told me that we were ordered to withdraw, I supposed to some new position, and that the Second Corps was to form the rear-guard; but at daylight, just as the movement was about to commence, as I understood, General Couch informed me that we were going to remain there and fight a battle."—Hancock, in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 67.

[1] "I immediately"—that is, on Saturday night—"set to work, knowing the importance of this position, to fix it up for the fight of the next morning. I managed to get forty pieces in position, and I cleared out behind us the débris of the Eleventh Corps, that had gone off—the caissons, guns, ambulances, etc., all piled up in great confusion in a marsh that was there. I built three bridges across the marsh, and, with the support of Sickles's corps, we could have defeated the whole of the rebel army there that morning. At 3 o'clock I received an order to fall back in rear of the position at the Chancellorsville House. Before I left, General Sickles informed me that he also had orders to leave with his corps. I mentioned to him the importance of this position, and he agreed with me that we ought to make an effort to hold it. I feel perfectly satisfied that, had General Hooker been able to see the position that I occupied there, he would never have abandoned it; and I looked upon it as a great misfortune that he did not see that point. The rebels, having this position, could enfilade our whole line to the Chancellorsville House with their batteries at this point."—Pleasonton, in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 29.

[2] *Dabney*, 700; *Hotchkiss*, 125.

CHANCELLORSVILLE, MAY 1.

Hill was wounded. Rodes was next in rank, but Hill sent for Stuart, who was five miles away, and desired him to take command of the whole corps. When he came, Rodes yielded, not with the best grace.[1] Stuart found every thing in confusion. This was increased by a midnight attack made by Birney, who forced the Confederates back for a space through the woods, and recovered some of the guns which had been abandoned by Howard's corps in its precipitate flight. In the darkness some of the Confederate brigades fired upon each other.[2]

All that night Stuart was busy in reorganizing the shattered corps which had so unexpectedly come under his command. He was separated from Lee by six miles of dense forest. Morning was approaching before he could inform his commanding general of his position, and receive instructions. The messenger said that Jackson had urged that "the enemy should be pressed in the morning." Lee's response was, "Those people shall be pressed."

The odds on that Sunday morning were greatly in favor of Hooker. At and about Chancellorsville he still had fully 78,000 effective men. Lee proposed to press this force in its intrenchments with 30,000 less.[3] Moreover Sedgwick, with his own strong corps, and Gibbon's division of Couch's corps, quite 27,000 men in all, were near Fredericksburg, not fifteen miles away. They were confronted by Early with not more than 11,000. It was clearly possible that Sedgwick would force his way to Hooker, and, assuming that Early should escape destruction and join Lee, the Federal preponderance would be greatly increased. Taking no account of probable losses on either side, Hooker would have 95,000 men, Lee 59,000. Apart from numbers, Hooker's position was far the better. His 78,000 lay together, Lee's 48,000 were separated, and it depended upon the chances of battle whether they could be united. Hooker, moreover, was intrenched upon ground mainly of his own choosing; Lee, assuming the offensive, must assail these intrenched lines. The region was indeed a difficult one, but the physical obstacles were as great for the one side as for the other, and the one venturing the offensive must undertake to overcome them. Considering that each commander was well informed of the force of his opponent, one can not but wonder that Lee should have ventured an attack, and that Hooker should have awaited it.

SUNDAY, MAY 3.

The action was opened at dawn by Stuart, earlier than he had intended. He had ordered his right to be swung around through the woods, from the position to which his men had fallen back during the night. This brought two of his brigades right in front of Hazle Grove, from which Sickles had withdrawn every thing except Graham's brigade, which formed his rear-guard. Stuart's direction was mistaken for an order to attack. A sharp conflict ensued, with loss on both sides; but Graham got safely off to Fairview, and Stuart took possession of Hazle Grove. A glance showed him the value of the position which had been abandoned to him. In a few minutes he occupied it with thirty guns. His whole force was then ordered to advance upon the Union lines, which, as the fog lifted, were seen crowning the Fairview ridge, a third of a mile in front. Between lay the valley of a little creek covered with a tangled forest growth, through which the attacking columns must force their way, in the face of a fierce fire of artillery and musketry. Again and again they charged down the valley, through the woods, and up the slope, and as often were thrown back in confusion, only to advance again with fresh force and unabated resolution.

Sickles, upon whom all this onset fell, first sent word to Hooker that he could hold his position so long as his ammunition lasted, and then, a little later, that he needed prompt support. This last urgent demand came in an evil time. For two hours and more the Confederate guns at Hazle Grove had been playing upon Chancellorsville. The house was riddled by shot. A ball struck a pillar of the veranda against which Hooker was leaning. He fell senseless. Those around thought him dead or dying. There was no one at hand with authority to send the re-enforcements so urgently asked by Sickles, though the two corps of Reynolds and Meade were wholly disengaged. Half of either of these sent to Sickles would have been enough to

[1] "Captain Adams, of General A. P. Hill's staff, reached me post-haste, and informed me of the sad calamities which had for the time deprived the troops of the leadership of both Jackson and Hill, and of the urgent demand for me to come and take command as quickly as possible" (Stuart, in *Lee's Rep.*, 17).—Rodes says (*Ibid.*, 112): "I yielded the command to General Stuart, not because I thought him entitled to it, belonging as he did to a different arm of the service, nor because I was unwilling to assume the responsibility of carrying on the attack, as I had already made the necessary arrangements, and they remained unchanged, but because, from the manner in which I had been informed that he had been sent for, I inferred that General Jackson or General Hill had instructed Major Pendleton to place him in command; and for the still stronger reason that I feared that the information that the command had devolved upon me, unknown except to my own immediate troops, would, in their shaken condition, be likely to increase the demoralization of the corps."

[2] "The attack was made precisely at midnight by Ward's brigade, with the remaining part of Birney's division in support. It was admirably conducted under General Birney, and was in all points successful. It was made entirely with the bayonet. We drove Jackson back to our original line, and reoccupied General Howard's rifle-pits, and recovered several pieces of artillery and some caissons which had been abandoned during the day. Jackson's force was thrown into great confusion, and his own artillery opened upon his own men" (Sickles, in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 7).—"At about midnight on Saturday, General Sickles ordered me to attack Jackson's corps with my division, driving them from the plank road and the small earthworks. At one o'clock I reported that we held the road and works, and had recaptured the artillery and caissons taken from us during the stampede of the Eleventh Corps" (Birney, *Ibid.*, 35).—"There was much confusion on the right, owing to the fact that some troops mistook friends for the enemy, and fired upon them."—Stuart, in *Lee's Rep.*, 18.

[3] Hooker had with him the corps of Reynolds, Meade, Sickles, Howard, and two divisions of Couch, numbering at the outset 81,000. Howard's corps had lost 2500, the greater part prisoners; all other losses up to this time could not have exceeded 500, leaving an effective force of 78,000. Lee's entire force, exclusive of cavalry, was 60,000. Of these, Early's division, and two brigades from Anderson and McLaws, about 11,000, were left near Fredericksburg. The entire losses on Friday and Saturday could not have exceeded 1000, leaving with Lee, near Chancellorsville, about 48,000. We take no account of the cavalry, because the character of the region prevented them from being brought into active service, on either side, in this operation.

DANIEL E. SICKLES.

have secured the victory.[1] That attack repulsed, the remainder of Hooker's unengaged force, sweeping around, would have enveloped Stuart's broken corps, and crushed it to powder. Reynolds was indeed minded to bring his corps into the fight. This seems to have been the plan of Hooker, as understood by some of his officers.[2] But if such was the purpose of Hooker, its execution was prevented by the blow which disabled him. For two eventful hours the Union army was without a commander. Hooker lay insensible for a time, then, partly recovering, mounted his horse; but pain overmastered him, and he lay upon the ground as if in a doze, the Confederate shells bursting all around him. Now and then he was partially aroused when some important dispatch required a prompt answer.[3]

Sickles's ammunition was almost exhausted. Again he sent to headquarters asking for aid, but there was no one there even to reply to his urgent demand. He withdrew his now useless artillery, and fell back with his infantry to a second line, which he resolved to hold by the bayonet. He was not followed, and, looking to his front, it seemed that the enemy was routed. They had the aspect of a disorganized crowd rather than an army. Just then French, with his division, had advanced upon the Confederate left, and driven it back.[4] Stuart concentrated all his force upon this point, and succeeded in repelling the attack, the only offensive movement made by the Union forces at Chancellorsville on that day. Had it been supported by a half, or even a quarter of Reynolds's corps, which lay idle only a few furlongs off, Stuart could not have escaped destruction.

While Stuart was thus with varying fortune pressing the attack upon the Union right, Lee, with the divisions of Anderson and McLaws, assailed the centre held by Slocum, under an enfilading fire from the batteries posted at Hazel Grove. The left, held by Hancock's division of Couch's corps, was threatened, rather than attacked,[5] for Lee was all the time edging to his left in order to make a junction with Stuart. This was effected at ten o'clock, at the very moment when the battle hung in even scales. Both sides had lost terribly. Stuart's three divisions, numbering in the morning about 27,000, had lost fully 6000 in killed and wounded, and 1500 prisoners. Sickles and French had lost well-nigh 5000 out of 22,000. The united Confederate force, 40,000 strong after all its losses, pressed on converging toward Chancellorsville. In their way lay Sickles, French, and Slocum, with some 10,000 less. Barely two miles away on either hand were Reynolds, Meade, and Howard, with fully 42,000, not a regiment of whom were moved to the scene of conflict at the supreme moment. The stress of the Confederate assault now again fell upon Sickles. His ammunition exhausted, he could only hold his line with the bayonet. Five times the enemy dashed upon him, five times they were thrust back. Then the whole front melted away, Sickles's corps first yielding the position.[1] Then, in obedience to orders from Couch, who had in some sort assumed temporary command, the army retreated to the line which had been traced out the night before.

As a defensive position to be held against a superior force, a better could hardly have been desired. It formed a sharp curve, the apex three quarters of a mile back of Chancellorsville, the sides stretching back right and left to the Rappahannock and Rapidan, covering the fords. Each flank was covered by a little stream bordered by dense woods. An enemy could assail it only by its narrow front, and this was covered by the skirt of the forest, pierced with only a few rough roads. It was a position which any general might venture to hold against double his force. Hooker had here fully 70,000 men, half of whom had not been seriously engaged. Lee had left barely 40,000; yet, in the face of these odds, he was on the point of renewing the fight, when he was arrested by ominous tidings. While the fierce fight had been going on around Chancellorsville, Sedgwick had marched from below Fredericksburg, stormed the heights, and was advancing to unite with Hooker.[2] Sedgwick had now his own corps, 22,000 strong. These were across the river, two or three miles below Fredericksburg. Gibbon's division of Couch's corps, 5000 strong, which had been left behind at Falmouth, opposite Fredericksburg, was also under Sedgwick's command; thus, all told, he had 27,000. Confronting him along the heights was Early, who had been left from Jackson's corps, and Barksdale's brigade of McLaws's, and Wilcox's of Anderson's, in all 11,000 strong. Just after four o'clock on Saturday afternoon Hooker sent an order to Sedgwick directing him to march upon Fredericksburg, capture it, and vigorously pursue the enemy. "We know," he added, though he did not himself believe it,[3] "that the enemy is flying, trying to save his trains. Two of Sickles's divisions are among them." This order did not reach Sedgwick until dusk. Almost simultaneously came another, dated three hours later, directing the route which should be taken in pursuit. At this time Jackson had struck his blow and shattered Howard's corps. At an hour before midnight another order came to Sedgwick. Hooker, not aware that he had already crossed the river, and supposing him still to be on the north bank, directed him to "cross the Rappahannock on the receipt of this order, take up your line of march on the Chancellorsville road until you connect with the major general commanding, and attack and destroy any force you may fall in with on the road. You will leave all your trains behind except the pack trains of your ammunition, and march to be in vicinity of the general at daylight. You will probably fall upon the rear of the force commanded by General Lee, and between you and the major general commanding he expects to use him up. Be sure not to fail." This peremptory and special order was dispatched after Jackson's assault had been checked.[4] Sedgwick put his corps in motion at once. The moon shone almost as brightly as day upon the hills, but thick fogs were gathering in the valley. The Confederates were on the alert, and their skirmishers presented some annoyance. Still Sedgwick's march was unaccountably slow. It took the head of his column until daybreak—a space of fully six hours, to reach Fredericksburg, a distance of three miles.

Two or three attempts were made to carry the heights on the Confederate right, which were held by Early with the main strength of his division. These attempts were repulsed with little difficulty. Gibbon, who had now crossed the river, made a demonstration against their left, but a deep canal, the bridges over which had been removed, prevented any advance. It had the effect, however, of detaining there a Confederate brigade which was moving from that direction toward Marye's Hill in the centre. This hill was

[1] "If Hooker had been well enough to have answered my request for re-enforcements, it would have turned the whole tide of battle. I have no doubt it would have been won in thirty minutes; at least it would have been won in an hour. It would have been won just as soon as you could have got ten thousand men from the right or the left to have repulsed that attack."—Sickles, in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 10.

[2] "We expected that Jackson's forces would assault us in the morning at Chancellorsville, and the intention was that General Sickles, with all his force, was to meet him at once; and the First Corps, Reynolds's, was also to attack him and envelop him; and, if necessary, more forces were to be drawn from the left of our line, leaving only forces enough to hold Lee's forces in check" (Warren, in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 46).—"I can not tell why the First Corps was not brought into action. I thought that the simple advance of two corps would take the enemy in flank, and would be very beneficial in its result. General Reynolds once or twice contemplated making this advance upon his own responsibility. Colonel Stone made a reconnoissance, showing it to be practicable."—Doubleday, in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 17.

[3] Pleasonton, in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 31.

[4] Sickles (in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 8) thus describes the aspect at this moment: "The enemy seemed to be satisfied with having forced me to withdraw my infantry from their front line to this second position, and the battle paused for half an hour or more. The loss inflicted upon the enemy, especially by my artillery, was most severe. Their formation for the attack was entirely broken up, and from my head-quarters they presented to the eye the appearance of a mass—a crowd without definite formation."—Stuart (in *Lee's Rep.*, 16) thus describes the situation: "In the mean time the enemy was pressing our left with infantry, and all the re-enforcements I could obtain were sent there. Colquitt's brigade of Trimble's division, ordered first to the right, was directed to the left to support Pender. Johnson's brigade, of the second line, was also engaged there, and the three lines were more or less merged into one line of battle, and reported hard pressed. Urgent requests were sent for re-enforcements, and notices that the troops were out of ammunition. I ordered that the ground must be held at all hazards, if necessary with the bayonet."—Several of the Confederate brigade commanders report how hardly they were pressed by the advance of French. Thus Pender (in *Lee's Rep.*, 52) says: "My men were about out of ammunition, broken down, and badly cut up."—Ramseur (*Ibid.*, 74) tells how he was obliged to run over the Confederate troops in his front, and how his line was "subjected to a horrible enfilade fire, by which it suffered severely." Out of 1509 men he lost 788.

[5] The left, that is of the line as actually engaged, for the corps of Meade and Howard, forming the absolute left, were not engaged at all. Hancock says (*Com. Rep.*, ii., 68): "Although the enemy massed their infantry in the woods very near me, and attempted to advance, and always held a threatening attitude, I judge they had exhausted their troops so much that they dared not attack me. There was no forcible attack on me."

[1] "No supports coming up, and the enemy meanwhile having had time to restore order in his own lines and bring up fresh reserves, I was again attacked, and, having no means of resistance except the bayonet, after repelling five successive attacks I again fell back to General Hooker's headquarters, which were then within easy range of the enemy's cannon, and were rapidly becoming a pile of ruins, almost every shot telling upon the building" (Sickles, in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 9).—Hancock, who, from his position on the left, could see something of what was going on upon the right, says (*Com. Rep.*, ii., 67): "The first lines finally melted away, and the whole front appeared to pass out. First, the Third Corps (Sickles's) went out; then the Twelfth Corps (Slocum's), after fighting a long time, and there was nothing left on that part of the line except my own division. I was directed to hold that position until a change of line of battle could be made, and was to hold it until I was notified that all the other troops had gotten off."—The Confederate reports uniformly give 10 o'clock as the time when Chancellorsville was carried; the Federal reports place the time an hour later.

[2] "The troops, having become somewhat scattered by the difficulties of the ground and the ardor of the contest, were immediately reformed preparatory to renewing the attack. The enemy had withdrawn to a strong position nearer the Rappahannock, which he had previously fortified. His superiority of numbers, the unfavorable nature of the ground, which was densely wooded, and the condition of our troops after the arduous and sanguinary conflict in which they had been engaged, rendered great caution necessary. Our preparations were just completed, when farther operations were arrested by intelligence received from Fredericksburg."—*Lee's Rep.*, 10.

[3] "It was based on a report sent in from General Sickles that the enemy was flying at the time he was sent out to follow up Jackson's corps. I was of the impression that the general was mistaken, but nevertheless felt that no harm could follow from its transmission to General Sedgwick."—Hooker, in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 147.

[4] Sedgwick (*Com. Rep.*, ii., 95) says that this dispatch was dated at ten minutes past 10. He probably gave the hour from memory. Hooker (*Ibid.*, 129) gives its date at 9 o'clock. There is no doubt, however, as to the time when it was received, although Howe (*Ibid.*, 23) says it was "received just after dark, say 8 o'clock; but he evidently confounds it with a previous order. As to the character of the night, I have endeavored to reconcile statements which upon their face appear wholly inconsistent. Hooker and Butterfield say expressly and in almost the same words (*Ibid.*, 76, 129): "It was a bright moonlight night, and clear, sufficiently light for staff officers to write dispatches by moonlight." Howe says (*Ibid.*, 22): "It was bright starlight, so that I could see what was in the advance." Sedgwick, on the other hand, says (*Ibid.*, 100): "In consequence of the enemy and the darkness, it took us until daylight to make a little over three miles. It was a very foggy night."

held by only two brigades—that of Barksdale occupying the stone wall at its base, from which it had so disastrously repulsed Burnside a few weeks before. The morning was wearing away, and nothing had been effected. At length Sedgwick, urged by Warren, resolved to assail Marye's Hill in front. At 11 o'clock, just as the fight at Chancellorsville was closing, he formed two strong columns, which dashed at the wall. The enemy reserved their fire until the nearest column, led by Colonel Johns, was within a few score yards; they then poured in a solid sheet of musketry. The column faltered and fell back. In a couple of minutes it rallied, and pressed fifty yards nearer. Again it met the sheet of fire, and again broke. It seemed that the tragedy of December was to be re-enacted. But Johns, though wounded, rallied his men for a third charge. This time they did not stop; they rushed over and around the wall, and in fifteen minutes from their first advance carried it, killing or capturing its defenders. Johns was again wounded and borne from the field. Colonel Spear, who led the other column, was killed. Other regiments now swarmed up the height from both sides. The Confederates made a fierce fight, but it was vain. Early fell back southward along the telegraph road. Sedgwick's corps thus stood directly between Early and Lee, with only two brigades in his front. This little force retreated sullenly along the plank road, closely followed by Sedgwick.

Such were the tidings which reached Lee at Chancellorsville. His situation was full of peril. Sedgwick might overwhelm Early, and then the Confederate lines of communication would be cut, or he might press straight on to Chancellorsville, and fall upon Lee's rear. This corps must be defeated at every cost, or all was lost. Four brigades of McLaws and Anderson, which had suffered least in the fight of the morning, were sent back to check the Federal advance. They came up with the retreating regiments at Salem Church, midway between Chancellorsville and Fredericksburg. Here a brief stand had been made upon a low wooded ridge. This was carried by the divisions of Brooke and Newton, for Howe had been posted in the rear to keep Early in check, and Gibbon had been left behind to occupy Fredericksburg. The Confederate re-enforcements now pressed Brooke and Newton back through the wood with heavy loss, and were in turn checked by the artillery. Night coming on, both armies slept upon the field. All this afternoon, Hooker, with 70,000 men, lay supinely behind his intrenchments, in front of which were barely 30,000 of the enemy. He made no attempt to aid Sedgwick, who had at length, though tardily, accomplished two thirds of his march.

MONDAY, MAY 4.

No army ever found itself in a more dangerous position than that of Lee on Monday morning, the 4th of May. All counted, it now numbered less than 50,000 men. Stuart, with nearly all of Anderson, confronted Hooker at Chancellorsville. Six miles to the east was McLaws, with less than 10,000, holding Sedgwick in check. Three miles farther to the south was Early, with 8000. Sedgwick had lost heavily, but he still had quite as many as McLaws and Early together. It was hardly within the range of possibility that Hooker would not discover the situation, and either assail Stuart in front with twofold numbers, or, leaving enough to hold him fast, fall upon the rear of McLaws, who would thus be crushed between two fires. Lee's only hope lay in dislodging Sedgwick. To do this he must still farther weaken his force at Chancellorsville. Anderson's remaining three brigades were moved down, leaving only Stuart, with 20,000 men, in front of Hooker. These took position toward Sedgwick's left, threatening to cut him off from the river, while Early marched along the ridge and retook Marye's Hill, thus throwing himself in Sedgwick's rear and cutting him off from Fredericksburg, which was thereupon abandoned by Gibbon, who recrossed the river.[1] Sedgwick's position was now a defensive one, for Hooker directed him not to renew the attack upon Salem Heights. By noon Lee had about 27,000 men opposed to Sedgwick, who had about 18,000, having lost 3000 on the previous day. There was some skirmishing all through the day, but no serious attack was made until 6 o'clock, when, Anderson having united with Early, these two divisions fell upon Howe, who, with 6000 men, was on the Union left. Howe met the assault with great stubbornness, and then fell slowly back toward Banks's Ford, to a strong position which he had previously chosen. The enemy dashed furiously upon this, but were met by a galling fire and driven back, broken and apparently routed. Howe was confident that they would not venture another attack, as, indeed, they did not. Two hours after dark he was surprised to learn that Sedgwick was about to fall back to the ford. He refused to abandon his position without a positive order. The order came, and was obeyed.[2] The division marched to the ford without the slightest molestation, having occupied its strong position two hours after having repulsed the attack.

Hooker all this day lay wholly inactive with his great force of 70,000 men, within two hours' march. Between him and Sedgwick, by the road along which Meade had marched out on Thursday, there was at no time more than three brigades. Hooker's orders to Sedgwick indicate the uncertainty under which he labored all that day, even when he had resumed the command after his injury. Long before daybreak he directed Sedgwick not to resume his assault upon Salem Heights unless he himself attacked, for he hoped that the enemy would assail him; but he was too far away to give any directions; only, if Sedgwick thought best to cross the river, he could go either to Banks's Ford or Fredericksburg. At 11 o'clock in the morning he directed Sedgwick not to cross unless compelled to do so, but, if possible, to hold the position at the ford. Half an hour later, Hooker sent word that he proposed to advance upon the enemy the next day, and in that case Sedgwick's position would be as favorable as could be desired. Sedgwick had all day been doubtful whether he could maintain himself on the south side of the river; but after the repulse of the attack made upon him, he wrote that he could hold his position. But, just ten minutes before Hooker received this, he sent an order to Sedgwick to cross. He immediately countermanded the order, but, before this was received, which was just before daylight, nearly the whole corps were over, and the enemy had taken a position which commanded the bridge, and it was too late to return.[1] Sedgwick lost in all nearly 5000 in killed, wounded, and missing, the greater portion of them on Sunday, and captured nearly 1400 prisoners. The Confederates lost about 4000.[2]

But, during the night, Hooker had resolved to abandon his own position. He summoned his corps commanders to a consultation. Slocum was not present. Howard wished an advance. Sickles and Couch were in favor of withdrawing. Reynolds went to sleep, saying his opinion would be the same as that of Meade. Meade at first opposed the crossing of the river mainly on the ground that the movement could not be effected in the presence of an enemy flushed by success; he, however, ceased to press his objections upon Hooker's confident assurance that the army could be withdrawn without loss. Hooker had no doubt that he could hold his position, and perhaps force the enemy to retire; but he urged that, as he would fall back toward Richmond, he would become constantly stronger, while we were growing weaker; he could be better assailed near Washington than at Richmond. So the order to cross the river was issued, and a new line of intrenchments was thrown up close by the United States Ford to cover the passage. When Sedgwick announced that he could hold his ground, Hooker appears to have proposed to recross back again at Banks's Ford, unite with Sedgwick, and give battle. But this purpose was frustrated by Sedgwick's movement.[3]

Lee, leaving Early on the heights at Fredericksburg to prevent Sedgwick from recrossing, reunited his remaining force, now reduced to 40,000, before the position from which Hooker was preparing to retire. In the afternoon of Tuesday a fierce storm sprung up. The river rose rapidly, submerging the approaches to the bridges. One of these was taken down and used to piece out the others, over which the army retreated without being perceived by the enemy. The storm passed away during the night, and Lee had made preparations to attack the Federal works at daylight; but, upon advancing his skirmishers, he found that the great Union army was beyond the river.[4]

The cavalry movement, upon which Hooker had relied for destroying the enemy by cutting his communications, proved equally fruitless. Stoneman divided his corps. Averill, in command of one column, ascended the Rapidan some twenty miles. At Rapidan Station, on the Orange Railroad, he came up, on Friday, with W. F. Lee, with 900. He reported the next day that he had been engaged with the cavalry of the enemy, and destroying communications. His loss in this "engagement" was one man killed and two wounded. On Sunday he retraced his steps, whereupon Hooker displaced him from command, and appointed Pleasonton in his place. But meanwhile the battles had been fought and lost. Stoneman, with the main cavalry column, pushed on farther southward. Arriving at a point thirty miles northwest of Richmond, he divided his force into six bodies. "We dropped," he says, "like a shell in that region of country, intending to burst it in every direction, expecting each fragment would do as much harm and create nearly as much terror as would result from sending the whole shell. The result of this plan satisfied my most sanguine anticipations." One regiment struck the James River Canal, and attempted ineffectually to destroy the aqueduct which spans the Rivanna River. They then returned to the main body. Four others were sent in various directions to break up the railroad from Richmond to Fredericksburg, which was the primary object of the whole movement. Davis, with one regiment, reached to within seven

---

[1] Sedgwick appears to have supposed that Early's force were re-enforcements from Richmond. He says (*Com. Rep.*, ii., 106): "I was informed, at an early hour, that a column of the enemy, 15,000 strong, coming from the direction of Richmond, had occupied the heights of Fredericksburg, cutting off my communication with Fredericksburg."

[2] "The movement was commenced very late, and Hays's and Hoke's brigades were thrown into some confusion by coming in contact; and it becoming difficult to distinguish our troops from those of the enemy, on account of the growing darkness, they had therefore to fall back to reform" (Early, in Lee's *Rep.*, 35).—"The attack was delivered with a violence that I had never before encountered. We resisted the first attack better than I expected, and at a favorable time the left of my line was thrown back partially behind some woods. As I expected, the enemy seemed to be under the impression, from this movement, that we were giving way. They advanced until they reached a point that we should have desired above all others they should have advanced upon, and where a reserve force, which I had placed under cover, had an opportunity to get a flank fire upon them with full effect. When the fire from our new position struck them, it was but a short time before they were entirely broken, and fell back in a rout. After this repulse, the position of the Sixth Corps, in my judgment, was less liable to a serious attack than it had been at any time since it crossed the Rappahannock, and I saw no necessity for recrossing the river" (Howe, in *Com. Rep.*, 21).—"Some time after we had returned to our old camps, I met General Hooker, and spoke to him of the movements we had made and the position we held. I stated to him that after the fight of the 4th of May I could have gone with my division to the heights of Fredericksburg, and held them. He expressed his surprise that those heights could have been held on the night of the 4th, and said, 'If I had known that you could have gone on those heights and held them, I would have re-enforced you with the whole army.' I told him that if I had not received orders to go back to Banks's Ford, I could have marched uninterruptedly to Fredericksburg Heights after 9 o'clock that night; for, after the fight we had had, the rebels abandoned the Heights, and there was nothing to be seen of them. There was a bright moon that night, and we could see an object of the size of a man or a horse at a great distance" (*Ibid.*, 25).—"The attack on Brooks was easily repulsed, chiefly by the skirmish line and the battery of the First Massachusetts. That on Howe was of a more determined character. It was gallantly resisted by our infantry by a counter-charge, while the artillery of the division played with fearful effect upon their advance. At length our line was forced back upon the left, and Howe directed his right to retire to a less advanced position. The division reformed promptly, the batteries keeping up a most effective fire. The advance of the enemy was checked, his troops were scattered and driven back with fearful loss, and the new position was easily maintained until nightfall. Several hundred prisoners, including one general officer and many others of rank, and three battle-flags, were captured from the enemy in this engagement."—Sedgwick, in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 107.

[1] Sedgwick, in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 97; Hooker, *Ibid.*, 133.

[2] Early, who encountered only Sedgwick, reports his entire loss at 1474; McLaws, 1889, the greater portion being in the action with Sedgwick; Anderson, 1445, probably half here.

[3] Butterfield, in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 77; Hooker, *Ibid.*, 135.

[4] *Lee's Rep.*, 13.

miles of Richmond, tore up a few rails, and destroyed some stores; captured a train filled with wounded, who were paroled; then, finding himself likely to be cut off, he headed southeastwardly for Williamsburg, but, discovering Confederate cavalry in his way, turned northward, crossed the Mattapony, and, following down its bank, reached the Union outposts at Gloucester Point, opposite Yorktown. Kilpatrick, with another regiment, on Monday struck the railroad still nearer Richmond, destroyed the dépôts at Hungary Station, then rode to within two miles of the city, passing through the outer line of defenses. With his small force it was useless to attempt any thing farther; so he turned eastward, passing the Chickahominy at Meadow Bridge, which he destroyed, and crossed the Mattapony without having encountered any opposition. Here he fell in with Davis, and both proceeded to Gloucester Point. Stoneman himself remained near the point where his divisions had separated, with only 700 men, which he kept as a nucleus around which the different parties could rally in case of need, having sent out three regiments to destroy the bridges in his vicinity. These reunited on Tuesday, and Stoneman set out on a rapid retreat to the Rapidan and Rappahannock, crossing the latter river at Kelly's Ford on Thursday, the 8th. The alarm caused by the "explosion of the bomb" was great, but the injury inflicted was small. In three days the railroad to Fredericksburg was in running order. Had it been known that almost the whole transportation of the road was collected at Guinea's Station, eighteen miles from Chancellorsville, where also were the main dépôts of supply, and that these were left wholly unguarded, a rapid dash made by half of the cavalry upon this point at any time during this eventful week would have changed the whole course of the campaign.[1]

The Federal loss in these operations at Chancellorsville was something more than 17,000, of whom 5000 were unwounded prisoners. They also lost 13 guns, some 20,000 muskets, and a considerable quantity of ammunition and accoutrements. The Confederate loss was about 13,000, of whom 1581 were killed, 8700 wounded, and about 3000 prisoners.[2]

Hooker issued an order congratulating his army on its achievements. "If," said he, "it has not accomplished all that was expected, the reasons are well known to the army. It is sufficient to say that they were of a character not to be foreseen or prevented. . . . . We have made long marches, crossed rivers, surprised the enemy in his intrenchments, and, wherever we have fought, have inflicted heavier blows than we have received . . . . . have placed *hors de combat* 18,000 of his chosen troops, destroyed his stores and dépôts filled with vast amounts of stores, deranged his communications, captured prisoners within the fortifications of his capital, and filled his country with fear and consternation." But no dépôts were destroyed or communications deranged except by the cavalry; the stores destroyed were not sufficient to interfere with Lee's scanty accumulations, and the interruptions to communications were so slight that they were restored in two or three days. Far more truthful was Lee's statement to his army: "Under trying vicissitudes of heat and storm, you attacked the enemy, strongly intrenched in the depths of a tangled wilderness, and again on the hills of Fredericksburg, fifteen miles distant, and, by the valor that has triumphed on so many fields, forced him once more to seek safety beyond the Rappahannock."

Hooker declared that when he returned from Chancellorsville he "felt that he had fought no battle," for the reason that he could not get his men into position to do so, though he had more men than he could use;[3] that he failed in his enterprise from causes "of a character not to be foreseen or prevented by human sagacity or resources." A careful examination of all that was done, or left undone, evinces that every one of these circumstances was of a character which lay fairly within the limits of probability; and that there was not, in fact, any moment between Thursday afternoon and Tuesday morning when success was not wholly within the grasp of the Union army. The movement by which Chancellorsville was reached, and the Confederate position rendered worthless, was brilliantly conceived and admirably executed. The initial error, by which alone all else was rendered possible, was that halt at Chancellorsville. Had the march been continued for an hour longer, or even been resumed early in the following morning, the army would have got clear of the Wilderness without meeting any great opposing force, and then it would have been in a position where its great superiority of numbers would have told.[1] The rout of Howard's corps was possible only from the grossest neglect of all military precautions. Jackson, after a toilsome march of ten hours, halted for three hours in open ground not two miles from the Union lines. A single picket, sent for a mile up a broad road, would have discovered the whole movement in ample time for Hooker to have strengthened his position, or to have withdrawn from it without loss. The blame of this surprise can not, however, fairly be laid upon Hooker. He had a right to presume that whoever was in command there would have so picketed his lines as to prevent the possibility of being surprised in broad daylight. But even as it was, the disaster to the Eleventh Corps should have had no serious effect upon the general result. That was fully remedied when the pursuit was checked. On Sunday morning Hooker was in a better position than he had been on the evening before. He had lost 3000 men and had been strengthened by 17,000, and now had 78,000 to oppose to 47,000. The Confederate army was divided, and could reunite only by winning a battle or by a day's march. The only thing which could have lost the battle of that day was the abandonment of the position at Hazle Grove, for from this alone was it possible to enfilade Slocum's line. But surely it is within the limits of military forethought that a general who has occupied a position for two days and three nights should have discovered the very key to that position, when it lay within a mile of his own headquarters. The disabling of Hooker could not, indeed, have been foreseen; but such an accident might happen to any commander upon any field, and there should have been somewhere some man with authority to have, within the space of three hours, brought into action some of the more than 30,000 men within sound, and almost sight, of the battle then raging. Sedgwick's assault upon the heights of Fredericksburg was certainly dilatory. He could not, indeed, have safely executed to the letter his orders, which involved a night assault upon the heights; but they could have been more easily stormed at 5 o'clock than at 11, and this would have brought him upon Lee's rear by 9, when the action was going sorely against the Confederates. How the hours from Sunday noon till Monday night were wasted, has been shown. Hooker, indeed, reiterates that he could not assail the Confederate lines through the dense forests. But Lee broke through those very woods on Sunday, and was minded to attempt it again on Wednesday, when he found that the enemy had disappeared. The golden opportunity was lost never to be recovered, and the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia gained a new lease of life.

If final success were a certain test of the merits of a military plan, we must accord the highest success to that of Lee. But it succeeded only through a series of accidents, any one of which failing would have involved ruin; and a general, save in the direst emergency, has no right to reckon upon the favors of fortune. His first movement, that of marching with the bulk of his army to confront Hooker at Chancellorsville, was wise, for he had good reason to suppose that then and there the force of the enemy was inferior to his own. He had no means of knowing that Sickles's corps had come thither; and, at the worst, he could fall back if he found himself overmatched, and return to his former position, or retreat upon his communications, and make a stand at any favorable point. But when, on the next morning, he divided his army, sending three fifths of it a day's march away, he staked upon an unlikely chance every reasonable possibility of safety. He had no right to assume that the Union right would be surprised, or that Hooker would fail to fall with overwhelming force upon one part or the other of his divided army. So, on Sunday morning, he had no right to anticipate that an attack made by an inferior force upon lines strongly intrenched could succeed, or that his opponent would meet him with only half of his force. How hardly, and by what accidents only, the battle of Sunday morning was won, has already been shown. He tempted fortune still more desperately when, on that afternoon and the next morning, he still farther divided his force. How could he suppose that Stuart's 20,000 would for a long day hold in check Hooker's 70,000, while a great battle was being fought close by between forces so equally matched that a tenth of this idle force added to the enemy would assuredly turn the scale? To retreat promptly and rapidly upon and along the railroad was the only course which any man knowing what both commanders knew, and, still more, what we now know, would have pronounced safe for Lee, when he was startled by the tidings that Sedgwick had stormed the heights and was advancing upon his rear. Lee, reversing the words of Hooker, might have said, "We succeeded only through circumstances of a character not to be foreseen or brought about by human sagacity or resources."

[1] "General Lee had but two regiments of cavalry, under W. H. F. Lee, to oppose to the large force under Stoneman. The whole country in the rear of the Confederate army, up to the very fortifications of Richmond, was open to the invader. Nearly all the transportation of that army was collected at Guinea's Station, eighteen miles from Chancellorsville, with little or no guard, and might have been destroyed by one fourth of Stoneman's force. Such was the condition of the railroads and the scarcity of supplies in the country, that the Confederate commander could never accumulate more than a few days' rations ahead at Fredericksburg. To have interrupted his communications for any length of time would have imperiled his army or forced him to retreat."—*Hotchkiss*, 101–9. See also Hooker and Stoneman, in *Com. Rep.*, 137–40.

[2] The official report of Union losses is given by Hooker in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 143; the Confederate in *Lee's Rep.*, 131–133. In the Union report, the respective numbers of killed, wounded, and missing are not given; but Lee (*Rep.*, 15) states that he took "about 5000 prisoners, exclusive of wounded." This statement has been adopted, and an attempt has been made to apportion the missing among the several corps, but the estimate is almost wholly conjectural. The Confederate report, while giving separately the killed and wounded in every regiment, makes no mention of the missing. But in their separate reports (in *Lee's Rep.*, 27, 33, 36, 117), Anderson, McLaws, Early, and Rodes give the missing in their respective divisions. Hill and Colston do not report their missing; but, as they were in the hottest of the fight on Saturday and Sunday, it is presumed that their loss in missing was at least equal to the average of the others. From these data the following table has been constructed:

Losses at Chancellorsville.

UNION.	Killed and Wounded.	Missing.	Total.	CONFEDERATE.	Killed and Wounded.	Missing.	Total.
First Corps (Reynolds)..	192	100	292	Early's Division.....	851	500	1,351
Second Corps (Couch)...	1,525	500	2,025	A. P. Hill's Division....	2,583	500?	3,083
Third Corps (Sickles)...	3,439	600	4,039	Colston's Division	1,863	450?	2,310
Fifth Corps (Meade)	399	300	699	Rodes's Division.....	2,178	713	2,891
Sixth Corps (Sedgwick) .	3,601	1000	4,601	Anderson's Division	1,180	210	1,390
Eleventh Corps (Howard)	508	2000	2,508	McLaws's Division	1,379	380	1,760
Twelfth Corps (Slocum).	2,383	500	2,883	Artillery and Cavalry...	227		
Cavalry, etc.....	150		150	Total.....	10,277	2753	13,030
Total.....	12,197	5000	17,197				

There is reason to suppose that the losses on each side were some hundreds greater than officially given. Thus Sedgwick reports his loss to have been 4925 (*Com. Rep.*, 107), and Sickles says (*Ibid.*, 10) that on Sunday he "lost 260 officers and about 4500 men in a couple of hours." Such of the Confederate generals as gave their losses state them considerably above those put down in the general report. In four divisions, the excess is about 400 in killed and wounded. Then, as to the missing, Sedgwick states that he made abou. 1400 prisoners, while in the division opposed to him the Confederate reports acknowledge only 1090, and some of these must have been captured before they encountered Sedgwick. Still we must consider the final official reports on both sides as the highest authority attainable in this case.

[3] *Com. Rep.*, ii., 142.

[1] "A mile or more in advance of the position I then had would have placed me beyond the forest, where, with my superior force, the enemy would probably have been beaten."—Hooker, in *Com. Rep.*, ii., 142.