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## THE BATTLE OF ANTIETAM.

The following is taken from the account of the great conflict of Sept. 17th, near Sharpsburg, written from the battle-field by a special correspondent of the World:

The battle of Wednesday, September 17, fought a few miles from the Potomac, near the confluence of that river with the Antietam creek, was one of the hardest, bloodiest, and most hotly-contested of the war. No battle has thus far been fought upon the continent in which so many men have been actually brought into action, in which so large a number have fallen before such terrific showers of shot and shell, and in which every strip of ground which was won and every advantage which was achieved cost the victor a more determined and continuous effort. In no battle, thus far—so our most reliable and most veteran generals affirm—has there been such persistency in the musketry of the infantry. From morning until evening the lines of our army were engaging the enemy, and both sides stood up against each other for twelve full hours, with the musket and bayonet. Besides the infantry fighting, unequalled in severity or duration, an incessant throwing of shells, round shot, grape and canister, continued from sunrise to sunset, and even late into the night.

Between sunrise and sunset of Wednesday, 100,000 men were fought by the commanding generals of both armies. I do not include the reserves. The number stated were actually brought into the fight. The whole strength of each army cannot be properly stated at present, but it is stated by many whom we have captured that the enemy had been strengthened, and numbered one hundred and forty thousand men. The rebel army exhibited the most astonishing and exhaustless resources of troops, which were brought into the field at every point through the entire day. When one line was broken another was always ready to be put in its place, and at no point was there seen any evidence of weakness or deficiency in numbers.

The battle-field was one that called for the greatest military skill in the moving and disposing of the troops. Both sides required to use unceasing vigilance and skill to prevent or counteract the purposes of the other. The generals of neither party were in want of elevations from which to observe the shifting scenes of the fight, and the day was evidently to be won by the most skillful generalship.

The Antietam creek runs for a distance directly toward our center, but turning suddenly southward it passes by the town of Sharpsburg, and near our extreme left.

I shall not endeavor to describe all the confusing changes in the positions of the various corps and divisions, the marching and countermarching from right to left and from left to right, as one and another position needed to be temporarily strengthened. The various lines of the army through the various phases of the engagement would each require an elaborate description and twenty different diagrams for illustration. The most important changes of our lines will be mentioned as they occurred. I will not only state the order of the corps from the right to the left, in order. General Hooker's corps was formed in the afternoon preceding the battle upon the extreme right. His corps (formerly McDowell's) consisted of Hatch's division (formerly King's), Rickett's division, and the Pennsylvania Reserves. General Burnside's command was upon the extreme left, three miles away, and in front of the town of Sharpsburg. Intermediate between these two extremes, were Sumner's corps, Franklin's corps, Banks' corps, and Porter's corps. These were upon the right and left of the turnpike, and their disposition for the battle was not made until the cover of the night should give assurance of its secrecy.

Our army, as it approached the position of the rebels, was upon the south side of Antietam creek. Gen. Hooker's division was thrown across the creek at Kelly's ford, and advanced beyond the center until dark, with a large body of skirmishers thrown out in front of him. The enemy appeared at several points in line of battle, and met with their own skirmishers, those thrown out by Gen. Hooker. An important advance was effected, and the enemy forced back, while as yet our center was bearing back upon the other side of the creek.

The greatest resistance was experienced as Gen. Hooker attempted to move upon the right flank. The enemy saw the intention, and made a vigorous effort to keep open communication with the road running northward toward Williamsport. It was to the Confederates the important position, and they were evidently massing their forces to turn our right flank. Hence the opposition experienced by Gen. Hooker. The enemy skirmished with him well until midnight.

Gen. McClellan promptly and most oppor-

tunely sent three army corps to strengthen the right, Banks' (then Mansfield's), Sumner's and Franklin's. This was the most important movement upon the field, and effectually thwarted the purposes of the enemy. At 8 o'clock they were put in motion, moved across the Antietam and placed in those positions where they could most effectually co-operate with Gen. Hooker in the morning.

The battle was commenced by a most vigorous attack upon the very position which Gen. McClellan had taken the greatest pains to strengthen. With the opening day came, the commencement of the fighting. The cannon from many an eligible position, of which there was no deficiency on either side of the field, commenced their work all along the lines, with an evident concentration of their fury upon Gen. Hooker and his supports by the enemy; upon Gen. Hill and his supports by our men. The first onset showed how immense were the forces wielded by each of the generals-in-chief, and the impetuosity and desperate character of the fight. From east to west, over a space of three miles, could be seen the smoke pouring from the cannon's mouths, and the reports of the guns, peal on peal, sometimes distinct and separate, and at times mingled in a terrible roaring, came from every quarter of the scene of the contest. The air was damp and the morning cloudy, and little could be distinguished beyond the hills save the lines of forest and the constant puffs of smoke which rose slowly from the enemy's guns, and the circles gradually separating which marked the spots where many of our shells had exploded high in the air.

Soon after the cannonading had commenced, Gen. Hooker who had pushed on his movement upon the position of the enemy, became engaged with them at close range, and with a terrible effect. Early in the day Morris's brigade, while pushing the enemy before them, was surprised by seeing the stars and stripes raised above their opponents, and simultaneously the shout raised, "Stop firing upon your friends." The brigade was ordered to stop firing and the advantage gained by so treacherous and dishonorable a resort enabled the rebels to drive our men before them through a field of corn into an open lot in which our men recovered from the effects of the deception and formed again for the fight.

Gen. Mansfield, who was recently appointed to the position held with so much credit by General Banks, brought his command early in the engagement to the support of Hooker. Gen. Mansfield was fatally wounded soon after the first onset. The venerable and brave soldier was brought from the field, and has since died of his injury. Gen. Williams assumed command of the corps, and his division was led by Gen. Crawford until a wound rendered him unable to remain upon the field. Gen. Green commanded the second division of the corps. The loss which they sustained was severe, and the fighting they did was as gallant as their losses were severe.

Sedgwick's division of veterans came into the action in column by brigades about 8 o'clock in the morning, to support Hooker and Banks upon their left, where they had been slightly repulsed by the rebels. First came a terrible fire upon their center from the rebels in front of them, and the enemy's cannon were playing all the while with destructive effect upon their columns. It was supposed that their line was sufficiently supported upon their left. The next adjacent division was thought to be close by, and no apprehension was entertained of a fire from that quarter. While forming the lines it was ascertained that the enemy were there, and in a moment a death-dealing cross-fire was added to that from which they were already suffering in front. The order had just been given to "ace left," preparatory to a movement southward to fill up the open space of the ranks. The severity of such a fire of infantry both from the left and front, with artillery playing upon them all the time, was enough to make veterans falter. The left broke and ran, but the 15th Massachusetts and the 82d New-York, next in line, stood and received steadily this tremendous attack. The 15th Massachusetts distinguished themselves by a gallant and memorable deed. Under this galling fire, volley upon volley, in the front and on the left, they charged upon the enemy in front of them, captured his battle-flag, and brought it away from the field.

Gen. Sedgwick remained near the center of his command, and had his horse soon shot from under him. Two bullets entered his body, and on foot, in front of his command, covered with the blood of his wounds, he insisted upon remaining and encouraging his men to stand firmly and not waver.

Gen. Sumner ordered them to fall back, and then followed an important action of Kirby's battery.

When Sedgwick's division had fallen back the way was clear for Kirby's Regular Battery to pour upon the rebels a fire of grape and canister, which moved them down in wadows. It played upon them with a most

terrible effect. But the enemy, apparently never lacking for men to sacrifice in a bold and hazardous enterprise, threw their soldiers in masses from out the woods against the battery. Immense numbers, not in columns, but massed together in overwhelming numbers, rushed from the woods upon the guns which had been dealing such heavy blows and cutting such gaps in their ranks. The infantry support of the battery fell back in confusion, and left it alone. But a most rapid discharge of shrapnel upon them piled the rebels in dead heaps, and their dash was broken, and the battery limbered up and moved away in safety. Sedgwick's division had, meantime, reformed, and were again in line and ready to assist, and then Gen. Franklin's corps came into action.

Smith's division took the place just occupied by Sedgwick's, and the enemy threw in fresh troops at the same time. The fight was renewed with the hottest impetuosity on both sides, but the enemy soon showed signs of weakness, and Smith's division drove them and gained for us the hard fought battle-field, affording an opportunity of bringing off the dead and wounded.

The center now became the most absorbing in interest and importance. Richardson's and French's divisions of Sumner's corps in their turn took the brunt of the infantry fighting, and the surging sound of the musketry as it came from the center was most appalling. These two divisions were separated by a short interval from Sedgwick's, the remaining divisions of Sumner's corps, and this short breach in our lines was the thing which enabled the rebels to come in upon Sedgwick's left flank with such destructive consequences.

French's division was formed upon a place of ploughed ground, and Gen. Richardson gave orders to Gen. Meagher, chief brigade commander of his division, to march around the edge of a hill, through a valley, and form his brigade upon the right next to Gen. French, Gen. Richardson remarking, "I will be there as soon as you are." Meagher's brigade took the position assigned to them near the brow of the hill, and lay down upon the ground in line of battle. French's division, next upon the right, was now desperately engaged pouring into and receiving from the enemy a fire of both shell and musketry. They marched onward, and their columns, unwavering and steady, excited the admiration of all who witnessed their excellent behavior.

The enemy had a position which was sheltered by a fence. The rebels were afterwards seen there lying dead in heaps upon the ground. But the fire was more than our troops could stand. Their ranks were being thinned out woefully. They broke upon the left, and just then came up, advancing in splendid style, further to the left, the Irish brigade. The right of this invincible command rested near the fence, upon the other side of which the left of French's division ought to have been in position. But the confusion upon French's left was not of long continuance. Nothing like a disgraceful rout occurred at any time upon the field; but when our lines have been broken for a time, they have invariably rallied again and fought with a redoubled vigor. So with the whole of French's division. They soon rallied again, and kept their line continuous with the Irish Brigade.

There seemed to be some obstruction in the advance of the center of the Irish Brigade, and he right and left advanced faster than the center. A fence was ordered to be thrown down and they advanced again towards a knoll, behind which the enemy were firing incessantly upon them. They charged up and but once for a moment faltered or fell back, but were easily rallied.

Caldwell's brigade, of Richardson's division, followed up next in turn, comparatively concealed under the hill, and came upon the left of Meagher in line of battle. Then followed up the hill the brigade commanded by Col. Cross, and the three brigades were in a continuous line of battle. Meagher's brigade suffered most severely of all. Their ranks were fearfully thinned out. No praise could be extravagant in speaking of their action, it is only a repetition of what is already known to multiply words of commendation.

Caldwell and Brooks' brigades marched up in the same column and across a road. In that road the piles of rebels tell of the hot work which was done there. Caldwell fought his brig splendidly; Cross fought splendidly. All deserve to be remembered with admiration and gratitude.

This firing of musketry continued from the time this line was formed for four hours. No more interesting sight than this columns as they poured upon the enemy their fire of musketry and received the enemy's fire in return, could ever be seen upon a field of battle. As they marched up the hill over the plowed grounds, their lines struck every one with admiration.

Still towards the left, the hardest of the

fight seemed tending. More or less, the entire day, had the sound of musketry given evidence that Burnside was not behind the reputation which he has already established. Several times in the morning the firing upon the left was most intensely rapid and severe. The artillery was constantly upon the enemy, and they were driven away from one position after another, slowly but surely, the whole day.

The stone bridge, near Sharpsburg, across the Antietam was most determinedly defended by the rebels. Burnside drove them from it after a severe fight, and gained the further side of the creek. Later in the day, the severest infantry fighting was with Burnside. The same dogged resistance, the same desperate determination to yield no inch of ground which could be maintained was manifested by the rebels. The same bravery in our troops and the same good generalship in our leaders was exhibited on the left, which they showed throughout the entire line, in every engagement of the day.

I must not forget to mention the important part which was taken by our twenty pound Parrott guns in the day's fight. Somewhat away from the scene of the infantry fighting on the rear of our lines, they threw constantly upon the batteries and upon the infantry of the enemy, a shower of shell which told with an important effect upon the issues of the day. The firing from the hill where these guns were posted was admirable. Shells would drop right among the columns of the enemy as they were attacking our lines, and it was worth a long pilgrimage by sea and land to have witnessed their operations.

Fitz John Porter's corps was held in reserve the entire day, and have not had an opportunity of showing on this battle-field the bravery and worth which they have shown so frequently before. These, with others of our reserves of which I think not proper to mention, may have again to-morrow an opportunity of showing the same good discipline and courage which all have shown in the fight of Wednesday.

Gen. McClellan's management of the battle has won him golden opinions in the minds of those who have hitherto been incredulous as to his possession of the skill and ability of a great general. No one can see the many movements which he has accomplished and consider the probable results which would have attended a failure to perform those movements, and not admire his generalship. Had not Sumner, Banks, and Franklin been moved on Tuesday night to support Hooker upon the right, Wednesday morning would have found us with our right flank turned, our lines broken, and probably a serious defeat.

We have had a very heavy loss. Probably not less than ten thousand. The enemy have, without a doubt, suffered much more. The masses of men which they have sacrificed in fruitless attempts to capture our batteries, the piles which they have left dead upon the field, cut down by our cannon and our muskets, show that their loss was much heavier than our own.

On the morning after the battle a flag of truce was sent in from the enemy from a strip of woods, into which an unsuccessful attempt was made to charge, stating that if we wished to come under a flag of truce we might take out our dead that were in them. This offer was not accepted. Another flag of truce was sent in with the proposition that firing should be ceased on both sides by agreement while the dead were being removed. This proposition was also not entertained and the endeavors ceased.

On Thursday the fighting was not renewed, both armies finding themselves more humanly employed in attending to the wounded and carrying away and burying the dead. The surgeons have been busily engaged in attending to the wounded, operating, and dressing wounds. The hospitals present the most terrible and pitiable scenes.

Chaplains and clergymen at some of the hospitals were seen conversing with the wounded and whispering, in the ears of those whose countenances showed the spirit was just departing from the body, words of hope and consolation. As I passed by one I overheard the clergyman repeating the words of the Nicene creed in a low and fervent tone to a dying man, whose dim eyes seemed to be expressing trust and faith.

INFORMATION WANTED.—John Griffith, turner, of 47 Milk street, Bristol, England, wishes to know if one WILLIAM GRIFFITH who left Swansea, Wales, about the year 1851 or '52 for Salt Lake Valley is now living.

He is about five feet five inches in height, dark complexion, with black hair, a book-binder by trade, and about 53 years of age.