

WAR STORIES.

Battle of Chancellorsville, May, 1863.

Atlanta Journal.

I come now to write of the greatest battle fought by the Confederate army on any battlefield. Like a newly-created sun the Confederate army had risen from its birthplace at Sumter, April, 1861, and had wound its way upward over the rugged heights of fame, and at Chancellorsville, May, 1863, it stood at the pinnacle of its grandeur and felt that omnipotence had endowed it with the power to conquer a universe.

There was a spirit in the heart of each man at that time that seemed to possess him from some unknown and unfathomable source. The idea of defeat never entered his mind. He felt that the god of battle was his sponsor and the whole world his heritage. This spirit was not a delusion, but a veritable force which he could not resist, and which, in fact, made resistance to it impossible of conception.

On entering upon this battle the Confederate soldier did it in the prime of his manhood as a warrior. He was sure of victory, no matter what the odds were.

On the other hand, the soldiers on the other side seemed to be under the same spiritual influence which depressed them and they looked not for victory, no matter how few our numbers were.

These opposite convictions seem strange, but they are true, as subsequent events show.

At this battle I was a private soldier, but, nevertheless, I took as much interest in what was going on in a campaign or in a battle as did our commanding generals, and I formed my plans and conclusions of how the battle ought to be fought and also formed an opinion of the result of the plan adopted.

I did not let my views conflict with the faithful performance of my duty, but I did not intend to fall, if fall I must, like one blind, but as one who ought to know what and why things are done in which he is a factor. I did not intend to be any the less intelligent and free after I volunteered in the army than I was before I joined it. I did not join it to go backward on these lines, but as I was fighting for freedom it was absolutely indispensable that first I be free myself. I have not yet been convinced that a slave, under command, ever fought to free anybody, or that a free soldier ever fought to enslave another, or that an army of freemen were ever commanded by a tyrant. I hold to the axiom, or fact, that every seed sown surely brings its own kind and no other.

Excuse this rather lengthy preface, but I want to show an important fact in regard to this battle. Not that I want to blow my own horn, but unless I deduce the fact I have in view, another may not do so, and the fact be lost to mankind.

In a previous article on the battle at Salem Church I related all about my command in its march from the camp and of its joining Anderson's division and of how we pushed Hooker's advance back to Chancellorsville.

When we got him back to this place were right onto the whole of the Yankee army, except that under Sedgewick, which was still at Fredericksburg.

We skirmished and made feints on Hooker's lines to keep him busy, expecting something until we could give him something that he was not expecting.

Well, we had not been in his front long before "Stonewall" came up with his corps. He was our leading man in raising the curtain and beginning the performance.

On this occasion our division and Anderson's was simply the orchestra.

So Jackson and Lee had a consultation as to which part of the stage could the show be opened to interest Mr. Hooker the most. It was determined that Mr. Hooker's people, who were away round on the right of the arena, would enjoy the opening most, and the surprise would spring on Mr. Hooker would elieve him of all doubt as to our having the greatest living actor on any stage. When Jackson came up we all felt that he brought victory with him, for something of an unaccountable feeling possessed us. The effect may be likened to visiting the two poles of an electric battery. The men wept and cheered over the man in spite of themselves. They fought under him in spite of themselves; they defeated the enemy in spite of themselves; at his name the enemy were depressed in spite of themselves; this depression was not for want of courage, but some subtle power overcame their courage by weakening their confidence in their safety; they were defeated before a gun was fired. There was something

which went out of the man into the breast of every soldier, or else, the same spirit which was in him was likewise deposited in our hearts by an unseen power, so that he was our counterpart or we were his counterpart. So we knew he would succeed. We knew Hooker's army was doomed to defeat, and that we all should feel that way is remarkable, for we knew that there was only 40,000 of us to defeat the 100,000 or more under Hooker at this point. And not only that, we knew that when Jackson got into position, that Lee's army would then be divided into three parts and Hooker's into but two. Our two divisions, between Hooker and Fredericksburg—Hooker's whole army between our two divisions and Jackson—and Early down at Fredericksburg, confronted by Sedgewick with 25,000 men. The Confederate army in this position without Jackson could not have succeeded, for there was no other man to supply us with the feeling which made us sure of success, and thereby was success possible.

As Jackson went on his way to execute his part of the program we increased the music for Mr. Hooker's benefit and the enemy answered by showers of leaden hail. The music balls came among us singing as they came, "where-izz you." Our men would sing out, "here I am." We never got tired, or ceased to play or rush their lines all day. About 4 o'clock in the afternoon, almost directly in our front, we heard a few scattering shots. General Hooker's army was drawn up in the form of a horse shoe. We were on one side of the shoe and Jackson was to attack the opposite side. Then in a minute or less time there came a terrible crash and roll of thousands of guns fired all at once. Then above the roar was heard the rebel yell. We all felt good and our eyes sparkled under the magic influence. Every second the roar of the guns and the yell got more distinct and we knew by this that the enemy was in full retreat. The Federal cannon opened and some lines of battle of theirs also joined in the chorus, but still the boys in grey are getting nearer and nearer. Our lines are drawn tighter around Hooker and some pretty hard fighting does so to keep the enemy from moving any troops in our front to the assistance of Hooker's right wing.

This yelling and terrible roar of cannon and small arms was continuous till night came. Then there was a lull. The Confederate army was in a dense thicket of pines, laurel and other growth, while the enemy had the clearing around the house, where they could use their cannon. We could use none, but had to depend upon our small arms. When the sunlight had faded away the moon rose and not long after this time, all of a sudden, there was a volley of small arms from the direction where Jackson had been fighting, answered in a minute by the Federal artillery, then the added roar of the lines of battle of both the Federal and our lines. The roar was terrible and the rising moon was greeted by the red flashes from thousands of guns.

The sky above the Wilderness was red like an evening sunset and about as light. As we did not get mixed up in this fusillade, some of us climbed what tall trees there were about us, so that we could overlook the scene, but the trees did not prove tall enough for that, but we did have a better view of this improvised aurora borealis. I suppose in about an hour's time the firing ceased all along the line, and those of us not on picket lay down and went to sleep. My chum, George McKenzie, and myself slept together, and late in the night we were awakened suddenly and on raising up found a man lying on top of us. We asked him who he was. He replied that he was Frank McKenzie, of the Fifteenth South Carolina volunteers, in Anderson's division. We got up at once, for my chum and the man who had fallen on our bed were brothers. He told us that in a charge that afternoon he was wounded in the foot, and had lain in between the firing lines until night came, and had crawled and hobbled to get to our lines and in the dark had fallen over us.

He remained with us until morning. We dressed his foot as best we could. The wound disabled him from further service.

Morning came, and with its awakening, a rumor that Jackson had fallen in the night firing. This was disappointing news—all of us were anxious. He was one of us. Later in the day a staff officer came along our lines and informed us that he was only wounded.

This satisfied us, and his spirit still abided with us. Then the order came to charge Mr. Hooker along the line.

We did so and drove his army back into the hills and hollows along the river. I have already related that our division (Mr. Law's) was detached as soon as we drove the enemy past the smouldering remains of Chancellorsville Inn, and went post haste to Salem Church to oppose Mr. Sedgewick.

At last, after the glory and the victory, came the sad news of the death of Jackson. The confident spirit which we had enjoyed up to that time left us all, and it never returned. The man who had prayed for us and the cause could pray no more, and when this came we declined, and from Chancellorsville, the zenith of its glory (the new sun), arising over Sumter's smoking walls, struggled on down the shining heights to a final setting at Appomattox, April, 1865.

No more victories, but a series of defensive combats, unequalled in the history of the world. General Lee said the loss of Jackson was the loss of his right arm. I felt there was a spiritual loss, a loss of spiritual power in the loss of this man who prayed, and we see in this the head of omnipotent power exerted through a human upon human.

The effect was just the opposite: on the Federal soldiers, as we see that his death relieved them of a dread and made them confident of success. Jackson prayed for the spirit, the light and the skill to do something, which he intended doing, not for the glory of himself, but for others. He did not pray to be relieved of something, but earnestly and lovingly prayed for the possession of something, and that prayer was answered, and when he fell there was not another left to pray in his stead who had the shining intellect and the great love for others which he had, supplemented, as in his case, with that spiritual power which governs all things.

The man thus equipped could not be outgeneraled, be mistaken or be defeated.

As long as the great mind of his, all free of self and filled only with love and duty, prayed, the Confederate army was invincible. When he left us and he prayed for us no more we became ordinary mortals, and were subject to the law of the heaviest battalions and the longest purse.

"Whatsoever ye (the righteous, that is, the perfect man) ask in my name it shall be granted unto you." "Rex regit."

W. A. JOHNSON, Co. D., S. C. V.

Atlanta, Ga.

WAR TIME CHRISTMAS.

Generals Hampton and Capers Tell Some Interesting Stories.

COLUMBIA, S. C., Dec. 24.—Christmas this year will be especially happy for General Wade Hampton, whose home is here; for during the year just close there have been many manifestations of popular love and veneration for the soldier-statesman.

The general is looking well despite his 84 years and is in excellent spirits. He will spend the day in the quiet cottage on Sonnet street presented to him, regardless of his protest, by the devoted women of South Carolina.

When your correspondent called on him there was a feverish air in his manner, which could not be explained until something was said about hunting. Then he made known his dearest wish.

"I want to go hunting!" said he, "and as soon as Col. Taylor comes back from a wedding he's been attending we will go down the country for a little sport."

The old chieftain is as ardent a huntsman now as he ever was, and de-

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spite his weakened eyesight, affected by cataracts, he rides as superbly as when he led his legion in the saddle.

"There was never any fighting on Christmas Day during the civil war," said General Hampton, when asked for some reminiscences. "It has been a long time ago, and I cannot remember much of those Christmas times. We of the army had other things to occupy our attention. But Christmas was one day on which there was no fighting. The men received messages and boxes from home, and camp life got an inspiration on that day."

"I remember that one Christmas the ground was covered with snow. The men ranged themselves on sides like school-boys, and a tremendous battle ensued. For a long time the contest raged. The lines charged and were broken, formed again and endeavored to execute strategic movements. Finally the sport became so exciting and so spirited that two men had their arms broken, and I had to go into the fight and declare a truce."

Bishop Ellison Capers, whose home is also here, and who rose to the rank of brigadier-general in the civil war, has not pleasant recollections of Christmas in war times. When asked for some reminiscences the head of the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina said:

"From the earliest colonial days in South Carolina Christmas has been the time of family reunion and family fellowship; especially has this been the case in the low country of the State. At the old plantation homes it was common for three and often four generations to meet at Christmas. But the civil war put an end to all of this."

"After the first battle of Manassas opened the great drama there were no young men left to greet their parents and grandparents at Christmas at the old home. Mothers, sisters and wives were too busy making comforts for the soldiers in the field to enter into the joyous festivities of the great holiday."

"I doubt if any family in the South enjoyed a real Christmas reunion during the war. The Christmas of 1860 was too full of uncertainty and intense excitement to be enjoyed as a happy family festival. All succeeding wartime Christmases were too full of sorrow for the dead and sadness and anxiety for the living to be days of joy and family happiness."

"While an officer of the Confederate army I never spent a Christmas at home during the war. The Christmas of 1861 was spent on a scout on Seabrook's Island locating the exact position of a Federal gunboat in the mouth of the North Edisto river, with a view to an attack upon her early on the morning of the 26th. It was late on the afternoon of Christmas before I crossed from Seabrook to John's Island, and I recall distinctly contrasting my hunger of that afternoon and my dinner to the feasting and joy of other days."

"Passing the cabin of an old negro on the plantation of Mr. Washington Seabrook, I stopped and asked 'old mammy,' who was seated in her door smoking her pipe; if she could not give me something to eat. She promptly replied that she had nothing but some turnip soup and cold hominy, but that not 'fit for you, Massa, an' a Christmas, too.' I dismounted and, handing the good old 'mammy' a quarter, ate her turnip soup and the cold hominy with a relish that I can never forget."

"Meanwhile what of the family at

home? The old folks were there, but there was no merry-making. The men of middle age and the young men were all in Virginia, or on the coast, or in the army of the West, and the thought of the old home was with them. From every such home the Christmas box had been filled to overflowing and had gone to the front. The arrival of the daily paper from Charleston was a matter of more intense interest than anything else, and if the news was of approaching battle the husbands and sons were commended to the God of their protecting fathers with the confidence of a certain faith in His protecting providence.

"Later in the war, when the resources of the South were taxed to the utmost to maintain our men in the field, and when from every home one or more was missed, never again to meet at Christmas time with those who mourned them, there was a pathos in the Christmas gathering that made it more a quiet loving commemoration of the heroes of the home than a great festival of happiness and joy."

"The Christmas of 1864 in South Carolina was a day of solemn commemoration for the dead and anxious prayer for the living. Little children, light-hearted and free from care, were happy, but their elders were contemplating the destruction of their homes and the ruin of their State. The devastating march of Sherman through Georgia had prepared the people of South Carolina to look for a like fate. Without an adequate force to oppose his army the Christmas that was before them was to be a day of their bitterest trial. Never before, nor since, was there such a Christmas in our old State. The old homes in the low country were deserted, and the torches that were to fire them were being lighted by thousands of willing hands."—Baltimore Sun.

The Presidents that Ohio has given to the Nation have been pursued by a curious and most lamentable fatality. Of the four, only President Hayes failed to die in office. Garfield and McKinley were assassinated, and William Henry Harrison served but one month of his term. Ohio men have been elected to five terms in office, but succeeded in serving only nine years and one month of the twenty years—Harrison one month, Garfield six months, Hayes four years, and McKinley four years and six months.

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A Chinese manuscript in the Paris Library proves that anaesthetics for surgical purposes were used in China 1700 years ago. It states that when a surgeon conducted a serious operation he gave a decoction to the patient, who after a few moments became as insensible as if he were dead. Then, as the case required, the surgeon performed the operation—incision or amputation—and removed the cause of the malady; then he brought together and secured the tissues, and applied liniments. After a certain number of days the patient recovered, without having experienced the slightest pain during the operation.

Japan has only one orphanage, yet in no other land are fatherless children better cared for. Every family cares for the sick, destitute, or orphans nearest to it. There is a superstition that a childless house is accursed.

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