

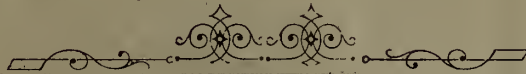


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THE  
BATTLE OF ATLANTA:

A PAPER READ

— BY —



GENERAL M. D. LEGGETT.



BEFORE THE SOCIETY OF THE

ARMY OF THE TENNESSEE,

OCTOBER 18TH, 1883.

AT CLEVELAND.

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A paper read by General M. D. Leggett, before the Society of the Army of the Tennessee, October 18th, 1883, at Cleveland.

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**A**T our St. Louis meeting last year, I was appointed to prepare for this meeting a paper on the battle of the 22nd of July, 1864, near Atlanta. I have presumed that I was not expected to give a complete description of that engagement, but to confine myself substantially to the battle as seen from the standpoint of my command, the 3rd Division of the 17th Army Corps.

To do this understandingly, I must include the movements of the evening of the 20th, and during the day of the 21st of July. During the afternoon of the 20th, the 4th Division of the 17th Corps under Gen. W. Q. Gresham, was deployed and marched in front, while the 3rd Division marched to the left rear in echelon of Brigades. Toward night Gen. Gresham's Division became quite sharply engaged; and just as the enemy

were driven into the outer line of their works, General Gresham was severely wounded and carried from the field. Colonel Wm. Hall, of the 11th Iowa, assumed command of the Division, but turned it over to General Giles A. Smith the next morning.

The 4th Division pressed up as closely to the enemy's lines as they could, and availed themselves of the make of the ground for protection. To have placed my Division, the 3rd, to the left of the 4th, and in prolongation of its line, would have thrown it into an open field in plain view and easy range of a battery, just in front of the 4th Division, and at the same time would have left a dense strip of woods between my line and the enemy in front.

While General F. P. Blair, who commanded the 17th corps, and myself were discussing the disposition to be made of my Division, General McPherson rode up, and suggested that we should occupy that strip of woods with a strong skirmish line. From the position where we were standing, we could see that the enemy occupied a commanding position on Bald Hill in an open field to our left and front, and a short distance west of the strip of dense woodland before mentioned. General McPherson at once suggested that we should possess ourselves of that hill, and Colonel G. D. Munson, of my staff, was sent to press the skirmish line far enough, if possible, to discover the extreme right of the enemy. He soon after reported that the confederate line extended only a short

distance south of the hill referred to. General McPherson decided that it was too late to assault the hill that night, but directed that we should do so in the morning, unless we got orders to the contrary.

I then moved my Division to the left, and forward into the woods, and bivouacked in two lines, with the 1st Brigade, General M. F. Force, on the right, the 2nd Brigade, General R. K. Scott, in the center, and the 3rd Brigade, Col Maloy of the 17th Wisconsin, on the left, refused so as to face south, while the other two Brigades faced west, or nearly so. The skirmish line was pushed closely to the western edge of the woods. As the 3rd Division was bivouacked, General Force was directly in front of the Bald Hill occupied by the enemy's right. I then notified him of the orders I had received, and that we must make the assault early in the morning.

General Force expressed regret that he had not known of the order sooner, and before putting his Brigade in position—saying that he had the 12th Wisconsin in the front line, which would not have been the case if he had known he was to assault the enemy in works.

The 12th Wisconsin was a large regiment of veterans, who had campaigned in Missouri and Kansas for nearly three years, but had never been under fire at the time it joined the 3rd Division, a few days before. It was a splendid regiment of stalwart men, splendidly officered. When it reported for duty, its Colonel, Geo. E. Bryant,

said he had a good regiment of good men--that they had been long in the service, and had done much hard marching, but had never been under fire, and closed with, "Now, General, if you have any fighting to do, give us a chance." I assured him that he would soon enough, probably, get all the chance he wanted, and assigned him to General Force's Brigade. General Force knew that this regiment had never been tried, while each of the others had a hundred times; yet he feared the effect upon the regiment, if he then should change its position.

Colonel Bryant and the other officers expressed the greatest confidence in their men, so they were left in the front line, and in that portion of it where most was to be done, and where the exposure was greatest. General Force and myself felt anxious about this regiment, but its officers were confident.

Our intention was to make the assault about daybreak on the morning of the 21st, but upon conference with General Blair, in the latter part of the night, I learned that the 4th Division had received no orders, and the support of that Division, in making the assault, was deemed important, if not necessary—hence, it was about eight o'clock when the order to advance was given.

It was found in the morning that the enemy had considerably strengthened their works on the hill during the night. General Force's Brigade consisted of the 20th, 30th, 31st, and 45th Illinois, and the 12th and 16th

Wisconsin Regiments. General Scott's Brigade consisted on that day, of the 20th, 68th and 78th Ohio Regiments. The 3rd Brigade under Colonel Maloy was held in reserve. When the order to advance was given, the skirmish line, under the immediate command of Colonel Munson, was pushed forward to draw the first fire from the enemy. The front line followed closely after the skirmishers, and the second line only a few paces in the rear. The resistance to the first Brigade was determined and sanguinary. General Force's coolness, self-possession, and utter indifference to danger was proverbial long before this, but here he even excelled himself. To lessen their exposure, he had directed all the field officers of his Brigade to leave their horses behind, only himself and a portion of his personal staff being mounted. He had directed his command to hold their fire until in the enemy's works, and his personal presence, conspicuously mounted, enabled him to enforce this order, and prevent a single moment's halt. His men fell thick and fast around him, but it was the work of only a short time, when his Brigade was in possession of the Bald Hill, and a considerable number of prisoners. The Confederate troops occupying this hill were a portion of General Cleburne's Division. Some of the prisoners said to General Force, with both pride and chagrin, that it was the first time that Pat. Cleburne's Division was ever routed.

*character for*

General Force was now in possession of the Bald Hill. He made the charge through an open field, up the side

of the hill, against a confident enemy strongly entrenched upon its summit. The 4th Division on our immediate right, advanced at the same time, but finding the enemy too strongly entrenched, and too well supplied with artillery, were compelled to fall back into the temporary works they had erected the night before. This left General Force greatly exposed, for he was occupying the right of the enemy's line, while the enemy was still in possession of the same line to our right. We immediately began with a fatigue party to turn the works we had captured, but the enemy rallied in the woods at our right front in large force, and made several persistent and desperate efforts to dislodge General Force, but without avail. He was there to stay; and had the enemy known him as we did, they would have spared their ammunition, and saved their men. I have not been able to find General Cleburne's report of this affair of the 21st; but General Hardee, in his report of the military operations around Atlanta, says that General Cleburne described this fight for the hill on the 21st of July, as "the bitterest of his life."

As soon as we could turn the enemy's works on the hill, we placed in position DeGolier's Michigan battery of Rodman guns, and shelled the enemy out of the woods in our immediate vicinity, and threw shot into Atlanta. As before stated, our line was a prolongation of the enemy's line. This brought the right of my Division facing toward Atlanta, in uncomfortably close proximity to the enemy's right facing from Atlanta;



and a continued galling fire was kept up until late in the afternoon. This hill was in an open field with nothing to protect against the direct rays of the sun. The day was extremely warm, and many of the officers and men suffered from sunstroke in the after part of the day. Among these were some of General Force's staff, whose constant activity and exposure had greatly exhausted them; and General Force himself suffered greatly from the same cause. This hill has since been known as "Leggett's Hill," but it ought to have been christened "Force's Hill," because General Force captured it, and held it on the 21st by a display of most excellent generalship, and unexcelled fighting qualities, and because in defending it the next day, he there fell so terribly wounded. Although the hill was captured in less time than it takes to write it, yet it cost us dearly. Our loss was 38 killed, and 294 wounded. Of these numbers, 29 were killed and 108 wounded from the 12th Wisconsin. The steadiness and gallantry of this regiment could not have been excelled. Colonel Bryant said to me that evening, "Your prophecy was too true, and fulfilled much sooner than any of us expected."

Among the wounded was our gallant and witty Col. Tom Reynolds, of the 16th Wis. He fell with his thigh terribly crushed. The surgeons pronounced his wound fatal. While they were examining it to determine whether or not his limb should be amputated, the Colonel rallied and said, "Please spare that leg, gentleman. I think a great deal of it, for it is an imported

article.” It will be remembered the Colonel brought this leg over from Ireland with him. The surgeons determined that he would in all probability die anyhow, and concluded to let him keep his leg ; and thank God, and the Colonel’s indomitable pluck, he still has both his life and his leg. After the March to the Sea, and up through the Carolinas, much to our surprise, Col. Reynolds met us at Raleigh, North Carolina. After congratulating him upon his resurrection, I said to him that his wound had considerably shortened his leg. He answered, “ Well, I don’t know, General ; lying so long in bed my leg got crooked at the knee joint, and the doctors put me under the influence of chloroform to straighten it, and I believe the d——d fools stretched the wrong leg.”

I will be pardoned for digressing so far as to correct a few errors of history. Gen. Sherman, in his memoirs, has both Gen. Gresham and Col. Reynolds wounded in the assault upon this hill, and Gen. Wm T. Clark, McPherson’s chief of staff, makes the same mistake in several published papers. Gen. Gresham was wounded the day before, while capturing another hill, a half mile or more to the right and rear of the one captured by Gen. Force. General Blair, in his official report, says, that in taking this hill on the 21st, General Force was severely wounded, while the fact is, General Force was not wounded at all when capturing the hill on the 21st, but was wounded while holding it on the 22nd.

Late in the afternoon of the 21st, General Force called my attention to a column of Confederate troops moving out of Atlanta toward our left, and we both felt a little apprehensive as to their destination. This movement was witnessed also by all officers and men in position on the hill, and on the skirmish line to the left, and the front of the hill. Notice of this movement was frequently sent back to General Blair, our corps commander, by Captain G. W. Porter, Captain A. W. Stewart, and others of my staff, with an urgent request that my left should be strengthened by additional troops.

What the destination of these troops was, is a mystery in the light of Hood's, Hardee's, and other Confederate reports, as they all agree in saying that the movement to our left commenced after dark, and a little after eight o'clock. Whatever they were, they caused our left to be strengthened by the 4th Division of the 17th Corps under General Giles A. Smith, and General John W. Fuller's Division of the 16th Corps. General Smith's Division occupied a refused line on the left of my Division, while Fuller's Brigade bivouacked directly in my rear. As soon as the Confederate movement referred to in the afternoon of the 21st was discovered, I gave orders to strengthen our works as much as possible, and throw out traverses to the rear facing south, on the left of each company. There was just enough apprehension of danger among the men, to cause them to work with a will. Just after dark, orders came, also from General

McPherson, to strengthen our lines against an assault from the front, and to be on a sharp lookout for such an assault at daybreak next morning. The work of entrenching was carried on briskly all night. The works on the hill were considerably enlarged, and much strengthened. The DeGolier Battery of Rodman Guns were removed, and the McAllister Battery of 24 lb. Howitzers placed in position on the hill. At nightfall of the 21st, my Division was in bad shape. The first and second Brigades occupied a prolongation of the enemy's line on what was then known as the McDonough road.

As before stated, in the assault of the morning of the 21st, General Giles A. Smith's Division, then on our right, found it impossible to dislodge the enemy in its front, and fell back into its works, some five or six hundred yards in the rear, leaving about five hundred yards between the right of Force's Brigade, and the left of Smith's Division. When General Smith's Division moved to my left, the 15th Corps extended to the left, occupying the position vacated by Smith's Division. Smith's Division relieved my third Brigade which I used to form a refused line on my right, extending from the right of Force's Brigade, to the left of Walcot's Brigade of the 15th Corps. General Fuller furnished me two regiments from the 16th Corps to complete this line. There were three batteries attached to my Division—the 3rd Ohio, 20 lb. Parrots; DeGolier's, Michigan, Rodman Guns; and the McAllister, Illinois, 24 lb.

Howitzers. The McAllister was placed with General Force on the hill, while the DeGolier was adjusted to support the refused line on our right. My artillery was under charge of Captain W. S. Williams, acting as my Chief of Artillery.

The night was one of very little rest. Just after midnight, I called on Colonel Geo. E. Wells, of the 68th Ohio, for two shrewd, reliable men, and sent them to the front with orders to go as far as they could safely. After an absence of an hour or more, they returned with a report that a column of troops was moving to our left from Atlanta.

I sent this report to General Blair, as my memoranda says, at half-past one o'clock the morning of the 22nd.

At break of day, the troops were on the alert, but no attack was made, and there was an ominous silence all along the line. It was soon discovered that the enemy had drawn out of the line at the right of General Force. I at once swung my Third Brigade, Colonel Maloy, forward into the vacated works to the right of General Force, and the 15th Corps did the same to the right of my Division, and all commenced changing the works to face toward Atlanta. The 3rd and 4th Divisions had an admirable line of works, with numerous traverses facing to the left, and as well arranged as they could have been *on that line* to resist the sanguinary assault so near at hand.

Soon after sunrise, Generals McPherson and Blair visited our lines. Both seemed impressed with the be-

lief that the enemy had evacuated Atlanta, and both Smith's and my skirmish lines were advanced until we drew the fire of the enemy, and found Atlanta still guarded, but as was then thought, with a small force; and we were directed to locate a line of works as far to the front as we could, and when properly constructed to move forward into them. General Smith and myself, with the Brigade Commanders, went to the front, and located a new line, and fatigue parties were sent forward with their entrenching tools.

For two days and nights, the officers and men had obtained no rest. The weather was extremely warm, and General Force's command, both officers and men, had been constantly exposed both to the direct rays of the sun, and the galling fire of Cleburne's troops. General Force himself was so exhausted as to fall asleep on his horse, while locating the new line for works in the front. General Smith's Division had also been hard at work all night, and had been on the alert for two days before, with little or no rest.

About ten o'clock in the morning of the 22nd, I received word that our corps hospital, about two miles at the rear, was being menaced by Confederate cavalry, and I directed General Scott to send Colonel Wells with the 68th Ohio back to protect it. About the same time, Captain Peter Hitchcock, Quarter Master of my Second Brigade, sent word that the enemy had just captured a man standing picket only a short distance in rear of General Smith's left. I started to confer with

General Smith on these matters, but before reaching him, skirmish firing was heard in the rear, and I returned to the hill from which I could see the 68th Ohio deployed, and firing at an enemy, not visible at my standpoint. General Fuller quickly took in the position, faced his Division to the rear, and double-quickened back on to the ridge behind where he had been lying. The 68th Ohio was moving slowly towards us, but kept up a constant fire toward their left.

The other Division of the 16th Corps was moving by the right flank toward Fuller's Division, but had not closed up to it. Colonel Alexander, of General Blair's Staff, at this point, joined Colonel Wells, and urged that he press the enemy hard to hold them back until the 16th Corps was closed up. Just as the two Divisions of the 16th Corps had come together, the enemy in double line came out of the dense forest in their front. General Fuller by good luck had parked his artillery in exactly the right place, and it was very efficient. Both Divisions of the 16th Corps immediately became hotly engaged. The enemy were evidently greatly surprised at finding such a force in that position, and were easily repulsed, and fell back into the woods in a southeasterly direction.

Just at this time, I espied General McPherson upon the high ground in the immediate rear of General Fuller's command, and sent Captain John B. Raymond, of my staff, to enquire of General McPherson the expediency of having General Giles A. Smith and myself

change our line so as to face south, and at the same time I sent Captain Geo. W. Porter to ascertain whether or not the left of General Smith, and the right of General Fuller, were sufficiently near together to antagonize any force seeking entrance there.

The enemy in front of the 16th Corps rallied in the woods, and then knowing what they had to meet, renewed their attack with increased vigor and bitterness; but the 16th Corps had also had time to dress its lines, and prepare for this second assault, and met it splendidly. The conflict continued for sometime, with no appearance on either side of any disposition to yield the ground, when the enemy gave way, and fell back in confusion, followed by the 16th Corps. The attack was not again renewed from that direction. This flanking force of the enemy was Hardee's Corps, consisting of four Divisions, commanded by Generals Bate, Walker, Cleburne, and Maney respectively. Bate and Walker were on the right of Hardee's infantry, and Cleburne and Maney on his left, while Wheeler's cavalry was on his extreme right. The first attack upon the 16th was by Bate's. 2nd part of Walker's Divisions, while the second was by the whole of these two divisions.

These conflicts between Fuller's and Sweeny's Divisions of General Dodge's 16th Corps, and Bate's and Walker's Divisions of Hardee's Corps, were among the few engagements of the War of the Rebellion, where the opposing forces met in the open field, with no works to protect or shield either side.



In Hardee's movements upon our left, it was his design to have his right reach to the right of our 15th Corps and assault it, while his left should reach to the left of our 17th Corps, hence, he swung his right more rapidly forward than he did his left, and Bate and Walker struck the 16th Corps before his left reached the left of the 17th. The second assault, however, was simultaneous with the attack upon General Giles A. Smith's Division, which was the left of the 17th Corps.

To understand the disadvantageous position of Smith's line at this time, it must be remembered that my line was on the McDonough road running nearly north and south, and facing almost due west; while Smith's line was refused so as to guard against an assault upon our left flank, and consequently his line ran in a southeasterly direction. Hardee was seeking to strike us directly in the rear, and not in the flank, hence, as before stated, was more rapidly advancing his right, so he was marching in a northwesterly direction, the general direction of his line being northeast and southwest. Smith's line therefore was almost exactly perpendicular to Hardee's line of battle, so that the enemy struck it squarely on the flank, enveloped Smith's left regiment, and captured it before Smith could so change the front of the balance of his division as to resist and check Hardee's advance. In change of front, General Smith was obliged to uncover two pieces of artillery belonging to an Illinois battery, and these were also captured. He succeeded,

however, in repulsing the enemy's attack after a most desperate encounter of considerable duration.

In repulsing the Divisions of Bate and Walker, the 16th Corps had so advanced in following up the enemy as to materially widen the gap between Fuller's right, and Smith's left, so that much of General Cleburne's command passed unmolested between the divisions, and quickly appeared directly in the rear of the 3rd Division. My Division, the third, was occupying the works it took from General Cleburne the morning of the day before, and Cleburne was now assaulting us from the same direction, and over the same ground we assaulted him. From the assertion made by the prisoners we captured from him, that it was "the first time Pat Cleburne's Division was ever routed;" and Cleburne's report to Hardee that his fight with us on the 21st was "the bitterest of his life," we may easily imagine the spirit that inspired him and his men, when they came upon us with their demoniac yells, so characteristic of Pat Cleburne's Texans. Our men immediately leaped their works, putting their backs towards Atlanta, and for vindictive desperation, this encounter was probably never exceeded. When this assault was commenced, I was at the left of my line with General Smith, but immediately rode to the hill occupied by General Force.

The attack was finally repulsed, leaving many prisoners in our hands. Cleburne's troops were but just driven back to the strip of woods at the foot of the hill, when General Cheatham's Corps advanced upon us

from toward Atlanta. This assault covered both my front and General Smith's, and other Confederate troops at the same time struck the 15th Corps to our right.

As soon as the first attack was made on the 16th Corps, we anticipated a co-operating attack from Atlanta, and I sent Colonel Munson, of my Staff, to take charge of the skirmish line, and retard as much as possible any assault from that direction. Colonel Munson, probably, had no superior in ability to handle a skirmish line. A skirmish line under his control was equal to a line of battle in the hands of some others. He had a quick eye, excellent judgment, and that kind of fearless courage that gave him staying qualities, and a personal magnetism that inspired his men to stay with him. On this occasion he made his skirmishers fight so desperately as to retard Cheatham's advance, and thereby prevent his effective co-operation with Cleburne. Cheatham finally struck savagely, and found our men again upon the right side of their works facing Atlanta, where a sanguinary struggle ensued. The enemy began to waver when our men leaped the works, and forced them rapidly back at the point of the bayonet. Near the right of my Division, my Chief of Artillery, Captain Williams, had placed two pieces of the McAllister battery of 24 lb. Howitzers. The battery did magnificent service during the whole day.

Cheatham's Corps was but fairly repulsed, when Cleburne, who had fallen back into the woods in the immediate rear of my Division to readjust his line, again

renewed his assault upon our rear with more anger, if possible, than before, but they were more easily repulsed, for General C. C. Walcott, then Colonel Commanding the left Brigade of the 15th Corps, was on my immediate right, and so changed front as to obtain an enfilading fire on Cleburne's attacking troops, which quickly caused them to seek shelter in the strip of woods, followed a short distance by our men. There were indications that Cheatham's forces were again preparing for another assault from toward Atlanta, and our men were again called back to their works. At this time General Clebourne was unable to re-adjust his lines, and repeat his assault upon the same ground, for General Walcott continued to pour in a galling fire upon his right flank, and General Fuller, becoming satisfied that the attack was not to be renewed, upon his front, had faced to the rear, and come to our assistance, by attacking Cleburne in the rear, compelling him to withdraw by the left flank. Immediately Cheatham was upon us again from toward Atlanta, supported by the confederate troops upon his left. This assault was pressed with great vigor, causing the whole of the Fifteenth Corps, except General Walcott's Brigade, to give way, and fall back to the ridge in the rear, from which they had advanced early in the morning. Discovering this, I immediately went to the right of my Division and found General Walcott still holding his position; but while with him, an order came from his Division Commander, directing him to fall back in line with the balance of the Fifteenth Corps.

I said to him that the order was certainly a mistake ; that my orders from General Blair, General Logan, and directly from General Sherman were to hold the Hill at any hazard, and at whatever cost ; but to do so would be impossible, if the enemy were to have, undisputed, our front and both our flanks. General Walcott responded promptly, that he could stay there as long as I could, and that he would take the responsibility of disobeying orders, and doing so.

The position he held at the time was one of extreme exposure. The enemy, flushed with a temporary victory on his right, was pushing him with renewed vigor and determination. To determine to stay there and hold his position, even in violation of the orders of his superior officer, was a test of personal courage and good judgement, to which very few officers were subjected. Yet to this action of this gallant officer, we were undoubtedly very largely indebted for our final victory on the 22d. of July. The right of his Brigade was partially protected by a small swamp covered with a dense undergrowth of brush, while his left occupied a high point of land overlooking my third Brigade, the highest point then held by our army north of the Hill captured by General Force the morning of the day before. If the enemy had got possession of this elevation, held by General Walcott, the position of my 3d. Brigade would have been utterly untenable. If I had been compelled to withdraw my Third Brigade, I should also have been compelled to have abandoned the Hill ; and

to have abandoned the Hill at that time, would probably have resulted in a catastrophe not now pleasant to contemplate.

Up to this point in the battle, we had been extremely fortunate in being able to prevent the assaults in our front and rear, from being simultaneous. We had been able to repel the enemy from one side and then leaping the works repel it from the other.

Just about the time the Fifteenth Corps was driven back from its position, Hardee having massed his divisions, or more strictly speaking, having shortened his line by closing more compactly, and having moved his whole line more to his left, with his artillery at short range, so posted as to enfilade the whole line of our works, made an irresistible charge directly upon Smith's left flank, and doubled back his division upon mine. For a time the two Divisions were thoroughly intermingled, and fought as if they belonged to the same regiments and brigades. The traverses thrown out the night before were a great protection to our troops, and enabled them to greatly retard the enemy's progress.

It at once became apparent that we must make a change of our front. At this moment Col. George E. Wells with the 68th, Ohio, whose instincts always seemed to guide him exactly to the place where most needed, having made a detour to the right made his appearance upon the Hill at this critical moment. Col. Munson immediately aided Col. Wells in placing the 68th, Ohio in a new line nearly at right angles with the

former line, and its right resting against the works on the Hill and facing south.

While my staff were busily engaged moving my second Brigade back to this new line, to aid them and to further retard the enemy, I swung my Third Brigade forward, wheeling to the left on the Atlanta side of our works, so as to face southerly, and by aid of our 24lb. Howitzer guns, the enemy's advance was so held in check as to enable our troops to form on the new line, with Smith's division to the left of mine. The 16th Corps also changed front and closed on General Smith's left. As soon as the new line was partially established the Third Brigade of my Division was again swung back into the works. Probably no occasion during the war, displayed so strikingly the discipline and soldierly qualities of the Army of The Tennessee, as did this change of front under the circumstances. Hardee's Corps, compactly formed, was charging and rapidly doubling our left flank, while his artillery was enfilading our whole line, and a galling cross-fire was being poured upon us from Shoupe's battery in Atlanta. The new line was but partially formed, however, when it was struck with great vigor, by Hardee's advancing columns, and a hand to hand conflict ensued not exceeded in fierceness by any assault during the day, but our men held their position, and repulsed the enemy.

No time was lost by our troops, and defensive works sprang up as if by magic all along the line. The day

was now nearly spent. My first Brigade still held the Hill. The 15th Corps had recovered its line and was again in the same position as when the battle opened. My Third Brigade held its position throughout the struggle and so did so much of the first Brigade as was on the north of the Hill, but immediately south of the Hill, our line broke abruptly to the rear, facing south.

Our line therefore was so formed as to present a right angle at the Hill—the apex of the Hill being within the angle. We felt that this was an awkward position, but one forced upon us against our will. This angle was a tempting exposure to the enemy, consequently they reformed, and just at twilight they made a bitter and persistent assault directly upon this angle, and came up against our works, leaving only the embankment between the two maddened lines. This last and bloodiest assault lasted until long after dark, when the enemy receded a few yards to works abandoned by us in our change of front, where they remained until towards the next morning and then withdrew. This ended the battle of the 22nd. of July, 1864, or the battle of Atlanta, as it has generally been called.

The struggle to recover from us the Hill was fierce and desperate beyond description. The carnage at this point was terrible and sickening. The ground from close to our works to one hundred yards or more away, was literally covered with the dead.

During the whole of the Battle, General Hood, the



commander in chief, of the confederate forces in and about Atlanta, occupied a position where the Hill and most of the 17th Corps' line were plainly within his view, and he witnessed all the movements and personally directed the assaults from toward Atlanta. Shoupe's Battery was close by his position, and he kept it playing upon us all the afternoon and much of the night.

The fortunate position of Colonel Wells, with the 68th Ohio Infantry, at the first appearance of the enemy in force, giving us full warning of their design before reaching our lines; the more than magnificent fighting of the 16th Corps, utterly defeating the enemy in their plan of striking the whole army of the Tennessee in the rear; and the patriotic personal courage of General C. C. Walcott, in assuming the responsibility of disobeying the orders of his immediate superior and protecting the right of flank of the 17th Corps in its most exposed and trying moment, were winning features of this bloody battle; yet the heaviest struggle and hardest fighting undoubtedly fell upon the 17th Corps. From the opening to the close of the engagement, from 11:30 A. M. to 8 P. M., the 3d and 4th Divisions of this Corps were continually and most of the time fiercely engaged.

Often the conflict was a hand to hand encounter, with instances of brilliant personal valor all along the line, too numerous to mention in this paper. Almost at the very opening of the battle the gallant McPherson, who as our former 17th Corps Commander, and now as the Commander of our Army of the Tennessee, had led us

so successfully through so many tiresome marches and hard fought engagements, was shot by the enemy and fell dead from his horse.

As a Commander he was most thoroughly respected, and as a man loved by every officer and man in the old 17th Corps, and probably in the whole Army of the Tennessee. Captain Raymond, as before stated, was sent to him for orders. He rode up to him, obtained orders, and started to return to me by a road entering the woods by my headquarters. He had but just entered the woods, when General McPherson rapidly followed him. Captain Raymond had ridden but a short distance into the woods, before he found himself closely in front of Cleburne's line of battle, parallel with the road, moving from the south toward it. They cried out "halt" to him and commenced firing; but his horse being in full run across the front of Cleburne's line, he had passed about the distance of a regimental front when his horse was shot and he fell into the enemy's hands. He says he had scarcely extricated himself from his horse, when again he heard the word, "halt," followed by some rapid firing, and General McPherson fell.

McPherson knew that Captain Raymond had come to him on this road, and was returning on it, and consequently had no reason to apprehend danger from following him.

The death of General McPherson was quickly known to all our troops, and also the fact that General Logan

had succeeded to the command. In General Logan, all had confidence. He was personally well known to every man in the Army of the Tennessee, and his presence in battle was always a power. He always seemed to have a kind of magnetic influence, exciting to deeds of valor, every officer and man.

General R. K. Scott, Commanding my 2d Brigade, rode out to the 68th Ohio as soon as he discovered it was engaged, but hearing firing on the front he started to return, and followed General McPherson into the woods. He had gone but a few yards when his horse was shot, himself slightly wounded, and he captured.

The same force that killed Gen. McPherson and captured General Scott, a few moments later presented itself at the foot of the hill held by General Force, and commenced the assault, in which General Force, and his Adjutant Gen. Captain Walker, both fell severely wounded, Captain Walker in his thigh, from which he subsequently died and General Force by a minnie ball through his head, entering just below the outer corner of the left eye, and coming out close by the right ear. That General Force recovered, and was able five months later, to go with us on the march to the sea seemed almost miraculous.

Thus the Army was deprived of its loved commander, and my Division of its First and Second Brigade Commanders, by General Cleburne's advanced line in his first assault. General R. K. Scott was a discreet, but a brave, daring, officer, and his services in such an en-

gagement, would have been invaluable. General Force was the idol, not only of his Brigade, but of the whole Division. His loss was severely felt, and at first threatened to be disastrous. The next officer in rank, in his command, was Colonel Bryant, of the 12th, Wisconsin Infantry, who as a Commanding Officer had never been under fire until the day previous.

When directed to assume command of the Brigade, and to hold the Hill, Colonel Bryant modestly preferred to be left with his regiment, but reluctantly obeyed the order to take command. He very soon won the confidence of the officers and men, by his cool, self-possessed manner, and his careful handling of his troops. Lieutenant Colonel G. F. Wiles of the 78th, Ohio, assumed command of the Second Brigade. Colonel Wile. was well known to the Brigade, and had the confidence of the men from the beginning.

General Smith had been in command of the 4th, Division only 24 hours when the battle opened, and could hardly have had his command well in hand, when called upon to resist a most vigorous assault directly upon his left flank. The assaults upon the flank of the 4th, Division, so mixed its companies and men of different companies together, as would have made troops of less patriotism and nerve, utterly worthless, and an easy prey for the enemy. The same was true, later in the day, of the 3rd. Division, and in fact the men of the two Divisions became thoroughly intermixed about the

time of our change of front, yet all this did not seem to materially affect the fighting or staying qualities of these commands. Wherever the men were, their faces were to the enemy, and every man doing soldierly work. The use of the clubbed musket, and hand to hand conflicts were frequent all along the line. General W. W. Belknap personally seized the Colonel of the 45th Alabama by the coat collar, and dragged him over the works, and made him prisoner. Some privates in the 17th, Wisconsin of the 3d. Division seized the horse of a Lieutenant of a confederate battery by the bridle, and pulled him over our works with its rider; and many prisoners all along our lines were captured in the same way. Captain John Orr of the 78th Ohio discovered a confederate soldier just in the act of bayoneting the colorbearer of his regiment, and springing upon him with the sword, cut his head almost clean from his body, for which act he was awarded a gold medal. Very many instances of individual prowess might be cited, for probably very few battles of our late war were equally characterized by so much man to man fighting.

The number of men engaged in this battle must have been over sixty thousand.

On the 20th of July there was present for duty in the 15th, 16th and 17th Corps, of our army including the artillery—————27,593.

While on the 10th of July, there was present for duty

in Hardee's and Cheatham's Corps and Wheeler's Cavalry, including artillery,—————37,455.

On the 20th, at Peach-tree Creek, the enemy's loss had been more than ours, and on the 21st about the same.

The assistance afforded from men and artillery in Atlanta on the 22d, not belonging to Cheatham's Corps, probably fully compensated for their losses referred to, so they must have brought into the battle of the 22d fully 37,000 men, against 27,000 in our Army of the Tennessee, making in all about 64,000 men engaged.

Respectfully submitted,

M. D. LEGGETT.



