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Colonel Archibald Gracie's
The Truth about Chickamauga.

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Read Before
The Ohio Commandery
Of The
Loyal Legion

February 7th, 1912

By

Edward L. Anderson, Captain 52nd O. V. I.

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COLONEL ARCHIBALD GRACIE'S
THE TRUTH ABOUT CHICKAMAUGA.

*A Review by Edward L. Anderson, Captain 52nd Ohio,
Adjutant McCook's Brigade.*

Mr. President and Companions:

I have had the honor of being invited to address you, this evening, upon a work of great significance; one which will give surprise to those who derive their ideas of the great Battle of Chickamauga from tradition and unsupported statements, but which will be recognized by those who were participants in the engagement as containing much of, if not the whole truth regarding the events of September 19th and 20th, 1863, when the Army of the Cumberland and the Confederates under Bragg measured swords in one of the fiercest contests of modern times.

The author of this work, a son of the late Brigadier General Gracie, Confederate Army, assures us that he undertook the self-imposed task, without much knowledge of his subject and without prejudice, because in his visits to the battlefield, in memory of his gallant father, he found so many contradictory statements from misinformed reporters, and such conflicting witnesses in the monuments, that he determined to see how nearly he could bring into harmony the differing credible representations, by seeking information upon every point from both the Federal and Confederate side.

"The tribunal to whose decision the truth * * * is referred, after exhaustive and impartial study, is the Official Reports, which constitute the Court of Last Resort, cited in the text herewith, and supplemented by references to those authoritative sources in "Notes" following thereafter, which will be found of special interest." (page viii.)

The greater part of the book is given up to discussing the four or five last hours of the engagement, so that in a review of the work in question, we must pass over the battles of the 19th of September and the early part of the 20th, with an account of these events in a brief manner, detailed enough only to make as clear as possible the movements and their results from noon of the second day.

In the hurly-burly of the series of fights which then took place, often by mere groups of our separated and divided commands, where there was much borrowing of squads, regiments and brigades as various points required support at moments of supreme importance, the author of "The Truth About Chica-mauga" met with very great difficulties. Each officer naturally and loyally made the best possible record for his troops in the last stand before the withdrawal from the field, which reports Colonel Gracie assumes were generally intended to be fair and truthful, except in the instances where he pillories the offenders in his criticisms.

One, and not the least of these difficulties in reconciling the conflicting statements into some kind of accord, is the fact that upon nearly every important affair the given time differs, often, by hours.

"I have found another check upon the accuracy of my work. I have followed out the movements of each corps; then the movements of each division of each and every corps; and finally, the movements of every regiment, battalion, and battery of each brigade in every division; and, where the units of organization have dovetailed perfectly, I have obtained, I think, a mathema-

tical demonstration in many instances of the accuracy of the work. After one has accomplished the chimerical task which I have suggested, he may claim to know something about the truth of this most wonderful battle.

In consequence of this work of mine, I claim respect for the accuracy of the premises on which my conclusions are based, for the truth of which the Official Reports are responsible, and with which these conclusions square." (page 35.)

To those who thoughtlessly ask, "Why should not the story of the battle, now more or less generally accepted, be permitted to rest, or the whole affair allowed to pass into oblivion?", it should be explained that to juggle with or to suppress historical facts is a crime that has a much wider influence for evil than is thought to prevail by such weaklings.

The first chapter of Gracie's book is given to the "Elimination of False History," and here the author undertakes to prove by the Official Reports that Chickamauga was not fought by Rosecrans for the possession or the holding of the City of Chattanooga, but for the destruction of Bragg's troops and the control of a large region occupied by the Confederates. Such objects were within the rights of an invading army; but as Chattanooga was peacefully taken ten days before September 19th, and was in a favorable position for defense, as was afterwards proved, it was absurd for Rosecrans to assert that the battle was fought for its permanent possession, a theory that came to his mind later when, after admitting defeat, he claimed that the object of his campaign was attained, and that Chickamauga was a great Federal Victory.

The fact is that Rosecrans by a series of masterly movements had forced the Confederates to withdraw from Chattanooga, and that after this was accomplished he lost his skill, and deceived by Bragg's clever stratagems believed that the Confederate forces were flying before him, a disorganized rabble seeking safety in flight.

Rosecrans' eyes were opened on September 12th, when he was confident that Bragg's army was concentrated about Lafayette, an easy march from the captured city. Then he hurriedly brought his weary and scattered corps into the unknown recesses of a tangled forest to face a brave and prepared foe.

"I doubt if there can be found recorded anywhere in the history of a great battle, an instance where any army was more completely deceived than was the Federal Army by the stratagems employed by General Bragg during the four days ending September 12th." (Gracie page 20.)

For four days the opportunity was given Bragg of attacking one of Rosecrans' corps with a much superior force, before it could receive aid from either of the others, and the neglect of doing so is one of those mysteries that envelope the story of Chickamauga; another, no less important in its bearing, is Longstreet calling a halt on the evening of September 20th, when the retreating forces of Thomas, lying at his mercy, were permitted to withdraw undisturbed. Of course it will be said, in accord with Granger's afterthought, that Bragg's army had suffered great losses in the battle of two days; but no successful troops would have refused to march a few miles, no matter what losses had been sustained, if they saw a complete victory before them.

Upon the 18th of September, Col. Dan McCook was ordered, with his brigade and the 69th Ohio, to make a reconnaissance towards Reed's bridge, on the Chickamauga River, at the north-east corner of what afterwards proved to be the battlefield, and that he should destroy that structure should he be able to do so without bringing on a general engagement. Col. McCook's command arrived at dark within a mile of the bridge, when his skirmishers came upon the rear of McNair's brigade, of Bushrod Johnson's Division, which was passing along a road crossing his front. About twenty stragglers were picked up, without creating any disturbance, and, after a short time of quiet, the 69th Ohio was sent forward and succeeded in firing the bridge, which as it was afterwards proved was only scorched. At daylight on September 19th, the enemy opened with small arms and artillery upon McCook's men, who had passed the night lying upon their arms, without fires, upon which Colonel McCook, following his previous orders, and, a peremptory order having been received before any great losses on his part, marched his command back towards Rossville. Upon reaching the point where the head of his command struck the Lafayette Road, General Brannan was met (Croxtan's brigade in advance), in column without advance guards. McCook called out to Brannan that he had a rebel brigade penned up in a bend of the river near Jay's saw mill, with the bridge in its rear destroyed. General Thomas reports that McCook gave him the same information at Baird's headquarters.

Immediately upon the receipt of Colonel McCook's report, General Thomas sent Brannan, followed by Baird, eastwardly towards Reed's bridge and the neighboring saw-mill with a view

to capturing the brigade which was penned up in the bend of the Chickamauga River. This episode is described at some length on account of the very important events which followed it as a matter of course. The fact was that the enemy was in great force about the points mentioned and towards Alexander's Bridge. The divisions of Brannan and Baird were soon hotly engaged and the battle of the 19th of September was begun past recall. Besides the divisions of Brannan and Reynolds, General Thomas had those of Johnson, Palmer, Van Cleve and Davis, long before midday. Croxton of Brannan's division and Van-Derveer of Baird's, after a number of sharp contests, had pushed their way to within half a mile of Jay's saw mill. Baird and Brannan maintained the unequal fight for at least two hours when Johnson, Palmer and Reynolds came to their assistance. All day the battle raged with varying fortunes; sometimes in long lines, sometimes by small commands, until before night every division in the Army of the Cumberland was represented on the fighting front. At dark Johnson's division alone remained in advance at D. C. Reed's farm where it was fiercely attacked and for a time the line gave way, but rallied and held its ground after great losses, until the firing ceased; when it, with other divisions took positions in a line west of the ground fought over, and the battle of September 19th ceased.

As has been stated, in a review of the book in question, we are not concerned about the battles of the 19th of September and the first half of the 20th, further than to give us an understandable perspective of the whole field for both days. Nor are there many points of importance in dispute before the arrival of Granger's Reserve Corps and the withdrawal of the whole of Thomas' command to Rossville.

From about noon of Saturday up to eleven o'clock on Sunday Rosecrans' headquarters were at the Widow Glenn's house on the Crawfish Springs Road. Here late on the night of the 19th the Commander of the Army of the Cumberland had a consultation with his Corps Commanders regarding the arrangements of the lines for the next day. With some slight changes the plan was adhered to with the following result:

Sheridan's division (20 A. C.) was posted on the extreme right at Widow Glenns. Davis (20 A. C.) was placed on Sheridan's left, his line extending to the south-east corner of Dyer's Field. Wood (21 A. C.) was on Davis' left, and Brannan's (14 A. C.) division on the left of Wood reached the Lafayette Road, north of the Poe house. Van Cleve's division was in rear of Wood and Brannan. There was a break in the line, as Reynold's right was in echelon four hundred yards in front of Brannan's left. Reynolds (14 A. C.) Palmer (21 A. C.) Johnson (20 A. C.) and Baird (14 A. C.) had their divisions in that order, around and east of Kelly's Field. The brigade of John Beatty was on Baird's left, Stanley's behind Baird, Sirwell's with the reserve artillery in rear of the left wing, these last named three being of Negley's division; this force being intended to guard the Lafayette Road from Bragg's formidable masses on his right. Granger, with Steedman's division and Dan McCook's brigade of the Reserve Corps, was posted at McAfee's Church, about four miles from Thomas' left to watch the road from Ringgold, and to give aid to, or to receive aid from the main army as occasion might demand.

The battle of September 20th opened by an attack upon our extreme left against John Beatty's thin line, which was driven

back upon Baird's troops, and this attack was repulsed. Stanley and the reserves of Johnson and Palmer drove back two Confederate brigades which had passed along the west side of the Lafayette Road in an effort to reach the Federal rear. Baird, Johnson, Palmer and Reynolds and Negley's two brigades repulsed many fierce assaults with steadiness and determination. The right wing of a Confederate brigade, its left held in check, slipped by to Kelly's field, when it was met and routed by Van Derveer and Willich, who always seemed to be on hand when wanted.

The greater part of Thomas' left wing was somewhat protected by a rude barricade of logs and rails, which aided the troops in resisting the terrible fire of the enemy. This slight but encouraging defence originated with Hazen, who throughout the whole day exhibited such skill, courage and perseverance as marked him as one of the most efficient officers in the army. Previously to the withdrawal of Wood from the main line Brannan was fiercely attacked in Poe's Field, but the enemy was driven from his front by an enfilading fire from the divisions of Reynolds and Palmer.

We now come to a very important phase of the battle, one that threatened the early defeat and destruction of the whole Army of the Cumberland.

About eleven o'clock Wood's division was withdrawing, under misunderstood orders, to assist Reynolds, who was on Brannan's left where there was the break in the line as described. Before Wood had wholly passed from his position two divisions of the enemy broke through the gap; one of these passing north-

wardly, crumpled up Brannan's division and all the troops in its rear; the other body of the enemy driving the troops of Davis, Sheridan and Wilder in a wild rout that bore with them from the field the Generals Rosecrans, McCook and Crittenden. The gallant Harker having escaped this attack returned with his brigade and for a time faced fearful odds, but very shortly these ready fighters with Brannan's men and those of Buell and Sam Beatty, a scattered mass, were pursued until a stand could be made by Brannan, Harker and fragments of other commands upon the heights south of the Snodgrass House.

General Thomas had nothing to do with posting the first line upon Horseshoe Ridge, as is proved by the official reports and the statements of all concerned. When Brannan, Wood and the commands in their rear were driven north from the vicinity of the Poe House and Dyer's field, Brannan's troops reformed upon the westerly point of the Horseshoe Ridge, while Wood posted Harker's brigade upon the easterly hill, in continuation of that providentially discovered stronghold; while Stoughton found refuge between Harker and Brannan, and the 58th Indiana was placed between Connell's 82nd Indiana and Croxton. The 21st Ohio, a splendid regiment of Sirwell's brigade with 535 men armed for the most part with Colt's repeating rifles, afterwards joined the right of Connell. When General Thomas arrived at the Horseshoe Ridge, from one to two o'clock, the line was as follows: 21st Ohio; 82nd Indiana; 17th Kentucky; 58th Indiana, Croxton, under Hays; 13th Ohio, Stoughton; 44th Indiana, Harker.

We now employ literally Colonel Gracie's words "Our standard of truth, from which we quote, plainly indicates that

Thomas was the grandest figure of the Federal Army; a monument of strength and inspiration to the courage of his soldiers, who had rallied in the woods and on the heights to which they had fled, and where they had been posted under the orders of their commanders, Generals Wood, Brannan and John Beatty, and Colonels Harker, Stoughton, Hunter and Walker."

"Here, from one to one and a half hours, with a force of about 1500 fragments under Brannan and of at least 1200 (carefully estimated) of the Iron Brigade of Harker, including the 125th Ohio, "Opdycke's Tigers," and Smith's four guns and eighty-three men of the 4th United States Battery, whom fugitives most of them, whose courage was restored by the very presence of Thomas, the pursuit was checked and the heights maintained against that most formidable instrument of war, Kershaw's South Carolina Brigade, fresh from storming the heights of Gettysburg, and from victories on many hard fought fields, but none, according to their commander, more heavy than this. Kershaw's Brigade about 1200 in action, with Colonel Oates' 15th Alabama Regiment, were the sole representatives that afternoon of "Longstreet's Virginia Army," in the assaults on Chickamauga Heights; yet these men, on the strength of their reputation, inspired such terror that their numbers were more than quadrupled by the imagination of their opponents. About 2 o'clock P. M., to Kershaw's support on his left came Anderson's strong and brave Mississippi Brigade, of Hindman's Division; but still the heights were held, the 21st Ohio Regiment, the strongest in the Federal army, performing yeoman service at this juncture with its efficient use of its five-chambered Colt's revolving rifles.

"Then followed the belated Bushrod Johnson, whose time and energies had been wasted for hours waiting for orders to advance his much-enduring hardfighting Tennesseans.

"This is the crucial moment and the die is cast. The 21st Ohio's thin line at its middle had been thrown back like a gate on its hinges, in a vain attempt to finally resist the Confederate movement on Brannan's flank. But fifteen minutes more and this rally on the heights would have been of no use, and Thomas' superb courage, famed in story, might never have been a theme of grandeur. Granger's Reserve Corps, without orders, marching *au canon, a la Desaix a Marengo*, had arrived on the field.

"After reporting to General Thomas, General Steedman, of this corps, was ordered to move his division into the three-quarter-mile gap between the two wings of the army. The Preparatory movement had been made, but before the final command of execution was given, the more immediate danger was seen in time. On the command "right face", Steedman marched west in rear of Brannan's line until the latter's right was reached, when first Whitaker's Brigade and then Mitchell's were moved by the left flank. The division then charged up the heights, General Steedman performing the most conspicuous act of personal courage recorded of any general officer on the Federal side, leading his men, most of them raw recruits, then for the first time in action, and, seizing the flag of the 115th Illinois, gained the crest and drove the Confederates down the southern slope of Missionary Ridge.

"About the time that Steedman's Division was thus put into action, another strong brigade of well-seasoned troops, under the command of a Mexican War Veteran, Colonel Van Derveer, reported to General Thomas at the Snodgrass House, and were immediately placed in the front in one line on the crest, relieving Brannan's troops (then almost exhausted), and posted next to the 21st Ohio's left, which still defended this flank on Horseshoe Ridge.

"By this acquisition of 4112 fresh troops under Steedman and about 1200 under Van Derveer, who had already rendered most creditable and opportune service on the Federal left wing and rear, Thomas was now strong in numbers and his whole command well supplied with ammunition; for another great service rendered by Steedman was the bringing up of ninety-five thousand extra rounds of ammunition to be distributed among Brannan's and Harker's men, whose supply was nearly exhausted."

The aspect of affairs on the heights was now completely changed, and the exultant Federals, who had been a few minutes before fighting in desperation, were reinforced with strength and courage like men who had won a victory. It was now that General Thomas resolved to hold his position and the army on the field until nightfall. He made his preparations for the purpose by general distributions of ammunition among both wings of his army. The Confederate division commanders on the left wing had received forcible knowledge of the material change in conditions by the arrival of reinforcements in support of the hitherto hard-pressed Federals on the heights. They now got together for the first time. Hindman and Johnson joined the brigades of their divisions with Kershaw's Brigade for two successive assaults in desperate efforts to gain the heights; for up to this time distinctly noticeable is the lack of unity of action on the part of these Confederate generals, due to the absence of any orders whatever from their wing commander, General Longstreet, and their inability to find him on this part of the field. Nay, more: questions of rank and precedence arose between them, which only General Longstreet's presence could have settled, and from 12 o'clock until now they had pulled in opposite directions."

"Nothing could exceed the intensity and desperation of the successive assaults which now followed, made by these seven Confederate brigades in line. Hindman mentions the fact that on his "extreme left the bayonet was used, and men were also killed and wounded with clubbed muskets," while Kershaw on the right effected a momentary lodgment near the crest, which drove the Federals from the summit; but the latter, rallying all their available men, charged upon the South Carolinians whose colors were only saved by their bearer, who, after receiving a mortal wound, turned and threw the staff backward over the works into the hands of his comrades."

"It was up to this time that Thomas, by virtue of his rank, used his discretion and held his men on the heights, by the example which he set them and the love which they bore towards him. His antagonist, Longstreet, who for the most part of his time until now had stationed himself in the woods in the rear of his right division, Stewart's, at this juncture, first emerged therefrom in time to witness from Dyer's field the last desperate assault of Kershaw. Preston's Division had at last been "pulled away from its mooring on the river bank" and had been advanced, with his leading brigade in line facing north, bisected by the Lafayette Road, near the Poe house, with his other two brigades immediately in rear, also in line. Longstreet now got into the action in Dyer's field with his last division, Preston's, the strongest of all, which he had held in reserve. He still remained blind to the opportunity which had existed at noon and all afternoon, plainly evident to the Federal generals, Wood, Thomas, Hazen, and others. Why was it that he did not order the whole of Preston's Division directly forward along the La-

fayette road, with Buckner's Reserve Artillery and the latter's other divisions, so as to fill the apparent gap of one half to three quarters of a mile between the Federal wings?"

"There were in this same fringe of woods west of the Lafayette road, at this point, four other Confederate brigades, none of which had moved since noontime. Humphreys' Mississippi Brigade, formerly Barksdale's, which, under orders of the wing commander, was anchored at the "Blacksmith Shop" and made no assault in the battle, the men begging in vain to join their comrades in the charge; then there were the Texas Brigade of General Robertson, Law's Alabama Brigade under Colonel Sheffield, and the Georgia Brigade under General Benning, all three under the command of General Law, comprising a part of Hood's famous division, then located "in line perpendicular to the road, to the left and slightly in advance of Preston, and close to the burned house (Poe's)." Blind to his opportunity and ignorant of the weakest point in his adversary's line which appears to have been a continued source of anxiety to General Thomas that afternoon, General Longstreet ordered only two brigades of Preston's to Dyer's field, leaving the other third of the division, Trigg's Brigade, at Brotherton's, for protection against the enemy's cavalry, supposed to be crossing the Chickamauga below Loe and Gordon's Mills, whom Trigg with two of his regiments "was sent 1½ miles back to intercept," on a perfectly useless reconnoissance, wasting valuable time and energy only to discover that the alleged enemy was "their own" Confederate General Wheeler's men. Gracie's and Kelly's brigades were then ordered forward to the relief of Kershaw and Anderson in a final and successful effort to gain the Heights of Chickamauga,

and drive the enemy from his chosen stronghold, which was made the "keypoint" of the battle, first by the division commanders who followed the fugitives into the woods and mountain fastnesses and finally by the action of Longstreet himself.

"The assault of Gracie and Kelly had begun, preceded by "a deadly fire on the right and right rear of the forces in front of Stewart." The movement of this artillery, principally composed of the twenty-four guns of the Reserve Corps Artillery, and commanded by Major Samuel C. Williams, was in General Buckner's special charge under General Longstreet's orders, but it was not until Gracie had gained the heights that Longstreet ordered Buckner's advance northward, with a battery of twelve guns with Stewart's Division following, Longstreet's object being not to drive this entering wedge between the two wings, so much as an effort to prevent the Federal left wing from reinforcing that part of their army which was posted on Horseshoe Ridge. Had Longstreet's orders to accomplish his object been given more promptly and more effectually executed, the reinforcement of Hazen's Brigade would not so opportunely have arrived in support of Harker and Brannan, nor General Hazen been rewarded with a major-generalship's commission for his act, which saved both Harker and Brannan from capture or annihilation. But it was long before this that General Thomas' watchful eye and attentive ear, of the trained soldier, forewarned him of the approaching storm and the danger to what he knew to be the weakest point in his army's position. It was also at this juncture, about 4.30 P. M., not later that he received the withdrawal order from General Rosecrans."

"Heretofore, by reason of his being the ranking general on

the field of battle, in the absence of any order from the commander-in-chief, Thomas had, in accordance with his resolve, used his power of discretion and maintained Harker's and Brannan's fugitive fragments at their position on the Horseshoe, assisted by the 21st Ohio, generously loaned Brannan on his urgent request to General Negley, and had saved these men on the heights and the whole army from immediate destruction, until Steedman's and Van Derveer's arrival.

"Another crisis now ensues. At the actual and relative time of Gracie's advance in magnificent array, as recognized in the Official Reports of Federal officers on the Horseshoe and described with much admiration personally to the writer by some of them (General Boynton included among the number), General Thomas now received Rosecrans' first dispatch, directed to himself, ordering withdrawal, and as proven by thirty of our witnesses against the testimony of only one to the contrary, the evidence in fact being unanimous on the subject, General Thomas did not and could not delay one moment his obedience to the order, and forthwith dispatched his aid, Captain Barker, for Reynolds to make a beginning of the movement. Orders were also dispatched to the other left wing division commanders for their withdrawal successively. This was a wise move, to begin the withdrawal at this quarter, because of the more precarious situation on his left wing, which at this juncture was within a few hundred yards of being completely enveloped by the Confederate lines.

"Thomas left the Snodgrass house before Gracie took possession of the heights, leaving General Granger the only corps commander on the battle-field, and by virtue of his rank, in com-

mand of the troops under Harker and Brannan, as well as his own men under Steedman; but Granger's personal departure seems to have been timed by the very first indication of Confederate success in driving Harker from the heights. Thus General Thomas "quit when ordered and because he was ordered." Meanwhile the withdrawal of Reynolds had already begun before Barker's arrival with the order. General Reynolds is quoted as saying, in his position at the breastworks that his only alternative was surrender. When his division reached the Lafayette road, General Thomas saw him. Putting himself at the head of Reynold's Division, General Thomas led his army in the movement of withdrawal.

"As before mentioned, the Confederates had nearly enveloped the Federal left wing; the front brigade of a division of the right wing had reached the vicinity of the Kelly house, passing in rear of the Federal divisions of Baird and Johnson. Thomas himself ordered the charge and the division cut its way out. At the same time the way was made clear for the escape of the other divisions of the Federal left wing, most of whom were retired in great disorder.

"Reynolds, misunderstanding Thomas' order, moved straight along the Lafayette road toward the Rossville Gap, not halting with his section of the division until checked at Cloud Church by Forrest's cavalry, while Thomas, separating E. A. King's Brigade from the rest of the division, wheeled to the left near McDonald's house and reached a point of safety on the Ridge road at the head of McFarland's Gap. Here he halted and sent his orders for the withdrawal of the rest of the army, which he had left on Chickamauga Heights, and which had been

driven therefrom before his order arrived. He thus obeyed to the letter General Rosecran's orders to withdraw. The most direct route of withdrawal to Rossville was by way of the Lafayette road and Rossville Gap but, in accordance with the wording of Rosecrans' order, he moved toward McFarland's Gap to "join his army with Crittenden and McCook," whose forces were then known to him to have been in that neighborhood. Finally, the full letter of obedience to Rosecrans' order was followed when he "assumed a threatening attitude" by the formation of his line to resist pursuit and protect the withdrawal. This alignment extended from the head of McFarland's Gap to the Lafayette road and Cloud House, nearly to Rossville Gap. This alignment was completed about 5:30 P. M., and shortly thereafter General Rosecrans' second dispatch, sent through the medium of General Garfield, again ordered him to retire on Rossville, provided his troops were "retiring in good order." General Granger was present with Thomas, and here learned for the first time Rosecrans' command to retreat to Rossville. (Page 145, Gracie.)

Colonel Gracie adds, "It was also in the vicinity of the Cloud House that General Sheridan at 5:30 P. M. reported his arrival on Thomas' left. * * * He had received a terrible beating at noon time on the extreme right flank of the army, suffering a loss of over 30 per cent, yet he gathered and rallied in the woods more than half the scattered remnants and brought them into line again at the extreme left flank of the army, ready before sundown to go into action again. Sheridan's statement is that when he reported to General Thomas for action the latter replied that his lines were too disorganized and withdrawal was necessary." There is no shadow of doubt that Sheridan marched to Rossville after the debacle of the morning, and obeying an

order sent by Rosecrans from Chattanooga at 5 P. M., he followed his original intention of moving out upon the Lafayette road, reaching a point three miles distant, where he halted on finding that it was too late to render assistance. Colonel Gracie states further that General Thomas, directed Sheridan, that; "instead of advancing further "the 1500 gathered" should be reformed on the Lafayette road at Cloud House and aid in covering the withdrawal to Rossville." (Page 110, Gracie.) General Davis joined Thomas right by way of McFarland's Gap; too late, however, to take part in the engagement.

In no part of his history does Colonel Gracie neglect to defend those who he thinks have been unappreciated or unfairly criticised, nor does he permit those whom he believes to have been negligent of their responsibility to escape his reproof. He declares that Negley's withdrawal of the two small regiments left him, in charge of the artillery reserve, was timely and judicious, for the guns might be, and probably would have been employed by the enemy against our retreating columns; that whole regiments were lost or imperilled by officers who employed them to cover the retreat of their own commands; that many of those who were doing their whole duty in a courageous and faithful manner were censured and maligned; and all this without fear or favor. His readers must judge, from the authorities he quotes, how impartial he has been in discussing a vast number of vexed questions, which up to this time have not been solved.

About an hour after Granger had left McAfee's church to aid General Thomas with Steedman's brigade, Colonel Dan McCook, who was during the two days under the direct command of Granger and Thomas, and whose every movement met with the commendation of both, was ordered to report to Granger via the Lafayette road. As the brigade was about to pass the McDonald house, Colonel McCook ordered Captain Edward L.

Anderson, his adjutant, to hasten forward to announce the approach of the command. Driven from the road by the fire of small arms and artillery Anderson turned to the right into the fields near McDonald's. Here he was met by Major Joseph Fullerton, of Granger's staff, waiting for McCook. At this moment the brigade, which had been marching by the right flank without an advance guard, was driven from the road by the artillery of the enemy to the heights behind the McDonald house. Fullerton waited to see where McCook would take position, while Anderson galloped forward and found General Thomas under a large tree near the Snodgrass house. General Thomas was perfectly calm, but Granger advancing from near by was weeping for the death of his Adjutant Russell, who had been killed but a few moments before in stationing Steedman's troops. This was about 2 p. m. Fullerton then arrived, and reported to Thomas that McCook's brigade, which he had noted from some distance, was posted on the crest of the ridge, apparently in perfect order. General Thomas remarked that "it was a happy chance, for McCook was just where he wanted him to protect our left flank and rear" and directed Captain Anderson to go to McCook with orders to remain where he was and to hold the position. The wisdom of this decision was shown later in a remarkable manner, for it proved the rescue of the army, as will afterwards appear, and McCook's brigade, by offering a threatening front in a commanding position and by the use of its battery, performed greater service than it did even in the glorious Atlanta campaign, when out of a brigade averaging about two thousand men it lost, at Kenesaw, Peachtree Creek, Jonesboro, and in many smaller engagements, three commanders and 1089 good soldiers, killed or wounded. No officer, staff, or other, placed McCook upon the crest of Cloud Hill, as every member of the command well knew. His troops were simply driven from the road, and under the Colonel's hurried orders sought the crest of the hill

which so timely and unexpectedly offered itself; the movement was an unpremeditated unforeseen affair, that was as quickly begun as the report of the first gun sounded, and the men answered as readily, but in an orderly manner.

Rosecrans' despatch directing Thomas to withdraw the army, and form a defensive line with Crittenden and McCook whom the Commander in Chief supposed to be somewhere in Thomas' rear, was sent from Chattanooga at 4:15 p. m., and was received before five o'clock as we knew from actual and constructive time. General Thomas immediately repaired to Kelly's field to hasten the movement. But a singular state of affairs had taken place in the left wing before Thomas' arrival. For some hours previously no word had been received from Thomas, and a consultation had taken place between the four division commanders and other officers of rank regarding the condition of their commands. This is not described in Gracie's book, but it is too important to pass over.

"There had been no intimation to the four commanders on the left—Baird, Johnson, Palmer and Reynolds—that everything had not gone well with the right. They could get no message from Thomas for two or three hours. At this juncture, fearing another assault by the Confederates, and supposing that Thomas had been cut off from them, Palmer, Johnson and Reynolds consulted with Baird and proposed that Palmer, as senior ranking officer, be placed in command of their four divisions and march them off the field. But Baird refused to join them, preventing this calamity." (Chattanooga Campaign, Col. M. H. Fitch, Baird's Inspector General, Page 111).

"About this time it was quiet on our front, and quite a number of general officers were congregated discussing the condition of the fight, among them two Major Generals, Reynolds and

Palmer; and it was urged that we ought to have a general commander for our four divisions. Reynolds, the senior declined positively to assume it, remarking that it would be only assuming a disaster which was certainly impending." (A Military Narrative, by General W. H. Hazen, page 131.)

"The commander of one of the divisions near my own, approached me and said I was the ranking officer on the field, and that I ought to order a retreat of the divisions on the left to Chattanooga. At the moment the prospect did appear gloomy, and I was inclined to apprehend that matters were as bad as he supposed them to be. I told him, however, that if it was true that the rebels had defeated our right and center of the army, and captured or killed Rosecrans, Thomas, McCook and Crittenden, so far as I was concerned they might have every man of the four divisions they could take; that we would cut our way to Chattanooga; that I would rather be killed, and be d—d, than to be d—d by the country for leaving a battle-field under such circumstances." Personal Recollections of General John M. Palmer, pp. 183-184.

Shortly after this consultation, Hazen was given permission to take his Brigade to look for the right wing. About 5 o'clock he came upon Harker's "Hard pressed brigade," on the open crest about the Snodgrass house, a few hundred yards in rear of his original position on the east hill of Horseshoe Ridge, whence he had been driven about five o'clock by General Archibald Gracie who had gallantly taken possession of the long sought point of advantage. Hazen who had skirmished over from Kelly's field with a front of two regiments, together with Harker and a section of the 18th Ohio Battery checked the enemy's pursuit. Here Opdycke, "the bravest of the brave" was conspicuous in his gallantry and his regiment, the 125th Ohio and the section of the

18th Ohio Battery, formed the last fighting line. Steedman had fallen back from the main ridge, with Bushrod Johnson between him and the Horseshoe. Brannan exposed on both flanks, was the last to leave the crest, retiring in rear of Snodgrass House; and by six o'clock the enemy had full possession of the stronghold so faithfully defended.

That is to say, the whole of the Horseshoe Ridge was in possession of the brigades of Trigg, Kelly and Gracie, the only Federals remaining being the three captured regiments, 89th Ohio, 21st Ohio, and 22nd Michigan, and a temporary stand of the 9th Indiana, which Gracie alleges had been sent to take possession of the middle hill, and that Brannan did this to distract the attention of the enemy, as was his abandonment of the captured regiments, to cover the "stealthy" withdrawal of his troops.

When, about 4:30 p. m., General Thomas reached the southern edge of Kelly's field he found Reynolds already moving off in column of fours, while beyond him a compact body of the enemy was passing south towards the rear of Baird, Johnson and Palmer. General Thomas at once commanded Reynolds to form line, face to the rear, and charge on the advancing foe. Turchin now made the charge which should live in history, as with wild cheers his brigade fell upon the Confederates and drove them more than a mile, uncovering the other three divisions. Barnett's Battery, of Dan McCook's brigade, aided Turchin in this attack and covered his retreat, when Reynolds and his troops found "shelter" behind McCook's brigade. Here were also the brigades of Robinson and Willich, and with these three commands General Thomas formed the nucleus of that front upon the line of hills that permitted the remainder of the army to withdraw by way of the "Ridge Road," to McFarland's Gap and Rossville.

Had McCook's brigade not been interrupted in its march to the front by an enemy which drove it to "the commanding position" south of the Cloud House; who can say what would have been the fate of the Army of the Cumberland? Had Turchin failed to return, the Confederates would have crushed the left wing in flank and poured masses in rear of the gallant men who had held the Horseshoe Ridge. Colonel Gracie remarks (p. 114), "It can not be doubted that this position occupied by McCook's Brigade and Barnett's Battery was developed into one of the most important keys to the safety of the whole Federal army, holding in check cavalry, infantry and artillery forces of the Confederate right. For on the Confederate right, Forrest's Cavalry and troops of Breckenridge's and Liddell's Divisions overlapped the Federal left under Baird. Steedman's opportune arrival had pushed aside Forrest's dismounted cavalry, thus preventing the junction via McFarland's Gap and the two Confederate wings; and nothing but McCook's Brigade and Barnett's Battery remained behind after Steedman to guard this threatened catastrophe—the surrounding of the Federal army and blocking its withdrawal through the passes to Rossville." For these services the brigade was handsomely commended by General Thomas.

"They also serve who only stand and wait."

A few more words about the withdrawal of the troops from the field. It has been officially reported that no command except the brigade of Col. Cruft had the good fortune to leave Kelly's field in perfect order. Johnson was fighting at the time the order came, but his right was exposed and he had to obey, and reports that he owed the safety of his command to Willich's masterly movements; Baird's division which had borne much of the burden of the two days, owing to his exposed position on the extreme left of the line, again suffered severely in killed,

wounded and prisoners ; one of Grose's regimental officers on the left reported that his command had been crushed, so that Grose, Palmer and Thomas were forced to recognize that Grose retired in "some confusion," when we know from the reports that the 36th Indiana and 6th Ohio withdrew in line of battle and turned to fight (as many of the men have told the writer) ; but Cruft goes down in history through his various superiors as having withdrawn in perfect order. It is evident from his report that Cruft, seeing Reynolds' retreat, left the line before the last attack, which shattered Grose's left, and he therefore had a mere parade in reaching the shelter of the woods. (O. R. 50, p. 733). There was more or less confusion in all the other divisions, after Reynolds withdrew.

After the troops from Kelly's field were on the road to McFarland's Gap, the heroes of the Horseshoe Ridge were safely withdrawn, except three regiments, (21st and 89th Ohio and 22nd Michigan) which were not notified to retreat and were captured, and the 9th Indiana narrowly escaped when it was ordered to make a vain endeavor to regain Hill No. 2, (the middle one) ; and the last shots fired at Chickamauga were between Lieut. Col. Henry V. N. Boynton's 35th Ohio and the 6th Florida. Henry V. N. Boynton was a gallant and efficient officer, a medal of honor man, one who distinguished himself on many fields.

Hazen followed the troops through McFarland's Gap as rear guard. Col. Dan McCook's Brigade was the last command to leave the field of Chickamauga, sending two six gun discharges from Barnett's Battery, in the spirit of defiance, by the personal orders of Granger, characteristic of that erratic officer, who appeared on foot about 6 p. m. An hour earlier General Baird surprised McCook by the information that the whole army was being withdrawn from the field. At 8 o'clock McCook's Brigade

retired, unmolested to Rossville, reaching its bivouac about midnight; or later. (See H. J. Aten's admirable History of the 85th Illinois).

In February, 1865, the author of this review, on his return from the Battle of Nashville, paid a visit to General Scott, in company with his uncle, Robert Anderson, a former aide-de-camp to the old Chieftan. General Scott was enthusiastic in his praise of Thomas, and turning to my uncle, said, "Robert, you have always known my opinion of George Thomas. Now I wish to say that, in my opinion, the Battle of Nashville was the finest piece of grand tactics of the Civil War." Had Scott lived to know all the mysteries, now revealed, of the great Battle of Chickamauga, such as the defence of the Horseshoe Ridge, of the charge personally demanded of Reynold's Brigade, of the successful withdrawal of the troops in the face of a victorious enemy, of the quickly arranged stand at the head of McFarland's Gap, in what words could he have expressed his opinion of the strategy and tactics of his old favorite, who had proved himself one of the greatest Captains of modern times.

Thomas' genius seemed to render him prescient, for he was always present at the critical moment, with a coolness that gave him instant, perfect control of his best judgment.

Truly, as Colonel Gracie remarks, "As the leader of the Federal Army, in its escape from complete annihilation, he received the crown of glory to which he was entitled."

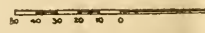
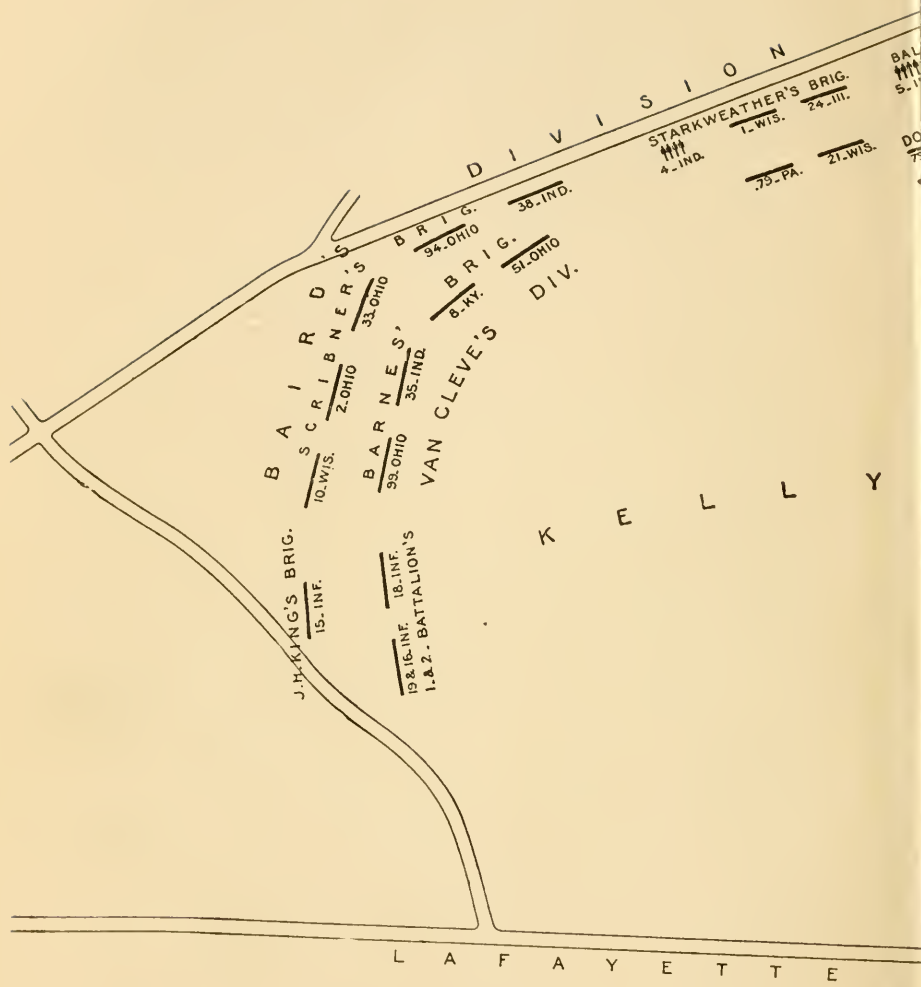
While Colonel Gracie's book may not give the last word about the battle of Chickamauga, it exhibits a conscientious and laborious effort to harmonize and reconcile the many statements regarding this great conflict into a fair and acceptable narrative, in which it must be admitted he has succeeded most creditably.

He has gone to the Official Reports and to reputable witnesses for his facts, and whether or no we accept all his deductions, we have before us *The Truth About Chickamauga* as it is understood by an impartial observer.

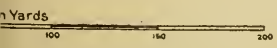
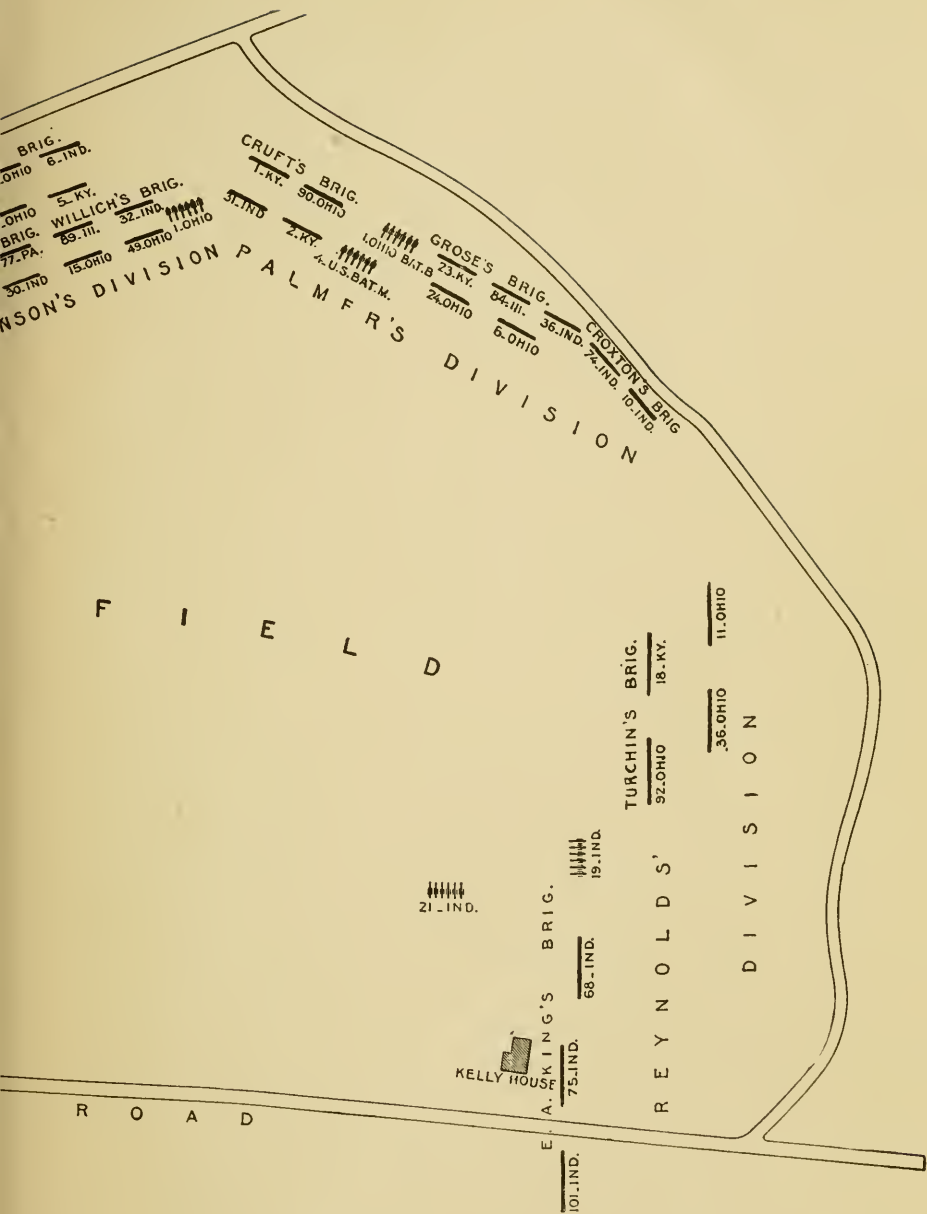
NOTE—The following named commands and fragments—some of which were mere squads, but which did honor to their regiments—fought on Horseshoe and the connecting Main Ridge from about 2:30 p. m. to 4:00 p. m., September 20th, 1863.

Beginning on the right (west); Steedman's Division, consisting of Colonel John G. Mitchell's and General Walter Whitaker's splendid brigades, 22nd Michigan, 21st Ohio, General Van Derveer's invincible troops, 87th Indiana, 58th Indiana, 17th Kentucky, 9th Kentucky, 19th Ohio, 79th Indiana, 14th Ohio, 4th Kentucky, 10th Kentucky, 13th Ohio, 19th Illinois, 18th Ohio, 11th Michigan, 44th Indiana, Harker's brigade on the extreme left (east). Generals Steedman, Brannon, Wood and John Beatty were with their troops, and the divisions of Negley and Van Cleve were represented. The 18th Ohio battery, Lieut. Frank G. Smith, 4th U. S. Artillery, was on a line with the Snodgrass House.





"THOMAS' LINES" (FEDERAL LEFT WING) FROM ABOUT 1.



TO 5 P.M., SEPTEMBER 20, 1863. (SEE OFFICIAL REPORTS)



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