

Report of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War / at the second session,
Thirty-eighth Congress ...

United States.

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REPORT

OF THE

JOINT COMMITTEE

ON

THE CONDUCT OF THE WAR,

AT THE

SECOND SESSION THIRTY-EIGHTH CONGRESS.

ARMY OF THE POTOMAC.
ATTLE OF PETERSBURG.

WASHINGTON:
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.
1865.

*Testimony of Major General Abner Doubleday.*WASHINGTON, *March 1, 1864.*

Major General ABNER DOUBLEDAY sworn and examined.

By the chairman:

[See testimony—"Army of the Potomac—General Hooker."]

Question. You were with the army of the Potomac when the battle of Gettysburg was fought?

Answer. Yes, sir.

Question. Give the committee an account of that battle in your own way.

Answer. When we marched to Marsh creek there was a rebel force on our left flank at Fairfield. When General Meade assumed the command of the army he gave General Reynolds the command of the right wing of the army, consisting of the 1st, 3d, and 11th corps. General Reynolds told me that his duties frequently required him to absent himself from the 1st corps—his own corps—and that I must assume command of it, which I did.

After we got to Marsh creek it was found that the force of the enemy which had been at Fairfield had left—had gone north—so that we had then no enemy directly to the west of us. General Buford's cavalry had gone to Gettysburg, and were engaged in feeling the enemy on the roads leading from that town. They reported that the enemy were in heavy force at Cashtown and Mummasburg, places to the northwest of Gettysburg. Cashtown is on the great road from Chambersburg.

On the 30th of June General Meade sent a circular to the effect that the enemy were apparently marching in heavy force on Gettysburg, stating that we should remain as we were until the enemy developed his intentions. This was very much like saying that he would give us orders after the battle was fought, for he had already stated the intention of the enemy to be to take Gettysburg. That place was a point of very great importance. It is like the hub of a wheel, having seven great roads and a railroad leading out of it, namely, the roads to Hagerstown, Chambersburg, Carlisle, Harrisburg, York, Frederick, and Taneytown, all of which places may be considered as on the circumference of the wheel. With our troops in possession of Gettysburg we could check the enemy on any one of these roads, as we would hold the centre. The enemy in possession of that point would have gained a great advantage, in my opinion; shortening and strengthening his line to Williamsport, from which place his supplies of ammunition, &c., were supposed to come, and being in a condition to strike in any direction.

General Reynolds, believing that it was the best policy to fight the enemy as soon as he could meet him, and prevent his sending off those immense quantities of supplies from Pennsylvania, and finding on the morning of the 1st of July that Buford's cavalry were hard pressed, directed me to put the 1st corps in motion to go to the assistance of Buford. He told me that he had already ordered Wadsworth's division to go forward, and that it was already under way. I think this was about half past seven o'clock in the morning. General Reynolds read his telegrams to me, showing where our troops were, and what they were doing. He then sprang on his horse and rode forward to join Wadsworth's division, which had started, directing me to bring up the balance of the corps and the batteries. Wadsworth's division had but one battery with it, Hall's Maine battery.

I waited until I had drawn in my pickets, and put the other two divisions and the batteries of the 1st corps in motion; I then heard rapid cannon firing, showing that the cavalry were briskly engaged. I say "cavalry," for there had not been time for Wadsworth's division of infantry to reach there. Hear-

Part I—20

ing this cannon firing I put spurs to my horse, and with my staff galloped in advance of the last two divisions of infantry, and reached the ground just as the head of Wadsworth's division was going into action. I had previously sent my adjutant general and an aid to General Reynolds for orders. There are two roads leading into Gettysburg from the westward, the one from the northwest, and the other from the southwest. It was on the road from the northwest that the main force of the enemy were approaching.

To the west of Gettysburg is an eminence that we called Seminary ridge, because there is a seminary situated on it, between the two roads referred to. This ridge runs north and south, and is about a quarter of a mile to the west of Gettysburg. About four hundred yards to the west of the first ridge there is another, also running north and south. Nearly parallel to the road from the northwest there is a railroad grading, part of it embankment and part of it deep cut, passing through these ridges. General Reynolds simply said to me, "I will defend this Cashtown road," or rather, "I will hold on to this road, and you hold on to the other." These were the orders he sent to me. He established a brigade and a battery to hold the road which came from Cashtown, placing his men under shelter of the most westerly of the ridges. Wadsworth's division now going into action consisted of two brigades—one under General Cutler, and the other, usually called the Iron brigade, under General Meredith—and one battery, called Hall's battery. General Reynolds took Cutler's brigade and Hall's battery to hold his part of the line, and directed the other brigade to be placed on a line with the first in a piece of woods which lay between the two roads. These woods were already occupied by the enemy, who opened fire upon us, killing General Reynolds almost at the first volley.

The Iron brigade charged with great gallantry; rushed into the woods, and on the left and somewhat on the right of the woods, and drove the enemy before them into a little ravine called Willoughby's run; there they captured a large number of prisoners, with general officers. They formed on the high ground on the other side of the run. This was being accomplished as I rode up. I sent word to them that this movement had carried them too far to the front, and they must fall back on a line with Cutler's brigade. They had got several hundred yards beyond that. I think some one else gave a similar order—whether General Meredith or General Wadsworth I do not know. They returned and took up a position in the woods and on the left of the woods. In the mean time Cutler's brigade had been ordered back by General Wadsworth. Its right flank had been turned and the battery attacked, and it was ordered back to Seminary ridge, as I have stated, leaving the battery and two regiments standing on the left of the battery. The right of the battery was now uncovered. The enemy charged up the railroad grading and attacked the right of the battery, killing, I think, all the horses and wounding all the men at one piece—doing a great deal of damage. The battery was directed by General Wadsworth to take up a new position, and finally was withdrawn by way of the railroad grading—the captain of the battery said, by an aid of General Wadsworth. He complained of this route, inasmuch as once on the grading there was no getting off it for a long distance, and the enemy had guns planted to enfilade it. He states that he finally reached Seminary ridge and took shelter behind it, and was again ordered to the front by another aid of General Wadsworth; that he advanced towards the position indicated until he found that the enemy held the ground he had been ordered to take, and that if he went any further he would lose his battery; he then returned. That gives the history of the battery so far.

Cutler's brigade, as I have stated, fell back, with the exception of two regiments—the 14th Brooklyn and the 95th New York. When this condition of affairs attracted my attention, I found the enemy massing themselves in front of Cutler. I had kept one regiment, the 6th Wisconsin, as a reserve. I or-

dered that regiment to attack on the flank of the enemy as he formed, if he formed in front of Cutler. That regiment, under Lieutenant Colonel Dawes, together with the 14th Brooklyn, under Colonel Fowler, and the 95th New York, under Colonel Biddle, made a most gallant charge, and surrounded the enemy, who had rushed into the railroad cut, and after a short but desperate conflict we captured two rebel regiments, with their battle-flags. The remainder of the enemy retreated to their first position. I ordered the line of battle to be resumed as it was originally. The enemy, to all appearance, were repulsed, and we were perfectly successful at this stage, having captured Brigadier General Archer and a large number of prisoners from his brigade, two regiments, with their battle-flags, from Davis's rebel brigade, and driven the enemy back so that their attack had become comparatively a feeble one. Shortly after this the remaining divisions of the 1st corps, with the batteries, came up. One of these divisions (Robinson's) I kept in reserve behind the Seminary. I placed one brigade of the other division on the right, and one on the left, of the woods; and General Howard arrived at Gettysburg about the same time with the 11th corps. The most prominent successes of the day occurred before he assumed command of the field. I now received information from General Buford, in person, that the troops of the enemy with which we had been contending were A. P. Hill's corps, numbering altogether, I suppose, some 30,000 or 35,000 men; opposing them we had the 1st corps, numbering about 8,200 men.

General Buford now reported to me that the rebel General Ewell, with his whole corps, was coming down from York on my right flank, making another 30,000. I sent word to General Howard, and requested him to keep Ewell off of my flank, as I had as much as I could do to attend to A. P. Hill. About the same time I received an order from General Howard to this effect: "Tell Doubleday to fight on the left, and I will fight on the right." About the same time he sent word to me that if forced back I must try and hold on to the Seminary. These were all the orders I received from him during the day that I remember. He also sent me word of Ewell's approach about the same time that I informed him of it, and formed the 11th corps to keep Ewell off. Ewell now made a junction with A. P. Hill's corps, so that Ewell's line was northwest and east of me, and A. P. Hill's was nearly west. The men on our side were in very fine spirits, and were elated to the highest degree. One division that I had was composed almost entirely of Pennsylvanians. I made short speeches to each regiment as it passed and went into action, and the men were full of enthusiasm.

I had assigned one brigade, under Colonel Stone, to quite an open position, where they were shelled pretty severely. Colonel Stone remarked, as he took the position, "*We have come to stay.*" This went quickly through his brigade, the men adopting it as a watchword; they all said, "*We have come to stay,*" and a very large portion of them never left that ground.

My attention was called to a wide and dangerous gap between the 11th and 1st corps, and I sent two regiments of Baxter's brigade, Robinson's division, to fill it and keep the enemy out. After a short time I found that that force was inadequate, and I then sent the remainder of the brigade. This left me but one brigade in reserve. But I found that even that force was inadequate, and with the greatest reluctance was compelled to send General Robinson and the last brigade of my reserve to assist in holding the position, which was on our extreme right. They held it successfully, capturing a large number of prisoners, estimated as high as a thousand, and taking several battle-flags from the enemy. But the division of the 11th corps on our right fell back about half past 2 o'clock. The time is given by General Wadsworth in his report. I did not look at the time myself. One of my generals—General Baxter—said that

division fell back before the enemy's line of skirmishers. General Wadsworth, in his report, says they "partially" engaged the enemy.

The enemy entered into this interval and folded their lines right around my right flank. I did not think I ought to retreat until General Howard gave the order, as he was then the ranking officer on the field, and I held on until a quarter before 4 o'clock, when the whole country was filled with the advancing lines of the enemy, double lines, in some cases treble lines, with reserves of battalions in mass. Our forces had fought with desperation, a portion of them for nearly six hours. Regiments were reduced to mere squads. They had made repeatedly the most heroic bayonet charges against overwhelming masses and driven them back. It was not possible to remain a moment longer. I had given orders in the morning to throw up a little rough rail intrenchment, a feeble pile of rails, around the seminary, and behind this the remnants of my line rallied. They fought by the seminary until the artillery, ambulances, and everything had retired in safety. When they were overpowered and fell back, I wanted to gain a little longer time, and I threw my personal guard of forty men around and into the building, and then fought a whole brigade for twenty minutes. In the onslaught upon us at this point, our artillery gained an enfilading fire on the front line of the enemy and swept it away. But the other rebel lines came up and outflanked us on all sides, and when we fell back we did so in fact between two lines of the enemy. I remained at the seminary myself until I thought everything had been got off, and was among the last to leave. I then rode through the streets of the town and rejoined my command.

I think the retreat would have been a very successful one, if it had not been unfortunately the case that a portion of the 11th corps, which had held out very well on the extreme right, had been surrounded and had fallen back at the same time that my right flank fell back. These two bodies of men became entangled in the streets of the town, and quite a number were captured. I lost but one gun and two or three caisson bodies. The men behaved in the most heroic manner in falling back. They would retreat a hundred or a hundred and fifty yards and then turn around and face the enemy again, fire upon them and keep them off for a time; then fall back another hundred yards, turn around and make a further stand. They passed through the town quietly and calmly; I saw no running, no undue haste. We re-formed our lines about a mile and a half from our first position, on an eminence called Cemetery hill, where the battle of the next day was fought.

During this time General Meade was at Taneytown, some ten or twelve miles off, engaged in laying out a very long line of battle—I should judge ten miles long at least—from Taneytown to Manchester, along Pipe creek. He seemed to have determined that the battle should take place there. It is inexplicable to me that he could hear the thunder of that battle all day without riding up to see something in relation to it, as he could have come up in an hour. Had he done so, there were two corps in our vicinity which he could have ordered to our assistance. General Sickles did start for that purpose without orders, though too late to be of service. There was no enemy in front of either of those two corps, but Slocum refused to leave without orders from General Meade, and I suppose he was right on strict military principles.

At the close of the day an order arrived from General Meade displacing both Howard and myself, placing me under the command of a junior officer, General Newton; and placing General Howard under General Hancock, who was his junior officer also. I thought this was done as a token of disapprobation at our fighting at all that day. When General Meade issued the order he was absent from the field and knew but little of the battle. He never asked me a single question in relation to the operations of that day.

Question. Had you received any orders from General Meade before this battle commenced, with regard to what you should do?

Answer. If any orders were received they are buried with General Reynolds; his staff know of none. When we went into this battle we supposed, as General Reynolds was very high in General Meade's confidence, that it was understood that the remainder of the army would come to our assistance. I think everything was left at loose ends, and there were no orders at all. I do not believe that our forces actually engaged, belonging to the two corps, amounted to over 14,000 men. There was a reserve of 3,000 or 4,000 of the 11th corps which did not join actively in the fight. It fired some shots from Cemetery hill, but the most of them fell short into our own front line. Now, 14,000 men were wholly inadequate to contend against two immense corps of the enemy, amounting to 60,000 men. I do not mean that 60,000 of the enemy were in the front line opposed to us, but that there were 60,000 including the reserves of the two rebel corps, enabling them to bring up fresh troops continually to attack us while our men were worn out.

The long, feeble line of battle on Pipe creek, laid out by General Meade, seemed to be chosen for defensive purposes, to cover Washington and Baltimore. It appears to me that the result of occupying that line would have been that the enemy would simply have let us severely alone, and either have taken Harrisburg or gone on *ad infinitum* plundering the State of Pennsylvania.

Question. You have described the first day of the fight?

Answer. Yes, sir. According to the reports rendered to me, we entered the fight with 8,200 men in the 1st corps, and came out with 2,450.

Question. Go on and describe the fight of the second day.

Answer. On the second day I was in command of a division stationed behind Cemetery hill. Nothing remarkable occurred in which I was engaged until towards sundown, when Sickles, who was pretty far advanced to the front, was driven in, and a part of Hancock's force sent to help him was also thrown back. I had been joined the night before by a Vermont brigade under General Stannard, increasing my force to about 2,500 men.

I received orders on the evening of that day to bring up this force with all haste to Hancock's assistance, who was suffering severely and being driven back. My division was formed in several lines, I think five lines in all. Having arrived at the place, a charge was ordered. This was about dusk. General Newton issued orders that that charge should be stopped. My front line, however, kept on at the request of General Hancock, who happened to be near them. He told them that he had lost four guns, and asked them to try and retake them, as the enemy were retiring. This front line continued on their charge and did not halt, but went in and regained Hancock's four guns which he had lost, and captured two guns from the enemy, and brought in quite a number of prisoners. They apologized to me for not halting, and I accepted the apology. We remained in that position for the remainder of the battle.

About 2 o'clock in the afternoon on the third day of the battle a tremendous cannonade was opened on us from at least 125 guns. They had our exact range, and the destruction was fearful. Horses were killed in every direction; I lost two horses myself, and almost every officer lost one or more, and quite a large number of caissons were blown up. I knew this was the prelude to a grand infantry charge, as artillery is generally massed in this way, to disorganize the opposing command, for the infantry to charge in the interval. I told my men to shelter themselves in every way behind the rocks, or little elevations of ground, while the artillery firing took place, and to spring to their feet and hold their ground as soon as the charge came.

When the enemy finally charged, they came on in three lines, with additional lines called, in military language, wings, the object of the wings being to prevent the main force from being flanked. This charge was first directed towards my lines, but seeing that they were quite strong, five lines deep, and well strength-

ened with rails, stones, and behind which the men lay, the enemy changed his mind, and concluded to make the attack on the division of 2d corps, on my right, where there were but two lines. He marched by his right flank, and then marched to his front. In doing this, the wing apparently did not understand the movement, but kept straight on. The consequence was, that there was a wide gap between the wing and the main charging force, which enabled my men on the right, the brigade of General Stannard, to form immediately on the flank of the charging column, while the enemy were subjected to an awful fire of artillery in front. It is said some few of them laid their hands on our guns. The prisoners state that what ruined them was Stannard's brigade on their flank, as they found it impossible to contend with it in that position; and they drew off all in a huddle to get away from it. I sent two regiments to charge them in front at the same time. While this was going on the enemy were subjected to a terrific artillery fire at short range, and the result was that they retreated with frightful loss.

Some five minutes after the charge was broken up and they began to retreat, a large number of batteries and regiments of infantry reported to me, as I sat on horseback, for orders to repulse the attack. I posted them, with the approval of the corps commander, though they were a little too late to be of essential service.

I would state that the wing of the enemy which got astray was also met by part of Stannard's brigade, which also formed on its flank, and it also retreated. Thus the day was won, and the country saved.

Question. That was the last day of the battle?

Answer. Yes, sir.

By Mr. Chandler:

Question. In your judgment, which army suffered the most in those three days' battles?

Answer. I think the enemy suffered far more than we did. We suffered heavily the first day, on account of the overpowering army brought against us. But the other days we were partially sheltered by stone barricades, &c., which protected our men from musketry fire, while the enemy advanced through the open fields.

By the chairman:

Question. How far was General Meade from where the battle of the last day was fought?

Answer. The battle-field was very contracted, and he could not have been very far from it.

Question. If I have understood you, from what you could learn, the plan and intention of General Meade was not to fight the battle where it was fought?

Answer. It would seem not; and yet the enemy was in General Reynolds's immediate front. They were three or four miles from Gettysburg on one side, and we were three or four miles on the other. Under those circumstances it was almost impossible to prevent a collision, unless one party or the other withdrew.

Question. Do you know whether there were any orders from General Meade to retreat before this battle of the first day?

Answer. I do not think there were when General Reynolds commenced the fight. About the close of that day's fight I have no doubt such orders were issued. I have alluded to a circular informing us that the enemy was marching in heavy force on Gettysburg. It was of vital importance to know whether we were to defend the place or give it up. But we got no orders, although the enemy were marching on the town, and something had to be done immediately.

Question. Did you know that General Reynolds and General Sickles had an order to retreat just before that battle commenced?

Answer. I do not know that General Reynolds had such an order. He was a man who always obeyed orders literally.

Question. You do not know whether General Sickles had such an order?

Answer. I do not.

Question. Which army outnumbered the other?

Answer. He thought the enemy had 90,000 men, while we had but 70,000. That is the best information I could gather.

Question. Did you have to assist you in that battle the troops stationed in and around Baltimore under General Schenck?

Answer. Not to my knowledge.

Question. Can you tell why, after that fight, General Howard and yourself were removed from your command?

Answer. I was removed from the command of the 1st corps. General Howard was not removed from command of his corps, but was directed to obey General Hancock, who was his junior, after the first day of the fight.

Question. Why was that?

Answer. I think General Meade thought a couple of scapegoats were necessary; in case the next day's battle turned out unfavorably, he wished to mark his disapprobation of the first day's fight. General Meade is in the habit of violating the organic law of the army to place his personal friends in power. There has always been a great deal of favoritism in the army of the Potomac. No man who is an anti-slavery man or an anti-McClellan man can expect decent treatment in that army as at present constituted.

Question. Has that, in your judgment, led to great disasters, from time to time, in the army of the Potomac?

Answer. Yes, I think it has.

Question. You speak of political favoritism. Explain what you mean by that.

Answer. I think there have been pro-slavery cliques controlling that army, composed of men who, in my opinion, would not have been unwilling to make a compromise in favor of slavery, and who desired to have nobody put in authority except those who agreed with them on that subject.

Question. Do you believe that this feeling of rivalry and jealousy, that seems to have actuated the high corps commanders of that army, has been detrimental to the public service, and led to checks and defeats?

Answer. Undoubtedly. I cannot but think that there has been an indifference, to say the least, on the part of certain officers, to the success of our army. I do not believe that General Pope received all the co-operation he was entitled to; and I do not believe that General Burnside received it.

Question. Can you give any reason why, after you had whipped the enemy, and they finally retreated, they were not followed up vigorously?

Answer. I have no idea why they were not pursued. I believe the 6th corps had not been very actively engaged—at least not so much as the other corps. They were comparatively fresh, and could have been thrown upon the enemy.

By Mr. Chandler:

Question. After the repulse of the enemy, were our troops so much exhausted by the three days' fighting, that it was impossible for them to follow up the enemy vigorously?

Answer. I think not; our troops for two days had been lying down a great deal in a defensive position.

By the chairman:

Question. Could our troops have been as much fatigued after the fight as the troops of the enemy?

Answer. No, sir; I think the enemy must have been the most fatigued, as they made the attack.

Question. Were you down at Williamsport, or near there, where the enemy effected a recrossing of the Potomac ?

Answer. I was not. I left the army on the 7th of July.

Question. You have heard that a council of war was held down there ?

Answer. Yes, sir.

Question. And you know how they voted ?

Answer. I have heard partially how the vote was. I am not sure as to the vote of every member.

Question. Can you give any reason, satisfactory to yourself, why that council came to the conclusion that it was not best to attack the enemy before they recrossed the river ?

Answer. I can give no reason; it is perfectly absurd to suppose that the enemy would choose a position on the bank of a deep river for the purpose of fighting us. You would as soon expect a man to place his back to a precipice, and then engage in a life and death struggle with another.

Question. Have you any doubt that, after the enemy got to the river, and were unable to cross on account of the water being so high, it was in the power of our army to have conquered them ?

Answer. I have no doubt; not a particle.

Question. You know the march General Lee had been compelled to make; the distance he was from his base of supplies, and the amount of ammunition he must have spent in such a battle as you had witnessed there ?

Answer. I think he must have almost completely exhausted his ammunition.

Question. I was going to ask whether, as a military man, you would not come to the conclusion that, after the battle, the enemy must have been very destitute of ammunition ?

Answer. I certainly should.

Question. You left the army on the 7th of July ?

Answer. Yes, sir.

Question. Where were you then ?

Answer. I was on the battle-field of Gettysburg.

Question. So that you know nothing personally of what occurred after that ?

Answer. I do not.

Testimony of General A. P. Howe.

WASHINGTON, *March 3, 1864.*

General A. P. HOWE sworn and examined.

By the chairman :

[See testimony—"Army of the Potomac—General Hooker."]

Question. General Meade succeeded General Hooker in the command of the army of the Potomac.

Answer. Yes, sir.

Question. Go on and state the operations of the army under his command, particularly the battle at Gettysburg; how it was brought on, and all about it, so far as you know.

Answer. We continued our movement until the 6th corps reached Manchester. We reached there the last day of June, I think. We remained there one night, and the next evening about 8 o'clock, I think, we received orders to move on Gettysburg. The other corps had been moving on our left and rear as we reached Manchester. From my own knowledge, I cannot tell what positions the other corps had, only as given in the reports. The evening that we received

Chancellorsville and Gettysburg / by Abner Doubleday ...

Doubleday, Abner, 1819-1893.

New York : C. Scribner's Sons, 1882.

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CAMPAIGNS OF THE CIVIL WAR.—VI.

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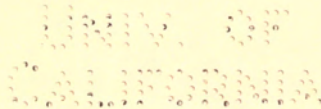
AND

GETTYSBURG

BY

ABNER DOUBLEDAY,

BREVET MAJOR-GENERAL U.S.A., AND LATE MAJOR-GENERAL U.S.V.; COMMAND-
ING THE FIRST CORPS AT GETTYSBURG.



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CHAPTER IV.

THE FIRST DAY OF THE BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG, WEDNESDAY, JULY 1, 1863.

On the morning of the 1st of July, General Buford, as stated, held the ridges to the west of Gettysburg, with his cavalry division, composed of Gamble's and Devens's brigades. His vedettes were thrown far out toward the enemy to give timely notice of any movement, for he was determined to prevent the rebels from entering the town if possible, and knew the First Corps would soon be up to support him. The enemy were not aware that there was any considerable force in the vicinity, and in the morning sent forward Heth's division of Hill's corps to occupy the place, anticipating no difficulty in doing so. Buford in the meantime had dismounted a large part of his force, had strengthened his line of skirmishers, and planted his batteries at the most commanding points.

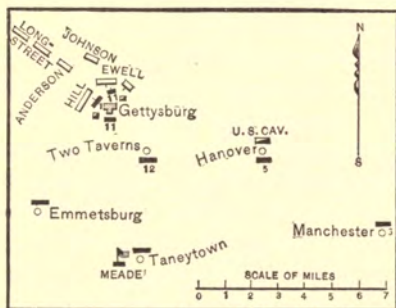
General Reynolds, in consequence of the duties devolving upon him as commander of the Left Wing of the army, that is of the First, Third, and Eleventh Corps, had turned over the command of the First Corps to me. He now made immediate dispositions to go forward to assist Buford.

As my corps was largely engaged in the first day's operations, I must be excused for having a good deal to say in the first person in relation to them. Reynolds sent for me about six o'clock in the morning, read to me the various des-

patches he had received from Meade and Buford, and told me he should go forward at once with the nearest division—that of Wadsworth—to aid the cavalry. He then instructed me to draw in my pickets, assemble the artillery and the remainder of the corps, and join him as soon as possible. Having given these orders he rode off at the head of the column, and I never saw him again.

The position of the two armies on the morning of the 1st of July, was as follows: The First Corps at Marsh Creek; the Second and Third Corps at Taneytown; the latter being under orders

to march to Emmetsburg, to relieve the Eleventh Corps, which was directed to join the First Corps at Gettysburg; the Twelfth Corps was at Two Taverns; the Fifth Corps at Hanover, and the Sixth Corps



about thirty-five miles off to the right at Manchester. Kilpatrick's and Gregg's divisions of cavalry were also at Hanover. The Confederate army was advancing on Gettysburg from the west and north. The concentration of their troops and the dispersion of ours are indicated on the map.

It must be remembered that the enemy had but *three* corps, while the Union army had *seven*. Each of their corps represented a *third*, and each of ours a *seventh*, of our total force. The same ratio extended to divisions and brigades.

Heth's division, which started early in the morning to oc-

little time, however, to indulge in these recollections. The situation was very peculiar. The rebel left under Davis had driven in Cutler's brigade and our left under Morrow had charged into the woods, preceded by the Second Wisconsin under Colonel Fairchild, swept suddenly and unexpectedly around the right flank of Archer's brigade, and captured a large part of it, including Archer himself. The fact is, the enemy were careless and underrated us, thinking, it is said, that they had only militia to contend with. The Iron Brigade had a different head-gear from the rest of the army and were recognized at once by their old antagonists. Some of the latter were heard to exclaim "There are those d——d black-hatted fellows again! 'Taint no militia. It's the Army of the Potomac."

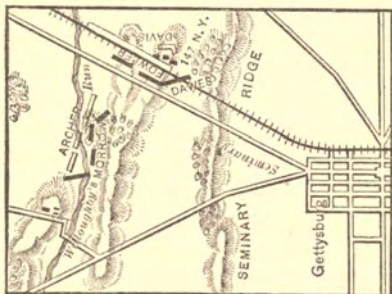
Having captured Archer and his men, many of the Iron Brigade kept on beyond Willoughby's Run, and formed on the heights on the opposite side.

The command now devolved upon me, with its great responsibilities. The disaster on the right required immediate attention, for the enemy, with loud yells, were pursuing Cutler's brigade toward the town. I at once ordered my reserve under Lieutenant-Colonel Dawes to advance against their flank. If they faced Dawes, I reasoned that they would present their other flank to Cutler's men, so that I felt quite confident of the result. In war, however, unexpected changes are constantly occurring. Cutler's brigade had been withdrawn by order of General Wadsworth, without my knowledge, to the suburbs of Gettysburg. Fortunately, Fowler's two regiments came on to join Dawes, who went forward with great spirit, but who was altogether too weak to assail so large a force. As he approached, the rebels ceased to pursue Cutler, and rushed into the railroad cut to obtain the shelter of the grading. They made a fierce and obstinate resistance,

but, while Fowler confronted them above, Dawes brought a gun to enfilade their position, and formed his men across the cut, by Fowler's order, to fire through it. The rebels could not resist this; the greater number gave themselves up as prisoners, and the others scattered over the country and escaped.

This success relieved the One Hundred and Forty-seventh New York, which, as I stated, was surrounded when Cutler fell back, and it also enabled us to regain the gun which Hall had been obliged to abandon.

The enemy having vanished from our immediate front, I withdrew the Iron Brigade from its advanced position beyond the creek, reformed the line on the ridge where General Reynolds had originally placed it, and awaited a fresh attack, or orders from General Meade. The



two regiments of Cutler's brigade were brought back from the town, and, notwithstanding the check they had received, they fought with great gallantry throughout the three days' battle that ensued.

There was now a lull in the combat. I was waiting for the remainder of the First Corps to come up, and Heth was reorganizing his shattered front line, and preparing to bring his two other brigades forward. The remnant of Archer's brigade was placed on the right, and made to face south against Buford's cavalry, which, it was feared, might attack that flank. What was left of Davis's brigade

was sent to the extreme left of the line, and Pegram's artillery was brought forward and posted on the high ground west of Willoughby's Run.

Thus prepared, and with Pender's strong division in rear, ready to cover his retreat if defeated, or to follow up his success if victorious, Heth advanced to renew the attack.

As I had but four weak infantry brigades at this time against eight large brigades which were about to assail my line, I would have been justified in falling back, but I determined to hold on to the position until ordered to leave it. I did not believe in the system, so prevalent at that time, of avoiding the enemy. I quite agreed with Reynolds that it was best to meet him as soon as possible, for the rebellion, if reduced to a war of positions, would never end so long as the main army of the Confederates was left in a condition to take the field. A retreat, too, has a bad effect on the men. It gives them the impression that their generals think them too weak to contend with the enemy. I was not aware, at this time, that Howard was on the ground, for he had given me no indication of his presence, but I knew that General Meade was at Taneytown; and as, on the previous evening, he had informed General Reynolds that the enemy's army were concentrating on Gettysburg, I thought it probable he would ride to the front to see for himself what was going on, and issue definite orders of some kind. As Gettysburg covered the great roads from Chambersburg to York, Baltimore, and Washington, and as its possession by Lee would materially shorten and strengthen his line of retreat, I was in favor of making great sacrifices to hold it.

While we were thus temporarily successful, having captured or dispersed all the forces in our immediate front, a very misleading despatch was sent to General Meade by Gen-

eral Howard. It seems that General Howard had reached Gettysburg in advance of his corps, just after the two regiments of Cutler's brigade, which had been outflanked, fell back to the town by General Wadsworth's order. Upon witnessing this retreat, which was somewhat disorderly, General Howard hastened to send a special messenger to General Meade with the baleful intelligence that the First Corps had fled from the field at the first contact with the enemy, thus magnifying a forced retreat of two regiments, acting under orders, into the flight of an entire corps, two-thirds of which had not yet reached the field. It is unnecessary to say that this astounding news created the greatest feeling against the corps, who were loudly cursed for their supposed lack of spirit and patriotism.

About 11 A.M. the remainder of the First Corps came up, together with Cooper's, Stewart's, Reynolds's, and Stevens's batteries. By this time the enemy's artillery had been posted on every commanding position to the west of us, several of their batteries firing down the Chambersburg pike. I was very desirous to hold this road, as it was in the centre of the enemy's line, who were advancing on each side of it, and Calef—exposed as his battery was—fired over the crest of ground where he was posted, and notwithstanding the storm of missiles that assailed him, held his own handsomely, and inflicted great damage on his adversaries. He was soon after relieved by Reynolds's Battery "L" of the Second New York, which was sustained by Colonel Roy Stone's brigade of Pennsylvania troops, which I ordered there for that purpose. Stone formed his men on the left of the pike, behind a ridge running north and south, and partially sheltered them by a stone fence, some distance in advance, from which he had driven the rebel skirmish line, after an obstinate contest.

battle, for it overlooked the field, and its possession by the enemy would cut our force in two, enfilade Morrow's and Biddle's brigades, and compel a hasty retreat.

After Hall's battery was driven back, General Wadsworth borrowed Calef's regular battery from the cavalry, and posted it in the same place Hall had occupied—that is, on the right of Stone. When the remainder of the division came up, Captain Reynolds's Battery "L" of the First New York Artillery, as already stated, was sent to relieve Calef, and assist Stone by keeping down the fire of two rebel batteries on the ridge to the west, but when Ewell's artillery also opened, the cross fire became too severe. Calef was withdrawn, and Reynolds, though severely wounded, formed his battery parallel to the road, with his left sheltered by the wooded ridge. The rebel batteries soon after ceased firing for the time being, and at Wadsworth's request, Colonel Wainwright, Chief of Artillery to the First Corps, posted a section of Reynolds's battery, under Lieutenant Wilbur, on Seminary Ridge, south of the railroad cut; Stewart's Battery "B" Fourth United States being on a line north of the cut. Cooper's battery was directed to meet Ewell's attack from the north, and Stevens's Fifth Maine battery was retained behind the Seminary in reserve.

Barlow's division on the right and Schimmelpfennig's on the left, formed somewhat hastily against Ewell, whose line of battle faced south. Barlow rested his right on a wooded knoll, constituting part of the western bank of Rock Creek. As there was an open country to the east he considered that flank secure, for no enemy was in sight there, and if they came from that direction, there would be time to make fresh dispositions. After the formation there was an interval of a quarter of a mile between their left and the First Corps, which might have been avoided by placing the two divisions

farther apart. This was a serious thing to me, for the attempt to fill this interval and prevent the enemy from penetrating there, lengthened and weakened my line, and used up my reserves. It seems to me that the Eleventh Corps were too far out. It would have been better, in my opinion, if its left had been *echeloned* in rear of the right of the First Corps, and its right had rested on the strong brick buildings with stone foundations at the Almshouse. The enemy then could not have turned the right without compromising the safety of the turning column and endangering his communications; a movement he would hardly like to make, especially as he did not know what troops might be coming up. Still they had a preponderating force, and as their whole army was concentrating on Gettysburg, it was not possible to keep them back for any great length of time unless the First and Eleventh Corps were heavily reinforced. The position of our forces and those of the enemy, will be best understood by a reference to the map on page 125.

About 2 P.M., after the Eleventh Corps line was formed, General Howard rode over, inspected, and approved it. He also examined my position and gave orders, in case I was forced to retreat, to fall back to Cemetery Hill. I think this was the first and only order I received from him during the day.

Rodes's division of five brigades was formed across Seminary Ridge, facing south, with Iverson on the right, supported by Daniels and O'Neil in the centre, and Dole on the left, Ramseur being in reserve. Iverson was sent to attack the First Corps on Seminary Ridge, and O'Neil and Dole went forward about 2.45 P.M., to keep back the Eleventh Corps. When the two latter became fairly engaged in front, about 3.30 P.M., Early came up with his whole division and struck the Union right. This decided the battle in favor of the enemy.

Stone threw forward one of these—the One Hundred and Forty-ninth Pennsylvania, under Lieutenant-Colonel Dwight, to the railroad cut, where they were partially sheltered. Colonel Dana's regiment, the One Hundred and Forty-third Pennsylvania was posted on the road in rear of Dwight and to the right. When I saw this movement I thought it a very bold one, but its results were satisfactory. Two volleys and a bayonet charge by Dwight drove Daniels back for the time being.¹ In this attack Colonel Stone was severely wounded, and the command of his brigade devolved upon Colonel Wister of the One Hundred and Fiftieth Pennsylvania.

This attack should have been simultaneous with one from the nearest troops of Hill's corps, but the latter were lying down in a sheltered position, and Daniels urged them in vain to go forward.

Not being able to force his way in front on account of Dwight's position in the railroad cut, Daniels brought artillery to enfilade it, and threw the Thirty-second North Carolina across it. The cut being no longer tenable, Dwight retreated to the road and formed on Dana's left.

Daniels had been originally ordered to protect Iverson's right, but Iverson swung his right around without notifying Daniels, and thus dislocated the line.

Ramseur now came forward to aid Iverson, and I sent Paul's brigade of Robinson's division, which was accom-

¹ Dwight was a hard fighter, and not averse to plain speaking. Once, when Secretary of War Stanton had determined to grant no more passes to go down to the army, Dwight applied for permission for an old man to visit his dying son. The request was refused; whereupon Dwight said: "*My name is Dwight, Walton Dwight, Lieutenant-Colonel of the One Hundred and Forty-ninth Regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteers. You can dismiss me from the service as soon as you like, but I am going to tell you what I think of you,*" and he expressed himself in terms far from complimentary; whereupon Stanton rescinded the order and gave him the pass.

panied by Robinson in person, to assist Baxter, and if possible, to fill the interval between the First and Eleventh Corps, for I feared the enemy would penetrate there and turn my right flank.

When Paul's brigade arrived, Baxter, being out of ammunition, withdrew, and formed in the woods behind Stewart's battery to refill his cartridge-boxes.

General Howard has stated that the interval referred to was filled by Dilger's and Wheeler's batteries of the Eleventh Corps, but a glance at the official map will show that, before Paul's advance, these batteries were several hundred yards distant from the First Corps.

Another attack was now made from the north and west by both Daniels's and Davis's brigades. Colonel Wister faced his own regiment, under Lieutenant-Colonel Huidekoper, to the west, and the other two regiments to the north. The enemy were again repulsed by two volleys and a gallant bayonet charge, led by Huidekoper, who lost an arm in the fight. Colonel Wister being shot through the face the command devolved upon Colonel Dana, another veteran of the Mexican war.

There had been a great lack of co-ordination in these assaults, for they were independent movements, each repulsed in its turn. The last attack, however, against Wister was extended by Brockenborough's and Pettigrew's brigades to Morrow's front in the woods, but Morrow held on firmly to his position.

I now sent my last reserve, the One Hundred and Fifty-first Pennsylvania, to take post between Stone's and Bidle's brigades, to be in readiness to reinforce either.

So far I had done all that was possible to defend my front, but circumstances were becoming desperate. My line was very thin and weak, and my last reserve had been thrown in.

VI.—7

As we had positive information that the entire rebel army was coming on, it was evident enough that we could not contend any longer, unless some other corps came to our assistance. I therefore sent my adjutant, General Halstead, to request General Howard either to reinforce me from Steinwehr's division, or order me to retreat, as it was impossible for me to remain where I was in the face of the constantly increasing forces which were approaching from the west. Howard, with something of the incredulity which had been so inauspicious to us at Chancellorsville, insisted that Halstead mistook rail fences for troops in the distance. The lorgnettes of his staff finally convinced him of his error; he still, however, refused to order me to retire, but sent Halstead off to find Buford's cavalry, and order it to report to me. The First Corps had suffered severely in these encounters, but by this additional delay, and the overwhelming odds against us, it was almost totally sacrificed. General Wadsworth reported half of his men were killed or wounded, and Rowley's division suffered in the same proportion. Stone reported two-thirds of his brigade had fallen. Hardly a field officer remained unhurt. After five color-bearers of the Twenty-fourth Michigan Volunteers had fallen, Colonel Morrow took the flag in his own hands, but was immediately prostrated. A private then seized it, and, although mortally wounded, still held it firmly in his grasp. Buford was in a distant part of the field, with Devins's brigade, covering the retreat of the Eleventh Corps, and already had all he could attend to. He expressed himself in pretty round terms at the idea that he could keep back Hill's entire corps with Gamble's cavalry brigade alone.

As Howard seemed to have little or no confidence in his troops on Cemetery Hill, he was perhaps justified in retaining them in line there for the moral effect they would produce.

About the time the Eleventh Corps gave way on the right, the Confederate forces made their final advance in double lines, backed by strong reserves, and it was impossible for the few men left in the First Corps to keep them back, especially as Pender's large division overlapped our left for a quarter of a mile; Robinson's right was turned, and General Paul was shot through both eyes in the effort to stem the tide. They could not contend against Ramseur in front, and O'Neil on the flank, at the same time.

Under these circumstances it became a pretty serious question how to extricate the First Corps and save its artillery before it was entirely surrounded and captured.

Biddle, Morrow, and Dana were all forced back from the ridge they had defended so long, which bordered Willoughby's Run. Each brigade was flanked, and Stone's men under Dana were assailed in front and on both flanks. Yet even then Daniels speaks of the severe fighting which took place before he could win the position.

What was left of the First Corps after all this slaughter rallied on Seminary Ridge. Many of the men entered a semi-circular rail entrenchment which I had caused to be thrown up early in the day, and held that for a time by lying down and firing over the pile of rails. The enemy were now closing in on us from the south, west, and north, and still no orders came to retreat. Buford arrived about this time, and perceiving that Perrin's brigade in swinging around to envelop our left exposed its right flank, I directed him to charge. He reconnoitered the position they held, but did not carry out the order; I do not know why. It was said afterward he found the fences to be an impediment; but he rendered essential service by dismounting his men and throwing them into a grove south of the Fairfield road, where they opened a severe fire, which checked the

rebel advance and prevented them from cutting us off from our direct line of retreat to Cemetery Hill.

The first long line that came on from the west was swept away by our artillery, which fired with very destructive effect, taking the rebel line *en echarpe*.

Although the Confederates advanced in such force, our men still made strong resistance around the Seminary, and by the aid of our artillery, which was most effective, beat back and almost destroyed the first line of Scales's brigade, wounding both Scales and Pender. The former states that he arrived within seventy-five feet of the guns, and adds: "Here the fire was most severe. Every field officer but one was killed or wounded. The brigade halted in some confusion to return this fire." My Adjutant-Generals Baird and Halstead, and my aids Lee, Marten, Jones, and Lambdin had hot work carrying orders at this time, and it is a marvel that any of them survived the storm of bullets that swept the field.

Robinson was forced back toward the Seminary, but halted notwithstanding the pressure upon him, and formed line to save Stewart's battery north of the railroad cut, which had remained too long, and was in danger of being captured.

Cutler's brigade in the meantime had formed behind the railroad grading to face the men who were pursuing the Eleventh Corps. This show of force had a happy effect, for it caused the enemy in that direction to halt and throw out a skirmish line, and the delay enabled the artillery soon after to pass through the interval between Cutler on the north and Buford's cavalry on the south.

As the enemy were closing in upon us and crashes of musketry came from my right and left, I had little hope of saving my guns, but I threw my headquarters guard, under

Captain Glenn of the One Hundred and Forty-ninth Pennsylvania, into the Seminary and kept the right of Scales's brigade back twenty minutes longer, while their left was held by Baxter's brigade of Robinson's division, enabling the few remaining troops, ambulances, and artillery to retreat in comparative safety. It became necessary, however, to abandon one gun of Captain Reynolds's battery, as several of the horses were shot and there was no time to disengage them from the piece. Three broken and damaged caisson bodies were also left behind. The danger at this time came principally from Hokes's and Hays's brigades, which were making their way into the town on the eastern side, threatening to cut us off from Cemetery Hill. The troops in front of the Seminary were stayed by the firm attitude of Buford's cavalry, and made a bend in their line, apparently with a view to form square.

I waited until the artillery had gone and then rode back to the town with my staff. As we passed through the streets, pale and frightened women came out and offered us coffee and food, and implored us not to abandon them.

Colonel Livingston of my staff, who had been sent on a message, came back to the Seminary, not knowing that we had left. He says the enemy were advancing toward the crest very cautiously, evidently under the impression there was an ambuscade waiting for them there. They were also forming against cavalry.

On the way I must have met an aide that Howard says he sent to me with orders to retreat, but I do not remember receiving any message of the kind.

I observe that Howard in his account of the battle claims to have handled the First and Eleventh Corps from 11 A.M. until 4 P.M., but at 11 A.M. his corps was away back on the road, and did not arrive until about 1 P.M.

The map previously given on page 125 demonstrates that we were a mere advance guard of the army, and shows the impossibility of our defending Gettysburg for any length of time.

The First Corps was broken and defeated, but not dismayed. There were but few left, but they showed the true spirit of soldiers. They walked leisurely from the Seminary to the town, and did not run. I remember seeing Hall's battery and the Sixth Wisconsin regiment halt from time to time to face the enemy, and fire down the streets. Both Doles and Ramsey claim to have had sharp encounters there. Many of the Eleventh Corps, and part of Robinson's division, which had been far out, lost their way, and were captured in the attempt to reach Steinwehr's division on Cemetery Hill, which was the rallying point.

When I arrived there I found General Howard, surrounded by his staff, awaiting us at the main gate of the cemetery. He made arrangements to hold the road which led up from the town, and which diverged to Baltimore and Taneytown, by directing me to post the First Corps on the left in the cemetery, while he assembled the Eleventh Corps on the right. Soon after he rode over to ask me, in case his men (Steinwehr's division) deserted their guns, to be in readiness to defend them. General Schurz about this time was busily engaged in rallying his men, and did all that was possible to encourage them to form line again. I understood they were told that Sigel had arrived and assumed command, a fiction thought justifiable under the circumstances. It seemed to me that the discredit that attached to them after Chancellorsville had in a measure injured their morale and *esprit-de-corps*, for they were rallied with great difficulty.

About 4.30 P.M. General Hancock arrived with orders from

General Meade to supersede Howard. Congress had passed a law authorizing the President to put any general over any other superior in rank if, in his judgment, the good of the service demanded it, and General Meade now assumed this power in the name of the President. Owing to the false despatch Howard had sent early in the day, Meade was under the impression that the First Corps had fled without fighting, and Hancock had orders to rally them. More than half the corps now lay dead and wounded on the field, and hardly a field officer had escaped.

Howard refused to submit to Hancock's assumption of authority, and quite a scene occurred. He said, "Why, Hancock, you cannot give any orders here! I am in command, and I rank you!" Hancock replied that he was sent by order of General Meade, but Howard said he should refuse to acknowledge his authority. Hancock then said he would go back to headquarters and report, but Howard asked him to remain and help him organize the troops. Hancock then rode over to me, perhaps a little doubtful whether I would join Howard in not recognizing his right to command. As he ranked me, and I had the greatest confidence in his ability, I was happy to serve under him. He said, "General Doubleday, I command this field, and I wish you to send a regiment over to that hill," pointing to Culp's Hill. I answered: "My corps have been fighting, General, since ten o'clock, and they have been all cut to pieces." He replied: "I know that, sir, but this is a great emergency, and every one must do all he can." He rode over again soon after, and asked if I had sent the regiment. I replied: "My regiments are now reduced to the size of companies. I have sent a brigade under General Wadsworth."

Hancock was much pleased with the ridge we were on, as a defensive position, and considered it admirably adapted