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WHAT I SAW OF THE BATTLE OF CHICKAHOMINY.

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IF the reader expects from this somewhat egotistical title an egotistical story, he will be mistaken. For he will find that the humble narrator assigns himself no part in that great struggle, save that of a very obscure but (he claims) an intelligent, and certainly an interested spectator. And let it be enough added concerning the question, Who is the narrator? that he was then a soldier of the Confederate army under General Lee, falling substantially in that class called in those days "high privates." He was, indeed, by no means "high" in his fortunes or position; but could at least claim, without self-flattery, these qualities denoted by the phrase: a liberal education, wholly civic and contemplating anything in the future rather than a military career; a motive purely disinterested and devoid of military aspiration in donning the "gray," and a corresponding place in the service entirely obscure and subordinate. The story compels one other statement, in spite of the fear of egotism, to give the necessary answer to the reader's question: "How came a mere 'high private' to see anything in the great battle of Chickahominy so much more worth narrating than what any other private saw, that he should claim a place in THE SOUTHERN MAGAZINE?" It was on this wise, gentle reader. The staff-organisation of our armies was then imperfect, and, as many will remember, the place of "orderlies" near the persons of the Generals commanding corps and armies was supplied by the temporary detail of men from some neighboring body of cavalry. (A very sorry usage, which General Lee soon superseded.) Now let it be supposed that it was the fortune of the writer to be

detailed for such a task, and attached to the person and staff of Stonewall Jackson during the "campaign around Richmond," and the reader will apprehend his position with sufficient correctness. And although there may still be apparent reason to complain of the writer "*stat nominis umbra*," the shade still entreats the benevolent readers to believe that the incidents related are all of the most substantial authenticity, seen with his own eyes and heard with his own ears. Of their truth, a sufficient evidence it is hoped will be found in their *vraisemblance*, and their consistency with the published histories of the battle and the testimony of survivors. Some one may say that the minute accuracy affected in relating incidents, and even words, after such a lapse of time is suspicious. My defence is, first, that the tremendous scene was indelibly impressed upon a memory not unretentive by the novelty and interest of the occasion; next, that the recollections of it have been kept bright by the oral detail of the narrative from time to time to private circles of interested friends; and last and chiefest, that I am guided by written records or memoranda of the incidents, made during a tedious convalescence from camp-fever contracted at that time.\*

Let it be added (after the fashion of the politicians who always excuse their aspirations thus, modest souls!) that these friends who have heard my little narrative deem it worth telling to the great public, and among them so has judged the editor of *THE SOUTHERN MAGAZINE*. It was my strange fortune to witness from my obscurity something of the inner working of the machinery of that grand drama which has never been disclosed in print; and I believe that my exact and homely detail of the sayings and doings of the historic personages who were then before me, will give a fresher and also a more truthful conception of them than that derived from the more stately Muse of History.

Before I proceed to tell just what I saw in the battle of Chickahominy, let me remind the reader of the events which will make my story intelligible. General Lee had succeeded to the command of the army defending Richmond; and General Jackson, after completing his immortal "Valley campaign" at Port Republic, had brought his victorious corps by forced marches to assist in driving McClellan away from Richmond. On the night of June 26, 1862, he reached Pole Green Church, a few miles north of the Chickahominy, and went into bivouac there as the initial battle at Mechanicsville began between the Hills and McClellan's extreme right. It will be remembered that the Federal army had held up to this time both sides of the Chickahominy, and was steadily creeping up so as to enclose the north-east angle of the city in its monstrous jaws. General Lee's plan was to turn its right wing, and so cut it off from its point of support and its ships at the White House. It was to effect this that Jackson was bearing down from Ashland upon the Chickahominy, and the Hills and Longstreet were thrown to the north side of

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\*As the value of a historical statement depends upon its exact authenticity, and our contributor, from mere shyness of publicity, will not permit us to append his name, we think it proper to state that we can, from our personal knowledge, guaranty his veracity; and also that the MS. has been read by the Rev. Dr. Dabney, who admits the entire accuracy of all the statements referring to the battle.—Ed.

the same stream the afternoon of June 26th. The threatening presence of Jackson, and the successes of the Hills at Mechanicsville, effectually changed McClellan's position at the end of that day. On the morning of the 27th he withdrew a few miles eastward, and taking up an exceedingly strong position, with his back to the marshy stream and his front towards the north, awaited an attack from the Confederates. It was to force this position, from Old Cold Harbor to Powhite Creek, that the battle of Chickahominy was fought.

Let my story begin with the morning of June 27, and let the reader bear in mind that my special duty was to attach myself to the person of Jackson's Chief-of-Staff at such times as he might be separated from his commander, in order to keep up communication between them. Of this Chief-of-Staff it becomes me to speak with reserve, as he is still living; and yet of him I must speak, or else not tell my story. People had been very much surprised, as is well known, when, after the death of Major Alfred Jackson, the General had pressed this post upon the acceptance of the Rev. Dr. Dabney, a middle-aged clergyman and professor, of the Presbyterian denomination in Virginia, without military education, and devoted all his life to the cloister and the pastoral office. Military men opened their eyes very wide at the appointment, and not a few evidently thought it very preposterous. The reverend gentleman came to Headquarters about the beginning of the great Valley campaign, and it so happened that his first appearance before the troops was on the Sabbath, and as a preacher. It looked very queer to many to see the chief Adjutant in a black coat, leading the public worship; and when a few days after active operations began, it seemed equally queer to mere army men to see the parson busy amidst the flying shells and dust, leading brigadiers to their places on the battle-field. But, as my story will in part show, the hearty devotion with which he served the General would have gone far to justify him in his strange selection had the Rev. Adjutant been able to keep the field. Unfortunately, his constitution, weakened by the confinement of study, and lacking early habituation to campaign life, was wholly inadequate to the exposures of such a service; and the oversight of this was perhaps the chief mistake which Jackson made in seeking a Chief-of-Staff in such a quarter. Certainly it would be against all rule for me to speak otherwise than kindly of Major Dabney; for during my short connexion with him I received from him only courtesy, and was treated with a consideration and even confidence proper for a fellow patriot and social equal rather than for a poor orderly. And such indeed was the deportment which prevailed in that cluster of chivalrous and polished gentlemen which composed Stonewall's dust-begrimed, hard-worked, and hungry staff during the terrific struggle when I served them.

But my old superior (who I know is both a contributor to and a reader of THE SOUTHERN MAGAZINE) must bear with me if I pause here to tell one or two stories at his expense which I found current in the corps. There was in the Stonewall Brigade a colonel famous for his almost reckless courage, and equally so for the independence of his opinions. A few days after the Rev. Major was installed Chief-

of-Staff, it was related that Col. G. had business at Headquarters; where he fancied he had seen among the younger officers something too much of self-sufficiency. On his return, a brother officer asked him how he liked the new *régime*. "Oh," said he, "I have great hopes of Headquarters now, for they have an Adjutant there who isn't certain that he knows everything." It was the same gallant Col. G. who, upon farther acquaintance, declared that although far from a church-going man, he meant to go to hear the Chief-of-Staff preach whenever he could; "for," said he, "he is not any more afraid of bullets than the rest of us sinners; and besides, he preaches like the very d—l." The other story was of Ewell, then a Major-General in Jackson's corps; the grimness of whose humor in battle was only equalled by the generosity of his heart. It seems that he had happened to be present on a Sunday when the Rev. Chief-of-Staff pressed upon his brethren very energetically the comfort and courage of a good hope of the heavenly rest. A few days after, in the progress of a battle, he passed the General conducting a battery or a regiment into the fire, with a very solemn look. "Ha!" exclaimed Ewell, "it seems the prospect of getting quickly to his rest isn't any more elating to him than to us reprobates!" (That title the old war-horse has no longer any pretext to apply to himself, for we are happy to learn that he has become a devout churchman). But to return.

I resume my story on the morning of June the 27th. The sun was bright and the air was balmy, and all nature was as placid as though no bloody work was to be done. The corps had resumed its march towards the scene of conflict, and had a little brush with the Yankee outposts, of which I saw nothing; and General Jackson had gone before us to the front. When we overtook him he had dismounted in the road, and was conversing in a subdued tone with an oldish gentleman who sat upon a cedar stump beside the way, while a body of Confederate troops was marching past and many officers were standing at a respectful distance around. An acquaintance whispered, "Did you ever see General Lee? That is he sitting upon the stump." It may be imagined I looked with all my eyes, and scanned that serene and classic face with which the whole world is now so familiar, the neat and well-dressed figure which somehow managed always to preserve the cleanest and trimmest appointments in the roughest turmoil, and that matchless *pose* and bearing which made even the stump seem a throne. He was evidently communicating to General Jackson his final instructions for the battle. While we awaited their will, my friend again whispered to me, "Would you like to see the Richmond *Examiner*?" He pointed me to a gentleman who had just ridden up in the train of a general officer. The latter was perhaps the most unmarked in appearance of all the mounted men around us; spare and short, dressed in a fatigue-jacket of gray flannel, with no plume, only a queer little felt-hat, and the least possible insignia which could designate his rank. The former was the very model of a *preux chevalier*, with every point of his equipment perfect, and as near military foppery as good taste would permit. This was Major John M. Daniel, whose pen was as trenchant as the sharpest sword, the world-famous editor of the *Examiner* newspaper; and his

superior was General A. P. Hill. Daniel's exquisite uniform was destined in a few hours to be dabbled with his own blood; for this was the day on which he received the wound which, with other infirmities, extinguished his fiery soul with the dying Confederacy.

As soon as Lee and Jackson had finished their conference, the latter resumed his march; diverging to the east upon a little country road parallel to the Chickahominy, while A. P. Hill marched on the direct road towards Gaines's Mill, in a south-east direction. It appeared that General Lee was at this time not aware of McClellan's design of concentrating on the south side of the Chickahominy, and making the James river his base; but expected him if defeated to retire to the White House. Hence he desired General Jackson to make a circuit to the left and fall squarely upon him at Old Cold Harbor. We marched then diligently to the east for a few miles, and then to the south. A little while before we came to the road which turned southward to that place, General Whiting (commanding then the brigades of Law and Hood) came riding back in an excited and hurried manner to General Jackson, who was at the head of the corps. He exclaimed, "General Jackson, there is a heavy force of infantry about a mile to the north-east of us in line of battle! They are visible across this farm; they must be a body of the enemy." When Jackson paused to hear this statement, the column naturally paused also; and as it seemed, without any special command. He rode in the direction indicated by General Whiting up a little hillock about thirty yards distant, and with his chin extended in his usual fashion, eyed the distant line for an instant. He then rode back and said to the Colonel commanding the leading regiment, in the quietest and driest possible tone, "Forward your column," deigning no reply and not even a look to Whiting. It soon appeared that the troops were those of D. H. Hill, who, moving earlier in the morning, had preceded us, and was awaiting us to make a junction with us at the turn of the road; Jackson had obviously recognised them at once. But Whiting's color and countenance showed that he felt this little scene as a "cut direct," and the subsequent events of the day confirmed our impression. The explanation which was whispered around the staff was that Whiting, who had been a brilliant Senior in West Point when Jackson was a Freshman, and who had assisted him in his early studies, did not exactly remember the changed relations, and was rather too much disposed still to tender Jackson his assistance in mastering the harder lessons of the day. This little scene was Jackson's hint to him to mind his own business.

When we reached the angle where the little road turned southward to Cold Harbor, so exact was the correspondence of the movements of the two bodies, the head of Hill's column was not twenty yards from that of Jackson's, and they were actually intermingling before anybody bethought himself of giving the word to halt. General D. H. Hill was at the head of his division, mounted, as I distinctly remember, on a light dun horse with a brilliant white mane, on which his groom evidently expended no little of his ambition. The General said to some member of Jackson's staff: "Are you going to run your men into mine?" (They were in the act of turning into the same

road together.) He also stated that it was agreed he should have the front; thereupon Jackson's column was halted, and remained stationary until Hill's whole division had passed before them. General Jackson having come up, they greeted each other, and rode together at the head of Hill's column. I do not think that there was any advanced guard either of cavalry or infantry before us. As we passed Cold Harbor, a Yankee surgeon came trotting down the road on our right, in an exceedingly comfortable one-horse carriage, and almost drove into our party before he perceived the company he was in. His surprise may be imagined when he was ordered to dismount from his seat, turn over his fine equipage to a quartermaster's orderly, and trudge to the rear on foot, a prisoner. As we proceeded southward we speedily came to a line of military telegraph-wire. Jackson ordered this to be instantly cut, that the Federal Generals might have no further use of it in the battle. General Hill called for a good climber, when a tall North Carolinian from his front regiment stepped from the ranks, and laying down his musket, climbed the pole like a squirrel and twisted the wire apart with his hands. Resuming our advance, we proceeded about half a mile beyond Cold Harbor, going towards the Chickahominy, when we suddenly came in view of a line of battle composed of Yankee infantry and artillery, standing perfectly quiet, but in rather uncomfortable proximity. While General Hill began to deploy one or two of his front regiments into line, to be ready for them, General Jackson rode forward upon a little hillock to gain a better view of them. Our curiosity led some of us to follow him. After a moment a small cannon was fired at him, from somewhere in or near this line, and with an aim so accurate as to the lateral direction that the ball passed directly over his head. But fortunately it was too high. I never before or since saw a cannon ball so distinctly in the air. Although a small one, and fired at so short a range, it was as distinctly visible as a cricket-ball hit away by a sturdy batsman, and apparently about as large. This was the signal for the opening of a furious cannonade upon us and the line which General Hill was forming. General Jackson turned and galloped to the rear for about a mile, as fast as his horse could carry him. As he swept past us, he or somebody said, "Scatter, so as to make less mark;" and many diverged to the right and left. Several of us ran very narrow risks, and it was said one member of the staff was wounded by this fire. After it lulled a little we all re-assembled, finding the General in the road north of Cold Harbor along which we had approached. Some more of D. H. Hill's regiments were advanced and posted, and then there was a pause as though of indecision. So marked was this that I ventured to dismount and give my horse a little pouch of Yankee corn, which I had taken from a great mound of sacks in one of their deserted camps. (It was little, flinty, peaked stuff, not much better than our pop-corn, and probably came from far North.) Nor was I interrupted in my project; for neither General nor staff seemed to do anything, nor to have any use for me, until I and my horse had finished our lunch. My surprise at this delay was satisfied afterwards when I read Jackson's report of this battle. He there stated that he had been informed McClellan was

expected to fall back towards the White House in case of reverses, and that he paused until General Lee, who was fighting him to the west of us, should drive him, that we might give him a mortal side-thrust on his retreat.

But about 2 o'clock P. M., Jackson seems to have concluded that McClellan was more likely to drive than be driven. He evidently got tired of waiting, and began to bestir himself in good earnest. General officers hurried to their posts, and aides were sent dashing up and down. As soon as the posting of D. H. Hill's division was completed, Ewell's, which was hurried up close upon its heels, was directed to a position by Jackson himself. These two Generals rode up and down together for some minutes until the desired place was assigned to each brigade. Then Jackson said: "Now, General, I will show you where to take in your artillery." They rode through an opening in the thin wood-land which fringed the right side of the road at that place, into a broad and smoothly undulating old field. "Here," said Jackson, "is a nice place for several batteries; and that opening in the woods will enable you to drive in easily, and to get out easily in case you should wish to retreat." Ewell asked: "Shall I have the enemy in range from this place?" "Oh, yes," replied Jackson, "over there; and I wish you to pepper those woods on the right well with shells." Ewell answered: "General, I think there is no enemy there." "Why, yes," said Jackson; "have not their sharpshooters been firing on us from that wood?" The partial view I had had of the topography while riding in the suite of the two Generals had convinced me that General Jackson mistook his direction here, confounding this reach or bay of wood-land with another nearer the Chickahominy. I learned afterward that Ewell was right; there was no enemy in that part.

General Ewell now galloped away, leaving General Jackson standing in this field. He seemed to muse for an instant, and then turned towards us evidently desiring to see which of his staff was at hand. There was no one but Major Dabney at the moment, the rest having been sent on different errands. Now occurred a scene which was to me a most surprising manifestation, under the circumstances, of thoughtful kindness. I soon learned, however, that while Jackson met any display of indolence, cowardice, or self-indulgence with the sternest and most exacting spirit, as though with a sort of fierce craving for a good occasion to expose and chastise these faults; if he believed that a subordinate was devoted and brave, and was truly zealous to do his duty, no superior could be more generous, forbearing, and even tender. Wheeling his horse at this time upon his chief-of-staff in a sudden and decisive manner, he began: "Major Dabney, I wish you to go at once down the whole line and instruct the commanders of brigades how to go into action. But no" (seeing another officer whom we will not name ride up, who was not regularly subject to, and yet disposable at the time for such an errand); "you shall not go; Major K. shall go. You have been far from well, and I do not wish you to ride much in the sun, lest you should have fever." Here Major Dabney interposed eagerly: "General, I am well enough for my duties; and on such a day as this there is no time to consider in-

disposition. I beg, Sir, that you will send me." "No," replied Jackson, "you shall not go; Major K. can carry my instructions very well." The other sought again to persuade him, but the General addressed himself to Major K. in a tone which precluded farther pressing: "Major K., I wish you to go to all the brigade-commanders in the rear and tell them to go into action. You will find the troops resting along the road by which we came this morning. The movement must begin from the left, and be extended to the right; and I wish the brigades to go in *en échelon*. Each brigade must get its direction by keeping in sight and supporting distance of the right of the brigade next on its left. This and the sound of the firing will be sufficient guides for them. As to artillery, the brigade-commanders must use their own discretion; if the ground will permit, tell them to take it in and use it; if not, to leave it parked in the rear. And remember, I do not wish them to wait for any other orders, but to move as soon as they can, and engage the enemy wherever they meet him." Major K. touched his hat and said "Yes, Sir!" though with a mystified countenance, which, to my eye, promised no very hopeful comprehension of this plan of battle. Unfortunately, the General seemed too much pre-occupied to notice him, and he cantered off.

For a few moments General Jackson rode short distances in two or three directions, giving no orders of any importance. He then turned again to his Chief-of-Staff, saying, "Major, where is your brother?" (This brother, Charles W. Dabney, Esq., of Hanover, had joined us at the General's request when we entered that county, as guide to the army. We learned that he was an old lawyer of the county, well acquainted with its people and roads. Where his own local knowledge of by-ways was not perfect, he was able to detail from the troops raised from his county, trustworthy young men, whom he could recommend to the General as guides). Major Dabney stated that as he had no command, was in civilian's dress, and would not be needed in battle as a guide, he had advised him to go to the rear when the firing began. "Can you find him again?" asked the General; "I want another guide." He replied that it was unlikely he could then find him. "Try, at any rate," said the General. "If you will go to the road there towards the rear and inquire of those who pass, you will probably learn where he is; and request him, if you please, to send me another guide." "I will try my best, Sir," he replied, and was moving off in a very discontented and reluctant way when the General called to him in a voice of positive tenderness: "Now, Major, don't exert yourself much on this errand. Take your place under a tree beside the road and wait there until you hear of him. I wish you to avoid the sun to-day." The soliloquy in which the Major indulged as we rode away to execute this order was not very grateful. It was muttered in about these words: "I am obliged to go, but he will see I won't stay. Sit under a shade-tree and wait, indeed, on such a day as this! It is nothing but an artifice to 'invalid' me for the rest of the evening, and I don't mean to be invalidated." To the road we went, however, and Major Dabney began very diligently to inquire of passing orderlies, cavalry-men, and ambulance-men, if the guide had been seen by them towards the rear. His inquiries were,



of course, vain; the confusion in the rear of a great battle is too huge to leave any hope of meeting an individual save by chance.

After a little time spent in these inquiries, I noticed in Major Dabney a restlessness which was evidently making him gravitate towards the troops. First, we made a pretext of a little rivulet in that direction which offered a convenient place for drinking and watering our horses. While they drank he was anxiously listening to the firing, which had now become general and violent. He remarked that the sound convinced him that the reserve brigades had not engaged the enemy as the General desired; and this confirmed the painful misgiving which he had from the first, that Major K. had misunderstood his instructions. Again and again we listened, and my leader declared himself more and more assured that the rear brigades had not gone in. His anxiety now rose to a positive agony. "What ought I to do?" he asked, half thinking aloud and half questioning. "This terrible mistake must be corrected. If I go to seek the General and tell him my suspicions, which would be the regular thing, it may consume a half-hour to find him; or more. Matters must be critical! Time is precious. Should I not take the thing into my own hand at once? I have no authority to do so; but this is no time for 'red tape.' Let them reprimand; let them cashier if they please; this battle shall not be lost by squeamishness, if I can help it." His mind thus made up, he flung himself into the saddle (for we had dismounted) and galloped off towards the reserves. As we came in sight of the troops, General Ewell's right brigade, that of Trimble, had just completed its formation, and was sweeping in line of battle through an open forest of oak which screened it from the enemy. Just beyond this forest (by the way the troops had come) was a little farm, surrounded and somewhat interspersed with young groves of "old-field pines," which were especially dense on the side next the enemy. In this opening I saw two brigades of infantry; the nearer standing at ease, and the farther in the act of countermarching its several regiments simultaneously. The former was that of Law, the latter that of Hood, both under the command of General Whiting. There was a group of officers near the former apparently as unoccupied as the men, and with them was their General. Major Dabney saluted him with studied respect, although Whiting's air showed at the first glance a feeling of discontent; and the following dialogue, in substance, occurred.

*D.*—"General Whiting, has Major K. been here with instructions from General Jackson about taking your division into action?"

*W.*—"Yes; he was here a while ago, with a farrago of which I could make nothing."

*D.*—"Did he say to you that it was the General's desire you should go into action as soon as possible, without waiting for further communication with him?"

*W.*—"No; about the only thing clear that I could get from him was that the General would send me word when to begin."

*D.*—"As I feared, Major K. has totally misunderstood General Jackson." [*Whiting.*—"I can't help that, Sir; it's not my fault."] "I must say in candor that I am not now charged with new orders

to you from the General. But I was present when he gave Major K. his instructions for you, and I am sure that I comprehend them. What I ask is this: that you will listen to my account of the General's plan, and then act as your own sense of duty prompts."

W.—"Well, Sir?"

D.—"The General designed the reserve brigades to move *without waiting for further orders*" (with pointed emphasis), "and on the following plan." [Here Major Dabney detailed the substance of what General Jackson had told Major K. about the movement *en échelon*, which need not be repeated.]

W.—"You say I am to keep my left in supporting distance of my next neighbor on that side? Who is next me there?"

D.—"Those are the troops, Sir," (pointing with his hand) "whom you see advancing through those woods, General Trimble's brigade of Ewell's division."

W.—(Pettishly). "How am I to march a line through such a thicket as that before us there?"

D.—(With a quiet smile, and a voice studiously bland). "General Whiting, every one knows that in knowledge of tactics I am but an infant compared with you; but even I can suggest a way. The men may be passed through the thickets marching by flanks of companies, with some skirmishers well in front; and when these come upon the enemy, your companies can be wheeled again into line. I wish you a very good evening, Sir."

As we rode off I confess to a strong surmise that General Whiting would refuse to act. But it would seem he thought better of it; for those who remember the history of the battle will recall the splendid and decisive share which his two brigades took in its closing scenes.

These explanations unavoidably occupied time. But we hurried on, and came next to the Georgia brigade of General A. R. Lawton, magnificent in numbers, equipment, and drill. The men were lying down near the road in a tall pine wood of second growth, resting upon the dry pine-straw. Very soon we came upon General Lawton, dismounted beside the road. Major Dabney immediately made the same inquiry as in the previous case, and received the same answer. He then gave his explanations as before, but more briefly, because they seemed to find a more willing hearer. Indeed, there was in the manner of General Lawton and of the commanders of the remaining brigades, a contrast as refreshing to our anxious minds as "good news from a far country." General Lawton declared his purpose of acting upon the wishes of Jackson, and we hurried on. We next came to the famous Stonewall Brigade, and the two others, the 3d Virginia, commanded by Colonel (Judge) Fulkerson during the sickness of General W. B. Taliaferro, and the 2d Virginia, commanded by Colonel Cunningham. These had served longer with Jackson, and his Adjutant evidently felt on surer ground in instructing them of his wishes. These troops were also found standing still and waiting for orders, and their commanders made statements in explanation similar to that given by General Whiting. At the head of the Stonewall Brigade we found their commander, General Charles Winder, a man rather slight in stature, but a model of knightly beauty and grace,

mounted on a very handsome bay horse admirably suited to his size. Major Dabney gave his explanations to him, concluding with the statement that he was not authorised by General Jackson to convey orders to him, but had come to correct the mistake upon his own responsibility. General Winder said, "You do not claim authority to *order* the brigade into action, Major ; but what is your own advice ? How shall I act in this unfortunate dilemma ?"

*Major Dabney.*—"General, if I commanded the brigade, I should engage the enemy just as soon as I could reach him, because I believe that is what General Jackson will approve."

*General Winder.*—"Yes, you are right, and I shall do so at once." Instantly giving the word to march, he set the brigade in motion, as it seemed to me, in a half-minute, and it disappeared in the thickets before we had ridden fifty yards. How cheering, how inspiring was the open, chivalrous countenance of Winder as he thus responded to the summons, and the alacrity of the officers and men about him ! Intelligence, heroism, and presage of victory sat upon his polished brow ; and as his "Stonewall" disappeared so silently and swiftly in the wood seeking the enemy, I felt the load of anxiety which I had assumed by sympathy from Major Dabney, lifted clear off my heart. The interviews with the other two commanders presented nothing different from the last. Colonels Fulkerson and Cunningham were found like the others waiting for orders, and as soon as they were undeceived moved promptly towards the battle. Thus six brigades of the best troops, containing between twelve and fifteen thousand bayonets, which were standing idle from a misconception of orders while the very crisis of the battle was passing, were sent into action in time to save the day. As I recall the subsequent casualties of war, I am startled to think how few of those who were set right that afternoon are still living to confirm my story. Of the five general officers or brigade-commanders whom we saw, General Lawton is the only survivor ! Fulkerson fell mortally wounded within an hour after he responded so gallantly to the instructions ; Winder and Cunningham gave up their lives a few weeks after at Cedar Mountain ; Whiting fell at Fort Fisher, near the close of the war.

Having seen the last regiment in motion, my leader set off to return to the place where we left the General. We must have been at least four miles distant, for the road we had travelled gave space for some fifteen thousand men and their numerous artillery, ambulance, and ammunition trains. So many explanations and so much riding had unavoidably consumed a considerable time, and according to a vague recollection it must have been about an hour by sun when we ultimately found General Jackson. But this was not so easily done. He was not, nor was any one in the field where we left him. The evening sun was lurid with smoke and dust ; the woods for miles literally fuming with sulphurous vapor, and a general and far-extended fire of large and small arms told us of the vast dimensions and fury of the battle. We went on our way inquiring for the General, and at length, when we were about a mile nearer Cold Harbor, and also nearer the line of battle, we saw the flag which marked his escort in a distant old field. Major Dabney had remarked that he should have

to tell of the erroneous orders issued in order to explain his own absence and the responsibility he had assumed; but when we galloped up to the General he seemed to perceive at once that it was no time for explanations, and merely said: "General, my brother can not be found." Jackson answered "No matter; I need no guides now." He was in a state of excitement such as I never saw in him, which transfigured his whole nature. His usual self-possessed, business-like air in battle had given place to a sort of concentrated rage, by which his faculties were not confused but braced. His face was crimson; the nerves of his chin and cheeks twitching convulsively, his lips purple from sucking a piece of lemon which he held in his hand and applied to his mouth unconsciously, his blue eyes blazing with a species of glare. He was riding hither and thither as if almost carried away with an uncontrollable impulse to dash into one or another part of his line of battle, but after a career of twenty or thirty yards he arrested his horse with a sudden jerk which almost threw him upon his haunches. His voice especially had undergone a peculiar change. Always rather curt, it had now become actually savage, like the bark of some beast of prey in furious combat; the very tones made my blood tingle. Yet let not the reader misunderstand me; still there was no rant, no scolding or declamation, no forgetfulness even of his ordinary courtesy, and not a superfluous word or a shade of confusion in his orders. There seemed to be in his single body the energies of a volcano or a tempest, curbed by his iron will. I thought then, and still think, that I could conceive the cause of this unwonted excitement: he believed that his last brigade had been engaged for an hour, or possibly for hours, and that the enemy's force was unbroken, hence his anxiety and anger.

When we rode up I noticed a man on foot dressed in an ordinary cavalry jacket such as was worn by privates, who took the liberty, which no one else dared to do at that time, of addressing his observations to General Jackson. He seemed travel-soiled, but alert and well-set, and wore a bushy red beard. I was mystified by his presence and by the familiar terms which he seemed to assume with the terrible figure before us. At one time Jackson rode up to him after returning from one of his aimless "spurts," and said, touching him on the shoulder, "See here." They retired a few paces, and Jackson bending low from his horse, said something in his ear. The dismounted man shook his head in an emphatic way, and said clearly and distinctly these three words: "Too many cannon." A little after he said in a clear high-pitched voice, like the ring of a bugle: "General, all your artillery on the left is idle; nobody is firing except Pelham." This made me surmise that the speaker was my own world-famous commander, "Jeb Stuart," whom I never had the honor of seeing before near enough to recognise his features. His words now directed my attention to the fact that the cannonade, which was terrific, came all from one side, except from a single gun. Earlier in the action a heavy park of artillery had been sent down to the left and stationed on a plateau beyond the Old Cold Harbor Tavern, but they were now all silent. Nearer to us, and a full third of a mile to the front, in a little depression of the field, was a single Confederate

gun which had been pounding away ever since my return in a most pertinacious manner, and was drawing to itself, apparently, the attentions of a whole Yankee battery. This then was an instance of the audacious gallantry of the "boy hero" Pelham; and truly, when we deliberately observed how he was courting the fire of a whole army, we stood amazed at his daring. The last I saw of the gun it was still there in its little hollow, and still firing with as game a spirit as ever; and I have no doubt that, when it moved, it advanced in pursuit at the grand *finale*.

But as soon as General Stuart called Jackson's attention to the fact that all his own batteries had suspended firing, he turned to Major Dabney and said: "Major, please go to the left and tell all the batteries to resume their fire, and to keep it up whether they have a good object in their view or not." He galloped away, and very soon thirty or thirty-five additional guns began to add their din to the roar of battle. About the time of his return, Captain Pendleton, the Assistant Adjutant, and a favorite aide of the General, came from the direction of the right and reported something — I surmised a message from General Lee. Jackson's answer was, "Very well." After a few moments he wheeled his horse upon him, and said in a tone of inexpressible sharpness and authority: "Captain Pendleton, go to the line and see all the commanders. Tell them *this thing has hung in suspense too long. Sweep the field with the bayonet!*" A hazardous errand for Pendleton truly; but that brave man only replied, "Yes, Sir," and with a rigid face darted away towards the line of battle. Before he had gotten out of our sight, however, a rolling cheer ran like a wave along the line for more than a mile, and told us that the day was won. As was apparent afterwards, the six reserve brigades had now gotten well into action at various points, and their overtaken comrades, with their assistance, were enabled to drive in the enemy at almost every point. The sun was now near the tree-tops. About this time also a handsome officer (who, I was told, was Major Courtenay of the artillery) rode up and said in substance: "General, I have under my direction twelve guns which have not been engaged at all; I take the liberty of reminding you of this, just to say that we should be very glad to be of some service." This brought the first relaxation to Jackson's stern lip which it had felt for many long hours. (It may be that the Confederate cheer had already brought some consolation.) With a gracious smile he said: "Certainly, Major. Yes, I am *very* much obliged to you. Major Dabney, go with him down to the left and show him a good place to put in his guns." So off we went again to the road in the rear where the batteries were waiting, and availing ourselves of such depressions in the fields as would partially shield us from the shells which were flying over, we coasted as swiftly as we could around the rear of the batteries already engaged, and took a position on the extreme left of them. On this ride I saw a thing not a little mortifying. The old road near the tavern was worn by time into a species of excavation. On the safe side of this, lying on their breasts upon the clay bank, were rows of Confederate soldiers unhurt and with muskets in their hands. I must have seen fifty of them; as many as

twenty in one place. Their infantry line was then far in advance. Among Major Courtenay's guns were two long iron smooth-bores, carrying eighteen-pound balls. The bellow of these two guns and the hurtling of their great round balls through the air added the crowning touch to the turmoil of the rout which had now become universal. So dense was the smoke that after the sun once sank beneath the horizon, the darkness came on with more than tropical suddenness, and the firing soon died away on all hands.

The task now was to find the General again; no easy one in the confusion of the closing battle and gathering darkness. The roads, the fields, were thronged with bodies of infantry, trains of ambulances, stragglers, cavalry, artillery, and wagons. As we struggled hopelessly along, a voice was heard ten yards in front of us which we recognised as that of General Jackson, but calm and subdued. On joining him, we found him leaning forward upon the pommel of his saddle, his head drooping and his whole form relaxed with languor. The fire of battle had burned out in him, and nature asserted her rights to repose. After the exchange of greetings and congratulations, he said: "I must rest; please find a house where I can get some food and sleep." We then rode wearily towards the west, and ultimately found a resting-place in the house of Mr. Sydnor, above Gaines's Mill. And this, with many ghastly corpses on the morrow, was what I saw of the battle of Chickahominy. Truly my agency in it was not of a very useful or honorable sort; but I consoled myself with the reflections that I had done what I was commanded to do, and had come out with whole limbs.

When General Jackson's report appeared, his whispered conference with Stuart was explained. It seems that the former, becoming impatient of the delay of victory, had proposed to the latter to mass all the cavalry under his command at that time into one imposing column of attack, and charge the enemy's right centre across the plateau in front of the "Magee House." General Stuart demurred, on the ground that the Federalists could display too much artillery to leave hope for success; and the suggestion was dropped. Major Dabney, detailing to his brother that night the incidents of the day, expressed a disposition to make no disclosure to the General of the errors which had been made and corrected, unless he demanded an account of them. He said that the mischief was remedied and a great battle won; that there was no use in making trouble for a brother-officer whose intentions were good; and he was inclined to let the matter sleep. I thought that this was a stretch of good-nature very extraordinary, not to say questionable; and that he might well have considered the advantage to his own standing with his commander of such a narrative, in removing any appearance of too great a readiness to avail himself of the permission to "remain under the shade." But he seemed indifferent to his own military reputation. It may be surmised that when the official report appeared the next year my curiosity led me to scan it carefully, in order to discover whether Jackson was aware of this part of the history of his own battle. There is not a word of allusion to it; and no reader of the report can fail to derive the impression that it was drawn up in

ignorance of it. The reflection which most obviously presents itself from this piece of true history is, that Jackson believed in Providence, and Providence took care of him. His faith in a superintending oversight of God was most vivid and practical; his prayers for its reception in all the affairs of the army most earnest and persevering. And now, when an evil threatened him of which he was unconscious, a remedy was applied which, so far as he was concerned, was fortuitous. Was not this an answer to prayer? Some one may say that to carry out this view consistently we should be able to show that this reliance on Providence was also able to save his life at Chancellorsville. I reply that his death, or rather his translation there, is the crowning proof of the favor of that Power in which he trusted. He was "taken away from the evil to come," and in that respect more happy than those who survive to experience and witness the oppression of the land we love.

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### IN THE LAST DAYS.

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**O**NCE more through storm and calm the changeful hours  
Have brought to longing hearts their Christmas Day;  
And lo! the dying year strews pale snow-flowers  
In the great monarch's way.

Not as before, gold, frankincense, and myrrh,  
But tribute of hushed winds, and clear pure skies  
Through whose calm depths life's toil-stained wayfarer  
May look with faith-purged eyes,

And see Heaven opened, and the Great White Throne  
Gleam glorious with Him who sits thereon,  
Like to a jasper and a sardine stone—  
As wrote of yore Saint John.

The Earth is old, and gray the hairs of Time  
Have grown since erst the journeying Sages came  
From the far East, on that strange quest sublime,  
Star-led, to Bethlehem.

And we, the latest of Earth's pilgrim sons,  
Holding our course through rougher ways than theirs,  
Sternier and sadder than those former ones,  
With the whole weight of cares