

superior genius of the Confederate Generals. With Lee, Jackson and Longstreet in command nothing seemed impossible to their troops, and, therefore, it was with no feelings of fear for the result that they surveyed the long and glittering lines before them.

Soon after sunrise slight artillery skirmishing commenced along the lines, which increased in volume until the air seemed filled with exploding shells. Upon the position held by the batteries of Brockenborough, Carpenter and Poague, Moody, Raine and Caskie, was opened a terrific fire, which was promptly returned, and the enemy's batteries several times compelled to change position. This continued for two hours, when it became evident that the infantry was massing for a charge. The position was of the most vital importance, for should the enemy succeed in gaining possession of this point and turning Lee's left flank, he would be irretrievably lost. His orders to General Jackson were, therefore, to "Hold the range of hills to the last!"

McClellan's advance upon this point was gallantly met by Jackson's veteran infantry, and for some time the fighting was of the most determined character; but at length the immense superiority of numbers prevailed, and Jackson's troops gradually fell back across the turnpike, past the Dunkard Church, and through the woods, and appeared upon the plain beyond. Most beautifully did the heavy columns emerge from the woods and moved forward upon the batteries quietly awaiting their near approach. "Do not pull a lanyard," said Brockenborough, who was temporarily in command of the whole, "until you get the command." Nearer and nearer those solid columns approached, and amid loud huzzas rushed forward at the double quick. It was a moment of dreadful suspense. On, on, they came! "Will Brockenborough never give the command?" Yes; he now has them at the muzzles of his guns, and the next instant the command, "Fire!" was heard above the exultant cheers of the advancing columns, and twenty-four pieces of artillery, double-shotted with canister, belched forth their deadly contents into the very faces of the assailants.

The scene that was presented as the smoke lifted beggars description. The ground was literally covered — nay, piled — with the slain and maimed of the enemy, and the survivors were in full retreat. They were soon re-formed, however, and again moved boldly to the attack, but only to be again mercilessly slaughtered and driven back. A third time they essayed, but with the same result, when, a disordered mass of fugitives, the survivors sought the shelter of the woods from which they had but a few minutes before emerged, confident of success.

How anxiously the great chieftain, Lee, who was close by, must have watched the dreadful struggle which was to decide the fate of his army, and perhaps of the cause for which he was battling; and how great must have been the relief as he saw the enemy in retreat, and Jackson's shattered columns once more