

THE FIRST BATTLE OF MANASSAS.

AS SEEN FROM A SOUTHERN STANDPOINT.

[From the Richmond Dispatch and Baltimore Sun, Aug. 1, 1861.]

By Divine favor we are again victorious. To God be the glory. The armies of the North and South yesterday faced each other—the former not less than 50,000 men, the latter not exceeding 30,000—and wrestled together for six long hours with that desperate courage which Americans only can show. I proceed to give you, as near as I can, a full and detailed history of that terrible battle which will through all time make famous Bull Run and the plains of Manassas. On Friday, the 19th, Gen. Joseph E. Johnston who had commanded the army of the Shenandoah, posted at Winchester, arrived at Manassas Junction with four thousand of his division to reinforce Gen. Beauregard. The remainder of a sufficient force to hold Winchester were intended to arrive on Saturday, the 20th, but in consequence of some railroad casualty they did not reach the scene of conflict until Sunday, between the hours of 2 and 3 o'clock, when the battle was raging at its height.

The night before the battle it was generally understood at Manassas Junction the enemy were gathering in great force and designed turning our left flank which rested a few miles above the scene of Thursday's engagement at a ford on Bull Run, called Stone Bridge. We retired to rest under the full conviction that on the morrow the fortunes of our young nation were to be decided in a mighty contest and we were not disappointed. There were not many spectators of the battle, the general commanding having on Thursday issued a general order requiring all civilians with the exception of residents before military operations commenced and those engaged necessarily in business at Manassas Junction, to leave the camp and retire beyond a distance of four miles. The writer, however, with the following named conferees of the press, were privileged to remain to witness a scene not often enacted and which forms an era in their lives for all time to come; a scene of terrific grandeur and sublimity which is imprinted on their memories with a recollection never to be effaced.

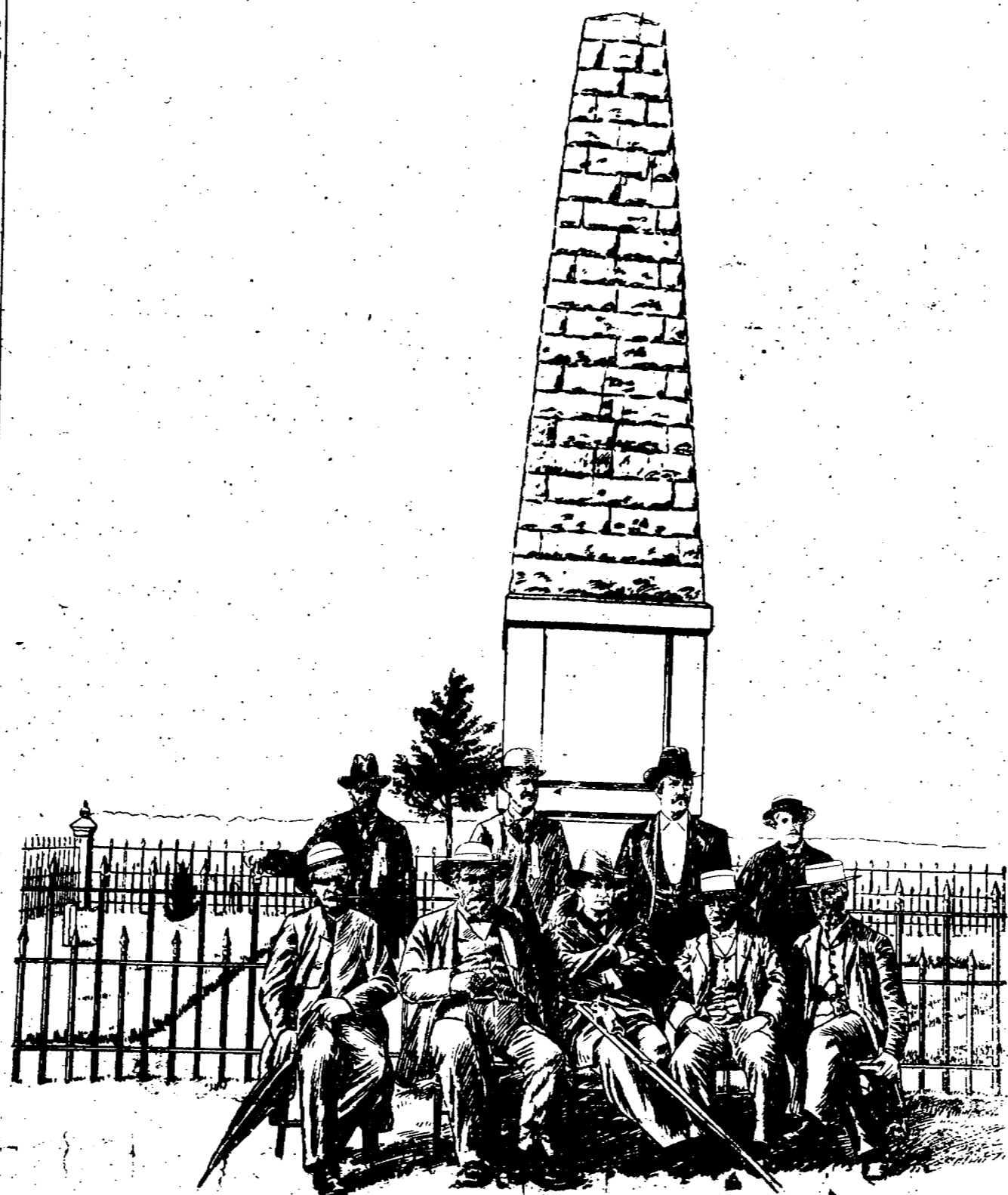
At 7 o'clock on Sunday morning our party consisting of Messrs. L. W. Spratt, of the Charleston Mercury, F. G. de Fontaine, of the Richmond Enquirer and Charleston Courier; P. W. Alexander, of the Savannah Republican; Sheppardson, of the Columbus (Ga.) Times and Montgomery (Ala.) Advertiser, and your correspondent started from Manassas Junction. The distant cannon, at short intervals since daybreak, had apprised us that the enemy were in motion, but in what direction we could only surmise until we reached a point a mile and a half from the breastworks at the north-west angle of the fortifications of Manassas Junction. The day was bright and beautiful—the left was the Blue Ridge and in front were the slopes on the north side of Bull Run crowned with woods in which the enemy had early planted his batteries, and all around us were eminences on which were posted small but anxious knots of spectators forming the most magnificent panorama I ever beheld.

At about 8 o'clock we reached a hill above Mitchell's Ford almost entirely bare of trees and sufficiently high to afford an unobstructed view of the opposite heights. After taking a leisurely survey of the beautiful landscape spread out before us in all the loveliness and grandeur of nature and listening with watchful intent to the booming of the heavy cannon on our right and anxiously examining the locations where the guns of the enemy on the opposite

hills were plainly to be seen with the naked eye, and the heavy clouds of dust rising above the woods in front and on either side indicating the direction in which heavy columns of the enemy were marching, we each sought the shade of a tree where we drew forth our memorandum books and pencils to note down for the information of the thousands who looked to us for a description of the day's occurrences, the various shiftings of the scene which henceforth forms an era in the history of our young Confederacy and grandly inaugurates the march of glory on which she has entered.

An interesting meeting took place between our party and the venerable Edmund Ruffin, who had against the walls of Fort Sumter fired the first defiant gun. He had come to this conflict with his eighty-odd years weighing upon him and his flowing white locks to take part in this fight, encouraging our young men by his presence and example. Agile as a youth of sixteen, with rifle on his shoulder, his eyes glistening with excitement as he burned to engage the Yankee invader. Shortly afterwards Generals Beauregard, Johnston, and Bonham, accompanied by their aids, came galloping up the hill and dismounted on the summit. The generals held an earnest conversation for a few minutes while taking a survey of the field and watching the execution of the orders of the day. The batteries, directed against our right and among the woods near Mitchell's Ford, where a hospital was stationed and the yellow flag flying. This was also the point where their fire of Thursday was directed, and where the mark of a cannon ball is to be seen in the kitchen and stable of a house in which Gen. Beauregard dined on that day at the time ball struck the building. Whether the enemy thought it was again his headquarters or whether the fire was playing toward that point to draw out a response from us is not known. It is more likely, however, it was a mere feint—an impotent attempt to deceive our skillful and able commander as to the point where the enemy was most in force, for so our wise general considered it, as he was seen to direct Gen. Johnston's attention particularly with his hand towards our extreme left as if he knew the struggle was to be made there.

I should here remark that it had been Gen. Beauregard's purpose to make the attack instead of waiting to receive it, but from cause unknown to me he preferred at last to let the enemy take the initiative, perhaps for the reason that Gen. Johnston's division had been detained on the railroad. As I have said, Gen. Beauregard was not deceived, for the immense clouds of dust appearing above the woods indicated beyond a doubt the Federal columns were moving in solid masses in another direction and one which was unmistakable. Just at this time, by the aid of our glass, we could see their guns brought to bear on the hill where we stood, for in a few moments the smoke was discovered issuing from their batteries of rifled cannon, and before scarcely a word could be said the peculiar whist and hissing of the balls notified us that their aim had been well taken. Several balls fell in a field immediately behind us and not a hundred yards from the spot where the generals stood. An officer of Gen. Beauregard's staff requested us to leave the hill and as we moved away a shell burst not twenty feet off. Col. Bonner calculated with his watch the time taken by the balls to pass us and made the distance 1 1/2 miles from the enemy's battery. The enemy no doubt discovered the horses of the generals and thought it a good opportunity to display their marksmanship, and credit is due them for the accuracy of their aim. Providence,



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CONFEDERATE MONUMENT AT MANASSAS.

however, who governs all things, covered the heads of our generals as with a shield and preserved them for the hazardous service in which they were in a short hour or two to be engaged.

It was now about 11 o'clock and the enemy having opened with rifled cannon and shell on their right which they had continued for more than three hours without response, we heard away to the left, about three miles distant, the heavy booming of cannon followed by the rattling crack of musketry—the discharges being repeated and continuous—which notified us the engagement had commenced in earnest at that point where the battle was to be fought and won.

Proceeding towards the scene of action about two miles we came to a creek in the hollow where one of the hospitals for the day had been stationed and the first wounded, some 25 or 30 had been brought. Dr. Gaston, of South Carolina, formerly a surgeon in Col. Gregg's regiment, but now attached to Gen. Beauregard's headquarters was assiduously at-

tending to the wants of the wounded. At this point Generals Beauregard and Johnston, accompanied by a staff of some ten or twelve officers, passed at a full gallop, riding towards their headquarters for the day which were on a hill immediately overlooking the ground where our brave soldiers were manfully and persistently struggling for the victory. A large force of cavalry were here stationed, and as the generals passed they called for three cheers for Beauregard, which were immediately given with right good will and which the general gratefully acknowledged by lifting his hat from his head and bowing his thanks.

Both of our generals were plainly dressed. No large epaulettes, no gilt, nor any fuss and feathers; you could only distinguish them at a distance to be officers by their swords, but on a closer inspection the marks of genius and military skill were unmistakable. Their uniform was what I took to be plain undress. No gold-laced sign of exalted rank. The first sign of exalted rank was exposed to the

eye coolly rode forward into the storm of iron hail. Beauregard's eyes glistened with expectation, no doubt, when he afterwards threw himself into the very heart of the action, appearing there, as was afterwards most expressly said of him, to be the very impulsion of the "god of war." Gen. Johnston, too, looked every inch a commander and proved himself to be the worthy inheritor of the prowess and virtues of his ancestors. On reaching the top of the hill where was a white house owned, I believe, by a Mr. Lewis, they were again discovered by the enemy as the rifled shot and shell whizzed through the air and lodged in the hollow behind. The aim was not so good at this time, the accurate artillerymen three miles below not having yet come up with the enemy's main body. At about 12 o'clock Beauregard and Johnston assumed the command of our main body at the Stone Bridge. The line of battle extended some seven miles up and down the creek and during the

At Blackburn's Ford, Gen. Jones's brigade made an attack upon the left flank of the enemy, who had two strong batteries in a commanding position which it was important to capture. The Fifth South Carolina regiment led the attack, but our troops were compelled to retire for a while under the heavy fire of the batteries and musketry and the enemy immediately retreated. Up to the time of this attack these batteries had been bombarding all the morning Gen. Longstreet's position in his intrenchments on this side of the ran.

Gen. Evans, of South Carolina, was the first to lead his brigade into action at Stone Bridge. It consisted of the Fourth South Carolina regiment and Wheat's Louisiana battalion. Sustaining them was Gen. Cooke's brigade, consisting of the 17th, 19th, and 28th Virginia regiments, commanded respectively by Colonels Cooke, Withers, and Robert T. Preston. These brigades were the

enemy, being to turn our left flank while we were endeavoring to turn his right. These regiments of infantry were sustaining the famous Washington Artillery, of New Orleans, who had two of their guns at this point which made terrible havoc in the ranks of the enemy. The Federal troops leading the action consisted of 10,000 regulars, sustaining the celebrated Sherman's battery, these regulars being in their turn sustained by immense masses of volunteers, the New York Zouaves being among the number. Gen. Beauregard estimated the enemy's numbers in the action to be not less than 35,000 men.

Their artillery far outnumbered ours. We have captured 67 pieces of cannon, while we had only 18 guns on that part of the field. It has been stated to me by so many of our soldiers I cannot but believe it, that the enemy had by some means obtained our signal for the day—they also used our red badge, which fortunately was discovered in time, and they carried into action the flags of the Palmetto State and the Confederate States. It has been asserted, too, by numerous individuals engaged in the battle, that there was great confusion and slaughter among our own men who mistook them for the enemy. This was less to be wondered at from the similarity of uniform and the mean advantages above referred taken by our unscrupulous foes. They pressed our left flank for several hours with terrible effect, but our men finched not until their number had been so diminished by the well-aimed and steady volleys that they were compelled to give way for new regiments. The 7th and 8th Georgia regiments, commanded by the gallant and lamented Barlow, are said to have suffered heavily during the early part of the battle. Kemper's, Shields', and Pendleton's batteries were in this part of the field and did fearful execution. I regret to be unable to name all the regiments engaged, in their order, not having succeeded in ascertaining their position; I am inclined to believe there was some mistake during the day in the delivery or execution of an order of Gen. Beauregard's respecting an attack on the enemy's rear which was not effected.

Between 2 and 3 o'clock large numbers of men were leaving the field, some of them wounded, others exhausted by the long struggle, who gave us gloomy reports, but as the fire on both sides continued steadily we felt sure that our brave Southerners had not been conquered by the overwhelming hordes of the North. It is, however, due truth to say that the result of this hour long trembling in the balance. We had lost numbers of our most distinguished officers. Gen. Barlow and Bee had been stricken down; Lieut.-Col. Johnson, of the Hampton Legion, had been killed. Col. Hampton had been wounded; but there was at hand the fearless general whose reputation as a commander was staked on this battle: Gen. Beauregard promptly offered to lead the Hampton Legion into action, which he executed in a style unsurpassed and unsurpassable. Gen. Beauregard rode up and down our line between the enemy and his own men, regardless of the heavy fire, cheering and encouraging our troops. About this time a shell struck his horse, taking its head off, and killing the horses of his aids, Messrs Ferguson and Hayward. Gen. Beauregard's aids deserve honorable mention, particularly those just named, and Col. W. Porcher Miles, James Chesnut, John L. Manning, and A. R. Chisolm. Gen. Johnston also threw himself into the thickest of the fight, seizing the colors of a Georgia regiment, and rallying them to the charge. His staff signalled themselves by their intrepidity, Col. Thomas being killed and Major Mason wounded.

Your correspondent heard Gen. Johnston exclaim to Gen. Cooke just at the critical moment, "Oh for four regiments!" His wish was answered, for in the distance our reinforcements appeared. The tide of battle was turned in our favor by the arrival of General Kirby Smith, from Winchester, with 4,000 men of Gen. Johnston's division. Gen. Smith heard while on the Manassas railroad cars the roar of battle. He stopped the

THE LEE STATUE, UNVEILED.

MAY 29, 1890.
Though Victory crowneth not thy brow,
Thou stand'st to-day, unrolled,
Type of the manliest manhood, thou,
That ever fighting, bled,
Well may'st thou hold aloft thy head;
Immortal is its crown,
And though the cause thou led'st be dead,
Deathless is thy renown!

'Twas thine to stand against the world,
(Greatest root of every name);
And though thy battle-flag be faded,
'Tis wreathed with the laurels of fame.
No braver soul e'er dared to die,
Or stood in strife more stern!
Not Spartan at Thermopylae,
Not Scote at Banockburn!

Nor ever shall thy memory die,
While tongue or pen can tell
Of daring deeds thy purpose high,
For which thy comrades fell;
And so in story thou shalt stand,
In legend and in lore,
The idol of thy native land,
Till time shall be no more.

—H. M. Claiborne.

train, and hurried his troops across the field to the point where he was most needed. They were at first supposed to be the enemy, their arrival at that point of the field being entirely unexpected. The enemy fell back, and a panic seized them. Cheer after cheer from our men went up, and we knew the battle had been won. Thus was the best-appointed army that had ever taken the field on this continent beaten, and compelled to retreat in hot haste, leaving behind them every thing that impeded their escape. Guns, knapsacks, hats, caps, shoes, canteens, and blankets, covered the grounds for miles and miles. At about 5 o'clock we heard cheer upon cheer, and the word "Davis" ran along the ranks, and we saw in the distance the tall slender form of our gallant President, who had arrived upon the field in time to see the total rout of the army threatened his capture, and the subjugation of the South.

The President left Richmond at 6 o'clock in the morning, and reached Manassas Junction at 4, where mounting a horse, accompanied by Col. Joseph R. Davis and numerous attendants, he galloped to the battle-field, just in time to join in the pursuit by a magnificent body of cavalry, consisting of 1,500 men, commanded by Lieut.-Col. Stewart. This sight, of itself, was worth the fatigue of the day's journey. We saw the poor wounded soldiers on the roadside and in the fields, when they observed the President's manly form pass by, raise their heads, and heard them give shout upon shout and cheer upon cheer. It has been stated the President commanded the centre and joined in the charge; but this is a mistake. The train had been delayed and arrived at the Junction two hours behind its time, which must have been a grievous disappointment. The Washington Artillery, who had drawn their guns up the hill and in front of the house known as Mr. Lewis's—Gen. Cooke's and Gen. Johnston's headquarters, and which was riddled with shot—commanded by Major J. B. Walton in person, gave the enemy about this time a parting salute.

With the aid of our glass, which was more powerful than his own, he observed the carriage of a gun some two miles off. He gave the order for another fire, and Lieut. Dearing pointed the piece. Before the ball had well reached the point aimed at, a whole regiment of the enemy appeared in sight, going at "double-quick" down the Centreville road. Major Walton im-



RALLYING THE TROOPS OF BEE AND BARLOW.

This is an error—the Federal force amounted to only 25,000, including the reserves. Gen. McDowell's Report states there only were engaged. W. F. B.

The Federal forces had but no place on the field. The remainder of their army was at retreat.—W. F. B.

No particulars are received on the dead and wounded.—Richmond Dispatch.

(Continued on page 200)

