

Chapter 2

The First Manassas.

After we were in the road and well closed up, Bartow, riding in his horse, announced to us, with thrilling manner, as we passed by, "We are marching to succor General Beauregard, who is now fighting the enemy at Manassas"; and deafening cheers responded. We kept on twenty four hours, with but four hours' rest, taking the railway train at Piedmont, where the shipment was tedious and wearing. Our regiment arrived at Manassas Junction early Saturday morning, July 20, and from Bartow's words to us after breakfast, we supposed we were to meet the enemy immediately; but having stacked arms near Mitchell's Ford, the day wore away without anything notable except loud complaints from the hungry. Our boys had many of them found their haversacks containing three days' rations too burdensome, and so they had thrown away most of their contents. The next morning, in company with W. H. Clarke, the junior lieutenant, and McCall the second sergeant, I went to a neighboring house and bespoke a good breakfast. While it was preparing a cannonade commenced. The house chanced to be that of the man who was to be the guide of Lieut.Col. Gardner, now in command of the regiment, Bartow commanding the brigade, to his position; and he saved us a long walk back over/^{the}ground we had come by showing us where we might fall in as the regiment came by. The cannon we heard were far towards the left. As we marched along the batteries quickened their fire, and I saw a shell explode for my first time. Because of the greater distance of the hostile batteries from us the explosion of the shell seemed to be the echo of the report of the gun,

and as the shell came toward us the echo seemed the louder. Most of the men were still hungry, and but few had recovered from the exertion of getting to Piedmont from Winchester by a forced march, now regarded as a great affair, though a year later we would have laughed at it. But the sound that promised battle fed the hungry and rested the weary. We went about and about, sometimes almost counter marching, often double quicking, and now and then on the run. The sun was blazing in fiercest heat. At last we were near the famous Henry house. Here we saw Bartow, who had not been with us during the morning; and while we paused to await some disposition of the 7th. Georgia that he was making as brigade commander, Hampton's Legion came alongside of us and halted. In their best clothes and clean linen, how bravely they outshone us, who were in our shirt sleeves, and all bedraggled and soiled with the dirt of our hard march. And their ranks were full, while we had left two hundred behind at Winchester, most of them sick with measles. Here I first heard musketry. Rival batteries might duel it out at long law, but I was as accurately impressed then as ever I could be afterwards that musketry meant real fighting. The sound came from over the hill and seemed about half a mile away. Here I gave Lit, my colored servant, my coat and baggage, and took my canteen, and ordered him to go to the rear. As we started he was in a great struggle between his concern for me, and his fear, which had been showing plainly since the increase of artillery fire, and became abject when he heard the musketry. The rest here,--though out of the shade, and we were about to taste our first battle,--was very grateful. We marched a few hundred yards, surmounting a hill that rose with a steady slope, and the shock was stunning when on the crest from which we

caught a view of two miles beyond, we came, as it seemed to me, all at once, in the midst of the fight. Under orders we laid down a short distance to our rear of the Henry house. The Wise artillery was just beyond the house, and it was firing rapidly. Hostile guns were replying, but they did not have the range; and the shot and shell were passing far overhead. This was the most trying part of the day. The projectiles sung and whizzed and exploded over us, around us, and a very few among us. One of the Macon Guards was killed here. I shrank from the accursed things for several minutes. Once I saw dust rising from the roof of the house, indicating that a shot had passed through it. Major Cooper directed a brush fence, dividing the regiment somewhere between the right of our company and the next, to be pulled down. I was lying ten or fifteen yards distant, and as another officer was nearer, I did not heed the command. It was repeated. I looked up, and to my shame saw that nobody had stirred. I forgot the hostile battery; and in a minute a dozen of our men had enlarged a passage to the major's satisfaction. This small affair was a great relief to me; and I think that with my springing up went the last of my nervousness that day. When I lay down again, I located the battery on the other side of the turn-pike, and about three fourths of a mile off. A long range of woods ran around the further limit of the field, and out of a place in this, as it seemed, I could see the smoke puff. Then I distinguished the report, and I have forgotten how many seconds I made it between the two. In a short while after I had heard the report, here came the shot or shell. Then I saw a long line of the enemy, far towards our left; and it rejoiced me to see them scamper as some of the shot from the Wise artillery tore through their ranks. General Bee

was fighting across the turn-pike, as we could hear, not see. After we had stood the fire of the distant battery about half an hour, Bartow started with us to reinforce Bee. As we moved off, another man was struck down by a shell--killed, I think. We kept behind rising ground, crossed the pike, went up a long steep red hill, and, when near the top, fronted in line and halted,--our commander seeming to expect an attack. Then we resumed our march. Just as we reached the corner of a square grove of oaks I descried the battery, and noted that we were nearer to it by half than when on the hill. It sent a few ineffectual shot at us; and passing on around the rear of the oaks, we turned up the other side; and when we got to a fence running off to our right on a production of the front line of the oaks and leading to the famous pine thicket, we filed to the right, and proceeded along the fence. It was partially thrown down, and there was some small growth on each side, called in the south a hedgerow. As we turned away from the oaks a few men were wounded by Minie balls from the long fence, some three hundred yards off, to be described hereafter. Eight companies had passed on--the regiment was marching by the flank, with the right in front--and just as company I was turning from the woods, a shell from the battery, now hardly three hundred and fifty yards from us, knocked three men out of a file behind me. Some of company K were also wounded here by a shell. Shortly afterwards I heard canister shot fly through the bushes, the marks of which I found the next day. Bartow was leading us to the thicket about a hundred and twenty yards distant from the oaks. A fence on the side of the oaks we were leaving reached on the produced side about 250 yards to the front, where it intersected with what I call

the long fence, which last extended several hundred yards to the right. The 4th. Alabama were lying on the ground, to the right of the fence running from the oaks, and I saw them in this position loading and firing upon the long fence. At the point where we left the oaks this regiment was between us and that fence. Now let me tell you of the latter and the thicket. It was evidently Bartow's design, or Bee's, that we should take advantage of the thicket in order to approach under its cover within good range of the long fence. The latter was about 125 yards from the front of the thicket, and our march was along the hedgerow to enter the rear of the thicket. We were foolishly carried over the last sixty yards of this route before and not behind the hedgerow, and a most galling fire was concentrated upon us from parts of three regiments. We made this last of the way on the run. I could hear the bullets zipping and zeeing among us like angry bees, and I knew that our men were falling fast. Two of our company were hit just here,—George Heard, one of them, falling dead as we entered the thicket. This with the three wounded by the shell, made five. We slackened down to quick time, and I glanced up the regiment and was struck with the good order in which the files were dressed. We were in sight of the battery, and in position to be raked from end to end, but its canister came too high. When we moved forward, the ground concealed us from the guns. Just as we resumed quick time I looked back at the perilous place we had just passed. Jesse Dalton, of company K, a man over sixty, against whom I had brought a suit for slander for Higgins, was coming over the ground running slowly and weasely. Thousands of bullets seemed to be striking up the dust around him, but he did not

quicken his gait. He was too exhausted. I thought that he would run the gantlet safely, but just as he got to the pines he received a serious wound. When I saw him fall I could not help thinking of the rule of law under which a personal action dies with the party. *

I said we had dressed our files. Bartow, quivering with rage, shouted, "By the left flank, march." That threw us in line, to the front. Everybody understood that it was now our time; and there was a wild rush to the edge of the thicket. It was rectangular and contained about three acres, with a front of some 110 yards. We should have had at least three hundred yards. From the fence came a volley that roared more loudly than any I ever heard afterwards, but it seemed to do no hurt. Huddled up in some places seven or eight deep, and even more, our firing commenced. I observed three colors at regular intervals, just on the other side of the long fence. A dwelling was a little beyond it, and four out-houses were on its line, and some grain stacks besides. The dwelling and out-houses were opposite the left and right center of the regiment. The further side of the fence, the out-houses and stacks were lined with federals. An ice-house was a few yards nearer on our side of the fence, and just a trifle to the left of the produced left line of the thicket, and more federals were around it; and they extended in rather desultory order, in front, to a point not far to its right. To the left of the ice-house, in an oblique line towards the fence, by which the 4th. Alabama were lying, another regiment took position, just after our fighting commenced, and its musketry was very destructive to companies K and I, as it approached somewhat to an enfilade and many of the men of these companies were pushed out into the open. This last

*(1 See 34 Ga. 433. I finally lost my case on another point.)

mentioned regiment fired buck and ball, as I discovered from the marks on the trees the next day, the other regiments fired Minie balls. Now, were we not in a pickle? The houses, the stacks, the fence, the line of the regiment on our left,--all seemed a continually playing flash. The trees were becoming white all around us, from having the bark cut away, though I noted that numerous bullets were going too high and bringing down leaves. Many of our men were being wounded, and there were frequent cries of pain, "O, Lord!" becoming from that time on the ejaculation that I usually heard a man make when struck in battle. But the loading and firing kept up with eagerness. Jim Lewis, one of the company, came to me and told me goodbye. The brains and blood seemed to be running out of his forehead. I never expected to see him again, but the next day it appeared that the ball had gone around and not through the skull. I shall never forget how pale, stiff and thoroughly dead Gus Daniel, another one of the company, looked as I glanced down when I had stumbled over him. This was the first dead man I saw. Our men were taking careful aim. McCall, a glorious fellow from New York State, our second sergeant, as already mentioned, was shooting at the color of the regiment on our left; and all of company K, and the left half of I, were aiming at that regiment. The weary and feeble were staying their muskets against the pines, and each man was selecting a mark. A federal in front of the thicket bravely rushed into an opening in the fence, where he raised his piece, but before it came to his shoulder it flew into the air and he fell. A second later I saw another adventurous man climbing an out-house, and down too he came. But we were under the concentrated fire of at least four regiments,

and probably each was of fuller rank than ours. I was never afterwards in as hot a place. The men were so crowded as seriously to impede their work. Some few fired as many as fourteen rounds, but the most of them fired but seven or eight. And let me make you understand the peril of those few minutes. According to a count some of us made upon a careful study of the company rolls, the regiment carried into the action 490 officers and men. Of these 41 were killed, 159 wounded, and seventeen reported missing ten or twelve days afterwards. It is probable that the most of the seventeen were wounded and captured. So out of 490 we lost 217—not very far from half. I think it was 39 or 40 of dead in the thicket that I counted a little before sun down, and they lay within less than half an acre of ground. In our company six were killed in the thicket; and thirteen severely wounded. Two of the latter died soon afterwards. Our total of officers and men in the company at the commencement of the action was sixty-four, and adding to the killed and wounded those whose clothing was pierced by balls—and bear in mind hardly one of us had on a coat—and deducting the sum from the total, fourteen only was left. As those who heard him told me the next day, Bartow vociferated to the captain of the Atlanta Grays, " We must get these men out of here." Several times he ordered us to fall back, but I was among those who did not hear. Nothing could be understood in the din to which our ears were so new. But some of the men at last, misunderstanding the order to fall back, began a disorderly retreat. On the right of the first platoon, close behind it, I was encouraging some of the men of our company to fire with more coolness, and I reminded them that the enemy's fire was slackening. The regiment furthest to the left had disappeared—

its smooth-bores probably being no match for the Mississippi rifles of company K—and the line before us looked thinner along the fence; and there was nobody standing on our side of it. Ransome, one of my men, lying on the ground, was keeping his musket quiet. He seemed very cool, and with much warmth I asked him why he had ceased to fire. He fired at once, began to load, and shouted to me that he had been obeying orders; and he rolled his eyes in such a manner that I glanced to the left and then to the right. Nearly everybody was going back at about quick time. Of course I could not stay. I carried off my squad very doggedly. Their sullenness increased mine. At every step they seemed on the point of rushing back, and some would turn and fire. I had got near the fence at the rear of the thicket, when I heard what seemed to be a severe slap, and looking towards it I saw a little fellow, of another company, with his piece almost at a shoulder. He was facing the right, and a ball had struck the barrel; and he told me afterwards he thought he was shot through his collar bone. His face showed great anxiety, until I said to him that it was his musket that was wounded. Bartow's horse was killed in the thicket; and when I came to the fence dividing the pines from the wheat field, he was there dismounted, and ordering the colors to be planted near the fence. He was greatly excited, and he implored his men to rally. I went to him, and I thought his eye twinkled with pleasure as he saw that I was coming from the front. The last words that passed between him and me were my enquiring where he wished the line to form, to which he pointed with his arm along an open place running diagonally through the pines, and said, "Just there." I was nearly ready to sink in the ground at what I too hastily conceived was the disgrace of the

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regiment, for I did not then know that we had been ordered back. "Who is the officer that is leading off these men," said the colonel hoarse with rage, stamping his feet, and shaking his fist in the direction of our poor fellows going across the wheat field. Jake Phinixy, 1st. lieutenant of company K, made great efforts to bring the men back. I shouted from the fence, calling everyone by name that I saw. We got back a few. But balls began to come hotly from the right, and the colonel commanded us to fall back. All organization was lost. My little band kept with me, and I told them we must go to the color. We crossed the ledge of small oaks, through which shot and shell were crashing, from a battery on the right which I could not see, and we came upon the color at the brook, at the foot of the hill, behind the grove of oaks. The men leaped into the water like thirsty oxen. It was muddy, but we drank copiously. A dashing cavalier, as he looked in his brilliant uniform, galloped up, and said, "Why, the Georgians are running while the South Carolinians (of Sloan's regiment) are fighting." Our color-bearer, Charley Daniels, cursed him, and threatened to shoot him; and many of us ran towards him, hurling at him the fiercest imprecations. "O," said he, with an apologetic, but noble bearing, "I must admit that you are ready enough to fight; I withdraw the words that I should not have used;" and he rode away. Some days afterwards I saw a picture, and then for the first time I learned that the handsome stranger was General Bee. Bartow sent the color on nearly to the pike, not far from the free negro Robinson's house; and there the regiment tried to form. It was madness. The red hill side across the brook, hardly two hundred yards distant, was swarming with infantry, clated, huzzaing, and flaunting

the United States flag so proudly that it seemed to cover the whole land. We mustered perhaps a hundred men. Bartow sent us word from a fence on which he was leaning, that he would die where he was or his regiment should rally. I saw Hampton's Legion in position, in front of Robinson's house, its right resting on the pike, and my judgment told me that we should reform behind the new line. But I could not disregard the appeal of Bartow. Our men fired about two rounds here, and it was returned more than five fold. In the midst of the smoke and dust thrown up by the musket balls shot at us I found myself between the two lines. But at last I got in place behind the remnant of our company. The company commanders led the men away; and I have always believed they did right. Just before I got to the pike, a fugitive passed me at a slow and pounding trot. When he was about six or eight feet ahead a bullet whistled so close to my ear that I was startled. "Dip", I heard it strike. The poor fellow fell forward, the blood and brains spouting from the back of his head in a red jet as long as my finger. We passed out behind Hampton's Legion, and then behind the 7th. Georgia. Here I noticed Fry, the old chaplain, patting the men on the back, and adjuring them to stand firm. Major Cooper in obedience to orders, carried the regiment off the field. I stayed behind; and I collected a few of my company and some others, whom I tried to induce to go with me into a regiment just arrived. A field officer angered me by saying they did not want stragglers, but one of his whole-souled captains told me softly not to mind a d--d fool, saying he would make room for us. My poor fellows were fainting for water, and it seems to me some of them were lolling their tongues out, and I was myself almost dead from thirst. We told the captain

that we should rejoin him as soon as we had got water; and we ran off for it. We hurried back, and the regiment had gone. Then it occurred to me that the remains of our own regiment might yet be ordered forward; and in that case I ought to be with it. So I sent one of the company to find and mark exactly where it was, and keep me informed of it; and I sat down on a stone and observed the fight. I cannot more definitely give the place than by saying it was a little to the left of a battery of ours that was on our right and firing vigorously. A Louisiana Tiger came along going to the rear. He was without his rifle and sabre bayonet, but he had not yet got rid of his loose attire, baggy trousers, and something on his head resembling a turban, --all of which made him look like a Turk. Every time a gun fired from our battery, which, as he was faced about, was to his left, and a little behind him, he would fall prostrate, manifestly believing that the shot was the enemy's and aimed at him. This sight diverted me for the moment; and with a few minutes' rest I was soon recovered from my extreme fatigue and thirst, and then returned my great concern for our fortunes. I saw a little and understood more of the first impact on our new line. Yes, the line really does stand. Then I discovered that an assault was repulsed. And as our men fighting were firm, and a few reinforcements were coming up with spirit, and rising columns of dust betokened more behind, the flush of hope came back to my pale cheek and I said to my companions, we shall conquer yet. All the struggle to keep the position where Jackson offered battle, and the taking and the loss of the ground about the Henry house --these I noted, heedless of the dangers that filled the air around me. I had unconsciously changed my position, and got nearly behind the center.

The fight had rolled further to the left, and my ear told me that we were not losing there. When the field around the Henry house was permanently occupied I decided that the day would soon be ours. In my verdancy I supposed that when the enemy went back all of us should be ordered forward; and so I returned to the regiment. The main field hospital was near it, where numbers of the wounded were stretched upon the ground. It was spirit-lifting to hear them bless the regiment's double-quickening by, and see them wave their comrades forward with hands soon to be stilled in death. The reinforcement rushing past, replying to the wounded with cheers and vows to revenge them, the musketry plainly receding, the joy in the faces of all around and brightest in those of the dying as victory was surely coming—all this moving scene arises, and I am again an eager confederate, volunteered for the war. When our men advanced in the last charge, there came above the confused noise of battle a shout—I was always told that it commenced with the 1st. Maryland and the 3d. Tennessee—and shaking the earth, rending the air, and piercing the ears, it followed Bull Run down on our sight, until it died out in the far distance. There was born full-grown the southern battle-cry. I ran towards the Lewis House. I caught sight of the federal line going to pieces, and I saw Lieut. Dearing as he fired the farewell shots from our side. Officers were leaping for joy. One of these who was gray-headed, was clapping his hands with fury, and exclaiming rapturously and over and over, "We have whipped 'em." I dashed back to the regiment. In a short while orders were brought that Genl. Johnston wanted every man to come to the top of the hill that he might show his line to the retiring enemy. As I tell this now I feel a qualm of the nausea that it excited in me.

It was about 5 P.M., and all of three hours until dark. I replied to myself, Is there to be no pursuit? I had been pleasing myself with the compensation our regiment was now to have for the awful loss in the morning, and gleefully had I quoted to some of my friends Shakespeare's "Tis sport to maul a runner." It was days before I fully recovered from the disappointment. Jake Phinizy always asserted that I never did.

President Davis galloped by on his way to the field. His high-crowned hat and citizen's garb showed oddly. He was recognized, and everybody cheered, the wounded among them.

I got to the pine thicket as soon as I could. Thad Howell, the handsomest man in our company, was lying on his back, in the open field, just at the edge of the pines. A bullet had struck the top of his forehead, and the brains were oozing out. His heels drummed on the ground constantly, but I found that he was utterly unconscious. Those who could feel demanded all that I could do. There was Dawson Moore, one of our company, with his leg broken. I got him into an ambulance. But there were many of the other companies who were not removed that night. For a long while after the ambulance left I was there alone. I supplied all the wounded with water. Some drank as though they would burst, but I was not afraid to give it. As I started away with a poor fellow's canteen the second time, he called me to him and made me swear that I would return. But their thirst was at last assuaged. Their teeth commenced to chatter, and I robbed the dead of blankets to cover them. Nearly all went to sleep. At a late hour that night, friends commenced to come in groups. It was raining. I threw an oil-cloth which I took

off of a dead federal around me and went to camp, and, lying on the ground with my feet to the fire, slept until several hours after sunrise, when the men around me waked me by cheering some of the captured artillery that was going by. It was still raining; but with Charley Doberty, a lieutenant of the Pulaski Volunteers, I went over the field. First I studied the fence and stacks and out-houses in front of the thicket. It gratified me to find hardly a single mark of a bullet from our regiment which was too high; and the wounded federals in the house and yard, said our musketry had been devouring. Then we went to the other part of the field. It sickened me to find a frightened woman cowering in the Henry house. She showed me the body of her mother laid out. The old woman had been long bed-ridden, I think she said, and while in bed the day before she was killed with a musket ball, which came through the side of the house. The house was riddled with shot. To the left of the house—in a field of small pines of second growth—the dead were thickest. The red shirt generally marked the federal. As this spot had plainly been the fiercest and closest grapple, and both sides had shown the genuine Anglo-Saxon mettle. It pained me to see that our dead here equalled, if it did not exceed, those of the other side. But further on to our left, the federal corpses indicated that surprise and swift destruction had darted upon them from the forest which I shall mention after a while as extending forward; and here our loss had been small.

As our camp was near I went over the field many times, and I studied it more closely than I ever had opportunity to do another afterwards. The map which accompanies this chapter was made just as

my study of the field ended. Though I was without topographical training, I think it is practically accurate. I hope that the engraver will reproduce the rude diagram exactly. I regret now that I did not make it illustrate the rest of the battle field. But I was then too resolved upon showing the terrific results to the 8th. Georgia of inexperienced conduct.

The foregoing account is mainly taken from my letters to Gennie, and it may be relied upon as thoroughly accurate. I have tried to set down mainly what I noticed myself, in my first battle. Many of the regiment further to the right told me that the federal line advanced from the long fence once in a charge, and arriving at the cedars, marked on the map, were thence driven back by our fire. I have not described this, simply because I did not see it. And I wish that I could say more of those who suffered. Especially should I be glad to tell of Col. Gardner, who was on the right, where he was sorely wounded. But I forbear. I fear that I have already detailed much that can never interest anybody but myself.

But if I have cut my narrative short, I have some philisophizing and reflections I cannot repress.

Instead of reinforcing Evans's right, Bee ought to have strengthened his left, using the square oak grove, the hedgerow to its right, and the hills to the left of the grove for cover and screen, and gradually have fallen back to the high plateau where we took our stand later. It was foolish in the extreme to advance the 4th. Alabama into the bare field beyond the oaks. It was madness to send the 8th. Georgia to the pines by the route I have told. We never should have been thrown so far out; but if it was decided that we must seize

the opportunity offered by the thicket, we should have been led from the corner of the oaks directly to its rear, which would have been the shortest line, and one hidden by the hedgerow from the battery and the long fence. When arrived at the thicket, only the left half of the regiment should have been sent to the front, and the other companies should have been stationed along the right side, and ordered to lie down. And those sent forward should have been instructed to take advantage of all cover offered by trees and the formation of the ground. When we gave way, the enemy advancing rapidly upon our right and rear, there was nothing to be expected from raw troops but a disorderly flight across the pike. But had Bee made use of the oaks and the hill to their left, and posted skirmishers to be retired into the oak grove and behind it when pressed, such a stand could have been maintained much longer than ours was and the transcendent duty of the hour was to gain time to allow of reenforcement from our distant right. And the 4th. Alabama, the Tiger Rifles, the 8th. Georgia, and the other men of Bee and Evans would have reached the new line with but small loss. Such management would have made the fight across the pike the right preparation for our battle, instead of the route which proved very near our ruin, and which was retrieved only by a seeming miracle.

The longer we contemplate the plainer it appears that everybody else's part on our side could have been better spared than Jackson's. He really decided, and with the utmost wisdom, where our new line was to be formed. He who was afterwards the magician of surprise to flank and rear is now the very soul of the grand need, obstinate fighting. And yet his wariness shows. He pushes his artillery into the open, to

be sacrificed to encourage the raw infantry that he is sheltering; and he charges when least expected and in the very nick of time. He has noble comrades, Bartow, Bee, Hampton and Evans are with him, and the heroes face imminent ruin with peerless courage. And General Johnston riding forward with the standard of a regiment! And the chivalric Beauregard having the officers to advance the colors and appeal to the men to come on! Where in all the annals of war were disheartened raw troops so quickly endowed with veteran steadiness against countless odds of foes flushed with victory won as they believed? And the result! With the very last reinforcement of ours we had all but twenty-five thin and weary regiments on the field, and we took prisoners of fifty-five regiments, full and fresh.

The field itself was great luck to us. Skirts of forest and second-growth pine ran along our front; on the right, in the rear of Robinson's house, there was a wooded ravine; and on our extreme left there was a long reach forward of forest—good for defence and for masking our movements. The ground occupied by the enemy in his struggle to carry our position was nearly all open, and it sloped downward, behind him to the plain almost a hundred feet; and so it was highly favorable both for our observation defence and attack. And it is not to be over-looked that there was little shade for the enemy and much for us on this hot July day, especially trying to raw levies. While it is Jackson's glory to have been the immovable fulcrum of the rally against defeat in the morning, it is Beauregard's glory that after he arrived on the field the tactics of the battle were practically faultless. To me he has long suggested Luxemburg's greatness in sudden straits; and I think he appreciated in time the entire

resources of the field to which he had been unexpectedly driven. He made them at first serve for an insuperable defensive; and at the moment of ripeness his offensive swept the baffled and wearied foe from before him. I am not aware of any other battle in which the ground was so well used and our troops disposed and handled better. The fault of our subsequent fighting was mainly tactical. Beauregard did so magnificently with a small army that he should have been trusted with a larger. Still I must say that there ought to have been vigorous pursuit till after dark.

And I cannot help thinking that we failed to learn another important lesson from the first Manassas. That lesson was to cultivate defensive tactics in pitched battles. I verily believe that had we forced a defensive battle in Pennsylvania the south would at least have got pay for her slaves.

I must not fail to observe upon General Johnston's report. In the lively image which it calls up to the reader it is equalled, in my knowledge, only by Caesar's account of the battle with the Nervii, or his picture of the battle which doomed Alisia.

And the last thing I have to say is that Beauregard is right, when he pronounces that we ought to have followed up the victory by crossing the upper Potomac. This would have given us Maryland, and lifted the pressure upon us in the west.

(Note: P.S. I see now, as I have explained in my book "The Brothers' War" that we ought to have pursued the flying federals, pressing them the rest of the day and all the next night. The bridge over the Potomac hemmed their retreat so seriously that we could have captured nearly the whole of the Grand Army and its baggage. The foregoing was written 20 years ago. July 27, 09.

Signed: John C. Reed)