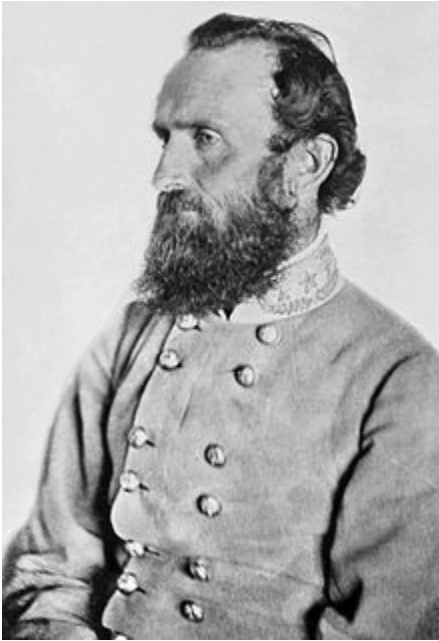


"Let us Cross over the River and Rest in the Shade"



Stonewall Jackson

Like a servant of the Lord, with his bible and his sword, Our general rode along us, to form us for the fight. Macaulay.

The Death of Stonewall Jackson. Stonewall Jackson was a man of intense religious conviction who carried the cherished precepts of his faith into every thought and deed. He was a tender and loving husband and father, kindhearted and gentle to all with whom he was brought in contact; yet in the times that tried the souls of men, he proved not only a commander of genius, but a fighter of iron will and temper. When danger was the eminent, he arose to play his finest roles as a leader. He knew was thoroughly dedicated to the cause, and gave it his "all." It was during the first battle of Bull Run where Jackson earned the name of "Stonewall," a tribute to his determination to focus his men to their work of repulsing the

attacking Union army. Few generals like General Robert E. Lee had as great a lieutenant as Jackson. He was a master of strategy and tactics, fearless of responsibility, decisive, quick in his movements, always ready to march as well as fight. In the spring of 1863 the Union General Hooker had under his command 120,000 men when he prepared to attack the army of General Lee, which was half as strong. The Union army was encamped opposite Fredericksburg when Hooker decided to distract the attention of the Confederates by letting a small portion of his force (under General Sedgwick) attack Fredericksburg, while he himself took the bulk of the army across the river in order to crush Lee by an assault on his flank. At the beginning, all went well. However, on May 1st, Hooker found himself facing the bulk of Lee's forces at Chancellorsville. Sedgwick dutifully crossed the river and charged with the utmost determination, routing the Confederate division of General Early out of Fredericksburg. But when Hooker found himself in front of Lee, hesitated instead of pushing on, thus allowing the consummate general to take the initiative. Lee fully realized his danger, yet saw that his only chance was to beat back Hooker; then to turn and overwhelm Sedgwick, who was to his rear. He consulted with Jackson who expressed a plan to make one of his favorite flank attacks upon the Union army.

Lee consented and Jackson crossed the countryside shielded by the forest, then marched his columns to the left along the narrow country roads until he was square on the flank of the Union right wing, which was held by the Eleventh Corps (under Howard). The Union scouts noticed the Confederate maneuver and reported it to headquarters, but the Union generals thought the Confederates were retreating; and when the scouts brought word to Howard that a flank attack was eminent, he paid no heed to the information and actually allowed his whole corps be surprised in broad daylight. Meanwhile, the battle raged on as Union sharpshooters surrounded and captured a Georgia regiment. This meant that Jackson was not retreating but was preparing to strike a heavy blow. The Eleventh Corps

had no inkling that it was about to be attacked; the men were not even in line. Many of them had stacked their muskets and were lounging about, some playing cards, others cooking supper, intermingling with the pack-mules and beef cattle. While they were thus engaged, Jackson attacked.

The first notice the troops of the Eleventh Corps received did not come from the pickets, rather from the animals, viz: deer, rabbits and foxes which were fleeing as the Confederates suddenly came running over and into the Union lines. In another minute the frightened pickets came tumbling back, and behind them came the long files of charging, yelling Confederates. In one fierce rush Jackson's men swept over the Union lines, and at a blow the Eleventh Corps retreated.

Some of the regiments resisted for a few moments, but were promptly carried away in the flight. For a while it seemed as if the whole army would be swept off; but Hooker and his subordinates exerted every effort to restore order. Keenan's regiment of the Pennsylvania cavalry, but four hundred sabers strong, was sent full force against the front of the ten thousand victorious Confederates. Keenan himself fell, pierced by bayonets. But these losses gave Pleasanton time to post twenty-two guns loaded with double canister.

The Confederates advanced in a dense mass, yelling and cheering, and the discharge of the guns fairly blew them back across the earthenworks they had just taken. Again they charged, and again were driven back; and when the battle once more began the Union reinforcements had arrived. It was about this time when Jackson fell from his horse, mortally wounded. He had been leading the charge, urging his men to advance, cheering them, joyous with excitement.

As he sat on his horse he removed his hat and, looking upward, thanked heaven for the victory. But as darkness drew near he was in the front, where friend and foe were mingled in almost inextricable confusion. He and his staff were fired upon at close range, and, as they turned, were fired

upon again. Jackson fell, struck in several places. He was put in a litter and carried back; but never lost consciousness, and when one of his generals complained of the terrible effect of the Union cannonade he answered: "You must hold your ground."

Jackson lingered for several days, learning how Lee whipped Hooker in great detail by forcing him back across the river. His thoughts were on the battle, and his last words were: "Let us cross over the river and rest in the shade." Source: Hero Tales from American History by Henry Cabot Lodge and Theodore Roosevelt