

The Plattsmouth Weekly Herald

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WM. L. BROWNE, LAW OFFICE. Personal attention to all Business Entrusted to my care. Titles Examined, Abstracts Compiled, Insurance Written, Real Estate Sold.

SHAKE!

One year ago, today, the HERALD issued its first daily, under its present management. It was a venture made after due consideration of all the surroundings in our limited field at Plattsmouth. And it was made with the knowledge that we were to meet many annoying obstacles.

HARRISON'S ACCEPTANCE.

This morning GENERAL HARRISON'S letter of acceptance appeared in the papers, but we have not the space to publish it in full. Thinking the convention for the honor conferred, and accepting the nomination, GENERAL HARRISON at once takes up the great issue of the campaign. It is not, he says, a contest between schedules, but between wide apart principles.

FLANKING "LITTLE PHIL."

THE MAN WHO CAME NEAR SPOILING SHERIDAN'S RIDE

Tells the Confederate Side of the Famous Double Battle of Cedar Creek—Gen. John B. Gordon Throws New Light on the Subject.

From the following statement it appears that had the battle been carried on according to Gen. Gordon's plan, even Sheridan himself could not have saved the day, though "he rode from Winchester, twenty miles away." Gen. Gordon has still the look of a warrior who could prove an ugly enemy on the battlefield, though this chat with him in the Gettysburg hotel demonstrated his affability and winning qualities when recounting to a former foe the strange chain of events of that wonderful day on the sinuous banks of Cedar creek.

"General, I am told that the splendid bit of strategy by which we were surprised on the morning of the 19th of October is to be wholly credited to you?" "Yes, the plan was mine wholly, and so was the conduct of the fight up to a certain point.

"For the time being we won one of the great victories of the war. Every detail of the movement was carefully planned, and for twelve hours it was supremely successful. I had gone the day before, Oct. 18, to the top of what is called Massanutten mountain, where we had a signal corps stationed, and had taken observations through the field glasses. There was a magnificent bird's eye view. The Shenandoah was the silver bar between us. On the opposite side of the river I could distinctly see the red cliffs of the Artillery. Why, I had so good a view that I could see the sore spots on the horses' backs in your camp.

"The plan was submitted, talked over, and finally substantially agreed upon. I took my command, having ordered them to leave their cantonments, and everything that could make a noise behind. I knew that our only dependence was in absolute secrecy and in a complete surprise. After inspecting things with my staff I found I could get my men around the mountain by putting them in single file. I discovered still another place where the horses could be led, although the route would be exceedingly dangerous. Still, the expedition was essentially one of great peril, and more or less danger was of little consequence."

"But taking things as they were, the surprise was not only possible, but actual, and we did what none of your people for a moment dreamed of as possible. Early in the night I began to move my men around the mountain. My object was to have them all ready for an attack before daylight in the morning. The movement took all night. All through the hours of darkness the silent figures moved to their position near the sleeping enemy. An entire brigade of cavalry was moved in this way, and reached the point in about one and a half hours in advance of the men. I instructed the cavalry that as soon as I got ready to move they were to proceed in my front, rush across the river, open up the cavalry pickets, and capture them, if possible. If they could not do this, they were to put their horses to full speed, ride right through the federal camp, firing their pistols to the right and to the left as they passed through, and make directly for Sheridan's headquarters and capture him. At that time I did not know that Sheridan was absent and Wright in command. I had selected his house from the flags which floated from it, and the couriers who were constantly going in and out.

"My orders were: 'Go right through the Federal camp with your command before daylight and right to Gen. Sheridan's headquarters. Capture him!' I told them not to try to take any prisoners, not to mind anything, but every mounted man was to press straight toward Belle Grove. We, with the infantry, would take care of what was be-

hind. I knew very well that the little fighting or capturing they could do would be of little account compared with the prize they were expected to get."

"Was there not danger of a premature onset at some point?"

"Before the movement began we had compared watches so that the attack might be simultaneous."

"Were the first actual demonstrations in accordance with your plan?"

"Perfectly, so far as the real attack on the right was concerned. On the morning of the 19th, just a few days after the battle, we were four miles away from the Federal pickets with our cavalry brigade, more than a mile across the Shenandoah. We had a whole corps of infantry. We went with a rush and double quick. Before starting I had selected the house on the road at which the head of my column should stop. It was a white house at the turn of the road, farther down toward the river, and was on the flank of the enemy's line. As soon as I got there I was in position, and I had nothing to do but to close up in front and move. Dash forward with some brigade, and we plunged into the enemy's camp and found the men asleep. Many of them never awoke in this world. We went right through them and shot every one in flight. The cavalry had reached the headquarters, and Gen. Wright barely escaped, leaving the rest behind him, and they ran into our hands. We killed and wounded 7,000 and 8,000 of the panic-stricken and bewildered Federals and broke two corps entirely to pieces. The loss in my command was only about 300. By sunrise we occupied the breastworks. The enemy's cavalry was forced to retreat before Rosser, although superior to him in numbers. We did not press our advance. The enemy still had the Sixth corps in reserve, but we drove it back and captured a few of its pieces. That was the battle of Cedar Creek, and it was a complete victory."

"You say you had gained a complete victory. What was the position of the two armies then?" "The Eighth corps was scattered to the winds, the Nineteenth corps, after hard fighting, was routed and driven entirely out of their works, and we had possession of the entire Federal position except a part of that held by the Sixth corps. This corps had fled out by the left toward the pike, and we had driven them back and forced them to a ridge just west of Middletown. We had the pike away along up to the edge of Middletown, and our position was admirable every way."

"What was the real cause of the halt in your progress?"

"I will tell you, and there has been a great deal of misunderstanding on this point. I saw that the enemy had a strong position, but that it was the last one they could hold. We had one of the finest positions for posting artillery I ever saw. You know the spot—right on the highest point of the pike south of Middletown, and east and above Sheridan's headquarters. I called for Col. Carter, the chief of artillery, and wanted thirty guns planted right there, and we would have battered that Federal line all to pieces, demoralized and cleaner than the cleanest sheet in after-pieces down the valley."

"Why didn't you get your guns to work in time?"

"Yes, there's the rub. We did get a few enough to break the line—but here comes the lamentable feature of that day's business. You know Early says that the final defeat was caused by the demoralization of his own men in plundering the Federal camp and in coming so close to their own rear. I had a position when Gen. Early rode up. He was wild with joy. I exclaimed, 'Gen. Early, give me thirty pieces of artillery right here and we will destroy that army and send its fragments over the Potomac.' I knew that the supreme moment had come."

GEN. EARLY'S REACTION. "What was Early's view of the situation?"

"No, no," said he. "We've won a great victory, we've done enough for one day, we will stop here. 'But,' said I, 'let us finish the job. It is true we have won a great victory; let us complete it. We can do it in an hour, and so destroy that army that it will never show its head in the valley again.' But Gen. Early said no; that the men had seen fighting enough, and that we had won glory enough for one day. 'Very well, sir,' I replied; 'then I will return to my command.' Until then I had had charge of the entire movement on the right. I did return to my corps, and Early carried on the battle. We followed up the Federals as they retreated. Our men were too much elated with their victory."

To the question as to Early's personal condition that morning Gen. Gordon gave no reply.

"How did the battle change?"

"Everybody knows about how Sheridan reached the field in the nick of time, and how he became thundering down from Winchester. He found his men scattered along the road in terror-stricken confusion, and he compelled them to turn about and follow him. He was a fury on horseback, dashing here and there among the flying soldiers and beating them back to the field of death which they had quitted. Meanwhile, the men who were retreating from the front had been brought to some sort of order. Then followed one of the most extraordinary reversals in the history of any war. As soon as Sheridan reached the field he reformed his line and practiced upon us precisely the same movement which had demoralized his own forces in the morning. He just moved around our flank, swept down it and whipped us out of existence. He broke our line all to fragments and routed the whole army absolutely. It was as thorough a defeat as I ever saw. The day had dawned upon victory and exultation. It closed upon utter disaster and dejection. Two distinct battles had been fought, and in the last we lost all that we had gained in the first one and all that we had before. The reaction was dramatic in its suddenness and completeness, and when we left the field that evening the Confederacy had retired from the Shenandoah. It was our last fight in the valley."—Boston Herald Interview.

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