Gen. G. T. Beauregard
Mexico

Mayville N.Y.
March 2d 1891.

I have to thank you for the pleasure I have derived from a perusal of your book, "The Battle of Manassas." Though myself only a private soldier on the other side who badly wounded crept back to Centreville from the field of battle, who knew only what he saw and saw only the few things which came under a common soldier's eye, I have naturally retained a very peculiar interest in this the first battle in which I was engaged. I have also found much pleasure in, and given considerable study to the strategy and grand tactics of the war which followed, and having the good fortune which usually attends the lot of the subaltern of having no need to fight my battles over again and not being so closely associated with any commander as to feel obliged to defend his conduct, I have freely exercised the student's privilege of preferring that which I thought most excellent, with little regard to others views.

Years afterwards, I became the warm personal friend of General McDowell and went over with him step by step the events of that time and distinctly remember

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that he alluded to the strange fact subsequently developed, that you had to have flanked simultaneous movements by the right flank. Indeed, I cannot conceive how any one conversant with the public thought of that time, the previous and subsequent events of that time, or the subsequently revealed habit of mind of Gen. Johnston, can conceive it possible that the view of the battle presented in his Century article can be the correct one. It is beyond the limit of credibility that a man of his inveterate hesitancy and superabundant caution, should have assumed the responsibility of battle on such ground as that along Bull Run within 20 hours of first setting foot upon it. It is doubtful, indeed, if the ablest man who held command on either side would have dared assume such responsibility.

Of one thing I am well-assured and as it is a matter with regard to which I speak from my own observation and in which I have been confirmed by every light which has since been thrown upon it, I do not hesitate to speak of it with confidence. This is the fact, that your judgment in regard to the advisability of an advance on Manassas was unanimously approved by the officers of the army, was unquestionably correct. Q. Jones, Funk and Longstreet, who had not been engaged, would have been sufficient to assure the executive of the soundness of the Fairfax and the probability has always seemed to me too strong to admit of doubt, that the crossing of any considerable force would have caused the evacuation of the Capital. The change terror that prevailed is inconceivable by those who were almost ignorant. Any one who was almost ignorant. Any one confined by all that I have been able to learn of the fact. Of course, fighting after we got to the work, field by time and I have been humane enough at anyone with that which I have his to entertain a humility that time.

This was very delightful and jointly removed on rather frequent by the ~~that~~ remarkable conference and elevations of the human nature was changed among.

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In an almost incredibly short time — considering the universal demoralization — a sullen dogged determination took the place of the wild desire for flight, which I do not believe could have been possible if your guns had kept on playing on the fleeing host. I for one have always been grateful that Gen. Johnston rather than yourself was in command of the army in our rear on the twenty-second of July and for several days thereafter. After a week had elapsed, I am of the opinion that conditions had changed and Washington was reasonably secure.

Perhaps, I may be allowed to reiterate here the opinion I long ago made a matter of ineradicable record — before your generals had gotten ready to fight over your campaigns — that the attack of Gen. McDowell on your left ought to have won and would have won (assuming always this miscarriage of your movement on the right) but for two things, to wit (1) his distrust of the volunteer soldier — the same leaven — and (2) his subjection of these untried troops to the severest possible test, — bringing them into action on unknown ground without visible relation or supports and in detail. It is only the audacity of genius which brings forward the recruit into a veteran by entrusting or assuming to entrust him with the plan of campaign but if McDowell had left the rear of Hunter's column [illegible] do. I think [illegible]

"Where is my position?" asked Colonel afterwards General H. W. Slocum of a staff officer as his regiment ~~was~~ detached from the woods road above Dudley's.

"Over there" was the reply accompanied with a wave of the hand that comprised about ninety degrees of the horizon.

We went "over there", not knowing who was to be on our right or whom we were to expect upon our left. Even the direction of the attack and the object and character of the movement were unknown to the commanders of the involved units.

This mistake was fatal and deserved to be. ~~Especially~~ The officer commanding raw levies — more especially intelligent lines must not expect of them the blind obedience of the more mechanical soldier. They must know — or at least think that they know — where they are going and what they are expected to do. By confidence, or apparent confidence, the commander transforms their intelligence into efficiency, while distrust and concealment of purpose paralyzes them and makes their intelligence a source of weakness.

This was the great mistake of Gen. McDowell. He was not fitted by temperament and education for the leadership of untrained men. An undisciplined force is well-nigh irresistible in an assault but its individuality must be appealed to, not its habit of obedience alone. Above all they must not detect distrust or feel that ~~as one~~ anything is hidden from them. McDowell's strategy was brilliant. Your plan of action was a perfect counter to it except that having so much heavier a force in hand upon your left rear, with the stream dividing both armies (as it would had your movement been executed as the town anticipated) the odds ought to have been with him. If he had showed himself to his men, appealed to them personally instead of ordering them impersonally, he would have found as Napoleon said, that "the valor of the new levy may be made as effective in attack as the experience of the veterans."

This is the conclusion at which I arrived that day when I came but could not join the rout. All that I have learned since has tended to confirm it. It seems — to a disinterested observer, for I actually have no interest as to who receives the credit for a confederate victory — I say it seems unfortunate

Edwin, Angeline, Diadema, Alanson, Emma, Jane, and Emilie.

(8)--Diadema, daughter of the above Mary was born in Beams vill Canada, June 1st 1838; removed with her parent to Conneaut, Ohio, in October 1843; married to Chester Frederick Hall, of Markham Canada, June 1857, at Erie Pa.

(9)--Essela Corwin Hall, daughter of the above Diadema, born March 29th 1870, at Rockford, Ills. In 1882, removed with her parents to Ravenswood, a suburb of Chicago, Ills, where she was married to Edward Joseph Wolliater, Sept 18th 1890.

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Edwin, Angeline, Diadama, Alanson, Emma, Jane, and Emilia.

(8)--Diadama, daughter of the above Mary was born in Beamsville, Canada, June 1st 1835: removed with her parent to Conneaut, Ohio, in October 1848: married to Chester Frederick Hall, of Markham Canada, June 1867, at Erie Pa.

(9)--Bessie Corwin Hall, daughter of the above Diadama, born March 29th 1870, at Rockford, Ills. In 1882, removed with her parents to Ravenswood, a suburb of Chicago, Ills, where she was married to Edward Joseph Hollister, Sept 18th 1890.