FOUR YEARS

WITH THE

ARMY OF THE POTOMAC

BY

REGIS DE TROBRIAND

BREVET MAJOR-GENERAL, U. S. VOLS.

TRANSLATED BY

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LATE LIEUTENANT COMMANDING TWELFTH NEW YORK BATTERY LIGHT ARTILLERY, U. S. VOLS.

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Yours very truly

R. de Trobriand

PREFACE OF TRANSLATOR.

In preparing this version of General de Trobriand's "Four Years with the Army of the Potomac," the translator has endeavored, so far as possible, faithfully to preserve the sentiments of the author, and the very force of the French idioms themselves.

The story was written soon after the war, from notes and a diary, and the lifelike manner in which are therein told incidents of army life, of the bivouac and of the battle, of the camp and of the field, renews to an old soldier of the East the many weary marches in the time of rain and in the time of hot sun, through the mud and dust of Virginia.

It brings to his mind the weeks pleasantly spent along the banks of the Rappahannock, and near Brandy Station, both in summer and in winter, — the many awful and deadly combats through the Wilderness, along the rivers Po, North Anna, and James, around Petersburg, — and, finally, the fierce rush of the last campaign, ending at Appomattox.

It brings back to him the grim face of that indomitable soldier, Grant, the clear-sighted and tireless Sheridan, the resolute and cautious Meade, the brilliant Hancock, Reynolds, "Uncle John" Sedgwick, Humphreys, and hosts of able and devoted commanders of all ranks. And, finally, it cannot fail to sadden him as he thinks of the many friends loved and

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cherished, heroic and patriotic, left behind on those blood-stained fields, with hasty sepulture, with hardly time to think of their loss, much less to shed a tear to their memory, never again to meet them in this world.

As we look back, in these days of peace, upon the years which have passed, we can with difficulty realize that those stirring times, which appear to us as of yesterday, are so far away; and as we see those who were actors in the drama so rapidly "going over to the majority," we feel that soon the survivors of those great scenes will be few indeed.

If this work is one-half as interesting to my old comrades of the Army of the Potomac, and especially those of the Third and Second Corps, as it has been to me, I shall be amply repaid for putting it before them in an English dress.

PREFACE.

In France, the facts in regard to the late war in America are very little known. Errors industriously disseminated, political prejudices ably worked upon, have coöperated to disguise its origin, its character, and its results.

We are surprised that public opinion has been so greatly controlled by these influences, considering the opportunities it has had to be better informed. But amongst people with traditional ideas, and under a great governmental mechanism, a party determined to adhere to opinions already formed closes its eyes to the light.

This is what has happened when eminent men, who have made a study of the great republic of the New World, have clearly portrayed the true character of the gigantic struggle from which the American democracy has just emerged triumphant.

However, the world advances; principles are cleared from their surroundings, prejudices become feeble, passions subside, and time, that great enlightener, rapidly develops results which must necessarily assure the triumph of the truth.

Meanwhile, it has appeared to me that a narration of those events of that war in which I have taken some share might be interesting and useful.

This book, then, is a narrative, and this narrative, as indicated by the title, embraces only the operations of

the Army of the Potomac. I have not treated *in extenso* of the operations of the other armies.

I have thus limited myself to those things which I have seen, *quæque ipse vidi.* I relate them, not as a Frenchman who has taken part in a foreign war, but as an American who has fought for the country of his adoption and for the institutions of his choice.

My judgments are derived from convictions which I have reached by a long road, and by successive stages, through the teachings of a somewhat wandering life on both sides of the Atlantic. Whatever value the reader may attach to these convictions, I ask him to believe in the sincerity of my judgments and in the scrupulous exactness of my narration of facts.

I tell of events as they have passed under my eyes, and as I wrote them down day by day, in a journal kept without interruption from my entrance into service until the disbanding of the last of my regiments.

Everything I have here related, which I have not myself seen, I have from the evidence of the actors themselves, and by a minute comparison with official documents and depositions *in extenso* taken before the congressional committee on the conduct of the war. I have deemed it my duty to avoid as untrustworthy all information derived from individuals, the exactness of which I have not been able to verify.

The reader, then, can follow me in perfect security. He will live the life of the camp; he will be present at the organization of the Army of the Potomac, at its apprenticeship, at its first efforts; he will follow it in its marches and in its combats, in the bivouac and on the field of battle; he will accompany it in its work, in its privations, in its successes and in its reverses. In fine, he will take part in the war, — the war itself, with all its realities, terrible or glorious.

This will not prevent us from following the march of events outside of the army. Together we will visit New York and Washington, when the course of events calls us there, and there we shall meet men great in the political field, as in the camp we shall meet men great in military life.

Is it necessary for me to add that this book is written for every one, and that I have abstained from everything which might give it a special character?

If it pleases, I shall be glad; if it is interesting, I shall be happy; — and if it be useful, I shall have attained the object which I set before myself in writing it.

MAY, 1867.

CORRESPONDENCE.

CHICAGO, December 4, 1886.

MAJ. GEN. RÉGIS DE TROBRIAND, WASHINGTON, D.C.

General, — Having read and enjoyed very much your "Quatre ans à l'Armée du Potomac," I thought it might be a pleasure to soldiers, especially of our old corps, to read it. I have accordingly translated it, — but before revising it I wish to ask your consent to its publication. Trusting your favorable consideration, I am,

Very truly yours,

GEO. K. DAUCHY,

Late Commanding Twelfth N. Y. Battery, Third and Second Army Corps.

NEW ORLEANS, La., December 14, 1886.

MR. GEORGE K. DAUCHY, CHICAGO.

Dear Sir, — I feel much gratified with your favorable appreciation of my "Quatre ans de Compagnes à l'Armée du Potomac," as shown by your translation of the work, in view of the pleasure which the old comrades of the Third and the Second Corps who don't read French may find in reading it in English.

Your asking my consent to its publication is an act of courtesy which I duly appreciate, and to which I can answer only by my thanks and full authorization.

There are two things only to which I beg leave to call your attention: — 1st. To try and keep as much as possible the color and form of the style of the original, by using the *equivalent* in preference to the literal "mot à mot." 2d. To leave intact, without modification or extenuation, my judgments upon men and things — for, whatever may be otherwise their value, they have at least the recommendation in their favor that they are the honest expression of seasoned convictions based upon *facts*, and which I did not find cause to modify since the book was published.

I need not point out to you the many misprints in the French edition, especially in the spelling of the English names. It was published in Paris while I was in command in Dakota, which made it impossible for me to revise the proofs, so was it that some letter or speech of Mr. Lincoln, which I had called "modéré," appeared in print as "médiocre," quite another thing.

With hope that your publication will be successful in every respect, and that I will hear from you again,

I remain, my dear sir,

Very truly yours,

R. DE TROBRIAND.

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FOUR YEARS WITH THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC.

CHAPTER I.

THE CAUSE OF THE WAR.

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THE great American rebellion of 1861 had for its cause the maintenance and the perpetuation of slavery. From whatever point of view we study the development of the facts and the march of events which culminated in this great conflict, we find at bottom the question of slavery; all else is merely subsidiary.

This question, pregnant with storms, dated from the very establishment of the Republic. The wise men who drew up the Constitution were, in principle, opposed to slavery, and could not logically sanction a right of property of man over man, when they proclaimed "Equality and the inalienable right to liberty" of all members of the human family. In their minds, slavery was condemned; but, constrained to respect great interests, they left to time, and to the progressive march of civilization, the care of adjusting these transitory interests to permanent principles.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Antagonism between freedom and slavery was developed rapidly by the voluntary extinction of slavery in the New England States, in New York, and in Pennsylvania. The opposing forces beginning at that time to be equalized, an active struggle began when the creation of new States and the expansion of free labor tended to cause the balance to fall on the side of emancipation.

The whole political history of the United States turns upon this strife, in which the statesmen of the country, for a half-century, expended their strength in vain. Their mistake consisted in believing in the efficacy of compromises, a poor expedient to reconcile irreconcilable differences; puerile efforts, which, in presence of the results, inevitably call to mind the image of the dikes of sand which children sometimes, for their amusement, raise along the shore, to stop the rising tide.

The most astonishing of these childish freaks was the invention of an imaginary line across the American continent, to limit forever the domain of liberty and the domain of slavery, to give to each its part: this to civilization, that to barbarism.

This compromise line was, as is well known, the result of the first great battle fought by the democratic and emancipating spirit of the North, against the oligarchic and pro-slavery principles of the South.

During the session of Congress in 1818 to 1819, Missouri had asked admission into the Union, but the House of Representatives attached to this admission the condition that slavery should cease to exist in the new State. The Senate refused to sanction this condition, and the unsettled question was reserved for the decision of the next Congress. By both sides, advantage was taken of this delay, to inflame the passions

and envenom the strife. The agitation, deep and violent, developed a startling difference between the North, which ardently sustained the condition imposed by the House of Representatives, and the South, which obstinately declared it unconstitutional.

Matters had come to such a pass that Congress was frightened at probable consequences, and drew back before the responsibility of a solution by force of arms, in case a solution was not reached by ballot. Could the young Republic, which had existed less than half a century, stand the terrible ordeal of a civil war, and would not the dismemberment of the Union lead to such results that both parties would be engulfed in one common ruin?

Such was, in fact, the determining cause of the "Missouri Compromise," which was not, *nor could be*, a solution. The danger was postponed, slavery had obtained a respite; the respite of the condemned.

It is difficult to suppose that the statesmen of that period could really have trusted in the permanency of their dike of sand, and that the American people could in good faith have believed in the efficacy of a geographic fiction to stop indefinitely the advance of liberty. But the hostile parties accepted the compromise as a truce by which each might profit in recuperating its strength and in subsequently resuming the contest with greater advantage. As for the mass of the people, preoccupied by their material interests, absorbed in business, they would naturally favor every respite from those exciting agitations, which, to the loss of immediate profit, interrupted them in their commercial, industrial, and agricultural enterprises.

In democratic governments, the active minorities have, in all times, led in their train the passive majorities. So, in the "sphere militant" of the slavery ques-

tion, from the instant the vanguard laid down its arms, the great bulk of the army celebrated the peace of the day, without troubling itself as to whether the war would not break out more furiously on the morrow. Thus slavery was tolerated in the new State, but forever forbidden north of the line of 36° 30′ north latitude, — and quiet was restored throughout the whole country by the adoption of the Missouri Compromise.

For ten years, nothing occurred to trouble this peaceful quiet except the temporary excitement incident to the two elections, which raised John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson to the Presidency. The question of slavery was not brought forward, and it still slept when, in 1830, South Carolina began to prepare for its awakening by a first aggression against the Federal Union.

Ever since the establishment of the Republic, the prosperous development of the Northern States, their rapid increase of population, their marvellous advance in the paths of commerce, of industry, of agriculture, left the Southern States more and more in the rear. The cause lay simply in the relative merits of free and slave labor. But the planters of the South would not see it, and their discontent sought for grievances in the tariff of 1828.

When a law wounds any one's prejudices, or conflicts with his interests, the most specious pretext with which to combat it is to represent it as unconstitutional. On this occasion, South Carolina did not fail in this particular. She found in Mr. Hayne, one of her representatives in the United States Senate, a strong and eloquent interpreter, and for the first time a voice was raised in Congress to proclaim the doctrine of Secession, to which Daniel Webster's political abilities and oratorical power soon rendered befitting justice.

The history of this dangerous conflict is well known.

Beaten in the arena of discussion, South Carolina wished to pass from theory to practice. In a convention assembled at Columbia, in November, 1832, she adopted and promulgated an act declaring null and void all the acts of Congress imposing duties on foreign importations, rejected the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court upon the constitutionality of these acts, and proclaimed that in case of an attempt at coercion, on the part of the United States, the State would withdraw from the Union and form an independent government.

This act was the supreme effort of the spirit of rebellion. President Jackson had just been reëlected. He replied to the ordinance of nullification, as it was called, by a proclamation which left no doubt as to his determination to resort to force if the rebels did not return promptly to duty. South Carolina, isolated in her attempt at revolt, opened her eyes at last to the urgent necessity of submission. Upon the proposition of Henry Clay, Congress adopted a modification of the tariff of 1828, and it was this plank of safety of which the rebellious State took advantage to repass its Rubicon.

But if the irritating question of slavery remained thus ostensibly foreign to the abortive attempt of South Carolina, on the other hand, the cause of emancipation, at precisely this epoch, made rapid progress in Virginia. After a general agitation amongst the people of the State, the question was brought out and spiritedly discussed in the Legislature. The measures proposed for arriving at the gradual abolition of slavery failed only by a trifling majority; a fatal check, which, thirty years later, was to precipitate the State into an abyss, from which the change of a few votes at that time would have sufficed to preserve her.

In 1834, England abolished slavery in its West Indian

colonies; and immediately the reaction was felt in the United States, by a redoubling of agitation on the same subject. A propaganda more active than ever was organized, and went to work with a persistent energy, to sow abroad everywhere the idea of liberty, to secretly spread upon the plantations abolition appeals in every form, and to facilitate the flight of slaves by all means.

The South was excited, not without reason, and carried the question to Congress, where Mr. Calhoun proposed a penal law against postmasters who, in the slave States, should transport or distribute through the mails printed matter, illustrations, or other incendiary articles. The North protested against the ridiculous pretence of submitting the mails to the investigations of postal employés, who thereafter were to be held responsible for the circulation of such material.

Immediately and simultaneously appeared, from nearly every one of the free States, petitions to Congress in favor of the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. In vain did the representatives of the South oppose the reading of these petitions, the style of which was in their eyes a public insult to their constituents, as well as to themselves. Respect for the right of petition prevails, and if the measure asked for does not pass, it at least obtains a foothold within the field of discussion, and henceforth will never depart, until its accomplishment shall be the signal for the abolition of slavery in the United States.

From this time, able men could foresee the inevitable consequences of this strife — in a future for which the people of the South were preparing themselves, but to which the people of the North were blind even to the last moment.

"Let the abolitionists," said Henry Clay, in the Sen-

ate, "succeed in their efforts to unite the inhabitants of the free States, as one man, against the inhabitants of the slave States, then the union of one side will engender the union of the other, and this process of reciprocal consolidation will be accompanied by all the violent prejudices, by all the envenomed passions, by all the implacable animosities which have ever degraded or deformed human nature. A virtual dissolution of the Union will have already taken place, while the forms still remain. The most precious elements of union, mutual good-will, sentiments of sympathy, the bonds of fraternity which happily unite us to-day, will have forever ceased to exist. One section will hold itself in an attitude of menace and hostility to the other, and the conflict of opinions will be promptly followed by the shock of arms."

These words of a great statesman and a great orator were a prophecy, since realized, point by point, in the march of events. But where he saw only the dangerous intrigues of a party, by viewing from a higher standpoint, he could have recognized the marks of eternal Providence, and the unfailing development of human progress.

The great financial questions which in 1836 served to raise Mr. Van Buren to the presidential chair, as successor to General Jackson; the reaction, which in 1840 brought the Whig party to power, by the election of its candidate, General Harrison; the premature death of the latter, calling Mr. Tyler to the White House, — who, vacillating from one party to the other, succeeded only in displeasing Whigs and Democrats alike; the boundary question, at this time sharply contested with England; the complications brought on by the Canadian rebellion, which threatened to bring on war between the United States and Great Britain, were

issues powerful enough to cause the question of slavery to be left out of the field of political agitation for several years. The presidential election of 1844 brought it to the front again, and, from that time, it not only did not retire again to the background, but advanced with the step of a giant, and, in a few years, came to control all others.

In 1844, for the first time, the abolitionists had a separate candidate, James G. Birney, whose adherents, in separating from the Whig party, took away from Henry Clay enough votes to insure his defeat. They thus contributed effectually to the election of Mr. Polk, the consequences of which were, as is well known, the annexation of Texas, and the war with Mexico, with the conquest of new territory, all which ought apparently to have strengthened the cause of slavery by extending its domain. But "Man proposes and God disposes." The supposed reënforcement to the Southern States was a fatal blow to them, from the enormous impulse it gave to the development of abolitionism in the North, and precisely from the annexation of Texas dates the last phase of the conflict, which, in a few years, was about to end in the grand rebellion, the means terrible, but necessary in the ways of Providence, to cut in a single day the Gordian knot of slavery, which the weak hands of politicians would with difficulty have untied in a century.

In 1846, referring to the negotiations to conclude peace with Mexico, Mr. Wilmot, a member of Congress from Pennsylvania, proposed to pass the bill, putting two millions of dollars at the disposal of the President, but upon the express and fundamental condition "that neither slavery nor involuntary servitude should ever exist in any part of any territory which might be acquired from Mexico, in virtue of any

treaty." Such was, in substance, the famous *Wilmot Proviso*, which for a time agitated the country so violently. In the House of Representatives, it passed by a strong majority, all the Northern members — except two — having voted in its favor, whichever party they belonged to. In the Senate, the session came to an end while the debate on the question was pending, and before it came to a vote, and the result was the same in the following session. It is well to remark that the discussion, at that time, had to do not with the maintenance of slavery where it then existed, but only with its possible establishment where it did not exist. The cause of liberty was still on the defensive.

In 1848, Ex-President Van Buren was the anti-slavery candidate. This fact alone is enough to show the great progress in public opinion during the administration of Mr. Polk. General Taylor was elected, it is true, but the large number of votes cast for Mr. Van Buren gave to the party he represented an importance, which, increasing from day to day, already presaged the part it would play in the near future.

President Taylor died only a few months after his inauguration, and the elevation of Mr. Fillmore to the supreme magistracy necessitated immediately a reconstruction of the Cabinet. From that time began divergences, intrigues, discontentments, numerous defections in the Whig party, whose rapid disorganization went to furnish a new element of power to the adversaries of slavery.

The introduction of this system in the free Territories, demanded by the South and resisted by the North, was the ground upon which the contest was begun with fierce ardor on both sides. The question arose from the necessity of organizing governments in the territories recently conquered from Mexico, whose permanent

possession had just been assured by the treaty of peace. It was henceforth no longer a question of speculative theories; the country found itself in the face of pressing realities. The conflict entered forcibly into practical politics. Hence, the great interest in the subject, which in a short space of time transformed opinions into enthusiasm, sentiments into passions; which on one side gave to the general agitation the character of a crusade against the extension of slavery in the Territories, and which, on the other, provoked significant measures, such as the manifesto signed by forty-eight members of Congress, the convention of the South at Nashville, and the menace of secession, formulated under every form of defiance. Everything appeared to lead to a decisive crisis, and Mr. Calhoun, the chief of the pro-slavery party, believed he could virtually announce from that time, in a discourse full of prophetic previsions before the Senate, that the Union was approaching its end. But, far from seeking to conjure away the storm, he desired rather to precipitate the explosion. The dissolution of the Union appearing to him inevitable in a short time, his opinion was that the South should hasten the separation before the gigantic and incessant progress of the North had destroyed all equilibrium between the two sections, and put in the balance an overwhelming preponderance in its favor.

The reckoning was correct. If there must be necessarily an appeal to arms, every delay tended to the advantage of the North, and it cannot be doubted that the South had, at that time, better material chances to establish its independence than when it resolved to make the effort, in 1861. But, at that period, the Northern people did not believe in what was a logical necessity. Blinded by its faith in its institutions, and

by its veneration for its government, it never considered secession possible until the moment when the cannon peal at Fort Sumter awakened it from its illusion.

In 1850, as in 1820, the only thought was to find a compromise, which should *forever* terminate the agitation of the question of slavery in the United States. A people which believes in the perpetuity of its constitution, and in the unlimited continuance of its government, may easily confound a temporary delay with a definite solution.

California, upon demanding its admission into the Union as a free State, appeared to open the way to the compromise so eagerly sought for. Mr. Clay was charged to formulate the terms, of which the principal ones were: The admission of California with the constitution which she had adopted; the organization of territorial governments for the conquered country, without the intervention of Congress either for or against slavery; the maintenance of slavery in the District of Columbia, but the abolition of the slave trade in negroes brought within its limits; the adoption of legislation more efficacious for the arrest and return of fugitive slaves who had sought refuge in the free States or Territories; finally, the declaration that Congress had not the power to prohibit or hinder the slave trade between the slave States.

This new compromise gave rise to memorable and prolonged debates, during which Daniel Webster and Henry Clay soared to the greatest heights of parliamentary eloquence. They succeeded, at last, in having the compromise adopted by Congress, as the anchor of safety, which would save the ship of State from the rock of disunion. The illusion was of short duration. At the adoption of the compromise, there arose

amongst the people of the free States a great cry of protestation against the measures assuring the restitution of fugitive slaves. In changing its ground the agitation only became the more intense, and the opposition the more violent. In fact, it was no longer the question of deciding upon the condition of the distant and almost desert Territories: henceforth the jurisdiction of the free States themselves even in their own limits was called in question. They were compelled to submit in their own boundaries to the application of a right of property which they did not recognize as property, which their laws proscribed, and against which the public conscience revolted.

The law was not new, it is true, since it dated back to 1793. But its action had been restricted more and more, as slavery disappeared successively from the Northern States, and it had become a dead letter, not less by the reprobation of the people than by the acts of the Legislatures. Its revival, in order to make it obligatory, was to pour oil upon a fire under pretence of extinguishing it.

It became necessary to recognize this fact, when, an occasion of applying the law having occurred, the people of Massachusetts were seen to rise against even the decision of the Supreme Court of the State, and, every recourse of legal procedure being exhausted, to resist violently the reclaiming of a fugitive slave by his old master. Blood flowed, and the federal officers were assailed and given up to popular execration, and never after were able, except on peril of their lives, to attempt to return a slave to servitude. The last attempt of this kind was sufficient to set the whole North on fire against the "Southern aggressions," rallying words of all the opponents of slavery.

Thus the waves of abolitionism rose higher and

higher in proportion as the effort was made to oppose new dikes against them.

From this time the popularity of Mr. Webster was engulfed. It foundered under the weight of the condemnation of the very State he represented, and of the censures which were poured out upon his head from the whole North. Mr. Calhoun died before the end of the session, as if crushed by the powerlessness of his efforts for the cause of the South. Mr. Clay and Mr. Webster were destined to follow him within two years. Thus, those three statesmen, rivals in eloquence and in popularity, were about to disappear from the scene, their eyes already opened to the weakness of their work of compromise.

Nevertheless, in 1852, the two great political parties into which the country was divided still existed, and for the last time the contest in the presidential election was between the Whig and the Democratic parties.

The question of slavery, however, was no longer pushed to one side in their platforms. On the contrary, it was given great prominence in the electoral campaign, and, though ostensibly the compromise of 1850 was approved in both platforms, in reality General Scott, put in nomination by the Whig party, was the anti-slavery candidate, to whom rallied the abolition forces. The Democratic party, on the contrary, placed itself squarely in favor of slavery, and, by uniting upon this ground the whole South and a portion of the North, it assured the success of General Pierce; a sterile triumph, which was destined rather to hasten than retard the march of events. The first session of Congress under the new administration had hardly opened when Mr. Douglas proposed the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, under the form of a bill since become famous under the name of the "Kansas-

Nebraska bill." It must be remembered that the Missouri Compromise had in 1820 established a geographic line separating *forever* the territorial division assigned on one side to free labor and on the other side to slave labor. The work, which was to have been permanent, lasted thirty-two years, and it was about to be destroyed by the very party whom it was designed to protect. Blinded by the deceitful brilliancy of the electoral victory it had just achieved, the South saw in the barrier which defended its favorite institution only an obstacle to its expansion. It undertook to overthrow it, and it did overthrow it.

Kansas and Nebraska lie to the north of the line 36° 30′ of north latitude, and consequently slavery was therein prohibited by the compromise of 1820. In presenting the new bill, as chairman of the committee on Territories in the Senate, Mr. Douglas proposed only to establish the principle that to the population alone belonged the right to choose their local institutions, and of deciding *sovereignly* upon the question of free or slave labor in the State constitution requisite for their admission into the Union. In supporting the bill with all its forces, the South wished for much more.

It was resolved to secure to itself those rich countries towards which already a current of emigration began to flow. It succeeded only in breaking the clasp of the box of Pandora, and in putting itself in the wrong by a flagrant aggression against the North, and carried the contest to a field upon which, for the first time in the history of the United States, the opponents, henceforth become enemies, were to meet each other with arms in their hands.

The States which had remained stationary in the embrace of slavery perceived with anger that they were

becoming diminished in comparative importance, and passed by in the marvellous progress made by the States growing in number and increasing in population under the *régime* of liberty. This led them to the system of provocations, which could tend only to inflame the discussions and intensify the strife. The return of fugitive slaves had already aroused the resentment of the North, and raised a riot in the streets of Boston. The repeal of the compromise of 1820 was now about to inaugurate the era of civil war in Kansas.

This Territory, connected with the free States by way of Nebraska, almost uninhabited, and the State of Iowa, very thinly peopled, appeared to be an easy prey to the South. Slavery could be introduced without effort from all parts of the western portion of Missouri, which State, moreover, interposed its whole breadth as an insurmountable bulwark to the free emigration from Illinois. But, however disadvantageous the conditions of the strife were for the free States, they were not enough to discourage their energy. Massachusetts, vigilant and indefatigable enemy of slavery, set to work the first to organize an emigration society for Kansas; the other States of New England followed her example; the movement extended to the States of the Northwest, and, in spite of the vast distances to be traversed, there were soon seen trains of colonists marching from all points towards the contested territory. To that emigration of free men the South could not oppose a pro-slavery emigration equal either in numbers or in value. As to number, its population was comparatively too restricted; as to value, in lieu of agricultural colonists, workingmen, merchants, it could only send to Kansas people of the lowest class, called *white trash*, who, under the planters' oligarchy, vegetated in degrading misery and abject ignorance. Ferocious by instinct,

disdaining all work, strange to every idea of civilization, this class was fit only for brigandage, and amongst them, in fact, were recruited the *Border Ruffians*, who, during some years, brought upon Kansas rapine, murder, and fire, to the great shame of the federal executive, who, it must be acknowledged, covered them for a long time with a protection either imbecile or criminal.

In 1854, an association organized in the county of Platte assembled publicly at Weston, Missouri, and adopted some resolutions, by which it declared itself ready, at the first call, to expel from Kansas all the colonists who had settled there under the auspices of the emigration societies of the North. This time, the aggression was formulated by an explicit declaration of war.

The act followed closely after the menace.

At the first election of a territorial delegate to Congress, armed bands of Missourians took possession of the polls, driving from them the partisans of free labor, and of 2871 votes deposited in the ballot boxes 1729 were illegal. Some months after (March, 1855), when the election of members of the Legislature occurred, the same armed invasion returned, and this time of 6218 votes cast only 1310 were legal. And of these 1310 votes, in spite of all these acts of violence, 791 were cast for the anti-slavery candidates.[1]

Governor Reeder could not sanction these monstrous frauds. He ordered new elections in six districts, five of which elected anti-slavery representatives, — the sixth district (Leavenworth) remaining, in spite of the Governor, in the hands of the Missourians. But the first act of the Legislature was to expel the five members, the only real representatives of the inhabitants of

[1] See the official report of the committee of inquiry, appointed at a late date by Congress.

the Territory, and to give their seats to those elected by fraud and violence, who had been rejected by the Governor, who lost his position by this righteous act. So completely preponderant were the interests of the South at the White House!

Freed in this manner from all opposition, the usurpers of legislative power gave themselves full swing. The aiding of a slave to escape, whether to a point within or without the Territory, was declared a capital crime; giving them asylum, or denying the right of holding slaves in Kansas, or even circulating anti-slavery publications, became a crime, punishable by from two to five years' hard labor; to the exercise of the right to vote was attached the condition of agreeing under oath to sustain the fugitive-slave law; and finally the laws of Missouri were *en masse* made applicable to the Territory of Kansas.

What did the great majority of the inhabitants, immigrants from the free States, do? To suppose that they bowed the head humbly under the tyranny of the *bowie-knife* and the *revolver* would be to misconceive the courageous energy with which the cause of liberty always inspires its defenders. They assembled in convention to protest against the acts of the Legislature, appointed ex-Governor Reeder delegate to Congress, and finally framed at Topeka a State constitution forbidding slavery. Resistance arose everywhere in proportion to the aggression; hatred provoked hatred; murder responded to murder; and violence reached the point that the city of Lawrence was obliged to arm and prepare to defend itself against an imminent attack. For several days the place was virtually in a state of siege. But its resolute attitude compelled the Missourians, assembled to sack the city, to refrain, and on this occasion they repassed the frontier without delivering

battle. The Topeka constitution was afterwards submitted to the vote of the people and adopted unanimously, with the exception of forty-five votes, — if we except Leavenworth, the headquarters of the bandits of the frontier. The State officers and the State Legislature were elected in consequence, and Charles Robinson was inaugurated Governor the 4th of March, 1856.

Rightfully the question was settled. The emigration from the free States had taken legitimate possession of Kansas, and had pronounced unanimously against slavery. This logical solution would, perhaps, have been accepted from that time, as it was necessarily somewhat later by the South, if the election of Mr. James Buchanan to the Presidency had not directly encouraged them to redouble their efforts to stifle right by force.

The desperate strife which was prevailing in Kansas had from its commencement excited the most intense feeling throughout the country. From this open fire the discord spread to all the States, and each new incident produced its corresponding effect, as well at the North as at the South. Passions were at fever heat everywhere, in Congress as in the State Legislatures. The very floor of the Senate was the scene of a brutal attempt upon the life of Mr. Sumner, senator from Massachusetts, in consequence of an ardent philippic which he had pronounced against the South and against slavery, in reference to affairs in Kansas.

The press, as may be conceived, was no less active than the tribune. The least event took on exaggerated proportions in coming to public notice through the journals, and the universal excitement was supported by books, by pamphlets, by writings of every kind, put forth continually to increase the flame.

The old Whig party disappeared in the tumult. The

new American, or *Know-Nothing* party, founded upon the principle of opposition to the increasing influence of naturalized citizens, had a very short life. The spirit of hostility to slavery and of resistance to the aggressions of the South had thoroughly penetrated all the free States. It dominated everything, and imperiously demanded a new organization upon that platform. The Republican party was born.

The time had passed when the adversaries of slavery served only to make up a deficiency or an addition to the parties who disputed among themselves the political power. In the presidential campaign of 1856 they entered the lists, as the only champions of the North, bearing on their banners the name of John C. Fremont. The contest henceforth took on the character well defined by Mr. Seward. It was an "irrepressible conflict" between the North and the South, between free labor and slave labor. Every other question had irrevocably fallen to a relative insignificance.

The popularity of Mr. Fremont was due much more to his venturesome explorations in the Rocky Mountains and in California than to any political prominence. That was precisely what determined the choice of the Republican party, too young as yet to burn its vessels by putting forward any of its chiefs noted for radical abolitionism.

To the "Pathfinder" of liberty, the defenders of slavery opposed a political hack grown old under the harness of the Democratic party, "a Northern man with Southern principles," according to the expression first applied to the successor of President Jackson. The *savoir-faire* of Mr. Buchanan was considered preferable to the servile compliance of Mr. Pierce, or the ambition, more ardent than prudent, of Mr. Douglas, — and, after an electoral campaign conducted on

both sides with a vehemence without precedent, the last of the pro-slavery Presidents was raised to the chief magistracy of the United States by the vote of nineteen States. The six New England States, New York, Ohio, Michigan, Iowa, and Wisconsin cast their votes for Mr. Fremont, — Maryland voted for Mr. Fillmore.[1] Pennsylvania (the State of Mr. Buchanan), Indiana, Illinois, and New Jersey decided the election by voting with the South; — an unnatural alliance for a lease of the White House for four years.

The South could not misunderstand the significance of the figures. From that time she prepared actively for the great rebellion for which the next election would furnish the pretext. Nevertheless, as always on the morrow after great commotions, there came a time of respite to the universal agitation. The combatants took breath, and Mr. Buchanan, profiting by the time preceding his inauguration, promised an administration equally opposed to all *sectional* politics, pledging himself in advance to repress every aggression, whether it came from the North or the South, taking for a task for his Presidency the reëstablishment of good feeling and of good sentiments amongst all the States, and the inauguration of a new era of harmonious prosperity. Promises and engagements cost little in such a situation. The emission of that kind of political paper money is made, unhappily, without guaranty, and its real value is established only when the bills become due. Thus this issue was not generally taken for ready money.

Mr. Buchanan had hardly taken his seat in the presidential chair when Congress sent to Kansas a special committee of investigation, ordered to find out the real

[1] The popular vote was as follows: Buchanan, 1,838,232; Fremont, 1,341,154; Fillmore, 884,707.

condition of the Territory. In the official report which was the result of their inquiry, they say: "All the elections have been controlled, not by the actual inhabitants, but by citizens of Missouri; consequently, all the officials of the Territory, from constable to legislators, except those appointed by the President, owe their position to the votes of non-residents. Not one of them has been elected by the inhabitants, and your committee has been unable to discover any political power, however small in importance, which has been exercised by the people of the Territory." Here was a good opportunity for the President to show the impartiality which he had promised. This is what happened: a considerable band of armed men, coming from different Southern States, had invaded Kansas, under the command of Major Buford. The United States marshal took them into his pay, and furnished them with government muskets. Lawrence was besieged again, and, when the defenders had surrendered their arms to the sheriff, receiving in return a solemn promise of security for persons and protection for property, it was to see their hotel and Mr. Robinson's house delivered to the flames, their stores to pillage, and their two printing-houses to a complete destruction. The principal adversaries of slavery were already in flight under an accusation of high treason, and the Governor-elect, Robinson, was a prisoner in the hands of the invaders. In fine, when, in the month of July, the liberal Legislature assembled at Topeka, the troops of the United States dispersed it by force. Mr. Buchanan had taken off the mask. Creature of the South, which had elected him to the Presidency, in return he employed in its favor the whole executive power of the government. Assailed by the South, sacrificed by the federal government, deprived of all

constitutional protection, what remained to the people of Kansas by which to defend themselves? The recourse to arms. There had already been an engagement at Pottawatomie and at Black Jack, where a Captain Pate of South Carolina had been taken prisoner, with thirty of his men; now a fortified camp near Lecompton was attacked and carried, and a band of pro-slavery men, commanded by Colonel Titus, was captured or dispersed. Governor Shannon, having then purchased the liberty of Titus and his men, in exchange for a cannon taken at Lawrence, was removed by the President and replaced by Mr. Geary of Pennsylvania. The Territory was declared in a state of rebellion. The Missourians, under the command of Mr. Atchison, formerly a United States senator, took possession of Pottawatomie after a vigorous resistance, invaded Leavenworth on the day of the municipal election, killed and wounded a number of the inhabitants, burned their houses, and forced a hundred and fifty of them to leave the Territory. But nothing could weaken the vigorous resistance of that population of free men, to the aid of whom, moreover, the North came with reënforcements of men, and with shipments of arms and of munitions of war. For the second time, the Legislature elected in accordance with the Topeka constitution assembled and attempted to organize. Again the marshal of the United States dispersed it, besides arresting the president of the Senate, the speaker of the House, and a dozen of the most influential of the members, whom he conducted as prisoners to Tecumseh. Immediately the pro-slavery Legislature, proceeding from a fraudulent election, in which the inhabitants had taken no part, assembled at Lecompton, and convoked a convention to patch up a State constitution, by the same means to which it owed its

own existence. At last the patience of the House of Representatives at Washington was tired of the complicity of the President in that illegal and violent oppression. It passed a bill declaring the acts of the territorial Legislature null and void, as "cruel and oppressive, and emanating from a legislative body which had not been elected by the legitimate electors of Kansas, but which had been imposed upon them by force and by non-residents." Unhappily, the Senate refused to adopt this bill, as also to confirm Mr. Harrison, nominated judge of the Federal District Court, at the urgent request of the Governor, in place of a pro-slavery betrayer of his trust, who had made use of his power only to assure impunity to the ruffians of the frontier. Thereupon Governor Geary sent in his resignation, and was replaced by Robert J. Walker of Mississippi.

When the election to the convention ordered by the territorial Legislature took place, the people who did not recognize its usurped authority refused to take part in it, and all the efforts of the Missourians could hardly bring forth the vote of a fifth part of the registered electors.

When, on the other hand, the election of territorial officers occurred, the inhabitants, flocking to the polls, elected Mr. Parrot their delegate to Congress by an enormous majority, and twenty-seven representatives to the Legislature out of thirty-nine. On this occasion, a characteristic incident was brought to light. The election returns of a village of *eleven* houses, called Oxford, showed a vote of 1624 for the pro-slavery candidates. At the investigation it was discovered that this pretended roll of votes was only a list of names copied alphabetically from a Cincinnati directory.

Nevertheless, the South did not abandon its purpose.

The delegates of its two thousand voters drew up a State constitution, declaring slavery an indefeasible right in Kansas, and prohibiting any emancipation act by the Legislature. The Governor protested earnestly against the imposition, and departed for Washington to prevent its acceptance. He arrived too late. Mr. Buchanan had already made haste to approve it officially. Like Mr. Geary, Mr. Walker sent in his resignation, and Mr. Denver of California was appointed to succeed him. Lost trouble! This pro-slavery constitution, known by the name of the Lecompton constitution, had to be submitted to the vote of the people. It was rejected by a majority of 10,226 votes. A second submittal, under an order of Congress in August, 1858, had the same result. Then only the pro-slavery Legislature, conquered at last, submitted to the people the question of calling a new convention. The vote was in the affirmative, the election of delegates took place, and the convention assembled at Wyandotte, July 5, 1859, and submitted a constitution which, like that of Topeka, prohibited slavery. It was accepted by popular vote on the 4th of October following, and at last the conquest was decided for liberty. The State of Kansas was to enter the Union saved from the stain of slavery.

The strife *à outrance*, of which I have thus given briefly the principal episodes, did not cease for five years to excite the whole Union to the highest pitch. From the banks of the St. Lawrence to those of the Rio Grande, the noise of the strife had filled the land without intermission. What was it, in reality, but the prelude to that gigantic war for which the South was preparing, and in which the North would not yet believe? In reality, the skirmishers of the two armies had met together upon the contested territory. There

they had fought desperately, supported on both sides by reënforcements more numerous on the part of the North, more desperate on the part of the South. And when at last the victory was assured to the defenders of right and to the cause of civilization, as if the events in Kansas were not enough to render the animosities irreconcilable and the supreme shock inevitable, a new cause of discord arose suddenly on the borders of Virginia ; a fact as significant as it was strange.

At the confluence of the Shenandoah and the upper Potomac, at the point where the water has forced its passage through the mountains known by the name of Blue Ridge, is situated on the Virginia side the small city of Harper's Ferry, connected with Maryland by a very fine bridge. In 1859 it had about seven thousand inhabitants. The United States government had an arsenal there, with arms enough to equip ninety thousand men, and an armory employing two hundred and fifty workmen, capable of manufacturing twenty-five thousand muskets a year.

Now, on the 17th of October of that year, thirteen days after the acceptance of the Wyandotte constitution by the people of Kansas, the telegraph suddenly announced everywhere the astonishing news that Harper's Ferry had been invaded by an armed band, which had taken possession of the arsenal. Where did it come from ? What was its force ? With what object was this incredible attack made ? That was unknown, but it was generally believed that there was an outbreak of the workingmen, but on the next day it was learned with astonishment that it was an invasion of Abolitionists calling the slaves to liberty. Incredible as it appeared, and extraordinary as were the circumstances, the news was not less true. There were twenty-two men, — seventeen white and five black, — who had undertaken to

arm all the slaves whom they could collect, and to cut a passage with them across Maryland into Pennsylvania, where they would disperse in order to escape pursuit. The author and chief of the enterprise was John Brown, a man sixty years of age, but still of youthful vigor, a character imbued with radical abolitionism, and exasperated to fanaticism by the persecutions of which he had been the victim in Kansas. Two years before he had been compelled to abandon with his family the village of Ossawatomie, where he lived and where he was remarkable as one of the most intrepid champions of free labor. Burning with implacable resentment against the pro-slavery oligarchy, with the idea of striking at its heart, he had exhausted his means in vain efforts, when at last, tired of projects impossible to be carried out, he resolved to attempt a stroke hazardous even to folly.

Perhaps he was not entirely mistaken as to the results. Perhaps this inflexible old man believed that the blood of martyrs fertilized the soil of revolutions; perhaps, in sacrificing his own life and that of his three sons, he saw in the near future the day when our liberating regiments would march to the conflict, singing: —

> John Brown's body lies mouldering in the grave,
> But his soul is marching on — [1]

However that may be, he had rented a small farm eight miles from Harper's Ferry. There he had secretly provided the necessary arms and munitions, and from there he started, at nightfall on Sunday, to attack, with his twenty-one men, the government of the United States and the State of Virginia.

The onset was so unexpected that at first he was

[1] Le corps de John Brown git pourrissant dans la poussière, mais son âme marche en avant —

successful. About ten o'clock in the evening, the city was invaded, the arsenal captured without resistance, and a score of employés and workingmen were made prisoners, together with some prominent citizens, intended, doubtless, to serve as hostages.

Day appeared, but the slaves did not move. Instead of that, the first one on whom they laid their hands thought only of flying, and was killed by a gunshot.

Sentinels had been posted at the principal doors. The first white man who appeared outside was armed with a rifle. To the call, "Who comes there?" he replied by firing, and fell dead, struck by several balls. A former officer in the army and the mayor of the city, having afterwards advanced to find out the character and force of the invaders, met with the same fate. There were no more precautions to take. A company of militia assembled in haste, attacked and carried by assault a building defended by five men, four of whom were killed on the spot, and the fifth was taken prisoner. Four of the conspirators, seeing things turning for the worse, had fled at daybreak, and had regained the mountains. There remained with John Brown only twelve men.

At their head he fought as did Charles XII. at Bender. Barricaded, with his prisoners and a few negroes, in the fire-engine room of the arsenal, he was attacked there by the railroad workmen, who burst in the door and killed two men, but were repulsed with a loss of seven wounded. The small band found itself reduced to eleven combatants.

During the day a thousand armed men had arrived at Harper's Ferry; but they hesitated before a determined assault, through fear of compromising the lives of the prisoners. The besieged then endeavored to send out two men with a flag of truce; one of them was badly

wounded, the other was taken prisoner. There remained nine.

In the evening, a hundred marines arrived from Washington with two pieces of artillery. On Tuesday, at daybreak, the garrison was summoned to surrender. They refused. If they must die, the bayonet was better than hanging. The marines then threw themselves against the door and broke it in by a heavy ladder; the first who entered fell dead near the threshold. John Brown was struck down by a sabre stroke on the head and wounded with three bayonet thrusts. His companions fell around him, killed or wounded, except two negroes, who were made prisoners unhurt. The survivors, even those who had escaped the evening before, were taken and were all executed.

John Brown lost the game; he paid the forfeit without a murmur. He was brought before the judge, with his head and body swathed in bandages, upon a bloody mattress. He passed through his trial without boasting or feebleness, and on December 2 went to his death, with a calm eye and a smiling face. This was in 1859. In 1865, when I was shown the place where the forlorn sentinel of abolitionism had been hanged, there remained no longer a single slave on the American continent.

Although this attempt was inspired by abolition doctrines, and was, thus far, connected with events in Kansas, in which, besides, its chief actor had taken part, the insane attack on Harper's Ferry was, in reality, an individual and isolated event. But it was immediately made the most of, throughout the South, as a flagrant aggression on the part of the North. On the other hand, the abolitionist societies redoubled their activity and their energy, and drew the Repub-

lican party more and more to their views. The irritation reached the point that Mr. Seward, its principal teacher at this time, stated, in a powerful speech, the following dilemma: "Either the cotton and rice fields of South Carolina and the sugar plantations of Louisiana will finally be cultivated by free labor, and Charleston and New Orleans will become markets open only to legitimate merchandise; or the rye and wheat fields of Massachusetts and New York will be surrendered to slave culture and to the production of slaves, and Boston and New York will become markets delivered over to the traffic in the bodies and souls of men." The position could not be more clearly stated; but it must be borne in mind that, as yet, the North wished only to conquer constitutionally the place in the Union to which its preponderance in population clearly gave it the right in a democratic government, while the South, from this time on, marched openly towards secession.

The pro-slavery leaders played an open game. One of them said to me, at this time, "If the Republican candidate is elected, we will leave the Union, we will establish a confederation of the South with a government to our liking; we will place a cordon of troops upon the frontier, and will hang all d——d abolitionists who may put foot upon our soil. Then we will have peace at home." "Then you will have war," I replied. "War! You do not know this race of traders. Their sole idea is to make money and to humbug the people, at whose expense they get rich. War will touch them on the place they hold most dear, their purse. They will not fight." In vain I tried to make him see his error on this point. "You are a Frenchman by birth, and the French fight for much less than that; but you cannot comprehend the nature of this people. The Yankees

will let us go, and will not fight." The Northern men, to whom I predicted civil war as the inevitable consequence of the slavery question, said to me precisely the contrary. "Civil war? Impossible!" they replied. "The fire-eaters are agitators, who make more noise than there is any call for. For years they have cried secession; but when it comes to seriously breaking up the Union, that is a different matter. They will not dare attempt it."

Is it not curious that, in the midst of their political furor upon the slavery question, the Americans of the North, fascinated by the patriotic worship of their institutions, would not see whither they were tending? Always Fénelon's saying: "Man acts, but God leads him."

CHAPTER II.

THE MANNER OF SECESSION.

Electoral campaign of 1860 — Direct menaces of secession — Violent scenes in Congress — Charleston convention — Baltimore convention — Chicago convention — Second Baltimore convention — Election of Lincoln to the Presidency — The Southern States take up arms — Passive complicity of Buchanan — Treason in the Cabinet — Secession of South Carolina — Last attempts at compromise — Secession of Mississippi — Of Florida — Of Alabama — Of Louisiana — Of Georgia — The first shot — Organization of the Southern Confederacy — Inauguration of President Lincoln.

THE question of slavery in the United States, of which I have indicated the successive phases and irresistible developments during forty years, was the only question at issue in the presidential campaign of 1860. For or against slavery — that was the dilemma — the rest was nothing. The preludes to the strife were stormy in the extreme, sometimes even bloody, as at Baltimore, where in the local elections several citizens lost their lives. The first official menace of secession came from Louisiana. In the month of January the Legislature of the State adopted resolutions declaring that the election of a *Black-Republican* to the Presidency of the United States would be a sufficient cause for the dissolution of the Union, and for the calling of a convention of the Southern States, to which Louisiana fixed in advance the number of its representatives at six delegates. The country, however, was not as yet stirred by that declaration. The more immediate interest was concentrated at that time upon the contest in which the election of Speaker of the House of Representatives was con-

cerned. The parties were divided so equally as to prolong the contest for more than eight weeks — from December 5 to February 1. But the Republicans finally prevailed, and their candidate, Mr. Pennington, was chosen on the forty-fifth ballot.

As an encouragement to the adversaries of slavery, this victory had the effect of stimulating their efforts. For the first time Mr. Lincoln appeared in New York. He was known there only by the report of his celebrated debate with Mr. Douglas, with whom he had contended, in Illinois, for a seat in the United States Senate.

A vast meeting was organized to hear him, and there the platform of the party was expounded and discussed by him with a success which commanded attention, but yet without menace as regarded the slave States. On that side, however, the horizon grew darker and darker, and the Legislature of South Carolina, following the example of Louisiana, recommended the appointment of delegates to a Southern convention.

Then it was that Mr. Seward, to calm the uneasiness of feeling which was manifesting itself in public opinion, delivered before the Senate an oration which did more honor to his imagination than to his foresight. According to him, there was no reason to apprehend any actual result from the menaces of disunion so many times insinuated, formulated, repeated. It was a scarecrow designed simply to influence the elections, etc. Was Mr. Seward in reality as optimistic as he wished to appear? Was he not working somewhat for his own interest? The result would appear to indicate it, since, adopting his views, public opinion considered him from that time the destined candidate of the Republican party for the Presidency. The threatening declarations

of the Southern States thus remained without effect upon the ideas and actions of the Northern States, where the adversaries of slavery triumphed everywhere in the spring elections.

Grave symptoms of hostility appeared under the form of conflicts of jurisdiction between the federal government and some of the free States. Thus, in Massachusetts, a refractory witness in the affair of Harper's Ferry, arrested by order of the Senate at his residence in Concord, was immediately set at liberty by the intervention of the local justice, supported by the people.

And again at Racine, in Wisconsin, a man arrested for having aided in the escape of a slave was taken by the people, out of the hands of the federal officials, powerless to execute their orders. In the Northwest, as in the Northeast, the hatred of slavery was the same, and produced the same resistance. It occasioned violent outbursts even within the halls of Congress.

On the 5th of April, in the House of Representatives, Mr. Lovejoy of Illinois became its interpreter to the House of Representatives. "Slavery," cried he, "has been justly called the source of all crimes. Put in a moral crucible all the crimes, all the vices of human nature, and the result will be slavery. It exhibits the violence of robbery, the sanguinary fury of piracy, the brutal lust of polygamy," etc. One can imagine the immediate effect of this furious outburst. A Southern representative rushes out with a cane to chastise the orator; Northern representatives hurry forward to protect him. A member from Kentucky, armed with a long bowie-knife, ostentatiously cleans his nails with it, watching for the moment to use it for some other purpose. Curses, threats are heard on all sides; and the presiding officer, powerless to calm the

tempest, can only declare the sitting adjourned, in the midst of frightful confusion.

In the heat of this universal excitement, in the North as well as South, in Congress as well as amongst the people, in the press as well as on the rostrum, the presidential campaign was opened by the Democratic convention assembled at Charleston in the latter part of April. Its object was to formulate a declaration of principles and to nominate a candidate for the Presidency.

Upon these two points a divergence of opinion was manifested from the first — a result nearly inevitable from the diverse elements which composed the convention, and from their disproportion to the interests they represented. Let me explain.

All the States in the Union, North as well as South, were represented at Charleston in proportion to their respective population, and consequently by the number of their representatives in Congress. Now, the free States, being nearly all assured to the Republican candidate, could furnish few electoral votes to the Democratic party; nevertheless, they had 366 out of 604 delegates to Charleston, while the Southern States, which, on the contrary, would give their suffrages nearly unanimously to the party, had only 238 members. A radical fault. The majority belonged to those who could do nothing for the success of the ticket, certain beforehand of a defeat in the States which they were chosen to represent.

Another cause of division — the candidate proposed by the Democrats of the North was Mr. Douglas, more than distasteful to the Democrats of the South by his doctrines in favor of leaving to the inhabitants of the Territories the liberty of choosing their local institutions, without interference on the part of Congress.

Put in practice in Kansas, these doctrines had produced a result which was far from being regarded with favor by the South. However, Mr. Douglas was the only man who might yet turn the issue in favor of the party. Should he be nominated at Charleston, the chances of the contest might yet be favorable. But that was precisely what the separatists did not desire. Determined to attempt secession, prepared already to support it by arms, they were resolved to reject every overture toward conciliation, which in their eyes was only a temporary delay, prejudicial to their cause.

The election of a Republican candidate to the Presidency would furnish them the occasion or rather the pretext desired. They concluded then to hasten the issue by the defeat of Mr. Douglas.

For form's sake, they submitted to the constitutional trial of a vote; in reality they were arming themselves for the revolutionary trial of rebellion. They consented to play the game, but with the reservation that if they lost they would not pay the stake.

Their first work in the Charleston convention was consequently the presentation of a political programme in formal opposition to the system of Mr. Douglas. In it they demanded the direct intervention of Congress in the government of the Territories, to protect and support the importation of slaves, the rigorous execution of the law in reference to fugitive slaves, in spite of all opposition of the State Legislature, etc. The glove was thus thrown down to the Northern fraction of the Democracy, which took it up, and, being in a majority, substituted for it a declaration by which the party simply left everything in reference to the contested subjects to the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States. Thereupon the delegations of seven Southern States withdrew with much parade, re-

fusing any longer to take part in the acts of the convention.

This withdrawal was with the evident object of vitiating the nomination of Mr. Douglas, which appeared to be assured. The two-thirds necessary for a nomination was thus reduced to 165 votes. But, to parry the blow, the convention decided that the number necessary should remain the same as if there had been no withdrawal, that is to say, 202. This decision rendered any nomination impossible. Mr. Douglas obtained one hundred and fifty votes, and after fifty-five ballots the convention adjourned to assemble at Baltimore on the 18th of June following. About six weeks were left to the Democracy of the North and the Democracy of the South in which to reconcile their irreconcilable differences.

However, the moderate men who had foreseen these differences and had no faith in their adjustment had been at work for several months to build up a mixed party, a sort of *juste milieu* between the two extremes, neither flesh nor fish, being careful neither to walk upon the burning soil of abolitionism nor to swim in the boiling springs of slavery, content to fly the banner, already somewhat torn, of the Union for itself.

The unionist party assembled in convention at Baltimore on the 9th of May. Its platform was most honorable, but of the vaguest sort. It was limited to this laconic formula, "The Union, the Constitution, and the enforcement of the laws." There were only two quiet sessions needed to put forth the following presidential ticket: For President, John Bell of Tennessee; for Vice-President, Edward Everett of Massachusetts. The colorless convention then separated, doubtless with the inoffensive

illusion of having found an anchor of safety for the drifting Republic.

In its turn, the Republican convention assembled May 16 at Chicago. What a contrast with the Democratic convention of Charleston! Here only four Southern States were represented: Missouri, Maryland, Virginia, and Texas. The compact phalanx of delegates, like a disciplined army marching to victory, went to work immediately with that spirit, at once intelligent and practical, which goes right to the point, without allowing itself to be distracted by secondary interests or to be led astray by dangerous dissensions. The platform was known in advance. It recognized slavery as a local institution whose abolition could proceed only from the States in which it existed.

But it demanded liberty in the Territories to arrest its extension. As to the candidate, Mr. Seward was really the leader recognized by the party, but, as shown in the preliminary ballot, he was considered as having been too much compromised, and as jeopardizing the success of the ticket. The convention nominated Mr. Abraham Lincoln of Illinois for President, and Hannibal Hamlin of Maine for Vice-President. In nominating Mr. Lincoln, the Republican party considered that by his indefatigable activity he would assure to the cause the doubtful State of Illinois, and the delegates recognized in him that intelligent moderation, that practical good-sense, which were soon to characterize his administration in the midst of the most terrible trials.

As ever in parties in disorder, who are joined to a hopeless cause, the example of the Republicans was without effect upon the Democrats. The quarrels between them became more bitter, and in the

Senate Mr. Pugh of Ohio, replying to an attack by Mr. Benjamin of Louisiana, against Mr. Douglas, had declared, without paraphrase, that the North would not submit to the dictation of the South, in regard to its principles or its candidates,—an explicit declaration which foretold clearly the fate of the second Democratic convention at Baltimore. It assembled, in fact, on the day appointed, and the first question was that of the rival claims of disputed delegations from the South.

It will be remembered that at Charleston the delegations of seven Southern States withdrew from the convention, on account of the adoption of a platform contrary to their views. These delegations presented themselves again at Baltimore. But during the interval other delegations had been appointed, with titles more or less doubtful, from the same States, and demanded the exclusive right to represent them in the convention. A new cause of division. The convention, which bore ill-will to the disturbers of Charleston, pronounced against them and admitted their competitors. Now the dissension was worse than ever. A second convention met and organized in opposition to the first one. One represented the Northern fraction and the other the Southern fraction, and from this irreconcilable antagonism two tickets were immediately put in the field. One put forth for popular suffrage, for President, Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois; for Vice-President, Herschel V. Johnson of Georgia. The other announced as candidates,—for President, John C. Breckenridge of Kentucky; for Vice-President, Joseph Lane of Oregon. Twenty-five States, mostly Republican, were represented in the first; eighteen States, nearly all pro-slavery, Democratic, assembled

in the second, expressed much more fully their convictions and their tendencies.

Thus the secessionists of the South accomplished their object. In thus irrevocably cutting the Democratic party in two, and separating from their Northern allies, they had deliberately assured the triumph of the anti-slavery candidate. Certain henceforth of the result, they awaited with impatience the signal of open rebellion, hastening besides to complete the preparations for it with a redoubled activity.

The party leaders set to work everywhere to preach secession with an indefatigable ardor, and to use every effort to excite hatred against the North. Frequent and unaccounted-for incendiary fires occurred in Texas. They were represented as the work of abolitionists sent from New England. Were adulterated liquors introduced clandestinely by innkeepers, on being discovered and seized, they were transformed in the journals to bottles of strychnine, sent to the slaves to poison the whites *en masse.*

At the North, the attempts at accommodation ended in nothing, antagonized as they were by their own rivalries. Mr. Breckenridge attacked Mr. Douglas in Kentucky, and he, on the other hand, denounced his adversary wherever he conducted his electoral campaign throughout the North, and also in the South. Amongst the Republicans, on the contrary, there were neither divisions nor clashing. Mr. Seward went through the Western States, supporting with every effort of his eloquence the candidacy of Mr. Lincoln. In the political meetings the violent language of the second-rate speakers aroused, here and there, serious tumults. At Philadelphia a "unionist" meeting was attacked by the Republicans; at Hannibal, in Missouri,

on the contrary, the Republicans were attacked by the Democrats. Even in New York, there was almost a riot at the passage of a procession of "Wide Awakes," a Republican association, before the New York Hotel, the Democratic headquarters.

In the month of October the agitation was at its height, when some of the local elections took place in parts of the Northern States. The results of these elections had, for a long time, been recognized as presaging the result of the presidential election. On this occasion, the victory of the Republicans was complete, and Pennsylvania, formerly Democratic, ranged itself decidedly under the Republican banner.

When every illusion was thus dissipated before the evidence, three distinct plans of secession were formulated and discussed publicly in the South: —

1. On the morrow after the election of Mr. Lincoln, the Legislature of South Carolina, called together in special session, should pass an act, in the name of the sovereign State, dismissing the federal officers, directing the seizure of the money in the federal sub-treasury, etc. In case of an attempt at coercion, the assistance of the other States would be invoked.

2. The Governors of the States should call together their Legislatures by proclamation, as soon as the election of Mr. Lincoln should be assured; they should declare the Union dissolved, and proclaim Mr. Breckenridge President of the Southern Confederation.

3. They must await the inauguration of Mr. Lincoln without opposition, and the proposition in Congress for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia would be for the representatives of fifteen Southern States the signal to retire *en masse* and proclaim secession. It will be seen that the question of separation was no longer even considered doubtful, the discussion

bore simply upon the manner of proceeding. This is so true that at this epoch overtures were made to the French government in the name of the future confederation.

The great day at last arrived, — the day of the presidential election — Tuesday, the 6th of November, 1860, — date forever memorable, not only in the history of the United States, but also in the history of the civilized world. The vote was cast everywhere with a calm that was solemn, — the momentary calm which in the moral as in the physical world often precedes the immediate unchaining of the tempest. On the evening of the day of election, it was known that the State of New York, the last hope of the pro-slavery men, had given a majority of more than forty thousand for Abraham Lincoln. The result was as follows: Lincoln and Hamlin, 180 electoral votes; Breckenridge and Lane, seventy-two electoral votes; Bell and Everett, thirty-nine electoral votes; Douglas and Johnson, twelve electoral votes.

Lincoln's majority over all his rivals was sixty-seven electoral votes. On the popular vote, he had five hundred thousand more than the highest of any of his competitors.

Immediately upon the election of Mr. Lincoln, action took the place of menace. On the next morning (November 7), the Legislature of South Carolina passed resolutions to call a State convention; then it voted the immediate arming of the people, and the raising of a million of dollars, and different war measures.

At the same time, military organizations were formed on all sides. Secession meetings succeeded each other everywhere. The fever for separation seized all the cotton States, and even in Virginia the militia were

furnished with arms. The flag of the Union disappeared — to give place in South Carolina to the palmetto, in Georgia to the old federal standard. In fine, as if to complicate matters still more, new troubles broke out in Kansas, on account of the delay made by Congress in the formal admission of the new State.

To these direct and multiplied attacks against the federal government, Mr. Buchanan opposed only the inertia of a senile imbecility, or the hypocrisy of latent treason. At the opening of the Thirty-sixth Congress, which took place on the 3d of December, his presidential message was without force, without inspiration, and did not rise above the narrow and shuffling forms of a technical discussion. Mr. Buchanan had formerly said of Mr. Webster, "He is a remarkable statesman, but he is no politician." To which Mr. Webster had replied, "Mr. Buchanan is a good politician, but he will never be a statesman." The last acts of his political career proved that he fell even much below that appreciation.

One word of Mr. Seward characterizes perfectly the wretched document addressed to Congress. "The President," said the senator from New York, "has demonstrated two things: 1. That no State has the right to withdraw from the Union, unless it desires so to do. 2. That it is the duty of the President to enforce the laws, unless somebody opposes it."

In addition, treason sat in the very councils of the small-minded President. Mr. Cobb, Secretary of the Treasury; Mr. Thompson, Secretary of the Interior; Mr. Floyd, Secretary of War, belonged to the South, and actively favored secession. In order to drive them out of their influential positions in the administration which they defiled, the discovery of gigantic thefts in the Department of the Interior was necessary, thefts in

which Mr. Floyd was found to be directly implicated, by his signature placed upon fraudulent Indian bonds. This was not, however, before the powers of the Secretary of War had been used to expedite to the South, under various pretexts, considerable quantities of arms, which must aid the rebellion. Mr. Buchanan himself did not clear himself from all suspicion of complicity in these shipments, as shown when a popular riot in Pittsburg had stopped the despatch to the South of guns and artillery equipments which had been hurried forward by his orders. See into what hands the government of the Republic had fallen, and to what men the care for its safety must remain intrusted for yet some months. Isolated from the nation by general distrust, they had around them only a group of intriguers, sharp for the spoils, even to the end, hurrying to get the last favors from the power still remaining, *et quasi apud senem festinantes.*

On December 20, South Carolina assembled in convention, declared the Union dissolved, and resolved itself into an independent republic. The scene was solemn. The delegates, each in his turn, gave in their votes as their names were called. They were 169. There was not one who pronounced against that revolutionary measure. An ordinance prescribed the turning of the custom revenue into the State treasury; the Governor was invested with all the powers formerly exercised by the President, and an executive council of four members was appointed to assist him. Secession was henceforth an accomplished fact in South Carolina. A fatal example, which could not fail to be promptly followed, especially in presence of the persistent inertia of the federal government. Already, in fact, the conventions of five other States were called for the month of January, and the armament of volunteers proceeded unceasingly.

To conjure away the evil, Mr. Buchanan could not think of anything better than to appoint a day of public prayers. Not knowing what saint to invoke, he issued a proclamation in form of an order, to invoke the intervention of Providence, at the special date of January 4, 1861. The inspiration did not appear to be that of the Holy Spirit, to a people whose practical maxim in matters of religion is, "Help thyself and Heaven will help thee." And it does not appear that the *Orate fratres* of the Rev. James Buchanan had any greater success with Providence, for whom secession was the means to accomplish the final and radical abolition of slavery.

In Congress, the Southern representatives claimed boldly the right of separation, which the Northern representatives absolutely denied. Vain discussion, it seems to me. Of what avail is right without force? A fiction. In the circumstances in which the United States found themselves, what was absolute right? Where could it be found? Arguments were not wanting on either side. It was with the Constitution in politics as it is with the Bible in religion: every one interpreted it to suit himself, and everybody found there what suited him. The Constitution, said the South, recognizes slavery, which is the base of our social and political organization. You do violence to the Constitution in attacking our peculiar institution. — No, cried the North, the Constitution, it is true, tolerates slavery and we tolerate it in the States where it exists; but we contend against introducing it in the Territories which are free, and which will remain free in virtue of the powers granted to Congress by the Constitution. — The federal agreement being violated, said the South, it ceases to be obligatory. Our fathers founded a Union of sovereign States, based upon the fundamental principle of self-government, upon the equality of rights in

common interests, and upon the equal division of influence in the central power. To-day the interests have become incompatible, the equality of power illusory, and, in virtue of the same principle of self-government, we make use of our right, and we dissolve the Union. — The federal agreement is not violated, replied the North, and remains obligatory. The Union founded by our fathers is based upon the formal and perpetual renunciation by the States of certain rights of sovereignty. The common interest governs and prevails over whatever local interests come in conflict with it; the division of power is in proportion to the number of the governed, a logical sequence in democratic institutions. You have no right to dissolve the Union. — Above all, proclaimed the South, we owe allegiance to the sovereignty of our respective States. — Above all, proclaimed the North, we owe allegiance to the sovereignty of the federal government. Such were, upon the whole, the questions debated at great oratorical length.

Let us come to the root of the matter, and see what there was real under this tumultuous flood of argument. For me, who at that time watched the working of affairs behind the curtain of journalism, I could find only this: in spite of the increasing preponderance of the North, the South, by its unity of action and the superiority of its political men, had governed the Union up to that time. From the moment when the power was taken away from it, it fell to a relative inferiority, which was without remedy. Unhappily for the South, the disproportion created by its state of comparative stagnation, in contrast with the gigantic progress of the North, was due to a cause which, outside of the development of material interests, had dug between them an abyss which nothing could fill. I speak of slavery. The question always returns to that. The spirit of liberty,

which produced such marvels in the North, could no longer act in harmony with the old institutions, which, in its progressive march, interdicted its access to those rich countries, to that fine climate reserved to the forced labor of the blacks. In the free States the hatred to slavery had increased with the development of civilization. Thence came that strife of more than forty years' duration, which had morally cut the Union in two, and which could end only in war, that decisive and irrefutable argument.

In such a case, why these long discussions? The men of the South gave themselves up to them only to gain time, and to secure to themselves the best possible chance in the trial by battle. But the time which they so well employed was by the North, on the contrary, only frittered away in puerile attempts at reconciliation.

Mr. Crittenden, the Nestor of the old Whig party, the colleague of the Clays and the Websters, believed that the Union could still be saved by a return, pure and simple, to the Missouri Compromise. A few of the representatives of the frontier States grouped around him; but, to realize his proposition, two-thirds of Congress would have been necessary, and the House of Representatives refused even to hear it read. The committees appointed in the Senate and the House of Representatives for the especial consideration of the state of the Union proposed nothing. In despair as to how matters were tending, a general "Peace" convention was called at Washington, upon the initiative of Virginia, yet undecided and unquiet at finding herself between the hammer and the anvil. But thirteen States — seven free and six slave — were represented in it. It is useless to add that the peace conferences in which the central States alone took part accomplished nothing.

While they were talking in the North, what had been done in the South?

The month of January had witnessed the secession, successively, of five States — Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, and Georgia.

Mississippi transformed the federal post of Vicksburg into a fortress, commanding the navigation of the river. Florida seized Pensacola, Georgia seized Forts Pulaski and Jackson and the arsenals of Savannah and Augusta; Louisiana, all the forts and arsenals in the State; Alabama, the same.

Outside of the States formally separated, North Carolina had acted beforehand in occupying the fortifications of Beaufort and Wilmington, and the arsenal of Fayetteville; Arkansas taking possession of Little Rock, containing nine thousand muskets and forty pieces of artillery; finally, Tennessee fortified Memphis, and the treason of General Twiggs delivered to the enemy the forts, the war material, and part of the troops which were in Texas. The first cannon shot had even been fired in South Carolina, always eager to push matters to the extreme.

When, in December, the South Carolina convention had passed the act of secession, the United States government had at Charleston only about a hundred soldiers, quartered at Fort Moultrie, under the command of Major Anderson. This officer, of memorable loyalty, understood immediately that, with his handful of men, he was there at the mercy of the enemy. Fort Sumter, surrounded by water at the entrance of the bay which it commanded, offered to him a post much more advantageous. He hastened to transfer his command to it. There, at least, he was protected against a *coup de main*. But his position was not less precarious. The Carolinians occupied all the forts around the

bay, which they proceeded to arm, with great activity, and, in addition, they built on several points new batteries, whose lines of fire converged upon Fort Sumter. Major Anderson reported to the War Department the progress of these menacing works. Fort Sumter was not, in point of fact, in a proper state of repair. It was short of men, short of munitions of war, short of provisions. It was urgent to revictual it and to reënforce the garrison. After weary delays and hesitations, it was determined, at last, to send the steamer Star of the West, carrying two hundred and fifty men, and provisions. It was already too late. The transport, arriving in the bay, with flag flying, was there received by cannon shot, fired from a battery on Morris Island. The vessel was a merchant ship hired by government. She had to retire without accomplishing her mission. Anderson and his little faithful troop were left, abandoned to their fate, and, under the effect of such an insult to the national flag, Mr. Buchanan humiliated himself to promise to send no more men nor munitions of war nor provisions to that handful of brave men, who had displayed and defended the flag of the United States, in face of the rebels of South Carolina. If that is gentleness only, what, then, is cowardice?

The national pride was indignant at such shameful feebleness, but the people resigned itself to wait patiently. The debased administration had but a few weeks more of existence. Public opinion found at least some consolation in the knowledge that there was one man in the Cabinet whose heart showed neither treason nor feebleness, when General Dix, the new Secretary of the Treasury, sent to the commander of one of the custom house vessels the peremptory order, "*If any man attempt to haul down the American flag, shoot him on the spot.*"

He was the only member of this emasculated government who gave any sign of virility. The general-in-chief, Winfield Scott, was no longer equal to the occasion. His glorious reputation belonged to the past. Enfeebled morally and physically by years, the old candidate for the Presidency saw but one issue to the strife already entered on, the division of the Union into four confederations. — The conqueror of Mexico could no longer organize or lead an army. And, in the meanwhile, the capital began to be menaced, and, with its population impregnated with the Southern sentiment, some adventurer might attempt to take it by a *coup de main*.

In the beginning of February, disdaining even to assist the inauguration of the President-elect, and profiting by the passive complicity of the President still in office, the six seceding States organized a provisional government at Montgomery, Alabama. Mr. Jefferson Davis of Mississippi was designated as President, and Mr. Alexander Stephens of Georgia, Vice-President. The constitution of the new confederation was copied from that of the United States, except a few variations to agree with circumstances.

Mr. Davis was known as one of the extreme chiefs of the secession movement. Born in Kentucky, in 1806, he was at that time fifty-five years old. An old graduate of West Point, he had followed the military career for some time, and had distinguished himself in the Indian wars. Retired upon a plantation in 1835, where he devoted himself for some years to the cotton culture, he had taken up arms again in 1846 to fight in Mexico, as colonel of a regiment of Mississippi volunteers. Peace having restored him to civil life, he had been elected senator, had occupied the position of Secretary of War during the Presidency of Mr. Pierce,

and had afterward retaken his seat in the Senate, which the secession of the State which he represented caused him to abandon. In spite of his education, he was more statesman than soldier; with a firm will, an indefatigable energy, he marched toward his goal with the persistence of absolute conviction or of an ambition without scruple.

Mr. Stephens, on the contrary, had been one of the last Unionists of Georgia. He had at first resisted the revolutionary movement, and risked his popularity by exposing the dangers, the obstacles, and the catastrophes inseparable from the sundering of the Union, with a broadness of view and a justness of observation which were remarkable. But, this duty accomplished, he had accepted his part of the calamities foreseen, and followed the fortunes of his State, which, in his opinion, had greater right to his allegiance than the federal government. In giving to him the second place of importance in the Confederacy, the convention had acted wisely. It assured to itself the active coöperation of an eminent statesman, whose influence must rally around it many undecided consciences and wavering characters.

When, then, Mr. Lincoln came to power, he found confronting him a confederation organized in the South, and already on a war footing. From Springfield to Washington his journey through a part of the free States had been marked by a series of ovations; but in order to reach the capital he must pass through Maryland, a slave State, which, with the South, had voted against him. Information well authenticated had been received of a plot against his life, so that he was compelled to separate from his suite at Harrisburg, and, passing through Baltimore under the strictest incognito, he reached the end of his journey. He was inaugurated

on the 4th of March, the date assigned. His inaugural address was sparing in pledges, exempt from menaces, but firm and explicit upon one point, the duty of recovering by force all the federal property taken from the government by the States in rebellion, and his determination to accomplish it. The time of cowardly subterfuge was past, the hour of action had arrived.

For that terrible trial, in which the fate of the Republic was to be determined upon the field of battle, Mr. Lincoln surrounded himself immediately with men devoted to the national cause, and resolved to give force to the will of the people. They were: Mr. Seward of New York, designated beforehand for Secretary of State; Salmon P. Chase of Ohio, Secretary of the Treasury; Simon Cameron of Pennsylvania, Secretary of War; Gideon Welles of Connecticut, Secretary of the Navy; Caleb B. Smith, Secretary of the Interior, etc. But everything was to be done, everything to be created.

On relinquishing power to steal away from public contempt into the obscurity of private life, Mr. Buchanan left to his successor the Union dismembered, a rebel confederation of six States, to which was about to be added in a few days a seventh, Texas, six other States in revolt against the federal authority, and really belonging already to the Southern Confederacy. Against this formidable rising there was no army; 653 men, including officers, in the capital; empty arsenals; forts without garrison and without armament; a navy scattered about, hardly sufficing for the protection of commerce in time of peace; a treasury nearly empty; — in fine, the North yet inert, distracted in its immobility by differences of opinion, betrayed by personal interests, sending to the South clandestinely the product of individual manufactories of arms.

Such was the situation. Many considered it desperate, but they did not know the immense resources a free people can find in the outpouring of its patriotism, and what prodigies it can accomplish to save at the same time its existence and its institutions. America was about to present this grand spectacle to the world. She awaited only the signal of the cannon of Fort Sumter, and she had not long to wait.

CHAPTER III.

THE CALL TO ARMS.

Capitulation of Fort Sumter — Call for seventy-five thousand men — Four States refuse to furnish their quota — First regiment *en route* for Washington — Bloody riot in Baltimore — No news — Secession of Virginia — New call for eighty-three thousand volunteers — Secession of Arkansas — Occupation of Alexandria by the Federals — Men, but no army — School of the battalion — First successes in Western Virginia — General G. B. McClellan — Battle of Bull Run.

THE month of March was devoted to organizing the new administration, and preparing the succor necessary for the few forts in the South still preserved to the federal government by the fidelity of their commandants. The first fleet was despatched from New York on the 7th of April. It was composed of eighteen vessels of different sizes, and six transports. Its destination was kept secret, but it had scarcely got to sea when General Beauregard, commanding at Charleston, notified Major Anderson, shut up in Fort Sumter, that all communication with the city was thereafter forbidden to him. That meant the cutting off of supplies from the little garrison, which, up to that time, had been able to subsist from day to day, in virtue of arrangements made by the commandant under his personal responsibility. On the 11th, Anderson was summoned to surrender the fort. He refused. "I shall wait for the first cannon shot," he wrote. "If you do not reduce the fort, we shall be compelled by famine to surrender in a few days." That was no news to the enemy, but it might induce him to delay the attack, and

the chance of receiving aid in time might thus be prolonged. Such, however, was not the case. On the next morning, — Friday, April 12, — at four o'clock, all the rebel batteries opened fire. The fort held a garrison of only eighty-one men, and was in no state for defence. In the casemates, about forty embrasures, in course of construction, presented to the view only a gaping void, scarcely disguised by curtains of planks a few inches thick. Nevertheless, they replied as well as they could to the hail of projectiles, which did not cease during the day. Red-hot shot set fire to the barracks built inside the fort. The garrison had to abandon the service of the guns to put out the fire, which, notwithstanding, destroyed the buildings. A few ships were in view, in the offing; but it was soon seen that one of them had grounded on the bar, and that the others could not follow the channel with any chance of reaching the fort. The commandant could hold out but two days longer with what remained to him of provisions in the storehouse. He preferred to spare the lives of his men, by shortening a useless resistance, and he capitulated on Saturday, in the afternoon. The defenders of Fort Sumter were treated with the honors of war, and allowed to set sail for the North, where, a few days later, they must have been agreeably surprised to see themselves transformed into heroes.

They had done their duty, nothing more. Left to themselves, in a hopeless position, they had undergone a bombardment of two days, which injured only the walls, though they wished it to be well understood that they yielded to force only; after which, they had packed their baggage and surrendered the place. With the best will in the world, it seemed impossible to find anything heroic in it. And yet, to see the ovations given to them, to read the dithyrambs composed in

their honor, it would appear that Anderson and his eighty men had renewed for America, at Fort Sumter, what, in ancient times, Leonidas and his three hundred had done for Greece, at Thermopylæ. The reason was that in those few days everything had changed its appearance in the free States. Slow as they had been heretofore in preparing for war, so much the more ready were they now to rush to arms. The last illusion was dissipated with the smoke of the cannon of South Carolina.

On the 15th of April, two days after the surrender of Fort Sumter, the President issued a proclamation calling for seventy-five thousand men for three months' service. The number was entirely insufficient, and could not be considered a remedy proportioned to the evil; but, at least, it had the good result to stir up the blood of the men of the North and to kindle in their breasts the battle fever. Nothing which could contribute effectually to this end was neglected, and so the defence of Fort Sumter, insignificant, considered by itself, was exalted to the proportions of an exploit, as much to stimulate popular enthusiasm as to honor faithful loyalty, at the time when defections were dishonoring the roll of officers of the army, and turning against the government the services of nearly all the officers coming from the South.

After the popular ovations came the promotions for these happy defeated, whom defeat profited more than any victory. The title of hero was at that time easily obtained, and the American press long held it very cheaply, before the correct value was established by the trial of blood and fire.

North Carolina, Kentucky, Missouri, and Tennessee refused to furnish their quota to repress the rebellion. This was virtual separation from the Union. In return,

most of the free States offered many more men than the number asked for. Pennsylvania and Massachusetts each offered a hundred thousand volunteers. The Governor of New York, a practical man and not inclined to exaggeration, promised thirty thousand men, armed and equipped, and set himself immediately at work to make good his word.

Whoever saw New York in those days of patriotic infection can never forget the grandeur and the strangeness of the sight: the feverish excitement of the people, the busy swarming at the approaches to the militia armories, the stream of humanity crowding the streets toward the recruiting offices, the immense meetings where the people, coming together *en masse*, were tossed about like angry waves under the passionate speech of an improvised orator. An inspiration of fire had passed over the multitude, carrying along everything in its course — everything, even to the allies of the South, who for a few days renounced publicly their known sympathies, or at least covered them hypocritically with the mantle of an affected patriotism.

It was not, however, the Empire State which, in the midst of the universal outburst, had the honor first to reply to the call of the threatened government. She was preceded by Massachusetts, to whom only forty-eight hours were necessary, after the proclamation of the President, to forward six hundred and forty men by sea to Fortress Monroe, and a regiment of eight hundred men by land, destined for Washington. On the 18th of April, the Sixth Massachusetts passed through New York, drums beating, flags flying, in the midst of acclamations of the population assembled to greet on its passage through the city the advance guard of the national army.

Mingled with the crowd, I admired the fine bearing

of the volunteers, studied the double character of bravery and intelligence imprinted upon their faces, and clapped my hands to the last company. Supernumeraries, without arms and without uniforms, would not be left behind, and followed the regiment, ready to take the place of the killed, and to relieve the wounded in the front. Their light baggage, wrapped in handkerchiefs, hung from their shoulders like haversacks, and they marched to glory or death, sure in either case of having done their duty as citizens and as soldiers.

And I thought, in spite of myself, of the familiar spectacles of my early childhood, when the French battalions defiled before the starry epaulets of my father; and I asked myself vaguely if the destiny which had deprived me in France of the heritage of his sword had not in reserve for me in America some compensation, in the ranks of these volunteers, marching to fight for a cause which had immortalized Lafayette.

The Sixth Massachusetts was followed almost immediately by the Eighth and by the First of Rhode Island. Their passage through the city roused the emulation of the New Yorkers, and hastened the departure of the Seventh, the finest of their militia regiments, which followed after an interval of twenty-four hours. These twenty-four hours were marked by an event which carried the excitement to its height. The railroad did not at this time furnish a continuous line from New York to Washington. Both at Philadelphia and Baltimore, one was compelled to cross the city either in a carriage or in wagons drawn by horses, in passing from one station to the other. At Philadelphia, the passage of the Sixth Massachusetts was marked by the acclamations of the people. At Baltimore, a city devoted to the Southern cause, the people raised a riot to stop the passage of the Yankee regiment. It went

through, notwithstanding, but at the cost of a bloody combat, in which several lives were lost on both sides. Some Philadelphia volunteers who were on the way toward the capital, poorly armed and equipped, were compelled to turn back.

This was an event of great importance, for the reason that it directly menaced the communications with the free States of the federal capital enclosed within Maryland. The peril was greater because it was unexpected; it must be averted at whatever cost. The Seventh New York departed immediately, greeted at its departure with the enthusiastic plaudits of the imperial city. It was quickly followed by the Twelfth, the Seventy-first, the Eighth, the Sixty-ninth, and others, the list of which would be too long.

They departed; but days and nights of anxiety passed before any news could be received of them. The telegraph wires had been cut on all sides in Maryland, and it was difficult even to follow the movements of the troops as far as Baltimore. Beyond that everything was uncertain. In the absence of facts, rumors had free course, and they were generally of a sinister character. People ran together in the streets, and called from house to house, to relate what they heard here and there. For nearly everything resolved itself into rumor. The morning papers, whose extras were eagerly sought for until noon, the evening journals, whose successive editions were exhausted as soon as they appeared, published everything, all the information they could get, without certifying to its correctness: unless, however, some bold correspondent, who had been able to cross the zone of isolation around Washington, brought his precious information to the extreme point of open communication. New York breathed again on learning from authentic sources that its regi-

ments had not been cut to pieces, that the President had not been assassinated, that Washington had not been delivered to the flames, as Southern sympathizers reported twenty times a day.

There was a telegraph station in the Fifth Avenue Hotel. Every evening the spacious hall was invaded by a compact multitude of the inhabitants of that elegant quarter. They conversed together with great animation while waiting for the news. As soon as a despatch arrived, an operator, mounted upon a table, read it in a loud voice, before hanging it up on the bulletin board, open to every one's inspection. During the interval, speakers addressed the audience, if the absence of news caused the conversation to languish, and the crowd dispersed only when the late hour of the night promised to add nothing more to the information awaited with so much anxiety in the family circle.

The day at last came when General Butler occupied Baltimore. Communications were reëstablished. The situation could be understood. Really it offered nothing very encouraging, but, at least, one knew what to believe. That was a great gain. Harper's Ferry and its manufactory of arms had fallen into the power of the Virginians, who had likewise taken possession of Norfolk, where the navy yard had been delivered to the flames. At Richmond the custom house and postal service had been taken possession of by the rebel authorities, proceedings which promptly followed the formal secession of the State. In consequence, the ports of Virginia and of North Carolina were declared blockaded. That was all that could be done for the moment.

Virginia was very much behind the extreme South. At the bottom she was opposed to separation, and until the last moment had made every effort for a peaceful

compromise. At the presidential election she had voted for Bell and Everett, the Union candidates. She had afterwards taken the initiative in the peace convention at Washington to rally the central States around Mr. Crittenden in a conservative resistance to the passions of the extreme parties. The interests of the cotton States were not the same as hers. Slavery had no hold in all the mountainous portion of her territory, to the west of the Shenandoah; on the contrary, devotion to the Union flourished there with energetic vitality. Even in the eastern portion of the State, servile labor was only an obstacle to the prosperity of the country, whose climate, soil, methods of culture, and industry had everything to gain from free labor. On that account, there was a general tendency towards emancipation, against which the planters had to strive in order to protect a shameful kind of speculation, which enriched them while it impoverished the State. I speak of the raising of human cattle and the breeding of negroes for the consumption of the cotton States. To meet the wants of this trade, the common practice upon the Virginia plantations was to keep up an establishment in the manner most calculated to increase the product as much as possible. This was the only interest the State had in the question of slavery. The oligarchy of slaveholders monopolized the profits, but the poorer class did not profit by it either directly or indirectly. Something besides the interest of the slave-breeders was necessary then to lead Virginia into the perilous paths of secession. A bait to her vanity accomplished the task. Richmond, the capital of the Southern Confederacy, — that was the will-o'-the-wisp which was put before her eyes. She followed it, and was lost in the quagmires.

How true it is that man is led not by reason, as the philosophers pretend, but by the passions which the

politicians employ. Becoming a participator in the rebellion, Virginia became necessarily the great battle-field of the war. In every way, and at all points, she was about to be trampled over, pillaged, ruined by the hostile armies, and, however the war should end, she was devoted to fire and sword. Faithful to the Union, on the contrary, she would have been covered by the protecting arm of the federal soldiers, whose operations, in that event, would have been carried on in North Carolina. There would have been the shock of battalions, there would the war have made its terrible devastations, and the fate of Virginia would have been that of Maryland, which, on account of having remained in the Union, suffered only the ravages of a few skirmishes and the shock of one battle upon the verge of her territory, fought almost immediately after invasion. Virginia proved in this circumstance that, if, according to Mr. Thiers' definition, "a free nation is a being which is obliged to reflect before acting," her reflections only led her to commit the greatest follies. She did not appear to understand that, in alluring her by the perfidious bait, the extreme South sacrificed her deliberately to its own security. The object was, above all, to confine hostilities to the *Border States*, that is, to the country bordering on the free States. Behind this bulwark, the heart of the Confederacy believed itself safe from attack, but it was counting without Grant and Sherman.

The federal government, however, could no longer deceive itself as to the greatness of the task which devolved upon it. The call for seventy-five thousand militia was like calling for a pail of water to put out a fire. The President made a new call for eighty-three thousand men, namely forty thousand volunteers for three years, twenty-five thousand men for the regular army for five

years, and eighteen thousand sailors. The total of the two calls was thus raised to one hundred and fifty-eight thousand men; but seventy-five thousand would return home at the end of three months. They were, therefore, not to be taken into account.

On the other side, the Confederacy was in motion. Reënforced by the secession of Arkansas, and by strong contingents from Kentucky and Tennessee, her forces were actually in Virginia. Her skirmishers were seen upon the right bank of the Potomac, even in sight of the dome of the Capitol. At any moment they could possess themselves of Alexandria, nearly in front of Washington. It was determined to forestall them. On the 24th of May, the city was occupied, and put as quickly as possible in a state of defence by six regiments of New York troops, a brigade from New Jersey, and one from Michigan. It was in this advance movement that Colonel Ellsworth, commanding a regiment of Zouaves, was assassinated, at the moment when he had himself hauled down the rebel flag, floating over the principal hotel of the city. His death, avenged on the spot, made a great sensation. He was the first officer killed. They were not as yet accustomed to see colonels fall by the dozen at a time.

The Confederate army was distant only twenty miles, established at Manassas, in a well chosen position. Its front was covered with field works along the crest of steep banks, following the windings of a water-course, before unknown, since celebrated — Bull Run. Thither flocked the Southern recruits, as the Northern to Washington.

About the 1st of June, the forces assembled around the capital amounted to no more than thirty-four thousand men, of whom twenty-one thousand were near the city, and thirteen thousand on the other side

of the Potomac. But an average of about a thousand arrived every day.

The eagerness for enlisting continued. Men were abundant; but they must be armed and equipped, and, in the absence of armories made ready beforehand, the State had everything to create. Private industry, to which it was necessary to have recourse, sufficed but imperfectly to fill orders. While awaiting the arms, usually inferior, which the government had purchased in Europe, and those which the American factories could deliver only at times more or less distant, uniforms, shoes, equipments were manufactured in haste, nearly everything of detestable quality, although paid for very dearly. In order to encourage enlistment, each new military organization was at liberty to choose its uniform, and it may be imagined what latitude was taken. The Zouaves were the most in favor; but what Zouaves!

Each regiment in course of formation had its separate camp. The outskirts of the cities were covered with them; I might say infested, for discipline did not as yet repress the turbulent and pillaging instincts of those rude novices, as little accustomed to obedience as were their officers to command. The latter, in military matters, were as ignorant as the rest. The Governors had no choice, giving the commissions to those who brought the men. On this account, old soldiers were very much sought after, for they alone knew how to act as instructors, and to teach the recruits, after a fashion, how to march, and to load and fire a gun. They were appointed sergeants without dispute, and if they could instruct in the movements of the platoon they were almost assured of the rank of commissioned officer.

Besides the ordinary enlistments, open to every one,

there were organized in New York a few "schools of the battalion," whose members paid their own expenses for uniform, instruction, and so forth. The organization was composed only of persons in easy circumstances, generally educated men. Such was the regiment of "New York Rifles." The day was always devoted to business, but every night, after dinner, we assembled at the armory, to devote ourselves, until a late hour of the night, with the greatest ardor, to the "school of the soldier," and the "school of the platoon." When the weather was fine, we marched out with beating drums, to practise the school of the battalion, in some one of the large squares of New York, where, if we had no moonlight, the gas was enough to light us in our evolutions.

These schools of instruction furnished a certain number of capable officers to the army, but at first the greatest number came from the nursery of the militia regiments. Thus the Seventh New York, which returned June 1, after a campaign of forty days, if not bloody, at least harassing, could count in a few months more than three hundred officers of volunteers coming from its ranks. One of them, Major Winthrop, aid of General Butler, was the first superior officer killed on the field of battle, in the unfortunate affair of Big Bethel.

In this manner the month of June passed on both sides, collecting together the armies, and organizing them as much as possible. There were only a few skirmishes without consequence at Fairfax Court House, at Bayley's Crossroads, and on the Arlington Heights, that is to say, on the line of defence, where they began to cover Washington by a line of detached forts. The only movement of any importance was an advance of General McClellan in Western Virginia,

which, in connection with the presence of a body of troops of Pennsylvanians at Chambersburg, under the orders of General Patterson, had for result the evacuation of Harper's Ferry by the Confederates, who fell back to Winchester. For the Confederates, in fact, the fidelity to the Union of the inhabitants of these parts added sensibly to the risk of a position too advanced. A regiment of federal volunteers raised at Wheeling had already gone out to Grafton to meet General McClellan, and there the loyal manifestations of the Virginians of the West could not be restrained. On the 18th of June, they assembled in convention at Wheeling, to declare null and void all the ordinances and measures voted by the Richmond convention. This done, they proceeded to the organization of a provisional government, from which came the constitution of a new State, sanctioned at a later date by Congress in a formal manner.

The month of July, great in events, was at first marked only by the assembling of the Thirty-seventh Congress in extra session, and by a first victory of General McClellan at Laurel Hill. As this successful contest was the immediate cause of his surprising fortune, it will be interesting to pause an instant and relate the incident.

General McClellan, born at Philadelphia in 1826, was a West Point scholar, from which he graduated in 1846, standing second in his class. He was immediately sent as second lieutenant of engineers to Mexico, where his brilliant services procured for him successively the commissions of first lieutenant and captain. In 1852 he took part in an exploring expedition along the Red River, and was afterwards sent as hydrographical engineer to Texas. The work of exploring the route for the railroad to the Pacific, across the western deserts, was intrusted to him, and procured for him the

official congratulations of Mr. Jefferson Davis, then Secretary of War. In 1855 we find him studying, along with Majors Delafield and Mordecai, the organization of the European armies, and present at a part of the operations of the Crimean war. That part of the report which was drawn up by him, published separately at Philadelphia, did credit to his military knowledge and to the cultivation of his mind. However, the military career in the United States promised to be very unsatisfactory to his ambition. Promotion by seniority only was desperately slow, and active service in time of peace was limited to distant explorations through deserts, or the life of a savage in the scattered posts of the new Territories. Captain McClellan did as did so many others. In 1857 he left the service for the more agreeable and more lucrative position of general superintendent of the Ohio & Mississippi Railroad, and of president of the eastern part of that line.

In 1861 the war recalled him under the flag. The Governor of Ohio had at first intrusted to him the command of the State troops; but soon the federal government extended his command to that of the military department composed of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and a part of Pennsylvania and Virginia. His troops entered upon the campaign June 1. On the 3d, the head of the column surprised and overthrew a detachment of rebels at Philippi. McClellan was still at Cincinnati. He joined his little army on the 18th, at Grafton, and a month rolled away before the resumption of operations, which had begun in so encouraging a manner. At last, in the middle of July, he determined to send forward General Rosecrans, at the head of four regiments, three from Indiana and one from Ohio. Rosecrans encountered in the mountains the army commanded by Colonel Pegram. He attacked

resolutely and beat him in a sharp engagement, in which he inflicted upon him a loss of three hundred men and two pieces of artillery.

Pegram retired in disorder upon Beverly, where he hoped he could await the arrival of another Confederate detachment, commanded by General Garnett, with which he had not been able to effect a junction at Laurel Hill. But McClellan anticipated him, and awaited Garnett in a strong position, who, seeing he had been preceded, fell back immediately without a combat. McClellan had still a part of his forces in reserve, under the command of General T. A. Morris. General Morris, notified promptly, rapidly crossed the mountain, pursued Garnett, came up with him the next day at Carrick's Ford, near St. George, and beat him as Rosecrans had beaten Pegram. Garnett was himself killed in the affair.

This operation, very well conducted by General McClellan, gave him as trophies six guns, of which one was rifled, ten wagons, a number of tents, and some provisions. It is very well known of what value this victory was to him soon after. The immediate result was to free that part of the country of all rebel forces.

In the North this first victory was received with triumphant acclamations. Imaginations were inflamed. McClellan had advanced with a few thousand men, and the rebellion had disappeared from Western Virginia. Let McDowell advance with his army, and the rebellion would disappear from the rest of the State. And, with that idea, a universal cry was raised, "On to Richmond!" Popular pressure from all sides forced the government to attack the enemy.

General Irwin McDowell, who commanded the army of the Potomac, could scarcely join in that blind confidence. His military education had been begun in

France, and completed at West Point. He had been through the Mexican war, on the staff of General Wool, and had been a professor at the military academy. He was a well informed and experienced officer, who knew much better than the journalists and politicians what were the risks of an attack made with recruits hardly organized, against a numerous enemy fortified in a strong position. In reality, his army was not an army. The regiments of which it was composed had nothing of the soldier as yet, but the arms and the uniforms. However brave the men might be, they had had no discipline, nor had they been exercised in the most elementary manœuvres. The officers were nearly all incompetent. A regiment which had had any practice in firing was an exception, as was a colonel knowing how to command. As to evolutions in line, they were not so much as thought of. But upon the news of McClellan's success any longer delay became impossible, and the order was given for a general movement in advance.

The defeat of Bull Run had the effect only of giving to the strife more formidable proportions. That defeat was not surprising. The attack was badly executed, because, with an army such as I have described, it was impossible for troops to act together or to move with any precision. Some regiments fought well, others fought very little, others did not fight at all. The Confederates had every advantage. Strongly established in a good position, protected by complete lines of works, they had only to defend themselves with vigor, which they did. They had the good fortune, moreover, of being strongly reënforced at the commencement of the battle by the army of General Johnston, whom the deplorable inaction of General Patterson permitted to hasten from Winchester without opposition.

With troops without discipline and without experience, an unsuccessful attack is easily changed into a rout. In this case the overthrow was complete. The soldiers fled, throwing down their arms, teamsters leaving their wagons, and cannoneers their guns. The draught animals served only to hasten the flight of those who could get hold of them, and the spectator who had come from Washington to witness the victory thought himself very fortunate if he lost only his carriage in his flight. Thus that horde of men and animals fled far from the field of battle in the greatest confusion.

They stopped only in Washington, after having put the Potomac between themselves and the enemy, who did not pursue. The Confederates lost there their finest opportunity. If they had followed up the fugitives, they might have entered Washington at their heels, and probably without striking a blow. In war, a lost opportunity rarely presents itself over again. This was no exception to the rule.

The battle was fought on Sunday, July 21. On the 22d, General McClellan was called to the command of the army in place of General McDowell.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM NEW YORK TO WASHINGTON.

The Guard Lafayette, Fifty-fifth New York militia — Camp at Staten Island — Departure for Washington — Collision — At Philadelphia — Through Baltimore — Arrival at the capital — Five hundred thousand men and five hundred million dollars — Tents — Organization of regiments of infantry — Composition of the Fifty-fifth — The insignia of rank, and the uniforms in the American army.

THE Fifty-fifth New York militia, more generally known then as the Guard Lafayette, was a French regiment. It wore as a distinguishing costume the red pantaloon and cap. It was small in numbers, scarcely exceeding three hundred and twenty men, the minimum required for a militia regiment. It was not on war footing — far from it; but the number sufficed for parade, marchings, and funerals, nearly the only requirements of service in time of peace.

When, in the month of April, the President made his first call for seventy-five thousand men, nobody in New York doubted but that the Fifty-fifth would be one of the first to respond. There was to be fighting, how could a French regiment fail to be on hand? Volunteers hurried in multitudes to enroll themselves in the ranks; the companies were filled up rapidly, bringing their effective force up to a hundred men each. A subscription, opened among the French residents, to arm and equip the new regiments without delay, had been immediately covered with signatures, and had provided abundantly for the military chest. — And yet, in spite of all that, the Fifty-fifth did not start.

One day, the regiment had received an order to encamp on the Battery, a public park along the bay, at the point of junction of the East and North Rivers. Two companies reported there, but the next day a counter-order relieved them, to give place to another regiment. Public opinion was astonished at these marchings to and fro without result, and at these delays without satisfactory explanations. The colonel threw the responsibility upon higher authorities; but the officers attributed the fault directly to the colonel, who, they said, endeavored, with all his power, to discourage enlistments and impede the departure of the regiment. Weary of these goings-on, and of the recriminations, the volunteers went away as fast as they had come. Some formed a company in the Sixty-second New York (Anderson Zouaves); others in one of the regiments of General Sickles' brigade (Excelsior Brigade). One day, a whole company had marched over, with drums beating, and joined the Fourteenth of Brooklyn. Lastly, a large part of the Lafayette Guards had connected themselves singly in different military organizations, where they found compatriots and friends. The officers of the Fifty-fifth, who wished to fight, and saw their recruits leaving them, were annoyed at the false position in which they were placed, and at the remarks, far from flattering, which were made about them in public. To get out of the dilemma, they had recourse to a united demand that the colonel should substitute, in place of a short leave of absence, for which he had asked, a final resignation, which was accepted.

Several weeks passed away in the search for a new commander, without success, when my name was presented, for the first time, by a lieutenant, who had served in France, and the only one of the officers who

was personally known to me. Some days after, a committee, composed of the major and three captains, came to see me on the matter. It was not difficult for us to agree. The condition made to me, as a candidate, was that I should lead the regiment to the front. The condition I made, on accepting the command, was that the regiment should follow me to the front. The officers were called together to choose a colonel on the 21st of July, the evening before the battle of Bull Run. I was elected unanimously.

On the 23d, the morning of the battle, a telegraphic despatch from the War Department announced to me that the services of my regiment were accepted, and, one week after, we were encamped on Staten Island, across the bay from New York, — the men in barracks, the staff only in tents.

The first business was to recruit, and fill up the ranks, depleted during the two months that had elapsed. A recruiting office was opened immediately, at the regimental armory. Those of the old members who had not made engagements elsewhere returned to us. New recruits came in squads to our camp; in four weeks our effective force was increased by more than four hundred men.

It was no longer the time when the crowd flowed towards Lafayette Hall. Three months of continual recruiting had absorbed already a great deal of the food for powder. But the hour of the mercenary had not yet arrived. All the enlistments were without bounty, and, on leaving for the army, I was proud at leading only unbought volunteers. Not one of my men had received a bounty.

On the 28th of August the regiment had become strong enough to enter upon the campaign. It was fully armed and equipped, and better drilled in the

manual exercise than most of the other regiments of volunteers. The officers were all acquainted with this duty, which was strictly performed. Among them and among the sergeants were found a number of old soldiers, good instructors to form the recruits. Some had seen service in Algiers, others in the Crimea or in Italy, and duty in the field was familiar to them. Each one, besides, had his heart in the work. The long summer days were devoted to the drill, and a part of the nights to the theoretical study. The French regiment must make a good appearance on arriving at Washington.

Before departing, some vacancies were filled for the last time by election in the companies, a system tolerable in the militia in time of peace, but inadmissible for volunteers in time of war, and the Fifty-fifth militia was about to be transformed into the Fifty-fifth volunteers. It was thenceforth enrolled in the service of the United States for three years, or during the war, if the war lasted less than three years, which appeared to be beyond question.

On the morning of the 31st of August, the regiment formed in line of battle, knapsacks strapped, and at order arms. I took a long look at that double line of brave men, gayly marching to meet the hazards of the field of battle, where many must shed their blood and many lose their lives, of which not one of them appeared to think for a moment. At the command, Forward! March! the noise of the drums was for an instant drowned by a rousing hurrah! The die was cast, the Fifty-fifth was on the road to the front.

I took with me nine companies only, the tenth was to join us later at Washington.

A railroad train stopping at a short distance from camp was in waiting to take us to the steamer, which

should carry us to Amboy. The steamer was not ready. Arms were stacked upon the quay. The men had two hours more time to prolong their adieux with New York friends. The embarking on board the Paul Potter was done in good order and in military style. When the ropes were cast off, there was a long exchange of hurrahs between the shore and the steamer, which threw her flags and streamers to the breeze. On the quay the sun glistened upon a multitude of hats thrown in the air, of handkerchiefs waved continuously, of ladies' dresses shaken by the wind. Soon the hurrahs ceased, objects disappeared in the distance. Would we ever meet again? Adieu! "The common port is eternity," said Chateaubriand.

At Amboy we took the railroad again; we had advanced but a few miles when the train stopped with a violent shock. It was a collision. A freight train, fortunately nearly empty, was coming towards us, concealed by the bends of the road. When seen, it was too late to prevent a collision. Two engines disabled, a few cars broken up. It is a frequent occurrence in the United States. Only in this instance superstitious minds might be affected by it as a baleful presage. But as our train was heavier, and was moving with the greater velocity, and the train coming from the south suffered nearly all the damage, the favorable interpretation prevailed, and it was considered as foreshown that the only prophetic signification of the accident was the triumph of the North and the discomfiture of the South. Nevertheless, it was necessary to return to Amboy, by the aid of a fresh locomotive, to wait until evening, while the road was being cleared. At daylight the regiment reached Philadelphia.

In those days of patriotic enthusiasm, the great cities of the North made it a duty to come to the aid

of the government in every possible manner. So that those cities which were on the route usually taken by the troops going to Washington had organized immense free eating-houses, where the regiments were served on their way. Philadelphia had one of the best organized establishments of this kind. The Fifty-fifth there received a generous hospitality. Nothing was wanting. Abundance of provisions for the men; separate table, well supplied, for the officers. Then *en route* for Baltimore.

There the scene changed. We entered an enemy's country. No more welcomes, no more acclamations, no handkerchiefs in the air, with "God bless you!" as in Philadelphia; but a sad silence, hostile looks, murmurs scarcely repressed. It was well to take a few precautions. Before reaching there each man received a dozen cartridges. It was the Sabbath; the sun was warm, the weather superb. The women showed themselves at the doors and at the windows; the men thronged the streets. At the news of the arrival of the French regiment from New York, the people crowded around the station, and along the road usually taken from one railroad to the other through the centre of the city. We evidently called forth more curiosity than sympathy.

The regiment had scarcely formed in line, after disembarking from the cars, than the first command was to load, the second to fix bayonets, which was done in a manner that no one could fail to see. Then the regiment moved at the sound of the drums vigorously beating the French march. No one followed us. Every one looked on as we passed. Here and there a few remarks were made in French: "What are you going to do in Washington? — The war does not concern you! — You had better remain at home. — You are going to get killed for the Americans! — Merci! —

What have the people of the South done to you?" The men did not reply; discipline forbids talking while in the ranks. They recompensed themselves by mocking airs and gestures more expressive than polite. The march was finished without other demonstration, and that evening, at nightfall, we were in Washington.

Everything there breathed war. Fortifications commenced showed here and there their broken profiles; the fires in every direction marked the places of the camps, and along the railroad the sentinels, posted for the night, leaning on their arms, watched us passing. Near the station the massive Capitol, surmounted by an immense dome, stretched towards heaven, gloomy, dark, and silent. Soldiers at the station, soldiers in the streets, soldiers everywhere. The train stopped in front of a barrack, constructed to shelter temporarily the regiments on their arrival. That was our lodging-place for the night. The vast room was floored with boards. We slept there, covered with our blankets, — after receiving a Spartan supper, composed of a piece of bread, a slice of salt pork, and a cup of water, more or less clear. The volunteers were not treated at Washington as at Philadelphia. There generous hospitality; here the regular commissary fare.

Every one, to-day, knows what Washington is. An imposing city, as yet in a state of expectation: a magnificent plan marked out on unoccupied land; in reality, a monumental village, of which Pennsylvania Avenue is the principal artery, with straight streets and broad avenues running through fields within a few steps of this inhabited line connecting the Capitol with the White House. A port without wharves and without ships, formed by the widening of the Potomac, and terminated by a bridge remarkable for nothing but its

length, — a mile and a quarter from one bank to the other. Nature appeared to have provided there everything necessary for a city of Babylonian dimensions. The founders of the Republic were deceived. They believed that the political centre was sufficient to bring to the Capitol a flow of population increasing in proportion to the universal prosperity. It was not the case. In a country such as America, men go where their interests call them. The great agglomerations are determined by the sum of advantages offered to the development of commercial, industrial, or agricultural riches. Therefore, these villages of yesterday are the great cities of to-day; New York, Philadelphia, New Orleans, Boston, etc., and, more recently, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Chicago, San Francisco. These advantages are not met with at Washington; the expected population did not come. The streets remained vacant, and around the monuments erected by the government for the administration of affairs were grouped only the residences, more comfortable than luxurious, of the clerks residing there for a season, the hotels frequented by agents and transient politicians, and the shabby buildings necessary for the business of every kind supported by this official world. The active season in Washington is always regulated by the sessions of Congress, — if we except the five years of a feverish vitality produced by the war and extinct with it.

In the month of September, 1861, Washington was half city and half camp. The wide extent of vacant lots, where scarcely a house was to be seen, was occupied by the tents of the infantry, stretching like an outer girdle upon all the neighboring heights. There was artillery everywhere. The wagon trains were concentrated within a smaller radius. And, finally, the

Commissary Department had its quarters in the centre of the city, where the uniform was supreme.

The extra session of Congress, commencing July 5, had closed August 5. Its principal results were to give to the President five hundred thousand men and five hundred million dollars, and to authorize the issue of bonds to the amount of two hundred and fifty million dollars. The strength of the regular army was raised to forty thousand men. Without serious opposition, the tariff had been raised in rates, direct tax voted, and the confiscation of the property of the insurgents, including slaves. The power of the executive had been increased. Finally, everything had been provided, that the President might act without hindrance in the repression of the rebellion, until the next session of Congress, in the early days of December.

The army then was supreme in Washington, so much the more that the sound of the enemy's cannon could be distinctly heard there, and that from the top of the dome of the Capitol the rebel flag could be seen floating from Munson's Hill.

The morning after our arrival, an officer was sent from the War Department to conduct us to the place of our temporary encampment. A recent order had been issued, that the regiments should march directly to their camping grounds, without passing along Pennsylvania Avenue, where the continuous and daily marching of troops had at last become tiresome. However, the fine bearing of the Fifty-fifth procured it the honor of an exception, and it took the *via sacra* on its route to Meridian Hill, where suitable camping ground was still unoccupied.

The administration of the war was not yet well enough organized successfully to attend to the great increase of labor which the concentration of a powerful army at

Washington imposed upon it. It is not very astonishing, then, that we were left at Meridian Hill twenty-four hours without rations, without tents, and without wood. Happily for us, we had still with us some rations, brought from New York. Besides, the weather was warm, and that first night passed away easily enough, *à la belle étoile.* The following day the tents and provisions came to hand.

The government gave out tents with a profusion impossible during a campaign, as we shall see later on. They were of two kinds; for the officers, wall tents, ten feet square, with perpendicular side walls three feet high, having the form of a little house; for the non-commissioned officers and men, wedge tents, six feet deep by six feet front on the ground, issued in the proportion of one for four men; so that for a regiment of one thousand men there were two tents for the colonel, two for the lieutenant-colonel, two for the major, two for the adjutant and his office, two for the two surgeons, one for each captain, one for the two lieutenants of each company; total, thirty-two wall tents and two hundred and fifty wedge tents, besides two hospital tents, fourteen feet by fifteen.

However, the style was not uniform, and a number of the regiments were furnished with Sibley tents, so called from the inventor, who had procured their adoption for the regular army. They were great cloth cones, capped by a movable cape, raised up to air the interior, and to let out the smoke from a stove during the winter. Sixteen men could sleep in one with their heads against the walls, and their feet converging to the centre. They were never used during a campaign. The only tent which took the place of all others, and was used uniformly by the soldiers during the war, was the shelter tent, whose model we have seen in France.

The regiment of American infantry differing entirely from the French regiment, it may be well to give in a few words its organization as it was fixed by an act of Congress, dated July 22, 1861, and unchanged during the war.

The regiment is, really, merely a battalion of ten companies. The staff is composed of a colonel, a lieutenant-colonel, a major, an adjutant, a quartermaster, two surgeons, with the right to add a chaplain. The major is not, as he is in France, an administrative officer, he is the deputy of the lieutenant-colonel, as the latter is the deputy of the colonel. Whether at drill or under fire, he more specially has charge of the left of the regiment, as the lieutenant-colonel has of the right, both looking out for the prompt execution of orders.

The adjutant keeps the regimental books, prepares the reports, files away the orders of the superior officers, countersigns those of the colonel, and receives the official communications of the subaltern officers, which must be addressed to him. In the military hierarchy, it is the rule that every communication of an inferior to a superior must pass through the hands of the adjutant.

The quartermaster has charge of the transportation, the camp equipage, and furniture and requirements, of which he keeps the accounts and makes the reports. Under him the administration of the subsistence is represented in the regiment by a commissary sergeant. He is, moreover, assisted by a quartermaster sergeant, as the adjutant is by the sergeant-major.

Each company is composed of one captain, one first lieutenant, one second lieutenant, five sergeants, eight corporals, two drummers or fifers, one teamster, and from sixty-four to eighty-two privates. The whole number of men in a regiment is, therefore : officers, thirty-

seven; non-commissioned officers and soldiers, from 805 (minimum) to 985 (maximum).

This was the organization of the Fifty-fifth New York. Its composition was of a very mixed kind. The recruiting had opened its ranks to men of all nationalities. The French were a majority in six companies. The sojourn in a strange land had not altered their character. Their merits and their defects were the same in America as in France. Only they were less subject to discipline, and the performance of what was required of them in service depended less upon their sense of duty than upon the national vanity which led them to exalt themselves and to underrate others. In reviews and in brigade drills, where they attracted attention, they made a fine appearance, and manœuvred together and with precision. Under fire, where nobody saw them, they did neither better nor worse than the others.

After the French, the Germans were the more numerous in the Fifty-fifth. Nearly all the companies had more or less of them in their ranks. Company H was entirely composed of them. Good soldiers, prompt in obedience, animated with good-will, and conspicuous for their fine bearing, they always did their duty well upon the field of battle as in camp.

Company K was composed entirely of Irishmen, commanded by three American officers, drawn from the nursery of the Seventh New York militia. The Irish have two prevailing faults, uncleanliness and a tendency to drunkenness. On inspection, their uniforms were seldom without spots or their bearing without fault. When whiskey was introduced into the camp clandestinely, it was in the Irish quarter that the officer of the guard first found it. The most severe punishments availed nothing. But, on the other hand, they were

fine fighters. When they were under fire, the spots on their uniforms disappeared under powder or blood; — good fellows, after all, indefatigable, enthusiastic, and always ready for a joke or a fight.

I had, besides, in my regiment a small number of Spaniards, young men, intelligent, sober, reserved, of fine bearing and of good conduct; and a few Italians, poor soldiers.

Finally, the tenth company, which had not yet joined us, was composed of Americans. Recruited at random, poorly commanded, not disciplined, very little drilled, we found it much behind the others. We had to furnish it with instructors; both officers and non-commissioned officers needed instructors as much as the soldiers, and the company never emerged from its relative inferiority. This is, however, a special instance, which is of no value for judging the American soldier. Experience has proved that he was not inferior to any other, and in certain respects he has shown himself superior to many, having accomplished the greatest results, without enjoying the advantages which are reserved to military nations, to whom peace never ceases to be a preparation for war. If the United States had had in 1860 a regular army of one hundred and fifty thousand men, the rebellion would not probably have lasted six months.

To complete the sketch of the Fifty-fifth, I must mention here an anomaly, which had come to us from the militia service, and from which we could not be freed until after a campaign. I mean a company of Zouaves in the regiment. Their uniform was precisely that of the French Zouaves, and of which they presented besides all the characteristics. I do not know whether I should attribute this peculiarity to the soldierly traditions which had crossed the Atlantic during the Crimean and

Italian wars, to the spirit of imitation, or to the influence of the uniform. The nationality had nothing to do with it, the company being a strange mixture of French, Germans, Americans, and Irish, of which no one element predominated to any great extent. However this might be, they were always thoroughly Zouaves. Their commander was a young captain, born in the barracks, raised in the regiment, became afterward a non-commissioned officer, had made the campaign of the Crimea, and owed his present position to his efficiency as instructor, as well as to his knowledge of the service.

The Zouaves of the Fifty-fifth remained Zouaves during the life of one uniform, that is the space of one campaign. The State had furnished their red caps, their laced jackets, their close vests, their large red breeches, their leather shoes, and the regimental chest their blue waistbands. When the clothing had to be renewed, the government very wisely sent us the regulation uniform. It was the same, with the red cap, the red pantaloons, and the blue coat. But for nearly a year the Fifty-fifth had to wear its special uniform.

The regulation uniform was the same for the whole army, with the insignia to designate the different arms of the service, and the rank.

The great variety of uniforms which marks the European armies is really more pleasant to look at than it is useful. It pleases the eye, and adds to the brilliancy of public ceremonies in time of peace, but in time of war of what use is it? The time will come when the military authorities will free themselves from all that medley and economize on the expense.

In the United States we have carried on an arduous war without shakos, without helmets, without bearskin hats, without breastplates, without lace, and it seems to me that we have nevertheless succeeded.

CHAPTER V.

THE FORMATION OF THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC.

The brigade of General Peck — Surroundings at Washington — Regiments of cavalry — Batteries of artillery — Grand review — The Orleans princes — Lincoln and McClellan — Summer storm — General Buell — Inspections — The defences to the south of the Potomac — Arlington, and the Lee family — General Wadsworth at Upton Hill — Blenker's division — Movements of the enemy upon the upper Potomac.

THE regiments, which were arriving continually at Washington, were not yet in condition to put into the field against the enemy. They might do very well for defending the capital behind intrenchments, but a very small part of them were fit to enter at once upon a campaign. Recruited in haste, dressed in the same way, they were hurried on as soon as they reached the regimental number. They had everything to learn, drill, marchings, service, discipline, and very few non-commissioned officers to instruct them, even supposing the officers capable of doing it, which was rarely the case. Such was the principal cause of the inaction in which the months of autumn and winter passed away. There were a great many men, but few soldiers. The affair of Bull Run had served as a lesson. Before resuming offensive operations, a real army must be formed. That, in fact, was what we endeavored to do.

We were not far from the enemy. The stimulant was not wanting, and we were continually on the alert.

The regimental camp was scarcely formed, and camp duty commenced, than we had a night alarm. Every one was asleep, except the guard and the sentinels,

when suddenly the long roll, the American alarm, was heard at a distance. This alarm signal, promptly repeated, came nearer and nearer. In a moment we were under arms, the regiment in line of battle in front of the flag, the first sergeants lantern in hand, the officers with revolver in belt. We were conscious, in the silence, that there was a great swarming of men; lights moved about in the darkness, and we heard the hurried gallop of the orderlies as they passed and repassed over the road. We awaited orders; time went on, and the orders did not come. Finally, we learned the cause of all the stir. Two Wisconsin regiments, encamped in the neighborhood, had just been sent to Chain Bridge, a bridge crossing the Potomac above Georgetown, where some reports had been received of the concentration of the enemy. That did not concern us; we returned to our tents to resume our broken sleep. These alarms were renewed from time to time, showing more zeal than experience.

A few days after the incident above mentioned, we were attached to a brigade organized under the command of General Peck. It was composed of four regiments, — the Fifty-fifth and Sixty-second New York, the Sixth New Jersey, and the Thirteenth Pennsylvania, — forming a force of about three thousand five hundred men.

General Peck had served in the Mexican War as an officer, after which he had abandoned a military career, to follow a business and political life. This was the case as to the greater part of our generals. On putting on the uniform again, he found it necessary to brush up his military knowledge. A capable commander, and, moreover, a conscientious man, so entirely free from all pretence that when he came for the first time to assist at the drilling of my regiment

he himself wished to wait a little, "to pick himself up," he said, adding in a loud voice, before the men, that he had not given a command for more than ten years. Most men would have thought the disclosure undesirable.

The colonel commanding the Sixty-second was a New York lawyer without any idea of the duties of his new position. He was lacking in the most elementary knowledge of them, and he did not seem to take the trouble to acquire them. His regiment was encamped on the grounds of an elegant villa, where he had installed himself unceremoniously. He was a handsome man, and passed the most of his time at Washington, where his tall figure displayed well his uniform and the spread eagles of his shoulder-straps. He left the care of drill to a special instructor. As to discipline, he had ideas quite peculiar, declaring himself, on principle, opposed to punishment, because, said he, "punishment degrades a soldier."

One can easily imagine the result of such a system. Insubordination reigned amongst the men, discord amongst the officers, the regimental government was full of intriguing, and the regiment, which, in other hands, would have been as good as any, was left to look out for itself. A bad neighborhood, which subjected our sentinels, more than once, to insults which it was necessary to punish ourselves, or see them go unpunished. I cite these facts, to show what obstacles had to be surmounted to reach a good organization of the army. We reached that point, but it took time.

The Thirteenth Pennsylvania had more than the maximum number of men, so that it was deprived of two supplementary companies. It was in good relative condition, under the command of an influential politi-

cian of Pittsburg, a boon companion, round-faced and large in girth, who had no objection to exposing himself to fire, but who was not yet ashamed to protect himself from the showers from heaven, by an umbrella, under which I found him, one day, going around camp, caring nothing for what any one might say.

The Sixth New Jersey did not remain in the brigade, its place being taken by the Ninety-third Pennsylvania.

The first care of General Peck, on taking command, was to establish uniformity of drill, and to fix the time at six hours a day: in the morning the company and the platoon drill; in the afternoon battalion drill and field duty. This was nothing new to the Fifty-fifth, but it was very different with the other regiments. A French lieutenant, belonging to a Wisconsin regiment, told me that they had not a captain capable of commanding a company, and that the colonel looked on naïvely at the platoon drill, book in hand, in order to understand the meaning of the commands. This did not prevent his being sent across the Potomac, a few days later. The question was asked what could he do in face of the enemy. Moreover, we were not so far away at Meridian Hill that we could not hear distinctly the sound of the cannon. Very often we were drilling to the sound of the artillery.

This proximity to the enemy could not fail to cause those who remarked it to see in what a strange manner camp duty was performed, or, rather, was not performed. One incident will give a good idea of it.

On September 20, the command of the grand guard of the brigade devolved upon the major of the Fifty-fifth, an officer zealous in all the details of the service, which he had learned in the ranks of the National Guard at Strasbourg. The lieutenant of the company of Zouaves was sent, during the night, to

make the grand rounds, and he stated in his report, the next morning, that he had entered the camps of twelve regiments, without being stopped, or even challenged, walking around freely everywhere with his men. In the Sixty-second New York, he had found seven sentinels asleep, rolled up in their blankets. Finally, what seems hardly credible, he went into the deserted tent of the colonel of the Nineteenth Indiana, whence he carried off the flag of the regiment, without any one's being present to oppose it. The flag was sent to General Peck, to be returned to the regiment, which, perhaps, had not noticed its absence. I trust matters went on differently on the other side of the Potomac. If not, it must be acknowledged that at that period the security of the capital depended less upon the protection of its defenders than upon the unskilfulness of the assailants.

On our side of the river, near the camp covering Georgetown and Washington, not an enemy was seen. This portion of the country is the most picturesque that one can imagine. The landscape is charming, full of variety, abounding in agreeable surprises. Great woods crown the summits of steep slopes, concealing the ravines under their thick shade, leaning over the brawling waters of Rock Creek, which falls into the Potomac, a little farther down. Here a mill, concealed in a narrow valley, there a bridge thrown boldly across the torrent from one rock to another. Farther along, a farm, with its fowls cackling, its fields of maize yellow in the sunlight; or a villa, with its green lawn, its orchards full of fruit, its gardens full of flowers. Everywhere, nature fruitful, calm, smiling, in full sight of camps formed for destruction, noisy, menacing. A thrilling contrast, an elegant protest of peace against the war so roughly invading its domain.

Under the great trees along the roads, the white tents showed the cavalry camps, with wider intervals than those of the infantry, and distributed over a greater extent of country. Most of the regiments were yet in process of formation. The men, who were to be armed, equipped, and mounted at Washington, arrived there, sometimes, without even uniforms. It is evident that the greater portion of them were not horsemen, and knew nothing about taking care of a horse. Many of their officers knew scarcely more. They had obtained their commission by contributing freely from their purses for the recruiting of their companies. That was a good enough title. Nothing more could be asked.

I knew a retired merchant of New York, filled with the vanity of wearing the uniform, who spent twenty thousand dollars to raise a regiment of cavalry, of which he was, of course, commissioned colonel. His camp was near us; he was never there. On the other hand, he displayed his uniform continually on the sidewalks of Pennsylvania Avenue and in the barrooms of the great hotels. He was present at all the receptions at the White House, at all the evening parties of the ministers, always most attentive to the wives of the high officials and of the senators. Radically incapable of commanding his regiment, much less of leading it into battle, but sustained by the double power of money and of political influence, he was nominated brigadier-general, and appointed afterwards to guard some empty barracks, in a post evacuated by the enemy. This was his share of glory, and, without ever having drawn his sabre from the scabbard, he returned home, to enjoy in peace the delight of being able to write the title of "General" upon his visiting-cards.

These pasteboard colonels generally took good care

to have a real lieutenant-colonel, to whom, in fact, fell the command of the regiment, and if the major was also a capable officer there was not much to complain of. But, if a regiment of infantry can be quickly prepared for the field, it is far otherwise with the cavalry. Cavalry cannot be improvised. Our experience already proved that. In the very beginning of the war, the organization of that arm met with a serious obstacle in the marked desire of General Scott to do without it. The commander-in-chief, who could no longer mount a horse, and who at that time arranged everything in his cabinet, had formed his own theory in that respect. Injurious delays arose from that cause.

The enemy, on the contrary, favored in every way the formation of bodies of cavalry. The rich young men of the South themselves provided the expense of their equipments. They brought to the army excellent horses, which they already knew how to manage, and they did not disdain to enter the ranks, followed often by a negro servant, who took his master's place in the disagreeable duties of the business.

These detachments, well mounted and equipped, composed of young men alert and brave, were very useful to the Confederate army. They acted as advance parties and scouts, and gathered exact information as to our movements. They protected their convoys, and carried off our wagons. They covered their own lines, and captured our pickets, appearing where they were least expected, disappearing before their retreat could be cut off, seldom returning without booty or without prisoners. It is well known what good service the enemy's cavalry rendered him in more important operations, in the bold raids which gave renown to the name of Stuart and others. This superiority lasted nearly two years, — as long as the men and the horses

— and until the day when our horsemen, inured to war, and better commanded, were able to conquer where the chances were equal, and, as veterans, to defeat everywhere the adversaries against whom, as novices, they had not been able to hold their ground.

The cavalry regiments consisted of four or six squadrons. Each squadron consisted of two companies, each having three officers and ninety-two non-commissioned officers and men.

Besides the drill, a certain number of infantry regiments were employed in constructing detached redoubts, the system of fortification adopted to defend the federal capital, especially to the north of the Potomac, where the enemy could with difficulty find his way. Under the direction of engineer officers, the men performed this duty very well.

The first occasion which was offered to me to appreciate, with any correctness, what progress the organization of the army had already made, was a grand review of cavalry and artillery, by General McClellan. It took place on the 24th of September, in the field east of Washington, behind the Capitol. At that time we were not yet *blasé* on military parades, which became more and more frequent as the troops became better prepared to figure in them to advantage, by their bearing and by their instruction in the evolutions of the line. For the present, manœuvring was not yet on the programme. The movements were confined to passing in review and defiling.

The weather was magnificent. The people thronged upon the drill grounds, and admired, without reserve, nine batteries of artillery, each having six pieces, fifty-four guns of different models, mostly new, everything in perfect order. The men appeared as well as the

"material," each one at his post, irreproachable in bearing.

Three thousand cavalry were in line, well dressed, not so well mounted, betraying their inexperience in the formation in column, and defiling.

Quite a large number of superior officers had obtained permission to witness the review, and received invitations to join the staff of the general-in-chief. Amidst these uniforms without embroidery, but severely military, three horsemen in civil dress naturally drew to themselves the attention of all. These three privileged citizens, whose names were asked, were the Prince de Joinville and his two nephews, the Count de Paris and the Duke de Chartres, scions of a dethroned royalty. The young princes came to offer their services to the federal government, and to follow in a republican army the career of arms which had already led one of them to the field of battle in Italy. The calling of a soldier is the inalienable *apanage* of French princes, the only one of which revolutions cannot deprive them.

The men of my generation who have roamed about the world have witnessed strange reverses of fortune. As a child I was rocked to sleep to the recital of the great imperial epic; I had seen Charles X. in all the splendor of royalty, of divine right; the Duchess of Angoulême, whose sad features appeared to bear the indelible imprint of the misfortunes of her infancy; the Duchess de Berry, the youth and joy of that aging court; and the Duke of Bordeaux, the hope of the dynasty, to whom I had been presented in the midst of his playthings, as a future defender of his throne. But the throne had crumbled away before I was old enough to hold a sword.

As a young man I had seen the king, Louis Philippe,

the crowned choice of the *bourgeoisie*, pass in review the national guard of his good city of Paris, surrounded by a family numerous and brilliant, destined, as it seemed then, to protect and perpetuate the new monarchy. But a stroke of the paw of the lion populace had precipitated the citizen king into exile, as it had done before the legitimate king.

One day, passing along the foot of the walls of the castle of Ham, I sought to discover upon the walls the silhouette of Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, who was then a captive within. "A head without a brain," the wise ones of that time said.

A man grown, I witnessed during the space of three months the melodrama played in France in 1848, hissing the bad actors, who struggled upon the shaking boards of power until the curtain fell upon a bloody ending, to rise upon a parody of military dictatorship.

From that abortive dictatorship I had witnessed the birth of the empire, and the captive of Ham, crowned by universal suffrage, seat himself in triumph upon the throne once more restored.

All those great shipwrecks have scattered their *débris* throughout the world. I have met many of them in my wandering life. I have deciphered the epitaph of Charles X. upon an obscure flagstone in a Franciscan convent in Göritz. I have paid homage to the ill-fortune of the Count de Chambord, the disinherited heir of the kings of France, in that old castle of Frohsdorff, where the daughter of Louis XVI. continued to seek in prayer a relief to the bitterness of undeserved sorrow. I have been the guest of the Duchess de Berry, that princess with heroic inspirations, the woman with charming disposition, whose quiet serenity neither age nor misfortunes ever altered. And near her, have I not seen at Venice that Arch-

duchess of Austria who was the mother of the king of Rome, and who had shared the finest throne in the world with the greatest captain of the century, still peevishly complaining at her ill-fortune. In England I have been received by the prince who would have been regent of France, under the roof where Louis Philippe died.

Amongst these great waifs of the revolutions, how many celebrities eclipsed, how many powerful fallen ones have I met, "*eating the bitter bread of the stranger!*" And now, in this distant land where the Duke of Orleans had wandered a proscribed man, I found again his grandsons, proscribed as he had been. In former days I had been presented to the Prince de Joinville, at the time when he visited New York on the Belle Poule, which he commanded. We were young then. *Tempora mutantur.* — The times change, and we change with them.

At this review, where I saw for the first time the young prince, there was seen a very simple open carriage, mingling on terms of democratic equality with the other carriages loaded with spectators. And yet it carried Mr. Lincoln and his family. It was to be observed that the eyes of the people were not upon the President of the Republic. The man upon whom more than upon any other depended the safety or the ruin of the country at that hour of supreme peril, upon whom weighed the highest responsibility, remained unnoticed in the crowd, except by those in his immediate vicinity, without guard and without attendants. All the attention was turned upon that young general, with the calm eye, with the satisfied air, who moved around, followed by an immense staff, to the clanking of sabres and the acclamations of the spectators.

Oh, the vanity of popular enthusiasm! On account

of one fortunate battle, fought at the head of a few thousand men, General McClellan was raised to the highest position. He was the idol of the moment. The popular voice called him the second Napoleon. He who by his political falterings and his military incapacity was destined to aggravate the dangers, prolong the trials, make heavy the sacrifices of the burdened country, — to him was decreed in advance an apotheosis. To him who was destined to lead the nation to its triumph with an immovable patriotism, with unwavering devotion to the best interests of the Union, — who, his task accomplished, was to give his life to his country and die a martyr to liberty, — to him the passer-by forgot to raise his hat in salute.

On the morning of the 26th of September the regiment broke camp in obedience to an order received the evening before. The brigade was sent three or four miles to the front, in the neighborhood of Tenallytown. The road was good and pleasant. It followed the meanderings of Rock Creek, in the shade of the willows and poplars, then passed through the forest to reach Swartz' farm, where we pitched our new camp. The men kept step, while singing the *Marseillaise*, or the *Chant des Girondins*, hymns unknown to the echoes of those parts, which repeated them for the first time, and probably for the last.

Our camping-ground was not so good as that at Meridian Hill. The ground was hilly, uneven, with abrupt slopes. We made the best arrangements possible, and the camp was established before night. It was well for us that we did so.

The sun had set behind a curtain of black clouds slowly creeping over the horizon. On the extinction of the fires, and when the lights were put out in camp, the lightning flashed out in the heavens; when the

drums became silent the thunder began to roll. The days directly after the equinox had passed, but we lost nothing by waiting. The first messengers of the storm were sudden gusts of wind, sweeping impetuously through the ravines, bounding along the hills, threatening to uproot the trees and to carry away our tents. Those asleep were quickly awakened. To the roarings which filled the air, to the tearful moanings of the forest, to the snapping of the tent flies, the clear sound of the picket pins, struck with hurried blows to strengthen our frail shelter of cloth, replied promptly.

We hurried still more eagerly to the task, when the heavens appeared to burst over our heads, as if the bottom of a vast reservoir had suddenly given way. A perfect sheet of water fell upon us. Every one disappeared immediately under his tent. The sentinels alone continued upon their beats, regarding the heavens, contemplating the storm, and directing their attention to protecting the locks of their guns with the skirts of their cloaks. We had, as yet, but uncertain notions as to the strength of the tents, and each one asked himself if they would be thrown to the ground under the weight of the deluge, or be driven away by the force of the wind.

I said that the ground was uneven and hilly. In a few minutes the streams began to run in all directions, increasing, as we looked at them, and rushing in small torrents through all the windings and upon all the slopes of the ground. The tempest, which had threatened our tents from the top only, now invaded them from beneath. Every one was compelled to defend himself the best he could against this new form of attack. There were dikes raised by hand, in default of spades, and ditches dug with the bayonet, instead of

with the pick. Thus, by the flashes of the lightning, the workmen appeared one by one or two by two, according to the urgency of the case, but this time with naked feet, stripped to the waist, and consoling themselves, over a forced bath, by defying the storm to reach their garments.

The night was rough, but left us nearly unharmed, with the exception, however, of the second surgeon of the regiment. The whirlwind appeared to be particularly directed towards his tent. He defended it obstinately, stopping up all the openings, repairing the breaches, tightening the cords, striving with the energy of one who fights *pro aris et focis*. Unhappily, the rain soaked the earth, and the picket pins, shaken furiously without any intermission, were moved further and further in their sockets of mud. The moment came when everything gave way. The doctor was conquered, but exasperated. He had not been able to keep his tent standing, he resolved to defend it fallen. He could be perceived, by the flash of the lightning, with uncovered head, hair streaming, disdaining to call for reënforcements, plunging into the cloth, like a sailor taking a reef in his sail, covering his trunk and his camp-bed, holding it there with both feet and hands, and defying the heavens, which, doubtless, to render homage to so heroic a resistance, closed at last their sluice-gates, and calmed the unchained winds.

The sun shone brightly the next morning, and the atmosphere was clear. But, instructed by experience, the soldiers nevertheless finished carefully the works begun during the night for the protection of the camp.

At Camp Holt (the name given to the new encampment of the brigade, I do not know why), the service

began to be performed with more uniformity and regularity. We were there connected with two other brigades to form a division under the command of General Buell, who was soon after appointed to command an army in Kentucky, and, in the month of April following, to play at Shiloh, in favor of Grant, the part that Blücher played at Waterloo, in favor of Wellington. In September, 1861, he was yet only a brigadier-general of volunteers. In the regular army he held the rank of major, and, before the war, performed the duties of assistant adjutant-general. He was a valuable officer for the government in the present circumstances. Perfectly conversant with all the details of the service, very strict in discipline, he caused the organization of the new troops and the instruction of the soldier to advance with rapid steps. He established his headquarters a little apart, in the midst of a field surrounded by woods. He slept there under a tent, giving his officers the example of habits of activity and frugality, most suitable to a soldier's life. As he liked to look out for everything for himself, it was not unusual to see him coming unexpectedly into our regiments, followed by an orderly only, seeing whether every one did his duty and whether his orders were strictly obeyed. No negligence escaped his inquisitive eye, and everything was required to be done according to orders. Cleanliness of camp was as necessary as punctuality on drill, the bearing of the officers was considered as well as the vigilance of the sentinels.

The division of Buell was covered by a line of pickets whose duty was performed as if with the enemy in front. The picket line described an irregular curve through the woods and fields, across the roads and the water-courses, in the midst of a picturesque country, of which those who have seen only that part of

Maryland crossed by the railroad from Washington to the Susquehanna can form very little idea. The pretty country-houses, scattered over the hills, varied the landscape. But they all appeared to be deserted. The disagreeable proximity of the troops, always bringing with it some robbing of the kitchen gardens, and exciting exaggerated fears, had driven the inhabitants away. We met occasionally a few farm laborers, generally negroes, left behind to take care of the furniture. In the fields, we met no one except our advance posts, who added very little to the animation of the landscape. The vedettes passed back and forth with their guns on their shoulders. The rest of the soldiers slept, or conversed tranquilly around the camp-fires, to provide which they had plenty of wood right at hand. Others, smoking silently, dreamed — of what? — Of their families, doubtless, of their chances of seeing them again, of the hazards of war, of its probable duration. But this was much the smaller number. The soldier is no dreamer. The activity of his life does not leave him the time. The sensibility is quickly dulled in a life left to chance, day by day, and where the evening, often, has no morrow. His unconcern arises from the uselessness of foresight. He knows not his fate, and so enjoys the present, as well as possible, not disquieting himself as to the hour to come.

Near our camp, back of the Swartz farm, some fortifications had been commenced, which we supposed we were to finish. But it was not to be. The usual drills were suspended only for reviews, and inspections became more and more frequent. One of them was the occasion of a very flattering mention of the Fifty-fifth.

Colonel Marcy, chief of staff of the general-in-chief, had been ordered to inspect all the volunteer forces

encamped north of the Potomac. The Count de Paris and the Duke de Chartres, attached as captains to the staff of General McClellan, accompanied him. Their national *amour propre* did not suffer on account of the appearance of the French regiment. "The regiment," say the journals, quoting the report of the inspection, "deserves a special mention. Nearly all the officers are French. Many have served in Europe. The men are principally French, and, in bearing and instruction, as in discipline, have no superiors, even amongst our regular troops."

After the inspection and the review, which is the usual conclusion, General Peck, Colonel Marcy, and the princes assembled under my tent, where champagne prolonged the visit. At that time, a basket of champagne might yet be found under the camp-bed of a colonel.

Our proximity to Washington, the good condition of the roads, the beauty of the landscape caused our camp to be the favorite resort of visitors. So we did not want for company. There were high officials, politicians, members of Congress or of the diplomatic corps, foreign officers come to offer their services or simply to study the formation of our army, newspaper correspondents, and all of them not infrequently accompanied by ladies curious to witness our drills or our reviews.

It was altogether different to the south of the Potomac, where the enemy was found. The bridges were guarded, and no one could cross them without a special permit. On that side, our line of defence formed an arc of a circle, resting its two extremities upon the river; one extremity at Alexandria, a few miles below Washington, the other covering Chain Bridge, a few miles above. It was composed of a chain of detached works, more important and better armed

than the redoubts raised on the northern side of the river. These forts were on the summits of a series of heights presenting great natural advantages. A few months before, they were generally covered with magnificent forests, of which the axe had already made immense abatis, a very efficacious breakwater against the human wave of a regular attack. Within a nearer radius, other works were thrown up, defending the heights of Arlington, opposite the city, and covering the bridge-head which protected Long Bridge.

The estate of Arlington, at that time, belonged to General Robert E. Lee, of the Confederate army. The Lee family is historical in the United States, and was not without distinction in England. The first of the name who went to America was Richard Lee, who emigrated in the time of Charles I., a strong partisan, and devoted to the Stuarts, like the greater part of the Virginians of his time, and against whom Cromwell had to send an expedition, which did not reduce the royalist colony to submission. The descendants of Richard Lee, who had preserved after him an influential position, played an important part in the War of the Revolution, and brought to their name a consideration higher than ever in the American Republic, although the instincts of their race were much more aristocratic than democratic.

In 1861, Robert E. Lee was a colonel in the regular army of the United States. A son of General Henry Lee, he was attached to the engineers, on graduating from West Point, and had served in the Mexican War with a distinction rewarded by several promotions. Afterwards he was put in command of the military school. Finally, in the month of April, 1861, he had resigned to attach himself to the fortunes of the Southern Confederacy.

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Arlington, where he usually resided, has a lordly appearance. A great park, shaded by magnificent trees, surrounded the residence, whose style of architecture had a prestige of age, much respected in America, where it is so rarely found. Each one of the two fronts is adorned with a wide veranda, whose high columns support the projecting roof. From the northern one the view is admirable. The majestic course of the Potomac through the plain is lost from view in the gray horizon of Alexandria; then, the whole city of Washington, with its great monuments and its small houses; Georgetown, rising toward the left, like an amphitheatre; lastly, as a frame to the panorama, the line of blue hills cut through at the right by the immense dome of the Capitol, raising toward heaven the statue of armed Liberty.

On September 29, when I visited Arlington for the first time, the imprint of the war had already altered its aspect. The dwelling of Lee had become the headquarters of General McDowell, now commanding a division in the army of which he had been general-in-chief, the army corps not being yet organized. The horses of the mounted orderlies, saddled and bridled, impatiently pawed the ground around the trees to which they were hitched. The tents of the guard and of the servants of the staff were set up in the gardens, trampled over everywhere by men and animals. The park roads were deeply furrowed by the continual passage of artillery and ammunition wagons. Through the broken-down fences, the hedges dug up in the fields, in the woods, and upon the turf, a number of abandoned camps, where the fires still smoked, showed by a thousand remains the place where the regiments had been, and which they had left early in the morning.

A strong division of twelve thousand men had in fact moved in advance, in consequence of a retrograde movement of the enemy, who had the evening before evacuated his advanced positions at Upton Hill and Munson Hill. It did not take us long to reach the principal column. It followed a narrow and hilly road, sometimes sunk between high slopes, sometimes crossing swampy places on an embankment. The artillery wagons at times encumbered the road, stopped by some obstacle or by some accident. The men marched on the sides of the roads, hurrying to close up the intervals in the ranks.

A squadron of cavalry halted in a field marked the place where General Keyes had established his headquarters in a covered cart, from which he sent his orders and watched the movements of his troops. Every one was in good spirits; no one remained behind.

When I reached Upton Hill, the brigade of General Wadsworth had already taken possession. General Wadsworth did not belong to the regular army. He had not served before, except on the staff of General McDowell, during the three months' campaign, so unhappily terminated by the disaster of Bull Run. He had a very large property in the State of New York, where his family was highly respected. When, at the commencement of the war, communication with Washington was interrupted, he had hired a vessel, and loaded it with provisions at his own expense, and went with it himself, to better assure its arrival at Annapolis. This generous devotion to the cause of the Union recommended him to the favor of the government, for which, besides thus using his fortune, he was destined at a later day to lay down his life.

I found General Wadsworth under the roof of the pillaged farmhouse. He was at that time fifty-four

years old, but the ardor of his patriotism served instead of youthful vigor, and his moral energy supported without weakness the contrast between the rude camp life and the luxurious existence which had, up to that time, been his portion. A few broken stools were all there was left of the furniture. Some doors taken off their hinges served for tables; some boards picked up in the garden answered for benches. The Confederates, who occupied the house the evening before, had written their names with charcoal upon the defaced walls of all the rooms. They had added, as soldiers usually do, rough sketches, among which the most frequent was the hanging of Mr. Lincoln. The legend was easily altered to make the representation that of the hanging of Mr. Jefferson Davis, which our soldiers did not fail to do.

The house was surmounted by a cupola, the view from which was of the most varied character. In the gardens the stacks of arms were surrounded by soldiers lying on the ground or digging in the vegetable garden; regiments were successively taking their positions in line; a dozen cannon were in battery, the cannoneers in their places overlooking the valley, the officers examining with their field glasses, the horizon covered with forests, the caissons in the rear, the teams on the inner slopes of the hill. In front the Leesburg road, upon which galloped here and there some staff officers followed by their orderlies, and the isolated hillock of Munson Hill, from the top of which already floated the federal flag. When we arrived there, our men began their installation behind a circular line of intrenchments left unfinished by the enemy, by burning the half-rotten straw upon which the first occupants had slept. From this hill the rebels had been able to contemplate at their ease the dome of the Capitol, the object of

their desire in the land of Canaan which it was given them to have a sight of, but which they never entered.

At Bailey's Crossroads were massed several regiments, among which was the "Garibaldi Guard," having in it as many nationalities as companies; a regiment poorly commanded by a Hungarian colonel, whose suspicious career was destined to end in the penitentiary of Sing Sing. The French company wished to be transferred to the Fifty-fifth. The captain commanding it came himself to see me about it; but it was too late. The War Department, fearing to open the door to new abuses, denied all requests of this kind, whether presented by individuals or by bodies of men. This was the fate of a petition signed by twenty Anderson Zouaves, and presented by the Count de Paris to General McClellan.

From Bailey's Crossroads to the Seminary, a large building for educational purposes, built upon the highest point of the hills which surround Alexandria, nearly all the country traversed by the road was covered by abatis. A few fortified points were visible at long distances apart in front of the strongest works, of which I have already spoken. But the pickets, with their reserves, lined the road the whole distance. On this side the movement was limited to connecting the advance positions with the right, by way of Munson Hill.

The camps which we visited on our return were generally well kept and in good order. We found there the German division of General Blenker, all covered with leaves, surrounded by little gardens with kegs, where the remembrances of *Vaterland* were abundantly watered with *lager beer.*

The general had served in Europe. He had served in Greece, in the Bavarian Legion, and later, in 1849, had commanded a body of revolutionary troops in Germany.

He received us under a great tent, which had evidently been designed for hospital service. It was double, of a bluish stuff, pleasant to the eye, and having a wall tent in front as a vestibule. There was the aid on duty, near whom was collected a numerous staff, composed of foreign officers, nearly all Germans.

The demonstrative courtesy of General Blenker contrasted singularly with the reserved manners of the American officers of his rank. I saw him then for the first time, and it would have seemed that I was one of his most intimate friends. It was continually, "My dear colonel, — my good comrade, — what a pleasure to see you here," etc. His band, which was excellent, regaled us with some choice selections from the Italian *répertoire*. Some real champagne was served to us, upon a table loaded with fruit and delicious cake; we witnessed afterwards the parade of a regiment of fine appearance, and apparently well instructed; after which we took our leave, with many compliments and hand-shakings.

The career of Blenker did not correspond with the brilliancy of its commencement. He was not with the Army of the Potomac on the Peninsula, was relieved from his command for acting according to his own will, in contempt of military discipline prejudicial to the government, in portions of Virginia, where it was desired to conciliate the people. He died in the humble position from which the war had raised him, regretting a fortune lost by allowing himself to be dazzled by its brilliancy, — hurried, perhaps, to the tomb by the worst of griefs, according to the poet: "Il ricordarsi del tempo felice, nella miseria."

In fine that portion of the Army of the Potomac had at that time the advantage over us of having been under fire. A few skirmishes, of little importance, but

quite frequent, had commenced to accustom the men to service, many of whom besides had been present at the battle of Bull Run.

On returning, I entered Washington in company with the military balloon of Lowe, which was at that time on trial. The trial continued for nearly two years, when finally the service was abandoned. Because the very wooded character of Virginia rendered its usefulness problematical, it does not follow that in an open country good results cannot be obtained from aëronauts surveying the ground in advance of an army, and judging somewhat of the position of the enemy.

On my return to camp I found an order to have ready three days' cooked rations, to make a requisition for a sufficient supply of ammunition wagons, and to hold the regiment ready to move at a moment's notice. The cause was a reconnoissance in force by the enemy, which had crossed the upper Potomac, five or six leagues from us. The next day passed in expectation. In the evening, General Peck called his colonels together in his tent. It was positively known that eight thousand Confederates were at Great Falls, upon the north bank of the river. With the maps before us, the probability of their intentions was discussed, — what the chances were of an attack at daybreak, — the best means of defence. But it seemed to me that no definite instructions had been received at headquarters, and no concerted plan had been drawn up. Hold yourselves in readiness, was about all the orders amounted to. This was strictly conformed to. The pickets were reënforced, strict instructions were given along the whole line. Each man received a hundred cartridges, and slept in his clothes, not knowing whether he would be awakened by the sound of the trumpet or of the firing.

I remember that the night was fine and calm. The

stars shone in the heavens, in an atmosphere clear but not cold. The Great Bear descended slowly to the horizon. On looking carefully at it, I was surprised to count an eighth star, more brilliant than the others. An examination with a field glass soon showed that the supplementary star was a small fire balloon, sent up, doubtless, by the enemy as a signal. Innumerable fireflies sparkled in the grass, as if the earth wished to reflect the scintillations of the stars. Nothing disturbed the silence, except a few distant gunshots, fired by some vedettes too easily alarmed. At daybreak it was seen that the enemy's column had retired as it had come, and everything returned to the usual order.

CHAPTER VI.

WINTER QUARTERS.

Settled down at Tenallytown — Moonlight — Pay-day — A case of *delirium tremens* — Court-martial — General Keyes — Unfortunate affair of Ball's Bluff — Arrangements for winter — Officers' mess — Flag presentation — President Lincoln at the table of the Fifty-fifth — Effects of the war around Washington.

On October 9, McCall's division, about twelve thousand strong, crossed the Potomac to establish itself a few miles above Chain Bridge, in the direction of Leesburg. As a consequence of this movement, Peck's brigade was thrown out to occupy Tenallytown, an important position, which covers Georgetown, on the border of the District of Columbia.

The village is built on a hill where five roads converge, three of which are highways. To the right, on the highest point, Fort Pennsylvania commands the plain. It was garrisoned by the Thirteenth Pennsylvania. The Ninety-third Pennsylvania and the Sixty-second New York had their camp further out, along the Rockville road. The Fifty-fifth was sent one mile to the left, near a strong demi-lune, armed with four thirty-two-pounders, and enclosed by a high palisade pierced for musketry. This work, built with care in a well chosen position, bore the name of Fort Gaines. Each one of my companies was sent successively to occupy this fort and become familiar with the use of artillery.

Behind the camp were great forests, along which ran the road from Tenallytown to Chain Bridge. In

front, the view extended a great distance. The eye could follow, over the woods which at that time beautified the valley, the course of the Potomac, whose waters were visible at various points. Beyond could be distinguished the movements of our most advanced forces, and in the distance the indistinct lines of the enemy were lost in the horizon. In front of us, between the river and the Rockville road, arose, on the other side of the valley, a wooded hill, whose trees were fast disappearing. Three redoubts were built there, which, later on, were connected and formed one of the most important forts in the defence of the capital.

It appeared, at first, as if we were not to remain long in that position. We had scarcely formed our camp when one evening an order came to hold ourselves ready to move at a moment's notice. The drums, which were at that moment beating the retreat, changed their tone. The men responded by hurrahs, and in a few minutes the companies were drawn up in position on the color line, when a counter-order was received. We were not to march till daylight. Every one returned to his tent under a rolling fire of pleasantries. At half-past nine came a new order, to go without delay to Chain Bridge. Again the drums began to beat. Ten minutes later, a new counter-order by telegraph. Renewal of jokes in the ranks. At ten o'clock, a third order, this time not countermanded, with instructions to leave only a dozen men with a sergeant to guard the camp, to take with us the two surgeons, leaving the care of the hospital to the hospital steward, and to take the four ambulances.

At half-past ten we were on the road. It was our first night-march, and the orders appeared to indicate that it was not to be a simple military promenade. The

morale of the men appeared to be excellent, and they would have cheerfully begun the march singing by the way, if orders had not been given to preserve strict silence in the ranks. We followed a crossroad, here plunging into the woods, there out again through the fields. Long streamers of clouds were covering the heavens, like the shreds of an immense torn curtain. Sometimes the moon appeared in the openings, her light glancing with thousands of reflections from the edges of the bayonets. Sometimes she disappeared, leaving in obscurity the regiment stretching out along the windings of the road like a fantastic serpent with blue scales. At midnight we halted near Chain Bridge.

I do not know how this bridge derived its name. It has no chains about it, but is a wooden bridge on stone abutments. In front of Georgetown, the Potomac narrows suddenly and ceases to be navigable. The greater part of its bed is filled with sand covered by stones and rocks, dry during summer but over which the water rolls noisily in the winter. During the greater part of the year, the current, deep and rapid, is enclosed in the narrow channel it has worn on the Virginia side, under the last arch of the bridge. The Washington canal follows the Maryland bank upon a slope somewhat elevated. The banks on both sides of the river rise into high hills, abrupt and rocky, generally covered with thick woods. Some fortifications hastily built, but quite strong, defended the approaches along the Virginia heights. If they were taken the bridge itself was protected by a battery of heavy guns, halfway up the hill, and by two field pieces placed to sweep the bridge the whole length.

The night passed without incident to us around the bivouac fires. Day broke in the midst of perfect tranquillity, and the first order we received in the morning

was to return to camp, which we did, much disappointed. We were impatient at not yet being led under fire. If we had been able to look but a few months into the future, it is probable we would have accepted our lot much more cheerfully.

Commencing from our arrival at Tenallytown, the line evolutions formed a part of the brigade drill, which we practised every day when the weather permitted. We had a large field in which to manœuvre, where our four regiments could deploy in every direction, leaving out the companies detached for service in the forts and for advance posts. But, as the season advanced, the weather became more and more uncertain. After the end of October cold and steady rains began to announce the approach of winter, and the service became more and more unpleasant. Nevertheless, the last fine days were put to good use, and General Buell was able to command the manœuvres himself without correcting anything except errors of detail.

On October 31, the regiment was *mustered for pay.* The expression has no equivalent in French, because the thing itself does not exist in France. In the United States the system of paying the army is very defective. Neither the soldier nor the officer is paid except every two months, supposing payment is made regularly, which is not often the case during a campaign. The muster takes place the last day of the second month. It is as follows: After the inspection in detail of the companies, the mustering officer, who should be an inspector on the staff of one of the colonels or regimental commanders of the brigades, proceeds himself with the roll-call, with open ranks, officers at their posts, non-commissioned officers and soldiers with arms at support. Each one answers to his name, and passes without command to order arms

and arms at ease, so that it may be seen that all the men present are upon the roll. Return is made on the roll of all men absent by desertion, temporary leave, or other cause, and the mustering officer afterwards himself makes sure of the presence of the men noted as forming the guard, or in the regimental hospital. The rolls, being duly signed and certified to by the commanders of companies, are sent to him to be signed in his turn, after adding to the report a summary upon the condition of the men, their bearing, their discipline, etc. These rolls, made in quadruplicate, are disposed of as follows: one to the adjutant-general at Washington, two to the paymaster-general, the fourth is kept with the regiment. There is the same disposition of the separate roll of the staff. In the staffs of the generals the rolls are individual. The paymaster having charge of the brigade makes a calculation of the sum due to each one upon a column left for that purpose, and when he receives the necessary funds he proceeds to the camp to make the payment, after which he returns immediately to Washington.

Is it necessary to point out the inconvenience of such a system? The American soldier, whose pay is thirteen dollars a month, never receives less than twenty-six dollars at once, that is to say one hundred and thirty francs, a sum too large not to expose him to dangerous temptations. I know that they send a portion to their families, but all soldiers do not have families to provide for, and amongst those who have all do not perform this duty with the same scrupulous care. There are always some, too, who are not present to receive their pay. In that case they must wait two months longer, and then the amount they will receive will be fifty-two dollars. And we do not think this very exceptional.

The enormous expense of the war, the robbery of the government in all manner of ways, or even the delay incident to a new issue of paper money, have often rendered it impossible for the treasury to fill its engagements on the day appointed. In that case the army and navy are regarded as best able to wait. Before Fredericksburg our regiment received six months' back pay at once. This amounted to seventy-eight dollars to each man; to the sergeants, more in proportion.

From these figures there is nothing to deduct, for the difference in value between gold and paper money was compensated to the soldiers by an act of Congress, which raised their pay to sixteen dollars a month, an increase maintained a long while after the war.

The soldier is not a hoarder, especially while on a campaign, where balls and bullets are considered by him in all his reckonings of the future. What is he to do, then, with any considerable sum? Let himself be robbed in play, at the risk of punishment if he is caught; procure at an exorbitant price a few bottles of poor whiskey, with which he may intoxicate himself and his comrades, however grave may be the consequences. If he is desirous of deserting, the money will make it much easier. Perhaps he would not have thought of it otherwise, but, feeling his pocket full, his head heated by drink, it is not impossible that he may die, shot on the same spot where he received his fatal pay.

For the absent, sent on detached service, or kept in some distant hospital, arise long complications from *descriptive lists* being incorrect, forgotten, or lost. All regimental commanders know to what interminable objections payment of men in hospital often gives rise, and how many patients have often been detained there an indefinite time as servants, for the sole reason that

they could not get their back pay. Some little informality, an almost inevitable result of the accidents of war, was thus sufficient to retain in a disagreeable service men whose honorable wounds gave them a right to a positive leave of absence.

The interest of the soldier, as well as that of discipline, demand in this respect a reformation. The government and the army of the United States have everything to gain by the adoption of a system of pay at short intervals, and by the change in the organization of the pay service which would be the result.

I have just stated what was the pay of the infantry soldier. The sergeant had seventeen dollars a month; the first sergeant, twenty dollars; the sergeant-major, the commissary-sergeant, the quartermaster-sergeant, and the drum-major, twenty-one dollars; the hospital steward, thirty dollars.

The monthly pay of the officers was as follows: colonel, $194; lieutenant-colonel, $170; major, $151; captain, $118; first lieutenant, $108; second lieutenant, $103. To this must be added ten dollars per month to every officer commanding a company, in consideration of his responsibility for uniforms, arms, and accoutrements, etc.

In time of war, forage is furnished in kind to mounted officers, in proportion to the number of horses allowed them.

The pay is somewhat higher in the engineer corps, the cavalry, artillery, and staff.

A brigadier-general receives three hundred dollars a month, and forage for four horses; a major-general, $445, and forage for five horses. Finally, the lieutenant-general commanding-in-chief, $720, and whatever forage he requires.

The month of November began sadly enough for us.

A continual rain, accompanied by violent storms, darkened the day of All Saints, and the next day we had to record the first death in the regiment. A soldier of the company of Zouaves had died after a few days' sickness, without our being able to send him to Washington. In default of the honor of falling upon the field of battle, he had at least the advantage of funeral services, accompanied by a certain military pomp. The body, clothed in full uniform, remained for twenty-four hours under a tent, covered with the flag and guarded by sentinels of the company, which not only volunteered this additional service, but also contributed to buy a good coffin and send the body home to the friends. Every one visited the tent. It was a new sight. But the coffin removed left no apparent void in the camp.

"Mieux vaut goujat debout que Zouave enterré." [1]

This was the only man we lost by sickness before leaving for the Peninsula the following spring. The health of the men remained in the most satisfactory condition during the whole winter. We seldom had to send a man to the hospital, and then it was rather to prevent serious illness than to cure one already serious. The only case except ordinary indispositions was that of a recruit, arriving at camp about that time.

This was a young Swiss, who had received an education enabling him to be attached to the editorial staff of a French journal in New York. Of a very nervous temperament, he had ruined his health by his unfortunate habit of intemperance. The immoderate use of strong liquors had resulted in bringing upon him the symptoms of *delirium tremens*, the result of which was that he lost his place. His only resource then was to enlist. He was near-sighted, and with a

[1] "A living dog is better than a dead lion."

feeble constitution, evidently unfit for the service; but they did not examine very closely at that time, and he was sent to the Fifty-fifth. To put him in the ranks would have been to kill him certainly. I placed him on duty at the hospital, where he could be made useful without danger to his shattered constitution. Everything went well at first, but the fearful malady had not lost its hold on him.

One night mournful howlings resounded suddenly through the camp, followed immediately by a tumultuous running, which awakened the sleepers with a start. The guard pursued a sort of a phantom half-naked, which fled uttering cries of distress: "For the love of God, do not kill me! Is it not enough to have burned my tent? Ah! they are going to shoot me!" And wild shrieks to the colonel to save his life. The tumult soon quieted down, and the noise ceased in the guard-house. Immediately the adjutant reported to me that Mr. ——, the hospital steward's assistant, in an attack of *delirium tremens*, had been arrested by the guard, and left in charge of the surgeons.

The next day I sent for Mr. ——, returned to his natural state. The recital which he gave me of his hallucinations made so strong an impression upon me that I can yet relate it in its strange details. Mr. —— had passed the evening, as usual, in the little tent which he had to himself. His writing finished, he lay down shortly after the fires were out, and went to sleep with no apparent ill-feeling. About one o'clock in the morning, he was awakened by a sensation of burning heat. He opened his eyes, and saw with fright that his tent was on fire. It was filled with a thick smoke, which suffocated him, and the flames, piercing the cloth at various points, burned up the walls, and extended in all directions with a dazzling clearness.

jurisdiction embraces all crimes and offences the penalty for which exceeds the loss of one month's pay and condemnation to one month's imprisonment or hard labor, the limit assigned to the sentences of regimental courts-martial, which are composed of only three officers, and can try only non-commissioned officers and soldiers. The sentences of general courts-martial, comprising the punishment of death, hard labor, ball and chain, imprisonment, military degradation, etc., are subject only to the revision and approval of the general-in-chief before being carried into effect.

The punishment of whipping was abolished in 1812, was reëstablished in 1832 for the single case of desertion in time of peace, and finally abolished in 1861.

The articles of war in the United States are nearly the same as in Europe, except that a duel is punished by disgraceful dismissal from the service, not only for the combatants, but also for the witnesses, and for every officer who may have taken any part, either in the sending or receiving of a challenge, or who even has abstained from preventing the combat. As, however, the duel had disappeared from the customs of the Northern States, those repressive measures required no application in the army. During the whole course of the war I knew but two cases where the fact of sending a challenge had been the cause of the dismissal of the officers who had braved the risks.

Besides courts-martial, wise measures were taken to free the service from incapable officers. Examining committees were appointed, before whom the colonels could send those from whom nothing was to be expected satisfactory to the service. This measure had the good result of stimulating generally the lazy, and of sending home a quantity of incorrigible nobodies, who could not pass the examinations. Only it was not sufficiently

general. It would have been well to have extended it, also, so as to have included the colonels.

On the whole, everything took on a better military appearance in the army, which General McClellan was never weary of passing in review by divisions.

Our time came, November 8. The three brigades proceeded early in the day to the Kolorama fields, near the place where we had encamped first on arriving at Washington. The march for us was about five miles; but the weather was favorable, the roads in good condition, and the new red pantaloons, received a few days before from New York, did not suffer. As usual, there was a crowd at the review, which was followed by grand evolutions commanded by General Buell. The general-in-chief appeared well pleased, and the spectators returned to Washington persuaded that, with such troops, it was necessary only to begin the march to go straight to Richmond. If, however, they had travelled over the road to Tenallytown that evening, their confidence, perhaps, would have been a little shaken, on seeing how many stragglers a marching column could leave behind it after one day of fatigue.

That review was the farewell of General Buell to his division. A few days after, he left us, to command the Department of the Cumberland, with headquarters at Louisville, Ky. He was equally regretted by both officers and men, in spite of his severity in the details of the service. Every one had confidence in his military ability, and the soldier attaches himself preferably to leaders whose merit justifies their authority and is a guarantee that his life will not be sacrificed uselessly and unprofitably on the field of battle.

General Buell was succeeded by General Keyes, an officer grown old in the service, which does not mean

that he had the abrupt manners of a *grognard.* He was, on the contrary, a man of amiable manners, having found in California the opportunity, rare for military men, of making a considerable fortune. Thus his residence in San Francisco had left much stronger marks on him than his former expeditions against the Indians of the Northwest. Little desirous of imitating the Spartan habits of his predecessor, he decidedly preferred a comfortable house in Washington to a tent in the open air. Accordingly, he made his headquarters there, without troubling himself too much about the inconvenience to the service which might result therefrom. For the rest, although not a strict disciplinarian like Buell, Keyes was, nevertheless, a capable commander. His conduct at the battle of Bull Run was spoken of in high terms, and his affability soon gained him the warm regards of his inferiors, and he rarely lost the opportunity of addressing a compliment to them.

It was a matter of course that General Keyes, in his turn, manœuvred his division under the eyes of the commander-in-chief. This second review, at an interval of a month from the first one, was decidedly more satisfactory, and served to note the progress the army continued to make from day to day. But the season was already too far advanced to employ them against the enemy. Nor did the unfortunate affair of Ball's Bluff, still quite recent, encourage haste. The affair was as follows : —

On October 20, General Stone, whose division guarded the line of the upper Potomac, about thirty miles above Washington, gave an order to Colonel Devens, commanding the Fifteenth Massachusetts, to cross the river during the night, attack and destroy an encampment of the enemy which, according to the re-

port of an officer sent on a reconnoissance, was a short distance off. On the 21st, at daylight, Colonel Devens, on arriving at the place indicated, found, instead of the pretended camp, an apple orchard planted on a hill, which, in the doubtful light of the moon, had taken on, in the eyes of the scouts, the appearance of tents symmetrically aligned. He immediately made his report, without abandoning his advanced position, where the presence of the regiment was known to the enemy. From this first report, it was concluded much too quickly that it was possible to make a favorable attack on Leesburg, and the Twentieth Massachusetts, a California regiment, and one New York regiment received orders to cross the river with them. For that purpose there were but two flat-boats, capable of carrying forty men, and an iron rowboat; — means so much the more insufficient in that they were obliged to land on and cross over a long and narrow island, and then reëmbark on the other side.

Slowly and painfully they thus finally succeeded in transporting to the Virginia bank a thousand men, and one rifled and two smooth-bore guns. As if to complicate affairs, the command had fallen upon Colonel Baker, ex-senator from Oregon, a brave but unskilled officer, although he had served in the Mexican War. General Stone committed the fault of leaving the conduct of the expedition to his discretion. So that when Colonel Devens, pressed by superior forces, and having the enemy on his heels, fell back in good order upon the point where he must repass the river, he found a line of battle unskilfully posted across the only open ground in the midst of woods. Still more unskilfully, the pieces of artillery were placed in advance, and so exposed that they hardly began to use them before the cannoneers were killed or wounded by the concentrated

fire of the enemy's sharpshooters. And, finally, the position assigned to the Fifteenth Massachusetts was so badly chosen that half its fire was useless.

The troops fought bravely, — admirably even for men who had never been under fire, who felt that they were badly commanded, and fighting an enemy double their number. Grouped upon the bluff, they defended themselves as well as they could until nightfall, but were finally crushed. The first who threw themselves into the only flat-boat within reach caused it to sink under their weight. Then all who could swim threw themselves into the water. The rest fell into the hands of the enemy, with the cannon and the wounded, whose number was quite large. We must except, however, about one hundred and fifty men, saved by the energetic coolness of a captain of the Twentieth Massachusetts, Frank Bartlett, since made a general. This young officer, having discovered a boat concealed along the bank, sent over successively the soldiers who had followed him, going over himself with the last. Colonel Baker was killed, thus paying with his life for whatever errors were committed. Of the sixteen hundred men thus thrown heedlessly across the Potomac, scarcely one-half escaped.

This unfortunate engagement terminated the campaign of 1861 as it had commenced, with a rout. It was made the subject of a minute inquiry by the committee of Congress upon the conduct of the war. General Stone threw all the responsibility upon Colonel Baker, who was not there to reply. But it was not shown that the latter would have risked three regiments of his brigade without orders, in a position where retreat was impossible in case of a reverse. Besides, whatever his errors and faults in the disposition of his troops during the engagement, they would have simply been re-

pulsed, and not destroyed, if the means of returning had not been wanting.

Public opinion was much more affected by that heedless affair, in that it believed it discovered indications of treason. Some depositions taken by the committee, in fact, brought suspicions of connivance with the Confederates upon General Stone, — suspicions which must have been serious, to lead to his imprisonment in Fort Lafayette. However, as no proof came to hand to corroborate these imputations, which his loyal character and former services rendered improbable, he was restored to liberty, without, however, obtaining the privilege of a court-martial, from which he expected restoration to rank. It was only toward the end of the war that his return to active duty was the tardy reparation of an injustice from which his honor had so cruelly suffered.

The natural conclusion to be drawn from the affair of Ball's Bluff was that, in general, the men were more capable of good fighting than the leaders were of commanding.

The season grew more and more unfavorable for active operations. December arrived with its accompaniments of rain and frosts. The horrible roads of Virginia had become mud holes, impracticable for artillery and wagon trains. The army was compelled to enter into winter quarters. Nothing was changed in the position of the troops, but measures were taken to better protect them against the storms. The tents in bad order were renewed, leaving to the different brigades every latitude in laying out and making comfortable their encampments in a manner the most advantageous for the well-being of the soldier.

The system adopted for the regiment was that of *log cabins*, square huts made of round logs, generally

split in two and plastered with mud, which closed the cracks. Upon these walls, three or four feet high, the tent was placed for a roof. A door made of boards, or a rubber blanket, opened to the interior. The inventive mind of the soldier was shown in ingenious contrivances to increase the furniture and economize the space of six square feet. The problem was to make it hold two beds, one table, a rack for arms, a valise for the clothes, a California fireplace — the California fireplace is dug in the ground and covered over to the level of the floor by large flat stones, under which a current of air, skilfully arranged, keeps the fire alive and carries off the smoke outside by a narrow channel on the side opposite the entrance — or a little sheet-iron stove, and a stool. The problem is nearly always victoriously solved, sometimes even with other small additions to comfort.

The surrounding woods furnished materials in abundance, and the daily drills were suspended during the few days necessary for the men to construct their winter mansions.

The officers took advantage of the situation to organize their mess in a dining-hall, which they bought ready-made in Washington. American ingenuity, always ready to take advantage of circumstances, found in the war new sources of profit. Among other inventions, board houses of all dimensions were built, perfectly constructed, furnished with doors and windows, and capable of being easily put together and taken apart. That of the officers of the Fifty-fifth was long enough to set a table with forty covers, a precious resource for winter evenings.

The *mess* is the table for the officers of a regiment, provided for at the common expense. In England it is a permanent institution. The officers pass away, the

mess remains. It has a stock of silver, often very fine, a complete service of linen, porcelain, and glass, a stock of fine wines, etc. In a country where the commissions are bought and where a fortune is a condition almost indispensable for entering the army, it is natural enough that the boarding of the officers should take the character of a club. Outside of the service, each one is a *gentleman* in uniform. The grades of the military service give way to an epicurean sociability, which unites all at the same table, from the colonel to the last second lieutenant, especially as the second lieutenant might be the heir presumptive of some great territorial magnate, and the colonel but a well-to-do citizen when out of his uniform.

In France, where the greater part of the officers have only their modest pay on which to live, and rely on their merit as soldiers for promotion, the difference in pay and the military rank are in accord, in maintaining a separate table for the lieutenants, one for the captains, and one for the superior officers.

In America, a country of democratic liberty and of individual independence, each one arranges his affairs to suit himself. In the Fifty-fifth, composed of mingled elements, we had adopted still a different method, in establishing two *messes*, that of the staff and that of the company officers.

No event of military importance marked the four months which we passed in winter quarters. The monotonous regularity of our camp life was enlivened only by a few matters of regimental interest, such as the presentation of a fine war horse, which was given to me, in a formal manner, by the officers of my regiment. Unfortunately, the war horse would not answer me even for parade service. It was a black stallion of splendid appearance, but, like most stallions, very skit-

tish and intractable. He could never get accustomed to fire, and, after interminable strifes to familiarize him with drill, I had to use him solely as a horse for parade. He was captured by the Confederates at Fredericksburg. I was consoled by thinking that he was of no more use to them than to me.

I recall to my memory the traditional keeping of Christmas, the serenades interchanged between the regiments of the brigade on New Year's eve, — serenades of bands, of drums, of bugles, varied by English, French, and German choruses. The most memorable day of the winter was that when the President of the United States sat at our table with a large and brilliant company. The occasion was as follows : —

One of the officers of the Zouave company had numerous friends in New York who agreed together to offer two splendid flags to the regiment, one the American colors, and the other the French. The presentation was arranged beforehand in a formal manner, and the day set was the 8th of January, anniversary of the battle of New Orleans.

The weather was favorable ; a sharp frost had hardened the drill ground, which was covered with a light fall of show. The effect of the Zouave pantaloons and the blue caps was picturesque; the spectators had a good view, while the principal actors had a fine place, carefully swept, reserved for them. Although this sort of ceremony was not new, the number of carriages and of horsemen and horsewomen was large for the season. The open barouche of the President contained Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln, General Shields, and Mr. N. P. Willis, an elegant writer, whose works have a popularity both in England and in America.

Mr. Frederick A. Conklin, a member of Congress from one of the New York City districts, delivered an

eloquent speech, to which I replied — what one does reply on such an occasion. The drums beat, the bugles sounded, the flag guard returned to the ranks, and the marching-by terminated the military ceremony, but not the celebration.

The programme embraced in addition a collation prepared in the dining-hall, whose inner walls were, for the occasion, hung with flags adorned with garlands, and all the military tokens that the soldiers understand so well how to arrange. The President, the generals, the ladies, and a few guests of distinction took the places of honor at the table, where it was the pride of the regiment to serve nothing which had not been prepared by its culinary artists.

The triumph of the latter was complete but costly, in the sense that the cooks, having given too good proof of talent, were very soon carried off by the generals, who had them detailed to their quarters. I thus lost a half-dozen fighting men, whom the fires of the kitchen saved from the fire of the enemy.

The President did honor to the collation. Never, said he, had he so well dined since his entry to the White House. He tried everything, and the gayety of his humor showed how well he appreciated that momentary diversion from the grave cares which weighed upon him at this time. He could not, however, escape the toast, which it was my duty to propose: "The health and the prosperity of the President of the Republic. May he quickly see the Union reëstablished under his administration; but not so soon, however, but that the Fifty-fifth may have an opportunity to contribute to it on some field of battle."

The President replied with a few words of thanks, which he closed as follows: "All that I can say is, that, if you fight as well as you treat your guests, vic-

tory is assured to us. And, since the Union may not be reëstablished before the Fifty-fifth has had its battle, I drink to the battle of the Fifty-fifth, and I wish it may be fought as soon as possible."

On his departure from the dining-hall, he was received with enthusiastic cries by the soldiers, who crowded around his carriage and formed in line on both sides, to salute successively the guests as they passed.

The visit of President Lincoln was the first notable incident in the remembrance of the regiment. The two flags which recall the day had very different fates. One, the French tricolor, left Tenallytown only to return to New York, where it still occasionally appears to adorn the parades of the new Fifty-fifth, which has taken our place in the militia. The other, the national flag, received its baptism of fire at Williamsburg, and, riddled with balls and torn by canister, left its pieces at Fair Oaks and at Malvern Hill, until there remained no more than the staff and a shred of the fringe at Fredericksburg, where its glorious career ended.

But at Tenallytown we knew nothing of war except the roses, although around us many had already been pricked by the thorns. The placing of camps in all directions around Washington could not be done except at the expense of the property which the government of necessity occupied. Forts were constructed, troops were encamped, woods were cut down, and the earth upturned. The soldiers, with little discipline in the greater part of the regiments, committed depredations difficult to prevent, especially in the orchards and vegetable gardens. Agricultural work was suspended. Of what use to work the ground or sow the seed where the harvest could not be gathered? And, besides, the negroes employed heretofore in the fields were want-

ing. They left their masters everywhere, encouraged and aided by the Northern troops, who were filled with hatred of slavery, and who almost believed themselves in an enemy's country, because they found themselves in a country with slavery. Land-owners, thus deprived of their income, were already on the road to ruin.

The land occupied by the Fifty-fifth formed part of a large property belonging to Mr. L——, whose house was separated from the camp only by a field, set aside for drill. It was a fine house, surrounded by trees and turf, with a broad avenue leading to the highway, with gardens, and all buildings necessary for farm work, — everything which tends to the enjoyment of a fortune in a country life. Mr. L—— was one of the best men whom I ever knew, joining simplicity of heart with the fine manners of a gentleman, judging things without passion or prejudice, faithfully attached to the Union, and prepared for sacrifices by the sincerity of his religious sentiments. Before the war he lived happily, surrounded by a charming family, for whom the future appeared to have smiles only, without frowns. One year had changed the whole aspect. One of his two sons had gone to California, the other had joined the rebel army. Madame L—— and her two young daughters alone remained at Grassland, to sustain and console the aged man in his terrible trials.

Besides Grassland, Mr. L—— owned another estate a few miles out, on the Rockville road. That had been plundered by passing troops, who found it abandoned. There remained only a dismantled mill, a deserted house, and some uncultivated ground, of which the fences served to feed the picket fires. And yet the hospitable habits of the family survived the shipwreck of its fortunes. Those of my officers whom I introduced were received with an unfeigned politeness, and often I

sat at the family dinner, which was offered me with the same cordiality which presided there in better days.

During that winter the good-nature of the soldiers, as much as their obedience to discipline, assured complete security to Mrs. L——'s gardens and domestic fowls. But after our departure the state of affairs was much changed, and when the fortunes of war brought me again into that neighborhood, during the first invasion of Maryland, I found this family, formerly so well situated, compelled by daily necessities to make their livelihood by boarding officers stationed in the vicinity.

Such was the effect of the war in the immediate neighborhood of the capital. What would it be when we entered the enemy's country?

CHAPTER VII.

MEN AND THINGS AT WASHINGTON.

Congress — The population of Washington — The lobby and the spectators — The contractors for the army — The faint-hearted — The general-in-chief — General Seth Williams — The Count de Paris — The Duke de Chartres — The diplomatic corps. — Its partiality for the South — Why? — Receptions at the White House — Mr. Stanton — Mr. Seward — President Lincoln.

So the days passed on, one like another, in camp life. In order to vary the uniformity, we had occasionally permission to pass twelve or twenty-four hours in Washington. It afforded one an opportunity to keep informed on those matters which the papers did not publish, and to study the curious spectacle presented by the capital at that time.

Congress had commenced its session in the beginning of December. It entered with unanimity on an energetic course, freed from factious opposition by the absence of Southern representatives, and by the assistance of the Northern Democrats, who had united with the Republicans, to pursue the war with vigor. There were a very few discordant voices, who, under the cloak of a false patriotism, made vain attacks against the national cause, and hypocritical excuses in favor of secession. — *Rari nantes* — an occasional remnant of the shipwrecked party in the vast current of public opinion.

Outside of the Confederate States, the country was a unit for repressing the rebellion, at any cost, if we except Maryland, where the opposition became the subject

of ridicule, by being reduced to the puerile affectations of the women of Baltimore; the little State of Delaware, whose insignificance made it hardly worth while to take it into account; and Kentucky, whose pro-slavery interests were not sufficient to wrench it from the federal power. Nevertheless, there were not wanting at Washington birds of evil augury, affirming the uselessness of the war, foreseeing only disasters, and predicting the ruin of the Union, by the certain establishment of the Southern Confederacy.

It must be remembered that Washington was a Southern city. Since the very beginning of the Republic the Southern men had carried things there with a high hand. They had there carefully preserved their sacred institution. They had diligently maintained their ideas and principles, by means of the preponderating influence which they exercised in the different branches of the government. Thus they were there *at home* where the Northern men felt that they were strangers, in that common capital, which the representatives of the free States could not reach without passing over pro-slavery territory, and where all domestic service was rendered by slaves.

This state of affairs had left deep traces in the population, which remained faithful to the worship of the past, without, however, disdaining to make all possible profit from the present condition. Never, indeed, had there been seen such a concourse of people at Washington. The concentration of more than a hundred and fifty thousand men around the city developed there an industrial and commercial activity without a precedent. It was like a population quadrupled in a few months, three-quarters of whom consumed without producing anything.

But, besides the army formed to act against the

enemy, there was another army — of lobbyists, contractors, speculators, which was continually renewed and never exhausted. These hurried to the assault on the treasury, like a cloud of locusts alighting down upon the capital to devour the substance of the country. They were everywhere; in the streets, in the hotels, in the offices, at the Capitol, and in the White House. They continually besieged the bureaus of administration, the doors of the Senate and House of Representatives, wherever there was a chance to gain something.

Government, obliged to ask the aid of private industry, for every kind of supply that the army and navy must have without delay, was really at the mercy of these hungry spoilers, who combined with one another to make the law for the government. From this arose contracts exceedingly burdensome, which impoverished the treasury, to enrich a few individuals.

As a matter of course, these latter classes, strangers to every patriotic impulse, saw in the war only an extraordinary opportunity of making a fortune. Every means for obtaining it was a good one to them; so that corruption played a great part in the business of contracting. Political protection was purchased by giving an interest in the contracts obtained. Now, as these contracts must be increased or renewed, according to the duration of the war, its prolongation became a direct advantage to a certain class of people disposing of large capital and of extended influence. What was the effect on events? It would be difficult to state precisely. But, in any case, this was evidently one of the causes which embarrassed the course of affairs, and delayed, more or less, the reëstablishment of the Union.

The government — that is, the people, who, in the end, support the weight of public expenses — was, then,

fleeced by the more moderate and robbed by the more covetous. The army suffered from it directly, as the supplies, which were furnished at a price which was much above their value if they had been of a good quality, were nearly all of a fraudulent inferiority. For example, instead of heavy woollen blankets, the recruits received, at this time, light, open fabrics, made I do not know of what different substances, which protected them against neither the cold nor the rain. A very short wear changed a large part of the uniform to rags, and during the winter spent at Tenallytown the ordinary duration of a pair of shoes was not longer than twenty or thirty days.

This last fact, well attested in my regiment, was followed by energetic remonstrances, on account of which the general commanding the brigade appointed, according to the regulations, a special *Board of Inspection*, with the object of obtaining the condemnation of the defective articles. Amongst the members of the board was an officer expert in these matters, having been employed, before the war, in one of the great shoe factories of Massachusetts. The report was very precise. It showed that the shoes were made of poor leather, not having been properly tanned, that the inside of the soles was filled with gray paper, and that the heels were so poorly fastened that it needed only a little dry weather following a few days of rain to have them drop from the shoes. In fine, the fraud was flagrant in every way.

The report was duly forwarded to the superior authorities. Did it have any consideration? I never knew. However, it was necessary to exhaust the stock in hand before obtaining a new supply, and the price charged the soldier was not altered.

Let us return to Washington.

The general impression was not favorable to the success of the government in the war. No one had foreseen its formidable proportions, so that, as the real situation became manifest, many were frightened at the magnitude of the sacrifices demanded, and the uncertainty of the results. In calculating what great efforts must be made, what expenses incurred, what sacrifices endured, to reëstablish the Federal Union, timid spirits asked if it would not be wise to accept accomplished facts and be satisfied with a Republic of twenty free States, infinitely more powerful and more prosperous than had ever been the thirteen States which originally founded the great American nation. Thus they concurred in the opinion of certain Northern merchants, whose Southern trade was injured, and of certain politicians disappointed in their devotion to the cause of slavery. All would have blindly sacrificed their country to their cowardice, their interest, or their ambition.

But the government and the people were capable of judging affairs more soundly. They comprehended that the strife entered upon was a question of life or death. The only chance of safety rested upon the maintaining of the great principle of cohesion, the fundamental base and guaranty of the union of the States in one people. To concede the right of secession was to loosen forever the link, and deliver the country up to an endless division, from which could come only common ruin, with interminable conflicts, of which the history of the Spanish republics of the new world had given so many examples and shown the consequences.

If, taking things at their worst, the Confederacy of the South succeeded in establishing its independence after a long and desperate war, the principle

would remain safe and strong. Force only could break up the Union, which is the fact in regard to all principles of government confronted by revolutions. No new secession could quote the rebellion as a precedent, and no attempt would be made a second time with the expectation of succeeding except by force subject to be repressed by arms. Now, that is a trial to be made only at the last extremity, and which will be much less liable to be attempted when it is seen through what dangers and sacrifices it leads. Every idea of compromise then was illusory, and yet it appears that there were, at that time, minds so little clairvoyant as to believe it possible. In a secret assemblage, which met at Baltimore, in June, a few Democrats of the North and of the South discussed seriously the problem of the re-establishment of the Union to the advantage of slavery, and for the exclusion of New England! It was reported that, to prepare the way, every influence of this singular assemblage was used to assure to General McClellan the command-in-chief of the army, to which he was, in fact, promoted a month later. In this respect, the rumors appear to have arisen from the political conduct of the general at different times, and especially during the presidential campaign of 1864, when he was the unhappy candidate of the deplorable party of peace and compromise.

However that may be, during the winter of 1861-62, General McClellan was the one on whom the great hopes for the success of the war rested. His popularity, though based rather upon anticipations as to what he was going to do, than upon any substantial reason, made him, nevertheless, the greatest power of the time. By singing his praises daily, the press had made him a sort of savior for the people and an irresistible conqueror for the army. Up to that time, however, the

part of the idol had consisted simply in letting himself be adored.

General McClellan resided in Washington, in an elegant house, where he held his court. There he received the homage which always bows before power, there he welcomed the officers who flocked around him to ask from favor what their merit did not deserve. To the remainder of the army he showed himself only during grand reviews. *Never* did he visit our camps. *Never*, in my knowledge, did he seek to find out for himself what was the state of discipline, of instruction, or the condition of the troops which he was to lead against the enemy. In that respect, the official reports were sufficient for him.

On the other hand, when any military business took us to headquarters, we never failed to find there an officer who, perhaps, did more than any other for the organization of the Army of the Potomac. I mean Seth Williams, major in the regular army and assistant adjutant-general, — duties which he performed as brigadier-general of volunteers until the end of the war, so valuable were his services to the different generals who succeeded in the command. Seth Williams was a man, simple, modest, and devoted to his duty! An indefatigable worker, nothing seemed to him unworthy of his attention. He applied himself equally to general affairs and to the minute details, — multiplying thus his labors, to obviate the defects of intermediate machinery in the vast organization of the army, where it was as necessary to create as it was to bring matters into proper order.

The Count de Paris and the Duke de Chartres were, as I have said, attached to the staff of General McClellan. They, with the Duke de Joinville, occupied a house where the French were always welcome.

The position occupied by the Count de Paris imposes upon me a reserve, which every one will understand.

I can at least, without a political bearing, render justice here to the amiability of his manners, to the wisdom and moderation of his views, as well as to the general correctness of his ideas. As to their particular application to France, either as regards government or politics, that is a subject upon which I have never had any conversation with the prince. Whether in free intercourse at his table, where I have sometimes had an opportunity to partake of his hospitality, or in conversation in my tent, where he has done me the honor to visit me, he has seemed to me to avoid with care anything which could appear like the rôle of a pretender. But he spoke freely and sensibly on general subjects, and judged correctly the situation in America.

As to the Duke de Chartres, he fully enjoyed the privilege of not being the heir presumptive to any crown. His active, gay, and lively nature just suited the uniform of Captain Robert d'Orléans. His address was frank, his conversation easy. He enjoyed a well told anecdote, and a trooper's joke was not displeasing to him. War seemed to be his element, so jovial did he appear. Whatever happens, his dignity will not prevent him from taking his part.

The last of the Stuarts died at Rome, wretched in a cardinal's robe. The Orléans family will never end in that manner, if the last of the race resemble in the least the Duke de Chartres.

One day in January, the prince, who never missed an occasion to mount his horse, was sent to make the round of our picket line along the Potomac, as far as Great Falls. He stopped a moment at our camp,

which was on his road. I had my horse saddled to accompany him, and we started.

From Tenallytown to Great Falls is about twelve miles, and the road was far from being good, or the weather agreeable. In order to visit the posts, we had to climb hills, to descend steep slopes, to pass through thickets, to wade through mud. Captain d'Orléans appeared scarcely to notice it. He did his duty conscientiously, without allowing himself to be turned aside by the difficulties.

We reached, after a time, a point where we must cross the canal; the ferry-boat was on the other side, and the ferry-man some distance off. While we were waiting for him we dismounted, holding our horses by the bridle.

Life brings us to some singular encounters. I have witnessed too many to be much astonished at them, but a strong impression remains with me of that ride in the woods of the new world, with the grandson of the last king of France, wearing the uniform of the Republic.

At sunset, we separated at the forks of a road which would take me back to camp. The prince scrupulously continued his rounds to Great Falls, where he did not arrive until after nightfall, — which did not prevent his returning that night to headquarters.

Amongst the visits which I made from time to time to Washington, I could not forget those which made me directly acquainted with the opinions of the diplomatic corps upon the great American crisis. I must say that upon this subject the representatives of the European powers showed a remarkable lack of perspicacity in their judgments. In their opinion, the Union was doomed. It could never be reëstablished, and it was infinitely better, by accepting the separation, to avoid

a disastrous war, whose sole result would be to ruin the country, without any imaginable compensation.

What struck me the most in these conversations was less the errors of judgment than the flagrant partiality of the argument.

Certainly, the foreign ministers residing at Washington had every means of being well informed. And yet they saw things entirely different from what they were. The obstacles, the abuses, the embarrassments which I have noted, took in their eyes such proportions that they appeared to have looked upon them through the magnifying glass of a moral microscope, while the enthusiastic resolution of the people, its prompt readiness to make all necessary sacrifices, the immense material resources of the country, the power of a great national idea, the inspiration of a cause ennobled by civilization and liberty, all these escaped their eyes, or were without sensible weight in the balance of their judgments.

On the contrary, if they considered the case of the Confederates, they reasoned quite otherwise. They saw everything to their advantage. Their relative poverty became inexhaustible riches. Their inferiority as to population would be more than compensated by the conscription, and, if necessary, by a levy *en masse*. Their crop of cotton alone was worth armies. All the good generals fought in their ranks; all the great statesmen were on their side. The thinly settled territory was inaccessible to our columns, and, if we beat them on the frontier, they would be unconquerable in the heart of the Confederacy. Finally, tired of war, it would be necessary for us to yield, only too happy if the will of the conqueror was not imposed upon us in Washington itself.

The ministers of Prussia and Italy were the only

ones, in my knowledge, who did not look on affairs in this manner, and who were fully convinced of the final and complete triumph of our arms.

The blindness of the diplomatic corps came in part from the former relations of the most of its members with the Southern men. Before the war, they associated preferably with those Americans who, in their manners, their education, and their habits, were closer to the elegant usages of European society. In this respect, the superiority was on the side of the South. Their representatives at Washington, whether in the government, in Congress, or in society, belonged generally to the class of rich planters, in which the aristocratic traditions were preserved, not less in their manner of living than in their principles. Many had visited Europe. They could talk of it from their personal observations, sometimes as well in French as in English. Some kept house in the capital, where their receptions and their parties were very elegant. On account of this intimate intercourse with the diplomatic corps, they, at the table, in the intervals of their games of whist, explained the enigmas of home politics from their point of view, and demonstrated the infallible success of their plan of secession.

The Northern men had not the same advantages. In the first place, their ideas were much less in accord with the European ideas, and their manners were not, in general, those of a refined society; even amongst those who occupied high stations in political life, there were many *self-made men*, whose early education had been much neglected and whose habits showed the humbleness of their origin. The latter kept aloof from the embassies, where their rare appearance on reception days was known by their dirty boots, their neglect of dress, and their plebeian appetite

at the supper table, — things which are important, in diplomacy.

Without doubt, the North also sent to Washington men with polite manners, distinguished gentlemen, and even learned men. But they were in the minority. Besides, their democratic republicanism could not be expected to inspire confidence or sympathy in the representatives of an order of things diametrically opposite.

The cause of this difference between the South and the North at the seat of government was that at the South a political career was considered as the natural vocation of, and belonging to men of the highest standing. At the North, on the contrary, it was generally abandoned to men of a secondary position, as men of the highest culture had withdrawn from the race to escape the obligation of courting the multitude and of lending themselves to electoral transactions repugnant to their conscience or their dignity.

Thus it was easy to explain the partiality of the foreign embassies for the cause of the South, by their liking for the Southern men. But also it is not difficult to perceive in this preference a reflection of the distrust inspired in the European monarchies by the Grand Republic.

For centuries, the people of the old world have been taught to believe that a republican government was impossible on a large scale, and that only small communities, like the Swiss, could be governed in that manner. Against that theory was the fact of the United States of America, whose very existence led to quite opposite conclusions. Arguments availed nothing, for there is not in politics, as in religion, a divine revelation to invoke, in order to substitute faith for reason and to make absurdity itself evidence, "quia absurdum."

General Bonaparte said: "The French Republic is like the sun: it is only the blind who do not see it." It is the same to-day with the American Republic. The people are not so blind as not to see it.

When America was still very young, Joseph de Maistre, the great apostle of the throne and the altar, found nothing to say against her but that fact: "They cite to us America. I know nothing more provoking than the praises given to that infant in swaddling clothes. Wait until it has grown." Since then the infant has grown exceedingly. She has become a giant. Her birth contradicted even then the theory of impossibility. Her grandeur, her prosperity, her power have completed the refutation.

Not that I would conclude from this that the republican form of government would be, at present, the best for all people. On the contrary, I do not think so. All governments are good which conform to the temperaments of the governed, to their advance in civilization, and to the particular conditions in which they are placed. All governments are bad which do not respond to the demands of public sentiment, to the needs of the general welfare, and to that long education of the people by which the development of progress is regulated. The best form of government may become the worst in certain times and certain countries where it may be applied. Nothing is absolute in this world.

Unhappily, rational philosophy does not regulate the intercourse of governments with each other. Their intercourse depends upon the natural or dynastic interests, and the diplomats are sent out to reconnoitre and prepare the way. Now, for the monarchies of Europe there was a moral interest in the shipwreck of the great republican experiment. For some of them there was a

natural interest in the dismemberment of the Union. Their representatives at Washington so understood it, and allowed their judgment to be too easily influenced by their desires.

In searching through the archives of foreign affairs at Paris, in the diplomatic reports and correspondence from Washington during the war, there would be found a curious chapter of erroneous judgments and false predictions. Who knows if there would not be found the real cause of certain enterprises which would not have been entered upon, of certain complications arising in the political world, which would not have occurred if the government had been more correctly informed upon the true state of affairs in America?

In the midst of these busy agitations, disinterested visitors also flocked to the capital, to look upon the unaccustomed sights offered to their curiosity. A trip to Washington was a pleasure excursion, very much in fashion, especially for the New York ladies, coming to see and to be seen. The hotels were full of brilliant company. There they danced, there they amused themselves without a thought of the enemy, who yet was but a few miles distant. Uniforms were very abundant at these parties, where trips to the various camps were arranged, and sometimes horseback rides to the advanced posts.

Never did a more elegant multitude crowd to the receptions at the White House. Every one knows that on these occasions the democratic usage opens the doors to whosoever wishes to enter. A cruel trial for the President, forced, for an entire evening, to a painful hand-shaking with a multitude, not one of whom is sympathetic.

Mr. Lincoln, instantly recognized from his tall and spare form, stood near the entrance door of the first

parlor, his two secretaries by his side, who gave him the names of the callers, which he repeated as well as possible in the inevitable form of salutation, when he thought he had heard correctly. In vain would one, on these occasions, look on his bony face for a trace of the humor so well known by numerous anecdotes and sayings. One saw there only the strain of absorbing thought, struggling with a vulgar ceremony. Inwardly a prey to the heaviest cares, bending under the burden of a formidable responsibility, he must smile on all as if he had really been "charmed to see you."

The task imposed on Mrs. Lincoln was much easier. Always dressed with elegance, a thing she enjoyed, surrounded by feminine attentions, she escaped the crowding of the multitude, sheltered by the trains of the dresses of her *entourage*. The presence of a certain number of generals in uniform was, besides, a diversion in her favor, as the callers wished to lose nothing that there was to be seen.

The members of the Cabinet did not appear very often at these receptions. They had more important duties. Occasionally, however, the broad shoulders and massive head of Mr. Stanton, who had just taken the place of Mr. Cameron, in the Department of War, was seen there, or the tall, venerably insignificant form of Mr. Welles, the Secretary of the Navy, of whom so much ill has been spoken, — much more, I think, than he deserves.

Mr. Stanton was a prodigious worker, devoted above all things to the Union, which he had served already with all his power, as attorney-general, in the Cabinet of the preceding administration. Determined to have it triumph at the price of every sacrifice, he displayed, in his new position, a vigorous capacity, which marked him as the American Carnot. As he would not be the

docile instrument of any party or coterie, he was often made the target of very severe attacks. Perhaps a few instances of personal favor badly bestowed might be found. But the attacks of his enemies — who were not generally the friends of the government — could not shake him in his position, where, on the contrary, he became very strong by his important services. He was able, therefore, to fulfil his task, even to the end, and, by his energetic work, his enlightened devotion, be reckoned amongst the men who contributed most efficaciously to save the Republic from the greatest dangers it could incur.

Mr. Seward was the one amongst the Cabinet ministers who appeared to bear the weight of affairs with the greatest ease. His part was not, however, the less arduous. The management of foreign relations, amid complications so delicate and continually arising, demanded from him a combination of the high qualities which constitute the statesman. He had to contend with difficulties of different kinds. On one side, he must take care not to irritate the pride of a democracy quick to take offence. On the other hand, he had to conciliate minds of doubtful friendship, if not to conjure away hostile dispositions, which, if they became enemies, could throw themselves with a decisive weight into the balance of the war. The Confederacy was working with all its might to bring about this result. It had agents abroad, very active, very cunning, and not at all scrupulous, who applied themselves without rest to influence opinion in favor of the South, — in official circles by continual personal efforts, in the public through the journals, which they furnished with false information and erroneous conclusions.

Mr. Seward could not always meet this danger with equal arms. At Paris, for example, while the Confed-

erates' agents showed themselves everywhere, put themselves in connection with influential men, worked the press, and operated on the Bourse, — the United States legation, where French was not spoken, was confined to its official functions, and had no influence, outside of that, which could counterbalance the manœuvres of its adversaries.

In spite of all, Mr. Seward, with his pliant and energetic nature, the clearness of his mind, the surety of his judgment, his long experience in public affairs, all moderated by the effect which the exercise of public opinion always has upon the ardor of party chiefs, was successful against all dangers from abroad, and baffled the intrigues of the Confederates. In the midst of these labors and responsibilities, Mr. Seward, on all occasions, preserved his amiable manners and his sparkling humor. There was in him a moral and spiritual vigor equal to every trial.

In 1865, while the Army of the Potomac, returning triumphant from its last campaign, awaited its disbanding around Washington, I was passing one day near the President's house, when my attention was drawn to a pedestrian, who crossed the road a few steps from me. A broad Panama hat covered a head confined in a surgical contrivance, two flexible stems of which, passing around his face, supported his jaw, and terminated in his mouth. As I walked more slowly, to look at him, he turned towards me and saluted me with his hand. I recognized Mr. Seward.

It was the first time I had seen him since a Southern assassin had pierced him with the poniard on that fatal night when President Lincoln fell, struck by another desperado of the same cause. Such as I had known Mr. Seward before, such I found him still, under that sinister envelopment of his head, from which it

was some time before he was relieved. His elastic vitality was proof against both work and wounds.

It was otherwise with the President, who, in the dark hours of his first year of trial, sometimes bent under the burden. In January, 1862, I had the honor to dine at the White House, where twenty guests were assembled. The conversation was varied by the observations of men who had had different careers, and who had passed through different vicissitudes. Mr. Lincoln took no part in it. Neither the lively sallies of Mr. N. P. Willis nor the inciting remarks of some of the ladies could distract him from his interior reflections, or lighten the moral and physical fatigue to which he visibly yielded.

It was at the time when public opinion, tired of the long inaction of the Army of the Potomac, began loudly to demand some revenge for the check of Ball's Bluff, and that measures be taken to reëstablish the navigation of the river, impudently interrupted by the batteries of the enemy. With this object, a direct pressure was made upon the President, whose anxiety was increased by the illness of General McClellan, with whom he could not come to an understanding in this respect. It was necessary for him to consult those generals in whom he had the most confidence, and debate with them the military questions, of which he was not a competent judge, and which, notwithstanding, he was called on to decide, on account of his superior authority; a new source of terrible perplexity to add to the dreadful political responsibilities which overwhelmed him.

These occasional fits of despondency, however, had no influence upon the devotion of the President to his duty. He did not fail in the accomplishment of the great task which had devolved upon him. Animated

by the most sincere patriotism, enlightened by a certain political sagacity, guided in his views and in his ambitions by an irreproachable honesty, sustained by the people, of whom he was less the directing chief than the faithful servant, he followed the straight path, regulating his steps by the march of events, without seeking to hasten or delay the demands of the hour. He thus had a career more useful than brilliant during his life, but immortalized in his last hour by the consecration of success and the sanctification of martyrdom.

CHAPTER VIII.

COMMENCEMENT OF THE CAMPAIGN.

Opening of the campaign of 1862 — Disagreements at Washington — Adoption of McClellan's plan — Military excursion in Virginia — Organization of army corps — Embarking for Fortress Monroe — Fight of the Monitor and the Merrimac — Disembarking at Hampton — The surrounding country — Newport News — March upon Yorktown — The beseeching Virginians.

THE campaign of 1862 was first opened in the West, in the month of February, by the capture of Fort Henry and of the fortified camp of Donelson. The former surrendered on the 6th, to Commodore Foote, after a few hours' bombardment; the latter, on the 15th, to General Grant, after three days of fighting. This double success gave the victors sixteen thousand prisoners, fifty pieces of artillery, and quantities of small arms, munitions of war, and provisions of all kinds. But its most important result was to break the line of defence of the enemy on the borders of Kentucky and Tennessee, and to cut his communications from the East to the West, in capturing from him the only railroad which he could use for that purpose. Thus he was obliged immediately to evacuate Nashville and Columbus.

At the same time, General Burnside, landing in North Carolina, at the head of a large expedition, established himself firmly on Roanoke Island, after capturing some strong fortifications, a large number of cannon, and more than three thousand prisoners.

The Army of the Potomac received all this good

news in its winter quarters, where the hesitations of the general-in-chief and the irresolution of the President, relative to the final adoption of a plan of campaign, continued to hold it. The great question was, to know if the enemy should be attacked from the front, as Mr Lincoln evidently thought, or if their position should be turned, by means of Chesapeake Bay, to throw upon their rear all the forces which were not absolutely necessary for the security of Washington, as was proposed by General McClellan. The difference of opinion was so great that the secret was soon known through the army. Thus it was known that the President had given an order for a general movement of the forces, both on land and sea, on the 22d of February, with the peremptory order, "that the chiefs of Departments, and especially the Secretaries of War and of the Navy, with all their subordinates, and the general-in-chief as well as all the other commanders and subordinates, in command of both land and naval forces, will be held, each in his own sphere, to a strict accountability for the prompt execution of this order."

The idea of such an order was not happy, and its execution subject to so many plausible objections that General McClellan had no trouble in getting it revoked. The 22d of February passed by without any other demonstration than the salvos of artillery in commemoration of the birthday of Washington. But, rightfully or wrongfully, the impression remained that the President had been compelled to exercise his authority, to force the general-in-chief from his inaction.

So, also, the creation of army corps was strongly recommended, as a necessary measure in the organization of an army of a hundred and fifty thousand men. General McClellan was opposed to it. Without denying its advantages in a military point of view, he

wanted, it was said, to take the time to choose the generals the most capable of taking command, according to their merits. But, as his choice had not been made at the time of commencing active operations, the President took the affair in his own hands, and, by an order dated March 8, divided the Army of the Potomac into four corps, and himself appointed the commanders.

The same day, a council of war of twelve generals of division was called by the President to pronounce between the two plans of campaign under discussion. The commander-in-chief had also, on his own account, to explain his plans to his subordinates and submit them to their judgment. Nothing could have been better, if he had taken the initiative, for in such a case, in asking their advice, he would, nevertheless, have remained the judge in the last resort, and free, consequently, to act as he pleased. But here he was placed in the false position of pleading his cause before his inferiors. If they preferred other plans than his, it would have been necessary for him to resign his command, for it does not comport with the dignity of a general-in-chief to charge himself with the execution of a plan which he disapproves, when, above all, it has been dictated to him in that manner. I do not know if General McClellan looked upon it in this way; but, in any case, he was put to the trial. Eight generals were in favor of his plan of campaign, only four were in favor of a different one.

At this time, a singular coincidence gave rise to many comments. The decision to open the campaign in the rear of the enemy's line was taken in secret council on the 8th of March — on the 9th, the Confederates had disappeared from Manassas.

Where had they gone to? They had fallen back upon a safer position, in rear of the line of the Rappa-

hannock, thus baffling the strategic combination which General McClellan had announced the evening before for the first time.

Whatever was the cause of that sudden retreat, its effect was to produce an immediate general movement in the Army of the Potomac. The following night, Keyes' division received the order to move out on the Leesburg road, and on the morning of the 10th we were *en route* by the way of Chain Bridge, at last bidding adieu to our winter quarters.

One would have said we were going to a *fête*. Officers and soldiers, equally tired of camp life, wished nothing better than to march upon the enemy, and when they debouched from the bridge, upon the *sacred soil* of Virginia, as the Virginians proudly designated their fields, it was in the midst of hurrahs for General Peck, who at this moment rejoined the head of the column. General Keyes had his share, when he overtook us at the first halting-place, galloping and saluting like the bronze caricature of Jackson on the public square.

We stopped on the road, to let pass McCall's division, which had just left its camp. Nothing could be more dreary than these ruined huts, on a field dry and bare. If we were happy in leaving Tenallytown, how much more joyful must the regiments have been who had passed the winter in this desolate place.

At four o'clock in the afternoon, we reached a high hill, which, from the extensive view it commanded, was called Prospect Hill. The enemy had just evacuated the position where the division established its bivouac across the Leesburg road, the right resting on the Potomac, the artillery in the centre, and the left covered by a regiment of cavalry. The pickets being posted, and the fires lighted, every one supped gayly and slept soundly till morning.

Three whole days were spent there waiting orders, which did not reach us till the evening of the 13th, when we returned to the neighborhood of Chain Bridge, where we had to wait two more days, and, above all, two nights, hard to forget.

On the 14th it began to rain; as we had no tents, the men endeavored to construct shelter for themselves, of branches which they cut in the surrounding woods. But the rain passed through them, and so thoroughly soaked the ground that it was soon a vast field of mud. Not being able to lie on the ground, we had to pass the night standing, or seated upon logs around the fires, kept burning with difficulty.

As for myself, it happened that I was field officer of the day of the division, so that I had to visit the camps of three brigades, then the advanced posts and pickets. The night was so dark that one could not see six paces from him. The rain fell without cessation, and the country was absolutely unknown to me. The service being, as yet, very imperfectly organized, I received from headquarters, with my instructions, only approximate information as to the position of the troops. No orderly was, at that time, to be had; the night advanced; I must set out on my nightly round without a guide.

So long as I had only to look up the guard duty in the regiments, it was easy enough to find my direction by the fires, which blazed up everywhere; but when I had to leave the neighborhood of these bright firesides, to follow the uncertain picket line, the task became more and more difficult. The withdrawal of the enemy, the bad weather, and the negligence of several subaltern officers had caused great irregularity in the placing of the advance posts. In reality there was no line. Only disconnected pieces, disposed without any regard

to each other. Their fires were usually concealed by the unevenness of the ground, or by the thick woods. Twice I was completely lost in looking for them, having neither star, compass, nor roads to guide me in the darkness. In the woods I ran against trees, or invisible branches whipped me in the face and tore my clothes. In the fields, sometimes my horse sank in the mud to the fetlocks, sometimes he slipped on the wet stones, sometimes he stopped short before some obstacle that my eyes could scarcely see. At one time I thought I had found a road. It appeared to be a few feet in front of me; happily the instinct of the horse was superior to the judgment of the man. He refused obstinately to advance a step, throwing himself one side, and protesting, by groaning, against the injustice of the spur. I concluded that my horse must have some grave reason for conduct so different from his usual disciplined habits, and we took another direction, without further contest. The fact was that what I had taken for a road was but the slope of a sandbank, of twelve or fifteen feet. If the horse had yielded, we would have rolled together to the bottom of the ditch, where it is hard telling in what condition we would have been found in the morning.

At last, with great trouble, I finished my rounds, and returned to my regiment before daybreak, where my quartermaster had succeeded in getting a wedge-tent, under shelter of which I was able to draw up my report in writing. The report was that the service was dangerously insufficient in front of the enemy; that the camps were poorly guarded, or not guarded at all; that the pickets were placed without any regard to connecting; and that the posts were so separated, one from another, that they could be carried off by the enemy before any one knew of his approach. This was an

evil, to which it was necessary to apply a remedy. The trouble arose from a want of discipline amongst the volunteers, who thought strict obedience unnecessary if there was no actual danger. The remedy was experience, and service in front of the enemy.

The rain continued to fall all the following day. What made it worse was that from the hills, where we received the storm on our backs, we could see our camp at Tenallytown still standing.

"Since the enemy has left, and we do not follow," said the soldiers, "what good is it to remain here and be soaked, when we could so soon dry ourselves in our vacant tents?"

"Bah!" replied the old soldier of the Crimea and Algiers, "it is to season the conscripts. We will see many worse days than this."

As if to cut short this punishment of Tantalus, the quartermaster received an order to take down the coveted tents, which were to be stored in Washington. This was done in the afternoon, and we had nothing to excite our envy on that side, when, after a second night as bad as the first, we had an order to return to our camp.

An hour after we were there, to find only that everything which did not belong to government had been pillaged, in spite of a guard of twenty or thirty lame men, left behind. A band of second-hand dealers had knocked down everything, and had left none of our winter comforts. Notwithstanding all this, we were better there than in our bivouac, while waiting the order to leave finally, and to receive our rubber shelter-tents, which were at last distributed to us.

The waiting lasted eight long days, during which, conformably to the President's orders, the Army of the Potomac was organized in five army corps, as follows:—

First Corps — Major-General, I. McDowell; composed of Franklin's, McCall's, and King's divisions.

Second Corps — Brigadier-General, E. V. Sumner; composed of Richardson's, Blenker's, and Sedgwick's divisions.

Third Corps — Brigadier-General, P. Heintzelman; composed of Porter's, Hooker's, and Hamilton's divisions.

Fourth Corps — Brigadier-General, E. D. Keyes; composed of Couch's, Smith's, and Casey's divisions.

Fifth Corps — Major-General, N. P. Banks; composed of Williams' and Shield's divisions.

So that each corps was composed of three divisions, as each division of three brigades.

The cavalry regiments remained provisionally attached to their respective divisions.

Orders and counter-orders succeeded each other incessantly during that week. One day we were to go to Alexandria, to embark; the next day, the transports were coming to Georgetown to take us. Then the vessels were delayed; then they were out of coal. At last we sailed.

It was the 26th of March. The five regiments of the brigade embarked in the evening, on six steamboats, which descended the river together to Alexandria, where they stopped to wait for the two other brigades of Couch's division, and took in tow some schooners, loaded with horses, forage, and artillery.

Never had that small inland port seen such a sight. The river was crowded with vessels of every kind and size. The wharves were covered with troops, waiting their turn to embark as soon as the steamboats came alongside the docks to receive them. The little tugboats furrowed the waves in every direction, leaving in the air their long plumes of smoke. Night even did not sus-

pend the work. The embarking was continued by the light of fires kindled along the banks, in the midst of signals exchanged between the vessels. As soon as they were loaded, the steamers anchored in the stream, in the position assigned to the command of which they formed a part.

The sun of the 27th rose in a cloudless sky, and found the whole division embarked. At a signal from the Daniel Webster, on which was General Couch, the boats containing the first brigade moved out. Our orders were to proceed to Fortress Monroe, where the Fifth Corps had preceded us, moving as fast as we could, without regard to other vessels. It happened that the Croton of New York, on which I had embarked with eight of my companies, was the best sailer. She gained on the rest of the division so fast as to be out of sight before reaching that long arm of an inner sea, called the Chesapeake Bay.

The garrison of Fort Washington saluted our passage with hurrahs; Mount Vernon, the mansion of the father of his country, appeared to us an instant, amidst its dense shade; the rebel batteries, now abandoned, which had interrupted the navigation of the river, looked on us silently as we passed.

Then, little by little the river widened, the hills became lower, and night descended upon us.

At daylight we were at Fortress Monroe, and awaited at anchor the rest of the brigade, which soon rejoined us.

Fortress Monroe is a work of the first order, constructed in accordance with the best military rules. Situated at the point of a tongue of land forming one of the sides of Hampton Bay, it commanded the mouth of the James River, in the middle of which is a group of rocks, called the Ripraps. Since that time a new

fort has been built on them, under whose guns is the outer channel.

There, as at Alexandria, the river was covered with vessels. But one alone drew all eyes and absorbed all attention; this vessel resembled nothing that had, up to that time, ever been seen on the water. If one figures to himself a flat rape-seed at the level of the water, without bulwarks or rigging, recalling the little narrow boards, sharpened at the ends, that the children sail in the streams, and carrying in the centre a tower broader than it is high, then one can form an idea of what the Monitor was.

This little vessel, so inoffensive in appearance, was the most recent and the most terrible engine of war devised by Yankee ingenuity.

Twenty days before there had sailed out of Norfolk another formidable invention, with which the enemy thought himself certain to destroy both our vessels of war and our merchantmen. It was like an enormous tortoise, carrying under his bullet-proof shell immense cannon, and at his bow a long spur. This floating battery was the transformed hull of the frigate Merrimac, which had fallen into the hands of the Confederates at the taking of Norfolk.

On coming out into Hampton Roads, the Merrimac sailed directly for the United States frigate Cumberland, and, paying no attention to a broadside, which rebounded from her sides like a handful of dry peas, struck her twice midships, stove in her quarter, and the frigate sank. She returned then towards the frigate Congress, which, seeing herself powerless to avoid certain destruction, struck her flag, after having run aground near the shore, which did not save her. This was the work of the first day, interrupted by the night.

It appeared as though the fate of all the vessels around Fortress Monroe, and of many others, was certainly settled. The next morning, the Merrimac, which had withdrawn during the night, under cover of Sewell's Point, moved out to finish a third frigate, the Minnesota, which had run aground the evening before, near Newport News, when there appeared in the distance an object of a singular shape, whose character was betrayed only by a long trail of smoke, indicating a steamer. It passed in front of the fort without stopping, and steamed toward the Merrimac.

From all the vessels, and from all points of the river banks where an eye regarded them, her approach was anxiously watched. As she came nearer, the form of a flat vessel could be distingushed, and the cylindrical shape of a small tower, and the starry banner floating at the end of a short mast; but no human form appeared on the deck washed by the waves.

A strange enigma. The rebels said, laughing: "What is that great cheese-box set on a raft? Do the Yankees intend to supply us with cheese?"

But the little Monitor still came nearer.

All at once, from the side of that machine, which so excited the humor of the Confederates, burst forth a white cloud, accompanied by a flash of lightning; a clap of thunder shook the atmosphere, and a heavy mass of iron, weighing 168 pounds, bounded on the shell of the Merrimac. The tower did not so much resemble a cheese now.

The combat lasted three hours, during which the two adversaries bombarded each other *à outrance*, and nearly at a muzzle length. The armament of the Merrimac was composed of eight eight-inch guns and two Armstrong hundred-pounders in broadside.[1] But the

[1] Six nine-inch Dahlgren guns and two thirty-two-pounder Brooke rifles in broadside, and seven-inch Brooke rifles on pivots in bow and stern.

tower of the Monitor turned upon itself, and its two eleven-inch guns could fire in any direction. The invulnerability of the latter was greater than that of the Merrimac, inasmuch as the impact of twenty-two projectiles injured nothing except the little pilot-house. The Merrimac, more difficult to manœuvre, was more vulnerable on account of open port-holes in her armored sides. She retired from the contest so badly injured that a tugboat was necessary to assist her to return to Norfolk, whence she never ventured out to fight another battle.

When we arrived at Fortress Monroe, the little Monitor, at anchor, but always under steam, still watched, night and day, for a possible sortie of the Merrimac, — like a jaguar watching the sortie of a wounded bull.

In the morning, the brigade received orders to land at Hampton, where we arrived before noon. The same want of organization, of which we had already felt the effects in more than one instance, kept us there the whole day. There was no order at the disembarking; no superior authority directed the details of it. The approach to the landing was obstructed by ships pushing, without any order, into the narrow pass by which the wharf must be reached. The landing was accomplished very slowly, in the midst of the disorder, and the transports, when discharged, could with difficulty make their way out through the compact mass of vessels seeking to take their places.

Hour after hour, the Croton waited its turn and did not get any nearer, passed by the more enterprising or the more skilful. I sent my report on the difficulty which delayed me, and received simply the reply to do my best. "Profit by the first chance," an aid said to me. "Push on," said the quartermaster of the bri-

gade. I saw General Couch and General Peck going off on horseback, without appearing to trouble themselves about our landing. Upon which I decided to do my best, and, since it was "every one for himself," to force my way to the wharf by main strength. We succeeded, thanks to our powerful engines, and thus our disembarkment on the Peninsula was effected.

The first sight presented to our eyes was that of the ruins of Hampton. Hampton was, before the war, a charming little town, at the head of the bay bearing its name. It had its churches, its banks, its hotels, its villas, its shady gardens. Southern families flocked there during the summer, to take sea baths and enjoy gayly the other pleasures of the season. Of all that, nothing now remained, — nothing but masses of ruins lying on the ground, skirts of walls blackened by the fire, broken columns marking the façade of some public building, and a few straggling bushes of the devastated gardens surviving here and there. Forced to evacuate the place, the Confederates, under the inspiration of some barbarous boast, or obeying the drunken notion of some of their generals, had burned the village and ruined the whole population, thus dispersed and left shelterless.

The sun was setting on that scene of desolation when the regiment began to march. The country was flat, with no hills, and of a character entirely new to us. The vegetation was very vigorous, judging by the great forests, under which the road soon plunged. Above all, the immense pines, arising to a great height without branches, and then spreading out like parasols. There were no low branches to intercept the view of that vast dome of verdure supported by gigantic pillars, and shaken by the breeze with sonorous rustlings, and which the moon lighted up with silvery rays.

Sometimes the road passed along on an embankment and crossed over swamps with flowery borders, where the vines twined around the great trees and hung down in arches of verdure over the marshes, like a trap set by nature for man.

The march appeared short to us in the midst of these novel sights, until we reached our camping ground near Newport News. There we were to wait the two divisions of the Fourth Corps. The division of General Smith arrived about the same time that we did, that of General Casey joined us April 2.

In the interval, I took occasion to visit Newport News, where the brigade of General Mansfield occupied a well appointed camp on the banks of the James. The troops composing it were in good condition, and showed in their drill efficiency quite enough to enable them to meet the enemy. But they were not put in action until after the battle of Fair Oaks.

Up to that time, they had not fired a shot, except against the Merrimac. It was, in fact, directly in front of Newport News, and hardly a cable's length from the shore, that the Merrimac had attacked and sunk the Cumberland, whose mast and rigging still showed above the water. The brigade was in the best position to follow all the incidents of the combat. It had even the honor of participating in it. If its field-pieces were without effect upon the ironclad vessel, the bullets from its muskets could, at least, penetrate its port-holes. The shore was, consequently, covered with sharpshooters.

When the Congress ran aground within short range, and struck her flag, the two Confederate steamers Yorktown and Jamestown endeavored to take possession of her. But the sharpshooters covered the frigate with a fire so strong and well directed that it was impossi-

ble for them to do so. The Merrimac then set her on fire, and a part of the crew perished in her. It was, it appears, one of the sharpshooters of the Mansfield brigade who wounded Captain Buchanan of the Merrimac, at the moment when he was looking out of the port-hole.

General McClellan arrived April 2. He had under his hand, at that time, two army corps, the artillery belonging to them, and a few regiments of cavalry; that is to say, more than sixty thousand men for duty. It was more than sufficient to drive back the enemy. The forward movement began on the 4th, the Third Corps taking the right, toward Yorktown, the First the left, toward Warwick Court House.

The roads were narrow and muddy, and the two columns stretched along almost interminably, each regiment marching by the flank, one after another, with the artillery in the intervals of the brigades, the wagons and ambulances between the divisions, — the whole covered by a line of flankers.

This order of march, which, in any other region, would have been exceedingly dangerous, was the only one that the character of the country permitted. It is certain that, if the enemy could have, by any possibility, attacked in force any point whatever in that long line, it would have been thrown in disorder and part of it destroyed before any aid could have arrived. But the same natural obstacles which imposed on us the necessity of marching in that manner prevented the Confederates from moving in any other way. This explains why this method of moving, entirely wrong on general principles, could be used without any unfortunate results.

In our advance upon Yorktown, we marched very much at random. The country was little known; in-

formation as to the position and strength of the force we had in front of us was very unreliable. When the head of the column reached the point where the Big Bethel road branches off, it was thought possible that the enemy was still behind the intrenchments which he had there raised. Consequently, I was ordered to guard against an attack from that direction, with my regiment and four rifled guns, until the division and its train had passed safely by, which took all the afternoon, and compelled me to remain there till the next morning. However, the enemy had evacuated Big Bethel a long time before, when the skirmishers of Heintzelman had appeared. They were the only ones who could have approached us from that direction.

Nevertheless, we passed the night under arms, without having to contend with any other enemy than some troops of hogs, half wild and complete rebels, who furnished a welcome addition to the soldiers' supper.

In the morning, we rejoined the brigade a few miles from there. The small number of houses, poor or fine, which were on the line of our march, were all abandoned. Their occupants had left on our approach.

I remember, where the road enters a pine wood, near a deserted hut, we met four children crouched at the side of the road. The oldest was no more than twelve. A few rags scarcely covered their feeble bodies. Their hollow eyes, their pale faces, eloquently told of what they had already suffered. Their mother was dead, and their father had abandoned them. They wept, while asking for something to eat. The soldiers immediately gave them enough provisions to last them several days. Blankets were not wanting for the little ones. The weather was warm, and the sides of the road were lined with them. But what became of these

children ? One does not like to think about such things. This is the horrible side of war.

That day we passed by the Young mill, a good position and well fortified, and where the enemy might have given us much trouble if he had defended it. But he had left it on our approach, and we found there only some tents, where a few regiments had passed the winter. They served us as a shelter against a pouring rain, during the short halt we made there. It was, however, only a passing storm. It lasted but a short time, and the sun shone out only the warmer for it, when we arrived at the Young plantation.

This Young, who was then serving in the rebel army as quartermaster, was a sort of lord in that part of the country. The house was his ; the farm and mill were his ; the fields and the forests were his ; his were the cattle and the slaves. It seemed as though we could not get out of his domain. But we had no time to delay. A sharp cannonade told us that Smith's division had met the enemy it had been looking for. We hastened our advance until we were a half a mile from Warwick Court House, where we halted near some artillery, until the firing, becoming more and more distant, had informed us that General Smith continued his march in pursuit of the retreating Confederates.

Warwick Court House is, as its name indicates, the seat of justice of the county ; the county seat is uniformly located at some central point where several roads converge. Their occupation is therefore of a certain importance from a military point of view. The criminal and civil cases which are tried there during the sessions bring there firstly the interested parties, and along with them a goodly number of business men and men of leisure, which makes it the principal centre of reunion amongst these sparsely settled countries,

which are connected only by a few roads, bad at all times of the year, and nearly impassable in the winter.

Nevertheless, the "Court House" is seldom larger than a little village. Two or three houses of residents; a general country store, whose counter answers for a postoffice; a tavern, with two or three whitewashed rooms, serves for a stopping-place for as many travellers as the beds in common will hold; some huts and some kitchen gardens, perhaps a church. Such is generally the collection grouped around the brick building where Justice gives her decisions.

I had not the time to visit Warwick Court House. The regiment had scarcely stacked arms when continued firing was heard on the picket line, where two of my companies were detached. Some aids started on a gallop to find out the cause, and they soon returned with the report that a few armed marauders had, with a zeal indicative of a thorough lack of discipline, engaged in the chase of a boar, supposed to be wild, because he ran loose in the woods, as was the common custom everywhere on the Peninsula. It is needless to say that this was directly in violation of orders, which forbade the discharge of a gun anywhere unless aimed at the enemy.

All the colonels were ordered to send an officer to put a stop to the noise and arrest the delinquents. It was thought doubtful, and with good reason, whether the soldiers would obey any officers other than those of their respective regiments. Remembering the manner in which the service of advance posts had been neglected at Chain Bridge, I preferred to assure myself with my own eyes of the state of affairs in my two companies.

I had the satisfaction of finding everything in order in that part of the line. Not but that there might have

been some of the red kepis amongst the hog-hunters; but as the regiment was armed with rifled muskets of a French model, and the stacks of arms were strictly guarded, they had only their sabre-bayonets, so that they could attack the porcine genus only with their side-arms, inside of the picket line, to cross which was more dangerous to the hunters than to the hunted.

The detachment of the Fifty-fifth formed the left of the line resting on the marshes bordering the James. One company was deployed, the other in reserve near a large sawmill, which a few months before had employed numerous workmen. All were gone, led away, willingly or unwillingly, by the Confederate troops. But the women and children were left behind.

In front of the mill — noiseless, motionless, lifeless — appeared a dozen wretched huts, grouped together on a small rise of ground. Several women came quickly out, when I stopped my horse in front of the abandoned building, to see what use could be made of it in case of an attack. They had recognized in me a superior officer, and had hastened to meet me, some alone, others leading a child by the hand, and one with a baby in her arms. They soon surrounded me, asking me, with an air at once fearful and suppliant, to protect them against the marauders, from whom they had already received an insolent visit.

I looked through their poor dwellings, which consisted of a single room, answering at the same time for a kitchen and for a bedchamber. Only one of them had a partition and a certain air of cleanliness which attracted my attention. It was occupied by a Northern woman, blonde, still young, the same one who had met me with a baby in her arms. She told me that she and her husband were from Vermont. As he was a good mechanic he had received favorable propositions to

work in Virginia, and, eighteen months before, they had come there to live. Everything went well at first; but soon the imminence of war threw all in disorder throughout the South. The sawmill did little work; then the workmen were no longer paid. The Vermonter wished to return North with his family; nevertheless, the hope of receiving what was due him kept him from week to week. When, at last, he saw that he must lose his money, it was too late. His savings were exhausted, and the authorities were opposed to his departure. He was forced to remain at the moment when, after long privations and trouble of every kind, the approach of our troops promised to give them a chance to return home; the rebels had enrolled him in their ranks by force.

This tale, related with tears, had all the air of truth, and was confirmed, besides, by the evidence of the other forsaken ones.

All of these did not belong to the little colony. A part of them had come there to take refuge from their lonely houses, where they did not dare to remain on our approach. With minds terrified by the absurd tales designedly spread by the rebels against us, they had fled with their children, leaving everything they had, rather than fall into the hands of men who were depicted to them as bandits without faith or law, ready to commit violence, murder, or pillage. The women at the sawmill had shared their beds and their provisions with them, and they were all together, trembling, fearful, and not daring to believe they would receive the protection they implored.

One only, more resolute, did not give way to these exaggerated terrors. She was a Virginian. Misery had changed, but not destroyed, her beauty, the character of which was shown in her large black eyes, her

regular features, and in her abundant hair, to which the want of care gave naturally that negligent appearance which has since become a work of art on the heads of our ladies *à la mode*. Her spareness was draped with a certain air, in the folds of a dress of plain wool.

"I do not suppose," she said to me, "that you have come to make war on women and children. However, some of your men came here a few hours ago, when the cannon were firing on the other side of Warwick. They penetrated everywhere, and carried off whatever suited them. We have nothing left to keep soul and body together, except a few chickens, a little flour, and a little corn; to take that away from us is to condemn us and our children to die of hunger. Is that what you wish to do?"

"No," I said, "we wish simply to punish the guilty and protect the innocent."

"I do not know," replied she, "whom you call the guilty; my husband went away with *our* army."

The other women looked with some uneasiness upon the turn the conversation had taken. At the last words of the Virginian, one of them pulled her dress quietly, and whispered some words in her ear, which I did not hear, but the sense of which it was not difficult to guess.

"Why not!" replied the one speaking to me, looking firmly at me. "My husband has done *his* duty, as this one has done his own. If he is a gentleman, he will understand that."

She was silent, appearing to wait a reply.

"I am not here," I told her, "to enter into the question whether your husband did his duty, or was a traitor in abandoning you, — but to alleviate as much as I can the evils which those whom he has followed have brought upon your heads."

"Yes, yes," cried the others, with eagerness. "The colonel is right. He will protect us. — Will you not, sir, prevent your soldiers from taking the bread out of our mouths?"

"Certainly," I replied. "But you must understand that it is not the soldiers who are disposed to injure you. On the contrary, they will protect you against the rascals whose depredations are forbidden and punished in our army."

I rejoined the reserve company posted on the other side of the ravine and ordered the captain to send two men as guard to keep off marauders from those unhappy women, who were, at least, able to sleep peacefully the following night. The next morning the regiment departed to relieve the Second Rhode Island on the banks of the Warwick River.

CHAPTER IX.

APPRENTICESHIP OF THE WAR.

Siege of Yorktown — Attack on Lee's mill — The Harwood farm — Amongst the sharpshooters — The man hunt — Visit of the general-in-chief — Faults of administration — A black snake mayonnaise — Marching-out of the Confederate troops — The enemy abandons his positions — Evacuation of Yorktown.

THE Virginian peninsula, as is well known, is formed by the course, nearly parallel, of the James and York rivers, which both empty into the Chesapeake. Ten miles above the mouth of the York, upon the right hand, is situated the small fortified town of Yorktown, which owes its first celebrity to the capitulation of Lord Cornwallis, in 1781, after a siege in which Marquis Lafayette took a brilliant part. In the month of April, 1862, the Confederates had extended and completed the defences so as to command with their artillery the ground between the town and the small river called the Warwick. The latter rises about a mile and a half from Yorktown towards the south, emptying into the James, thus crossing the peninsula, whose breadth at that point is only ten or twelve miles. This was a natural obstacle, which the enemy had already improved by raising the water at the fords, by means of dams, and covering the more exposed positions by protected batteries. At the time of our arrival, Magruder's Corps, which opposed us, had, at the most, ten thousand men.

If a vigorous attack had been made at the time of our first approach, nothing could have prevented our forcing a passage at some point. Broken anywhere, the line could not have been held an instant, and York-

town, pressed on all sides, would have been ours in a few days. Unhappily, only a too long delayed, feeble, and isolated attack was made. Too long delayed, because it was not made till the 16th, eleven days after our arrival; isolated, because only a few companies of Vermont troops were used; unskilful, because the point chosen for assault was precisely the one most strongly fortified, the one which offered the most difficulties, and consequently the least chances of success. The result was that our force fought bravely, but uselessly, for more than an hour, in the rifle-pits captured from the enemy, and that it ended in being driven back to the river with considerable loss.

The companies sacrificed in that unfortunate affair belonged to the division of General W. F. Smith, who acted on direct orders from General McClellan. General Keyes disclaimed any responsibility for it, saying openly that he had not even been informed of it beforehand, although the troops engaged belonged to his corps.

From the very first, the majority of the generals had advised forcing the Warwick lines without delay. The commander-in-chief, engineer officer in all his instincts, preferred digging ditches, opening parallels, and placing batteries around Yorktown. The former asked simply to beat the enemy by the power of an irresistible superiority; the latter wished to reduce the place by the scientific method, so dear to special schools. Such being the fact, is it far out of the way to suspect that he ordered the attack of Lee's mill less with the resolution to make it successful than with the thought of demonstrating, by its want of success, the superiority of his other plans? *Quod erat demonstrandum.*

However that might have been, the siege was resolved upon; the army sat down accordingly, and Magru-

der was able to await without danger, and receive without hurry, the reënforcements he needed.

Peck's brigade was on the extreme left of the army, near the mouth of the river, opposite Mulberry Island, where the enemy had quite a strong garrison. The Warwick, before emptying into the James, describes at this point a sharp turn, around a point of land which, from its shape, made a salient angle in the enemy's defensive line. This position was assigned to the Fifty-fifth.

On our side, the bank was higher, which gave our sharpshooters some advantage. On the other hand, the enemy had two batteries, which commanded all the ground which we occupied, and whose fire would have troubled us very much if it had not been for large woods which hid our tents from the eyes of the Confederates. These woods extended along the water, and covered the point of the triangle, leaving some cultivated land at its base only, in the midst of which was the Harwood farm. An excellent position to accustom our men to fire. It was in our examination of this ground that we first heard the enemy's balls whistle, and on the establishment of our pickets that we first fired on the enemy.

At nightfall, the rations having been two days behind, I sent twenty-five men, under command of a lieutenant, to the farm buildings, with an order to bring away every suspicious person they found there, and also to report if they found anything which could answer the place of our missing rations and forage. They found the house completely abandoned, but abundantly provided with provisions. The farmer, it appeared, kept a country store. He had left there a large amount of excellent salt provisions, flour, cheese, sugar, etc. He had corn in his barns, cattle in his stables, fowls in his barn-

yard. The detachment returned loaded with the booty, which was distributed equally amongst the companies, and for several days the regiment, independent of the commissary, lived as in the land of *cocagne*, in the midst of abundance and table delicacies such as were never seen in camp before, and such as we never saw again.

Unfortunately, this godsend lasted but a very short time. The next morning the news was spread through the neighboring regiments, and in the afternoon a large number of visitors was attracted to the store. The first comers crept towards it stealthily; then, as the battery of Mulberry Island showed no signs of life, those coming afterward boldly crossed the field without any precaution, until the house was full from cellar to garret. That, it appeared, was what the enemy was waiting for.

All at once, the battery was crowned with smoke; the cannon thundered. A first shot made a hole in the roof, another went completely through the house, at the third shot the house was vacant. It was amusing to see how quickly this was accomplished. The intruders rushed out crowding together, some by the door, some out of the windows, bounding over the sills, leaping fences and ditches, — all hurrying towards the woods, with a celerity hastened by the shells, which happily made more noise than they did damage.

It was probably one of these disappointed foragers who, to revenge himself for the fright he had had, set fire to the building that same evening. At midnight there was left but a pile of smoking ruins.

During that time, along the bank of the river, the musket firing was kept up. Six companies were disposed in the woods, each one furnishing the pickets to cover its front. The four others, held in reserve, sent out during the night the number of men necessary to guard the open field and to make the rounds.

Between us and the enemy the river was only forty to fifty yards wide. As I have said, on our side the bank was abrupt and wooded, except on the road to a bridge, which was destroyed, and of which there remained only a few piles. On the enemy's side the land was flat and marshy to the foot of a little hill, which rose a short distance back, where we could see some earthworks behind an abatis of large trees.

During the night the fire ceased on both sides, and the skirmishers were relieved under cover of the darkness. Nothing could be seen, but conversation was carried on between the two lines, very rarely with anything abusive in it. It was for the most part an exchange of soldiers' banter. Bull Run and Ball's Bluff were the subject on the part of the rebels, to which our side replied, Laurel Hill, Donelson, Roanoke, Newburn.

To these federal victories there were soon added others of more importance, for during the month of April the Confederates were beaten at Shiloh, in Tennessee, after a bloody battle of two days, where their general, A. S. Johnston, was killed ; and New Orleans was surrendered to Admiral Farragut, after a naval battle in which he had forced the passage of the lower Mississippi, destroyed the enemy's flotilla, and compelled Forts Jackson and St. Philip to surrender.

When the news of these successes arrived at the camp before Yorktown, chance brought in front of the Fifty-fifth New York the Fifth Louisiana, which called itself "The Louisiana Tigers," so that Frenchmen were firing at each other from across the river, and each evening, at the same hour, the retreat that the Parisians heard upon the Place Vendome was heard on the banks of the Warwick, in the opposing lines. Of course the nightly colloquies were in French. The capture of New Orleans and of Baton Rouge, the capi-

tal of the State, put a damper on the spirits of the "Louisiana Tigers," and they thereafter replied to banter only by gunshots.

In the night the enemy crossed the swamps, to come and crouch near the water in the high grass behind some dead trees or some hillocks where they remained concealed during the day. With us, the men chose the best positions, sheltered by great roots, or behind stones, which permitted them to see without being seen.

When the day broke, everything was quiet and motionless on both banks, where nothing betrayed the presence of man. It was, however, the hour when the eyes, sharpened by the hunter's instinct, examined the smallest inequalities of the land, and carefully searched the grass and bushes for a mark.

On both sides the game was played with patience and a rare cunning, in the first place to find out the precise point where the adversary was concealed, and afterwards to put a ball through him. The most ingenious stratagems were resorted to in order to draw the fire of the opponent upon some false appearance, and, at the same time, compel the man firing to show himself. Two rapid discharges were heard; two puffs of white smoke appeared and disappeared in a moment; but nothing was visible, only perhaps a wounded man dragged himself into the bushes, calling for aid, or a dead body was growing cold in a pool of blood.

Of all known kinds of hunting, that of man by man is certainly the most exciting. It is superior to all others, in being a strife between intelligences of the same nature, with equal arms and equal dangers. Thus the powers both of mind and body are put in play, and are developed with an ardor curious to study.

One morning I went out to one of our advanced

rifle-pits to try and examine the nature of the works on which the enemy had been industriously laboring the whole preceding night. A few steps from there I saw a young soldier lying motionless, flat on the ground, a man of a mild and inoffensive nature. His disposition was in accordance with his physical appearance, and he would have been averse to killing even a sheep. But the man chase had transformed him. With his head covered with leaves, and at the level of the earth, he had crept out there with his eyes intently fixed upon a single point of the swamp, watching as a wild beast of prey watches for his concealed victim. His loaded gun was pushed out in front of him, looking like a stick lying on the stones, but really directed under his hand, upon the bunch of rushes which absorbed his attention.

He heard my step, and, without changing his position or turning his head, he simply made a motion with his hand, which said distinctly: "Do not come up behind me; you will give him the alarm." I left him in that position, where he remained, I think, two or three hours, never tiring of his watch, never discouraged at waiting. At last the bunch of rushes moved; a shot was fired from it; but the marksman had shown himself. Almost immediately he bounded backwards and fell writhing in the high grass, while the other one leaped lightly into the rifle-pit, crying out with an air of triumph, "I hit him!" "Bravo! well done!" said his comrades, somewhat jealous of so good a shot.

Whatever may be said, war responds to an instinct which nature has put into the heart of man. Instead of being a violation of an order of things divinely established, it is much rather the normal obedience to one of the mysterious laws which govern humanity, and preside fatally over the development of its destiny. Explain the fact as you will, the human race, ever

since it has existed, has never ceased to have its internecine combats, and has never ceased to multiply. The shedding of blood must be then a necessary condition of equilibrium in its propagation. And my good young man, who would not have given a fillip to a child, was, in killing his fellow-man *con amore*, only the humble but striking manifestation of what are called the "working ways of Providence."

This kind of drill in firing, whose usefulness I have heard discussed often, has incontestable advantages. Better than any other, it perfects the soldier in the use of arms of precision; it familiarizes him readily and without effort to danger, and finally it gives a tone to his character by the habitual application of his individual faculties to the common work: that is, to do the greatest possible amount of damage to the enemy, with the least sacrifice to ourselves. On this account I encouraged my men, although others did differently.

On the front of the neighboring brigade, they watched each other peacefully across the river. They lay around in the shade, or in the sunshine; going and coming in perfect security. Those who liked fishing threw their lines in the stream, and, instead of being man-hunters, became fishermen. On that part of the lines, the service of advanced posts was an eclogue in action.

On the other hand, along our part of the line, the artillery was soon put into play. The enemy brought into action some rifled guns, whose conical projectiles burst in the pines around my last company. To guard against these, a sentinel was posted specially to watch that battery. At every shot fired, as soon as he saw the smoke, he cried, *Look out!* and the men hid behind the trees until the shell burst. In that way the

enemy burnt a great deal of powder for nothing. However, they very nearly gave us a hard blow.

The general-in-chief having expressed his intention of examining for himself the position occupied by the Fifty-fifth, his visit was announced to me by a staff officer, and the companies were promptly put under arms. Soon, indeed, General McClellan came through the forest, accompanied by Generals Keyes and Peck, and followed by a numerous staff. They stopped first near the Zouaves, who were the farthest to the rear, and, tempted by the opportunity for observation offered by the open fields, they advanced a few steps out of the woods. The enemy, who was always on the lookout for our movements, saw that it was evidently a group of superior officers. He pointed his rifled guns with a great deal of care and fired. Two shells came one after another, whistling a well known air, and burst with a remarkable precision over our visitors, who re-entered the woods without going farther along the line, putting off the promised visit to another day, which never came.

I regretted this *contretemps*. I would not have been sorry to have had the general-in-chief see with his own eyes what we had to endure from the negligence or incapacity of the quartermasters. Not an officer in the Fifty-fifth had a tent. For my part, I slept on the ground, at the foot of a tree, under the doubtful shelter of a double rubber blanket stretched upon a stick, and fastened down at the four corners by stakes. Worse yet, all my baggage had been left at Newport News, and, though we were only twelve or fifteen miles from there, we waited for it in vain day after day. More than two weeks passed before it was sent to us.

Rations were distributed to the soldiers very irregularly. The means of transportation, they told us, were

wanting, and the roads were abominable. However, they had no great distance to go. The general depot was but a few miles back of our lines, on the navigable head of the Poquosin, where the transports could come without difficulty. As to the bad roads, that was provided for everywhere by corduroy.

The corduroy is a sort of rough floor, formed by small sticks resting on sleepers, and covered over with a light layer of leaves, mixed with earth. In a forest country, this is a quick and easy way to establish good means of communication for the artillery and wagons. Wherever we stopped during the war, we constructed stretches of this kind of road. They last a long time, require very little repair, and are of continual utility, especially in a rainy season.

In front of Yorktown, what we were most in want of was much less the material than proper administration. The quartermasters and commissaries wanted experience, instruction, and too often honesty. As to staff officers, properly so called, they were not equal to the performance of their duties. They were generally young men recommended to the generals, to whom they were attached more by their family connections and their position in life than by their ability. If they had been drawn from the regular army, the service would have been much the gainer, but the officers of the regular army who could be spared from their regiments were employed in the engineer service, or held higher commands among the volunteers.

On the 16th of April I sent a report to headquarters of the division, to recommend the placing of a battery on a point which commanded the course of the river, and which would be very useful to facilitate the crossing, or to repel an attack, in case the enemy should attempt an offensive movement against the left of our

line. General Couch came himself to examine the position. The plan was approved by the chief of artillery, and orders given in consonance. But the works proceeded so slowly, for want of proper supervision, that they were not yet finished when the Confederates evacuated Yorktown. One day the tools were wanting, and the men were sent back to their quarters; the next day it had been forgotten to detail the men, after the tools were sent. These shortcomings of the staff gave rise to frequent complaints; but it seemed as though no one knew how to remedy the evil.

The siege, however, took its course, and the cannonade became more and more continuous along the Third Corps front. In our front hostilities were limited to the exchange of shots between the picket lines. A few pieces of field artillery had been put in position behind the parapets; but with the injunction to use them only in case of an attack by the enemy, who profited by it to collect the provisions and forage stored in some farm buildings which we could have destroyed in a quarter of an hour.

At this time a great deal of consideration was shown for the Confederates, which was the more singular in that they showed very little for us. The smoke of our fires no sooner showed where our tents were pitched than immediately a few shells were thrown at the place, which compelled the men to withdraw one or two hundred yards back, in the midst of the woods, to cook their meals. But in our front, out of rifle shot, the officers of the enemy collected openly, in a small farmhouse, which answered them for an observatory. We saw them from morning to night, nonchalantly smoking their cigars on the piazza and attending to business without being disturbed. I could never get the use of a couple of cannon to knock down that country seat.

The latter half of April passed away without other incident than that of sending a few wounded men to the hospital. I had no other occupation than the daily routine of the service, and no other distraction than the visits, which were quite numerous on account of the position the regiment occupied. I thus had the opportunity to accompany General Sumner to our advanced posts. His corps brought our force up to more than a hundred thousand men.

A few of our visitors were glad to take the chances of a dinner with us, allured by the reputation of French cookery, which, in fact, increased our culinary resources, and provided for our guests some surprises entirely unlooked-for. I do not speak now of the immense bull-frogs, whose legs were as large as and more delicate than the leg of a chicken. We had something better, or at least more rare than that, as doubtless Count de V——, a French officer attached at the time to the staff of General Keyes, will remember.

One day he was served at our open-air table with an exquisite mayonnaise, — so he called it after tasting it. He partook a second time with pleasure. "But what is that mayonnaise made of? What is the secret?" He could not guess and was very much perplexed about it.

"Eat what you want first, and afterwards we will give you the recipe."

"And I will take it to France," added the captain, "that it may take its place above the Parmentier potato, and by the side of the wild turkey of Brillat-Savarin."

The meal finished, the secret was revealed. The mayonnaise was of the black snake, whose nutritious qualities my Zouaves had discovered. We had eaten of it without troubling ourselves, knowing what it was

made of. But see the power of imagination. The word "black snake" was a shot in the stomach of our guest. He had found the dish excellent; the name struck him with horror. White as his plate he rose, his smile had disappeared. — I regret to add, in conclusion, that he never appeared again at our table, and I have every reason to think that he did not make known in France the savory qualities of the black snake — in a mayonnaise.

During the last days of the month the enemy appeared to strip his works of men and guns. To feel of him, we sent him a dozen shots, to which he did not reply. During the night of the 29th, he withdrew his advanced posts in front of Smith's division. On the 30th he unmasked quite an important movement of troops on Mulberry Island.

In the afternoon, a column composed of three regiments of infantry, a regiment of cavalry, and a battery of artillery, commenced to march along the edge of the woods which border the James, and finished by crossing the flat open land in front of the Harwood farm, five or six hundred yards from a small work, where we had two pieces of artillery. The route they followed made a bend around a house, which was the nearest point to us. Twenty horsemen came there first, as if to reconnoitre our position, and, seeing we remained motionless, they dismounted and were soon joined by a group of officers, who installed themselves in the farmhouse, while the infantry continued defiling peacefully under our noses.

During this time I sent message after message to General Peck asking permission to open fire, of which the lieutenant commanding the artillery did not dare to take the responsibility, in view of the positive orders he had received to reply only to an attack. General Peck referred the matter to General Couch. Some aids

came by turns to see what was passing, and returned to make their report. Meanwhile, time was going on, and the enemy continued his march without being interrupted.

He could not have had any choice of roads, whatever was the object of his movement, or he would not have thus openly exposed his troops; for our two guns were enough to break up his column, without counting the artillery, which could have been sent in a few minutes to stop his advance entirely, and throw him back into the woods and swamps, from which he had emerged. But no. The only order I received was to double my pickets, at the very time when the enemy was withdrawing his.

The troops which we had so benevolently allowed to pass established themselves a little further off, in a large wood, where, when night came on, they troubled themselves no more about lighting their fires than if we had been at Tenallytown. Then only was it decided to give them a few shots, and then their fires were extinguished. During the night they embarked on some boats sent to receive them. In the morning they had disappeared.

Thus the enemy retired from Mulberry Island. This was an indication at least: but it did not appear that any importance was attached to this fact at headquarters. The next morning, the 1st of May, everything remained as before.

The 2d of May, in the morning, the regiment received its pay for the months of January and February, when a negro, having swum across the river, came to confirm to us the report of the evacuation by the enemy of all that portion of his line which was in front of us. I sent him immediately to General Peck, but heard nothing more from it.

I state this fact, which is not without some importance, to prove that upon the left of our lines we had been held motionless two days before abandoned positions and works evacuated by the enemy. If Couch's division and after him Smith's had been thrown across the Warwick, whose crossing by us was no longer disputed, we would most probably have succeeded in cutting off the retreat of the garrison of Yorktown, and in capturing a part of the force which still showed itself in front of the Third Corps.

Success would then have had a very different meaning, for a city captured is a victory, a city evacuated a deception.

I have never known if the information reached headquarters of the general-in-chief. It might not be impossible that during these two days the fugitive who brought it to us did not get any farther than the headquarters of the Fourth Corps. All I have ever learned about it is that, before the Congressional committee on the conduct of the war, General Keyes alluded to it in very vague terms. "The enemy," he said, "had for a day or two made preparations to retreat, *as I learned from a negro*, withdrawing his artillery from Griffen's Landing on the James, and, as I think, from other points on the Yorktown side." Not a word about the brigade which we had seen depart on April 30, nor of sending the negro to army headquarters.

On the 3d of May, in the evening, the enemy opened a violent fire on the right of our lines, which he continued without intermission the greater part of the night. This was to deceive us as to his movements, and he succeeded so well that our batteries were forbidden to reply for fear of spoiling a formidable bombardment, which was about to be opened on the 6th. Labor in vain. After so much work and so long preparations,

the rebels, whom we thought we held tight, slipped between our fingers. The morning of the 4th, they left Yorktown without hindrance, leaving behind them only some empty tents and seventy guns of large calibre, which they had not been able to carry away.

CHAPTER X.

THE FIRST BATTLE — WILLIAMSBURG.

Pursuit — The enemy attacked at Williamsburg — He attacks Hooker's division — Peck's brigade the first to receive it — The Fifty-fifth under fire — Critical moment — Attack repulsed — Reënforcements arrive — Engagement of General Hancock — General McClellan's report — Advice of General Couch — A walk on the field of battle — Burial of the dead — Visit to the wounded — The amputated — The prediction of a Georgia captain.

THE pursuit began at once. General Stoneman was sent with the cavalry to put to flight the enemy, whose rearguard he came up with in the afternoon before Williamsburg. But there he ran against a series of redoubts which barred the road, and he was compelled to halt and await the arrival of the infantry.

The latter had also been put in motion in the morning, the Third Corps by the Yorktown road, and the Fourth by the Warwick, the two roads coming together before reaching Williamsburg. At the point of juncture the enemy had thrown up a bastioned work called Fort Magruder.

Couch's division crossed the river at Lee's mill, where for the first time we comprehended with what deadly hatred towards us the Confederates were filled.

The road we followed was sown with murderous snares. There were cylindrical bombs, with percussion fuses carefully concealed, buried so as to leave the capsule level with the ground. The step of a man or horse upon it was sufficient to explode it, and it was always fatal. Sometimes the bomb was covered by a piece of board, inviting the tired soldier to sit down. Whoever

yielded to the temptation never rose again. A few bodies, torn and blackened with powder, showed us the result of that invention of the South. But as soon as we were on our guard it ceased to be destructive, and the greater part of the projectiles, dug up, went to increase our stock of artillery ammunition. We continued the march, almost without intermission, nearly all the afternoon, meeting nothing but abandoned camps. The few tents we found still standing were slashed with the sabre, so that they might be of no use to us. Tired, footsore, hungry, we reached our camping ground late, where the rain prevented us from having a night of rest.

In the morning, May 5, at seven o'clock, we renewed our march forward. The rain had not stopped during the night, and it continued to pour down all day. The heavens were hid by one of those thick curtains of gray clouds, behind which it seemed as if the sun were forever extinguished. The roads were horrible, if we could call roads the great mud-holes where the teams struggled, and the cannon and caissons, buried up to the axles, were with difficulty drawn out of one deep rut, only to fall immediately into another.

However, the cannon were heard firing uninterruptedly at Williamsburg, indicating a serious engagement. The advance had evidently met with a vigorous resistance. They might need reënforcements, we must hurry forward. And we pushed on the best we could, through an ocean of mud, amongst the mired teams, in the midst of an inevitable disorder, which left behind many stragglers. As each one took his way by the road the least impracticable, it ended by the regiments, the brigades, and even the divisions becoming mingled in inevitable confusion. Whenever I reached a favorable place, I made a short halt of a few minutes, to

rally my scattered companies and give the laggards time to rejoin us. Then we again started on, following the route of the One Hundred and Second Pennsylvania, with which General Peck had taken the advance.

Behind us marched General Kearney, leading the head of his division, which came from Yorktown. His ardor had found means of passing all the troops which were ahead of him. He urged on our stragglers, and told me that Hooker's division, having marched during the night to join Stoneman, must have had the whole rearguard of the enemy on his hands.

Soon an aid of General Peck brought me the order to pass by Casey's division, which had halted, I do not know why, in a large open field, near a brick church. The sound of the cannonade did not diminish. At this point, Kearney's division turned to the left to come into line by a crossroad less encumbered.

A little further along, I met Captain Leavit-Hunt, aid of General Heintzelman, who had been ordered to hurry forward reënforcements. He informed me that the conjectures of Kearney, as to Hooker, were correct; that Hooker, strongly opposed by superior forces, had lost ground, after a desperate contest of more than four hours, during which no assistance had been sent to him.

The Prince de Joinville, in his turn, passed by me without stopping, urging me to hurry forward. He was mounted on an English horse and covered with mud from head to foot. He was hurrying to Yorktown to endeavor to bring up General McClellan, who, ignorant of what was passing at Williamsburg, had not yet started.

In the absence of the general-in-chief, General Sumner and General Keyes lost time in consulting as to what was to be done. The former was senior in rank, but the latter alone had any troops within reach, and,

between the two, no measure was taken, and Hooker lost not only his position but some of his guns.

When I led my troops out on the farm where that idle conference was going on, the Count de Paris and the Duke de Chartres, recognizing the uniform of the regiment, came on foot to meet me. I did not have time either to stop or to dismount; they did me the honor of accompanying me in this manner for several minutes across the furrows, to explain to me the position of affairs, and to wish me success.

"Everything is going to the devil," said the Duke de Chartres to me. "There is nobody here capable of commanding, and McClellan is at Yorktown. As several aids have not been able to induce him to come, my uncle has gone himself to look for him, knowing well that without him nothing will be done as it should be."

General Peck was on the edge of a strip of woods, which was all that separated us from the enemy. Learning that, on account of our hurried march, and the difficulties of the road, I had left behind me half of my men, he ordered a halt of ten minutes, to rest those who had come up, and to give the others a chance to join us. In fact, the greater part of the regiment were in the ranks before it went into action. It was then about one o'clock in the afternoon.

The road on which we were left the woods in front of Fort Magruder in the midst of an oblong plain, which the enemy had fortified with a series of redoubts. As this was the narrowest point of the peninsula, the position would have been a good defensive one, if one were master of the two rivers. But the evacuation of Yorktown had opened one of them to our gunboats, and the other had been defended only by the Merrimac, whose destruction would in a few days be involved in the taking of Norfolk. The Williamsburg line, then, was not

tenable by the Confederates. They thought so little of opposing us there that the greater part of their army had already passed on, when the attack of Stoneman compelled them to return, in order to delay our pursuit, and cover their rearguard. The fortified works proved to be very fortunately placed for them, so they occupied a part of them, and made particularly good use of Fort Magruder.

Peck's brigade, the first to come to the aid of General Hooker, was promptly deployed along the edge of the wood facing the enemy. The Fifty-fifth was on the left, resting its right on the road, on the other side of which the One Hundred and Second Pennsylvania formed the centre, and the Ninety-eighth a little further on the right. The Ninety-third was in the second line, and the Sixty-second New York was held in reserve on the other side of the woods.

In front of us stretched an abatis of trees twenty to twenty-five yards deep, then a broad, open field, crossed parallel to our front by another road, which ours joined in front of Fort Magruder. On the other side of the crossroad the fields were bordered, at a distance of two or three hundred yards, by a wood, from which Hooker's left had been dislodged after a long and deadly conflict, and from which the enemy, encouraged by a first success, was reforming for a new attack, whose shock we were about to receive.

My orders were to support the right of General Hooker; but it had fallen back into the interior of the woods, taking us, I suppose, for a brigade of Kearney's division, expected every moment to relieve it. I had also to cover a battery of artillery advanced into the field, where, in fact, we found it, but abandoned in a mud-hole, where the horses had been killed or drowned in their harness.

We had hardly time to notice these details, when, at the signal of a group of officers emerging at a gallop from Fort Magruder, the enemy's line started out of the woods with loud yells, and marched straight for us. When they had advanced half-way I opened upon them a fire by file, which promised well, while the One Hundred and Second fired a volley with its entire second rank. I do not know what harm we did them, but they continued to advance rapidly, with increased cries.

There was in front of my left a natural opening in the abatis, toward which two battalions of the enemy directed their course, with the evident intention of making it their especial point of attack. Unhappily, the company which was posted in front of that point was the worst commanded, and the one on which I could the least depend. I had my eyes on it when it received its first volley. Alas! it did not even wait for a second. A man in the rear rank turned and started toward me. And, like a flock of sheep after the leader, the rest followed in the twinkling of an eye. Almost immediately the next company gave way, then the third. The Zouaves, thus finding themselves left alone, broke in their turn, and fell back; and, what is most shameful, some officers ran away with their men and even without them. The Ninety-third, in forming the second line, could not stop the runaways. They broke through the ranks and disappeared in the woods — the cursed woods, which tempted the cowards by an easy refuge, and upon which, instead of rain, I wished at that moment to see fall fire from heaven.

However, in the breaking of the left, a handful of brave men, non-commissioned officers and soldiers, remained immovable. Posted behind the trees, they held firm, and endeavored to cover the opening by a rapid and well directed fire, under the command of

Major Yehl, who gave them the example of a courageous coolness. Some officers, taken by surprise and led away by the current, stopped of their own accord, or retired slowly, rather hesitating than frightened, and as if seeking to find out what they ought to do. In spite of the density of the thicket, where my horse advanced with difficulty, I was soon amongst them. At my voice they stopped and formed around me. I gathered in this way a hundred, and led them quickly into line. But at the moment when I reformed them in front of the fatal opening, a strong volley broke them a second time.

The enemy had then advanced to the end of the abatis, and rushed into the passage which he thought open to him. In the midst of the smoke I saw six or eight gray-jackets advance to within a few steps of us. Are we about to be swept away? No. This time the men whom I had led back under fire had not fled. The most of them had only taken shelter behind the neighboring trees, and from there directed a well sustained fire upon the assailants, whom the fire of my centre companies struck obliquely. Those nearest to us were killed or wounded, and the others fell back in front of the abatis.

My right had not yielded. On that side Lieutenant-Colonel Thourout, an old lieutenant of the French army, passed back and forth encouraging the men. Captains Four, Battais, Demazure, Meyer, were brave officers, who kept their men in position without effort, for, when the officers set the example, the soldiers, sustained by confidence in their superiors and spurred on by pride, fight well. So it can be truly said that soldiers are what their officers make them.

Four, who commanded the first company, had learned war in the Chasseurs of Vincennes. Standing on the

trunk of a tree, he directed the fire of his men upon each point where the enemy penetrated the abatis. Battais, abandoned by his two lieutenants and a dozen men who had followed them, continued ordering as if on drill, with the tenacity of a Breton. The Irish company fought under the command of its senior sergeant, without troubling itself about the absence of its officers. The Zouaves, having rallied now, did their duty, with their first lieutenant, St. James, at his post. Finally, the remains of the three broken companies grouped upon the left had amongst them a second lieutenant named Prost. This brave man, having seen everything around him fleeing, disdained to leave, and remained at his post until the last, although he had but a dozen men left him to command.

When I could see clearly for myself how matters stood, through the smoke which floated over the whole line, in the midst of the rolling of the small arms and the bursting of the shells among the trees, I breathed as a man would breathe rescued from the water where he was drowning. The flag of the regiment had not receded. Our honor was safe ; the rest was nothing.

Perhaps it is too much to say it was nothing. For if we had succeeded in holding the enemy on the edge of the abatis and prevented his passing at the point where he had twice, unavailingly, attempted it, not the less did my left rest in the air. Let the enemy try to pass one or two hundred yards farther along and there was nothing to prevent his entering the woods and striking me in the flank and rear, in which event my only chance was in a change of front to the rear, — a manœuvre always delicate but nearly impracticable in the forest, especially with troops who fought in line for the first time. So I kept going to the left to examine, with an intentness mingled with anxiety, that part of the deep and

silent wood where nothing could be seen, neither friends nor enemies. The question was: "Which will show themselves first?"

What a tumult! The whole edge of the woods on fire; the musketry rolling uninterruptedly from one end of the line to the other, the balls striking the trees like hail and bounding amongst the branches; two batteries of artillery firing as fast as possible; the shells tearing the branches of the trees and filling the woods with their explosions; shrapnel bursting in the air like petards; — such were the instruments of the diabolical concert.

If all these had done as much damage as they made noise, the affair would have been quickly decided; happily, it was quite otherwise. The reality was much less terrible than the appearance. It is true that some men fell here and there, not to rise again; that others, covered with blood, limped or were carried back a short distance to the foot of a tree, where the two surgeons dressed their wounds temporarily. But, after all, the number was quite small. The missiles of the enemy, directed upon the interior of the woods, which they probably supposed to be full of troops, passed over our heads without doing us any harm. As to the infantry, troubled by the abatis which covered us, they fired too high.

When the boldest of the enemy sprang forward amongst the fallen trees and tried to get through them to reach us, impeded in their movements, held in a network of branches, they furnished a good mark for our men and soon disappeared. A large number entered there never to go out again.

On the other side of the road, the abatis, not so thick or broad, rendered the attack apparently easier. The road itself forked to pass around a clump of trees. The principal attack was made there after the first shock

which broke my left. It there struck the Ninety-third Pennsylvania (Colonel MacCarter), posted on both sides of the road and the One Hundred and Second Pennsylvania (Colonel Rawlins), entirely to the right of the road. The welcome received was the warmest. A terrible fire, at a distance of fifty feet, broke the enemy's ranks and compelled him to fall back in disorder.

The engagement lasted about an hour, when, for the first time, firing was heard on my left. I could perceive nothing yet, but the fire became more and more vigorous in that part of the woods. No more doubt. Kearney had arrived. Hurrah for Kearney!

His division, after leaving us near the brick church where Casey's division was calmly taking its coffee, had followed a road less obstructed but much longer than the direct one by which we had come. Berry's brigade now came into line. Colonel Poe of the Second Michigan had come through the woods to see for himself who we were and where we were. He had no difficulty in recognizing the red kepis, and advanced his regiment on our left. One may imagine if Berry's brigade was welcome. It could not have been more so even if I could have foreseen that it would be the first brigade I would be called on to command.

From that time the enemy could do nothing more than keep up his fire, which he did until twilight. Between four and five o'clock more reënforcements reached us. Devens' brigade took position in our rear, followed by Casey's division, which General Keyes had finally gone himself to find. When my ammunition was exhausted the Sixty-second New York relieved me. At ten minutes past five o'clock by the watch, the last gun was fired from Fort Magruder. A little later the musketry fire ceased with the day, and the rain only continued to fall on the living and on the dead.

While on the left we thus stopped the offensive return of the enemy, the following is what happened on the right. On that side the rebels had not occupied the redoubts thrown up east of Fort Magruder lengthwise of the narrow plain, protected at that point by a marshy creek running through thick woods. At its extremity, the plain terminated in a steep bank, at the foot of which a long road transformed the creek into a pond. There was a formidable redoubt at that point. As it swept the road for its whole length, a regiment with a few guns would have sufficed to stop an army corps. But the enemy had put there neither a gun nor a man.

Hooker had sent a reconnoissance in that direction in the morning. The colonel commanding, meeting no enemy anywhere, informed General Hancock, who commanded a brigade in Smith's division, of that fact. On that information Sumner decided in the afternoon to send forward some force in that direction, and Hancock, passing rapidly over the road, ascended the hill at the foot of the vacant battery and advanced into the plain unexpectedly. Two redoubts, both unoccupied, were near by. He put a force in them, and, as he had taken a battery with him, he put two guns in the nearest and took two with him to the edge of the woods, with which he drove out, without trouble, the feeble garrison from a third work.

This attack gave the alarm to the Confederates, who, not expecting us from that direction, had given General Hancock plenty of time to make his dispositions.

When they recognized the danger, Early was promptly detached to retake the redoubts and throw us back into the swamp. But Hancock was ready to receive him. He allowed them first to advance in line of battle, behind a swell of the ground. When they

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were well uncovered, he welcomed them with a deadly fire at short range; then, at the moment when he saw their line shaken, he charged them vigorously, and remained master of the field of battle, which in their flight they abandoned to him, covered with dead and wounded. The night coming on prevented Hancock from pursuing further the advantage of this short but brilliant engagement.

What was General McClellan doing in the meanwhile? He had finally decided to leave Yorktown, at the urgent solicitation of Governor Sprague and the Prince de Joinville, and had reached Williamsburg — when everything was over. One need not be very much surprised, then, that, knowing nothing himself of what had happened, but in a hurry to give an account of the battle, he had sent a despatch at ten o'clock in the evening, the errors of which bordered on the ridiculous.

At the very instant when the enemy, abandoning his position, hastily resumed his retreat toward Richmond, he wrote: "I have Joe Johnston in front of me with a large force, *probably much greater than mine, and very strongly intrenched.* I will, at least, try to hold them in check here. The total of my force is, without any doubt, *inferior to that of the rebels,* who still fight well; but I will do all I can with the troops I have at my disposal."

Now, what was the number of the troops which General McClellan had under his orders? One hundred and twelve thousand three hundred and ninety-two (112,392) men *present* for duty, — so it appears in the official report, signed by his own hand, sixteen days before. At Williamsburg, the Third and Fourth Corps together amounted to sixty-eight thousand two hundred and nineteen (68,219) men. The Confederates had not one-half that number in front of us.

The next morning, the enemy having disappeared, the general celebrated our success in a very different tone. Now, "the victory is complete." Only, it is Hancock who has gained it. "He took two redoubts." In his delight, the general-in-chief forgets that they were not defended. "He repulsed Early's brigade in a *real* bayonet charge. He took a colonel and one hundred and fifty prisoners, killing at least two colonels, as many lieutenant-colonels, and many soldiers. The brilliant fight of Hancock resulted in turning the left of the enemy's works, who abandoned his position during the night, leaving all his sick and wounded in our hands. Hancock's success was gained with a loss not exceeding twenty, killed and wounded."

This was an error. Hancock had lost more. But would it not appear from this report that Hancock was the only one who had been engaged? As to Hooker, he hardly mentioned him. "I do not know exactly what our loss is; but I fear Hooker lost considerable on our left." This is all. Not a word about Kearney, nor of Peck. And yet Hooker's division had fought for six hours with a desperation, shown by a loss of about seventeen hundred men. Peck's brigade, the first to arrest the enemy's success, had lost 124 men, and Kearney's division about three hundred. Was the general-in-chief ignorant of this? Or were those accessories invisible to him, on account of the brilliant achievement of the capture of two unoccupied redoubts, and of a *real* charge — with the bayonet?

The regiment passed the night in a field of mud — a miserable night. Since the second day before, we had made a hard march, fought fairly, eaten little, and slept not at all. Fires were kindled, which were kept up with difficulty on account of the rain, and around which

we endeavored to pass the time by detailed accounts of all the incidents of the day.

At two o'clock in the morning, General Couch had the kindness to come in person and compliment me on the part we had taken in the battle. I was not disposed to accept more than what rightfully belonged to us.

"General," I said, "I thank you for the praises you have been so kind to express to me for the brave men, officers and soldiers, who surround me. They deserve them. But here is but two-thirds of my regiment. The remainder ran away at the first fire, and I do not know what has become of them. Among these last are eight or ten officers who have acted like cowards; I wish to get rid of them as soon as possible, and I propose to ask to-day for a court-martial, that justice may be done."

The general drew me aside to reply to me. Smiling, he said: "My dear colonel, you take the matter too much to heart. It is not at all surprising; and what has happened to you has happened to others I could cite to you, but who will say nothing about it. Do as they do; believe me, it is best. A court-martial is not possible at this moment, and, if it were, I would persuade you not to ask for one. The first fire has an unlooked-for effect on the nerves of many men, against which their inexperience is futile to fortify them. Surprised at the first encounter, they will be prepared at the second and will come out of the action as brave as any others. It is right to give those who have failed to-day an opportunity to repair their fault on the next occasion. If the thing occurs a second time, I will be the first to ask you to take severe measures. Until then, let us keep our family secrets and do our best."

General Couch was right. He judged wisely, as the

conduct of the whole regiment soon proved, at the battle of Fair Oaks.

The enemy retreated quietly, without being pursued. The roads were in such a horrible condition that he had to abandon five pieces of artillery and several wagons in the mud-holes. What would have been the result, then, if we had followed him up closely? But General McClellan showed himself in no more hurry to take Richmond than he had been to take Yorktown; and as he had allowed Magruder's division to fortify and receive reënforcements on the Warwick where he could have easily captured it, so now he allowed Johnston's army to go and prepare for the defence of the Confederate capital without even attacking his rear-guard. Thus we had three entire days of leisure at Williamsburg to lie around in the sun and brush up our arms to the sound of military music, which celebrated our indolent glory by playing from morning till night "Yankee Doodle," "Hail, Columbia," and other patriotic airs.

I profited by the delay to visit the field of battle, where several detachments passed the day of the 6th in burying the dead. Not an exhilarating spectacle. And yet, to be sincere, I could not help feeling a little disappointed in finding only fifteen dead in the abatis behind which we had fought. Three hours of firing and sixteen thousand cartridges expended to kill fifteen men and put perhaps a hundred and fifty *hors de combat!* But the rebels had found even that loss too much, and so that must console us for not having done more.

Where Hooker's division had fought our loss was much greater than theirs. On the open ground, and especially on the sides of the road, lay many of the dead from Sickles' New York brigade. Further along

in the wood, where the attack had begun, the New Jersey brigade had left the thicket full of dead.

Everywhere those who had been killed outright had retained, when fallen, the position in which death had struck them standing.

During the battle, Captain Titus, brigade quartermaster, having gone forward to the right of the Fifty-fifth, saw a Confederate soldier crawling into the abatis. He picked up a musket, fallen from the hands of a man killed or wounded, and shot him just as he was taking aim at one of our men. The next morning we found him stretched out on his back with both arms in the position of taking aim. The captain's ball had passed through his heart.

The cannon which the enemy had not been able to carry off were buried in the mud to the axles. The two wheel horses were literally drowned in the liquid mud, their heads half buried. The others, killed by balls, mingled their blood with that of some artillerymen who had endeavored to release them by cutting the harness.

Human remains frightfully mutilated gave evidence here and there that the cannon had also done its part in the bloody work. One of these lay at the foot of a fence with nothing of the head left, but the face like a grinning mask. The remainder, crushed by a ball, adhered to the rails in bloody blotches. Strange curiosity, which by a natural impulse leads us toward the horrible — which led me there upon the field of battle, and which attracts you, also, you who read these lines, since your imagination completes the picture of which this is a sketch.

You will not hesitate, no more than I did, to step on the edge of these broad trenches, carelessly dug to-day by those for whom others will dig trenches elsewhere,

perhaps in a year, perhaps in a month, perhaps to-morrow. The first to depart on the long journey lie stretched out before us, side by side, with marble features, glassy eyes, and in their torn and bloody uniforms. The comrades who will follow them hasten to finish their duty without philosophizing on the skull of poor Yorick, whose infinite witticisms but yesterday enlivened the bivouac. A layer of men and a layer of earth. The ditch filled, it is covered over with a little hillock, to provide for settling. Then they depart, leaving to a few friendly hands the pious care of marking a name and a date on small boards aligned at the head of the dead, where no one will come to read them.

I found my wounded in a neighboring farmhouse transformed into a hospital, where those of the brigade had been carried. The farm buildings were full. The patients were laid on the ground, on beds of straw. Those who could walk went and came with the head bandaged or the arm in a sling, helping to take care of the others. All showed a remarkable courage and bore their sufferings with a tranquil resignation. The most boastful were even laughing, and spoke of soon retaking their places in the ranks. A few only, feeling that they were mortally wounded, groaned aloud with grief, or shed silent tears while thinking of those they would never see again.

Amongst the latter was a young married German, and having, I think, a child. The ball which had wounded him had passed through the head of the man in front, and, striking him over the left eye, had traced a furrow around his head, coming out behind the ear. The surgeons declared the wound less dangerous in reality than in appearance. But the poor boy was struck in his imagination. He thought he had the ball in his head.

"I feel it," he said to me, "it is heavy and hurts me; I am a dead man."

Nothing could convince him to the contrary. He died at the end of a fortnight, not by a ball, but by an idea in his head.

Such was not the case with the big strapping Irishman whom I found smoking his pipe at the door of the hall.

"Well," said I to him, "how do you find yourself?"

"Perfectly, colonel. Never better in my life."

"Why, then, have you got your face half covered with bandages?"

"Oh! a mere nothing; a scratch. I will show it to you."

"No, I thank you."

"Yes, yes; you will see what it is."

And, raising up compresses and bandages, in spite of my protestations, he showed me a gaping wound in the place of the eyebrows carried away.

"I see," said I, "your wound has not been dressed this morning."

"No; the doctor put on this yesterday for the first time. But to-day he is so busy with the others, who need his help more than I, that I did not wish to bother him."

"And your eye," I replied.

"Gone. But you see, colonel, it is only the left eye, and that will save me the trouble of closing it while taking aim, which always did bother me. In a fortnight I will be back with the regiment, and may I be d——d if I do not bring down plenty of Johnny Rebs yet."

I had to use my authority to have him consent to the dressing of the wound. I left him in the hands of the surgeon, who let me know by signs that the wound was

a bad one. In fact, the poor fellow never returned to the regiment.

As I walked toward the door, a soldier, who did not belong to my regiment, raised himself painfully on his seat and called me with some hesitation.

"What is it?" said I.

"Colonel, I would like to shake hands with you."

"All right, my boy; where are you wounded?"

"No matter about my wound. I wished only to shake your hand, because you are a man. After the fight you do not forget those who have had their bones broken under your orders. I wish I belonged to the Fifty-fifth."

The least attention of this kind goes to the heart of a wounded soldier. A visit and a few words of encouragement from a superior officer, which he would think nothing of in his tent, are sufficient, at the hospital, to fill him with gratitude; simply because it proves to him that he is not forgotten. In our hours of suffering the bitterest pang is caused by thinking ourselves forgotten.

Behind the camp assigned to the regiment near Fort Magruder was a house in which the Confederates had left a number of their men too badly wounded to be taken with them.

When I went to the house a little stream of coagulated blood reddened the steps coming from the half-opened door. On pushing it, to enter, I felt a resistance, the cause of which I soon recognized. It was a pile of amputated legs and arms, thrown into a corner of the room, waiting the coming of a negro to take them out and bury them in the garden, in a hole which he had dug for the purpose.

Limbs, vigorous or slight, all shattered beneath the remnant of bloody flesh. I remember that near the pile there lay by itself a leg white and slender, termina-

ting in a foot almost as small as that of a child. The knee had been shattered by a ball.

"You see we have had some work to do," said a surgeon to me. "Come in, colonel."

Around the room, in which I entered, the amputated were on the floor, in rows, with the head to the wall. All these mutilated creatures turned their eyes, hollow with suffering, towards me, the greater part of them listless but a few with an air having a shade of defiance. I looked for the one to whom the leg with a child's foot had belonged. I had no trouble in recognizing him. He was, really, almost a child, with blue eyes, long blond hair, and with emaciated features.

"How old are you?" I asked him.

"Seventeen years."

"So young and already a soldier?"

"I enlisted of my own accord."

"What to do?"

"To defend my State against her enemies."

"Say to break up the Union to the profit of your slaveholders."

"I do not think so."

"Have you any relations? a father or a mother?"

"Yes," said he, with a voice evidently moved.

"Why did you not remain by her side? see what your condition is now."

"I did my duty. That satisfies me."

I went into the next room. The same sight.

"Water," cried several feeble voices.

"Wait a minute, boys," said the doctor, in a fatherly tone. "The deuce! Haven't you any patience. Sam is busy just at this instant. As soon as he is disengaged he will bring you some."

Sam was the negro ordered to bury the amputated limbs.

"Think of it, colonel," began the doctor again, "we found here only an old black man to help us take care of these poor creatures, a good enough old fellow, but not as active as he might be, and who is hardly enough to attend to everything."

On the stairs I met my second surgeon, eating, with a good appetite, a piece of biscuit and some cheese.

"The surgeon-in-chief detailed me here yesterday," said he, "and I assure you, colonel, it is no sinecure. This is the first morsel I have eaten since I left the brigade hospital."

And, continuing his hasty repast, he introduced me to a room where a dozen patients waited their turn. One of them, whose leg had been amputated only the previous evening, had been left there on a straw mattress, a privilege accorded to him on account of his rank as captain. He was a robust Georgian, with black hair and beard, sunburned skin, a real "*dur-a-cuire*," whose *morale* had not been affected by the loss of a leg.

We entered readily into conversation, and what he said to me has remained graven on my mind. It was a prediction, which after events have not allowed me to forget.

"Do not be in a hurry," he said, "to cry victory! and to regard that as a great success which is really only the execution of our own plans. What we wanted at Yorktown was simply to delay your arrival before Richmond until the summer heat. We have succeeded. We kept you there, throwing up earth, digging ditches, erecting batteries for a whole month, although we had but one against ten when you came. McClellan having thrown up his mountain to crush our shed, we gave him the slip without his even knowing it. You did not take Yorktown; we made you a present of it, when it was no longer of use to us. You caught up with us

here, but you have not beaten us, since your loss is much greater than ours, and you know yourself what condition Hooker was in when your red kepis came into line. It was one of them who put me in my present condition, and I do not thank you for it. But such is the chance of war. What I regret the most is that I cannot be there to see your army melt away in the Chickahominy marshes, where Johnston and the fever await you.

"I can tell you now, if you had taken Yorktown a month ago, Richmond would perhaps be yours to-day. Now it is too late. We have the campaign now in the shape we wish it. Go and besiege Richmond. You will find there a new adversary, who will save us the trouble of fighting you. The season begins when the marsh fevers will do more to demoralize your men and destroy your army than all the battalions and all the redoubts we can oppose to them."

The Georgian captain spoke this with an animation somewhat feverish. I thought it all an exaggeration, attributable to a sense of defeat and irritation from his wound. I left him, assuring him that, whatever might happen before Richmond, the Southern Confederation was none the less condemned to perish.

"Good-bye," said I. "I will meet you again some day, once more a citizen of the United States."

"Never," answered he, with energy. "I will rather find a wooden leg and get myself killed at the head of my company."

I felt provoked at this bravado.

"Look out you do not get knocked over on the way," said I, shrugging my shoulders.

I went into the next room.

This was the operating-room — the *butchery*. Blood everywhere — on the floor, on the walls, and in the pails.

An arm, taken off at the shoulder joint, rolled under the table more bloody than any of the rest. The table of torture. A young man lay there unconscious, from whom that arm had been taken.

Under the influence of chloroform, he appeared not to suffer; but from time to time a sad smile passed over his countenance.

I did not wait his revival. I had had enough of it. The surgeon told me that it was doubtful if the patient survived the operation. He died the following night. When I went out of the house, Sam came in, having finished his work of gravedigger. He bowed very low several times. "Sam," said I, "if you are a good man, go immediately to the well and get some water for the wounded, who are very thirsty."

That was all I could do for them.

CHAPTER XI.

DAYS OF SUFFERING.

Forward march — Engagement at West Point — Subject for discontent — Dinner at headquarters — Fight of a new kind — The bull and the Newfoundland dog — The death of Bianco — Virginia plantations — Marsh fever — The Turner house — Delirium — Manna in the desert — Anxieties — Battle of Fair Oaks — First days of convalescence — Departure for the North.

On Friday, May 9, the Fourth Corps at last moved, followed by the Third. The Second, having remained at Yorktown, embarked there for West Point, at the place where the Pamunkey and the Mattapony unite to form the York River. One would naturally suppose that the last three days had been actively employed in arranging an advantageous concentration of the army, in getting together and completing the material for transportation, in assuring the regular service of the supply department, — in fine, in taking every possible measure to repair the lost time by a rapid advance. The days were long, the sun hot, the roads dried while you were looking at them. But nothing could hasten the methodical slowness of the general-in-chief, and our daily marches were those of the tortoise. We did not reach New Kent Court House until Tuesday the 13th, the fifth day after starting, and we did not leave there till the 16th, two days later. The distance is twenty-eight miles, two ordinary marches.

The enemy was not the cause of these delays. He thought only of continuing his retreat; we did not come across him, keeping ourselves at a respectful distance from his rearguard.

General Franklin alone, having arrived at West Point on the 7th by transport, and thus threatening with his division the flank of the Confederates, who were marching by at a distance of two or three miles, had an engagement with them, the importance of which was much exaggerated by the imagination of General McClellan. The most advanced regiments were thrown back and kept near the river, and Johnston continued his march without being further troubled.

When it was known in the army of what little importance was the pretended battle of West Point, it began to be perceived what partialities the general-in-chief would show towards his particular friends. He had already cut out new commands for them by reducing the army corps to two divisions each. Great discontent was manifested. Not that the army took to heart the transfer of such or such a division from one command to another. That was an affair for the generals. But Hooker's division was deeply wounded by the injustice of which it had been a victim in the telegraphic bulletins upon the Williamsburg fight. The same sentiment prevailed in Kearney's division and in Peck's brigade. Personally, Hooker was incensed; Kearney protested vigorously; Peck complained against the injustice. As to the subaltern officers and soldiers, their discontent found vent in murmurs and epigrams.

Another grievance, more generally felt because it directly touched the soldier, was the excess of precaution and the severity of orders to preserve from injury any object, even the smallest, belonging to the rebels. Not a farmhouse, not a cottage, not a negro, but was furnished with a guard on our approach, by the troops of General Andrew Porter, especially ordered, not to protect the persons and the furniture, which ran no

danger, but to watch over the farmyards, the stables, the forage, the wells, and even the fences.

I have seen our men, covered with dust and overcome by the heat, try in vain to get water from wells overflowing, from which stringent orders drove them away, because the supply of water for a rebel family might be diminished. I have also seen them, covered with mud and shivering with the rain, prevented by orders of the general-in-chief from warming themselves with the fence rails of dry wood which were ready at their hands, because the cattle of a rebel farmer might get out and eat the grass in his fields, while he was rebuilding his fences.

In the first case, the soldier had to go a long distance to fill his canteen with warm and muddy water from a pool or creek. In the second, he had to cut down trees and use the green wood, hard to burn, not fit to dry himself by, and hardly answering to boil his coffee.

And it must not be imagined that the people, treated with such great consideration, were in the least grateful for it. They were animated with such irreconcilable hatred against us that they did not give themselves the trouble to dissemble. The women would sometimes even take advantage of their immunity to boast of their enmity. They were so many spies, whom we were guarding. Everything they heard, everything they could get out of any one was reported to the enemy as soon as possible. The horses, cattle, hogs, which we were so scrupulously compelled to respect, were sent on the first occasion to the Confederates, so that the Yankees might not profit by them.

When the army was before Richmond, letters of these enemies, whom we treated as friends, were intercepted. They were full of exact information as to the location of our pickets and the disposition of our

forces. They designated also the farms where, under our safeguard, provisions were reserved for the Confederates, as soon as they could send for them. It is true that the Richmond papers, which were filled every day with invectives against us, showed themselves more courteous towards our general, whom they called "the only gentleman in his army." It can be seen that they had very good reason to feel so.

So the soldier lived poorly, having no way to add to the insufficient rations, which were furnished quite irregularly. On two occasions the coffee failed us, which, of all privations, is the one the soldier feels the most. The means of transportation are still incomplete, it was said. And the quartermasters incompetent, might have been added without injustice.

On the general's staff they possibly were ignorant of these things, for evidently they did not suffer from the want of anything. Near New Kent Court House, my bivouac being near the army headquarters, I profited by it to make a call on two of my friends, who kept me to dinner. It was an excellent dinner; certainly they were not in want of the means of transportation. The fare was of the best, and we had a certain mixture of Bordeaux and iced champagne, which still lingers in my grateful memory.

I finished my evening in the tent of the Orleans princes, who, influenced by their surroundings, appeared to me to see things somewhat differently from what they really were. At headquarters they had but one bell, and consequently only one sound was heard — praises of McClellan.

It was near New Kent Court House that the brigade had a fight of a new kind, from which it did not come out without disorder. The people of a neighboring farm, who had taken care to house their cattle at our

approach, had thought fit to leave an ill-tempered bull in the field where we must camp. The animal appeared at first to be indifferent to our movements, but when the arms were stacked and the men scattered on all sides in search of wood and water, this unusual stir began to excite him. He commenced to paw the ground and to bellow, showing his anger.

At this provocation, the dogs of the regiment pricked up their ears and replied by barkings, which in their language must have had a definite signification, for immediately every one of them started like an arrow in the direction of the bull. The bull waited for them at first without moving, and, when he had five or six in front of him, charged resolutely at them, irritated more and more by their barking and his powerlessness to reach his adversaries.

Attracted by the noise, the men ran from all sides to enjoy the spectacle. As soon as the animal saw that he had enemies more worthy of his notice, he fell upon the nearest. They, having no other arms than their canteens or tin cups, ran away as fast as possible, in every direction. The rest, seeing that the sport was becoming serious, made for the fence with great strides, in the midst of cries, oaths, and laughter, the noise of which came nearer and nearer.

Blinded by rage, worried by the dogs, the bull in a few bounds was at the front of the regiment. The lieutenant-colonel was there at that moment, giving orders, when twenty voices at once cried out to him to "look out." He turned his head; the animal was almost upon him, foaming at the mouth, fire in his eyes, with horns lowered. With one bound, he jumped to one side, his foot slipped and he fell in a furrow. Happily for him, the brute was under so much headway that he could neither stop nor even turn before striking our

stacks of arms with his lowered head. He knocked over two or three of these, threw himself on the line of the Sixty-second, overturning everything in his passage, and returned towards us with great bounds, in the midst of a general rout.

On our right was the Seventh Massachusetts, belonging to another brigade. One of their wagons had stopped near the road, and behind this wagon was chained a fine Newfoundland dog, the favorite of the regiment. The courageous animal made desperate efforts to break his chain, and by his barkings asked to take part in the combat. On the other side, his master did not seem disposed to give him his liberty, fearing he might be disembowelled by the bull. However, from every side the cry was raised, "Unchain the dog! Unchain the dog!" The dog was loosed. He bounded across the road and rushed upon the enemy, whom no one knew how to fight. A few men, indeed, had seized their guns, but they could not use them for fear of killing or wounding some one. As to playing the rôle of *picador* with the bayonet, it was so dangerous that no one was willing to try it. When the Newfoundland entered the lists everything was changed.

As, when two of Homer's heroes meet in the field of battle they stop to look each other over and challenge each other to single combat, around them the common arms are lowered and the common soldiers stop their fighting to watch from the pit the spectacle which the gods themselves witness from the first boxes, — so the bull and the Newfoundland stopped for a moment in front of each other, while a large circle of federal warriors was formed around them. The common animals even ceased their noises.

The tactics of our champion were evidently to take a position on one or the other flank of the enemy, but he

changed front rapidly to correspond with the movements of his adversary. This manœuvre was kept up for a few moments, when the dog made a feint, turned sharply back, and, springing at the head of the bull, remained fastened to his ear. Remember that it was not a question of a bulldog, of little weight, but of a Newfoundland, who did not weigh less than sixty or eighty pounds.

The bull, having attempted in vain to free himself by throwing the dog in the air, then endeavored to crush him under his fore feet. A dangerous attempt, but against which the dog guarded himself with remarkable address, using his hind feet. Then, mad with pain and rage, the bull began to run at a venture, bellowing fearfully and carrying the huge dog fastened like a vise to his ear.

At this instant the commissary sergeant of the regiment, who was a butcher by profession, came up. He armed himself with a hatchet, and one vigorous blow upon the backbone of the bull put an end to the combat. The conqueror then let go his hold, to receive with an intelligent dignity the caresses and congratulations which were given him, while the conquered one, quickly cut up, furnished an addition to the regular rations, of which no account was rendered.

Thus, in this inhospitable country, even the animals took part in the contest against us.

I had brought a bulldog along from Washington, whose former masters had filed down his dog-teeth to make a more peaceable animal out of him than bulldogs usually are. Bianco (for that was his name) lived on good terms with every one, man and beast, in the loyal States. But from the moment of disembarking on the Peninsula it was only a continued combat with the Confederate dogs. A large mastiff, driven away from

the Harwood farm by the fire, had followed the regiment. He was valued for his ability to catch the wild hogs wandering through the woods. Between the bulldog and him there was the hatred of the Guelph for the Ghibeline. One day, taking advantage of a moment when the regiment, being in motion, could not interfere, they went off the road to settle their differences. The new dog remained there. Bianco had strength enough left to rejoin me on the plantation of ex-President Tyler, where we went into camp. His victory having been duly reported, he lay down in a ditch to die on his laurels. The soldiers, whom he had accompanied under fire at Williamsburg, decided that he had died gloriously, and my groom swore over his remains a war of extermination against all the Confederate dogs.

The residence of Mr. Tyler resembled a great many others in Virginia, of which one can say, as of the floating staff of the fable, — "From a distance, it is imposing; near by, it is nothing."

These residences are generally built on a pleasant site, in the midst of rich fields. Shaded by great trees, surrounded by farm buildings and negro huts, they have an air of importance when seen from a distance. Regard them close at hand and with a view of the whole building, and the house loses in its proportions. Enter the house, and you are surprised to find nothing there which bears the marks of elegant comfort. The walls are whitewashed; the floors covered with common matting, often badly worn; you will find calico curtains, beds and cupboards painted with a poor imitation of mahogany, chairs with seats of straw or braided rushes. A map, yellow with age, will hang on the wall in the vestibule; a few colored prints of women with mouths in the shape of hearts, and a rose in the hand, will pass for parlor ornaments, while one or

two plaster parrots and a Yankee clock, worth a dollar, will probably furnish the mantel ornaments.

You think you are in the house of some poor farmer who is living by the sweat of his brow. Not at all. Count the horses in the stable, the slaves in the cabins, the cattle in the fields. You are in the house of some great planter, a breeder of negroes, an influential politician, who, away from home, will spend money by the handfuls, in the hotels of Washington or New York, or at the Northern seaside watering-places, where, perhaps, he passes all his summers. There his ostentation takes no account of the expense. But at home, where he lives only *en famille*, economy governs his habits. He leads two entirely different lives. In one the luxuries are considered as necessary, in the other common necessaries figure as luxuries.

It was on the grounds of Mr. Tyler that I felt the first symptoms of a sickness that showed its full strength a few days later. The regiment passed the night near a thicket which was interspersed with stagnant pools. I slept quite poorly, on some wooden rails, to protect me from the dampness of the ground, near a campfire of my first company. The next morning I awoke with my head heavy and my body shaken by aguish feelings, which did not leave me during the day's march. The second day after, May 18, was a day of rest. I took advantage of it to consult the surgeon. His remedies did not stop the illness, which continued to grow worse.

On the 20th, the division arrived at a brick building called Providence Church, not far from the swamps in the midst of which flowed the Chickahominy. The weather was rainy, the ground soaked. I had taken hardly any nourishment for three days; on dismounting from my horse I felt that I was failing, and that if I

passed the night in that mud I should be unable to rise in the morning.

There was, close by, a dilapidated barn, where a few men, weakened by fever or worn out by the march, had obtained shelter. I thought myself happy to be able to lie down on a pile of corn stalks, sometimes shivering and sometimes stifled under my blankets. I thought of the sinister predictions of the Georgia captain.

I had turned over the command of the regiment for the night to the lieutenant-colonel. In the morning, when I learned that the brigade was ordered on a reconnoissance toward Bottom's Bridge, in the direction of Richmond, I made a last effort and left on horseback at the head of my regiment. A few hours later I returned under the charge of the regimental surgeon, stricken down by the terrible malady which was soon to make such ravages in our ranks.

Much was said at that time of the "fine organization" of the Army of the Potomac. Things should be seen from a near point of view to know the truth. We have already seen how the commissary and quartermaster service was performed. I had to make trial, in my own person, of the ambulance service. In the whole division there could not be found one available to transport a colonel to a hospital.

I was no longer able to keep in the saddle. Shelter must be sought somewhere for me. That shelter was a miserable little house inhabited by some poor people named Turner. The husband and his wife composed the whole family. The ground floor was divided into two small rooms, the kitchen, in which they slept, and a vestibule, to which an old leather sofa furnished a pretense to call it a parlor. From the vestibule, a stairway like a ladder led directly to a garret, with sloping ceiling, where there was a bed. I should have said a

cot. But, under the circumstances, it seemed like a gift from heaven. It actually had sheets.

My orderly was left with me as nurse. He was a Zouave named Shedel, a careful and steady man, who was of great service to me. He found in the hut room enough to stretch his blankets near my bed. My two servants put up their shelter tent near the door; my horses were hitched to a fence, and my installation was complete. A sorry installation. I was abandoned there like an estray from the vast current of men advancing toward Richmond.

My first night was miserable. An intense fever consumed me, and an intolerable headache deprived me of all sleep. These continual pains nearly drove me mad. I had great trouble to keep from delirium. It was only by a constant effort of will, and by determinedly keeping my eyes open, that I was able to prevail against the hallucinations of the fever. From the instant that they closed, weighed down by fatigue, the phantoms took hold on my brain and added imaginary tortures to my real sufferings. My head rolled before me as if carried away by a cannon shot. I ran after it to pick it up, and my intestines stretched out on the ground behind me. This sensation was continually renewed, filling the long hours of the night with anguish.

During the course of the next day my first surgeon succeeded in making me a visit. Foreseeing that it would be the last, he had carefully made his prescriptions, and, handing to Shedel a few medicines prepared beforehand, accompanied by detailed instructions, he remounted his horse and left me to the care of God.

The following days have left but a confused trace in my memory. I vaguely remember persons coming in and going out of the house, officers speaking in a low tone of voice near my bed, and red lights illuminat-

ing my window, in the midst of a great murmur outside. I knew afterwards that the rear divisions of the army had camped over night around the house and had departed at daybreak.

The critical period lasted three days. The disease began to abate on the fourth, and on the fifth the fever left me in a state of prostration which it is difficult to imagine. Life returned to me without pain. Except that, neither power nor will. The moral spring appeared to be broken as well as physical power. If I had known that the guerillas were coming to cut my throat and that I must get out of bed to escape them, I would have said, "Let them come," and would not have stirred. In the utter exhaustion of nature, everything had become totally indifferent to me. Life and death might have been weighing in the balance and I would not have put a grain of sand in either scale.

The first incident which served to shake off my torpor was the visit of two surgeons, who, passing near and hearing of a colonel dangerously ill at the Turners', had the house pointed out to them, and came to see me, in the hope that they might be of some service to me. They both declared me to be out of immediate danger, telling me that I had had a narrow escape, of which I did not have the slightest doubt. They advised quiet, patience, and no excitement, which was not difficult for me, and put me especially on guard against the least imprudence which might bring on a relapse, for, said one of them to me with emphasis, — "A relapse, in your condition, means *death in eight hours.*" I did not like the idea of being condemned to death, even conditionally, on so short notice, and decided for myself that I would live. This was the beginning of my convalescence.

At this time, my second surgeon, having been detailed to a hospital distant a few miles, was able to get

away and see me. He brought me some medicines; but his prescription was in substance the same as that of the other physicians — repose, calmness, patience. This wearied me a little, which was a good symptom. I began to feel myself reviving by a vague disposition to get angry, if I had been strong enough. But how to regain strength? I had nothing to eat. Where could I find anything to help nature?

My servants mounted on horseback and scoured the country, going from farm to farm, which were poor and far apart, endeavoring to purchase — money in one hand, revolver in the other — food for their sick colonel. The result of these expeditions for two weeks was — two skinny chickens and a mess of small fish. On passing by, the Confederates had not left anything for General Porter to protect.

My foragers themselves escaped starving only thanks to the hard biscuit they had been able to pick up in the abandoned camps, where rations had been distributed, and to some salt provisions obtained with great trouble from the commissary sergeant. As to my hosts, all they had left to keep them from starvation was a quarter of pork and a sack of corn meal. They had had a cow, but her carcass was rotting at the back of the garden; a dozen sheep, which they were always hoping to see return from the woods, into which they had fled, but they never returned; some fowls, which the Confederates had not wished to leave for the Yankees. They still had left with them a little negro boy, half naked, who thought only of running away, and whom Madame Turner did not encourage to remain, by boxing his ears continually, — doubtless as a relief to her feelings.

One day, my groom, who had gone out early in the morning in search of provisions, did not return at the

usual hour. He was an old cavalry soldier, formerly bugler in the New York militia, whose uniform he still wore, and particularly inclined to show his skill in the handling of the sabre. Add to that, of a quarrelsome disposition and contemptuous bearing toward the people of the country. His absence gave me considerable uneasiness for him, and for the horse which he had ridden. In the isolated farms where he must go, and in the deserted woods which he must traverse, there were not wanting people who would think it a meritorious act to strike down a Yankee, if the opportunity occurred, with a fair chance of escaping with impunity.

The afternoon passed without news and without provisions. But, at the approach of darkness, Shedel, posted near the window, said : —

"There is Schmidt coming back."

He then descended the stairs quickly.

In a few minutes they made a triumphal entry to my room, — Shedel with his hands full of oranges and lemons; Schmidt holding a bottle in each hand.

"Colonel," said Schmidt, giving a military salute without putting down the bottles, "Madame G. sends you her compliments. She is very sorry to hear that you are ill, but hopes that you will soon recover, and meanwhile" (putting the things on a chair answering for a table) "here is a bottle of good bouillon and a bottle of old Sherry wine, besides some oranges and lemons, which she directed me to bring you."

I rose to assure myself that the bugler had not found all those things at the bottom of a whiskey flask. But no; Schmidt stood up as straight as an arrow, and the things spoken of were there before my eyes.

"Ah yes! I see the oranges and the bottles; but what has Madame G. to do with all that?"

"Really, colonel, she has everything to do with it,

since it is she who has sent them to you. A very lovely lady indeed, blonde, with blue eyes, and a black dress, as though she were a young widow. And she gave me my dinner, with a glass of good wine. She said, 'That poor colonel! how sorry I am for him!' There were also some other ladies there, from New York."

"There! — where?" interrupting him, for I understood nothing of his strange story.

"Where? At White House Landing."

"Have you been to White House?"

"Yes, indeed. Seeing that I could find nothing amongst these countrymen, I said to myself, 'Schmidt, why not go to White House? The supply base of the army is established there. You will be sure to bring back something.' Then I found out the road, and, as Turco is hardy, I was able to go and return without using him up."

"And you found Madame G. there?"

"Yes, colonel. I met an Alsatian, a countryman of mine, who was detailed to the commissary department. He said to me: 'Do you see that great steamer? That belongs to the Sanitary Commission. Go on board while I hold your horse. You will get everything you need there; ladies who will give you everything you wish for your colonel.' And I found it to be true."

This is how Schmidt after a day's absence had returned with full saddle-bags.

These delicacies were like manna in the desert, to me. The sherry especially, which came from a noted stock, the *Old Harmony*, seemed to me more than wine. It was renewed life that Mrs. G. had sent to me, — *consolatrix afflictorum.*

My quartermaster came the next day to give me the news of the regiment and bring me some letters. How far were the writers, when sending them, from foresee-

ing where I would receive them, and in what condition I would be when I read them. They were very gay in New York. War had put no stop to their pleasures. They congratulated me on our forward march. They were still ignorant of the part taken in the battle of Williamsburg by Peck's brigade, but they felicitated me on my *good health.* Life is full of these mockeries.

Although for more than a week I had drunk deeply of the bitter cup, it was not yet exhausted. On the 30th, in the night, a furious storm shook the Turner hut, and left me very little rest in my cot, poorly sheltered from the rain. During the 31st it was still worse. The sound of the cannon took the place of the thunder, and I could not doubt that a bloody battle was being fought before Richmond. Sickness had doubtless developed in me an unusual acuteness of hearing; for from my bed and through my open window I could not only hear the incessant detonation of the artillery, but even distinguish the musketry fire, although I was distant six miles in a direct line from the field of battle. That was not all. The direction of the sounds revealed clearly to me that the enemy was gaining ground, and driving our troops back.

In the afternoon, Schmidt, who had gone to find out the news, met a teamster, who told him that, at the moment when he left the brigade, the Fifty-fifth was going forward, without knapsacks, and at double quick, to charge the enemy. One can guess what a dreadful day I passed. My head began to throb. I could not keep quiet. I pictured to myself the left routed, the right cut to pieces, the flag lost, perhaps. I wished to rise, but fell back upon my pillow, overwhelmed by the thought of my powerlessness, and by the first symptoms of the fever, which began its attacks upon me anew. Shedel endeavored to calm me. "Do not be uneasy,"

said he, "all will go well." And he told me everything that he could remember or imagine, to demonstrate to me that the regiment was composed entirely of heroes, and that those who had run at Williamsburg were still more determined than the others to repair an hour of feebleness by deeds without number.

"Wait until to-morrow, colonel, and you will see."

The waiting appeared long, terribly long, during that night of fever and anxiety, during which I could have heard every hour strike, if in that solitude the hours had had a voice to measure the silence.

At last we heard some news, at first fragmentary, incomplete, and hardly intelligible, excepting in one point, on which all agreed: *The regiment had done gloriously.* Soon the lieutenant-colonel, thinking how I must suffer from uncertainties, sent me by messenger a pencil note, which dissipated all my fears — and my fever along with them.

Everybody, at this day, knows the history of the battle of Fair Oaks, which was fought more at Seven Pines, where the Fourth Corps was encamped, than at Fair Oaks. Our army was unfortunately placed on both sides of the Chickahominy, the three corps of Sumner, Fitz-John Porter, and Franklin on the left bank, forming altogether an effective force of sixty thousand men. On the right bank, the two corps of Heintzelman and Keyes, reduced to four divisions, amounted to scarcely thirty thousand men, badly placed.

Casey's division had been thrown forward three-quarters of a mile from Seven Pines, where Couch's division was placed. The Third Corps was much farther back on the Williamsburg road. In front, this left wing of the army was almost without communication with the centre and the right wing. Bottom's Bridge and the railroad bridge were so situated as to

make them unavailable for the purpose of sending over reënforcements, and, of the two bridges thrown across the river by Sumner, one had just been carried away by the rise of the water, and the other was in momentary danger of breaking when the Confederates made their attack.

General Keyes had several times called attention to the danger of his position, but without success. General Heintzelman, who commanded the left wing, could only obey the directions of the general-in-chief. To the reiterated objections of General Keyes, he replied, on the 29th of May, the day before the battle: "The position of our corps was selected by General Barnard and Lieutenant Comstock of the Engineers, and the instructions to occupy them came from Major-General McClellan. The commander-in-chief also ordered that the Third Corps should not be thrown forward, except to prevent yours from being driven back by the enemy." If General McClellan had wished to deliver up his left to the enemy, he could not have better taken his measures.

Invited in this manner to destroy the Fourth Corps, General Johnston did not wait to be urged. May 31, about eleven o'clock in the morning, he fell like an avalanche on Casey's division, which defended itself as well as possible, but was quickly overwhelmed. Eight of his guns were about to be captured when General Keyes ran himself to send in the Fifty-fifth to save them. The regiment went in on a run, led by General Nagley, who put it in position. Deployed rapidly between the enemy and the threatened pieces, it sustained the attack of a brigade without wavering, and the enemy was forced to stop before its obstinate resistance. For a whole hour it remained there, unshaken by every attack, and fell back only, its object accomplished, to

renew its exhausted ammunition, and render still further services. On that day it saved the guns, but lost more than a fourth of its effective strength, amongst them a large number of officers wounded.

Couch's division fought with a tenacity shown by the list of its losses, and especially by those of the enemy, who, although in overwhelming force, did not succeed in his object before two brigades of Kearney's division had arrived to support Couch. Nevertheless, in spite of this reënforcement, after having reformed its broken lines three times, it would probably have been destroyed if, towards the close of the day, the appearance of Sumner on his right had not changed the face of things, who, profiting by the only bridge which was left to him by which to cross the river, hastened to the sound of the cannon. The promptness and vigor with which he entered into line at Fair Oaks decided the fortunes of the day. The dearly bought successes of the enemy stopped at that point, and the next day were turned into defeat, when he was easily thrown back into his lines from the ground which he had taken the first day, at the price of seven thousand men.

Ours did not exceed five thousand. But the loss of the Fourth Corps was two-fifths of the whole. Of its nine generals eight were wounded, or had their horses killed under them; General Peck was amongst the latter.

Four regiments of the brigade were engaged (the Ninth Pennsylvania was on detached service). Of the four commanders, one, Colonel Riker of the Sixty-second New York, was killed; MacCarter and Rawley of the Ninety-third and One Hundred and Second Pennsylvania were wounded. The fourth, who was my lieutenant-colonel, had his horse killed under him. The

loss amongst the other officers was proportionately great. These figures have a significant eloquence.

General McClellan remained as inactive at the battle of Fair Oaks as he had been at that of Williamsburg. At the sound of the musketry he contented himself by sending an order to General Sumner, which the latter had already anticipated by putting his two divisions in motion, and he remained in his tent, not feeling very well, as he explained afterwards before the Congressional committee. The next morning he finally concluded to mount his horse and cross the Chickahominy, when everything was over, to order back Hooker, who, with his division, had advanced within four miles of Richmond without meeting any opposition. The greater part of our generals — Heintzelman, Keyes, Casey, Hooker, and many others with them — thought then, and think yet, that after the battle of Fair Oaks the Confederate capital was at our mercy if the army had advanced on the heels of the retreating enemy. But the army did not stir.

Of course, I was ignorant then of all these details ; at the time of the battle I knew only one thing, the good conduct of the regiment. The newspapers did not reach my hut ; all the noise, all the movement between the army and its base of supplies at White House were for me as if they did not exist.

Around the house was a large abandoned field, surrounded by great woods. On all sides the ground was covered by the thousand remains that soldiers leave behind them in abandoned camps : poles stuck in the ground, withered branches, broken cracker boxes, empty pork barrels, extinguished fires, ashes soaked by the rain, pieces of uniform, worn-out shoes, bloody remains of slaughtered beeves, heads with horns on, stiff hides, decaying entrails. What a refreshing sight for the

eyes of a convalescent! And yet that was the only view I had from my window; and it was in the midst of this depressing environment that I must rally, little by little, my weakened forces.

These days were dreary and bitter. My hosts were distressingly ignorant. They knew nothing about anything. Their existence was merely vegetation on two feet. There was no opportunity for even a shadow of a conversation. The woman spent her life dressing her husband, for whom she carded, spun, and wove the wool and cut and sewed the garments. Old Turner, not being able to dig in the ground any longer, did not know what to do with his great body. He went out, came in, stretched himself on a chair, or sat down on the door-sill, asking himself why his sheep had not yet returned. A true specimen of that class, intermediate between the planter and the slave, which the oligarchy of the South kept in subjection by means of his ignorance and his poverty, and from which, at this time, it drew its ample supply of food for powder.

Turner, however, was not without some little idea of history. He had heard from the old men — as he informed me — that America had been discovered by a great man by the name of Washington, who had driven away the British with the aid of a famous French general called Bonaparte. He had never heard of an emperor by the name of Napoleon.

However, the quartermaster and the second surgeon of the regiment had come to see me, and found that, for want of suitable nourishment, I could not recover my strength. They urged me to ask for a leave of absence for two or three weeks, which I decidedly refused to do as my regiment was still in front of the enemy. They consulted together in regard to bringing my condition to the knowledge of General Keyes, who had often

inquired about me. The doctor drew up a statement giving the reasons why a leave of absence was absolutely necessary to my recovery. The quartermaster took it to the general himself, adding personal explanations, and in a few days he returned to hand me special order No. 64 from the headquarters of the Fourth Corps, which granted me fifteen days' leave of absence, to go North, that I might recruit my health, broken by sickness.

On June 9, I bade adieu to the Turners, who, although rebels, did not hesitate to take the pay for their hospitality in *greenbacks*. I climbed, with great exertion, on my horse, my head a little flighty, my heart somewhat weak, and departed, followed by my little caravan.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SANITARY COMMISSION.

The victims of the Chickahominy — The army railroad — Peregrinations of a friend in search of me — Hospital tents — Agreeable surprise — Origin of the Sanitary Commission — Difficulties thrown in the way — Services rendered — The commission transports — Herculean labors — Strifes — The loads of sick humanity — Horrible realities — The miracles of charity.

THE nearest point where I could reach the railroad was Despatch Station. Our road to that point was one long series of mud-holes which we had to avoid by taking paths scarcely marked out. We proceeded slowly; but the air was sweet and we were in no hurry, so that, before the passage of the train, I had plenty of time to call at the house where Dr. Arthaud had his patients, — all sick, the wounded having been sent directly to White House.

On dismounting, the first person I met was General Nagley, who, under orders of General Keyes, had led the Fifty-fifth into action at Seven Pines. He congratulated me on the good conduct of my men, adding that they had done more than had been asked of them, — "for," said he, "an hour after having left them, long after the guns had been saved, I still found them in the same place, obstinately maintaining their position, from which they did not fall back until ordered."

The surgeon led me to a room on the ground floor, where he had collected the sick belonging to my command. It was a sad sight. These men, whom I had left twenty days before full of life and health, lay there, wan, emaciated, on a bit of straw where sickness held

them; some attacked by the terrible marsh fever, others tortured by rheumatism, others again exhausted by dysentery.

When I advanced into the room, these brave men, forgetting their own sufferings, appeared to think only of those of which I bore the evident marks. And yet what had they not endured? On May 31, while they were fighting in the position assigned to them, their camp had fallen into the hands of the enemy. They had lost everything there: tents, knapsacks, provisions, blankets. Since then, without shelter from the burning heat of the day, without protection against the heavy dews of the night, breathing an air infected by foul exhalations, drinking the marshy water poisoned by dead bodies, they daily saw their ranks diminished by a new consignment to the hospital.

This is where General McClellan had led his army. Not to Richmond, where it might and should have been at that hour; but in the swamps of the Chickahominy, where the fire of the enemy was less to be feared than the ravages of a deadly climate.

My quartermaster had his quarters near Despatch Station. I left my servants and my horses in his charge, and took my seat in the train which was to carry me to White House.

The train was made up of freight cars. There were no others on the line designed especially to provision the army. In case of necessity they could be used to transport the troops, the wounded, and the sick. Those who were travelling by themselves, officers and soldiers, stowed themselves away as best they could, without regard to rank, amongst the boxes and barrels, the sacks of oats and bundles of hay. As, after having unloaded its cargo, the train returned empty, we were

more favored as to room than as to cleanliness. But, amongst us, — all wounded or sick, — nobody troubled himself about so little a thing. It was a great privilege to be able to stretch one's self on a dusty floor, or sit down on a small valise.

The locomotive advanced with an exasperating slowness. The train stopped every few moments, for one cause or another, where the detachments guarding the road were posted. About noon, the engine left the cars on a side track. We had arrived. Arrived where? On the edge of a muddy plain, which stretched far away, and at the end of which we could see in the distance a collection of tents amongst the trees, and masts of ships. There was White House Landing. The difficulty was to reach it. Not a vehicle was in sight; not one was expected. Every one then made his way to the riverside in the best way he could.

I would have done as the others did; my legs might be just able to carry me there. But what should I do with my valise? However light it might be, it was still too heavy for my emaciated limbs, on which my uniform fitted about as well as an old coat hung on a stick for a scarecrow. A sergeant came along, with his arm in a sling. He was searching for his wounded captain, whom the train should have brought, but who was not among the passengers. I asked him when the steamer left for Fortress Monroe. "To-morrow morning, at eight o'clock." "Is there any place between here and the landing where one can get something to eat and can sleep?" Not to his knowledge. "Is the steamer which leaves in the morning at the landing?" "It will not come until half after eight this evening." "Can one sleep on the vessel?" "Not unless you have special permission?" "Where can I find the steamer of the Sanitary Commission?" There were

several of them, but they had all gone north, loaded with wounded after the battle of Fair Oaks.

While this discouraging conversation was going on, a small black boy came along, looking for an opportunity to earn a little something. He took my valise and followed me towards the river. That was the best I could do to find out where I must go. After stopping two or three times to rest and take my breath, I finally reached the river, painfully dragging along my boots heavy with mud.

I found there a fleet of transports, of every size and every kind, steamers, sailing vessels, barges without sails or steam; and along the bank, shaded by great trees, stretched a village of tents, of every size, inhabited by quartermasters, commissaries, sutlers, soldiers, and workingmen, black and white. Artillery wagons, drawn by six mules each and driven by negroes, were travelling about in every direction; the wagon masters, on horseback, were coming and going; workmen were unloading the ships; steam whistles were signalling each other. Everything was in motion in that human ant-hill.

Leaning against a rail put up for holding horses, I looked on passively at this spectacle, humiliated to feel that the fatigue of a short walk, the gnawings of an empty stomach, and bodily feebleness could produce such confusion in my ideas and disturbance in the exercise of my mental faculties. At this moment a friendly face appeared, and immediately Frederic L. Olmsted warmly shook my hand. "At last we have you! We have had trouble enough to find you! Do you know that we were very uneasy on your account? But come on. Here are some friends, who will be happy to see you again alive." And, passing his arm under mine, he led me toward a small steamboat of the

Sanitary Commission, of which he was chief secretary. I was beside myself with inner joy, in feeling that I had reached the end of my trials, and the satisfaction of knowing that I had not been forgotten during my days of illness, although, to tell the truth, I did not understand who had been looking for me, nor why I had been expected.

The enigma was soon explained. The New York newspapers had done me the honor to concern themselves about me. They had announced that I had been left dying in a little farmhouse on the Peninsula, the precise locality of which they could not state. The arrival of my servant on board the Sanitary Commission steamer led them to suppose I could not be far away; but, as he did not come back again, the lack of news led them to suppose the worst. Upon which a medical student, who was closely related to me by marriage, had taken a horse and searched the whole surrounding country to bring me back, dead or alive. A first unsuccessful trip had not discouraged him, and when I reached White House he had been gone two days on another trip. He received news of me only on seeing me the evening of his return, surrounded by such kind attention as almost to give one a desire to be sick, in order to receive such a welcome.

I will not publish the names of the American ladies who, in the performance of a great patriotic work, welcomed me on board the Wilson Small. I respect too highly their modesty, that virtue whose charm adds a peculiar grace to the merits of womanly devotion. But, if I do not publish their names here, they are not the less graven on the thankful hearts of many more than will be found readers of this book.

Dr. Haight, the young surgeon, was not the only one who had set out in search of me. There was a family

from Tours living in New York, two members of which, young women, had accompanied my family to America, in 1847, when I was arrested in France on my return from Italy. Their affairs had prospered greatly in the new world, where, in the course of a few years, they had brought over to their American home their aged father and the orphan children of a sister who had died young. One of them had married that officer of the Fifty-fifth militia who had proposed and made successful my candidacy for the command of the regiment. On entering the family, he had adopted their feelings of affection for me and mine. So that, when the news of my condition reached them, Ferran took his carpet-bag, and, leaving the charge of his business to a clerk, set out for Baltimore. He had served seven years in Africa, and therefore knew what he had undertaken to do. But he was not the man to be rebuffed by difficulties.

At Baltimore, he had to go the rounds of the offices, in order to obtain a permit for passage to Fortress Monroe. The object of his journey being stated, the pass was given to him, and the next morning, debarking on the encumbered wharf, he sought the hotel, bag in hand. Two-thirds of the rooms were taken by the government, for the medical service, and the remainder consisted of but a few rooms, more than full, always engaged in advance. But one could sleep on the floor of the dining-room, trusting his bag to the baggage man. Ferran did not ask for anything better.

He went to headquarters for information. I was acquainted with several officers there; but none of them knew anything of my whereabouts, and they advised him to see the surgeon-in-chief, director of the hospitals, which stretched in the distance towards Hampton. Ferran started for the hospitals.

Doctor Cuyler received him pleasantly, was very

obliging, had the registers and reports searched, but, finding there no trace of my presence, advised him to visit the different sections, where he would probably come across some of the wounded of the Fifty-fifth, and perhaps learn from them where to find me. Ferran commenced his rounds.

During the entire day he went from tent to tent, and from bed to bed, seeing the sick and wounded, asking the surgeons, talking with the men, and learned nothing more than he knew already, that I had been left *somewhere*, in a condition from which the worst might be feared. The third day, at the end of his search, he returned to find Dr. Cuyler and ask his advice. — "In your place," said the doctor to him, "I would go to White House. There are a large number of hospitals there, and it is quite probable that the colonel might be found in one of them."

Ferran returned to headquarters, obtained a pass for White House, left his valise at the hotel, and started that night on the mail-boat, determined, if it was necessary, to go even to the regiment. To his great satisfaction, he met on the boat a New York merchant of his acquaintance. Mr. Meeks had two sons in the service. One, my quartermaster, attacked by typhoid fever on the Warwick, was then at home, where he was slowly regaining his health. The other had been wounded — some said killed — at Fair Oaks. In the absence of positive news, the father had started for the army, not knowing whether he would take his son home living or dead. Mr. Meeks and Ferran felt themselves naturally drawn together by the similarity of the object of their journey. They agreed to act together in their efforts when they landed at White House, asking where they could find supper, or, at least, a place to lodge during the night.

That day had not been one of repose for me. My moral force strengthened by the hospitality of the Sanitary Commission, and my physical by the first substantial meal I had eaten for more than a month, I had gone off the steamer, attracted by a red kepi that I perceived near a sutler's tent. It was, in fact, one of my men, who, wounded in the head, had come there from the hospital to see what he could see. When he had replied to my questions, —

"Colonel," said he, "our men who are at the hospital would be very glad to see you. Can you not give them the pleasure?"

I wished nothing better, but I was afraid of my strength.

"Is it very far?" I asked.

"Not very far. We follow the road to the trees you see there. Then we turn to the right, across the fields, for a short distance."

If I had been alone, I doubt whether I would have tried it. But the honest lad insisted with so much earnestness on the pleasure the visit would give to the wounded, that I started with him.

Half-way to the hospital, we sat down on a fallen tree, before crossing a wide field, on the other side of which the white tents of the hospital glistened in the sun. My guide was more active than I; he laughed occasionally, under the bandages with which his head was enveloped, thinking of the agreeable surprise which he was about to give his comrades, in bringing them their colonel. For my part, I forgot my fatigue when I found myself amongst them. The hospital was in fine condition, and they were well cared for. I listened to their stories of the battle of Seven Pines, I encouraged them in their hopes of soon rejoining the regiment, and finally left them, thinking of the different

effect which wounds and sickness have on the morale of men. Wounds appear to affect only the physical constitution; the moral force remains intact and preserves all its vigor. They still exulted in the remembrances of the fight. — How they had rolled up those Johnny rebs! They had poured into them such a fire as if Heaven itself had taken up arms against them. The faster the rebels came on, the more they covered the ground with them.

"Ah, colonel! What a pity you were not there! That is what you may call a battle. Williamsburg was all well enough to commence with. But, in comparison with Seven Pines, it was only *small beer*. And yet, after all that, the army did not go into Richmond! Well, we must have patience; it will not be long. I hope we will be able to return before the grand final tableau!"

So spoke the wounded men. What a contrast with the sick, whom I visited at Despatch Station. The latter had lost, with their physical power, all their moral courage. Discouraged and disgusted with everything, insensible to hope and even desires, they asked from life but one thing, relief from suffering. The full activity of the faculties of the mind are then dependent on the action of the bodily organs. When the latter suffer certain material disorders, the mind becomes paralyzed in its immateriality. A condition not flattering to human vanity, but the fact of which I less than any one can call in doubt.

I returned to the steamer so tired, both in body and mind, that I could only receive with the humility of a guilty conscience the reproofs for my imprudence. They made for me a camp bed, in a place where I could be watched and where I soon fell into a deep sleep.

When I awoke, it was night. The lamps were

lighted in the cabin, but the one on the table near me was so shaded by a screen interposed as not to interrupt my sleep. The sound of a voice in the room had recalled me from the land of dreams. I opened my eyes, and saw a person unknown to me, on the last step of the stairs, who, hat in hand, was asking the doctor a number of questions, to which I paid little attention. All that I caught was that he was inquiring with much solicitude about some friend or relative, who was wounded. Behind him, in the shade, stood a second figure, motionless and as if waiting his turn, who from the first took all my attention. Well, thought I, there is a man who bears a striking resemblance to Ferran. I then turned on my bed, to go to sleep again.

The conversation continued. I thought of the features of the stranger. I wished to examine them further, and rose up softly on my elbow. I had never seen so extraordinary a resemblance. But it was absurd to suppose it could be Ferran. What reason in the world could bring him from New York to White House? I began to fear that it was an illusion of my brain, tired by exertion, and, resting on my pillow, I tried to think no more about it. Then it seemed to me that the conversation ceased, and the two inquirers started to depart. I wished to be sure. If it is he, I said to myself, he will recognize his own name. I called, "Ferran," in a low voice.

On hearing that word, Ferran sprang into the middle of the room, as if sent by a spring. "Colonel! my good colonel, where are you?" "Here, my friend, here." He followed the sound and seized the hand I extended to him "Thank God!" he cried, "I will lead you back to life."

The Sanitary Commission, which sheltered me, was an admirable institution, brought forth by the war. By

the immense service it rendered, it well illustrated the old proverb, which might serve as a device: "*Aux grand maux les grands remèdes.*" (For great evils, great remedies.) As Minerva sprang, full-armed, from the brain of Jupiter, the commission sprang, fully organized, from the brain of Rev. Dr. Bellows, a Unitarian clergyman of New York. Animated by a true philanthropy, endowed with a highly practical mind, with an indefatigable activity, Dr. Bellows conceived the first idea of concentrating into a vast unity of administration and action the scattered associations spontaneously organized to aid the medical service of the army, but the isolated efforts of which rather showed good intentions than led to any great results.

To unite under a common direction all these patriotic good-wills, to arrange systematically their spheres of activity with the disposition of the vast voluntary contributions to be drawn from the liberality of the people of the loyal States, and, finally, to place the management of the great work under the patronage and control of the federal government, without asking from it the help of a man or a dollar, — such was the plan conceived and realized.

It is only necessary to mention the amount contributed, to show the generosity of the people and the zeal of the commission. During the war, the Sanitary Commission collected and distributed to the armies *twenty millions* of dollars, having received five millions in money and fifteen millions in supplies.

But, before reaching any results, it had to meet with many difficulties and surmount many obstacles. It was necessary to humor the official susceptibility, quick to take alarm at any appearance of rivalry; it had to strive against the spirit of the bureau, narrow and devoted to routine, always opposed to innovations. It was also

necessary to demonstrate the practicability of the undertaking, to the sceptical spirits, who, as one of the commission explained to me, saw only, in the plan proposed, a sentimental theory, lacking practical sense, conceived by tender-hearted women, charitable clergymen, and philanthropic physicians, deserving only the consideration due to the earnestness and respectable character of its advocates. President Lincoln himself frankly told Dr. Bellows that he feared the commission would be a *fifth wheel to a coach*, more embarrassing than useful.

However, the committee on organization had modestly formulated its views in a manner not to give umbrage to any one. "The object of the organization," it had declared publicly, "will be to collect and distribute information obtained from official sources concerning the present and probable needs of the army; to form a connection with the medical corps of the army and of the States, and to assist their efforts as auxiliaries; to connect itself with the New York medical association for the supply of lint, bandages, etc.; to provide a depot of supplies; to solicit the aid of all local associations, here and elsewhere, who desire the assistance of this society, and especially to open an office for the examination and registration of candidates for the medical instruction of the nurses; and, finally, to take measures to furnish a number of good nurses sufficient for all possible needs of the war."

This programme was, as will be seen, only as the acorn to the oak; but still it took more than six weeks of journeys back and forth, of explanations, of strife even, in order to make a start. Finally, June 13, 1861, the President, on the proposal of the Secretary of War, approved the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry and Advice, in respect to the sanitary interests of the

United States' forces, without remuneration from the government. The commission was composed at that time of nine members, under the presidency of Dr. Bellows, and, in coöperation with a military surgeon detailed for that purpose, immediately set to work.

In the first place, it completed its organization by the addition of new members, the appointment of a treasurer, chief secretary, the formation of sub-committees in the East and in the West, the despatch of sanitary inspectors to the armies and of agents to the different States. Finally, such was its activity and the rapidity of its progress that, even before the first shock of arms, it was ready to aid our sick and wounded after having taken the initiative in many salutary measures for the health and well-being of our soldiers. Since then, and up to the end of the war, with no other resources than the liberality of the people, with no other assistance than that of its employés, the commission pursued its work of patriotic charity on a scale corresponding to the great proportions of the conflict. Wherever our armies fought, wherever there were any sufferings to assuage or sick to relieve, upon the field of battle or in the hospital, amongst the camps and in the garrisons, for the men assembled under the flag and for those whom sickness or wounds sent singly to their homes, the Sanitary Commission was always there, as indefatigable in its devotion as it was inexhaustible in its assistance.

The medical service of the army was so poorly organized, so entirely insufficient to provide for the most pressing necessities, that, during the first year of the war, a large part of its functions fell upon the Sanitary Commission. It was the commission, for instance, which had to take charge of the transportation to the North of the greater part of the sick and wounded of

the Army of the Potomac during the campaign of the Peninsula. Without it a large number of the unfortunates whom it nursed and took care of before their embarkation and during the trip would never have seen their families again or reappeared in the ranks. And this was only a part of the services of a branch of the *Aid Department*, at a time when the average of the sick in the federal armies had reached the proportion of one-seventh of the whole number, and when the permanent and temporary hospitals had to provide for a hundred thousand sick and wounded.

In the service of the hospital transports, so necessary to the Army of the Potomac, the government furnished only the vessels. They were great steamers engaged for the transport of the troops, and which, when the troops had debarked on the Peninsula, were without immediate work, although they were costing the government six and eight hundred, and even as high as a thousand dollars a day. Eight or ten were successively transferred to the commission in the condition in which they were found. It was first necessary to clean them from one end to the other. Then the interior arrangement had to be changed to serve the needs of their new duties. The commission put on board the necessary employés, and provided everything requisite for the use of the sick and wounded, — food and drink, mattresses, blankets, linen, etc.

The first vessel used by the commission, the Daniel Webster, arrived at the end of April at the depot, when the army was before Yorktown, with a service perfectly organized, of six medical students, twenty nurses (all volunteers without pay), four surgeons, four associate ladies, twelve freedmen, three carpenters, and a half-dozen boys for common service. I state thus exactly, in order to give an insight into the *personal*

put on board by the commission under ordinary circumstances. In time of urgent need additional aid was sent, in accordance with the necessities of the service.

May 1, two vessels, loaded with provisions, arrived at the depot, where the commission had, besides, a small steamer, the Wilson Small, intended to be used to ascend the rivers, to a point where they became shallow, to bring down the sick and wounded. There the committee established its headquarters.

On the next day everybody was at work. The Wilson Small brought back from its first trip thirty-five sick. The ladies went through the hospital tents, taking with them spirit lamps, bowls of gruel, lemons, brandy, and clean linen; while on board the Webster, already half-full of patients, other provisions were distributed on the requisition of the surgeons, some of whom came for miles through the swamps and mud-holes to get them.

But what was that? But an insignificant prelude to the labors soon to become necessary.

On the 4th of May, when the army moved suddenly, as a result of the evacuation of Yorktown by the enemy, all the sick were necessarily left behind. The surgeons, not wishing to prolong their stay in the abandoned lines, and in a hurry to rejoin their regiments, made haste to get rid of their patients by sending them as quickly as possible either to Yorktown or to Cheesman Creek, where, after having been piled into ambulances and jolted over the roads, the unfortunates were abandoned to the Sanitary Commission, which, it was said, had taken upon itself the duty of caring for them. As it happened at this time, the commission had not a transport at its disposal. The Daniel Webster had departed for the North, with a full load of sick, and the Ocean Queen, designed to take her place, arrived,

it is true, but empty, without any preparation or provisioning of any kind, without an employé of the commission, which, indeed, had not yet taken possession of her. No matter; as soon as she appeared, two barges overloaded with sick came alongside, and, in spite of all remonstrances, without an hour of delay for the most necessary preparations, their loads of suffering humanity were poured into her. Other loads followed in turn. Those who were able to stand were pushed upon the deck: the others, carried on board in the arms of the bearers, were laid down exhausted, dying. Among them were many attacked with typhoid fever; some delirious, and all put down in the first vacant place which could be found.

Fortunately, a reënforcement of surgeons, nurses, and assisting ladies had come on from Baltimore. Negroes were not difficult to find. Supplies soon arrived from the depot — provisions, mattresses, and blankets. Little by little order was established, and towards midnight the living were attended to; in the morning, a half-dozen dead were to be buried. But the next morning new arrivals filled up the boat, until it was absolutely loaded down. And yet, when the anchor was raised, the patients were distributed according to their diseases, and the service was completely organized. All that in two days.

Some hundreds of sick yet remained, brought to Yorktown in wagons from the different abandoned camps on the Warwick line. These poor fellows were tumbled into the mud while the tents were being put up to receive them. The committee supplied them with provisions from its magazines, and hastened to reach West Point, where the battle of Williamsburg had just cut out an abundance of work for it.

They sent back as many wounded as the Wilson

Small could carry, all chosen from the severest cases, the remainder being transported to Fortress Monroe by government steamers, without any medical supplies. Three men died during the night. It was certainly not for want of devoted care. "Our little boat," wrote one of the ladies, "is so loaded that the well sleep on the upper deck, all that is under cover being occupied by the wounded, and, as all our little stock of crockery, etc., is required for the sufferers, we eat our meat and potatoes on slices of bread for plates, the top of the stove serving as a table." During the following days important supplies, both in respect to persons and material, arrived. The Daniel Webster returned from New York, departed again, completely loaded and supplied, in eighteen hours. It was at this time that the government, convinced by experience of the important services of the commission, put four or five other large steamers at its disposal, with which it continued to transport our sick and wounded to the hospitals at Hampton Roads, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, or Washington.

But what labors without any relief; fatigues endured night and day; what pains taken to leave no one uncared-for in that great work of assistance for all, and of salvation for so many! Whatever was needed was procured at any price; what could not be obtained, must be made. If fresh meat was wanting after the forward movement of the army, they hunted up the cattle strayed in the woods. If a new steamer has not cooking appliances sufficient for a cargo of wounded, the huts of Yorktown, the abandoned camps, the sutlers' dismantled establishments are searched through, to see what can be found that will answer the purpose.

One night the steamer Knickerbocker is made ready to take a load of sick and wounded. An order comes

from the quartermaster-general, who, in a hurry, has forgotten that the steamer had been transferred to the commission. No matter; it is an order; it must be obeyed; and immediately the Knickerbocker is under way, carrying off, on a purely military errand, the sanitary employés and the ladies in charge. In the morning, the committee find that their boat is gone. They go everywhere for information. Finally, the mistake is acknowledged. The steamer will return; but it is a day lost.

The next day, a telegram from the medical director at Williamsburg wishes a steamer in two hours, to take on board two hundred wounded from Queen's Creek. Other arrangements had been made, but they were immediately changed, and the boat arrived at the point designated. No wounded there. The medical director, not counting on such punctuality, had not yet sent his convoy. More delays. The loading was not made until early in the following day. Then it is a brigade surgeon, who, having the convoy in his charge, and not understanding the limits of his authority, assumes to exercise on board the vessel the same power as in his hospital tents. Protest is made by the general secretary, who, in order to secure the powers of the commission and to maintain its arrangements, is compelled to go to Williamsburg on a wagon loaded with forage. The surgeon is finally brought back to his proper sphere by an order in correct form, while the hundreds of wounded, eaten up with flies and mosquitoes, wait on the river bank, with an impatience easy to understand.

In the evening, while the work of putting them on board was being completed, Mr. Olmsted went up the river in the yawl, to be certain that no one was left behind, and four miles from all assistance, without

help or nourishment, he found eight unfortunates, on the borders of a wood, where, the night before, two wagoners had been assassinated by the people of the neighborhood. These poor fellows, stricken down by the fever, and incapable of following the marching column, had wandered around at random, refused by the hospitals because they did not have their papers from their captains or the surgeons of their regiments. One of them died as they were putting him on board the steamer.

At this moment an officer arrived, requesting that a steamer be sent as soon as possible to Bigelow's Landing, where, according to the report of the ambulance wagon master, "a hundred poor soldiers had been left to die without shelter, in a driving storm, without help or provisions." *En route* then for Bigelow's Landing.

But at the moment when the anchor is being raised a small steamboat hails her, and the surgeon in charge comes on board and asks that the commission should immediately take a hundred and fifty patients, collected that morning at West Point, and who have remained the whole day without the least nourishment. "The weather was rainy and cold," said Mr. Olmsted. "I hesitated at first, on account of the greater urgency which called us to Bigelow's Landing. But, the surgeon having induced me to glance into the interior of the cabin, I changed my mind. The narrow room was as full and crowded as it could be with sick soldiers, sitting on the floor. There was not room for them to lie down. Only two or three were stretched out at full length. One of them was dying, — was dead when my eyes rested on him a second time. Everything terribly dirty, and the air suffocating. We began immediately to take them on board the Knickerbocker."

It was midnight when the transfer was finished. At

nine o'clock two other boats had left for Bigelow's Landing. There were always several of the commission ladies along. They were present everywhere. Nothing repelled them, nothing discouraged them, nothing frightened them. Their untiring devotion did not hesitate before anything which could relieve our sick and wounded, either in their reception on board the transports, or during the trip by sea. They were ready for any emergency, with a marvellous intelligence, never shrinking before loss of sleep, fatigue, or even danger.

To reach Bigelow's Landing, it was necessary to use lighters and tow a barge, on which the sick were obliged to remain, exposed to a beating rain, until they had picked up eight or ten dying men, incapable of moving from the places here and there on the bank where they were lying. Twenty-four hours later, how many more would have been dead men?

Such were, at a glance, the first labors of the Sanitary Commission on the Peninsula, after the evacuation of Yorktown and the battle of Williamsburg. Each one of these vessels having carried North from three hundred to five hundred sick or wounded on each trip, it might have been hoped that the army hospitals, relieved to so great an extent, would be able, in a measure, to care for new contingencies. But such was not the case. From the time when the troops were established on the marshy borders of the Chickahominy, their sanitary condition became worse from day to day, so that soon all the resources of the medical department became insufficient for the terrible quota of sick men drawn every morning from our decimated regiments. The supply of tents sent from Washington was not enough even to shelter all the patients whom the railroads brought to White House. The surgeons hastened

to send off on the commission transports all that they could carry. But these transports, though making continual trips, were not able to take away the sick as fast as they arrived. There always remained some without shelter or care, exposed to all extremes of a deadly climate, and whom it was necessary to look after here and there, where they had been dropped. And always some died before it was possible to embark them.

Such was the state of affairs when the battle of Fair Oaks came to put to a supreme trial the devotion and the resources of the commission.

The first train of wounded arrived at White House in the night of May 31, after the battle of Seven Pines. Others followed without interruption, as fast as the railroad could bring them. There ensued, during two or three days, a frightful confusion, a heaping-up of suffering and misery, more hideous in its reality than Dante's hell in his imaginary circles. All the hospitals were overflowing with the sick, and it became necessary by every possible conveyance to place the unfortunate wounded at Yorktown and Fortress Monroe, while awaiting an opportunity to send them North. The steamers of the commission being far from sufficient, the quartermaster department furnished all the available transportation it had ; but these vessels were without accommodations of any sort, and without any nurses to take care of the sick piled into them hurriedly, without order, without system, in the necessity of disposing of them in the quickest possible manner. Happy indeed were those whose good fortune it was to be sent aboard the vessels of the commission. There were eighteen hundred who there first received the needed relief. To appreciate the importance and extent of its services in these terrible circumstances,

I cannot do better than to make a few extracts from its correspondence.

"The commission transports," wrote one of the ladies in charge, "were loaded first, and departed with usual promptness and good order. Afterwards other vessels arrived, assigned by the government to the hospital service. These boats were not under the control of the commission. No one was there to take charge of them; no one to receive the wounded at the landing, no one to properly put them on board, no one to see if the boat was provided with necessary supplies. As a matter of course, the commission did everything it could in the emergency; but it was there without authority, and had no rights except those of charity. It could neither control nor stop the frightful confusion resulting from the arrival of trains, one after another, and the heaping-up of the wounded on board the different vessels. But it did all that could be done. Night and day, its members worked to make the best of untoward circumstances. Three, at least, of the government vessels were without a particle of food for the wounded passengers, — and, if there had been, there was not a pail or a utensil in which to distribute it.

"Our supply boat, the Elizabeth, arrived, and we went on board the Vanderbilt. May I never see again a similar scene to that of which I was a witness, and in the midst of which I have lived for two days. Men in a horrible condition, mutilated, shattered, crying, were brought in on litters by negroes, who unloaded them wherever they could, knocking against doors, against pillars, and treading without mercy on those who were stretched out in their way. Imagine a great steamer, whose every deck, every bed, every square inch is covered with wounded, where everything, even to the stair-

way of ladders, is covered with men less grievously wounded than the others, — and litters still coming on board, one after another, with the hope of finding some vacant corner.

"It rained in torrents. Two transports were already full. We returned on shore, where the same thing was repeated, to embark one hundred and fifty wounded on board the Kennebec, except a few so dreadfully wounded that they could not be moved in the darkness of the night and under the rain, and who were, for the time being, left in the wagons. We distributed refreshments to all. — At daylight, we took some repose and at half-past six in the morning we were on the Daniel Webster No. 2. At noon, we had given breakfast to six hundred wounded, before having taken our own."

We will now let Mr. Olmsted, the chief secretary of the commission, speak : —

"In the afternoon of June 2, the wounded continued to arrive by all the trains without any assistance. They were loaded into the freight cars as closely as possible, without arrangement, without beds, without straw, a few having, at the most, a handful of hay under their heads. Many of the lightly wounded were brought along on the tops of the cars. They came in this way, dead and living mingled together in the same narrow box, numbers of them with *horrible* wounds full of matter, swarming with worms. Remember that it was a summer day in Virginia, clear and calm. The stench was so strong that it caused vomiting even amongst our sturdy employés, accustomed to care for the sick.

"Is it necessary to tell you that our ladies are always ready to hurry to these dreadful places, in torrents of rain, by the dim light of a lantern, at any hour of the night, carrying with them spirits and ice-water, bringing

back to life those whose exhaustion alone made them despair, or receiving for a mother or wife the last words of the dying.

"The trains of wounded and sick arrive at every hour of the night. As soon as the whistle is heard, Dr. Ware hurries to his place and the ladies are at their posts in their tents. The fires blaze under a row of saucepans, the lamps are lighted near savory provisions, piles of bread and cups of coffee. — Then come first in line those who are slightly wounded. In going on board the boat they stop before the tent and receive a cup of hot coffee, with as much condensed milk as they wish. Then comes the slow defiling of the litters, the unfortunate occupants of which are comforted with brandy, wine, or iced lemonade. A minute suffices to pour something into their throats, to thrust some oranges in their hands, to save them from exhaustion and thirst until a meal, prepared with care, can be served to them on board the vessel. Those who are to remain on shore are put under the twenty Sibley tents set up by the commission along the railroad. There is where each one of our squad of five goes every night to feed from a hundred to a hundred and fifty wounded."

A notable fact is that among these wounded were many Confederates, who were cared for the same as our own men, with the difference only that they were guarded as prisoners. They were not less surprised than grateful, their barbarous customs not having prepared them for the generosity arising from our civilization.

So, thanks to the Sanitary Commission, order was in a few days restored to that chaos, the relief became equal to the demands made upon it, and the regular action of the service had succeeded to the utter dis-

order resulting from an avalanche of suffering to be assuaged at once.

This unhappy experience was not, however, without producing fortunate results. Important improvements were introduced into the organization of the medical department; more efficient measures were taken to repair omissions, to fill up gaps, to provide against insufficiencies, and, finally, to prevent the return of such a catastrophe. In this branch, as in the others, the general administration of the army learned, in the hard lessons of experience, to follow the path of progress. We must remember that the United States were not a military nation; that for them everything was new in the organization, the maintenance, and the movements of great armies in a campaign, and we will be less surprised at the effects of their inexperience than at the promptness with which they caused them to disappear.

I was welcomed on board the Wilson Small, the eighth day after the battle of Fair Oaks, and all traces of encumbrance had already disappeared from the hospitals. The transports of the commission carried away, in their regular turn, the patients committed to the care of a more numerous corps of assistants. The additional steamers again took their places in the quartermaster department, and the assisting ladies were able to take some rest, in the performance of their regular duties, from the harassing fatigues undergone with the heroism of charitable devotion. During the evening of repose and comfort for which I am indebted to the care of those noble women, no one of them once thought of rehearsing to me those details which I have related in their honor. No more than these ladies did the other members of the commission appear to think they had done more than perform the simplest of duties.

This war was fruitful in great sacrifices. Some gave their blood, others their wealth. And none the less deserving at the hands of the Republic were the latter, who consecrated their efforts to the relief and comfort of her defenders.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SEVEN DAYS' BATTLE.

Contrasts — New York — The Newport steamer — Boston — Success of Stonewall Jackson — Stuart's raid — Return to Fortress Monroe — Interview with General Dix — Evacuaton of West Point — Arrival at Harrison's Landing — The work of McClellan — A characteristic despatch — Battle of Mechanicsville — of Gaines' Mill — of Savage Station — of White Oak Swamp — of Glendale — of Malvern Hill — The port of refuge.

On the morning of June 10, I embarked with my fellow-traveller on the mail steamer, which carried scarcely any but sick and wounded. The cabin reserved for officers had the sad look of an infirmary. No life, no animation. The passengers, stretched out in their blankets or their overcoats on the sofas or on the floor, exchanged few words. Those suffering the least, seated on chairs, appeared plunged in sleepy meditation. Each one thought silently of the hard realities of war, as it were, the scoriæ soiled by the blood and grime of that volcano of which from afar we see but the fiery plume, — of the miseries endured, of friends dead, of present burdens, of the future uncertainties. All that could be read in those pale faces, in those languid looks, wherein the joyous reflections of life had given place to mournful shadows. But I said to myself: "Let but health come again and all this will be forgotten. In a month's time we shall nearly all be back at our posts, joyous as people who have awakened from an evil dream."

In the afternoon we were at Fortress Monroe, in time to take the steamer to Baltimore, where we arrived

early the next morning. A breakfast to refresh us and we were off for New York by the railroad.

How beautiful is all that country! How rich and well cultivated! I saw everywhere things to which on other occasions I had given no attention. Extensive farms where breathed abundant life, fields where the harvests ripened in the sun in full security; herds of cattle peacefully grazed in the fertile meadows, and everywhere the fences were standing undisturbed. No picket fires smoking along the edge of the woods; no camps whitening the hillsides; no heavy wagons jolting along the roads; no cannon, no stacks of arms, no soldiers.

Good people standing joyfully on your doorsills, you who see from a distance the trains passing along the railroad, and you who ask what is the news from the seat of war, take care how you complain about an increase of taxes which may cut a little into your revenues. Rather thank Heaven that the tide of armed men has not taken its course across your fields. If it had so passed, of everything which now makes your happiness and your riches there would remain to-day nothing but ruins.

New York presented its usual appearance, except, perhaps, a noticeable increase of mercantile activity and obtrusive luxury. The war had opened new sources of speculation, which had been pursued with more activity than conscience, and the newly enriched were in great haste to display to all eyes the material proofs of their good fortune. One would hardly have been conscious that there was a war, if it had not been for the presence in the street of so many sick and wounded in uniform.

I stopped only one day in New York, long enough to convince my friends that I had not died of disease,

been strangled by the guerillas, or poisoned by the farmers, as rumor had declared. I was not yet in condition to meet an assault of mothers, wives, sisters, and weeping lovers, who, without counting the male relatives or the friends of both sexes, would probably come to ask me for news as to the killed and wounded of the Fifty-fifth, in whom their hearts had a particular interest, and even about the well who had neglected to write after the battle of Fair Oaks. Strengthened already, by a diet quite different from that of the army, I hurried on to Boston by the Fall River Line.

The fine equipment of this line of steamers is well known. The watering season was about to open, and promised to be brilliant.

The steamer was filled with a fashionable crowd leaving the city to breathe the Atlantic air in their sumptuous villas, which have made the pretty port of Rhode Island the paradise of earth for summer days. There were on board horses, carriages, servants, and great trunks without number, reminding me of the modest valise, weighing thirty pounds, which the regulations allowed me in the army.

All this fine world went and came, jested and laughed, and was interested in the war, as in an exciting novel, which is read in instalments. I was somewhat startled at the violent contrast between this superb steamer full of beautiful toilets, of refined elegance, of gay converse, in which a happy life was shown by a thousand joyous remarks, and that poor steamer where, but two days before, I was surrounded with soiled uniforms and pitiful wrecks of men, and where the suffering and privations were shown by a mournful silence. Did I dream then, or do I dream now? Neither the one nor the other. Such contrasts as these are continually occurring around us in reality, as much as, or more than, in

fiction. Riches jostle misery, virtue vice, happiness adversity, and all the flowers of life open out to the sunlight upon some miry bank.

I always liked Boston; — perhaps because I have never lived there, as unprejudiced Bostonians have assured me. If it is true that this great city has preserved many of the petty traditions and narrow ways of small villages, I can only say I have never perceived them. During the short sojourns which I have made there, at different times, I have always received a hospitable welcome and the most polite attention, which is generally the case with strangers passing through. I have met there men of great minds, celebrities learned and literary, great political characters, in the midst of a society truly distinguished and of a people deeply patriotic. On this occasion, I was going to find there, what I was in search of above all things, — health.

How unjust the world is as regards the climate of Boston! Under the pretext that it makes the men grumblers and the women nervous, there is nothing too bad to say about that good east wind, which blows from the Atlantic. But for a sick man, struck down by the heavy and poison-laden atmosphere of the Virginia Peninsula, it was like a breeze from Paradise. I shall never forget with what delight I drank in, with long inspirations, both physical and mental vigor, and how, each day, the friends who had welcomed me aided my convalescence by drives through the suburbs, the most charming, and inhabited by the most refined population, of any city in the world.

The patriotic heart beat vigorously in modern Athens. It had not, as in some other cities of the North, been subjected to enthusiastic exaggerations or the reactions of discouragement. It had rather shown itself by a vigorous and persistent determination, whether in suc-

cesses or in reverses. This was logical. No State of the North has, I believe, better understood and more determinedly accepted the necessity for the war than Massachusetts. It has been made a reproach to her that she had forwarded the strife, by the aggressive propaganda of her abolitionism; but must the struggle of liberty against slavery remain forever in the domain of theory? Must it not come to the decisive trial by battle? By having stirred up the movement of minds, and hurried on the march of events towards the practical solution of the problem, Massachusetts has simply added another glorious title to all those which she shared in common with the other free States of the Union.

During the month of June, 1862, every one followed with an uneasy eye the developments of the peninsular campaign, and it was already feared that the result might be unfortunate. Public opinion began to be suspicious of General McClellan; the people prepared for new sacrifices, for which it foresaw the near necessity, without, however, being alarmed.

Army news, in fact, was very discouraging. Jackson had had his own way in the Shenandoah valley, where our forces were scattered and unskilfully posted. He had beaten Banks at Winchester, and driven him rapidly back across the Potomac; — he had repulsed Fremont at Cross Keys; — he had badly handled Shields at Port Republic; and, finally, had escaped uninjured from McDowell, and carried off a large booty, a great number of prisoners, a quantity of arms, and several pieces of artillery.

In addition, information came that General Stuart, with a force of fifteen hundred cavalry, had, with a success equal to its boldness, gone around the Army of the Potomac, cut the railroad, destroyed a great quantity of sup-

plies, picked up a considerable number of prisoners, and returned to Richmond, without meeting with any one to bar his passage. If he did not destroy the depot at White House, it was because he did not attempt it, fearing to meet forces which were not there. Besides the damage to material, by this reconnoissance, he had learned all he wished to know in regard to the disposition of our forces and the vulnerability of our line of supplies.

It was very fortunate for me that I was no longer at Turner's. I would have shared the fate of my quartermaster, who was carried off from that neighborhood with twenty empty wagons.

The good air and the life in Boston soon strengthened me so that I believed I was in condition to return to the army. This was not, however, the opinion of the physicians. But I had greater confidence in nature to fully restore me than they had. And, besides, — I must own it, — I was hurried by the fear of not arriving in time for the capture of Richmond. Alas! how much further we were from it than I supposed, when on the 29th, in the morning, the Baltimore steamer left me at Fortress Monroe.

For two days they had been without news from the army. The latest information received was of a bloody battle on the right of our lines, at Mechanicsville, where the enemy had been repulsed on the 26th, with great loss. Since then, there had been only rumors and conjectures, with no official report. The government was silent, and with good reason, — it heard nothing. The press was no better informed. This silence was interpreted as inauspicious, every one thinking it to be the indication of some disaster.

The first positive fact that I learned, on landing on the wharf, was the interruption of the daily communi-

cation with White House, and the arrival of transports since the night before indicated the precipitate evacuation of the depots and hospitals on the Pamunkey. I hurried to the fort, where I was received by General Dix, whom I had known personally for a long time. I presented to him my leave of absence, which expired the next day, and asked him to furnish me with transportation to rejoin my regiment immediately.

General Dix shook his head, and contented himself by replying, "It is impossible."

I persisted in urging my request.

"But, general," I replied, "I have been already only too long absent. If there is a battle going on at this time, it is only so much greater reason why I should rejoin my regiment without delay."

"It is impossible," repeated the general, laconically, without replying to my remark. "The best I can do is to promise you an order for passage on the first boat sent to the army. In any event, that will not be before to-morrow."

The general closed this short interview by an invitation to breakfast with his family and the principal officers of his staff. At the table, it seemed as though every one was preoccupied. The conversation was without life, and was limited to unimportant subjects. Not a word was said which bore upon what was passing on the Chickahominy.

On leaving the general's quarters, I stopped at the telegraph office to send to New York a simple message of a few words: "Arrived safely; kept here to-day; to-morrow with the army," and my signature. The employé politely returned me the paper. There was a formal order to send no message, no matter what, coming from a private source. Decidedly, something very

grave must have happened; but, still, what was it? No one could tell me.

It was Sunday. The hours passed slowly and heavily, when in the afternoon, returning to the landing, I saw the Wilson Small at anchor in the bay. There is my lodging-place for the night, I thought. I went immediately on board, where I learned, at last, something positive. The enemy had turned our right to the north of the Chickahominy, and beaten it, cut off our communication with our base of supplies, and thrown back the greater part of our army in retreat towards the James. On the 26th, an order had been received at White House, to evacuate the hospitals without losing an instant, to load everything on the transports for which room could be found, and to burn everything which must be left behind. This was promptly done. In two days, fifteen hundred sick, all the employés of the government, the garrison, and the greater part of the provisions were taken away. There was even found place on the forage barges for an exodus of negroes, men, women, and children, abandoning the land of slavery. The Wilson Small was the last to leave, lighted by the blaze which devoured everything that could not be brought away.

The next morning, the 30th, I went to headquarters at an early hour. Not a despatch from the army, from which, evidently, nothing had been received for three days. Official reticence in this instance was not voluntary, but forced. They said nothing because they knew nothing. Chance gave me that day a proof of this fact, as curious as it was irrefutable.

Mr. B. of Philadelphia, who loved to devote his time and part of his income to different philanthropic objects, had just arrived at Fortress Monroe in search of information and of occasions to make himself useful. In the

course of a private conversation, which our friendly relations of several years justified, he showed me the following telegram, which he had just received and which I transcribe literally: "*Is the enemy at White House? And, if not, where is he?*" signed, *Stanton.* The Secretary of War himself knew no more than anybody else.

Two great steamers soon came up to the wharf reserved for the service of the fort, to take in coal. One was the Vanderbilt, which, having taken a load of sick from White House, was getting ready to ascend the James in order to visit the army wherever it might be. I received an order to go on board of her, but her departure was delayed until the next day morning, July 1, in order to take on board the Eighteenth Massachusetts, and the officers and soldiers on the way to rejoin their regiments. At sunrise we started for our uncertain destination.

Silence and solitude reigned on both banks of the river. The presence of man was evidenced by ruins only. At Newport News the rigging of the sunken Cumberland appeared above the water in front of the abandoned camps. Farther on, the wharves were everywhere burned, and occasionally a few brick walls, yet erect in the midst of the ruins, were the only indication of inhabitants and of farms, formerly covered with harvests, to-day abandoned to weeds. Finally, about midday, near Harrison's Landing, we perceived the first signs of the Army of the Potomac.

These were fires lighted along the river banks; artillery wagons, whose white covers were visible through the curtain of trees; drivers, with their teams worn out and covered with mud; infantrymen of the escort, advance guard of cavalry, artillerymen without guns, soldiers without muskets, and those stragglers who, as

they are always in the rear when the army is advancing, on the other hand are found in advance when the army is retreating. From them we learned that the army was near at hand, after seven days of fighting and seven nights of marching before an enemy eager in the pursuit.

A small steam gunboat, near by, prevented our mounting the river any higher. At that very time, a battle was being fought on Malvern Hills, six or seven miles distant, which, in all probability, would decide the safety or destruction of the army.

However, the number of arrivals increased hourly around the Harrison House. The field, with the harvest half gathered, was soon covered with teams and overrun with bands of men marching, mingled with the trains. Some were sick or wounded, others separated from their regiments unwillingly. Many had left the ranks tired of fighting with no hope of victory, demoralized by defeat, fatigue, and hunger.

In the evening, the news was spread that the battle of Malvern Hills was gained; that the enemy had been everywhere repulsed, and so badly treated that he had fallen back in disorder on his capital. But it did not appear that the victory, gained, had transformed us into pursuers instead of the pursued, for during the whole night retreat was continued from Malvern Hills to Harrison's Landing. And what a retreat! The rain, falling in torrents, rendered the roads impracticable, and multiplied the obstacles to the moving of the trains and the artillery. The infantry, broken up by that last night of retreat succeeding a day of battle, was moving without order, men separated from their commands, regiments mingled together, brigades without connection, divisions scattered everywhere and assembled nowhere. And this after a victory! What would it have been after a defeat?

Within the lines, where the army was about to intrench itself, staff officers and mounted orderlies were posted at intervals, calling out in the obscurity: — "Such a division to the right! — Such a division to the left!" And the men belonging to the divisions named turned in the direction indicated, finding, further on, other officers and horsemen calling out: — "Such a brigade this way! — Such a brigade that way!"

In this manner, little by little, the different corps were reassembled, and, after one night of frightful confusion, each was found on the following day in its proper place, in a position of defence against an attack, which fortunately did not take place. The two armies were equally exhausted, equally powerless to undertake anything; both out of provisions and short of ammunition. Arrived near Harrison's Landing, the Confederates stopped only long enough to take breath, and then quickly returned to Richmond.

And the grand Army of the Potomac was stranded on the banks of the James River, fainting, exhausted by its efforts, reduced by sickness yet more than by fire and steel; — an inert mass of men, heaped together in a narrow space, where they had henceforth only to ruminate on their deceived hopes and their devotion without result, while waiting the final abandonment of the Peninsula.

The overthrow of the Seven Days was the logical sequel to that sad campaign, which will bear eternal witness against the military incapacity, the political blindness, and the deficiencies of all kinds of General McClellan. In that series of adversities, nothing could be attributed to chance, nothing to any one of those fortuitous circumstances which may defeat the best combined plans, — nothing to such a disproportion of forces as must necessarily overbear resistance. The

general-in-chief alone is and will forever remain responsible for the reverses.

We ought to have been victorious. Any general of ordinary capacity, in command of the army, would have led us into Richmond, and the anniversary of national independence would have been celebrated in the rebel capital, conquered by our arms. To that end, what was necessary? To profit by our advantages for acting promptly and with vigor; to attack the enemy resolutely, to overwhelm him by our numerical superiority, to follow him up untiringly, sword in hand; and we would not have been compelled to thrust the sword to the hilt, to drive out his government, which, at the mere news of our victory at Williamsburg, had already begun to make preparations to move. But McClellan had neither vigor nor readiness. In his timid brain, haunted by phantoms, our advantages were transformed into disadvantages. His troubled eye never saw the enemy except with fantastic exaggerations, nor his own army except as largely reduced in numbers. Far from attacking, he did not know even how to defend himself.

In place of overwhelming the enemy, he fought him only with isolated corps, and when, in spite of everything, at Fair Oaks, as at Williamsburg, the tenacity of some of the generals and the obstinate valor of our soldiers had wrested victory from the hands of the Confederates, and turned the tide of battle against them, he finally did appear on the field of battle; it was when there was no danger, and then only to render the victory sterile by stopping the pursuit, and reimprisoning, in the fever-laden swamps, the army of which he had made himself the gravedigger-in-chief.

From the very opening of the campaign, this cowardly spirit was a prey to a persistent hallucination,

which always and everywhere made the enemy appear to him as greatly superior in force, even on the banks of the Warwick, where we were eight to one. Under this imaginary impression, he never ceased to ask *à cor et à cri* for reënforcements, without which, he said, he could do nothing. From the month of April it was the corps of McDowell which was indispensable to enable him to take Yorktown. Then he would content himself with the two divisions of Franklin and McCall. At the end, Yorktown was taken without the aid of Franklin or McCall.

The President did not like to strip Washington of the troops left for its protection. Wanting military experience, he endeavored to take good-sense for his guide, refusing to leave the capital exposed without defence to the first *coup de main* of the Confederates, to satisfy the timorous fantasies of a general in whom he could have but limited confidence. Thereupon McClellan broke out in puerile complaints and pitiful insistence. Reënforcements were sent to him, but as soon as they arrived he demanded more. After the arrival of Franklin and his division on the last of April, he had in the fore part of June the whole corps of troops at Fortress Monroe, under the command of General Wool. After that he announced that he required nothing more, except the arrival of McCall, to take Richmond. McCall arrived on the 11th of June. Then there was something else. The Chickahominy had overflowed its banks. When it had returned to its bed, the roads were still too bad for artillery; but finally the general-in-chief asked for nothing more "only a little fine weather in order to report progress." The fine weather dried up the roads; what will he contrive now to excuse further delay? He wishes to know whether McDowell will come from

Fredericksburg by land or by water, and in what relation of subordination. "Meanwhile," he added, "I shall be very glad to receive all the troops which can be sent to me."

At last, on the 18th of June he is ready: "A general engagement may take place at any moment," he writes. "An advance movement on our part is a battle more or less decisive. The enemy shows himself ready to receive us everywhere. He has certainly a very large force and extensive works. After to-morrow we will fight the rebel army *as soon as Providence will permit.* We have nothing more to wait for but a favorable condition of earth and of sky, and the finishing of a few indispensable preliminaries."

Well, Providence is favorable, the condition of ground and weather all that can be asked; the indispensable preliminaries are disposed of. He has received nearly forty thousand reënforcements, thirty-three thousand of whom in the ranks bring the number of our effective force up to a hundred and fifteen thousand, making deduction for the sick and absent. Finally he learns that the defence of Richmond has been weakened by at least twelve thousand men sent to reënforce Jackson. Now or never is the time to strike the great blow so long promised, which will destroy the head of the rebellion. But no; McClellan is not one of those who dare to strike blows. He will wait for them. He has resigned himself to this, when, on the 24th, a deserter informs him that Jackson, reënforced, is advancing from Gordonsville with the intention of attacking our right, on the 28th, and trying to take us in the rear.

McClellan had four days before him. He knew whence the attack was to come. Consequently he could take his measures accordingly, and confound all the calculations of the enemy by concentrating his

whole army on either one or the other bank of the Chickahominy. On the north side he could first crush Jackson, and then return and finish Lee, if he had followed up the movement. On the south side he could do better still; overwhelm Magruder and follow him into Richmond before Lee and Jackson could find out that they had lost the substance for the shadow. But McClellan did neither the one nor the other. Undecided, irresolute, as incapable of forming a new plan as of executing it in the face of dangers which paralyzed him, he could only leave matters as they were. And, as at Seven Pines he had given over his left isolated, now at Gaines' Mill he leaves his right to receive the attack without support.

He is beaten before the battle is fought. He foresees only defeat; he dreams only of the excuses necessary to throw the responsibility on some one else; and, on the 25th, he addressed to Mr. Stanton, Secretary of War, that despatch, inspired by fear and dictated by a troubled conscience, which succeeded neither in deceiving himself nor in deceiving others: —

"I have just returned from our line, and find your despatch in regard to Jackson. Several contrabands, just arrived, confirm by their information the supposition that Jackson's advance is at Hanover Court House, or in that vicinity, and that Beauregard arrived at Richmond yesterday with considerable reënforcements. I think Jackson will attack my right and rear. The rebel forces are estimated at two hundred thousand men, including Jackson and Beauregard. I must fight against vastly superior forces, if these reports are true; but this army will do everything that is humanly possible to maintain its position and repel every attack. I regret my great inferiority in numbers; but I feel that I am in no way responsible for it, not having failed to

represent on numerous occasions the necessity for reënforcements; that this was the decisive point; and that the whole available resources of the government should be concentrated here.

"I will do all that a general can do with the magnificent army which I have the honor to command, and, if it is destroyed by an overwhelming superiority of numbers, I can at least die with it and share its fortunes. But, if the result of the action, which will probably take place to-morrow or very shortly after, is a disaster, the responsibility cannot be thrown on my shoulders. It must rest where it belongs."

And he finished by returning to his fixed idea: "I feel that it is useless to again demand reënforcements."

Thus the general-in-chief devoted his army in advance to destruction, or at least to an irremediable disaster. Not having found any plan to escape it, but with his head full of terrifying fantasies, he held himself ready to depart at the first firing of the cannon, and precede in the retreat those whom he abandoned in danger.

Since the battle of Fair Oaks the Second Corps (Sumner) had remained on the right bank of the Chickahominy, where it had been followed in the month of June by the Sixth Corps (Franklin). So that only the Fifth Corps (Porter) remained on the left bank, recently reënforced by McCall's division. All the efforts of the enemy were made there, and there the great seven days' contest commenced.

On the 26th of June, A. P. Hill, preceding Jackson by twenty-four hours, endeavored to force the passage of Beaver Dam Creek, defended by the Pennsylvanians under McCall. He was repulsed with considerable loss on the Mechanicsville road. But, during the night, Porter was compelled to fall back to a position more

tenable against a force become much superior to his own, Jackson and Longstreet having united against his lines. On the 27th, then, the Fifth Corps, with about twenty-five thousand men, was assailed by seventy thousand Confederates on Gaines' Mill Heights, and defended itself there obstinately, until our own cavalry came fatally to the enemy's aid. Unskilfully handled and roughly repulsed, it fell back in disorder on our lines, where it put everything into confusion, artillery and infantry. The Confederates, coming on at the charge, finished the overthrow, and the Fifth Corps would have been destroyed if the coming of the night had not enabled our decimated troops to cross to the right bank of the Chickahominy, destroying the bridges behind them.

It cannot but be remarked that these same troops, which rejoined the main body of the army, worn out and cruelly maltreated by a contest so disproportioned, might have been rallied, without loss or fatigue, from the advanced position which it was known beforehand that they could not hold. In that case, their movement would have been the signal for a brilliant advance. Now, it was only the signal for a disastrous retreat. It is deplorable for General McClellan that he is thus found always playing the enemy's game, and doing everything the most effectual for their safety and our ruin that his adversaries could have suggested.

As soon as Porter had crossed safely on the 28th, the general retreat commenced. Keyes crossed White Oak swamp first, and took position to protect the passage of the immense army trains and the great herds of cattle. Then, on the 29th, after having repulsed a cavalry attack, he continued his way towards the James, where he arrived on the 30th, at the same time that Porter reached Haxall's Landing. Much less favored,

the three other corps suspended their march only to fight and ceased to fight only to march. But all this was done without any general system, in the absence of superior supervision, and of orders in accordance with circumstances.

On the 29th the enemy crossed the Chickahominy to unite all his force on the right bank; Franklin advised Sumner, and the two, acting together, fell back on Savage Station, where they took up position, with the intention, aided by Heintzelman, of repelling the dangerous attack which menaced them. But Heintzelman, adhering to his general instructions, after destroying the material of the railroad, the provisions, munitions of war, arms and baggage that there was neither time nor means of carrying away, hastened to cross White Oak swamp, uncovering Sumner's left. The latter learned of the retreat of the Third Corps only from a furious attack by the enemy on the very side which he believed protected by Heintzelman. He did not the less sustain the shock with an unshakable solidity, and fought all the afternoon with four divisions without being broken at any point. The enemy, worn out by the useless attacks, retired at nightfall. Then only did he receive any news from McClellan, under the form of an order to Sumner, to fall back along with Franklin, to the other side of White Oak swamp, abandoning our general hospitals at Savage Station, and the twenty-five hundred sick and wounded in them.

On the morning of the 30th, Jackson presented himself, to cross the swamp after us. He found the bridge destroyed, and endeavored to force a passage at several points. He was everywhere repulsed and kept in check the whole day by the obstinate resistance of Franklin, while farther on, towards the James, Long-

street was held by Heintzelman and McCall, who prevented him from cutting our army in two at Glendale.

This was not done without hard fighting. The Confederates, arriving by the New Market road at a right angle to the Quaker road, which was our line of march, struck, in the first place, the Pennsylvanian reserves, broke their line, outflanking it on the right and on the left, captured a battery of artillery, and pushed resolutely on through that dangerous breach. They then struck Hooker's division, which threw them obliquely on Sumner's Corps. Soon afterward, Kearney occupied the vacant space, and, as on the evening before, the sun set with the rebels unsuccessful.

But, the same evening, Franklin, left without orders, and seeing his position was becoming more and more dangerous, abandoned White Oak swamp and fell back towards the James. At that news, which was promptly sent to him from several directions, Heintzelman sent in vain to headquarters, to ask for instructions. Left to his own devices, he concluded that the wisest course was to follow the retrograde movement, and retreated with his corps.

Sumner still remained, and, seeing himself left alone and without support, he decided, in his turn, to do as the others had done. On the morning of the 31st, he arrived on the Malvern Heights, where the three corps, the Second, Third, and Sixth, found themselves united, not, as has been benevolently said, by the wise combinations of General McClellan, but by the fortunate inspiration of the commanders, who had received no orders to that effect. "At daylight," said General Sumner, in his testimony before the Congressional committee, "I called on General McClellan, on the banks of the James. *He told me that he had intended that the army should hold the position it had the night*

before, and that no order for retreat had been sent; but that, since the rest of the army had fallen back, he was glad that I had done the same."

It was found that the plateau of Malvern Hill was admirably formed for a defensive position. General Humphreys, of the corps of topographical engineers, was ordered to examine the position, and he traced a formidable line with the left resting at Haxall's Landing on the James, where it was protected by the gunboats, while the right was thrown back on some fields covered with thick woods, and cut up by marshy streams. The summits and slopes of the plateau were bristling with cannon, sweeping the plain over the heads of our infantry deployed in front of them. In that position, the army awaited a last attack.

The enemy played there his last card, and lost the game. It was perhaps imprudent, but he had been victorious at Gaines' Mill, and since then, although repulsed with loss at Savage Station, at White Oak swamp, and at Glendale, after each of these engagements he had taken up his march in advance, as we had resumed our march in retreat. Whatever might be the material losses on either side, the moral effect remained in their favor, for in that sad week our men, falling back after every fight, believed themselves always defeated, even when they were the victors; and they were proportionally demoralized. For the same reason, the Confederates, convinced that they had beaten us constantly since the 26th, pursued us with the vigorous and confident spirit which is given by victory.

And, really, was it not a victory for them? What if they had been repulsed at Savage Station and at Glendale, and stopped at White Oak swamp? what was it but a delay of a few hours? And, if their losses had been greater than ours, was not the difference in the loss in

dead and wounded more than compensated, in a reverse sense, by the moral condition of the survivors? To tell the fact, our advantages during the last days were limited to saving our transportation, by giving it time to take the advance. But when General Lee led his whole force against the Malvern Heights it was a victorious though diminished army which he hurled to the attack, to give the *coup de grace* to the army of McClellan, — of McClellan, who, at that very time, had retired on board the gunboat Galena.

Lee had to hasten. Every step forward took him further from his supplies, and brought us nearer ours. Behind us, the roads, broken up, became more and more impracticable, the difficulties became greater from hour to hour. Such being the case, Lee did not have time to wait until his adversary evacuated his present position, in order to try and force his lines in some other, which might not perhaps offer any better opportunity for attack. He tried his fortune and gave battle July 1. On every point his columns were thrown back in disorder, crushed in every attack by the double fire of artillery and infantry. Dash was not enough now. On this occasion, the enemy was compelled to acknowledge himself beaten and incapable of pursuing us any further.

But our men were slow to believe in success. On receiving the order, a few hours later, after night had put an end to the contest, to retire to Harrison's Landing, they naturally concluded that we were not strong enough to hold out long against the enemy, and that, while Couch and Porter had victoriously held their lines unbroken, some ill fortune must have come upon us at another point, compromising our position, and thus compelling us to a precipitate retreat. Worn out by fatigue and fighting, exhausted by privations and by vigils,

discouraged, and suspecting that it was not fortune alone that had betrayed them, they dragged themselves along, without order, towards the designated point, during that last night march, which had all the character of a rout.

The next day, at last, they were able to take some rest, and understand that the end of their trials and immediate dangers had arrived, seeing that their general had stopped with them. His headquarters were established at Harrison's plantation, on the banks of the James, and under the cannon of the gunboats.

It was there that, like a shipwrecked crew, this army rallied, after securing its own safety in spite of everything, — fighting with equal firmness, both against men and against circumstances, and not allowing itself to be destroyed by Robert E. Lee, nor by George B. McClellan.

CHAPTER XIV.

FROM CHARYBDIS TO SCYLLA.

Miserable condition of the army — Desertions — Military bravado and political manifesto of McClellan — Reconnoissances — Order to evacuate the Peninsula — Delay after delay — Pope on the Rappahannock — Delay at Alexandria — Night march — Fairfax Court House — Death of Kearney — Retreat on Washington — Pope and McClellan.

THE Vanderbilt, which had brought me on the 1st of July to Harrison's Landing, took me back, on the second day after, to Fortress Monroe, in company with six hundred and fifty wounded. Bad weather and poor food had proved the doctors right, and brought on a relapse, which put me in a condition unfit to be disembarked. It was not until a week later, July 10, that I could resume command of my regiment, reduced then to less than four hundred men. The remainder, except a few deserters, were sleeping upon four fields of battle, shut up in the Richmond prisons, or lying in the hospitals.

Officers and soldiers were in a sad plight. The greater part without tents, many without blankets, some almost without uniforms. And they had been in that condition since the battle of Fair Oaks, where, as will be recollected, the camp of the Fifty-fifth, and everything it contained, was lost. Through one cause or another the loss had not been made good. The little that the men now possessed they had picked up here and there during the fights or on the march. They were the spoils of the dead and wounded. The officers were no better provided for; their baggage had been

burnt at Savage Station, in consequence of an order, given too hurriedly, by an inexperienced quartermaster.

Happily for me, the lieutenant-colonel had procured an old, worn-out tent, which I could occupy with him while awaiting something better, — a wretched shelter, under which I heard the relation of the sufferings endured, the perils braved, the privations undergone, during the terrible seven days.

Now, our pressing need was to recruit physically and morally. The first was easier than the last. In the repose which we enjoyed under the protection of our retrenchments, the necessary material soon arrived, and the regiment could be newly fitted out in a few days. But the *morale* of soldiers is not restored with the putting-on of new uniforms, and that of the army was terribly shattered; — so much so that, on arriving at Harrison's Landing, favored by the universal confusion, desertions took place by thousands amongst the men, and by hundreds amongst the subaltern officers. To such an extent did the disorganization reign in the different branches of the service that deserters had been able to go on board the transports with the sick and wounded, and thus abandon the army.

In a letter to General McClellan, dated July 13, the President, with the reports in his hands, showed the unexplained absence of forty-five thousand men from the Army of the Potomac. Now, the official reports of July 20 bring the total number up to 158,314, and the loss during the fatal retreat was 15,249. On the 8th of July, when Mr. Lincoln himself came to visit the army, but eighty-six thousand could be shown to him under arms.

In his reply, General McClellan alleged that 38,250 men had received temporary furloughs. The number

still left to be accounted for by desertion is very large, as will be seen. But it seems impossible not to ask the question, how the general-in-chief could authorize such an enormous number of furloughs at the very time that he was complaining of the want of troops. For if he had, before the late reverses, asked and asked again to satiety for reënforcements, it may well be believed that he did not change his cry after having been driven back some twenty miles. The day after the battle of Malvern Hills he had asked for fifty thousand men, that is to say, all who remained to cover the capital. The day after, we are told, he asked for a hundred thousand men, rather for more than less, "to take Richmond."

Take Richmond with an army commanded by General McClellan? There was no one who did not know what interpretation to put upon this cruel pleasantry. So that, when the general-in-chief thought it necessary to issue, from Harrison's Landing, an order of the day, in which he notified the enemy that before long he was going to take his capital, no one could help shrugging his shoulders at such ridiculous gasconade. The American soldier is too intelligent to be influenced by high-sounding but empty words. He judges things from the facts, and not by the false colors under which they may be presented to him.

McClellan understood it, probably, from the effect produced in the army by his bravado, and from the impression made throughout the country by his deplorable campaign. One is compelled to believe that he wished to create a diversion, and escape a part, at least, of his military responsibility, by evoking the political passions.

On July 7, — five days after his arrival at Harrison's Landing, — he wrote to the President of the Republic a letter in which he undertook, disregarding alike both

propriety and courtesy, to dictate to him the course of policy which the government ought to pursue. In this letter he declared that in no case should the war be carried on with the object of subjugating the people of any State; — that neither the confiscation of property, nor political executions, nor the territorial organization of a State, nor *forced abolition of slavery* should be for an instant thought of. That the military power should not be permitted to interfere in the relations of servitude, whether for or against the authority of the master, except to repress all disorders, as in every other case; — that, on appropriating in any permanent manner the labor of the slave, the government must recognize the right of the master to an indemnity; — that the declaration of radical views, especially in reference to slavery, would rapidly disorganize our armies. Finally, to give effect to this political manifesto, General McClellan recommended to the President to appoint a generalissimo, who possessed his confidence, to execute his orders. That is to say that, without positively asking that position for himself, he offered himself virtually to conduct the war against the rebellion, being careful in all ways of injuring the rebels, and, above all, protecting for them the institution of slavery, the direct cause of the conflict, the incontestable source of the present ills, but for him the holy ark which it was not permitted to touch.

This manifesto gives the key to the ideas and conduct of the general, his hesitations, his slowness, his tender regard for the enemy, and perhaps to some awkward things, until then inexplicable. It was, in any case, a direct appeal to the party suspected of sympathy with the rebellion, an appeal which encouraged its opposition to the policy of the government, becoming daily more and more pronounced. In this letter was already

made manifest the policy of compromise adopted at a later day by the Democratic convention at Chicago.

In this instance, the President was wanting in decision. The moment was opportune to retire from the command of the Army of the Potomac a general who, as a soldier, had caused the campaign to fail from his incompetence, and in political matters had separated himself so pointedly from the line of conduct marked out by Congress and adopted by the government. But whether the administration recoiled from an open rupture with the Democratic party, or whether it did not feel itself sufficiently clear as to the merits of the generals to designate the one most worthy of succession to a position so important, matters were left as they were. Only the isolated corps of McDowell, Banks, and Fremont were united and put under one command, that of General Pope, in order to protect Washington more effectually.

Our situation at Harrison's Landing was neither pleasant nor encouraging. We found ourselves in a position from which we could not withdraw except backwards. Alone, we could attempt nothing against Richmond of any avail, and our junction with Pope's army, which covered Washington from its position at Culpeper Court House, had become impracticable since we had been thrown back to the banks of the James. We waited passively the solution of the questions which were discussed between headquarters and the government.

It was a painful waiting of more than a month. We were crowded together behind our intrenchments, where the want of room was as prejudicial to the cleanliness as to the well-being of the soldier. Our camps were unhealthy. The water was of bad quality. The frightful heat of the month of July was scarcely tem-

pered by the dreadful storms which came upon us so often in the afternoon. If the skies remained clear, a torrid sun cracked the earth in every direction, and from the openings exhaled fever-laden miasmas. In spite of the care taken to bury each day the animal matter of all kinds, an unhealthy odor infected the air around the tents, too thickly placed, and in which the heat, the vermin, and the flies left very little repose to the soldier. These flies are a veritable plague. They multiplied to an infinite extent, and their sharp stings tormented the men and covered the horses, who were powerless to defend themselves. Night alone brought any relief from their persecutions.

Such was our condition at Harrison's Landing. The enemy left us alone, without troubling himself to disturb us in our inoffensive idleness. He was preparing for more important operations. Once only, on the 1st of August, between midnight and one o'clock in the morning, he opened an unexpected cannonade on our transports. To this end he had sent a few batteries on the right bank of the James; but they were promptly reduced to silence, and retired at daylight without doing us any particular damage. Coggin's Point, of which they had made use, was occupied by our troops and fortified, and the enemy did not trouble us from that point any more.

On the 5th of August, Hooker made a reconnoissance towards Malvern Hill. He encountered nobody, and returned as he had gone.

On the 6th it was our time to march out to Haxall's Landing. After the battle of Fair Oaks, General Peck had been promoted to the command of a division, and had been replaced in the command of the brigade by a captain of artillery, promoted to brigadier-general in the volunteer service. So that General Albion P.

Howe was more familiar with the command of a battery than with the infantry service. This was well exemplified at the time. Departing at sundown, the brigade did not reach Haxall's Farm until one o'clock in the morning. The distance is three or four miles, and could easily have been made in less than two hours. But wandering around in different paths, under the brilliant light of the moon, the general did not appear to think that men should have, now and then, a few minutes of rest. Thus, from not having regard to the fatigue of his men, he left behind him a large number of stragglers, and reached his goal with a command reduced by a third, and so tired that if we had met the enemy we were in a condition not at all favorable for an attack, or even for properly defending ourselves. Happily, Haxall's was abandoned, as was Malvern Hill, and, after a day spent in manœuvres, poorly conceived in case of an attack, the division returned the following night, this time by the straight road, and without having burned a grain of powder.

On the second day after, August 10, the first order for departure arrived. The hospitals were vacated and the baggage shipped on the transports, even the knapsacks, leaving the soldiers only their arms, their blankets, and their haversacks. The heavy artillery was also embarked. All that took several days, during which the army, from universal joy, appeared to be transformed. We were at last about to leave that odious peninsula, where we had found only reverses and false hopes. We would, without doubt, leave there the bad fortune against which we had fought, and matters would take a more favorable turn for us on new battle-fields. Bonfires were made of everything combustible which we did not wish to take with us. Joy shone on all faces; the *morale* became higher in every heart. It

would not have been well for the enemy to try to bar our retreat. We would have passed over him with an irresistible force.

But the enemy had no such idea. His eyes were fixed on another point, and his efforts were turned in another direction, to crush Pope before we had time to come to his aid. This was precisely what the government at Washington, as well as General Halleck, — recently called to the command-in-chief of the armies, — and the greater part of the corps commanders of the Army of the Potomac, had foreseen. The latter had so expressed themselves in July, when the President and afterwards General Halleck had visited the army.

The project of evacuating the Peninsula dated from the President's visit on July 8, and since then General McClellan had not ceased to oppose it in every way and under all possible pretexts. It was the better to inform himself of the value of that opposition that, on July 25, General Halleck had made his visit to Harrison's Landing. There he was able to see for himself the real condition of the army, to get direct information and the opinions of the generals, a majority of whom advised the immediate evacuation of the Peninsula. He returned to Washington fully satisfied of the necessity of that measure, and on the 30th addressed to McClellan the order to send away promptly all his sick, in order to break camp. On the 2d of August he had received no reply. A new order was given, confirming the first. On the 3d McClellan replies that he cannot decide which of the sick to send away until he knows what the army is to do. Immediately he is informed that the army is to be transported from the Peninsula to Acquia Creek. On the 4th, instead of obeying, he protests vigorously against the order given, and asks that it may be withdrawn. On the same day

came a third order to General McClellan, to hasten the departure of the sick, without waiting for a communication as to what were or were not the intentions of the government relative to future operations.

The reasons for that determination are very clearly expressed in a despatch of General Halleck, dated August 6.

". . . In our last interview," he writes to General McClellan, "you and your officers estimated the forces of the enemy around Richmond at two hundred thousand men. Since that time, you and the others report that these forces have received, and are yet receiving, considerable reënforcements from the South. General Pope's army, covering Washington, is only about forty thousand strong. Your effective force does not exceed ninety thousand. You are thirty miles from Richmond, and General Pope eighty or ninety, *with the enemy directly between you, ready with his superior force to fall on one or the other of you as he may elect.* In such an event neither of you can reënforce the other.

"If General Pope's army were diminished, to reënforce you, Washington, Maryland, and Pennsylvania would be left uncovered and exposed. If your forces were reduced to reënforce Pope, you would become too feeble even to maintain the position you now occupy, if the enemy should turn against you, and attack you with all his force.

"In other words, the old Army of the Potomac is divided into two parts, with the enemy directly between them. They cannot be united by land without exposing both to destruction, and yet they must be united. To send Pope's army by water to the Peninsula is, under present circumstances, a military impossibility. The only alternative left is to send the forces now

on the Peninsula to some point by water, say Fredericksburg, where the two armies can be united."

In opposition to these decisive reasons, the theory of General McClellan amounted simply to this: That Washington was best protected by a menace against Richmond; that, consequently, all the disposable troops around the capital and elsewhere should be sent to the army, to enable it to take the offensive, and to recommence its operations against Richmond. This was untenable, in the present state of affairs. For, taking his own figures, if it were true that the Confederates had more than two hundred thousand men, half of them were enough to hold in check McClellan and Pope united on the Peninsula, while with the other half they had only to march directly on Washington, left without protection, and take possession without striking a blow; which they certainly would not have failed to do.

At last, General McClellan, constrained to obey, resigned himself to it with very bad grace and very slowly. On August 7, eight days after the reception of the first order, he had embarked less than four thousand sick, and there were still six thousand in the hospitals. In vain, from the 9th, General Halleck telegraphed to him that the enemy was massing his troops in front of Pope to crush him and march on Washington. McClellan replied tranquilly that he would put his army in motion as soon as he had sent off his sick. In vain, on the next day, the 10th of August, General Halleck informed him that the enemy had crossed the Rapidan in considerable force, and attacked Banks at Cedar Mountain. It was not until the 14th that our first division was put in motion, and not until the 23d did McClellan embark for Acquia Creek, where he arrived on the 24th.

Now, during these fatal delays, after the 18th, Pope,

having on his hands the mass of the Confederate forces, had been compelled to fall back behind the Rappahannock, where, while he was holding out against Lee, Jackson turned his right, by a great flank movement, and took position in his rear at Bristoe Station, on the Orange & Alexandria Railroad, thus cutting off his communication with Washington.

At this critical time, the corps of Porter and Heintzelman, arrived at last from the Peninsula, came into line. The annihilation of Jackson should have ensued from their coöperation in the dangerous position where he had risked himself. The latter, nevertheless, succeeded in rejoining Lee, and then commenced a series of desperate contests, in which Pope, overwhelmed by numbers, found himself, in spite of partial advantages, thrown back to Manassas, and finally beaten in a last battle, at the same place where fortune had before been so adverse to us.

While these things were happening in the north of Virginia, that is to say, from the 20th to the 30th of August, the Fourth Corps remained camped between Yorktown and Fortress Monroe, waiting its turn to embark, which never came. Leaving Harrison's Landing on the morning of the 6th, we had arrived by short stages on the banks of the York River, where we encamped on the 20th. It was not until after nine days of waiting that Couch's division alone received orders to proceed to Alexandria. Peck's division was sent later on to North Carolina, whence Burnside's corps had been recalled, and General Keyes remained at Yorktown with but one division. The Fourth Corps henceforth did not exist.

Transports were sent to take us. The Fifty-fifth and the Sixty-second New York, placed temporarily under my command, were crowded on board of one

of them. On the 30th we started, and on the 31st, in the evening, cast anchor before Alexandria. A sad return, after the defeat, to the same point from which we had departed five months before, confident of victory.

The boat which carried us was a large sailing vessel, which it was necessary to tow, so that the others arrived before us. During the night a steamer was sent to take us ashore. The darkness was profound; we had no lanterns, and the transportation of baggage and of men was made by groping our way. However, at daylight, we landed on the wharf of Alexandria.

The news which awaited us there was disastrous. A thousand rumors circulated, each more discouraging than the one before. As usual in great reverses, the word treason was freely used. The beaten soldier always likes to say that he is betrayed by some one. Perhaps in this case there might have been a certain degree of truth in it; but certainly not as regards those against whom the blind accusations were made. At this time, at Alexandria, the hero of the day was Siegel, and the scapegoat McDowell. Why this double absurdity? This it is impossible to explain, especially since tardy justice has brought out the facts, and shown who did their duty nobly, and who betrayed their trust.

But, however that might have been, through all the sinister exaggerations, the one undeniable fact of a defeat was plainly evident. Beaten for the second time at Manassas, the army had retreated across Bull Run and taken position at Centreville, where the corps of Sumner and Franklin furnished too late a reënforcement of about forty thousand fresh troops.

At three o'clock in the afternoon I received the order to join the rest of the brigade, which had preceded us to Fairfax Court House, with my two regi-

ments. We departed immediately. Some regiments, more fortunate than we, were taken by rail; but, the number of cars not being sufficient for all, we were obliged to go to our destination on foot.

The heat was frightful. Toward sunset, dense masses of dark clouds commenced to pile up on the horizon, and soon the heavens resounded with the deep, rolling thunder which threatened us with a storm. And now a premature darkness enveloped us in its heavy atmosphere. Night came on before its time, and almost immediately the rain poured down upon us in torrents.

The severity of the storm caused us to hope that it would be of short duration; but it was not so, for the rain continued to fall, with more or less violence, until after midnight. Soon the road became a mud-hole, in which one could with difficulty direct his steps by the flashes of lightning. Disorder began to affect the ranks. The soldiers advanced painfully through the sticky earth, from which they could hardly lift their feet. The middle of the road was soon monopolized by an interminable file of wagons retreating towards Alexandria. Mingled with them were batteries of artillery, which, endeavoring to pass by the wagons, blocked the road. The orders of officers, the cries of the teamsters, the oaths of the soldiers were mingled with the peals of thunder. All this produced a deafening tumult, in the midst of which it was difficult to recognize each other, and from the confusion of which we could not free ourselves without leaving behind us a large number of stragglers. The farther we advanced, the greater the number became. In the woods which we had to pass through, the great trees on all sides invited the tired men to a few moments of repose. Many yielded to the temptation, thinking to rejoin

their battalion at the first halt. But in that dark night, in the midst of a current of wagons and cannon, of men and beasts marching in the other direction, how could they make up for lost time, and regain the regiment? The officers could do nothing. The companies were mixed together, and, in the obscurity, no watch could be kept. The Sixty-second dropped off almost entirely along the road. In the Fifty-fifth not an officer remained behind (I had but sixteen); but two-thirds of the men were missing at roll-call, when, towards eleven o'clock in the evening, we halted at the outskirts of the village of Fairfax.

There everything was in terrible confusion. By the light of the fires kindled all round in the streets, in the yards, in the fields, one could see a confused mass of wagons, ambulances, caissons, around which thousands of men invaded the houses, filled up the barns, broke down the fences, dug up the gardens, cooked their suppers, smoked, or slept in the rain. These men belonged to different corps. They were neither sick nor wounded; but, favored by the disorder inseparable from a defeat, they had left their regiments at Centreville, to mingle with the train escorts, or had come away, each by himself, hurried on by the fear of new combats; stragglers and marauders, a contemptible multitude, whose sole desire was to flee from danger.

None of them could give any information as to the position of the division. The officers whom I had sent for information returned without having found out anything. We were compelled to bivouac where we were and wait for daylight.

The village of Fairfax was small, surrounded by gardens and barnyards. Near a board fence, already half destroyed, and which served to keep up our fires, we seated ourselves upon some stones to dry our soaked

garments and warm our benumbed limbs. The rain was still falling, but we could see that it was nearly over. The men promptly rolled themselves in their blankets and slept around their stacked arms, without troubling themselves about the mud. A few officers went to find out the news. All was of the most discouraging character. Beaten at Manassas, the army had with difficulty rallied at Centreville, and continued its retreat towards Washington.

Among all the reports, true or false, which were told me during that ill-omened night, there is one the sad impression of which has never left me: Kearney had been killed that evening. This was not only a sorrow for his friends; it was a great loss for the army and for the country.

Philip Kearney belonged to a highly esteemed family, one which had already furnished a general to the United States. None possessed to a greater degree the tastes and the qualities of a soldier. To these natural gifts, and to a military education which he had received at West Point, he had joined, besides, an experience which very few of the officers of our army had received. Thus, sent on a mission to France, to study especially the organization of the cavalry, instead of contenting himself with the information given him by the War Department, and with the study of the regiments in the Paris garrison, he had courageously subjected himself to all the exercises of the school at Saumur, where he had passed two years. He afterwards visited Algiers, where he accompanied the Duke of Orleans as honorary aid during the campaign of Portes de Fer. He obtained there the only distinction in his power to obtain, the cross of the Legion of Honor. He afterwards was offered a command in the French service, in the Foreign Legion; but he preferred to return to

America, where the Mexican War soon furnished him an opportunity to distinguish himself. After having signalized himself in many engagements, he lost an arm, and attained the rank of major at the attack on Mexico.

Later on, he left the service to enjoy his large fortune. In 1861 he resided at Paris, where, at his house, his friends and countrymen always found a cordial welcome and an elegant hospitality. Politics interested him very little, and he received with an equal cordiality his old comrades of the army, whether they were from the North or from the South. But when the war broke out between the two sections of the country he did not hesitate in the fulfilment of his duty. At the first sound of the cannon, renouncing family joys and the tranquil comforts of the rich man, he left immediately to ask employment from the federal government. Soon after his arrival he was appointed brigadier-general of volunteers.

On the Peninsula he commanded a division which shone amongst all by its bearing and its discipline, its dash in attack and its obstinacy in defence. The soul of Kearney was in it and animated it, even to the end, after it had lost its chief, whose memory always remained in its ranks like a living presence.

Kearney was appointed major-general at Harrison's Landing. This promotion, merited twice over, lost much of its value in his eyes because it was included in a batch made up without discrimination on the Fourth of July, the anniversary of national independence. All the brigadier-generals who, during a campaign, had commanded a division, well or poorly, were promoted at the same time, and all the colonels who were commanding brigades received equally the star of brigadier-general. Deplorable system, which contributed not a little to prolong the period of our reverses.

Kearney played an active and brilliant part in the series of combats which Pope had to fight. At Manassas he attacked the enemy so vigorously that he drove him beyond the railroad which covered him. This partial success ought to have given us a victory. In fact, Kearney's attack should have coincided with an attack by Porter's corps against the right of the Confederates. But Porter did not come into action, and left the enemy at liberty to send reënforcements to his outflanked wing. Kearney was compelled to abandon the ground he had gained, and fortune turned against us.

On September 1, Lee, pursuing our retreating forces, came up to our right near Chantilly. General Stevens having been killed, his division, short of ammunition, fell back in disorder. Kearney hurried forward Birney's brigade to maintain our line, and supported it by a battery of artillery, which he put in position himself. However, a gap still remained open. In order to know what was the length of the opening, and its perils, he rode alone in that direction, leaving his staff officers and orderlies, in order not to attract attention. — The latter waited his return in vain; he never came back. — Carried away by his ardor, he had advanced, without perceiving it, to the line of the enemy's skirmishers, concealed along the edge of a wood. When he was but a few paces distant, the one nearest cried out to him to surrender. For answer, he faced about, and, lying down on his horse's neck, set out at a gallop. The balls flew more quickly than he. One struck him above the hip and passed through his body. He fell, and died in a few minutes.

The Confederate generals, whose comrade and friend he had been before becoming one of their most formidable adversaries, wished, on this occasion, to show in what esteem they held him. By order of General Lee,

the body of General Kearney, his horse, equipments, and arms were delivered to us, without the loss of anything. A fiery spirit and noble heart, he, in this manner, commanded the sympathy and admiration even of the enemies whom he was fighting.

This fatal death brought to my mind the last words which he had spoken to me in my tent, where he sometimes came to talk of France, of Paris, of our mutual friends in New York, and of the thousand things which always interested him, as a man of the world, in the midst of his duties as a soldier. As I remarked to him that now he was engaged in a path which might lead to everything, —

"Oh!" said he, "do not exaggerate. Doubtless, I could command a corps with some distinction; but a higher position would probably be beyond my ability, and I do not think of the position of a commander-in-chief. — 'Such a one shines as a commander of the second rank,' you know the phrase. So I have not the ambition for myself that my friends have for me. Let the war be finished in whatever way and I will return immediately to take up my family life in Paris, satisfied with having done my duty and with having done nothing with which to reproach myself."

Thus we plan. He had counted without regard to death, which awaited him in twenty days from that time. The public grief was great, especially at New York, where the funeral ceremonies were imposing. But nowhere was his loss so deeply felt as in the Army of the Potomac, of which he had been one of the chief glories, and where the thousand tales told at the camp-fires finished by giving to his memory the proportions of a legendary hero.

During the night that we passed at Fairfax Court House, very few of the men rejoined the regiment, on

account of the thousand difficulties resulting from the general confusion. The greater number of those whom we had left behind had gathered in squads, remaining alongside the road to wait our return. At daylight most of the stragglers, assembled around the village, had taken up their way for Alexandria. To all questions, they replied, invariably, that the whole army was following in retreat and that those who wished to rejoin their regiments could do no better than to wait until they came along. And, in fact, the army trains rolled unceasingly along the road, soon followed by the artillery and infantry.

Having heard, by report, as to the position of the division, I joined as the extreme rearguard, following back along the vast human current, and crossing two lines of battle, which proved to me that, at least, the retreat was not being conducted entirely without order. I had unfortunately with me but a handful of men, but everything was precious then. We were immediately sent out on picket, on the Centreville road, where the enemy was expected to appear every minute. The Tenth Massachusetts and the Twenty-ninth New York were with us. Here a few of those who had been separated from us involuntarily the night before rejoined us.

In the afternoon came our turn to fall back, which we did without the cavalry vedettes, who covered us, discovering the enemy. He had, in fact, given up further pursuit. The retrograde movement had continued the whole day without hindrance or disorder. But, when night came on, matters took on another aspect.

Those who for eight days had done nothing but march and fight were worn out with fatigue. Every one knew that the enemy was no longer at our heels. No salutary fear kept them in the ranks, and many

gave way to the temptation to take a few hours' rest. They lighted great fires, whose number became greater and greater, so that at a few leagues from Alexandria the whole country appeared to be illuminated.

There was everywhere along the road the greatest confusion. Infantry and cavalry, artillery and wagons, all hurried on pell-mell, in the midst of rallying cries of the officers and calls and oaths of the men.

I remember that our brigade was cut in two by a convoy of horses belonging to Banks' corps. Being fastened two by two to a long rope, and throwing themselves to the right and left, they created everywhere the greatest confusion. Without news or orders from General Howe, whose staff officers were invisible during the whole night, I devoted myself especially to keeping the battalion together, a task rendered less difficult by the reduction, since the evening, of the men remaining around the flag.

In this manner, each regiment arrived separately in the line of fortifications which covered Alexandria. There a staff officer of the division directed us, by a crossroad, upon a field near the seminary. A few twigs, picked up here and there, enabled us to light two or three poor fires, around which we went to sleep, without any supper. Our haversacks were empty.

The next day all the newspapers announced, with a tone of exultation, that the army was safe in the Washington intrenchments. This *was* something to boast of, indeed!

The unfortunate campaign of Pope was immediately the object of the most violent censures. McClellan's friends filled the air with their cries. According to their account, the Army of the Potomac had been sacrificed by the presumption of an unskilful general, who had lost his head in the presence of the enemy. The

newspapers of the party to which McClellan had joined himself without reserve, by his famous letter of July 7, were full of recriminations, whose object was not difficult to perceive. — "See what is the result of the ridiculous rodomontade of Pope! Was it worth the while to bring an ignorant and incapable general from the West, solely because he was the personal friend of the President! Such was the result of favoritism. If McClellan had been heeded, Richmond would perhaps now be in our power. But, in order to abase the only general capable of finishing the rebellion, the only one who understood the true character of the war and the manifest will of the people, the fruit of a whole year of efforts and sacrifices had been lost!" etc.

In all these tirades there was much more of passion than of reason. Above all things, the question was to reinstate McClellan. To accomplish this end, the defeat of Pope offered a means, which was worked to its utmost possible extent, and it succeeded. At a later date, the truth, which, in the stress of circumstances at the time, could not be investigated, has become known. To-day the records in the case are open to the examination of every one, and allow an impartial judgment to be formed.

As for myself, in this matter, I can well apply the saying of Tacitus in reference to Otho, Galba, and Vitellius: *Mihi nec beneficio nec injuria cogniti.* McClellan and Pope have neither of them ever done me a favor or an injury. To the former I have never addressed a word, except to thank him for a compliment addressed to my regiment, and I have never been near or seen the latter in my life.

That Pope did not show himself equal to the high position in which he was placed, that he did not accomplish what was expected of him, — this is, I think, a

fact that no one will contest. But justice demands, in his favor, that the many extenuating circumstances be considered. In the first place, his task was Herculean; and, in order to accomplish it, he must have been a great captain, and great captains are very rare. In the next place, the reënforcements and aid on which he had a right to rely failed him in a great part, which kept him constantly in a disadvantageous position in front of the enemy. Finally, the ill-will and disobedience of at least one of his corps commanders contributed sensibly to defeat his plans and paralyze his efforts.

Let us recall the facts:—

On July 20, when Pope, having on his hands the whole Confederate army, took position behind the Rappahannock, he had not yet received a single man of those whom for more than a week McClellan had had a formal order to send to him. Nevertheless, a first attempt of Jackson to turn his right at Sulphur Springs was vigorously repulsed on the 22d.

Then Jackson, making a long circuit with forced marches, on the 26th reached Bristoe Station, in Pope's rear, and broke his communications with Washington, by destroying the railroad. This bold movement should have been coincident with an attack in front. Lee, with the bulk of his forces, should have dislodged Pope from his position on the Rappahannock, while Jackson struck him in the rear; in this manner routing him, and leading perhaps to the destruction of his force. Otherwise, Jackson's march was a grave fault, and exposed himself to the danger of being crushed. It came very near resulting in this way, for Pope, preventing Lee's attack, and being reënforced on the way by the two corps of Heintzelman and Porter, arrived at last from the Peninsula, hastened to

manœuvre so as to surround Jackson at Manassas, where he had retreated.

It was in the execution of this capital combination that the ill-will from which Pope was to suffer so much began to be manifest. On the 27th, Hooker had met and driven in the rearguard of Jackson at Bristoe. Porter, the close friend and favorite of McClellan, ought to have been there at daylight on the 28th, to make a success of this first advantage. He did not appear until about ten o'clock, and every one can well see what a delay of six or seven hours means in such a case.

Jackson slipped through his adversary's fingers, and succeeded in rejoining Lee. It was very ably done by him, but one must admit that he would not have succeeded if Pope, even without Porter's coöperation, had taken his measures better.

However, nothing material even yet was lost, provided that the corps of Sumner and Franklin should appear on the field of action. Unhappily, McClellan had arrived at Alexandria, and, on the 27th, had received orders to take entire direction of the despatch of troops to the rival whose success would be his own condemnation. From that moment, of the forty thousand men he had present under his command, not a man joined Pope. Why? This is what McClellan himself explains clearly to us, in a despatch addressed to Mr. Lincoln, on August 29, at forty-five minutes past two in the afternoon.

"It is evident to me," he writes to the President, "that one or the other of these propositions should be adopted: — First, concentrate all our disposable forces, to *open communication with Pope.*" (Not, take notice, to reënforce Pope, for which he had received the formal order, twenty times repeated from day to day, and

almost from hour to hour, but simply to facilitate his retiring within the fortified lines.) "Secondly, to *let Pope get out of his scrape as he best can*, and employ all our resources to put the capital in perfect safety."

Let Pope get out of his scrape as he best can! In that phrase his motive is betrayed. Commentary is unnecessary.

Franklin and Sumner were kept inactive by all kinds of idle pretexts, the puerile character and contradictions of which one cannot imagine without reading them in detail in the official documents published on this subject by Congress, notably in the series of telegrams exchanged between General McClellan and General Halleck, and serving as an appendix to the deposition of the latter before the committee on the conduct of the war.

In regard to Porter's conduct, military justice has pronounced. He was cashiered, dismissed from the army, and declared incapable of occupying any position of confidence, honor, or profit under the government of the United States.

Thus, the absence of two corps looked for in vain; the failure of opportune coöperation of a third corps by the default of its commander; the errors of some division commander; some orders badly given or badly executed, — everything turned against Pope. The result was a fatal want of united action in the concentration of his forces and in the different fights, which ended in the defeat of Manassas.

Since that time, the country has allotted to each one his share in these reverses, and weighed in the balance the responsibility of Pope and of McClellan. But what was understood at the time? The soldier, so much the more irritated at his defeat because he had fought well, was ready to put the blame on whosoever was

pointed out to him as being in fault. Outside of the army, public opinion, at first undecided, was soon directed in the way that appearances, unscrupulously exaggerated, seemed to point. Government itself had its hand forced.

Pope disappeared from the scene to guard the distant frontiers of the Northwest, while McClellan, reinstated in an unmerited popularity, united under his command the Army of the Potomac, that of Virginia, and the troops brought by Burnside from North Carolina.

McDowell was sacrificed. It was his ill-luck always to be the scapegoat for others. On the other hand, Hooker was promoted to the command of the First Corps. This, at least, was an act of justice.

In the midst of the wild rumors and false reports which were day after day brought to the capital, and by which sometimes a general, sometimes an army corps, was held up for reprobation, the glorious reputation of the Third Corps (Heintzelman) remained above all suspicion. In Northern Virginia, as on the Peninsula, its two generals of division, Kearney and Hooker, had vied with each other in their eagerness to obey, and in their ardor for battle. It was impossible not to recognize the superior merit shown by both in their commands. Kearney was dead; but Hooker survived, reserved by fortune for more difficult trials and more brilliant services.

CHAPTER XV.

BETTER TIMES.

Invasion of Maryland by the Confederates — Passage of the Fifty-fifth through Tenallytown — Advance posts on the Monocacy — Transfer to the Third Corps — Appearance of Washington — A legacy from Kearney — General Birney — How Harper's Ferry surrendered to the enemy — Battles on South Mountain — Condition of the two armies — Battle of Antietam — Attacks in detail — Incomplete Result — McClellan's hesitations — Lee returns to Virginia.

WHEN General Lee had given up the pursuit of our army retreating upon Washington, it was not simply to sleep on his victory, or to put himself in position to protect that portion of Virginia which he had retaken from us. He had higher aims, and, encouraged by his success, had resolved to "fight the Romans in Rome." This was why, leaving us to return to Alexandria in the condition we have seen, he marched straight for Leesburg, crossed the upper Potomac, and invaded Maryland without opposition. From September 7, he had camped with his whole army around Frederick.

At this news, General McClellan, in his turn, began to move to meet his adversary. He took with him the First and Ninth Corps (Hooker and Reno), under the command of Burnside; the Second Corps, to which was added the Twelfth (Mansfield), both under the command of Sumner; the Sixth Corps (Franklin), reënforced by Couch's division; and the Fifth Corps, still commanded by Porter, — the whole forming an effective force of ninety thousand men, including the reserve artillery and Pleasonton's cavalry.

The force of the Confederate army was nearly the same, although its generals have represented that it was much less.

Our halt near Washington did not last long, but was sufficient to bring back all the stragglers to the ranks. The horses and baggage left behind at Yorktown did not reach us until later.

On the 4th, the regiment camped on high ground, near Chain Bridge, which was so familiar to us. On the 5th we crossed the bridge, and by a well known road reached Tenallytown, passing by our old camp, now occupied by others, and near which our friends of the preceding winter were assembled along the road-side to greet us by voice and gesture.

This short interview was full of mournful recollections. What a contrast between the departure and the return! We had started out in the spring gay, smart, well provided with everything. The drums beat, the bugles sounded; the flag, with its folds of immaculate silk, glistened in the sunshine. And we were returning before the autnmn, sad, weary, covered with mud, with uniforms in rags. Now the drummers carried their cracked drums on their backs, the buglers were bent over and silent; the flag, riddled by the balls, torn by shrapnel, discolored by the rain, hung sadly upon the staff, without cover.

Where were the red pantaloons? Where were the Zouave jackets? And, above all, those who had worn them, and whom we looked in vain along the ranks to find, what had become of them? Killed at Williamsburg, killed at Fair Oaks, killed at Glendale, killed at Malvern Hill; wounded or sick in the hospitals; prisoners at Richmond; deserters, we knew not where. And, to make the story short, scarcely three hundred revisited Tenallytown and Fort Gaines on their way

to fight in upper Maryland. This was not very cheerful, but *n'importe!* Should we all fall there, even to the last one, the rebel flag should never float over Washington!

The army advanced slowly and with caution. In this General McClellan did not depart from his usual habits, but here the circumstances demanded prudence. The Confederates menaced Baltimore as well as Washington. While endeavoring to divine their intentions, it was necessary for him to cover the two cities, and to guard against making any movement so marked as to give passage to his adversary on one side or the other. Thus, we did not reach Poolesville until the afternoon of the 10th, having taken five days to march the distance ordinarily made in two. Poolesville is an insignificant village, but its position gives it a real military importance. It is, in fact, situated at the centre of a segment of a circle, formed by the Potomac, and at a short and equal distance from three fords, by which the river can easily be passed.

We had hardly stacked arms when General Couch sent for me. I found him in his tent, preoccupied and concerned.

"I have sent for you," said he to me, "to send you on a mission which is not without danger nor unimportant. Some reports have come to us, which make us fear that the enemy meditates the destruction of the aqueduct on which the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal crosses the Monocacy, at the point where it empties into the Potomac. It must be prevented. The aqueduct is six miles from here. You will go there with your regiment immediately. A guide will show you the way. You will take the best measures of defence which the topography of the country will allow. In that respect I rely entirely on your judgment. Unfor-

tunately, I have neither artillery nor reserve to give you, so that you must depend solely upon yourself, in case of an attack. However, I will keep open communication with you, with a few horsemen that I have. As long as you can hold your position, hold it. As long as you can fight, fight. But if you are dislodged by a superior force, your line of retreat is that by which you are to advance. The best road will be the one by which you will have the chance of meeting the small reënforcement that I can send you in such case, whether to enable you to retake the offensive or to protect your return to our lines."

"General," I said, "I will do my best."

And, as I was about to go out, he added, with a certain solemnity, which was not habitual to him: —

"The time has come when every one must do his duty, and more than his duty, for never has the Republic been in greater danger."

This reflection struck me as the expression of a sentiment which animated the army at that time. The confidence in McClellan had been restored, and the late reverses had much less beaten down the courage of the soldier than excited in his heart the resolution to have his revenge. Every one then was ready to do his duty, and more than his duty. This was well manifested in a few days.

We were *en route* in a quarter of an hour.

We reached the aqueduct before sundown. The position was very good and favorable for defence. The bank where we were was wooded. By its elevation it completely commanded the opposite bank, which was level and bordered by large fields entirely without cover. Near the canal, too, rose a hill, from which one could see a long distance, with nothing to break the view, and, lastly, a regiment of Massachusetts cavalry

was in our immediate neighborhood. Decidedly, the mission on which we were sent was not as dangerous as the general thought it to be. I did not the less take all requisite precaution in the disposition of my little force. I established a line of advanced sentinels in the plain, to prevent all surprise; I had fires lighted and tents pitched on the hill, so that the aqueduct might appear to be protected by a larger force than that which I had at my disposal; — and, that done, I went to sleep on the doorsill of a hut abandoned but left locked. In Maryland, we were no longer in an enemy's country. The property of individuals was respected as scrupulously as possible.

The night passed without an alarm, and the day broke without any threatening signs. In the morning, a hundred men crossed the Potomac, a mile away from us. They were stragglers, who were rejoining the Confederate army in little squads, and marauders, whom Lee's cavalry was taking back to their regiments. With these exceptions, there was no appearance of any force of the enemy in front of our position.

Towards noon the Twenty-third Pennsylvania came to relieve us. It was accompanied by a regiment of cavalry and two pieces of artillery.

We rejoined the division at Poolesville, to learn that we were no longer to form part of it. We were replaced by a newly raised regiment, composed of recruits who had never been under fire. But in the eyes of General Howe it had one great merit, that of adding seven hundred men to his brigade.

In other circumstances, this measure would have been very agreeable to me. General Albion P. Howe, whose unsociable disposition had formerly been the cause of his being put in quarantine by his fellow-officers of the regular army, was not a commander

under whom one would desire very ardently to serve. Our intercourse had been purely official, and very cool, since, at the time of the reconnoissance at Haxall's Landing, I had taken the liberty to remark to him that there was some difference between an infantry soldier and an artillery horse. That since that time he had labored to have me replaced in his brigade, I could not help but know. But to gain his object, since our march from Alexandria to Fairfax, on that tempestuous night, when so many men fell behind, he had been pleased to represent that the regiment had become demoralized by the extent of its losses, and incapable of doing good service until it had been reëstablished, both morally and materially. The transfer order was consequently made, ostensibly for that reason.

In the evening, on taking leave of General Couch, I protested earnestly against the order which sent me to Washington on the eve of a battle, and against the injustice of the allegation, which besides was contradicted by the post of honor assigned to the regiment that very evening. But there was nothing to do but to obey. I gave the order, to depart at sunrise the next morning. —I will add here that Couch's division was not engaged at Antietam, which relieved me from the only regret I might have had on account of leaving before a battle.

On arriving at Washington, I went, conformably to orders I had received, to present myself to General Banks, who, at that time, commanded the defences of the capital. In the meantime I halted the regiment at Tenallytown, so as to be able to cross the Potomac at Chain Bridge, if I should be sent in that direction, which was the case as it happened.

The appearance of Washington was much changed. Congress was not in session; nearly all the members

were absent. With them had disappeared the swarm of office-seekers. On the other hand, the members of the diplomatic corps were absent on their summer vacations, which the passage of an army through the capital would not induce them to shorten. No strangers were to be seen. The resident population alone remaining appeared a prey to the greatest anxiety. The Northern sympathizers feared for their safety; the Southerners dreaded a defeat for the Confederate army in consequence of the attitude, passive if not hostile, of upper Maryland, which had not risen in insurrection as they had expected. Lee's proclamations, calling on the inhabitants to join him, had been without response. The ground threatened to give way under his feet to the north of the Potomac, and the new Antæus lost his strength on leaving the ground of Virginia, his mother. Lastly, the certainty of a battle, and one which might be decisive, put every one in a fever of excitement, and left no room for any other thought.

The military administration itself felt the effects of it, and was not exempt from confusion. For instance, on the 16th I was assigned to Kearney's old division, the command of which had just been given to General Stoneman. But where was General Stoneman? It was not known at headquarters, only his division must be somewhere south of the river. I was consequently compelled to telegraph General Heintzelman, the commander of that part of the defences. The latter knew no more of its whereabouts than General Banks, so that we were compelled to start out and find it.

We crossed Chain Bridge, and, after having passed by Arlington, went into camp near Fort Albany, in front of Long Bridge. That evening, in searching for information, I finally ran across General Robinson, whose brigade formed part of the command to which I was

attached. He informed me that General Stoneman was absent with one of the brigades, but that, in his absence, the remainder of the division was commanded by General Birney, whom I would find three miles further on, by the Seminary.

The division headquarters were, in fact, at the country house of the bishop, who had not thought best to remain there. When I presented myself the next morning, the first officer whom I met was one of my New York friends, Major Brevoort, of whose connection with the army I was ignorant. He had just arrived, under circumstances quite curious and worthy of being reported.

A few days before leaving the Peninsula, Kearney was in search of an assistant adjutant-general. Certainly there was no lack of officers around him brave and capable of fully performing the duties, but he wanted more. What he was seeking for was a man of the world, speaking several languages, who had travelled and lived in society, both in America and abroad. The difficulty was to find an officer who would fill both parts of the programme. He came to me to let me know of his embarrassment and to ask me if I could assist him in finding this Phœnix.

"Such a person is very difficult to find," I said. "You will probably find a good officer who will be not in the least a man of the world, or a brilliant man of the world who will be a poor officer."

It was then he spoke to me of Brevoort, of whom he had thought.

"Brevoort," I said, "will suit perfectly the conditions requisite; but I very much doubt whether he will be equally capable as a soldier."

"Pshaw!" replied Kearney; "as to that, I charge myself to make him efficient. For the office work which I require, all that is wanting is willingness and

intelligence. Brevoort is abundantly capable in these respects, and in a few weeks I will have him well taught. It will put a good deal of work on me at first, but afterwards I will have gained an agreeable companion for the days and hours off duty."

Henry Brevoort was not less surprised than flattered when he received word that he had been appointed major of volunteers and assistant adjutant-general on the staff of General Kearney, who had then joined Pope. He equipped himself hastily and started; but he arrived too late. Kearney had just been killed at Chantilly. Nevertheless, Birney accepted the legacy from his predecessor, and Brevoort had entered on his duties when I presented myself at the bishop's house.

The man of war received me in the office of the churchman. It was elegant and comfortable, and I saw nothing there which reminded me of the austere contemplation of prayer or the pious meditations of a shepherd of souls. Let them say what they will, the path strewn with thorns is not the only road to paradise. There are also roads perfectly macadamized, which are followed by the bishops, whether Protestants or Catholics.

General David Birney was a man of ability and education, a gentleman of excellent manners, as well as a distinguished officer. His family had formerly lived in Alabama, then in Michigan, where his father, James G. Birney, had been, in 1844, the first abolition candidate for the presidency, as he had been the first planter to sacrifice his interests to his principles by emancipating his slaves. David Birney had inherited the patriotism of his father, but not his political radicalism. His opinions were moderate. Although condemning the institution of slavery, he rather asked for gradual emancipation than immediate abolition. The war gave him an

opportunity to gratify his military tastes, poorly satisfied by the easy honors of the militia. Leaving in the hands of his partner his interests in a profitable practice of the law in Philadelphia, he recruited and organized the Twenty-third Pennsylvania regiment, at the head of which he joined the army. Raised to the grade of brigadier-general on the Peninsula, he commanded, for the time being, the division in which he had highly distinguished himself under the orders of Kearney.

Our first interview was very pleasant. The plain manner in which I explained to him the real reason for my transfer to his division appeared to satisfy him much better than the reasons indicated in the order of transfer, the form of which I did not like. He obligingly assured me that he knew too well my services to attach any importance to this detail, and that he was too happy to have me under his orders to trouble himself about the form of the transfer. He spoke with much praise of General Berry, under whose orders I was to serve. Then, after having spoken of other matters, he ended by inviting me to come and see him as often as my duties would permit.

Poor Birney! Between us this was the beginning of a friendship which lasted, without a break, until the day of his death. But how many were already dead, and how many were to die before him! And, at the very hour when we were conversing together for the first time, twelve of my friends, more or less intimate, were lying lifeless on the battle-field at Antietam.

When the Confederates invaded Maryland, their line of retreat and their base of supplies were necessarily transferred to the valley of the Shenandoah. At the point where that river empties into the Potomac, we had, at Harper's Ferry, a corps of nine thousand men,

commanded by Colonel D. H. Miles of the regular army, and a brigade of two thousand men at Martinsburg and Winchester, under the command of General White of the volunteer service. These troops barred the way from the valley. If General Lee had neglected to dislodge them by main force, it was because he thought it sufficient to cut them off from Washington, which accomplished the same result. General McClellan recommended, in fact, the evacuation, but General Halleck was opposed to it, in view of the importance of that position, to prevent, or at least delay, the operations of Lee in upper Maryland. The latter then found it necessary, contrary to his first intentions, to detach a considerable portion of his force to reduce Harper's Ferry.

The attack was foreseen ; Colonel Miles was ordered to hold his position, but Harper's Ferry itself was not tenable. It lies at the bottom of a sort of funnel, commanded by two mountains and a high hill, from the summit of which the village could be instantly destroyed. Evidently, the order was to defend the position, and from the point where it was defensible ; that is to say, on what are called Maryland Heights, a crowning position, protected on one side by a steep precipice, and offering on the other every opportunity for an easy defence. If Colonel Miles had established himself there resolutely, Lee would never have been able to force him from it before having the army of McClellan on his back, and the position of the Confederates would have been a very embarrassing one in which to give battle. But, with a folly inexplicable in an officer of his rank, Miles stupidly shut himself up in this funnel, where White, falling back before Jackson, soon came to join him. A mere detachment had been sent to the Maryland Heights, from which it was easily

driven by a Confederate division, while a second took position on Loudon Heights, and a third cut off all retreat by Bolivar Hill.

It was September 13. The next day the preparations for attack were completed, and on the second day the artillery of three divisions opened fire, and in two hours Miles surrendered, with nearly twelve thousand men, delivering to the enemy seventy-three pieces of artillery! He was killed by a last shot, at the instant when he had just hauled down the flag which he had not known how to defend. A prompt but useless expiation of a fault whose consequences were not the less disastrous.

However, McClellan, on arriving at Frederick, had come to the knowledge of the movements of his adversary by a happy chance, which had delivered into his hands a copy of a despatch addressed to the generals of his enemy. He knew then that Lee was weakened by the absence of three divisions, and that he had retired behind Antietam Creek, to await there the result of the operations against Harper's Ferry. The occasion was offered to him to strike a grand blow.

Between the two armies there was a chain of mountains, known as South Mountain. There were two passes by which to cross them, about six miles apart. Both were forced, notwithstanding an energetic resistance, thanks to the accessible nature of the surrounding heights. Turner's Gap was carried by Hooker and Reno, the latter of whom was, unhappily, killed there. We lost there fifteen hundred men, the enemy three thousand, fifteen hundred of whom were left prisoners in our hands. Crampton's Gap did not cost us so dearly. Franklin forced it with the loss of five hundred men, killed and wounded, inflicting on the enemy a loss much greater, and taking four hundred prisoners.

On that side the direct road to Harper's Ferry was open. Franklin was only five miles from Maryland Heights. Two hours more and everything was saved. But at that very hour when the enemy marched into the valley Miles had surrendered! The misfortune that had not been prevented it was now the question to repair. General McClellan hurried forward with his whole army in the pursuit of the adversary, who fell back before him.

The enemy halted after having crossed Antietam Creek, to receive our attack in a position chosen by General Lee. The night was employed on both sides to complete their preparations for an imminent battle, and the morning's sun of September 16 found the two armies in array.

Fortune was not yet weary of offering to McClellan favorable opportunities, of which he did not know how to avail himself, either at Yorktown, Williamsburg, or Fair Oaks. Here again she put into his hands all the good cards. She brought him, with more than eighty thousand men, in front of an enemy compelled to accept battle with fifty thousand; the reports of the Confederate generals even say forty thousand — for Jackson alone, of the troops at Harper's Ferry, had joined, with his tired division, the rest of the army during the night. McLaws and A. P. Hill were still at Harper's Ferry.

On the other hand, the *morale* of our troops was marvellously raised since they had returned to the loyal States. On Maryland soil they were *at home;* they were now fighting for their firesides, to save the threatened capital and with it perhaps the Republic. An enthusiasm of valor animated them. This was shown by the vigor with which the enemy had just been attacked and driven from position after position in the passes of

South Mountain. This first victory was of good augury. It had increased the confidence both of officers and men.

And, finally, the revived popularity of McClellan secured for him everything which was wanting for Pope: the entire and cordial coöperation of his corps commanders, the faithful execution of his orders, and the prompt obedience of all. It seemed that he had only to say, *Go in!*

The condition of the Confederates was very different. They were much inferior in numbers, as we have just seen. Besides, their energy, if not exhausted, was at least badly tried by the costly efforts they had made to drive us back from the banks of the Rappahannock to those of the Potomac. Poorly clothed, poorly shod, poorly fed, they had taken up their march to enter into the promised land of Maryland, which, they were told, awaited them as liberators, and whose people would rise with transport on their approach. On reaching Frederick, they sang the famous appeal to Maryland: —

> She is not dead, nor deaf, nor dumb!
> Hurrah! She spurns the Northern scum!
> She breathes, she burns, she'll come, she'll come!
> Maryland! my Maryland!

But Maryland did not respond to that appeal. Not only had she not gone over to the Confederates; now that they stretched out the hand to her, she refused to follow them. There was no movement. It was a cruel disappointment.

Worse yet, at the very time when McClellan was advancing against them, reënforced by three corps which had not taken part in the battles with Pope (the Second, the Sixth, and the Ninth), the rebels saw their ranks thinned more and more, by a multitude of strag-

glers and marauders who had remained behind. The Confederate generals should be heard on this head. General J. R. Jones, who commanded an *élite* body of troops, the old division of Stonewall Jackson, says in his report: "My division was reduced to the effective force of a feeble brigade, and did not number more than sixteen hundred men."

General Hill cried out with anger: "Thousands of craven-hearted thieves were absent from pure cowardice. The straggler is generally a thief and always a coward, insensible to every sentiment of shame. He can only be kept in the ranks by a strict and bloody discipline." And General Lee himself makes the same complaints, with more moderation, but not without bitterness: "Our ranks were greatly reduced by the arduous service to which the army had been forced, by their great want of rest and food, and by their long marches without shoes, in the mountains. Thousands of brave men had in this way been compelled to leave the ranks, while many more had done the same from unworthy motives."

These were the circumstances, on both sides, when the battle was fought.

The Confederate right rested on Antietam Creek, whose course protected their entire centre, drawn up in front of Sharpsburg. Their left, thrown back, was connected with the Potomac by their cavalry. This was the side where McClellan made his attack. In the afternoon (September 16), Hooker advanced up Antietam Creek, crossed it by a ford, and at nightfall took position in front of the left wing of the enemy. The lateness of the hour did not allow of opening the fight, so that Lee had the whole night in which to get ready. Nevertheless, at daylight, Hooker attacked the Confederates so vigorously that he threw them in disorder beyond the Hagerstown road. But the First Corps had

attacked all alone. After terrible losses, it was soon stopped by new troops sent against it, and forced to fall back in confusion, while Hooker, severely wounded, was carried off the field of battle.

Mansfield, who had crossed the Antietam during the night, advanced, in his turn, at the head of the Twelfth Corps. At the beginning of the engagement he fell, mortally wounded. The enemy was, not the less, driven back a second time, to the other side of the road. But there, again reënforced, he returned to the charge, and had retaken the position twice lost, when he found Sumner, with the Second Corps, in front of him. Sumner threw his troops on the Confederate divisions, which, much reduced and worn out with fatigue, were rapidly, for the third time, driven back upon their shaken centre.

At this time, a decisive victory appeared to be assured to us. Lee's left was swept away, his centre reduced, and his reserve enfeebled. Provided his right was engaged, he had nothing with which to stop Sumner, and after him Franklin, — without reckoning Porter, held in reserve. Unfortunately, the greater part of the enemy's right, composed of Longstreet's corps, remained disposable. In order to attack, Burnside had, in the first place, to carry a narrow stone bridge, under the fire from a steep hill crowned with artillery, well covered by infantry. His first attempt, begun too late and conducted too slowly, had been repulsed so easily that Longstreet could hold him in check with a single division. The two others (one of which had returned the evening before from Maryland Heights) were sent to aid the routed left wing.

On their arrival, they effected an entrance into Sumner's line, through a gap left between the divisions of French and Sedgwick, thus separating the latter, who was at our extreme right, and, concentrating their effort

against it, drove it back roughly to the point where Hooker, in the morning, had opened his first attack.

By reason of this vigorous offensive return, the enemy rallied, and his reënforced centre, in its turn, bore bravely against the two divisions of French and Richardson. They held their ground. However, it is quite possible that they would have been compelled to fall back in their turn if Franklin had not come to their aid. His arrival enabled us to retain the advantage we had so dearly bought at the price of seven hours of deadly fighting. It was at this time that Sumner, tired of waiting in vain for a serious diversion from Burnside, took upon himself to stop Franklin, at the instant when he was getting ready to follow up his success. The exhausted enemy asked for nothing better. The fire ceased on both sides, and the afternoon passed away with no more fighting on this part of the field.

It was only then that the contest, ceasing on the right wing, took on the character of a battle on the left. The bridge was carried, and the force which defended it driven back on Sharpsburg. But it was fated that on this day we could not make an advance of two steps without falling back at least one. At the moment when the threatened capture of the village was about to bring certain defeat to the Confederates, A. P. Hill appeared, bringing up the last of the three divisions sent to Harper's Ferry. This reënforcement was sufficient to change the face of affairs, and drive back the Ninth Corps to the crest of the hill, which commanded the course of the creek. Here the varying positions and changing fortunes of this bloody day came to a close.

Was it a victory? Not as yet. We had been successful to a certain extent, it is true, since we had crossed the Antietam, and carried the advanced posi-

tions of the enemy. But, far from having abandoned the field of battle to us, he held his line firmly at all points. Compelled to fight no longer either to rouse Maryland or to gain Baltimore or Washington, but only to assure his own safety, he had from the very danger itself drawn a redoubled energy, and fought with a tenacity which had caused us great losses. In spite of everything, however, his position was almost desperate. The day's battle had cost him ten thousand men. All his troops had been in action. The greater part had met with terrible losses. They were worn out by their efforts and discouraged by their want of success. On our side we had lost about thirteen thousand, but, although our loss had been the greater, we were not so seriously affected by it, on account of our numerical superiority. We had, besides, a reserve of four divisions (Porter's corps and Couch's division) which had not fired a shot. Finally, our position was much more favorable than the night before, no natural obstacle existing between us and the enemy which it was necessary to surmount.

Every one slept that night, convinced that the next day's sun would witness the destruction of Lee's army by a united attack, and that what remained would be driven into the Potomac, captured, or dispersed. The generals took their measures accordingly. Burnside asked for five thousand reënforcements to destroy everything in front of him. Franklin, who had with impatience seen his action suspended in the middle of the day, would finish it so much easier on the morrow, in that he would then have his third division (Couch) with him. Sumner was well prepared to take his revenge for the mishap of one of his divisions. And, finally, it was probable that Porter was anxious to make up for the complete inaction in which he had been kept up to this time.

McClellan had only to say the word. — But that word he did not say. It was still the McClellan of the Peninsula, faint-hearted and irresolute, not daring to follow up a success or parry a reverse; incapable, on every occasion, of handling an army in the face of the enemy.

On September 17, he held Lee in his hands, as it were. The plan that he had conceived was incontestably good; the execution of it had been most unskilful. In place of acting against the enemy's left with three army corps together, he had sent each corps in by itself and at too long intervals for one to be able to profit by the advantage gained by the other. Thus the First and the Twelfth had successively seen their first success changed to a reverse. The Second came very nearly meeting the same fate. Instead of attacking the right of the enemy simultaneously, which would have prevented the sending of reënforcements to Jackson against Sumner, the general-in-chief had contented himself by sending late orders to Burnside, which the latter had not executed until still later. The battle of Antietam had been fought disconnectedly, without agreement or concordance in its different parts. The relative success gained there was entirely due to the obstinate courage of the soldiers and of the inferior officers. Nothing else.

I have vainly sought in all the documents, and in all the accounts of the battle which I have seen, an indication of the presence of the general-in-chief at any point where he could attend to the execution of his orders, or see for himself how things were going during battle. But in the afternoon, after the fight had ceased on our right, he went there to approve the order which General Sumner had taken the responsibility of giving, and prevent Franklin from renewing the contest with

Smith's division, which had been only partially engaged, and Slocum's division, which had not been engaged at all.

Thus the whole of the 18th passed away, and McClellan was unable to come to the resolution to profit by this last opportunity offered him by fortune. He had asked for fifteen thousand men from Washington, and he was waiting for them! Always reënforcements; reënforcements *quand même!*

It has been said that he proposed to renew the attack on the 19th. But why on the 19th and not on the 18th? Was it to give Lee time to escape? However that might be, Lee was not slow to profit by it. On the morning of the 19th, without being disturbed, he had put the Potomac between the remnant of his army and his obliging adversary, who, it may well be thought, had no idea of pursuing him into Virginia.

Thus ended the first invasion of Maryland by the Confederates.

CHAPTER XVI.

INTERLUDE.

General Berry — Volunteer recruiting — Antipathy of the people to the conscription — New regiments — Three hundred thousand men raised for nine months — The Fifty-fifth reorganized in seven companies — Raid of General Stuart into Maryland — The Third Corps at Edwards Ferry — General Stoneman — Colonel Duffié — General McClellan's inaction — Correspondence with the President — The army returns to Virginia — The different classes of farmers — Forward march — General McClellan relieved of his command.

THE retreat of the enemy to Virginia, while depriving us of the most important fruits of the battle, left us incontestably with the honor of victory. I called on General Berry with the order assigning the Fifty-fifth to his command. He was a plain straightforward man, tall and broad-shouldered. His blue flannel blouse and his whole dress gave him very little of a military air. But whoever judged him from his appearance would have judged badly, for, although he had rather the appearance of an honest farmer than that of a brigadier-general, he was not the less a good officer, as faithful to his duty as he was devoted to his soldiers. He belonged to that fine race of woodsmen from the State of Maine, who, in spite of the appearance of great physical vigor, were yet unable to endure the fatigues and privations of the war as well as others not so well provided for as to stature and muscular strength. In fact, experience has proved that, in conditions of good health, men rather meagre than fat, rather small in size than of tall stature, make more hardy soldiers. In the case of

the woodsmen of Maine, the fact appears much more surprising, in that they had been accustomed from infancy to open-air work and camping in the forests where they carried on their labor. I note the fact, and leave to others the explanation.

The Peninsular campaign, and that of the north of Virginia, had already sensibly affected the health of General Berry. But in him the moral energy strove against physical weakness, and it was only when it could not be avoided that he consented to take a leave of absence, to reëstablish his exhausted strength.

His brigade was composed of six regiments: three of New York — the First, the Thirty-seventh, and the Fifty-fifth; and three of Michigan — the Second, the Third, and the Fifth. All of them had lost more than half of their effective force, and averaged but about four hundred men in each regiment. Hooker's old division was in the same condition. This was why the Third Corps had been left at Washington to rest and recruit its exhausted ranks.

To rest — that was well said. But recruiting was a very different matter. The time had passed when volunteers poured into the ranks of their own accord. The severe trials which the army had undergone, the battles, its reverses, and the prospect of a long and hard-fought war, had considerably cooled the military enthusiasm. It had become necessary to have recourse to bounties. Small at first, these bounties gradually became greater as circumstances became less and less encouraging, and ended by reaching a very high figure. The federal government gave one. In order to fill up its quota, each State gave another. For the same reason, the districts had to furnish a third. So that the price of a soldier arose, later on, to eight hundred dollars in greenbacks, which represented, according to the fluctua-

tions of the gold board, from fifteen hundred to two thousand francs in gold.

Thus the people voluntarily imposed on themselves the most heavy pecuniary sacrifices to avoid the conscription, against which they always showed a profound antipathy.

Nothing in the world can be more illogical than this sentiment. For, in a democratic government, the very fact that the government is only the agent of the people, sprung from it, and being one with it, makes it incumbent on the people to defend it with all its power. There is no ground for distinction. The cause, the interest are the same. Whoever says government says people. The correlation of rights and duties is absolute, and every citizen enjoying the first in all their plenitude is bound to fulfil the second to their whole extent. So that, in the United States, the conscription is not a tribute of blood imposed on the people, it is simply the duty imposed by the institutions which it has itself formed, and which it would maintain at all hazards.

However, the feeling in this respect, although illogical, is not inexplicable. It has its origin in the distrust of military institutions, whose too great development has always been fatal to liberty. If the conscription became an established thing, was it not to be feared that after the war it might give birth to a military power, useless for the exterior protection of the country, and dangerous, perhaps, to its internal security? Much individual apprehension came in aid of these general considerations, to induce the people to pay large bounties, in order to defer the necessity of resorting to the draft to fill up the ranks of the defenders of the Republic. But it was henceforth a mere euphemism to call the new levies volunteers. The greater part

of them were really mercenaries. Our veterans of the Peninsula, who had neither asked nor received anything for taking up arms for their country, called them *bounty men.*

If they had even been sent to us by squads or companies to fill up our depleted ranks, we would have quickly made them serviceable soldiers. Intermingled with tried men, placed under the orders of experienced officers, they would have soon conformed to discipline and been efficient in drill. They would have quickly learned their trade, and marched under fire with the confidence which the example and support of soldiers give to newcomers.

Generals and colonels asked with equal urgency that the vacant ranks of their regiments be filled up. But other considerations prevailed with the Governors of the States. The thing most desired by them was to furnish the number of men called for, and the most efficient way of so doing was to form new regiments. For these reasons : —

All the volunteer officers beneath the grade of brigadier-general were, as I have explained elsewhere, appointed by the Governors of the States. Now, as the commission of captain was assured in advance to whoever should raise a company, many young men went to work with that object. Each one was assisted by two others, who would receive the rank of first and second lieutenant ; and all these used their influence, their money, and their friends' money. Independent contributions, sometimes of quite large amounts, were added to the bounties offered.

The selection of the staff was generally influenced by the same reasons, and there were very few colonels, lieutenant-colonels, majors, or quartermasters who did not owe their commissions to the more or less important

part which they had taken in the recruiting of the new regiments; unless, however, their political influence was considered as an equivalent; or unless, through their friends or acquaintances, they were in a position to ask a favor which would not be without return to the appointing power.

Besides, it was generally supposed that these regiments, by reason of their want of instruction and their inexperience, would be kept around Washington, and for guard duty of towns and depots; and this idea, it cannot be denied, operated in favor of new organizations, and gave them a marked preference in the eyes of those enlisting.

And, finally, the *amour propre* of each State was stimulated as to the number of regiments furnished by each to the federal service. This rivalry had been carried to such an extent that, to reach a figure more apparent than real, a new number was given to the regiments which, originally enlisted for three months, had afterwards reënlisted for three years, or during the war! So that, for example, the Thirteenth Pennsylvania became the One Hundred and Second. Really, it was one and the same regiment. But it counted double in the account of the force furnished by Pennsylvania, and the patriotism of Pennsylvania took on an additional lustre.

To this combination of individual ambitions, of collective vanities, and political expedients we in the army could only oppose the public welfare, and it was not a sufficient counterpoise. If, in fact, the recruits had been sent directly to us, the State furnishing the troops would have lost the coöperation of those who wished to obtain commissions on the start; the number of regiments furnished by each State would have been diminished; and the enrolment would have been so much

slower that there would have been less chance of being stationed where they would not be under fire.

To all this there was a remedy — the conscription. But the government did not wish to have recourse to this except in case of absolute necessity. It was evidently fear of the unpopularity of the measure, which induced it to resort to expedients to avoid the necessity.

An act of Congress, dated July 17, had authorized the President to accept for *nine months* the service of one hundred thousand volunteers in addition to the five hundred thousand who were already under arms. The volunteers not coming forward fast enough, in the emergency, three hundred thousand militia were called for, also for nine months. An order from the War Department announced, August 4, the apportionment amongst the different States. Those of them whose quota was not full by the 15th of the same month must fill up the number lacking by a special draft.

Now, as it was impossible to choose which regiment must go, a sufficient number of volunteers must be found in their ranks, — which was more than improbable, — or resort must be had to lot to furnish the contingent. It was really a conscription, but a conscription attenuated, disguised, and only for the period of nine months, and for that reason necessitating the organizing of new regiments.

The States immediately strove, by exertions and bounties, to gather in volunteers, and when they proceeded to the draft the demand for substitutes took in all the disposable men who had been reserved for that speculation.

Thus three hundred thousand men were called out under the flag, who were good for nothing but garrison duty, and whom it was necessary to send back to their homes when they had become capable of service in the

field, at the very time, perhaps, when there would be the most use for them. For there was no probability of finishing the war in nine months,

From that time there was no possibility of recruiting for our old regiments, whose ranks remained half full. In the end, it was necessary, as we shall see, to consolidate the regiments, in order to make them efficient for service in the field.

The latter part of September and the beginning of October passed by in this way, while we waited for the recruits who did not come. Happily, besides the conscription of the militia, there were some regiments of volunteers, that had been organized for some little time, which were sent to us. Our brigade was thus reënforced by the Seventeenth Maine. The willingness and zeal of this regiment soon made good the deficiencies arising from its inexperience. The daily drill *de rigueur* in the camp, the field duty, which was performed as if in the face of the enemy, were the best preparations for the rough trials from which it would afterwards come forth with honor.

A few changes took place in the disposition of the troops. Our brigade was sent to Upton Hill, to relieve a division of Sigel's corps, sent to Centreville. There my regiment was reorganized in seven companies, in order to make room for three new companies promised from New York, but which never came. This *consolidation* furnished occasion for a certain number of promotions. The losses, in fact, were not less amongst the officers than amongst the men. My lieutenant-colonel had resigned at Harrison's Landing, in consequence of his slight knowledge of the English language and his entire want of education suitable to so high a rank. I did not think I ought to ask for a successor. It would have been a useless expense for the government, in a

regiment so much reduced in its effective force. Two captains had been obliged to leave the service because of disability; a third, after having deserted, *procured* a discharge, I do not know how. Amongst the lieutenants, one had been condemned to death for cowardice in face of the enemy, three had been dismissed from the army by sentence of court-martial. Others had been retired on account of wounds or sickness. To sum up, of thirty-three officers whom I had taken on the Peninsula, I had but fourteen on my return before Washington.

The duties of presiding officer of a court-martial, which I had performed the winter before at Tenallytown, occupied me almost entirely at Upton Hill.

It was the 11th of October when the division left camp to rejoin the army, according to orders received the evening before. The Confederate General Stuart had reëntered Maryland, at the head of fifteen hundred cavalrymen, and renewed his exploit of the Peninsula by playing the d—l around the camps. He had penetrated as far as Chambersburg, in Pennsylvania, and, pursued by General Pleasonton, who had, however, but eight hundred men, he was approaching the Potomac to return to Virginia. As our line was along the river, in the part of the country towards which Stuart was aiming with his spoils, we hoped that we could bar his passage, but that good fortune was not given to us. It fell to the Second Brigade, which, unhappily, could not profit by it. That brigade had been in advance of the two others for some time. It had accompanied General Stoneman to Poolesville, where it was stationed when the enemy appeared in the neighborhood. The colonel who commanded it *ad interim* in the absence of General H. Ward, recently promoted, had gone out with two or three regiments of infantry and a squadron of cavalry

on the aqueduct road near the Monocacy River. There he found himself in the presence of the enemy, who occupied a wood parallel to the road and separated from it by some open fields. At this moment General Ward came on the field. Colonel Stoepel hastened to turn over the command to him. The general, who did not know exactly where the rest of his brigade was, and doubtless had no knowledge of the measures taken to stop the enemy, took advantage of the terms of his leave of absence, whose expiration he had anticipated by twenty-four hours. He refused on so sudden a call to accept a responsibility for which he was not prepared. Both parties insisted: — "The command belongs rightfully to you." — "Excuse me; the command is, in fact, in your hands." — "As you are present, I have no right to retain it." — "I am absent; here is my leave." I shorten the story. Time passed, and nothing was decided on.

The result was — I had it from a number of eye-witnesses — that the enemy, seeing the indecision, fed his horses under the eyes of our furious soldiers, and afterwards quietly crossed the Potomac a short distance from there. He had reached the Virginia bank when Pleasonton came up too late, having made, in the pursuit of the raiders, seventy-eight miles in twenty-four hours.

This unfortunate incident left a long and bitter remembrance in the Second Brigade. General Ward was shortly after summoned to Washington, where he must have made satisfactory explanations, since he returned upheld in his command, while Colonel Stoepel left the army, his resignation being accepted.

During this time, our brigade, after having taken position on Seneca Creek on the morning of the 12th, had been sent the same day, by a rapid march, to Ed-

ward's Ferry. We arrived there in the night, in a driving rain. The next morning, the tempest having abated a little and Stuart having succeeded in escaping, we went into camp half a mile from there, on some ground not so muddy and better situated.

It was a fine country; — great woods interspersed with broad meadows and cultivated fields, in the centre of which arose farmhouses of fine appearance. The opinions of the inhabitants favored the South, and more than one young man from the families around was in the Confederate army. Nevertheless, we were politely received, since we took nothing which was not paid for in ready money, and the requisitions for wood and forage were under the orders of the quartermaster's department.

The older people were very reserved on the subject of politics. The young girls, only, gave free license to their tongues, excited by our officers, who were the more amused by this frankness as the expression was more animated, and in that the grandparents showed themselves much disturbed by it. It was not our place, defenders of every liberty, to find fault with free speech even in the mouths of our enemies. We granted it to others as much as we asked it for ourselves.

General Stoneman had his headquarters at Poolesville, where I saw him for the first time. His polite but reserved manners were those of a gentleman. Nothing in his appearance betrayed the energy, active and somewhat blustering, which one expects in a cavalry general. The poor state of his health, which was the cause of his assignment to an infantry command, was, besides, enough to explain his somewhat sleepy appearance.

Near his headquarters was camped a regiment of New England cavalry, so called because it had been

recruited from the New England States, though the greater part of its force came from Rhode Island. This regiment was commanded by a Frenchman, Colonel Duffié, who had found it in a truly pitiful condition. A few months had sufficed to transform his command and put it on such a footing that the First New England Cavalry was already regarded rightfully as one of the best regiments, and one of those on which reliance could be placed.

When I visited Colonel Duffié, I found him under his tent, surrounded by his officers, to whom he was himself giving a lesson in tactics. We visited his camp together, where everything breathed the air of order and cleanliness, and a care for the least details of the service. The horses were in good condition, the men appeared finely, and the equipments were irreproachable.

In this manner our cavalry was becoming better and better. The ignorant or incapable officers had given place to others, better instructed and more skilful. The cavalrymen, novices at the beginning of the war, had better learned their trade, and made war under the curb of a more severe discipline. The time was approaching when the superiority of the enemy as to cavalry was soon to disappear, both as to quality and to number, and ere long to be changed to inferiority.

Nothing marked our stay near Edward's Ferry, except the strong feeling caused by an order of the Secretary of War, authorizing the transfer to the regulars of any volunteers who should make the request, — and that either with or without the approval of their officers.

This deplorable measure had been inspired solely by the desire to fill up the ranks of the regular army. But evidently the consequences had not been con-

sidered. They had not thought that it effected not only the further reduction of the regiments of volunteers already so terribly reduced, but also the total subversion of discipline in their ranks. The soldier could henceforth set his superiors at defiance. He was at liberty to pass to the regulars. If he should be punished, however he might have deserved it, "All right," said he, "I will be transferred to the regulars." If he found the chevrons of a corporal were too long in coming, "Well, I will try the regulars." The desire of change would be sufficient to cause him to ask for a transfer.

So, as though it were not enough for us to be unable to replace the men we had lost, a part of those who were left were to be taken from us, and the rest demoralized in consequence. And for what reason? To recruit a corps of troops who were neither better nor worse than the others, and who formed an insignificant portion in the composition of our armies. I have never heard whether there were any regulars in the Western armies or not; in the Army of the Potomac there was but one division. Was it worth the while to concern themselves so much about it?

From all quarters, the strongest remonstrances were made to this order. Then the number of transfers authorized was reduced to ten men from a company. It was forgotten that a large proportion of the companies had not more than thirty men in their ranks, and many even less. Then a pro-rata was established according to the effective force in the regiments, compared to the number of men asked for on a prepared list. Finally, the measure was not carried out. It ended by being revoked, and the volunteer service lost only a few men who were absolutely necessary to man the batteries.

The time passed away. The fine days of October, the finest weather of the pleasantest season in the United States, slipped away without any indication on the part of General McClellan of any intention to profit by them. More than a month had passed since the battle of Antietam, and the army was immovable. It was impatient at this long inaction. The country was astonished at it. Everywhere, it was asked, "What is McClellan doing?"

What was he doing? Nothing. What did he wish to do? Keep us in Maryland, perhaps winter there; who knows? Ever since the 23d of September, he had recommenced his eternal refrain, by demanding reënforcements, and four days later more reënforcements! While waiting for them, he announced his intention of remaining where he was, *in order to attack the enemy in case he should again cross the Potomac.* One would naturally think this was a pleasantry, but nothing is more serious or true.

October 1, the President visited the army. Without doubt, he returned to Washington convinced of the necessity of issuing positive orders to overcome the persistent inertia of the general, for on the 6th he sent him a formal order, "to cross the Potomac and give battle to the enemy, or drive him South." Without prescribing to him a line of operations, he stated simply that McClellan could have thirty thousand reënforcements, by advancing in such a way as to place himself between the enemy and Washington while twelve thousand only could join him if he operated in the Shenandoah valley, much more distant from the capital.

The reply was that the army could not be moved in the condition in which it was. It needed so many tents, so many shoes, so many uniforms, such and such supplies and equipments, etc. And twenty other pretexts.

The President replied to the general's objections with rare good-sense. He wrote to him October 13 : —

. . . "As I understand, you telegraphed General Halleck that you cannot subsist your army at Winchester unless the railroad from Harper's Ferry to that point is put in working order. But the enemy does now subsist his army at Winchester, at a distance nearly twice as great from railroad transportation as you would have to do without the railroad last named. He now wagons from Culpepper Court House, which is just about twice as far as you would have to do from Harper's Ferry. He is certainly not more than half as well provided with wagons as you are. I certainly should be well pleased for you to have the advantage of the railroad from Harper's Ferry to Winchester ; but it wastes all the remainder of the autumn to give it to you, and, in fact, ignores the question of *time*, which cannot and must not be ignored.

"Again, one of the standard maxims of war, as you know, is to operate upon the enemy's communications as much as possible without exposing your own. You seem to act as if this applies against you, but cannot apply in your favor. Change positions with the enemy, and think you not he would break your communications with Richmond within the next twenty-four hours ?

"You dread his going into Pennsylvania. But if he does so in full force, he gives up his communications to you absolutely, and you have nothing to do but to follow and ruin him. If he does so with less than full force, fall upon and beat what is left behind, all the easier."

Nothing was done. One pretext disposed of, McClellan found another. And so the days ran on, and the army did not move.

Sometimes the impatience of the President was expressed in biting irony. Here is one of his despatches dated October 25 : —

"I have just read your despatch about sore tongues and fatigued horses. Will you pardon me for asking what the horses of your army have done since the battle of Antietam that fatigues anything ? "

And then McClellan complained that the services of his cavalry had been disparaged. Afterwards he wished to know what should be done to protect Maryland when he went into Virginia. He advised this, he objected to that, and, once under way, he arrived (on paper) at Bragg's army. Upon which General Halleck very sensibly remarked to him that Bragg's army was four hundred miles away, while Lee's army was but twenty. As a last resort, McClellan discovered that it was necessary to fill up the old regiments before putting them in the field.

If the matters concerned had not been so grave, it would have been equal to any comedy. But the country was not in the humor to laugh at jokes, especially when it did not understand them. It saw only the incomprehensible inaction of the Army of the Potomac, and was indignant at it. McClellan's friends endeavored to throw the responsibility on the President, on General Halleck, on the Secretary of War. The partisans of the government saw only in the delay the action of McClellan conformable to his antecedents. It was full time to put an end to the false situation ; the patience of every one was exhausted.

On October 27 the President wrote categorically to the recalcitrant general : "And now I ask a distinct answer to the question — Is it your purpose not to go into action again till the men now being drafted in the States are incorporated in the old regiments ? " On

this occasion the general replied in the negative, announcing at last that he was about to move.

The next day, the 28th, we broke camp. General Berry being absent on account of sickness, the command of the brigade devolved upon me. The effective force of the seven regiments composing the brigade was about three thousand four hundred men. The same day we crossed the Potomac, at White's Ford, between Conrad's Ferry and the Monocacy. The troops were full of ardor and good spirits. The water was cold and the atmosphere was not warm, but the comical incidents of the passage spread good humor over all, and gave rise to a great deal of laughter. Moreover, we stopped near the ford, and the campfires quickly dried the shoes and wet trousers. The baggage reached us the next day.

My headquarters were on a rich farm, whose owner, Alfred Belt, an old Whig, had become a secessionist with all his family. The good man grumbled from morning until night about the soldiers, who, however, respected his barnyard and paid large prices for the milk, bread, and cakes which his daughter sold them. But he took to heart the loss of his fences, which, in the evening, made magnificent fires. He could not refrain from going continually, with a mournful air, to the windows, to see them blaze up. Then he would return to the chimney corner and seat himself in his old armchair, to curse the war, deplore the extinction of the Whig party, and demonstrate to us that Henry Clay would have saved the Union if he had been living.

He had, under various pretexts, asked of me the permission to send some of his people beyond the line of our pickets, which I had refused, knowing him to be a man who would send exact information as to the

strength and position of the division. Several women who had come to see him had been sent back to where they had come from. So the old secessionist had but a very mild regard for me.

He had in the woods a valuable colt, on account of which he was very much troubled, not being able to send out to look for him. The second night, one of the advanced sentinels heard a movement of branches in the thicket, and a step as of some one approaching cautiously. "Halt! who goes there?" cried the sentinel. No reply; then a shadow was seen a short distance away. "Who goes there?" called our man for the second time, taking aim. And as the shadow approached without reply, he fired. The guard ran up and found the unfortunate colt dying, a victim to his ignorance of the usages of war. Imagine the feelings of the old man Belt, on hearing this news in the morning. He would have been glad to have persuaded me that the government of the United States ought to pay him the value of the animal. But I succeeded in convincing him that he would have to resign himself to pass the account of the colt to the balance against the horses that his grandson, then in the Confederate army, must have carried away in Maryland, during his Antietam excursion. So that we parted poor friends.

On October 31, we took the road to Leesburg. We supposed that the whole army must have crossed the Potomac. It was a mistake. With his accustomed slowness, McClellan took five days for that operation, which was accomplished only on the 2d of November. So the march of the division was of the slowest. We had to wait for the other corps, which, coming from beyond Harper's Ferry, had a longer distance to travel.

The 1st of November we spent near Leesburg, on the

Snickersville road, where we had camped the night before. The good people who received me in their little farmhouse troubled themselves as little as possible about politics. Their house, though poor, was happy and joyous. The husband had so far escaped the Southern conscription. The children were delightful to see, running after their mother, who was back and forth laughing and blushing (for me, I suppose) to hear me speaking English with a French accent. I hope the war bore lightly on them, even to the end.

The next morning, we marched towards the firing of the cannon, whose threatening voice was heard in the distance. The enemy, it was said, had assembled a considerable force five or six miles away. The First and Ninth Corps were with us, one commanded by General Reynolds, the other by General Burnside, under whose orders our division was placed. At nightfall we stopped at Mount Gilliat, in a good position, in the midst of a superb country, but suffering from the cold which was so much more piercing in that the falling of the temperature had been sudden.

The next day's march took us to Millville, where I was to come across the lowest class of the white inhabitants. Chance served me well in this respect. On entering again into Virginia, I had met a type of the rich farmer, selfish, egotistic, politician on occasions, more Virginian than American, detesting the Northern democracy because he was himself an aspirant to aristocracy in the country where the vicinity of the free States had driven away the planters.

Near Leesburg I had found shelter in the house of a small farmer, living rather by his own labor than by that of others, caring little for politics because he had no ambition; a philosopher without knowing it, extending neither his activity nor his aspirations beyond his

house, and asking of God only to live, and to enable his family to live in a little comfort.

At Millville, my shelter for the night was the dilapidated hut of one of the poor devils whom public contempt in the South designates as *White Trash.* This one bore the name of Hospital; are there predestined names? Everything about him breathed misery and slovenliness: the walls, the furniture, the garments. What furniture! and what garments! The moral qualities of my hosts were plainly on a par with their physical. Their ignorance was on a level with their poverty. Possessing nothing, they knew nothing. They lived an animal life, poorly supported by day's work on the farms, without appearing to imagine that there could be for them any other existence.

These three classes were equally carried away in the whirlwind of the war. In the first class were found the instigators and ringleaders who deceived the others, without foreseeing themselves where they were tending; the second class furnished the defenders of the soil, dupes of political theories which they did not understand; the third class, the "common herd," furnished the food for powder.

On the 5th we passed through Middletown and White Plains, to camp near Salem, and on the 6th we arrived a few miles from Waterloo — name of sad memory.

This march was laborious. The roads were horrible, for the weather had changed very much since we had returned to Virginia. It was now piercing cold, from which the men had hard work to protect themselves, as their clothing was in poor condition, and insufficient for the winter temperature. In spite of our prolonged stay in Maryland, the army was far from having received all the supplies it needed. The want of shoes was especially felt, and during the last days I had seen many of

the soldiers marching along laboriously in the mud, with remnants of shoes worn down at the heels, cracked open, and almost soleless. Some were barefooted; but they marched on, endeavoring not to be left behind.

The night was really glacial. Happily, fuel was plentiful. The great fires lighted on all sides continued to blaze until morning. Then the snow began to fall, at first in light flakes and soon in a thick whirlwind, whipped by continual squalls. The trees groaned, the ground trembled, and the men shivered. In the midst of the storm, General Stoneman sent for me, and, looking like a snow man, I entered the country church where he was quite comfortably installed with his staff. When I had warmed myself a little, he told me that the first two brigades of the division were camped in a forest of tall pines, which the road passed through a short distance away.

"You can also go there and choose a place for your regiments," he added. "They will be better protected than in this position, where you are now."

I mounted my horse, accompanied by an officer of my staff, and we found, without much trouble, a place with the desired conditions. But the snowstorm did not abate, and, the day being nearly spent, I concluded to see the general again on my return, to ask him to let me put off the changing of camp for my brigade until morning.

He consented immediately, with an air which made me think that our advance movement was suspended. Why? I could not imagine; but there was something new in the air, and something indefinable in the manner of the general and his staff, which struck me.

The enigma was explained the next morning, when, while laying out our new camp, the news came: McClel-

lan had been relieved from command, and replaced by Burnside.

At first we could hardly believe it. We had so many times received news as true one day, only to be denied the next! But for once the rumor was true. The evening before, a general officer had brought from Washington the following order, dated November 5 : —

"It is ordered by the President of the United States that Major-General McClellan be relieved from the command of the Army of the Potomac, and that Major-General Burnside take command of that army."

It was finished. The military career of General McClellan had come to an end.

We may well believe that this removal was deserved. But, to tell the truth, although too late, it was not opportune. Really it is not always enough to do a thing good in itself, it should also be done at the proper time. Now, the suitable occasion for removing General McClellan from the command of the army had twice presented itself: the first, in the month of July, after the disastrous failure of his campaign against Richmond, and the sending of an unbecoming communication to the President on the general policy of the government; the second, in the month of October, in view of his manifest ill-will, when he refused to move his army, disobeying positive orders. Now that he had started to execute his plans, whatever they were, the time was badly chosen to supersede him, — unless the army was in danger of being compromised, which was not the case.

This was the general judgment. The *Copperheads* of the North, it is true, made great hue and cry, but on the other hand the Southern rebels poorly disguised their vexation at a change which might be ruinous to them. As to the army, sentiments and opinions were divided. McClellan had there a great number of partisans, who were still ignorant of his share of the

responsibility for the defeat of Pope, and his refusal to pursue and finish up Lee after the battle of Antietam. And they did not hesitate to express their disappointment. This, without doubt, is what has given rise to the too generally received idea that McClellan was the idol of his army, and that his dismissal had given a great blow to the confidence and energy of his soldiers.

This may have been true as to some generals and a few officers whose promotion was more dependent upon the favor of the general-in-chief than upon their own merits. But this idea was very incorrect as to the great body of the army, in which the popularity of McClellan, great in the beginning, was dimmed before Richmond, eclipsed after the retreat of the seven days, was only regained afterwards by the counteraction of Pope's misfortunes, and had blazed up at Antietam only to become clouded over during the long inaction which followed that victory.

The Army of the Potomac, animated by a better spirit, did not make its patriotism depend on the retaining of a chief who had contributed to its reverses more than to its successes. The truth is that, with some grumbling, interested mostly, the army accepted the change as a man does a wife: "for better or for worse."

Thus the general who had up to this time played the first rôle disappeared from the scene. His misfortune and that of the country was his sudden elevation to a position to which his ability was not equal. If he had remained at a post in accordance with his military abilities, for instance the command of the defences of Washington, it is probable that he would have filled the place with honor. As he was essentially an officer of engineers, he would have found there the best field for his special talents. But the success of a small affair well carried out, at Laurel Hill, was the means of bring-

ing to him such high fortune that he was dazzled, and, as it were, overwhelmed by it. So great is the distance between the command of a small body of troops, and that of a great army.

Aside from his military ability, McClellan had not the burning ardor which was necessary to put an end to the rebellion. He wanted *zeal* and conviction in the strife. His ultra conservative opinions were full of sentimentality toward the *erring brothers*.

The enemy was to him only an enemy in the military acceptance of the term. Aside from that, he appeared, in combating the rebellion, to be always afraid of hurting the rebels too much, while they, for their part, thought they never could injure us enough. Thus he showed himself overflowing with consideration for them, even to the point of professing a respect, badly timed, for slavery, which had in his eyes the character of an inviolable institution. We are forced to believe that he deceived himself, even to the point of hoping to bring them back to the Federal Union by mild measures; but, with that system, the war would still be unfinished, or the Confederation would be definitely established at this time.

Aside from his military and political rôle, the ex-commander of the Army of the Potomac is a gentleman, courteous in his manners, dignified in his bearing, and reserved in speech. For those who, at a later date, supported him for the Presidency, in order to have in the White House an accomplished gentleman, he filled, without doubt, that part of the programme. But the people, who wished, above all things, the safety of the Republic and the triumph of the government, demanded at the head of the army a general who had higher merits than the qualities of a gentleman and the talents of an engineer.

CHAPTER XVII.

FREDERICKSBURG.

Ambrose Burnside, general commanding — Organization of grand divisions — Mrs. L.'s honey — State elections — General Burnside's plan — The delay of the pontoons — Effect of snow — Passage of the Rappahannock — Doctor C.'s nerves — Battle of Fredericksburg — Attack of the enemy's positions on the left — Tragical episode — Whose fault was it? — Disasters on the right — General Burnside's obstinacy — Dead and wounded — Return to our camp.

GENERAL AMBROSE BURNSIDE was but little known by the army the command of which had devolved upon him. He had achieved his reputation as commander of a fortunate expedition on the coast of North Carolina, where he had remained during our entire Peninsular campaign. When Pope, menaced by the greater part of the Confederate army, awaited the reënforcements which McClellan delayed sending him day after day, it was Burnside who was the first to hasten to Alexandria, at the head of the Ninth Corps, to his assistance, and who immediately sent Reno's division to the banks of the Rapidan. So that he had belonged to the Army of the Potomac but two months, during which, as we have seen, he had commanded the right wing at South Mountain, and the left wing at Antietam. He was a man of fine character, honest, upright, full of patriotism, incapable of stooping to any intrigue, and always subordinating his ambition to his duty; but too much inclined to be obstinate.

A friend of McClellan, not only had he done nothing to supersede him, but he had already twice refused the honor which had just been conferred upon him rather

against his wishes. Far from presuming too much on his own ability, he was afraid of not being equal to the responsibility which devolved upon him; but duty called, and he believed that he had no right to longer withhold the services which government demanded of him. To a formal order he yielded a ready obedience, and thought only of doing his best.

In order to inform himself of the position and strength of the different corps, the resources upon which he could rely, the necessities against which he must provide, — in a word, to put himself *au courant* with the workings of so vast a machine as an army of a hundred thousand men, the new general-in-chief required a few days, during which the movements then under way were suspended. His intention was to substitute a new plan for that of his predecessor. To the line from Culpeper to Gordonsville, which took us further and further into the interior, he preferred that of Fredericksburg, which offered greater facilities for supplying the army and had the advantage of being more direct, calling Richmond our objective point. His reasons, submitted to the President and General Halleck, were approved. So when the army moved it was to march to Fredericksburg.

However, before giving the order, General Burnside made a change in the organization of the army, forming what he called grand divisions. Each of these grand divisions comprised two army corps. There were three of these, called the right, centre, and left grand divisions: the right was composed of the Second and Ninth Corps, under command of General Sumner; the centre of the Third and Fifth Corps, commanded by General Hooker; and the left of the First and Sixth Corps, commanded by General Franklin. There followed a complete change in the command-

ers of the different corps, which were now as follows: Second Corps, General Couch; Ninth Corps, General Wilcox; Third Corps, General Stoneman; Fifth Corps, General Butterfield; First Corps, General Reynolds; Sixth Corps, General W. F. Smith.

The formation of the grand divisions appears to have been, for General Burnside, a means of diminishing both his responsibility and the work of his staff, at the same time giving a higher position to the three principal corps commanders, whose services might, eventually, put them on the road to the command of the army. But it was a complication, the positive inconveniences of which much exceeded the doubtful advantages. So that the innovation did not survive the originator. The grand divisions were abandoned when Burnside gave up the command of the army to one of the generals for whom he had created them.

The consequences of these changes even reached me. General Berry, though still ailing, having courageously resumed his post, and General Birney being permanently assigned to the command of the division, I was transferred, with my regiment, to the Second Brigade, where I replaced him with a provisional rank. My new command was composed, like the first, of seven regiments: three New York, the Fifty-fifth, the Fortieth, and the Thirty-eighth; two Pennsylvania, the Fifty-seventh and the Ninety-ninth; two Maine, the Third and the Fourth. They were in the some condition as the others. One-half of the men lacked overcoats, or blankets, or shoes. Their incomplete uniforms bore but too strong evidence of the hard labors of the summer. It must be believed that all the government storehouses were empty at that time, since every effort to supply our needs before commencing our march was useless.

What made the soldier most angry was not the fact of having to undergo privations, to which he was more or less hardened, but to read every day in the journals that the army was abundantly provided with everything, living in a comfort which left nothing to be desired. If the optimistic writers who composed these fancy pictures had been put for a moment on our regimen, they would very soon have changed their tone. Without speaking of the worn-out condition of the uniforms, they might have related that, on account of not finding at White Plains the rations which were to have been there, our wagons had been compelled to go as far as Conrad Ferry for them; and that during these delays the soldiers had to go without their rations, to the great sorrow of the neighboring farmers, whose barnyards were very rapidly depopulated. Unhappily for them, the inflexible Andrew Porter was no longer there to let them enjoy a happy inviolability, and the provost guards were no longer put exclusively to their service.

Nevertheless, as the order to respect property as much as possible was still in force, the Virginians, even the most hostile, took advantage of the least pretext to demand indemnity, out of all proportion to the losses they had or had not received.

I remember that at Oakwood the provost of the Third Brigade, which I commanded at that time, reported to me that the soldiers belonging to the division had carried off a few bee-hives from some houses close by; he had driven off the marauders, and placed two guards to protect the farm from any further depredations. The next morning, as I started off at the head of my brigade, a countryman stopped me on the road, to present me with a bill of damage, which I refused to approve, for the simple reason that the complainant could

not point out to which brigade or regiment the depredators belonged, and besides I had neither the time nor means to verify his account.

Eight months after, on our return from Gettysburg, the War Department sent me a voluminous claim addressed to it, in which the bee-hives were estimated at something like thirty or forty times their value. A report on the subject was asked for from me.

I concluded as follows: —

"I have no way now of ascertaining the amount of damage, but I consider the claim as an enormous exaggeration. And on this point I have the honor to call the attention of the War Department to the fact that, while our enemies are fighting the government of the United States, their families (whom we have constantly endeavored to protect against wanton depredations) pursue a war of speculation against the United States treasury, under all kinds of pretexts. Hardly one can be found who, having lost a bundle of hay or a panel of fence, does not try to get twenty times its value, from the very government they are endeavoring to destroy.

"As to a search, to discover the guilty persons in the special case referred to me, — in order to show its impossibility, it suffices to say that the brigade which I then and still have the honor to command numbered at that time more than three thousand men in its ranks, while to-day it can hardly put twelve hundred in line. The remainder is either in the hospital, disabled, or buried on the battle-fields of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, or Gettysburg. Let us, then, charge up the honey to the account of the glorious dead, and let their loyal blood wash out the trace of Mrs. L.'s rebel honey.

"I have the honor to recommend that the claim be disallowed."

How much money the government of the United States has thus too generously paid to its enemies!

We were still near Waterloo when the papers brought the news more discouraging to the army than all the privations it had been compelled to undergo. The pseudo-democratic party had prevailed in the elections in several States. By force of agitating, of intriguing, and inveighing against all the measures taken by government, and, above all, by hypocritically complaining that the war was not conducted with sufficient vigor, the *Copperheads* had succeeded in deceiving the people, and getting hold of the power in New York and several other States.

The Governor-elect of the Empire State was Horatio Seymour, an old political stager worn in the party harness. His accession to power would be marked only by the evil which he would do, or would attempt to do, while infusing into the administration of the State a fault-finding opposition to the federal government, — an opposition soon to result in bloody riots. Already, as soon as the election was over, the party hacks had thrown off the mask and uncovered their batteries. Men of tainted character, men of disappointed ambitions, paid speakers, hastened, in assemblies, to mark out most alarming programmes. Many loyal men said at the time, on reading their audacious plans, that the Republic was lost, and that the war would end only in a shameful compromise, or even in a peace which would be that of dismemberment. They were wrong. Varro did not despair of the safety of the Roman Republic, and the American Republic had not had its battle of Cannæ.

The plan of General Burnside has been more severely criticised than faithfully explained. If it failed, it was not because it was poorly conceived, but because it was

poorly carried out, as will be seen. In the first place, the Fredericksburg line offered such manifest advantages over that of Gordonsville that all the corps commanders were unanimous on this point. The latter route was impossible. The further one advanced in that direction, the greater the difficulties which would accumulate against us; the Confederates, menacing our too extended line of supplies, would have been able to break it at some point, to carry away or destroy some trains, and intercept our communications with Washington, or fully one-half of the army would have been employed to assure the subsistence of the other half, paralyzed in its offensive movements by that fact. One is led to ask how the same general who refused to cross the Potomac, because he could not supply his army at Winchester, pretended afterwards that he could subsist it at Gordonsville. No; if McClellan had led us to that point, we would have returned much more quickly than we had advanced.

By way of Fredericksburg, our base of operations at Acquia Creek was much more accessible, besides being easier to guard. On the other hand, our line of operations was more direct, and permitted a more rapid advance on Richmond, while offering facilities for supply by water, such as could not be found on the Gordonsville line.

It has been stated, in favor of the latter line, that McClellan expected to surprise the scattered forces of Lee, cut them in two, and fight them in detail. This is easier to say than to do. I, for my part, do not think General Lee was the man to allow himself to be taken unawares in this manner. At all events, it was certainly easier for him to concentrate his forces at Culpeper than at Fredericksburg. Jackson, who was still in the Shenandoah valley, would have joined him

promptly behind the Rapidan, where we could be held in check, without very much trouble, even by troops inferior in number.

From Warrenton, where our army lay, we could reach Fredericksburg before the enemy and get possession, without a battle, of the city and the heights, which a month later were so fatal to us. And if Longstreet hurried from Culpeper, to put himself across our road, he could easily be crushed before Jackson could have had the necessary time to come to his assistance.

The objection that all that was necessary for Lee to do, to force us to retire, was to march on Warrenton, is no more conclusive. In fact, if it had been so, why did he not do it? Because, in the condition in which he found his army, it was absolutely impossible for him to attempt any new offensive operations against Washington, and Burnside knew it very well. Besides his adversary was too cunning to risk his army in a simple demonstration, which would have left open to us the road to Richmond.

Everything, then, was well considered in the plan of General Burnside, everything except that which caused its failure, — a fatal delay in the arrival of the pontoons.

I have no charges to make against any one, in inquiring upon whom the responsibility for these fatal delays ought to fall. It is sufficient to state that General Sumner was at Falmouth, opposite Fredericksburg, on the 17th, and that the first shipment of pontoons did not arrive until the 24th. Seven days left to the enemy to concentrate his forces and prepare his defences! One may imagine how well he profited by the delay. Never was a week better taken advantage of. Not only did the enemy mass his forces in our front, but he began to cover with a double and triple line of intrenchments

those heights which we might have occupied without resistance, and which now stopped our way.

Sumner, who, on his arrival, had found in front of him only a squadron of cavalry and a battery which he promptly reduced to silence, had proposed to seize the position, by crossing at a ford which he knew of. But a single rainy night was enough to render the ford impassable, and the general-in-chief had wisely refused to expose one part of his army, without the means, in case of necessity, of sustaining it with the remainder. The double experience of Fair Oaks and Gaines' Mill would, in that respect, serve as a warning to him.

In addition, the expected supplies were no less delayed than the bridge equipage. General Burnside wrote in a despatch to General Halleck, dated the 22d : — " Another very important part of the plan proposed by me was that all the disposable wagons at Washington should be loaded with bread and light rations, and sent immediately here, so as to furnish to the army from five to six days' rations. These trains could have marched in perfect security, protected as they would be by the very movement of the army."

And, after explaining to him to how great an extent his plans were compromised by these divers mishaps, he added : —

" You can easily see that much delay in the general movement must result, and I think it my duty, in submitting the facts to you, to say that I can no longer promise a probable success, with the same confidence that I had when I supposed that all parts of my plan would be promptly executed." — The problem was, in fact, an entirely different one. The question now was to force the passage of the river under the enemy's fire, and to carry by assault the formidable position in which he was intrenched.

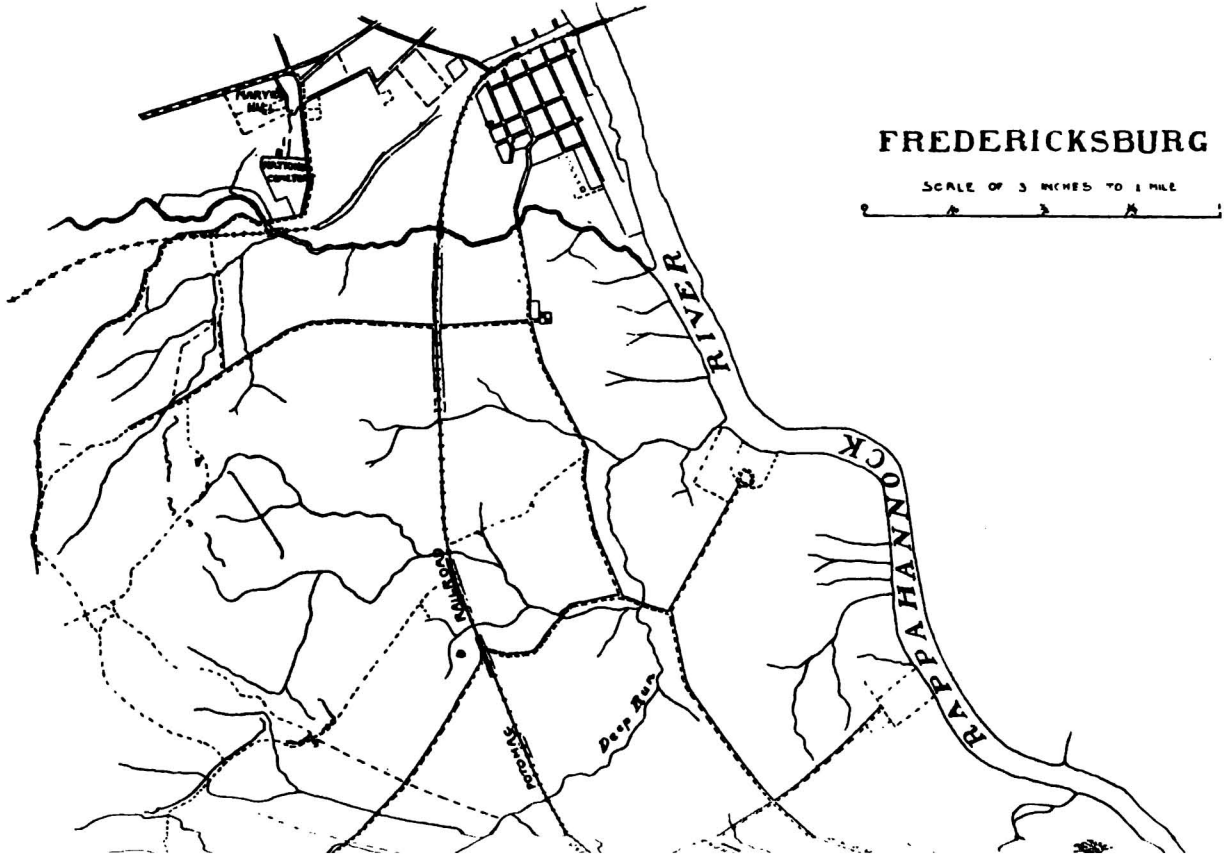
The little city of Fredericksburg is situated on the banks of the Rappahannock, in a plain extending to a line of hills, which close in to the river, a short distance above the village of Falmouth, lying on the opposite bank. Below the city, these hills, deeply cut by a broad ravine, make a wide curve away from the river, to a point where they terminate abruptly to give passage to Massaponax Creek, a stream which crosses the plain at its widest point, to empty into the Rappahannock.

The north bank of the river, behind which our army had camped since the 22d of November, by its height commanded completely the city and the plain. The city was thus placed between the two armies, and could be destroyed by the artillery fire of either. The enemy had also posted several regiments of sharpshooters in the houses and along the bank of the river, to oppose as much as possible the laying of bridges.

General Burnside's first plan had been to force a passage several miles below. With this object, a number of regiments had been sent to open roads through the woods to Skenker's Neck. The enemy got wind of it, and immediately sent the division of General D. H. Hill to oppose it. As the river was quite broad at that point, and presented much greater difficulties in presence of a force disputing the passage, the project was abandoned, and Burnside resolved to meet in front the obstacle which he could not turn.

During the preparations made necessary by this dangerous determination, the return of General Ward, retained in the command of the brigade, sent me back to the head of my regiment. General Hooker, under whose orders the Third and Fifth Corps were placed, had asked for me the grade of brigadier-general. But military services did not, at that time, suffice to determine promotions. Political intrigues had much greater

Massaponax River
JACKSON
FREDERICKSBURG
RICHMOND
HEAD
BURNEY
HAMILTON'S CROSSING
STEWART
OLD RICHMOND
5TH CORPS
6TH CORPS
AND


FREDERICKSBURG
SCALE OF 3 INCHES TO 1 MILE
RAPPAHANNOCK RIVER
RAILROAD
POTOMAC
Deep Run

weight, and the recommendations of a few members of Congress had much more influence than that of the generals.

The weather was very unfavorable for a winter campaign. The cold was severe, and the necessary clothing arrived but slowly, and in insufficient quantities. A few recruits also came to us; but what were twenty new-comers to a battalion which lacked five or six hundred men?

On December 5, the snow fell the whole day. The ground was soon covered to a depth of several inches. The pine trees, where my regiment was camped, bent under the weight. The young trees, curving over, formed arcades above the tents where the men were lying silently, rolled in their blankets. The fires were extinguished. Under the mantle of snow, shaken off from time to time, the sentinels looked like plaster statues half confounded with the tree trunks. One would have said that Death, not satisfied with the bloody part reserved to him, wished to bury us all under the same winding-sheet.

Thus, no trial was wanting to us: the heat of the torrid zone on the Peninsula; arctic cold in the north of Virginia. We tried to console ourselves with the thought that on the hills across the river our enemies, coming from the South, suffered more than we.

On the 7th, the cold still continued sharp and biting. The snow, with an icy crust, sparkled in the sunlight like diamond dust. The two following days all drill was suspended, to enable the men to install themselves more comfortably. They began immediately to build little huts, saying perhaps they were going into winter quarters. But on the evening of the 10th the order arrived to hold ourselves ready to march the next morn-

ing. "This time," it was said, "the ball is going to begin."

The night was full of suppressed agitation, and of those distant rumors which denote preparations for battle. The fires remained burning longer than usual. In different directions was heard the rolling of wagons going to the rear, and cannon going to the front. Confused noises indicated the march of regiments changing position. Their bayonets flashed through the obscurity, lighted up by the bivouac fires.

We were awakened at daybreak by the sound of the cannon. Every one was quickly on foot. The men said, while putting on their haversacks, "Well, the fight will come off to-day." And they hastened to swallow their hot coffee.

At half-past seven our division drew near the river and was held in reserve behind the Stafford Hills, which were crowned by a hundred and forty-five pieces of artillery. Under their protection and favored by a thick fog, three bridges were commenced in front of the city, and two more one or two miles further down. The latter, intended for the left grand division, were finished without much opposition. But work on the others was stopped by the deadly fire of the Mississippi sharpshooters. The artillery not being able to dislodge them from the houses, although the bombardment began to burn the city, two Massachusetts regiments and one Michigan, who had volunteered for the dangerous work, were sent over in the pontoon boats. In spite of a terrible fire, they succeeded in landing on the opposite bank, and soon swept before them the Mississippians, part of whom were taken prisoners. These bridges were then finished without hindrance, and our heads of columns began to

occupy the city, and debouch on the plain, though too late to push the operations further that day.

On the 12th the different corps continued to cross the Rappahannock, Sumner on the right, Franklin on the left. The two corps commanded by Hooker, forming the centre, were the last to cross. On both sides the sharpshooters were exchanging fires, and the artillery duel continued; no serious action occurred.

At four o'clock in the evening, the Third Corps having received an order to reënforce the left wing, we went to join General Franklin, under whose orders we were temporarily placed. We reached a little valley ending at the bridge we were about to cross, and halted there for the night, in a thick pine wood, which the axe soon cleared out. Such was the skill of our men, and especially of the lumbermen who abounded in the Maine regiments, that the trees invariably fell in the desired direction, and that, although we were formed in column by battalions, with but fifteen feet interval, not a stack of muskets was struck by the fall of these giants of the forest near the fires they were destined to feed.

On that day I witnessed a very curious example of the effect that cannon fire can produce on a nervous temperament and a diseased imagination. Shortly before there had come to the regiment a civil surgeon, whom the attraction of a fixed salary, in want of a profitable practice, had, doubtless, led to accept a military commission. Dr. C—— was married, and the father of a family. He had, it seemed, but a very vague idea of what he was undertaking, for, on arriving at the camp, he found himself living without fire, in a tent covered with snow; where, to make himself comfortable, he had but a wood fire in the open air, by which he roasted on one side while freezing on the

other; and where, shivering and hungry, he had to content himself with a meagre pittance, less refreshing than repugnant to his disordered stomach. So the goodman got to thinking with bitterness of the delights of the domestic hearth, too lightly abandoned; of the rocking-chair near the fireside; of his soft bed; of the breakfast-table, where, in the morning, the buckwheat cakes smoked. These bitter regrets troubled his sleep and his appetite; but it was far worse when the roaring of the cannon announced the prelude of a battle.

The bombardment of Fredericksburg had made for some hours a great racket; but our division was in reserve, and not a shot had fallen near us. The poor doctor was not the less in a pitiable condition. Livid as a dying person, trembling like a leaf, he shook at each detonation, as if his long legs were about to give way under him. "Colonel," said he, with a wild air, "I must go away, or I am a dead man!" Insensible to reason as to raillery, hardly knowing what he said, he repeated incessantly: "I am a dead man; I am a dead man." I never saw such utter demoralization. At last, being able to get nothing from him but this mournful refrain, I sent him to some hospital in the rear, where, shortly after, he received his discharge, for physical disability.

The 13th of December, 1862, was a day as radiant as a fête day. The air was soft, not a cloud in the sky. The sun did not trouble himself with our affairs. He rose in all his glory, lighting up with superb indifference the two armies in battle array.

Our brigade was already massed on the summit of the hill, arms stacked, awaiting its turn to cross the river. The men filled their canteens at a brook running to our right. Some of them, careless of the great slaughter

preparing for them, with loud cries, were chasing the frightened rabbits through the bushes.

From this point the view was splendid. At our feet, the river was spanned by two bridges of boats, across which defiled, on one the infantry, and on the other the cavalry and the artillery. We looked at the regiments, as they marched out on the plain to take their place in order of battle in front of the enemy's positions, which arose by steps, at the back of the picture. On the left, the view extended without hindrance to the horizon, hidden in the luminous vapor of the rising sun, and spotted with little white clouds, the nature of which we well knew. It was Franklin, who was feeling the enemy, and throwing some shells at Stuart's cavalry. In the clearness of the morning, we could easily distinguish in that direction the crackling of the skirmishers' shots, emphasized by the firing of the cannon. And on the right, a projecting hill concealing Fredericksburg from our view, we were able to see only the steeples. But further on clearly appeared above the fog a line of heights, covered with retrenchments, and bristling with cannon.

I confess it; after having long examined with the aid of a field glass that formidable arc, of which the river formed the chord, and where the army was entering so audaciously into battle; when to us, in our turn, came the order to descend into the arena, I thought involuntarily of the gladiators of old, entering into the amphitheatre. *Ave, Cæsar! Morituri te salutant!* If we had had there our Cæsar, we also would have been able to exclaim: "Those about to die salute thee!"

On clearing the bridge, we turned immediately to the left, marching obliquely towards the old Richmond road, which cuts the plain in two in its length, and is

itself cut at a right angle by a crossroad. This road led directly from the Smithfield farm, situated on the bank of the river, to that portion of the heights comprised between the ravine of which I have spoken and the point at whose foot runs the Massaponax. It was about noon when we crossed the intersection of the two roads, to deploy in line of battle in a large field lying in front of the main road, and to the left of the crossroad. Hooker's old division, commanded now by General Sickles, did not follow ours. It was to rejoin us later on.

This deploying appeared to me to be done with more ostentation than ability. But, perhaps, it was specially desired to draw the enemy's attention on us, who were only in the second line, and thus divert it from the attacking column, composed of Meade's division of the First Corps. In that case we undoubtedly succeeded, judging by the quantity of projectiles we received there, standing with arms at rest. The fire was then very lively at our extreme left, in the direction of the Massaponax. From that side, an attack had been made against us, which Doubleday's division was occupied in repelling. We awaited the result, before attacking the intrenchments in our front.

Soon our guns, put in position in open view on a slight undulation of the ground, begin to thunder. The shells fall with great noise in the Confederate lines, among the trees, which are torn by the bullets. Several batteries are posted there, which hasten to reply in the same manner, one especially, the strongest and the most dangerous for our column to attack. It is important to silence it. So it becomes the principal target for our guns. A veritable avalanche of iron whistles, shrieks, bursts, and seems to be about to destroy everything at that point. Yet the

battery keeps on replying behind a curtain of smoke, crossed by flashes which follow one another without slackening. All at once, a column of fire springs into the air, and spreads out like a sheaf, white and red above the trees. A violent detonation shakes the ground. Hurrah! Whether magazine or caisson, the ammunition of the battery has blown up. Its fire grows languid and ceases. Now, forward the infantry!

At this moment, the order was given us to pile our knapsacks on the other side of the main road. It would have been much better to have done that where we were. We would not have been obliged to retire at the very time when we should have advanced. In fact, we had scarcely left our position, when a fierce musketry fire burst forth from the railroad, which ran along the foot of the hill, and where the enemy had formed his first line of intrenchments. The attack had commenced.

Meade's division was composed exclusively of Pennsylvania regiments. It advanced on a point of woods, which extended in front of the line, entered into it without stopping, and, in an instant, swept away everything that it found there. The First Brigade, which was in front, advanced then upon the railroad, gallantly carried it, drove back a few of the enemy's regiments, who fled in disorder, and ascended the wooded slope at their heels, and reached the crest over a second line of works, where the question now was to establish themselves firmly. But there it found itself in front of an open space where General Jackson had massed his reserve. Welcomed by a terrible infantry fire in front and a cross fire of case shot from a battery, it was forced to halt and soon to fall back precipitately. The Second Brigade, attacked on both flanks, advanced with difficulty. The First carried it with it on its retreat. The

Third, which had scarcely crossed the railroad, did not hold long, and the whole column fell back pell-mell out of the woods into which it had advanced with so firm a step.

During this time our division had taken its former position. We heard the rolling fire in the woods; we saw the white smoke rising above the trees, but we did not know what was happening behind the curtain, when I received an order to take three regiments to the other side of the crossroad. There we found, unsupported, a battery which we must defend. The Ninety-ninth Pennsylvania was placed between the road and the guns, the Third Maine to the right of these last, and the Fifty-fifth New York a little further along.

Our line, thus formed in open field, three or four hundred yards from the enemy, rested its left on the road which separated it from the remainder of the division. Its right was completely in the air, and halted in the position vacated by Gibbon's division of the First Corps. The latter had advanced to attack the enemy at the same time with Meade. But the attack had been made too slowly; instead of rushing upon the railroad as the Pennsylvanians had done, the First Brigade had stopped a short distance away to reply, by a useless fire, to the deadly volleys of the Confederates. The Second stopped in the same manner. The Third, however, advancing in column to the right of the two others, charged the works with the bayonet and carried them, after a short but sharp resistance. — It went no further. It had lost precious time, and Meade's advance was already driven back from the summit of the hill.

When we came to take position in line with the battery, a few regiments of Gibbon's division still held on near the railroad, but, it was plainly seen, without any

advantage. Under these circumstances, the general himself being wounded, the line began to melt away, and ended by breaking. It was a singular sight, though not encouraging. The soldiers who were retiring from the fight crossed the plain to our right singly or in groups. It did not in the least resemble a flight. They marched deliberately, with their guns on their shoulders, quickening the step, but not running, to get out of reach of the balls. Convinced of the uselessness of longer effort, and seeing that the attack had failed, they retired so as not to sacrifice their lives uselessly. In one word, they had had enough of it.

Apparently, there was nothing to do but to get ready for the counter-stroke. A rebel battalion having advanced in front of us, for an instant I thought it was about to attack my three regiments. But it was merely a demonstration, which the fire of my skirmishers was enough to check. It was a little further along that the effort of the enemy was really made against our centre. In the position I occupied I was admirably placed to observe all the incidents above the two long hedges which lined the road.

Meade's division had scarcely returned, running like a herd of buffalo, when behind it Early's (Confederate) division came out of the woods like a band of wolves. They had descended the slope at a rapid pace, and advanced in a confused mass without troubling themselves to reform their ranks. Among the first I still see an officer on horseback, shaking his hat at arm's length and crying in a harsh voice: "Forward! Forward!"

Immediately, no longer paying attention to the enemy's batteries, which were pouring on them a shower of projectiles, our artillerymen turned their guns on the charging mass, upon whom the balls ricocheted, the shells burst, and the canister poured. Their *élan* was

weakened, but they still advanced, hoping to capture the guns. At this time an infantry fire opened on them, before which they hesitated. At this instant, Birney threw upon them the four regiments of the brigade Ward had kept with him, the Thirty-eighth and the Fortieth New York, the Fifty-seventh Pennsylvania and the Fourth Maine, supported by the brigades of Berry and Robinson. From the style of their charge Kearney's men were recognized.

On seeing them advance with closed ranks, the enemy halted, endeavoring to correct his line to receive them. But, being in the open field, the advantage of his intrenchments was lost. He had already paid so dearly for having left them that the temptation to return was too strong to be resisted. He fell back without waiting the shock, and the men, turning their backs on us, ran to find their first position.

On our side, we should have been satisfied to rest there, the object of the charge having been fully accomplished. But the regiments were already in motion. They wished to obtain a more decisive success, by getting possession of the railroad. While the right pursued the flying enemy into the woods where they had disappeared, the left found itself suddenly halted by a deep ditch, concealed by the high grass. An increase of the fire proved immediately that the enemy awaited them there. Meanwhile, our men, not being able to pass the ditch by a leap, hesitated. Some jumped into it, and stopped there to take breath; others fell killed or wounded, while endeavoring to get out of it. The officers on horseback galloped right and left encouraging their men, and looking for a crossing which did not exist.

Of course, the enemy had, in his turn, concentrated the fire of his artillery on this point. The place was

not tenable. In a very short time everything which was not in the ditch would be swept away. They must get back in any way possible, by parts of regiments and by companies. The right did the same, having fared no better in the woods.

Two-thirds of those who had made the charge in the four regiments of our brigade did not answer to roll-call. How many remained in the ditch watching for a chance to escape, we did not know. What we did know was that we had left a great many wounded or dead in the dry grass. Amongst the wounded, we counted Colonel Campbell of the Fifty-seventh Pennsylvania (he was supposed to be mortally wounded, but he recovered); Lieutenant-Colonel Gessner, commanding the Fortieth New York; Colonel Leidy of the Ninety-ninth Pennsylvania; — among the dead: General Jackson of the Pennsylvania Division; Colonel Gilluly of the Fifth Michigan; Major Patcher of the Fourth Maine. The major of the Seventeenth Maine must be included in the list, having succumbed later under the amputation of the hip joint. And how many more, captains and lieutenants!

At the moment when these remnants of regiments reformed behind the batteries, a horrible thing happened on the very field of battle, where there were already horrors enough. The cannonade had set the high grass on fire at several points, and the flame, quickened by light currents of air, extended rapidly on all sides. Despairing cries were heard. They were the unfortunate wounded left lying on the ground and caught by the flames. Through the smoke, they were seen exerting themselves in vain efforts to flee, half rising up, falling back overcome by pain, rolling on their broken limbs, grasping around them at the grass red with their blood, and at times perishing in the embrace of the

flames. They were between the lines, which would perhaps soon close in action, and no one could help them.

This was the last episode of that bloody day. It is not difficult to see that it might have been better managed. To dislodge the enemy from his positions, an attack *en masse* would not have been too much; a partial attack was not enough. The fault was, after having put fifty thousand men under the command of Franklin, that is about half the army, to restrict his action to one single attempt, for carrying out which the means were out of all proportion to the result expected.

The instructions sent to him on the morning of the battle were — "The general commanding directs that you keep your whole command in position for a rapid movement down the old Richmond road, and you will send out at once a division, at least, to pass below Smithfield, to seize, if possible, the heights near Captain Hamilton's farm on this side of the Massaponax; taking care to keep it well supported, its line of retreat open."

On one hand, "to hold three army corps ready for a turning movement on the enemy's right;" on the other, "to send against the front of the enemy at least one or two divisions;"—what was it, if not a decisive manœuvre prepared for by a false attack? General Franklin so understood it. Any other general would have done the same. And yet he was blamed, at a later date, for not having ordered his troops forward *en masse* to carry the heights, as if he had not obeyed literally the orders that he had received. The responsibility for the want of success of the left wing does not rest on him.

It was much worse with the right wing. On that side, the heights were free from trees; everything that

passed there was open to view. There could be clearly distinguished, first, a heavy wall, that appeared to be supported by an interior slope, and behind which was seen a continuous row of gun barrels; a little higher up, a line of rifle-pits shown by its covering of earth half way up the hill; finally a third line of defence on the top of the hill, and in all the lines, numerous batteries where the mouths of the guns were seen in the embrasures. The crest projecting furthest into the plain was directly in front of Fredericksburg, at the end of a broad road, in a straight line with which and closing the perspective was an imposing mansion with a Greek façade. It was the Marie house, which, from its advanced position, commanded a view of the defences, of which it formed the centre. A perilous advantage, which on that day was the cause of its destruction. Between the line of hills and the city there was nothing on the plain but a few small huts.

If there were ever a position which could be considered impregnable, this was certainly the one. And yet this was the very point where General Burnside had decided to make his principal attack. Fatal rashness, whose consequences could be only disaster. For when the left wing was unsuccessful in carrying a difficult position, what could the right do against impossibilities?

No general deliberately and with cold blood sends his troops to a useless slaughter. We must believe, then, that the commander-in-chief did not know the actual state of affairs. Otherwise, he would have taken different measures, the simplest of which appeared to be to cross the Rappahannock a short distance above Fredericksburg, when it was evident that the enemy was there too strongly fortified. The mere fact of our presence on his left would have been enough to cause him to

abandon immediately a position threatened in reverse—as happened at the opening of the following campaign. But the determination was taken. What we could have gained by manœuvring, we were about to attempt to carry by main force.

General Sumner was ordered to make the attempt. His instructions were to attack as strongly as possible, but with part of his force. He was directed "to push a column of a division or more along the plank and telegraph roads between Fredericksburg and the Marie house, in order to seize the heights in rear of the town." Sumner sent forward his two divisions in accordance with his orders; French's and Hancock's, both belonging to the Second Corps.

At a later date, before the committee on the conduct of the war, he testified as follows: "There was line upon line of the fortifications in two or three tiers. If we had carried the first line, we could not have held it, because the second line was much stronger and commanded it. Behind that there were, between the hill tops, great masses of infantry, and if we had reached the summit we would have been obliged to fight these masses of fresh troops and their batteries." But an order is an order, and must be obeyed.

Let us hurry on to the catastrophe.

French's division charged first. Scarcely had it appeared above the rise of land behind which it had formed in column of attack, when it was cut to pieces by a hail of shell and shrapnel from all directions. It advanced, notwithstanding, leaving the ground covered with the dead and wounded. Reaching a point near the stone wall, a murderous musketry fire struck it and threw it back mutilated, cut to pieces, destroyed.

Hancock's division advanced in its turn. The same carnage from the artillery, the same destruction from

the musketry fire, the same negative result. The first line of intrenchments had not been attained. The dead bodies of our men, twenty or thirty paces from the stone wall, marked the extreme point reached. The result: four thousand men lying on the field.

The trial was conclusive. Four thousand men struck down in a quarter of an hour was mournful testimony to that effect. Was it not full time to stop the slaughter? Unhappily, the want of success in the attack, instead of leading the general-in-chief to wise reflections, excited in him only a blind rage, similar to that which leads the enraged bull to attack the locomotive. An eye-witness, Mr. Swinton, at that time correspondent of the New York *Times*, relates that General Burnside, walking back and forth along the high bank of the Rappahannock, and looking out upon the opposite heights, cried out vehemently: "Those heights must be carried to-night!" And Hooker, held in reserve till then with the Fifth Corps, received the order to attack in his turn.

He had left there with him, of his two corps, but two divisions of the Fifth Corps. Two had been sent the evening before to reënforce Franklin. "These," he said in making his report of this battle, "were my favorite divisions, for one of them I had formed myself, and the other had been commanded by Kearney. I knew them better than any others in my command." Looked at prosaically, this favorable opinion on the part of the general would have brought us that day more honor than profit if we had been with him. A third of his divisions had gone to relieve General Howard above Fredericksburg. A fourth was on the road to reënforce General Sturgis. The last two immediately crossed the river and passed through the city.

General Hooker was a fighter, as every one knows.

He went in gladly where there were blows to receive, provided he was able to return them. But, when he saw with his own eyes the character of the enterprise intrusted to him, he understood quickly how it would infallibly result. He took upon himself to suspend the attack, and sent one of his aids to ask that it should not be made at that point. The reply was given, to attack in the same place. Still hoping that the general-in-chief would yield to evidence, and desiring, above all things, to save the lives of so many brave men, which would be so uselessly sacrificed, Hooker himself hurried with the utmost speed to Burnside; but nothing could affect the obstinate irritation of the latter.

Let us now give the words of General Hooker. "I then returned and sent in advance all the disposable artillery I could find in the city, to demolish the enemy's works. I proceeded as I would have done against fortifications, and endeavored to make a breach large enough to give passage to a *forlorn hope*. It seemed to me that before that the attack had been made on a too extended line, and not enough concentrated. I sent two batteries to the left of the road, at a distance of four hundred yards from the point I was to attack, and on the right I placed some sections of batteries, at a distance of five or six hundred yards from the same point. All these pieces were fired with rapidity until sundown, but without apparent effect upon the rebels or their works.

"During the latter part of the cannonade, I had given the order to General Humphreys to form his division as an assaulting column, under the shelter of a roll of the ground. When the artillery fire ceased, I gave the signal to attack. General Humphreys' men took off their knapsacks, their haversacks, and their overcoats. They received the order to advance with unloaded mus-

kets, for they had not time either to load or fire. At the command, they charged with the greatest impetuosity. They ran hurrahing, and I felt encouraged by the great ardor with which they were animated.

"The head of General Humphreys' column reached a point about fifteen or twenty paces from the stone wall which formed the advance line of the rebels, and was then driven back as quickly as it had come. The time taken was probably not fifteen minutes, and it left behind seventeen hundred and sixty men out of four thousand."

Was that enough? No. General Burnside had butted against the obstacle. He even yet thought only of either breaking it in pieces or being utterly broken by it himself. In the evening he passed along our position on the right (he relates this himself). He mingled with the officers and soldiers, and recognized amongst them a decided opposition to the renewal of the attack the next morning. He returned a little before daybreak to his headquarters, and gave the order to General Sumner to form the Ninth Corps in columns by regiments. These regiments, advancing rapidly, one after the other, must carry the stone wall and the lower batteries, throw the enemy back into his second line, etc. The order was carried out, but at the hour when the signal should have been given Sumner reported at headquarters. "I come here," said he to the general-in-chief, "to ask you to give up this attack. I do not know a single general officer who approves of it, and I think it would be disastrous to the army." It must be understood that Sumner was an old fighter, always full of juvenile ardor.

For the first time, Burnside hesitated in his obstinacy. However, he did not countermand his order. He called a council of the corps and division generals.

They voted unanimously against the proposed attack. Not yet yielding, he crossed the river, to see if the other officers were of the same opinion. Not one favored a renewed assault. Finally, he sent for General Franklin, who, like everybody else, pronounced against the proposed attempt. Then only did General Burnside, having exhausted all means of getting a favorable opinion, revoke the order for a renewed attack, and the battle of Fredericksburg was over. It cost us thirteen thousand men. The enemy did not lose more than six thousand.

We displayed a bold front to the end. During two days we kept our position in line of battle, in front of our adversaries, who made no movement to take the offensive. Only during the night, as both sides expected an attack, the picket lines being close together, the firing of the skirmishers caused frequent alarms. They were usually brought on by the marauders seeking to strip the dead, or by some brave men, who, under cover of the darkness, ventured outside of the lines to give water to the wounded and bring them in on their backs.

The unfortunate wounded remained thus, without assistance, during forty-eight mortal hours — mortal, indeed, to many of them. Finally, in the afternoon of the 15th, I was in the front line, with two regiments, when a suspension of hostilities was concluded for two hours. Officers, with details of men without arms, carrying litters, were sent immediately upon the ground between the lines. In my front only I counted ninety-two dead and twenty-six wounded.

I will never forget the joy of the wounded when they were brought into our lines. One of them cried out, trying to raise himself on his litter: "*All right now! I shall not die like a dog, in the ditch.*" Another said to

the men carrying him, while two great tears ran down his hollow cheeks: "Thanks, my friends. Thanks to you, I shall see my mother again."

The dead were hideous: black, swollen, covered with clotted blood, riddled with balls, torn by shells. The rebels, poorly clothed, had left them neither shoes, nor trousers, nor overcoats. Among them I had the opportunity to recognize the body of young Dekone, aid to General Meade. His remains, at least, could be sent to his sorrowing family.

At nine o'clock in the evening the order came to fall back in silence to the bridges; during the night the whole army repassed the Rappahannock without the enemy finding out the movement, and the next day we returned to our old camps with the hope of not leaving them again during the winter.

CHAPTER XVIII.

EMANCIPATION.

Military balance-sheet for the year 1862 — The emancipation question — The inaugural address of Mr. Lincoln — Reserve of the President and of Congress — General Fremont — Abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia — Proposition for gradual emancipation — General Hunter — Confiscation act — Progress of emancipation — Letter of Mr. Lincoln — Religious deputation — Last scruples — Preparatory dispositions — Definite proclamation of emancipation.

The battle of Fredericksburg closed the year 1862 by a defeat. The Army of the Potomac was not fortunate. However, its reverses were due solely to the want of ability of the generals who had commanded it. Neither of them had possessed the high military qualities required to command successfully an army of a hundred thousand men. Thus, the only two offensive battles which they had fought (Antietam and Fredericksburg) were reduced to partial and successive attacks. I do not cite Williamsburg, which was an accidental victory of a few divisions, without the participation of and unforeseen by the general-in-chief. On the defensive the same lack of ability had caused the rout of the Fourth Corps at Seven Pines, and that of the Fifth Corps at Gaines' Mill. It might have resulted in the complete destruction of the army if it had not been for the vigorous energy of Sumner at Savage Station, of Franklin at White Oak Swamp, of Hooker at Glendale.

The same remark will apply to the campaign of Pope, who, however, did not belong to the Army of the Potomac, since the latter only appeared therein in part and as reënforcements.

In the conduct of a battle, observe the disposition of the movements in bodies and you will know the worth of the general-in-chief.

The proximity to Washington on one side and to Richmond on the other made Virginia the principal theatre of the war. There, between the two capitals, the greatest efforts were concentrated. There the enemy opposed to us the "flower of his chivalry;" and we brought against him the best contingents of all the Eastern States, reënforced by good troops from the Northwest. It was seen on both sides that the Gordian knot of the war would be cut there, which explains the great importance attached to successes or reverses on this theatre.

But the war was being carried on in other parts of the country with not less vigor, and more success. On the Atlantic coast, we were solidly established in North Carolina and at some points of South Carolina and Florida. In the south of Virginia, we had retaken Norfolk, the maritime arsenal of the rebels, and in Georgia, Fort Pulaski, which commanded the mouth of the Savannah. The mouths of the Mississippi had been forced, the works which defended them captured, and we occupied New Orleans and a part of Louisiana.

In the West, we have seen that the spring campaign had opened by the capture of Fort Henry, on the Tennessee, and of the intrenched camp of Fort Donelson, on the Cumberland. This double victory carried with it the fall of Nashville and Columbus. Missouri and a part of Arkansas were swept clean of rebel troops. Island No. 10, which the enemy had covered with defensive works to bar the Mississippi against us, had been gloriously reduced. Going from victory to victory, to recover the navigation of the river which divided the Southern Confederacy in two parts, we had taken from

the enemy the city of Memphis and Forts Pillow and Randolph, which are on the river. To drive him from Kentucky and Tennessee, the possession of which he obstinately disputed with us, we had fought in the spring at Shiloh, and in the autumn at Corinth and Perryville. Finally, in the West the year closed by the victory, on December 31, of Murfreesborough, which threw the Confederate forces nearly out of Tennessee.

It will be seen that, if we had fallen back in the East, on the other hand, we had made large advances in the West, and that, on the whole, the campaigns of 1862 left a large balance in our favor. But the birth of the year 1863 was to be marked in America by a conquest more important in itself than any military success.

On January 1, emancipation was proclaimed by the President.

To understand the character and bearing of that great measure, we must take up the question from the commencement of the war, where we had left it.

The Republican party, which had elected Mr. Lincoln to the Presidency, was opposed to slavery in principle, but in practice it recognized the exclusive right of the States to control their domestic institutions. It respected slavery where it existed in fact. Even more, it conceded the constitutional obligation of the free States to deliver up fugitive slaves in the manner prescribed by the law. The only thing it demanded was the interdiction of the encroachment of slavery in the new territories.

The inaugural address of President Lincoln, the most solemn of manifestoes, was very explicit on these points (4th of March, 1861).

"I have no purpose directly or indirectly," said he, "to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do

so, and I have not the inclination. Those who nominated and elected me did so with the full knowledge that I had many times repeated this declaration, and had never recanted it. And, more than this, they placed in the platform for my acceptance, and as a law to themselves and to me, the clear and emphatic resolution which I now read: —

"'Resolved, That the maintenance inviolate of the rights of each State to order and control its own domestic institutions according to its own judgment exclusively is essential to the balance of power on which the perfection and endurance of our political fabric depend, and we denounce the lawless invasion by armed force of the soil of any State or Territory, no matter under what pretext, as among the gravest of crimes.'

"I now reiterate these sentiments, and, in so doing, I only press upon the public attention the most conclusive evidence of which the case is susceptible, that the property, peace, and security of no section are to be in any wise endangered by the now incoming administration. I add, too, that all the protection which, consistently with the Constitution and the laws, can be given, will be cheerfully given to all the States, when lawfully demanded, for whatever cause, as cheerfully to one section as to another.

"There is much controversy about the delivering up of fugitives from service or labor. The clause I now read is as plainly written in the Constitution as any other of its provisions: —

"'No person held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due.'

"It is scarcely questioned that this provision was intended by those who made it for the reclaiming of what we call fugitive slaves — and the intention of the lawgiver is the law."

This was the departing point. Neither aggression, nor hostility, nor denial of justice from the new administration to the Southern States, already in arms against it, even before it was inaugurated. But in taking the initiative of the war they necessarily accepted the consequences of the war. And by violently separating themselves from the government of the United States they rejected the protection with which the Union covered their domestic institutions; by destroying the federal constitution, they renounced the right to invoke its protection. The logical consequences were about to develop slowly but surely. We will follow them step by step.

On the call of the President, Congress assembled in extra session July 4, 1861. The message was silent on the question of slavery. It was devoted to events happening and measures taken since the inauguration. It discussed especially, with great elevation of view, and great power of argument, the question of the right of secession, in the following language: —

"This issue embraces more than the fate of these United States. It presents to the whole family of man the question whether a constitutional republic or democracy — a government of the people by the same people — can or can not maintain its territorial integrity against its own domestic foes. It presents the question whether discontented individuals, too few in numbers to control administration according to organic law, in any case, can always, upon the pretences made in this case, or on any other pretences, or arbitrarily, without any pretence, break up their government and thus practically put an end to free government upon

the earth. It forces us to ask, 'Is there, in all republics, this inherent and fatal weakness?' 'Must a government, of necessity, be too strong for the liberties of its own people, or too weak to maintain its own existence?'"

Congress, which is the soul of the people, could not be silent on the question of slavery. It first passed a resolution declaring that it was not the duty of the United States soldiers to return fugitive slaves. A self-evident truth, and which it would not have been necessary to affirm in that manner if some over-scrupulous generals had not had the inhumanity to return to their masters some unfortunate slaves who had sought refuge in our lines.

A general discussion followed, from which it appeared that Congress had no more than the administration any idea of abolishing slavery where it existed. The future course of events was indicated by Mr. Dixon, senator from Connecticut, when he said that, if the war were prolonged and it came to the point that the government or slavery must perish, the conservative people of the North would declare, "Let slavery perish rather than the government!" For the present, a resolution proposed by Mr. Crittenden was adopted, assigning as the sole object of the war the defence and maintenance of the supremacy of the constitution and the preservation of the Union, with the dignity, equality, and rights of the different States unaltered.

Certainly it was impossible to show more moderation. The authorities were still so conservative as to everything which regarded slavery that the only fugitive slaves who at that time were protected against legal reclamation were those whom their masters had employed on some military work against the government and authority of the United States.

The abolitionist party and the impatient part of the Republican party were irritated by this conservative aspect as to slavery; but the President continued faithfully in the line of conduct which he had determined on — to advance with the people, and even to follow rather than precede. Thus, when, in the month of August, General Fremont, at that time commanding in Missouri, proclaimed martial law in that State, and confiscated the property, real and personal, of the citizens in arms against the government, which included the liberation of their slaves, he was immediately rebuked and ordered peremptorily to recall that premature measure.

Congress reassembled December 2. The President perceived the necessity of stronger action, but still contented himself with recommending that they should not act with too much haste. Now the House of Representatives took the initiative. The extreme consideration shown towards slavery had remained without effect to bring back the rebels, and abroad had only cooled the sympathy of the liberals for our cause. It was time to take a more pronounced course.

The first propositions were to request the President to emancipate the slaves as soon as that measure should be considered opportune to aid in beating down the rebellion. They were not adopted, it is true; but the first blow was struck by the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, with pecuniary compensation, and by its prohibition in all the territories belonging to the United States.

At that time, the President, perceiving the mounting tide, thought to open the way before the dikes were carried away. On March 6, he sent to Congress a special message, recommending the adoption of the following resolution: —

"Resolved, That the United States, in order to co-operate with any State which may adopt gradual abolition of slavery, give to such State pecuniary aid, to be used by such State, in its discretion, to compensate it for the inconvenience, public or private, produced by such change of system."

There was still the recognition of the constitutional right of the States to decide the question for themselves, at the same time offering to assist them by pecuniary compensation in solving the problem.

It may be remarked that the resolution was adopted only against the opposition both of those in sympathy with the rebellion and of those who, to crush it, were in haste to bring the most extreme measures to bear against it. On both sides they wanted everything or nothing. But the majority still preferred to offer the olive branch, although, at heart, no one really had any great confidence in its pacific virtues.

The President, in vain, used every effort to make the measure useful. He addressed himself directly to the Representatives of the border States; he sent to Congress a project relative to the allotment of the sum estimated as eventually necessary for that purpose. His voice was not seconded, his proposition met with no response. We must recognize that the people had lost its patience. The North showed itself as tired of offering compromises as the South was obstinate in repelling them.

Nevertheless, Mr. Lincoln wished to exhaust every means. General Hunter, who commanded the department of the South composed of the parts which we occupied in South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, endeavored to force his hand. Strengthening himself by the incompatibility of martial law and slavery in a free country, he declared the slaves forever free in those

three States. The President immediately issued a proclamation annulling that declaration as an encroachment on the power reserved to him, and which he could in no case abandon to the generals in the field. He then called attention to the resolution adopted by Congress, "An offer authentic and a definite and solemn proposal of the nation to the States and their citizens the most interested on the subject." He adjured them again to take it into serious consideration, and "not to be blind as to the signs of the times," but to profit by the privilege that Divine Providence had given them to make much greater efforts than any they had made in the past. "So that," said he, in finishing, "you may not in the future have to deplore having neglected your opportunity."

This eloquent appeal did not obtain the affranchisement of a single slave; and the abolition wave mounted higher and higher.

In an act of Congress, known by the name of the "Confiscation Bill," and approved July 17, by the President: The slaves of every person convicted of the crime of treason against the United States, or declared guilty of having aided or assisted the rebellion by any act, or of having taken part therein; — slaves of every person engaged in rebellion or aiding it, who took refuge within our lines, who might be captured, or found afterwards in any place occupied by the United States forces, after having been occupied by the rebel forces, were declared free. — The military authorities were forbidden, under pain of dismissal from the army, to assist in any reclamation of a fugitive slave, in whatever State or Territory it might be. — Authority was given to the President to employ as many men of African blood as he should judge necessary or expedient for the suppression of the rebellion, and to organize and

employ them in any manner which he might consider for the best interests of the country.

Thus, among the different measures combined in this bill were to be found side by side the confiscation for life of the property of the rebels and the emancipation of their slaves, and by the side of a project for colonizing the blacks in some foreign country the authorization to form regiments to actively aid in the war, the first cause of which had been their former condition.

Another act of Congress, approved at the same time, went still farther on the road to emancipation. It extended the benefit to the mother, to the wife, and to the children of every negro employed by the government in military labor, at the fixed price of ten dollars a month, provided that the mothers, wives, and children did not belong to a master who had remained faithful to the Union.

Matters had arrived at a point where they could not stop. These distinctions between slaves, these discriminations giving liberty to some and keeping the others in slavery, had an unjust and odious appearance. What! If we free the slaves, is it not for the sake of humanity, of civilization, of eternal justice! Is it not for the honor of the United States! This great redemption from a stain which has existed too long is reduced to the proportion of an expedient to strike the authors and plotters of the rebellion, and punish them in their material interests. Such was the effect of this political trick that the right to liberty was denied to the unfortunates who were found to be the property of the partisans of a liberating government, or of the undecided, and conceded to the slaves whom a happy chance had made the property of its enemies.

There was something revolting in all this, which did not fail to have its effect on the public conscience.

The extra session of Congress had hardly closed when popular feeling began to bear directly on the President. From all sides, absolute and immediate emancipation was demanded from him. He, however, declined to act, fearing to be in too great haste.

On the 23d of August, he thus defined his rule of conduct, in a letter which made a great sensation: —

"I would save the Union. I would save it in the shortest way under the Constitution.

"The sooner the national authority can be restored, the nearer the Union will be — the Union as it was.

"If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time save slavery, I do not agree with them.

"If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time destroy slavery, I do not agree with them.

"My paramount object is to save the Union, and not either to save or to destroy slavery.

"If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it. If I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it, — and if I could do it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that.

"What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save this Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union.

"I shall do less whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause, and I shall do more whenever I believe doing more will help the cause.

"I shall try to correct errors when shown to be errors, and I shall adopt new views so fast as they shall appear to be true views."

Mr. Lincoln was a man of perfect honesty and of rare good-sense. It could not be said of him that he was

a great philosopher or a great statesman. But good-sense has the excellent quality that it arrives at the goal surely, although it takes its own time, while genius sometimes fails to reach it, from trying to grasp it by too eager an effort. In this case, the fear of being in advance of public opinion put the President behind it, and made him hesitate before the "signs of the times," which he had, however, perceived. For him, the hour had not yet come.

On one point he was mistaken. It was no longer a question of the Union *as it was*, that was to be reëstablished; it was the Union *as it should be*, that is to say, washed clean from its original sin, regenerated on the baptismal font of liberty for all.

Unless with that object, why this war, these immense sacrifices of every kind, these enormous immolations of men? To build up the crumbling edifice with the same stones which could not sustain it before? To renew the impossible endeavor to suppress the effect, while retaining the cause? But that was no solution; it was a putting-off. It was no reconstruction; it was a plastering-up.

Matters being in the same state as before, how could the future prevent that which the past had not been able to prevent? We would have proved ourselves the stronger; but it would be necessary for us to prove the same thing to-morrow, the day after to-morrow, in five years, in ten years. The strife would have been eternally renewed, as long as the two incompatible and antagonistic elements, free labor and slave labor, existed together in the Republic. And we would have dragged behind us the heavy ball of slavery, which made us limp on the way of progress, and made us resemble rather the condemned criminals of civilization than its pioneers.

Happily, Providence had other designs. It would not allow the seed which it had caused to germinate to be scattered to the winds, nor the harvest to be trampled under foot. The logical outcome must be accomplished. It was of little importance whether the watch of the President was too slow. The hour had sounded on the people's clock.

On the 13th of September, as if God himself wished to speak by the voice of those who were regarded as being nearer him, a deputation of clergymen of all the different denominations, coming from Chicago, was received at the White House. They came, in their turn, to ask of the President the proclamation of universal emancipation.

Mr. Lincoln replied at first in a tone half joking, half serious, putting into his answer a few words on the divine Will, which every one believed he was capable of interpreting, even those with opinions the most diverse and opposite. He hoped that there was no irreverence in supposing that upon a point so closely connected with his duty God would reveal himself directly to him. However, as the day of miracles had passsed, they could certainly believe that he had not that expectation. He limited himself then to studying simply the material facts of the case, in order to deduce from them what might be just and wise.

The President entered into an explanation of the consideration and of the difficulties which had heretofore held him back. The delegates insisted, and gave all the considerations, moral and material, which bore in favor of the measure. Pressed closely, Mr. Lincoln had to admit that slavery was the cause of the rebellion, without which it would not have been; that emancipation would aid us in Europe and in America; and that it would weaken the rebels. Evidently his objections

were scarcely without exception dilatory, a scruple already shaken. He declared, in conclusion, that he had not decided against a proclamation, but that he had the subject in his mind, deliberating upon it day and night more than any other. His last words were, "Whatever shall appear to be God's will I will do." Judgment was not entered up, but the suit was won.

Nine days after, September 22, appeared a preparatory proclamation, in which it was declared that on the 1st of January following the executive power would designate the States and portions of States which were in rebellion against the United States, and that, at that date, every person held in slavery in these States or portions of States would be, from and after that date, forever free.

And, in fact, at the opening of the year 1863 the definite proclamation of emancipation was made :—

"Whereas on the 22d of September, in the year of our Lord 1862, a proclamation was issued by the President of the United States, containing, among other things, etc.

"Now, therefore, I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested as commander-in-chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion, do, on this first day of January in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty three, and in accordance with my purpose so to do, publicly proclaim for the full period of one hundred days from the day first above mentioned, order and designate, as the States and parts of States wherein the people thereof respectively are this day in rebellion against the United States, the following, viz. :—

"Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana (except the parishes of St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Jefferson, St. John, St. Charles, St. James, Ascension, Assumption, Terre Bonne, Lafourche, Ste. Marie, St. Martin, and Orleans, including the city of New Orleans), Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia (except the forty-eight counties designated as West Virginia, and also the counties of Berkeley, Accomac, Northampton, Elizabeth City, York, Princess Anne, and Norfolk, including the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth), and which excepted parts are for the present left precisely as if this proclamation were not issued.

"And by virtue of the power and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States and parts of States are, and henceforward shall be, free; and that the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.

"And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defence; and I recommend to them that, in all cases when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.

"And I further declare and make known that such persons, of suitable condition, will be received into the armed service of the United States, to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.

"And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God.

"In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my name, and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed," etc.

It will be understood that the reservations made in the proclamation were only a matter of form. In the portions of the States expressly excepted, and in the States which were not mentioned, because they had not separated themselves from the Union, — Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Maryland, and Delaware, — slavery existed only in name. In fact, the slaves either had been taken or sent South by their masters, and were rightfully free, as belonging to owners participating in or aiding the rebellion; or they had been left upon the plantations, and were therefore free in point of fact, doing as they pleased and able to go away when they pleased, without fear of being apprehended and returned to their masters. The military authorities were formally forbidden to interfere, and nobody dared reclaim the fugitives before the civil magistrate.

The war at last assumed its true character: a war for liberty, against slavery. The time for disguise had passed. Congress in its acts and the President in his proclamation had in vain and repeatedly declared that the only objects of the war were "the restoration of the Union, the maintenance of the supremacy of the federal government, and the reëstablishment of constitutional relations between the United States and the States in which these relations were suspended or disturbed." Congress and the President could not at first comprehend in its full extent the civilizing work of which they were the instruments, — or, which is more probable, for political reasons they preferred not to proclaim them in advance. But, in any case, they could not have things any different from what they were.

Congress and the President were only the agents of the people. To the people they left the duty of directing the march, limiting themselves, so to say, to mark

out the road travelled. Thus the government and the nation took the same step, and, as they marched together, they must reach the goal together.

And they attained the goal. The question was decided. Between the Republic and the accursed institution there was henceforth war to the death. The triumphs of the one led necessarily to the destruction of the other. And it was not the Republic which was destined to perish.

Now, we could march with a prouder step, and fight with more confidence. We were no longer merely the soldiers of a political controversy, to be decided by the fate of arms. We were now the missionaries of a great work of redemption, the armed liberators of millions of men bent beneath the brutalizing yoke of slavery. The war was ennobled; the object was higher. While meriting well from the country, we deserved well from humanity.

CHAPTER XIX.

LAST EFFORTS OF BURNSIDE.

The Fifty-fifth New York consolidated with the Thirty-eighth — New Year's day in camp — Abuse of strong liquor in the army — New projects of General Burnside — Plan of a cavalry expedition by General Averill — Intervention of the President — Burnside at Washington — General Newton and General Cochrane — Complications — The army in motion — A gloomy night — The army buried in the mud — Return to camp — General order No. 8 — How General Burnside came to be relieved of the command of the army.

THE career of the Fifty-fifth New York ended with the year 1862. At the battle of Fredericksburg, it could put but two hundred and ten men in line, and, although on that occasion it lost only a dozen men, nevertheless it was one of the regiments the most reduced in numbers. Now, in the impossibility of filling the vacant ranks by recruiting, the War Department adopted the only alternative remaining to make the force effective, — that of taking the feeble regiments to fill up the stronger, provided the latter were old organizations and from the same State. The Fifty-fifth was thus absorbed in the Thirty-eighth New York, forming the four left companies, and I was called to this new command, which numbered 804 men, of whom about five hundred were present in the ranks. In reality it was a small regiment; comparatively it was large.

The Thirty-eighth was a good regiment, steady under fire, and asking only to be led by a firm hand, by a commander knowing how to use it. This point once established between us, everything went on well, and I

had only to praise its bearing and conduct during the five months that it was under my command.

New Year's day passed more gayly than could have been expected. General Ward, who was well fitted for all such details, organized diversions in the brigade, which met with great success: foot-races, mule-races, sack-races, greased pole; burlesque procession; comic interludes, — nothing was lacking to the fête, in which the division joyfully participated.

The higher officers paid their visits to the tents of the generals, where the inevitable drink watered the day's greetings. General Sickles, who, at that time, commanded Hooker's old division, did things in grand style. During the whole day he kept open house at his headquarters. The collation, which he had ordered from Washington, was abundant and choice. The champagne and whiskey ran in streams. I wish I could add that they were used in moderation; but the truth is that the subaltern officers, attracted by the good cheer, partook of them so freely that it was not to the honor of the uniform nor to the profit of discipline. *Amicus Sickles, sed magis amica veritas.*

Drunkenness is, as all know, the dominant vice of the Celts and Anglo-Saxons. To keep the army from being overcome with it, prevention was much more efficient than repression. So that, while offences proceeding from that source were punished as the regulations demanded, the sale of wine and liquors to the soldiers and purveyors for staffs was expressly forbidden. That the desire for enormous profit led, sometimes, to the secret violation of this order was the exception, and did not invalidate the general good effect of the regulation. But it would have added much if the officers had given the good example of sobriety. Unhappily, this was not the case, and it happened too often for some of them

that the privilege of providing themselves with liquors only offered facilities for indulging in habits of gross intemperance. When they were on duty they were liable to be court-martialled, and, if convicted, dismissed from the army. So it was generally in the evening, in their tents, that they indulged their ignoble appetites. Impunity was assured them if the colonel would close his eyes. And there were cases where the colonel did worse than that, and joined himself in nightly orgies. I knew such a regiment, where, during that winter, the soldiers were often disturbed in their sleep by the obscene refrains and drunken cries from the tent of the commanding officer. One can judge of the deplorable effect.

Such matters depend upon the officers commanding. If certain regimental commanders indulged with impunity in such license, it was because there was culpable tolerance on the part of the generals under whose orders they were serving. This excessive indulgence had its origin in a false manner of looking at things, much too prevalent, especially amongst those whose younger years had not been shaped by a healthy family influence, or by the feelings in the heart of a gentleman. In their eyes, drunkenness was less a degradation than a subject for pleasantry. The officer who exhibited himself in that state exposed himself to ridicule, but not to contempt. A remonstrance might follow sometimes, after repeated instances; a punishment only as a last resort.

In such a case these generals were the really guilty. They extended the evil instead of stopping it, and were so much the more culpable that, to banish the evil from their staffs, all that was necessary was to show their disgust, and announce the determination to send to his regiment every officer who should be intoxicated.

Therefore it was necessary for the highest authorities to take measures to reform these abuses. The few generals who happened to be themselves inclined to the immoderate use of intoxicatiug liquors were, at a later date, relieved from their commands. More severe orders were made to regulate the sale of such articles to the officers. Each one of them was required to designate on the regimental order book the kind and the quantity of liquors required for his personal use, which was allowed to him within certain limits. This requisition, subject to the approval of both the colonel and the general commanding the brigade, required the signature of the provost-general, to become effective, and the sutlers authorized to furnish it could in no case exceed it, under pain of expulsion from the army and confiscation of their goods. The same regulation applied to the staff officers, and the generals themselves, although not restricted as to quantity, had not the less to sign the orders given their purveyors. In this way the evil was attacked at its root by the impossibility of introducing in the camps an excess of intoxicating liquors, and, as the courts-martial acted with vigor against the delinquents who were brought before them, it came to pass that drunkenness became an exception in the army, where it had threatened to become a universal habit.

The army, duly installed in winter quarters, did not suspect how uncertain was that installation. Behind the curtain of the monotonous camp life at this time, movements were projected which might any day change the face of affairs.

Since the battle of Fredericksburg, the troops had lost their confidence in the general-in-chief. That precious element of success no longer existed for us. A common sentiment of distrust showed itself everywhere, aggravated by the deep sense of injury in the divisions

which, having suffered the most, complained of having been uselessly sacrificed. Their complaints and accusations against General Burnside were repeated in sympathetic echoes in the other corps as well under the officers' tents as around the bivouac fires. These complaints became discouragements among the lighter minds and feebler characters, and the number of desertions, a sure indicator of the moral condition of armies, mounted up from day to day to unexampled proportions.

It would be difficult to admit that the general-in-chief did not know it, for the generals understood perfectly well the disposition of the army. Much more, the larger part of them were as distrustful as their troops, and would have regarded with great reluctance any renewed attempt to force the line of the Rappahannock.

However, General Burnside was not of a character to regard himself as beaten. His plan once determined on, he pursued it *à outrance*, sustained by the honesty of his intentions, by devoted patriotism, and by what we might call obstinate devotion to duty. So that his first thought, after the want of success at Fredericksburg, had been again to try fortune to obtain his revenge. Keeping to himself his secret designs, while the army was working like beavers, he had without noise got ready for a new advance movement. This time, he intended to cross the river six or seven miles below Fredericksburg, and strike a decisive blow, by surprising the army of the enemy in the rear of its intrenchments.

At the same time, a select body of cavalry was to be sent to southern Virginia. This enterprise had been planned and worked out by General Averill. His proposed route was, to cross the Rappahannock at Kelly's Ford, the Rapidan at Raccoon Ford, the James thirty miles above Richmond, pass around the city at a dis-

tance, going south of Petersburg, and join the troops of General Peck at Suffolk. His design was to cut all the communications of the Confederate capital with the South and West, where they were then fighting at Murfreesborough, and with that object to destroy the James River canal, blowing up the locks; to burn the viaduct of the Richmond & Danville Railroad across the Appomattox, and the bridge at Flat Creek a little further down; to demolish the railroad from Petersburg to Lynchburg at the point where it crosses the tributaries of the Nottoway, and the bridges at that point; to burn the trestle work of the railroad from Petersburg to Weldon on the Nottoway and the bordering swamps; and, finally, to cut the telegraphic wires wherever they were found; to destroy everything in the nature of public property; in a word, to do all possible injury to the enemy.

The plan drew out all these operations in detail, and contained besides the dispositions necessary to make sure the start.

The raiding column consisted of a thousand selected men with their mounts, four field pieces, each drawn by eight selected horses, and of twenty mounted soldiers of the engineer corps, under the command of an officer of that arm, with the materials necessary to burn the bridges, to destroy the railroads, to blow up all constructions of stone, etc.

On December 30 everything was ready. Roads leading to the Seddon House, where the army was to cross the river, were opened in the woods, and corduroyed for the passage of the artillery and the wagons. The detachments of cavalry, destined to mask the principal movement by false attacks on Warrenton, Culpeper, and other points, were already at their posts. A brigade of infantry had even made a demonstration on the right

bank of the Rappahannock. Finally, General Averill himself was at Kelly's Ford, at the head of his column, when everything was stopped by an unforeseen counter-order.

General Burnside had just received a telegraphic despatch, in which the President forbade him undertaking any general movement, without first advising him. The more surprised at such a communication inasmuch as he had confided the secret of his design to no one, the general went immediately to Washington to discover the cause. There he learned that two of the generals under his orders had come directly to the President, to represent to him that the army was in a state of demoralization, resulting from its want of confidence in its general-in-chief; that the latter, judging by certain orders relative to rations and ammunition, was on the eve of commencing operations, and, in the opinion of all the generals, this was to run to certain disaster.

General Halleck and Mr. Stanton, Secretary of War, were called in. Neither of them knew anything of the information and advice given the President, nor of the telegram sent in consequence of it. In their presence, General Burnside unfolded his plans, which were discussed. He insisted on the reasons which made prompt movement desirable. General Halleck said nothing; the President asked time for consideration, and Burnside returned to his post, nothing being decided.

The two generals who were the informants of the President were: Newton, commanding the Third Division of the Sixth Corps, and Cochrane, commanding the First Brigade of the same division. Although Mr. Lincoln had refused to name them, the mystery was not difficult to penetrate; but it was not so easy to discover whether, as they afterwards testified before the Congressional committee, they had really acted on their

own motion, or whether they had been urged on by others to bell the cat. We will soon see that General Burnside believed that he had grounds for the latter opinion.

However it might be, the projected movement was definitely abandoned as having become known, and the cavalry raid was put off indefinitely, the plan having been divulged, in some way or other, to some people in Washington known as Southern partisans. The enemy was always well served by the spies whom he kept in our midst.

But, although abandoning one plan, Burnside had not given up the idea of trying another. It was his disposition to strive against difficulties rather than yield to them. He had not been able to cross the Rappahannock below Fredericksburg. He would cross it above. For that he only asked a formal approval of the President and General Halleck, in order to blot out the influence of the late telegram and silence the nearly unanimous opposition of the generals of his army to an operation of that kind.

The President had already enough upon his hands, especially since the partial triumph of the Democrats in the autumnal elections, and in presence of the anger excited amongst them by the proclamation of emancipation. The risk of creating new embarrassments he would not incur; and, besides, as to military operations, he could not use his own judgment, but must rely on that of his counsellors. As to General Halleck, he was much more ready to take the negative responsibility of his position than to assume the positive responsibility of his orders, — on account of which it was commonly said that his position of general of the armies was like that of a fifth wheel to a coach. On this occasion, he did not depart from his usual rôle. He replied in

general terms, that he had always been in favor of a forward movement of the army, but that he could not take the responsibility of prescribing when or how that movement should be executed. He finished with a few military commonplaces on the management of armies in the field. This non-committal letter had the approving indorsement of the President.

If they had reckoned that the resolution of Burnside would become lukewarm on receiving such vague encouragement, they were deceived. He asked nothing more, and set to work immediately with an ardor and a promptness which showed he had infinitely less hesitation before the risks of the enterprise than fear of being again stopped in its execution. He went himself to carefully reconnoitre the banks of the Rappahannock above Falmouth, and completed his preparations to cross all his forces at Banks and United States fords, — fords which were not passable at that season of the year; but, this time, the pontoons could not be too late; he had them with him.

There was, however, a delay caused by some unaccountable movements of the enemy. He had to send to the other side of the river for explanation, on two successive nights. On the third day, the reports being satisfactory, the whole army received the final order to march the next day, January 20.

The first preparatory order had been issued on the 16th; we did not expect it. What likelihood, in fact, was there that one would think of commencing active operations in the middle of the winter? We knew nothing, at that time, of the visit of Newton and Cochrane to Washington, nor of the telegram of the President, nor of the project stopped on the eve of its execution. Still less did we know what was passing in the head of the general-in-chief. It was said that

Hooker had been in Washington; that he was to be placed at the head of the army, or that an independent command would be cut out for him, of which the Third Corps would certainly form part; but nothing of all this talk indicated any immediate or even probable movement.

A few indications, significant in appearance, rather denoted the contrary. For instance, the ladies were allowed passes to visit the army, which was only permitted in winter quarters, when active hostilities were suspended for some time. General Birney had been allowed, without objection, to go to Washington to meet Mrs. Birney, who was accompanied by quite a party of Philadelphians, ladies, sisters or relatives of officers of his staff. They arrived at his headquarters on the 13th, where everything was ready to receive them, and for three days there was nothing but gayety, rides on horseback and drives in carriages, collations, reviews, music, and improvised dances by moonlight. But here comes a fatal order. Immediately our visitors fly to the Acquia Creek Railroad, like a flock of frightened grasshoppers. The parting greeting was *au revoir!* But how many would ever see each other again?

On the 17th the weather turned cold in spite of the bright sunshine. On the 18th it froze hard. We were to break camp in the afternoon. The prospect was not encouraging. In spite of himself, one thought of the amount of suffering such weather would entail; of the cold nights in the snow, and the terrible effect of frost on the wounded. It was a relief to receive the news that the departure was delayed twenty-four hours. We concluded from that that the movement was given up until the weather moderated. The inconveniences arising from a thaw were doubtless great, but on the whole preferable. Of the two evils, that was the lesser.

On the 20th the division started, at noon. The atmosphere was filled with moisture. The lowering heavens were without sunshine and without warmth. Over the roads still hard, through the fields, and under the forests, our long columns of infantry marched till night, mingled with batteries of artillery, ammunition trains, and wagons carrying the pontoons.

In the evening we arrived in rear of Banks Ford, in some woods composed of young pines with bushy tops, where the regiments which were to force the passage at daylight in the morning were crowded together. This glorious task was assigned to Ward's division, and my regiment was awarded the place of honor, the advance. But, at the very time when we stacked arms, the fog, becoming more and more dense, turned to rain, which continued to fall cold, heavy, incessant. The dull daylight was soon gone in the darkness of night, darker still amongst the pines. We were forbidden to light any fires or make any noise that might put the enemy on the alert. One saw nothing except here and there the dim light of a lantern. Nothing was heard but the monotonous dropping of the rain and the murmurs of conversations carried on in a low voice.

It was a dismal night; one of those sleepless nights when everything has a funereal aspect, in which the enthusiasm is extinguished; in which courage is worn out, the will enfeebled, and the mind stupefied. Under such circumstances, inaction is the worst of trials. Those who had to pass the hours in pushing on the cannon wheels, in drawing the pontoons by hand to the edge of the river, in filling up mud-holes, in contending against obstacles of every kind, which increased at every instant, were better employed.

When the day began to show its gray light through

a confused mass of vapors, the rain had been falling for twelve hours, and there were no indications of any cessation. The wind, which had risen toward the end of the night, ran through the trees with a roaring sound. At each gust, the water came down in showers from the branches, on the soaked soil, where the men were tramping around in the mud.

No order reached us. A few fires were tolerated at first, then authorized. The soldier, benumbed with frost, soaked from head to foot, could, at least, prepare his coffee, and warm his stomach if not his limbs. Every one understood that the expedition and the passage of the river were out of the question; but, at all hazards, the arms were furbished, and the cartridges protected against the dampness.

The hours passed on without bringing us any news. Nothing reached us in the midst of the woods; nothing could pass along the roads, transformed into impassable mud-holes. The general officers around us were no more favored. Their baggage and their provisions were left on the road somewhere in the rear. In the afternoon I sent my servants to hunt them up, and, while awaiting the absent dinner, after a breakfast made up of a dry biscuit and a cup of black coffee, I went to sleep under the slender protection of a shelter tent. There is a proverb which says, "He who sleeps dines." It is a falsehood. I slept, but I did not dine.

The rain lasted thirty hours without cessation. To understand the effect, one must have lived in Virginia through a winter. The roads are nothing but dirt roads. The mud is not simply on the surface, but penetrates the ground to a great depth. It appears as though the water, after passing through a first bed of clay, soaked into some kind of earth without any consistency. As soon as the hardened crust on the surface

is softened, everything is buried in a sticky paste mixed with liquid mud, in which, with my own eyes, I have seen teams of mules buried. That was our condition on the 21st of January, 1863.

The earth gave way under our feet, and especially under the wheels of the wagons and artillery carriages. The great efforts and herculean work of the preceding night had succeeded in bringing a few pontoons near the river, and in placing a few pieces in battery. But everything else was buried in the slough. All the teams had, as it were, given out under the crushing weight of a superhuman power, which forbade their going farther.

In vain had efforts been made to fill up the mud-holes or open new side roads; in vain had whole companies dragged at the cannon, the caissons, the wagons carrying ammunition, — all was useless. The powers of heaven and earth were against us. We must wait until we were permitted to take back to camp the whole war equipment, so unfortunately put in motion.

The second day, the rain having at last stopped, I owed to the hospitality of General Ward the first good meal I had eaten for two days. A slice of ham is under such circumstances a good fortune.

On all sides the men set to work. By digging, pushing, drawing, and corduroying, the cannon and caissons were finally extricated. The wagons which had overturned were again righted, and finally, on the 23d, we reëntered our camp, leaving no traces of our "mud march" except extinguished fires, fallen trees, and dead animals lying by the side of the buried road.

It might be imagined that this new failure was far from making General Burnside any more good-tempered than before. The army had done its duty without hesi-

tation ; but, on its return to camp, had allowed its discontent to give vent in criticisms and murmurs. The general commanding (*tenacem propositi virum*) resolved then to turn against his critics the blows which he had not been able to deal upon the enemy. He drew up the General Order No. 8, which, though never issued, was not the less known to everybody. This order, a little military coup d'état, dismissed from the United States' service Generals Hooker, Brooks, Newton, and Cochrane, and relieved from their commands in the Army of the Potomac, Generals Franklin, W. F. Smith, Hurgis, Ferrero, and Colonel Taylor. But this order could not be carried out without the approbation of the President. Consequently, the general left for Washington with the order and with his written resignation, determined to have one or the other accepted by Mr. Lincoln.

In the alternative, thus categorically placed before him, the President was very much embarrassed. He did not wish to deprive the country of the services of the general officers designated in Order No. 8, nor of those of General Burnside himself. In order to delay matters, he put off his reply until the next day, to take time, he said, to consult the Secretary of War and General Halleck. The next day, in fact, the reply was ready. When the general presented himself, the President announced to him his decision to relieve him from the command of the Army of the Potomac and nominate in his stead General Hooker.

General Burnside accepted this conclusion with the noble dignity and unshakable patriotism which formed one of the fine sides of his character. Nobody, not the President or General Hooker himself, would have rejoiced more than he if his successor had been victorious. Then, after having approved some other steps on which

the President desired his advice, he spoke of his resignation as being a matter of course.

"General," interrupted Mr. Lincoln, "I cannot accept it. We need your services too much. You can take all the time you wish to arrange your private affairs which demand your attention; but, as to your resignation, we will not accept it."

"Mr. President," said Burnside, bowing, "it is for you to decide whether I do or do not remain in the service, but if I remain it is on the condition that I am employed. And I will take the liberty of adding that if all the officers whom it will be found necessary to relieve from their commands would give in their resignations it would be very much better for you, as you would thus be relieved of the solicitations of their friends."

"It is quite possible," replied the President, "but as to your resignation we cannot accept it."

On leaving the President, the general went to the War Office, to write a request for a leave of absence for thirty days. He found there the order which relieved him from the command of the Army of the Potomac at his own request. This was not exactly the case. He asked that the formula might be modified, in order, he said, not to appear before the country as a man giving up his command without some reason. He wished to retain the reputation of having remained at his post as long as it was thought desirable for him to retain it; — which did not belong to him to determine. General Halleck washed his hands of it. (He must have had very clean hands if we consider what frequent habit he had of resorting to that expedient.) Mr. Stanton took the better course, appealing to General Burnside's patriotism and eloquently representing to him the wrong that his resignation or his acknowledged disa-

greement with the government would do the common cause. The heart of Burnside could not resist that argument. "Well!" said he, "draw up the order as you please. I will take my leave for thirty days, and on my return I will go where you wish, even if it is to retake the command of my old corps or even to serve under the orders of General Hooker, if you so desire."

This incident depicts the man. In fact, he took command again of the Ninth Corps, but to operate in an independent field, in Tennessee, of which he acquitted himself with success. We will find him later on in the Army of the Potomac, wiping out by good and loyal service, as corps commander, his lamented errors as commander-in-chief.

CHAPTER XX.

HOOKER COMMANDING THE ARMY.

General Hooker's character — Improvements in the army — How promotions were made — Intrigues and rivalries — Political preferences — Brigadier-generals' report — Special marks to designate the different army corps — Poverty of Virginia country people — A pastor without a flock — Marriage under a tent — Camp fêtes — Preparations for moving — Combined march on Chancellorsville — Brilliant commencement of a brilliant conception.

THE selection of General Hooker as commander-in-chief was received with favor in the ranks of the army, where he already enjoyed an extended popularity. His brilliant services as general of division, the part he had played at Antietam as corps commander, the wound he had received there, finally, the efforts he had made to prevent the useless butchery attending the attack on the Fredericksburg heights, were so many recommendations to the favor and the confidence of the soldier. He exercised a direct influence on the troops of his old commands, by his open manners, his military bearing, and by his intrepidity under fire, which had given him the name of "Fighting Joe Hooker."

Towards the officers his manners were generally pleasant, familiar even to taking a glass of whiskey with those whom he liked. In the high position in which he was placed, a little more reserve would not have been out of place.

He was an easy talker, and was accustomed to criticise freely, with more sharpness than discretion, even in the presence of his inferiors, the conduct and acts

of his superiors. On the other hand, when it concerned himself, he indulged in boastings, that one hearing could not accept as gospel truth, or reckon modesty in the number of his virtues.

Kind to his subordinates, his kindness would have been worth more if he had not extended it too indiscriminately to everybody. Prodigal of promises, his promises would have inspired more confidence if, after having made them, he had not often deprived himself of the power to fulfil them.

He had not acquired the cordial feeling of the generals as much as that of the troops. He had wounded some by openly criticising them; he had alienated others by putting himself forward at their expense. The friends of McClellan did not love him. They had against him the double grievance of his military judgments and of his political opinions, both equally opposed to those of their old idol, to whose overthrow he had contributed so much.

The first effect of his promotion was to take from the army General Sumner, on account of his higher rank, and General Franklin, who was obliged to justify himself as to the responsibility for the defeat at Fredericksburg, which was attributed to him. Hooker, in the first place, suppressed the grand divisions. He applied himself immediately to raise the *morale* of the army, and to perfect its organization in the different branches of the service by a series of well considered measures, the effect of which proved the excellence of his judgment in such matters. He therein gained the incontestable honor of being the first who had raised the Army of the Potomac to the level of the regular armies of the old world, and above the other armies of the American continent, in the first place by the perfection of its discipline and instruction, and in the second

by the reform of abuses and the improvement of its regulations.

"At the time when the command was given to me," said he, in giving account of those improvements, "the condition of the army was deplorable. The desertions had reached an average of two hundred a day. The express offices were full of packages containing citizen's clothing, intended for the deserters, so eager were the parents, wives, brothers, and sisters to assist the flight of their relatives. I can show that, when I took command, the number of absent from the army had reached the figures of 2922 officers, and 81,964 non-commissioned officers and soldiers. They were scattered all over the country, and the greater part were absent without known cause.

"My first object was to prevent desertions. When I had succeeded in that, I turned my attention to the means necessary to bring back the absent, and to make the men present as comfortable and contented as circumstances would permit. I made regulations as to furloughs and leaves of absence, so that every one could be away a few days in the course of the winter. Disloyal officers were dismissed the service as soon as the proof of their disloyalty was brought to my knowledge.

"Important changes were introduced in the different departments of the staff, especially in that of inspections, which was completely organized and intrusted to the most competent officers I could find. Convinced that idleness was the great evil in all armies, I made every effort to keep the troops busy, particularly at drill and manœuvres, as often as the weather permitted.

"The cavalry was consolidated in a separate corps, and put in the best condition ever known in our service. Whenever the state of the roads and of the river per-

mitted, expeditions were started out to attack the pickets and advance posts of the enemy, and to forage in the country he occupied. My object was to encourage the men, to incite in their hearts, by successes, however unimportant they might be, a sentiment of superiority over their adversaries. In that object, we succeeded in a remarkable manner.

"During this period of preparation, the army made rapid progress, and, at the beginning of April, justified the highest hopes. Everybody was full of confidence and devotion to the cause, and I saw that it was a living army, an army truly worthy of the Republic."

The picture is not too strongly colored; it gives an exact idea of the transformation which was brought about during the months of February and March. Let us add that, in the matter of desertions, the President came to General Hooker's assistance by issuing, on the 10th of March, a proclamation which offered pardon free from all punishment (except the loss of pay) to all soldiers then absent without permission, provided that before April 1 they had rejoined their regiments, or presented themselves at the rendezvous provided for that purpose in the different States. The measure had good results; but to put an end to desertions there is only one way, to shoot the deserters. Now, that could not be done without first submitting the verdict of death to the President, who, in the goodness of his heart, approved the proceedings, but always modified the sentence. The army commanders, then, must be invested with the necessary power to carry out the sentences of the courts-martial. From this time, military executions took place, and desertions became as rare as before they had been frequent.

This period of repose for the army in general was, on the contrary, a time of great movement amongst

the colonels and brigadier-generals. It was the time of year for promotions, and, since the 1st of January, the publication of the list sent in for confirmation by the Senate was looked for with anxiety. When at last it reached us, on the 25th, it was a cruel disappointment for those who should have appeared in it, on account of their services, but whose names had been put to one side in favor of political intruders.

In this appeared, again, one of the most flagrant vices of the system applied to army affairs. The list for promotion did not come from military recommendation. Services rendered, proved capacity, acquired rights appeared in the list only in a small proportion. The greater part were put there from outside recommendation, and, above all, by political influence.

The Army of the Potomac had to suffer from this more than any other; for the Army of the Potomac was the army of the President, the army of the Senate, the army of the House of Representatives, the army of the press and of the tribune, somewhat the army of every one.

Everybody meddled in its affairs, blamed this one, praised that one, exalted such a one, abased such a one, gave his opinion on everything which concerned it, and labored for his friends who happened to form a part of it.

However, the superior officers, whose promotion depended on the President, were far from having clean hands as regards this state of affairs. While openly complaining of it, they neglected nothing which would enable them to profit by it. Every permission to be absent was, for them, an opportunity to visit Washington, in order to put in play, *per fas et nefas*, what influence they could bring to bear on the President, in favor of their promotion. These efforts, when opposed,

too often degenerated into intrigues, in which the baseness of the means employed was added to ardor of solicitation. Example is not wanting of a calumny being the weapon picked out of the slime to injure a rival. Finally, the number and importunity of the solicitors became so great that the War Department had to limit the stay of officers on leave in the capital to twenty-four hours, unless their families were there, or they resided there.

Fortunate were those who had friends or protectors among the influential members of Congress, especially in the Senate. If their record of service was good, justice was done them ; if it was not, favor took the place of it. The most important thing was to bring direct pressure to bear on the President, and this pressure could not come from the military authorities. They were not the ones who voted the budget, made the laws, directed the people, and guided the government. With the best intentions, Mr. Lincoln could not resist certain influences, which he managed less for himself than for the good of the country.

Nevertheless, there was no such thing as corruption in this intervention of the members of Congress. In exerting themselves actively for their friends, or for the officers who were particularly recommended by them, they generally believed they were doing an act of justice. Abused by false representations, they were not far from considering their protégés as unappreciated heroes, especially when those protégés belonged to influential families, and had numerous friends in their electoral districts.

What, then, became of the officers truly meritorious, who had only the recommendations of their superior officers to plead their rights ? They were left outside, mortified, discouraged with well-doing, and champing

the bit, until, better informed, they obtained also, by political influence, the recompense which would not be accorded to their military merits.

General Hooker, who had undertaken and carried out many improvements, was not strong enough to put his hand on these abuses. His most urgent and well founded recommendations could not strive against the contrary currents, and in the pell-mell of incongruous promotions one can see the names of lawyer politicians, entire strangers to the military career. These gentlemen were ambitious of the privilege of promenading up and down the streets with their shoulders adorned with the star. For this reward, their patriotism on sale, they consented to rally around the government policy and the war for emancipation.

An order from the War Department, dated August 18, 1862, well directed that "henceforth, no nomination for major or brigadier general will be made, except to officers of the regular army, for meritorious and distinguished services during the war, or to volunteer officers who have given evidence in the field of the military talents requisite for the functions of a general officer." But the orders of the Secretary of War were not obligatory on the President, and the senators showed in this case that they cared nothing for the order.

However, when the mass of promotions submitted to the Senate for confirmation, in a lump, reached it, the Senate collectively refused to sanction what each one of its members had contributed to individually. The list was returned to the President as much exceeding the number of forty major-generals and two hundred brigadier-generals fixed by law. All beyond that number must be cut out. The reader can imagine what strenuous efforts were made for friends.

The President was besieged, pursued, persecuted on all sides. Everybody had the better right to be retained on the chosen list, nobody admitted the possibility of being rightfully among those to be dropped. Mr. Lincoln lost his time and trouble, and, in despair, asked Congress to free him from his embarrassment by passing a law adding to the number of general officers.

Congress willingly assented to this and authorized the supplementary creation of thirty major-generals and seventy-five brigadier-generals, "provided," it was added, "that the officers promoted by virtue of this act shall be chosen from amongst those who have distinguished themselves by valorous and meritorious conduct in their duties." The condition was an excellent one in itself. It pacified the conscience of Congress, but it must have greatly troubled that of "Honest Abe," for it was not possible for him to follow the prescription.

In this desperate strife for stars, General Halleck preserved the immobility of a *Deus Terminus*. Mr. Stanton supported the recommendation sent from the army and General Hooker went to Washington several times to urge its retention. Unhappily, the list agreed on at the War Department had to pass through the White House in order to reach the Senate, a dangerous passage, sown with pitfalls and traps. In that passage, my name, as well as others, disappeared twice, to give room, without doubt, for that of some political favorite whose name had never been mentioned in the army.

During this time we were blockaded in our tents by the rain, the mud, and the snow. When the sun shone again, we mounted our horses and rode from camp to camp, to learn and comment on the news, discuss our hopes, or give vent to our discontent. Changes succeeded each other in the different commands. In the

Third Corps, Stoneman returned to the cavalry, Sickles succeeded him temporarily while awaiting his confirmation as major-general. Berry, also promoted, passed to Hooker's old division. Birney kept the command of Kearney's old division as brigadier-general. He was among those dropped out, and was irritated, not without reason, at seeing an officer commanding a brigade under his orders pass over him to a higher rank.

March 4, the day fixed for the adjournment of Congress, arrived and the famous list was not yet confirmed. Now, on that day the promotions made by the President in the interval between the two preceding sessions became void for want of confirmation. For the major-generals, the commands might remain the same by virtue of their commissions as brigadier-generals, which emanated from the President. But the case of the brigadier-generals was very different. Their commissions as colonels of volunteers, coming from the Governors of the States, had terminated by the fact of their promotion. They were no longer on the muster-rolls of their old regiments, where they had been replaced, and, not being colonels, ceasing to be generals, they no longer belonged to the United States' service. Those of them who had been officers in the regular army retook their grades.

The President had to call the Senate in extra session to remedy this state of affairs, and, after several days, the generals on foot were again in the saddle.

All this excitement did not lessen the fruitful activity which General Hooker had impressed on the improvement of the army. This progress extended even to the smallest details of the service. Nothing escaped his solicitude. Thus, during the campaign of the Peninsula, Kearney had contrived to render all the men of his division recognizable by a little piece of red cloth

sewed on their caps. He had in this way developed in them an *esprit de corps*, encouraged their *amour propre*, and controlled the stragglers or cowards, who could not stray from the ranks or mingle with the other troops without being instantly recognized. Hooker took up the idea and extended it to all the troops in his command. Each corps had its particular badge. The First Corps, the disc; the Second, the trefoil; the Third, the diamond; the Fifth, the Maltese cross; the Sixth, the Greek cross; the Ninth, the shield; the Eleventh, the crescent; the Twelfth, the star. Each of these badges was red for the first division, white for the second, and blue for the third. Each staff also received a special flag with its badge and distinctive color. It was square for the corps, oblong for the division, triangular for the brigade. In this way, whether on the march or in action, the generals were always easy to find.

The military tribunals did not remain idle. During February, I formed part of a commission, presided over by General Howard, to try several inhabitants of the country, charged with having aided the flight of our deserters by selling them clothing. One of them was also accused of brigandage.

The creation of the commission was connected, as will be seen, with the measures taken by General Hooker to stop desertion. Those found guilty were condemned to severe punishments. The one charged with brigandage escaped a verdict of death only from the insufficiency of proof. Another, who had made his house a sort of clandestine rendezvous for concealing and assisting deserters, was condemned to six months of hard labor and to have his house razed to the level of the ground.

If the commission showed itself more indulgent

toward the others, it was in consideration for the frightful misery in which the war had plunged those unfortunates. Robbed by the marauders from both armies, they lived from day to day on what they could pick up here and there. When deserters presented themselves and offered them money for some old clothes hanging in a corner, the temptation was irresistible, for with that money they could procure the food wanting in their houses. And, besides, if they refused to sell the clothing, how could they prevent the deserters from taking it by force? These searched the house from cellar to garret and appropriated whatever pleased them. If they consented to give a few dollars in exchange, how could the money be refused? How could they reject the bread which, for some days at least, assured the existence of the family?

Those who lived within our lines had much less to complain of. Instead of plundering them, the soldiers often supported them; what little they had, at least, was secured to them. However, there were very few remaining in the country except the poor, in their huts. The country houses of any importance were nearly always abandoned; the negro quarters were deserted, and in such cases everything was invariably pillaged.

Our pickets extended to a long distance. The service was done by brigades. Each corps furnished a brigade, and relieved it every three days. Along the part of the line guarded by the Third Corps were two inhabited dwellings, one occupied by a Protestant minister, the other by a Fredericksburg lawyer. The clergyman was from Baltimore. He was living peaceably and comfortably in that city, when he had the unfortunate inspiration to accept the charge of two churches near Falmouth. Mark that this was in 1862, when the expedition was preparing against Richmond. But such

was the blindness of Southern men that they fully believed Fredericksburg beyond all danger from the ravages of war, sheltered, as it was, behind the rebel army, which was still occupying the Manassas lines. The Northern army, they said, could never penetrate beyond that.

Reasoning in this manner, the reverend gentleman came with his wife and daughter, bringing also his slaves. They found a pleasant country house for rent, in the vicinity of the two churches, and established themselves there, without troubling themselves about the future. But suddenly the Confederate army fell back on Richmond, leaving the country exposed to all manner of incursions. Immediately the slaves decamped. Soon the armies, passing and repassing through the country, devour everything on their passage. The flocks are dispersed, and disappear; one of the two churches is burned, the other is pillaged, and, instead of there being two parishes without a pastor, there is one parish without parishioners. As a matter of course, there was no longer a question as to receiving a salary, but, on the other hand, there was no rent to pay. The poor man was ruined. *Qu'était-il allé faire dans cette maudite galère?*

I found him there during the winter, looking with an indifferent eye on the falling of the finest trees in the world, under the axe of our pioneers. His philosophical calmness showed that they did not belong to him. His table was supplied by the general stationed there; his wife, troubled with deafness, busied herself silently with the household duties; his daughter sang minstrel songs in the parlor, souvenirs of Baltimore, and in the kitchen the starved cow chewed her cud.

One can hardly form an idea of the rapidity with which the forests disappear around an army in winter

quarters. When we arrived before Fredericksburg, at the end of November, the country surrounding the city was covered with great woods of oaks and pines. At the end of February everything was cleared off, not only around our camps, but even at a considerable distance. The country, so picturesque a few months before, now had the dull aspect of a vast and muddy desert, where nothing gave relief to the eye, save a few trees, spared here and there, because they sheltered the hut or the tent of a general.

In the first days of March, we had to go so far to get the daily supplies of wood to burn, and the transport was so slow and painful for the men, and fatiguing for the animals, that the most of the camps had to be removed. Our division moved back near the railroad to Acquia Creek, on the shore of a deep bay of the Potomac, in which the small transports unloaded their cargoes at the wharf of Belle Plain. There we camped literally in the midst of a wood on the summits of little stony hills, favorable to the draining-off of the water, and drier at all times than the muddy plain from which we had come. The roads, laid out usually in the hollows, were, it is true, in a horrible condition; but we soon opened others.

Soon the weather began to improve; the sun became warmer; fine days were more frequent, and more frequent also became drills and reviews. Fêtes of different kinds enlivened the camp life. There was a marriage in Berry's division, under a tent, accompanied by every kind of festivity. The bride had brought with her from Washington an escort of ten groomsmen and ten bridesmaids. The groom was a captain in the Seventh New Jersey. If he had been colonel, he could not have had more pompous nuptials. Generals were present in an imposing number. There was dancing, drinking,

banqueting. The commanding general himself was present, full of gayety and life. Then succeeded a ball, given by General Sickles at his headquarters, where, as usual, there was feasting to the heart's content.

Sickles was one of the striking figures of this war. More as a man than as a general officer; in many ways a typical American. He was gifted in a high degree with that multiplicity of faculties which has given rise to the saying that a Yankee is ready for everything. Still young, he has tried many things, and always with success. At the bar, in politics, in diplomacy, in the legislature, in arms. He has been a lawyer and politician in New York, Secretary of Legation in London, member of the Legislature in Albany, representative in the House of Representatives at Washington, general in Virginia, envoy extraordinary to Bogota. And in all these positions he has acquitted himself well.

He has a quick perception, an energetic will, prompt and supple intelligence, an active temperament. Naturally ambitious, he brings to the service of his ambition a clear view, a practical judgment, and a deep knowledge of political tactics. When he has determined on anything, he prepares the way, assembles his forces, and marches directly to the assault. Obstacles do not discourage him, but he never attempts the impossible, and as he has many strings to his bow, if one breaks, he will replace it by another.

In him, ability does not exclude frankness. He likes, on the contrary, to play with the cards on the table with his friends and against his enemies. As much attached to the former as hostile to the latter, he will be as eager to serve the former as to combat the latter. But let a friend deceive him, or an enemy cease to oppose him, then both become equally indifferent to

him, and he goes on his way, troubling himself no further about them.

Gay, prepossessing, *spirituel*, he rarely fails to make a good impression, even upon those who may be the least prepossessed in his favor. Pleasonton, an old West-Pointer, regular army officer, and known as given to criticism, said of him : " I never met a general who coöperated more harmoniously on the field of battle, nor one who more promptly seized a suggestion from another person."

When the war broke out, Sickles was in the ranks of the Democratic party, to which he had always belonged. During the time of discussion he had been among those most conciliatory in regard to the pretensions and aggressions of the South. But when the sword was drawn he was one of those most ready to throw away the scabbard, saying that he considered himself by so much the more obliged to fight the rebellion as a soldier that he had been ready to make the greatest concessions as Congressman. Disgusted with the bad faith of his old allies, and irritated at the false position in which they had put the Democrats of the North, he considered his party as in duty bound, more than any other, to carry on the war *à outrance*, unto the complete triumph of the national government.

Imbued with these ideas, he raised in New York a brigade of volunteers, to which he gave the name which serves for the device of the Imperial State. The *Excelsior* brigade was attached, from the beginning, to Hooker's division, in which Sickles continued to serve until he came to the command of it. Promoted major-general, and confirmed by the Senate, he was assigned by the President to the command of the Third Corps, where he soon attained great popularity.

Nor did General Birney wish to be behind in merry-

making. He gave, in his turn, a fête, which made an epoch in the remembrances of the division. There were races, with and without hurdles, on the drill-ground. Colonel Prince Salm-Salm came near breaking his neck. Some of the other officers had fine tumbles in the mud. But generally these falls were more comical than dangerous. After returning, there was a collation at headquarters, we had illuminations, fireworks, and a representation of negro minstrels in a theatre put up for that purpose. Nothing was wanting for the success of the entertainment, at which the whole army was present.

Finally, at the beginning of April, Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln came to visit the Army of the Potomac. On the 6th, there was a review of all the cavalry commanded by General Stoneman; on the 7th, a walk through the camps of several divisions, and a collation at Sickles' headquarters; the 8th, another review, of four army corps at once, the Second, the Third, the Fifth, and the Sixth. On the 9th, the presidential excursion ended by a visit to the Eleventh and Twelfth Corps, near Acquia Creek, where Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln embarked to return to Washington.

As soon as the President had left, there was a redoubling of activity everywhere. On the second day after, an order was issued to consolidate into five companies of infantry, or six of cavalry, every regiment of volunteers reduced below half the regulation maximum. The same measure was applied to the batteries of artillery. Its objects were: to facilitate the consolidation of regiments; to reëstablish the normal proportion between the number of soldiers and officers, and, finally, to relieve the treasury of a large and useless expense.

On the 13th, the movement commenced by the departure of the cavalry. At the same time, our men

received eight days' marching rations (biscuit, coffee, sugar, and salt), three days' rations of salt pork, leaving room in their knapsacks but for one shirt, one pair of drawers, and one pair of stockings. Everything else was to be left behind, in charge of the quartermasters.

We were ordered to be ready to march that same night, but the heavens always reserved their right to interpose their veto, and on this occasion did not fail to use it by sending us rain in torrents, which put our departure, for the time, out of the question. Operations already begun were necessarily suspended, to the great disappointment of General Hooker, who wished to begin the campaign before losing a certain number of regiments, whose time was about to expire.

These regiments were divided into two classes. The first contained those who had enlisted for two years at the outbreak of the war. There were forty of these regiments in the Army of the Potomac, and, making deductions for the three-year men found in their ranks, the total amounted to 16,472 officers and men who would be discharged during the months of March, April, May, and June.

The second list was composed of the nine-month regiments, who were called out under an unfortunate resort to expedients, at the time of the defeats of McClellan and Pope. The fatal consequences, to which the authorities had closed their eyes at that time, were developed now without possible remedy. These men, who had taken up arms having had no opportunity to use them, who had learned their trade in the camps during the winter, were now to be sent home at the very time when their services, become really efficient, would be most useful to the army. There were eight Pennsylvania regiments in this list, amounting to 6421 men.

This made more than twenty-two thousand muskets to be withdrawn from our ranks at the opening of the campaign; to which were to be added nineteen other regiments whose time would expire in the months of August, September, and October, forming a total of 11,097 men. Thus, during the year, and in the Army of the Potomac alone, thirty-four thousand men would leave us. It was, then, not without reason that General Hooker was in a hurry to begin operations. He wished to strike a blow while he had his whole force.

We have seen what the position of the Confederates was on the other side of the Rappahannock. It had not changed since the battle of Fredericksburg. As then, they occupied at the end of April the line of fortified heights extending from Skenker's Creek to the point where they touched the river above Falmouth. On this side, however, they had extended their lines by covering, with fortifications occupied with troops, the only two feasible crossings between Falmouth and the point where the Rapidan empties into the Rappahannock: Banks and United States fords. And these two fords were passable only in the summer. Everywhere else the steep and wooded banks of the two rivers presented a barrier which could not be passed. It was a stretch of twenty to twenty-five miles to defend, but such was his confidence, inspired by the defensive advantages of the ground, that Lee thought he could safely send Longstreet's corps to operate on the south of the James, against Peck, who occupied Suffolk with a small force. The rebel army, then, did not number more than sixty thousand in front of Hooker, when, on April 27, the latter began his movement on Chancellorsville, at the head of more than a hundred thousand men.

Chancellorsville is not a city, a village, or even a

hamlet. It is a solitary house in the midst of a cultivated clearing, surrounded on all sides by woods, which have given that region the name of *Wilderness*. A veritable solitude, impenetrable for the deploying or quick manœuvring of an army. So that it was not there that Hooker had planned to give battle. But it was a well chosen point for concentrating his forces, three or four miles southeast of United States Ford. From that point he could strike the enemy, taken in reverse, or, at least, force him to come out of his position, as weak from the rear as it was strong from the front. If the Confederate army fell back on Richmond, it presented its flank to our attack, and, if he were stopped or delayed by some obstacle and pursued at the same time by a force strong enough to vigorously press his rearguard, his retreat might be changed to a rout. If, on the contrary, he marched towards Chancellorsville to meet us, he was forced to accept battle in the open field, in unforeseen conditions, exposed to attack by a pursuing army as much as on the Richmond road. Attacked at the same time both in front and rear, Lee ran the chance of being cut in pieces, and would be very fortunate if he saved the remnant of his forces.

Such was Hooker's well concerted plan, the secret of which was confided to no one, not even to his most intimate friends amongst the officers.

The point on which everything depended for success was to be able to assemble the army at Chancellorsville before the enemy could oppose him at that point. This part of the plan was as admirably executed as it had been ably conceived, and it can be truly said that up to that point General Hooker showed himself to be an able tactician.

In the first place, he detached all his cavalry, under the orders of General Stoneman, to cut the enemy's

lines of communication with Richmond. The undertaking was not very dangerous, for Stoneman took with him more than ten thousand horse, who could meet with no serious resistance. Under his instructions, after crossing the Rappahannock, he was to divide his force into two columns: one, under command of General Averill, was to threaten the force the enemy might have at Culpeper and Gordonsville, while the other, led by Stoneman himself, would attempt to accomplish the main object of the expedition. Both columns were to come together at a given point, to attack the enemy in case he retreated directly towards Richmond, and to harass him if he took the road to Gordonsville.

At the same time that the cavalry started, the Eleventh and Twelfth Corps (Howard and Slocum) marched for Kelly's Ford, above the mouth of the Rapidan and twenty-seven miles distant from Fredericksburg. There, on the 28th, they were met by Meade's corps (the Fifth), which was to join them. The passage of the Rappahannock was made that night without opposition. On the 29th, that of the Rapidan was effected happily, in two columns, and, the movement continuing with a promptness of good augury, the three corps arrived at Chancellorsville on the afternoon of the 30th. Their advance opened United States Ford, behind which the Second Corps (Couch) was waiting, in order to throw across a pontoon bridge and join the other corps, which was done before night. Hooker himself arrived at the appointed rendezvous, to finish up the work he had so brilliantly commenced.

While these important movements were being accomplished on one side, the attention of the enemy was concentrated in the opposite direction, towards what seemed to him to be a prelude to an attack in force. In fact, on the 29th, at daybreak, while our right, hav-

ing already crossed the Rappahannock, was advancing towards the Rapidan, a bridge of boats was established by force at the same point where, on the 13th of December preceding, Franklin had passed the river, and the Sixth Corps (Sedgwick), after having driven back the enemy's sharpshooters, advanced into the plain below Fredericksburg. A little further down, the First Corps (Reynolds) did the same thing, and, finally, the Third Corps (Sickles) took position in reserve, ready to cross over in its turn if necessary. This was the force designed to hold the enemy in his intrenchments by the menace of an immediate attack, or to pursue him, if, discovering the danger which threatened him, he should abandon his position.

During that day the demonstration succeeded to our best wishes. The enemy appeared only to prepare his defence on the side where it was not intended to attack him.

The next day, the 30th, the Confederates not stirring, Hooker called the Third Corps to Chancellorsville. We started immediately, making a forced march in order to arrive in time for the decisive attack. That night we made our fires at a short distance from the bridge across which the Second Corps had marched in the morning.

So there, on the 30th, at night, the Confederates, still motionless in their positions in rear of Fredericksburg, prepared for an attack on their right, indicated by the movements of the two corps of Sedgwick and Reynolds, while in rear of their left four other corps were already united, and about to be joined by a fifth. On one side, Sedgwick, with forty thousand men, including Gibbon's division of the Second Corps, which, having its camp in full view of the enemy, had not yet moved ; on the other, Hooker, with about seventy thou-

sand men in a position which seemed an assurance, in advance, of a victory. "Now," said he, in an order of the day to the army, "the enemy must flee shamefully or come out of his defences to accept a battle on our ground, where he is doomed to certain destruction!" And every one repeated, "He is in our power!" Nobody doubted that, before two days, all our past reverses would be effaced by the annihilation of Lee's army.

CHAPTER XXI.

CHANCELLORSVILLE.

First encounter with the enemy — Capital fault — Defensive position of the army — Advance position of the Third Corps — Engagement of Birney's division — Jackson's attack on the right — Rout of the Eleventh Corps — Counter charge of Berry's division — Death of Major Keenan — Artillery saved by General Pleasonton — Night encounter — Episodes — Death of Stonewall Jackson — Renewal of the battle — Accident to General Hooker — Remarks on the position — Bayonet charge — Movement backward — Sedgwick carries Fredericksburg Heights — Combat at Salem — The Sixth Corps at Banks Ford — General retreat.

WHAT Hooker called "our ground" to give battle on was about half-way from Chancellorsville to Fredericksburg, outside of that region covered with almost impenetrable woods, where we were at that time. On that side the country was open and favorable for the manœuvring of an army. It was then important to get there at the earliest possible moment. Two broad roads led to it, coming together near a church called Tabernacle, while a third road, running near the river, led to Banks Ford. By these three roads, Hooker renewed his movement in advance, on Friday morning, May 1. Slocum, with the Twelfth Corps, held the right by the plank road; Sykes, with a division of the Fifth Corps, supported by Hancock's division of the Second Corps, advanced in the centre, along the principal road, called the Macadamized road (although it was not); and Meade led the column composed of Humphreys' and Griffin's divisions along the road near the river. The three other corps, the Second, the Third, and the Eleventh, were to follow the movement, so as to come

into line of battle outside of the forest, at two o'clock in the afternoon.

But before Hooker had left Chancellorsville Lee had started to meet him. Informed, the evening before, of the true state of affairs, he had collected his forces in all haste, and, leaving behind him only Early's division reënforced by one brigade, he had hurried forward all the rest at midnight, in the direction of Chancellorsville. Between ten and eleven o'clock in the morning, his advance guard encountered our cavalry skirmishers, and forced them back. But behind them Sykes had already deployed his division. He charged the enemy resolutely, drove them back in his turn, and established himself in the position which had been assigned to him by his instructions.

Everything went well with us. On the right, Slocum had encountered no opposition ; on the left, Meade had arrived in full view of Banks Ford, without the least obstacle. He had only to form promptly in order of battle. The corps in the rear would have had time to get into line while the enemy made his disposition on his side, on the ground where General Hooker had "devoted him to certain destruction."

Well, as if Heaven wished to take up that arrogant defiance to adverse fortune, it was at this time and at this very place that General Hooker virtually lost the battle of Chancellorsville by an error as unexpected as inexplicable.

Instead of supporting Sykes' division strongly, and pushing his forces forward, he hurriedly sent the order to the three columns to return to the positions they had occupied the night before. Amongst the generals who were in position to judge for themselves, I know not one who considered the measure otherwise than deplorable. Couch, before withdrawing Hancock's division,

sent to pray the general-in-chief to countermand the order; Warren, who commanded the corps of topographical engineers, and who was in the advance, hurried himself to headquarters with the same errand. Nothing availed. The decision was maintained. The columns fell back uneasy, astonished above all that the first order given by Hooker as general in command in front of the enemy was to retreat without fighting. That did not at all resemble Hooker commanding a division.

The position which we voluntarily abandoned to the enemy was excellent; the position which we took in place of it was detestable. In the first, we could deploy and fight, well connected together on a crest of ground running in the direction of our lines; in the second, we were as if penned up in the midst of natural obstacles, on low and flat ground, which neutralized any advantage in numbers by the difficulty of movement. In the first, we barred to the enemy the only three routes by which he could penetrate into the Wilderness; in the second position, we gave up to him the plank road, and it will soon be seen what use he made of it against us. Finally, in the first case we preserved all the material and moral advantage of the offensive; in the second, we subjected ourselves to all the disadvantage of a defensive accepted without necessity, as it was without preparation.

The enemy took possession immediately of the position which we so benevolently abandoned to him. He planted his guns there, and followed our retreating troops closely. The afternoon was passed on his side in feeling of our lines at several points by direct demonstrations; on our side, by protecting ourselves by abatis, by regulating the position of the different corps, and awaiting events.

Towards four o'clock, the Third Corps, which had

remained in reserve between Chancellorsville and the river, received orders to advance. In the woods, on the right and left we passed a great number of troops, massed without apparent order and filling all the small clearings. Soon we came out on the Fredericksburg road, in front of which stretched our line of battle. Berry's division, which had preceded ours, deployed in the open ground around the farm. As we turned to the right, to take position further on, the skirmishing fire told us that the enemy extended along our front, on the other side of some great woods, which concealed his movements from us. He had his batteries already in position on that side, for the shells and balls reached the troops while they were deploying. One struck a colonel of the Excelsior Brigade. We saw him fall from his horse, without letting go his bridle rein, although he was dead. His men hastened to him and carried off his body.

To discover the enemy's movements, five or six daring men had climbed to the top of the highest trees, from which they had a view over the surrounding woods. The position was very dangerous, for they might become targets for the rebel sharpshooters. In order to guard against it as much as possible, they kept up a continual shaking of the trees in which they were; they could be seen thus balancing in the air more than a hundred feet above the ground, braving the double danger of the enemy's bullets and a fall — death in either event.

Firing ceased a little after dark. The moon rose calm and smiling, and nothing troubled the tranquillity of the night.

The next morning, May 2, an order was sent to the First Corps, to join us. Sedgwick then remained alone below Fredericksburg with the Sixth Corps and Gib-

bon's division of the Second; twenty-six to twenty-seven thousand men in all.

At Chancellorsville our line was disposed in the following order: — On the left, the Fifth Corps and Hancock's division extended from the vicinity of the river to the turnpike, facing towards Fredericksburg; in the centre, the Twelfth Corps, forming an obtuse angle with the left, and covering the road in front and parallel to which it stretched; then, in the same direction, Birney's division of the Third Corps; finally, the Eleventh Corps on the right. Two divisions of the Third Corps (Berry and Whipple) and one division of the Second Corps (French) were held in reserve.

In the morning, the enemy contenting himself with attacking Hancock's pickets, without approaching his line, Hooker began to be troubled about what was passing in our front, beyond the curtain of woods, which limited our view in that direction. He sent forward the troops of the Twelfth Corps, who, being received by a deadly fire, could not force their way, and were compelled to fall back, leaving the general commanding in the same uncertainty as before. But almost immediately, through an opening in the woods before the Twelfth Corps, there appeared a column of rebels marching rapidly from the left to the right, and which consequently presented its flank to our whole line of battle.

This movement threatened our right, which appeared to be unprepared for it. As it was the opposite side from that by which the enemy had advanced from Fredericksburg, less disposition was made against an attack there than elsewhere. The whole Eleventh Corps prolonged the general line parallel to the road. But a small brigade thrown back barred this road with two guns, resting on nothing, leaving our extreme right completely in the air.

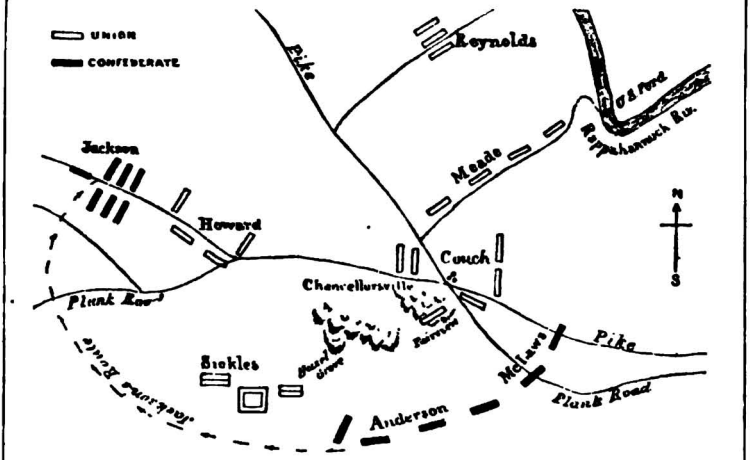
General Hooker had visited that part of the line in good season, without prescribing any change. Only, when the movement of the enemy revealed to him the possibility of an attack from that direction, he sent some additional instructions to General Howard, which had no other effect than to cause an advance of the pickets. There was no change made in the disposition of the troops. The fact is that General Hooker did not believe in the danger of such an attack, and that he preferred to regard the movement as a retreat of the army of Lee on Gordonsville. Otherwise he would not have telegraphed a few hours later to General Sedgwick: — "Take Fredericksburg and everything you find there, and pursue the enemy vigorously. *We know that he is in full retreat*, endeavoring to save his trains. Two of Sickles' division are upon him."

General Slocum was far from sharing that confidence. Towards noon I met him visiting our front to see how we were placed, and examining attentively the position of the Eleventh Corps.

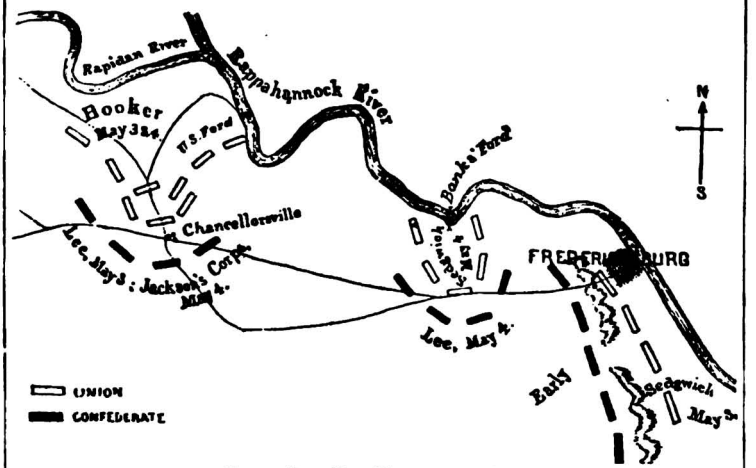
"Let me recommend you to fortify yourself as well as possible," he said to me. "The enemy is massing a considerable force on our right. In two or three hours he will fall on Howard, and you will have him upon you in strong force. You had better protect yourself as well as possible, at least by an abatis on your front."

I was about to follow his advice when the division received orders to advance. We moved forward out of the woods, and crossed the open ground which extended in our front. It was an effort to cut in two the column of the enemy, which continued to defile before us, and to sweep away what must be his rearguard.

Our advance was delayed in the woods. We had to build or rebuild some bridges over some brooks. We



Chancellorsville, May 2, 1863.



Chancellorsville, May 3-4-5, 1863.

From Col. Dodge's "A Bird's-eye View of our Civil War."

had to cut our way painfully through the thick underbrush, a network of branches and briars. But these detentions afforded the Second Division time to support us. Finally, by main force, our first regiments reached the crossroads on which the rear of the enemy's column was marching. A brisk fire was opened immediately; our men charged upon the enemy surprised at seeing an attack made upon them from a thicket which they thought absolutely impenetrable. They fell into confusion. Some fled, others surrendered; the Twenty-seventh Georgia resisted stoutly; but it was soon surrounded and compelled to lay down its arms. More than five hundred prisoners remained in our hands, and were immediately sent to the rear.

We had in this way, continually on the run, reached some abandoned furnaces. Birney had just formed the division in a square across the road by which the enemy had disappeared, and he waited the arrival of the Second Division, reënforced by two brigades, one from the Eleventh and one from the Twelfth Corps. The men took breath, laid off their knapsacks, and reloaded their pieces. The officers laughed and conversed together, relating the different episodes of the combat.

Suddenly the noise of a distant firing came through the air. Our ranks became silent, as if by magic. Each one listened, and turned his head towards Chancellorsville. There is no more doubt; there is where the fight will be made. The musketry fire increases and rolls uninterruptedly. Soon the roar of cannon breaks out like a clap of thunder, at first by a volley of batteries, then by shots hurried, furious, as in combat *à outrance.*

In a moment the aids passed at a gallop along the front of our regiments. The command rang out, from

one end of the division to the other, *Forward!* Double quick! March! And we were soon swiftly returning on the run by the road over which we had just come. Hurry up! Jackson has crushed our right; the Eleventh Corps is in an utter rout. Hurry up! Quick! or we will be cut off!

Harassed and out of breath, yet in good order, we finally reached the edge of the open ground that we had first crossed on leaving our lines. Our artillery was still there, but turned against the same woods we had occupied a few hours before. Firing had ceased. Jackson's troops filled the intrenchments which the Eleventh Corps had raised, and the rebel flag floated behind the abatis which, in the morning, had protected the front of our division. Evening had come. We silently formed in line of battle near the artillery, and awaited the fate which the night had in store for us.

We then heard a detailed account of what had happened in our absence.

General Lee, having found our lines too strong to be carried on our left or centre, had agreed to Stonewall Jackson's proposition to lead an attack on our extreme right. The movement was not without risk, for, in order to do it, it was necessary to march on one single road, at a short distance from our front, a long column of twenty-five thousand men, and to divide in two parts an army which, altogether, was yet inferior in number to ours. But the position taken since the evening by General Hooker was so absolutely defensive, the difficulty of moving so as to get out of it so manifest, that the general commanding the enemy thought that a few demonstrations would suffice to keep him on the defensive. Jackson commenced his movement early in the morning, and, although the head of his column had been noticed between nine and ten o'clock, he

continued to march with impunity along our front the greater part of the day. When, at last, in the afternoon, our division was sent to cut him in two, we were only able to reach his rearguard, which merely hastened his march.

Jackson, having gone beyond the point where our lines extended, turned to the right, by a road which led into the turnpike, near an inn known as Old Wilderness Tavern, and massed his forces there for one of those terrible attacks which have rendered his name celebrated in this war. This movement was made known to General Devens, who commanded the last division in that direction, and to General Howard, his corps commander, by two soldiers sent out to reconnoitre. Several times a brisk fire was opened upon the line of pickets of the Eleventh Corps, showing the presence of the enemy's skirmishers. Yet, notwithstanding all that, no new measure was taken, and the small brigade across the road remained alone, with two regiments in reserve, to meet an attack against our right, already turned.

About five o'clock, the picket firing was suddenly renewed, then redoubled, and came nearer. Soon the men appeared falling back hurriedly on both sides of the road. A moment more, and the enemy, emerging from the woods in deep masses, with the rebel yell, threw himself upon the few regiments which were opposing him. The latter endeavored to resist, but they were quickly swept away and beaten down. The remainder of the division, taken in flank, melted away, was broken, and rolled upon the next division, which it carried with it; while along the road, in the midst of the fleeing multitude, the wagons, the ambulances, horses and mules, which had been imprudently left in that part of the field, were precipitated

pell-mell. In vain, a few superior officers endeavored to stop the flight. In order to meet the attack it was necessary to change front to the rear, and, during this movement, their ranks were broken and carried along with the torrent. It was not an engagement, it was a rout, in the midst of which a few regiments, keeping their order, endeavored to hold together. Two brigade commanders, Schimmelpfennig of Schultz's division, and Bushbeck of Steinwehr's division, succeeded in effecting their change of front, and fought until, overwhelmed and carried away by numbers, they were compelled to fall back on the Twelfth Corps. All the rest went on in the greatest confusion towards Chancellorsville and the road to the Rappahannock.

In the midst of the rout and tumult, Hooker hurried up. Very fortunately, he found at hand, back of the road on which the enemy was sweeping everything before him, Berry's division, the one which he had so long commanded. "Forward!" he cried, "with the bayonet!" The division, supported by Hay's brigade of the Second Corps, advanced, with a firm and steady step, cleaving the multitude of disbanded men as the bow of a vessel cleaves the waves of the sea. It struck the advance of the Confederates obliquely, and stopped it with the aid of the Twelfth Corps artillery.

Jackson's attack, arrested on the left and in front, was thrown towards the right, that is to say, into the woods between the road and the intrenchments abandoned by the Eleventh Corps. It was drawing near the position that Birney had occupied in the morning, and thus a new, terrible, and imminent danger presented itself to us. In the open ground, and in front of the woods, and two or three hundred yards from the intrenchment, the division had left its artillery without protection, while advancing towards the furnaces. The

guns were there on low ground, in full view, under the guard of the cannoneers only. Multitudes of flying men had taken this direction, to escape more quickly, and wagons, ambulances, and pieces of artillery rolled at a gallop across the field, in the hope of finding, further on, an opportunity to get back into our lines. The moment was most critical. Who should save the guns from almost certain capture?

At this instant, General Pleasonton, who had accompanied us in our forward movement, returned with two regiments of cavalry, which he had found it impossible to use to advantage in the midst of the thickets. While marching, one of his aids, who had gone on in advance, came back in haste to announce that the Eleventh Corps was fleeing in disorder, and that cavalry was necessary to stop it. Pleasonton put his columns at a gallop, and, on arriving, recognized at a glance the imminence of the peril. Then, consulting only his inspiration in the responsibility he was about to take, he assumed the direct command of the artillery at that point.

To put it in position, he must have at least ten or twelve minutes, minutes more than precious in such a case. He called Major Keenan of the Eighth Pennsylvania, and said to him: "Major, charge into the woods with your regiment and hold the rebels in check until I can get these pieces into position. It must be done at all hazards."

"General, I will do it," simply replied Major Keenan.

It was nearly certain death. He knew it; but the honor of the duty assigned, and the importance of the service to be done, lighted up his features with a noble smile. He had but four or five hundred men. Riding at their head, he charged furiously at the enemy, ad-

vancing victoriously, and fell lifeless on the line whose advance he seemed to still bar with his dead body. This intrepid charge caused the attack to hesitate for a short time, and Pleasonton gained the ten minutes which he required.

All he had to do more was to clear the ground of stragglers and vehicles, and to put in position, near the two batteries of the division, the one he had brought with him, and a few pieces of the Eleventh Corps, which had retired in that direction. When the remains of the Eighth Pennsylvania cavalry had fallen back to the right and left, Pleasonton had twenty-two guns in line, loaded with double charges of canister, and ready to open fire. In the rear, the Seventeenth Pennsylvania, half concealed by a roll of the ground, awaited the moment to charge in its turn, in case of necessity.

Soon the wood was full of rebels. A moment later, their flags appeared behind the intrenchment; a volley of musketry lighted up the top of the works, and a mass of men bounded over with a fierce yell. Now was the time. The twenty-two pieces made but one detonation, followed by a deep silence. When the smoke rose, everything had disappeared. The mass of men had been swept away at a stroke, and, as it were, annihilated.

This lightning stroke marked the limit of Stonewall Jackson's success. The firing still continued behind the cover of the intrenchments, and some attempts were even made to renew the charge against the guns; but the crushing power of their fire, and, probably, also the uncertainty as to what might be concealed by the swell of the ground where were the cavalry and the teams, prevented the enemy from advancing out of the woods. Sickles soon arrived, followed by Whipple's

division. Birney's division came back in its turn, and the contest ceased on both sides.

All was not over, however, for the day. It was to be closed by the fifth act of the drama, in which Birney's division was to play the principal rôle.

It was ten o'clock at night. The moon, high in the heavens, gave but an uncertain light through the vapors floating in the atmosphere. No fire was lighted in the woods or on the plain. Federals and Confederates concealed in the shadows the secret of their respective positions.

The brigade commanders were called to General Birney to receive their instructions. When Ward returned, the colonels assembled around him. We learned that a night attack had been determined on. The plan was to charge into the woods with the bayonet, striking down the enemy where we found him, and, marching right before us, to join Berry's division on the turnpike. The troops were disposed as follows: Ward's brigade deployed in the first line without intervals between the regiments; Graham and Hayman's brigades in the second line, breaking by the right of companies in advance. It was expressly forbidden to reload the muskets after the first fire.

The colonels communicated their orders in a low voice to their company officers, the latter to the sergeants, and on to the soldiers. The preliminary dispositions were made without noise. The higher officers were on foot behind the file-closers. When everything was ready and nothing was stirring along the line, the signal was awaited in a silence so profound that one could have heard the flight of a night-hawk. The moon looked on with its usual serenity.

After a few minutes of waiting which appeared long a movement ran along the line. General Ward had, in

a steady and measured tone, ordered, *Forward!* which was repeated in low murmurs from one to another. We started at a quick step, gun on shoulder, neither hurried nor loitering.

There were perhaps two hundred yards to pass over before reaching the woods, whose dark line appeared in front of us. All eyes vainly sought to penetrate the silent obscurity. Every one instinctively hurried his step, and we could soon distinguish the outline of the intrenchments sketched out by us in the morning. Each one said to himself: "They are there, taking aim, with the finger on the trigger. They are letting us come near, to be the more sure of their fire. At twenty paces they will fire their volley. But those of us not struck down will be upon them before they can reload their guns, and then —"

The nearer we approached, the lower dropped the point of the bayonets of the front rank.

At a distance of twenty steps there was no sign of movement. Well, it was said, the contest will be at bayonets' point; so much the better.

In such moments one has an excessive delicacy of hearing. A cracking of branches and a footstep on the dead leaves were heard on our right. It was the Ninety-ninth Pennsylvania, which was advancing into the woods without encountering any one. In an instant, we were there in our turn. The enemy — I do not know why, even now — had neglected to occupy the border of the woods. He was farther back, in a line of intrenchments more complete and on higher ground. Perhaps, also, we surprised him in the midst of some movement preparatory for the next day's battle. However that might have been, profiting by the fortunate accident, without seeking the cause, we continued to advance through the thicket, but not in as good order.

We had moved forward about fifty yards, and my regiment was crossing a rough and muddy ravine, when a voice cried out, "Halt! who goes there?" Nearly at the same time one shot, then ten, twenty, a hundred; the word *Forward!* was heard on all sides; a loud hurrah responded, and the bloody contest commenced.

The ground on which we found ourselves was not only very wooded, but also very rough. There were unequal little hillocks and small winding ravines, at the bottom of which crept or stagnated the water from springs or from rainfall. The trees grew very irregularly, scattered, here high, there bushy, and covered with thorns. The line of the brigade was broken in an instant: the regiments obliqued to the right or the left, led astray by the slope of the ground. The companies were mingled together while crossing the obstacles; the left of the Ninety-ninth Pennsylvania was thrown over into my right. The Third Maine, on the other hand, was separated from my left. My regiment itself was divided into two parts. We ran to one side to reëstablish order, and on the other the companies dashed forward on the run. Some carried the intrenchments before them without firing a shot; others recoiled before a deadly fire. The defence was as confused as the attack. Terrible at some points, at others it was a mere nothing. But, instead of ceasing, the fire redoubled on our side. In spite of orders, the men reloaded their pieces, some while marching, others posted behind trees.

The second line, entering in its turn into the woods, carried away by the noise of the firing, began to fire also. A hundred voices were immediately raised above the noise of the tumult: "Stop firing there below! You are firing on us!" A few men fell, struck from the rear. Then all dashed forward, pell-mell, as they

were able. The enemy, broken already at several points, did not await the shock. They disappeared, running, leaving not a man in the intrenchments.

The confusion was extreme. I had around me about a hundred men of the Thirty-eighth, mingled with others of different regiments. They were brave men. They marched with mine, without thinking of profiting by the opportunity to slip away. For the rest, I did not trouble myself about the companies out of my sight. I knew they were well commanded, and all inflamed with honorable rivalry between those of the right, belonging to the old Thirty-eighth, and those of the left, belonging to the old Fifty-fifth. I had but one thing to fear, which was that the desire of each to surpass the others might carry them too far.

However, the repeated hurrahs showed clearly that the Third Maine had advanced farther than we had. We hurried forward to rejoin them, the more eagerly inasmuch as four of my companies would be with it. The ranks being reformed as well as possible, we again took up our march, crossing obliquely a second hollow. We had scarcely commenced to ascend the opposite slope, when, at a distance of fifty yards, the crest burst into a flame like a volcano, and sent us a hail of bullets. Happily for us, the enemy, deceived by the darkness, had fired too soon. The avalanche of lead passed, whistling, over our heads. Hardly a man was hit. We fell back towards the left, to turn the position, following the curve of the ravine, and there we found a fire by file from the same quarter where the Third Maine must have passed. Where was the enemy? Where were our men? We could not tell anything about it. In this obscure labyrinth of ravines and hillocks, of dwarfed thickets and giant trees, we had lost our direction.

How could we find it again? We were fired on from all sides; from the front, from the right, from the left, and even from the rear, where the fragments of the second line, scattered like ours, marched at hazard, and fired in the same manner. The moon was hidden; we could not see ten steps. Around me, men fell or disappeared. The part of the wood where we were had become the focus to which all the firing converged. The bullets struck the trees all around us; shells crossed their sparks from all directions, and filled the air with the noise and flash of their bursting. The groans of the wounded, the orders of the officers, the oaths of the soldiers, the whistling of the balls, the roaring of the conical projectiles, the crackling of the branches, the rolling of the fusillade, the thunder of the artillery, — everything united in a concert infernal.

I was there joined by Colonel Pierson, of the First New York. He belonged to the second line, and had hardly twenty men with him. He endeavored to lead forward those who were giving way. Half a dozen of the latter had taken refuge behind an epaulement, where they were cowering. We tried to make them march; but it was of no use, and I had no time to lose.

With a handful of men, who still followed me, I turned my steps towards a point where the firing seemed to have ceased. All at once, I felt the ground moving under my feet, and cries issuing from it. It was a square hole, from which the dirt had been taken out, without doubt, for the intrenchments. Five or six poltroons had lain down there flat on the ground, literally packed like sardines in a box. We passed over them, and continued our advance.

In the midst of a clearing, there was growing a great tree. Around its trunk five men were crowded, think-

ing they were protected from the fire. There were two on one side, and three on the other. The precaution was of little use, where the balls came from all quarters.

A few steps further on I met an officer, going in the opposite direction. He was alone, and appeared to be looking for his company.

"Have you seen any men of the Thirty-eighth?" I asked him.

"I do not know; I saw some troops in that direction; but they belonged to the Twelfth Corps, and we were fired upon. A nice mess!" grumbled he. "The devil himself would not know where he was."

Nevertheless, the information was useful to me. It served to set me right. Knowing the position occupied by General Slocum, I turned immediately to the left. I walked as fast as possible, putting aside the small branches with the point of my sabre. I thought I recognized a path which must lead to the turnpike. I immediately took it, hoping to find my lost companies there.

Passing around a thick bush, a man ran against me. He wore a light blue jacket (color of the uniform of the old Fifty-fifth), trimmed with black on the sleeves. The man recognized me immediately.

"Don't go that way, colonel," said he to me. "The rebels are in force a few steps away. They hold the line of the road by which we advanced out of the woods this morning, and are picking up all who pass. They have taken a good many prisoners from us, and I came near being gobbled up myself. A wounded man warned me in time, and told me that General Ward had been taken, with two or three officers of his staff."

While listening to him I had turned about to retrace my steps. I saw that I was alone with my informant.

The last men who had followed me had taken a different direction.

It appeared quite improbable to me that General Ward had been taken prisoner at the extreme left of his brigade, in the very direction where, as he well knew, the greater part of the force of the enemy was. But, if the report were true, the command devolved upon me, and, without believing it, I resolved to find out about it. The *mêlée* had finished, evidently to our advantage. The two lines of rifle-pits taken from the enemy were vacant. To the continual fusillade had succeeded the occasional shot, and the shells burst only at intervals. Soldiers were going back and forth looking for their regiments, or helping the wounded. The dead were lying alongside of the living.

On returning towards the edge of the woods, I recognized my lieutenant-colonel walking behind me.

"Colonel Allason," I said to him, immediately, "where are our men?"

"All around, colonel; at least, I suppose so. The companies of the right have just gone out of the woods, where the Fourth Maine occupies a part of the intrenchments taken from the enemy. Two or three other regiments have the same orders that we have, to reform near the guns. But five companies are lacking, of whom I have no news since the commencement of the action. Were you with them?"

"No," I told him. "They took the lead from the beginning, and must have reached the main road where Berry's division is."

On the open ground we found, in fact, one half of the regiment, around which rallied, from time to time, the men strayed away during the contest. General Ward was near there, inquiet about two officers of his staff who were missing. We did not know whether

they were dead or prisoners. The latter supposition was the true one. This was, without doubt, what had given rise to the report I had heard.

By inquiring of every one, and sending out in search of them, I finally found out what had become of my missing companies.

Three of them, belonging to the old Fifty-fifth, finding the ground easier than elsewhere, had advanced under the command of Captains Williams and Demasure and Lieutenant Suraud. But they had not advanced faster than the company of the Thirty-eighth, commanded by Captain Brady. They charged the intrenchments together, overcame the force they found there, and, after a moment's halt, saw a short distance away the flashing of the fire from a battery of artillery. The idea of carrying the battery came to them immediately, and, with one accord, they took that direction. We must believe that, in the tumult, the cannoneers did not hear them approach, or that, if they were seen, the direction from which they came caused the gunners to hesitate. However that may be, they advanced right up to the mouths of the guns.

One of the first to leap into the battery was a great German, nearly six feet high, named Johann. He wore in the front of his cap a red lozenge, the distinguishing mark of the First Division, Third Corps.

"Hello! who are you?" cried one of the cannoneers.

"Thirty-eighth New York," cried Johann, brandishing his bayonet.

"Hold on! don't fire!" cried a score of voices at once. "This is the Twelfth Corps, General Slocum."

And my men, completely mystified, recognized General Slocum himself, in the midst of the artillerymen, revolver in hand, ready to be slain at his pieces rather than not defend them at all risks. The general com-

plimented the officers on the vigor with which they had led the charge, and the four companies were put in line to defend the artillery they had so nearly attacked.

The last company to hear from was one belonging to the old Thirty-eighth, commanded by Captain Althouse. The captain, without troubling himself about what was going on elsewhere, or turning to right or left, had marched straight ahead, with well closed ranks. He fortunately crossed the two intrenched lines, and continued his march without stopping. Reaching a piece of woods thicker than the rest, he saw himself surrounded and summoned to surrender. All resistance was useless. He had advanced directly into what appeared to be the enemy's lines. The captain, with chagrin, was about to surrender his sabre when a joyous voice called out, in a shout of laughter, "Well, that is a good joke! This is the First Division."

The company was in the midst of a brigade of Berry's division. It was the only one, to my knowledge, which arrived at its destination.

At that time we were still ignorant of the most important event of that nocturnal combat. We had taken two rows of rifle-pits from some of the enemy's regiments, but at a very heavy cost to us. But what gave the engagement the importance of a victory gained for us was the fact that Stonewall Jackson, the most to be dreaded of our adversaries after Lee, had fallen, mortally wounded, a few steps from us in the same woods, a witness of a *mêlée* as bloody as it was confused.

Encouraged by the day's success, full of confidence in the fortunes of the morrow, Jackson had made his disposition to throw himself on our rear, and cut off our line of retreat to United States Ford. After having himself overlooked some changes in the disposition of his troops, he had advanced out of his lines, with a few

officers of his staff, in order to see himself the exact position we occupied. In this way he reached the turnpike, where he had before him Berry's division, where the attack commenced against the most advanced of his regiments in the woods. In an instant he recognized that it was something more serious than a skirmisher's alarm. He turned his horse to reënter his lines, and took the most direct road. His troops were under arms, eyes and ears open, as may be imagined. At the noise of horses galloping, they thought it was a charge of cavalry, and fired. Jackson fell, struck by several bullets, one of which broke his arm. Two or three of his officers were killed or wounded. The others made themselves known. A litter was hastily brought. The general was placed thereon, and they hurried to get him into his own lines. They had scarcely started when one of the bearers fell, struck by a ball or by a piece of shell. The general was roughly thrown to the ground. The fall aggravated his wound, and doubled his suffering. He survived several days, and succumbed under an amputation.

General Jackson, without being a great general of an army, was an admirable corps commander. He excelled above all in the conduct of detached operations which were trusted to him, and in the spirit he knew how to impart to the important attacks which made his reputation. An old West-Pointer, he loved the profession of arms, and had studied the science thoroughly. He had entire confidence in the success of the cause to which he was devoted. Austere in religion, he was not far from believing himself one of the instruments chosen by the God of Israel to deliver his new people from another Egyptian servitude. He died, then, in the fulness of his illusions, consoled in his death by the victory for his side.

Thus ended the second day of May, 1863.

We had about two hours of repose. Before daybreak the brigade was assembled, and we received an order to form line behind the artillery, in the field which extended between the Chancellorsville house and the woods which we had swept clean of living rebels, while leaving there a large number of our own dead. It was on that side a renewed attack was expected. By leaving Birney's division where it was, along with Whipple's, we would have had an excellent defensive position at that point, for we should have taken the enemy between two fires, both in front and in flank. It was deemed preferable to draw back the whole Third Corps between the house and the woods, perpendicular to the main road. The result was that the enemy, finding the ground free, which we had just quitted, promptly took possession of it, and placed his artillery there, giving him a converging fire, without hindrance, upon the centre of our position. And yet the retreat of our corps was not made without difficulty. Although the day had hardly broken, the brigade which brought up the rear was attacked as soon as it was put in motion. But General Graham, who commanded it, held back forces much superior to his own, and effected a retreat in good order, without breaking.

Then began a desperate battle, the brunt of which the Third Corps had still to bear. The enemy advanced in three lines sustained by strong reserves, between the main road and the ground where his guns replaced those which Pleasonton had so well defended. The movement then was simply the continuation of that which, the evening before, had swept away the Eleventh Corps. The resistance was terrible as the attack was desperate. The musketry and artillery fire mowed down the Confederate ranks; but the more they fell

the more came on, and they continued to advance, crying: "Remember Jackson!" They were furious on account of the death of their general, and eager to avenge him.

During this time Ward's brigade was receiving blows without being able to return them. The bullets ricocheted in our ranks, shells burst around us, and the balls which passed over the first line found a mark in the second. As we were without cover, we had caused the men to lie down, to avoid useless losses; the officers alone remaining standing. In spite of this precaution, the number of wounded increased more and more, when we received an order to throw ourselves rapidly on the other side of the road, where a violent fire had broken out, and extended into the thicket.

In order not to return to the first phase of the day's action, I will say that, up to this time, the troops of the Third Corps had to sustain alone the furious attack of which we have just spoken. They defended the ground foot by foot, until they had fired their last cartridge, and were compelled to fall back to the rest of the army, saving their artillery, but abandoning that part of the plateau of Chancellorsville to the enemy.

During the fight, General Hooker had been wounded on the threshold of the Chancellorsville house. He was standing under a verandah, watching the approach of the Confederates, when he was violently knocked down by one of the columns sustaining the roof, which had been struck by a cannon ball. The shock was so great that he remained unconscious during the most of the battle, and did not appear to have recovered his faculties during the rest of the day, — which, I think, explains many things, and especially why the Third Corps received neither support nor reënforcements at the time when it had the most urgent need of them.

Let us return now to the woods where our brigade had just disappeared.

Generally, on reading the description of a battle, one witnesses, as it were, from the upper air, as formerly the Olympian divinities witnessed the heroic combats of the Greeks and Trojans. We see the movement of the right, the left, and the centre of each army; we see the reënforcements arrive, the reserves put in action, and in that view of the whole, well pictured, the details are of little account. But to a colonel who is in the action matters are presented under an entirely different aspect. Of the general field he sees nothing; of the details very little. Unless good fortune gives him an exceptional position, his visual horizon does not extend beyond his brigade, and is often bounded by the line of his regiment. Where he receives the order to go, there he goes; forward, backward, to the right, to the left. His sphere of action is limited to take his regiment in on a charge; to hold it steady on a retreat; in every event to execute rapidly and correctly the changes of position which he is directed to make. Aside from that, the battle may be won or lost; he knows nothing about it. He will learn that later. What happens elsewhere is none of his business.

As an example, here is a copy of my pencil notes, May 3, during the battle of Chancellorsville, from the time when I left off my story: —

"Being able to penetrate the thicket only on foot, I turned my horse over to Couillou (a sapper), with orders to bring him to me by a détour, to a clearing towards which we were going. Arriving there, neither man nor horse was to be seen. The fire continued with extreme violence. It must be Berry's division which stops the enemy's movements on this side. They are firing through the thickets, without being able to

charge. Our men hold firm. No hurrahs, but a deafening noise of musketry. What the devil has become of Couillou?[1]

"The firing came nearer and stronger at the centre. Clearly the enemy was driving us back at that point.

"We are now on the left centre, near the Twelfth Corps. We have hurried forward with our utmost ability. It seems that the time is critical. We formed our line twenty or thirty paces from the first, which, after all, had not given way. In this direction, the rebels are giving voice to their sharp yell, and our men reply by distinct hurrahs, as if there were not enough noise without that! As we had a great number of wounded, we were made to fall back to the edge of a road, where the men can at least lie down in the ditch. The bullets do us much less injury; the shells continue to trouble us. A great column of black smoke towards our left, then sheets of flame; the Chancellorsville house is burning. At the rate they are going on in our front, they will soon use up all their ammunition, and it will be our turn to take their place. The wounded are continually passing through our lines. One of them, half naked, is as black as a negro. He runs shrieking towards the ambulances. It is an artilleryman, wounded by the explosion of a caisson. Couch passes by at a light trot, a little switch in his hand, as usual. Sickles goes by in his turn at a walk, with a smiling air, smoking a cigar. 'Everything is going well,' said he, in a loud voice, intended to be heard. Then, in a lower tone, giving me his hand, he whispered in my ear a congratulation and a promise. It

[1] On leaving me, Couillou had been struck on the head with a piece of shell. A drummer caught my horse, and led him to the baggage in the rear, saying I had been killed or wounded.

would appear that I won a star in the fight by moonlight, the night before.

"We returned to the right, always on the double quick. The enemy's artillery rains projectiles upon us. Our lot for to-day is to receive blows from all sides, without being able to return them. A lieutenant of the Third Maine is cut in two by a shell bursting in his body; legs thrown to one side, the trunk to the other. One of our batteries has silenced the one which troubled us so much. General Berry has just been killed near us. An excellent man and a brave soldier. An hour of respite. It is as hot as summer; my cloak oppresses me, and I have no horse! Nothing in my stomach for twenty-four hours, but a cup of black coffee and a big swallow of whiskey, which a staff officer gave me a short time ago.

"Fifth change of position to the rear. Interval employed in covering ourselves with light intrenchments. This time, we are in the front line. The two other brigades of the division return at last to join us. General Mott is wounded. Colonel MacKnight, of the One Hundred and Fifth Pennsylvania, is killed; also Colonel Shylock, of the Fifth Michigan. In General Birney's staff, two officers are wounded, Clarke and Walker. The latter, division inspector, belongs to my regiment. He is said to be maimed for life.

"Two batteries have just come into position on our line. At half after four, the firing recommences, and stops at five o'clock.

"We learn that the First Corps arrived last night, coming from Fredericksburg, and that the Sixth carried the heights above the city this morning."

One can judge by this extract how much a colonel sees and knows about a battle in which he has all the time manœuvred his regiment. Here, now, is what occurred: —

Every effort of the enemy was against the Third Corps. When that corps, out of ammunition, began to fall back to the rear, from the right to the other side of the road, Stuart, who succeeded Jackson, extended his attack on his left, hoping to take us in reverse, and reach our line of retreat towards the Rappahannock. There he struck French's division of the Second Corps, which not only held its ground, but even compelled its assailânts to fall back. It was to sustain him that Ward's brigade had been ordered into the woods.

In this part of the field, our right was facing to the west, while our centre looked south, and our left east.

In the meanwhile, Lee, having learned of the success of Stuart on our right, and seeing us all engaged in that direction, attacked our left centre vigorously, so that for a moment it was in danger of being broken. Upon which our brigade was hurried over to reënforce the Twelfth Corps.

The danger past, Stuart returned to the charge, reënforced by new troops, and now forced French to retire. This was the reason for our precipitate return near the clearing where we had first taken position.

But our comrades of the Third Corps were not yet out of the difficulty, notwithstanding their having fallen back and changed front. The enemy, who had just effected a junction of his two wings on the plateau of Chancellorsville, and who had not been able to force, at the angle to our left, the intrenched line of our advanced posts admirably defended by Colonel Nelson A. Miles, now commenced again the attack against Sickles with renewed vigor. Our men, short of ammunition, had no other resource than the bayonet. They availed themselves of it brilliantly and with great success. The New Jersey brigade, amongst others, commanded by General Mott, broke the first line of the Confederates,

and, advancing, took flags and trophies from their second line.

General Hooker, recovering from his unconsciousness, although still feeling the effects of the accident, had resumed the command of the army, left for some hours to General Couch. He gave the order to retire to a stronger line of defence which he had had traced out the night before by the engineer officers. There the other two brigades of the division came to join us.

Thus ended the third day of May, 1863.

Our new position rested, at one end, on the Rappahannock, the other on the Rapidan. On the left it faced southeast, on the right southwest, making a very open angle, at whose apex, opposite the enemy's centre, was formed a great trilateral work. This was the point occupied by the Third Corps. As the army made no further movement until it repassed the river, we can leave it behind its breastworks and join the corps at Fredericksburg.

On the afternoon of the 2d, Hooker, seeing his right broken in, and the Third Corps compromised by Jackson's attack, had thought immediately of making a diversion from the other side, which would turn Lee. He sent an order to General Sedgwick to cross the Rappahannock as quickly as possible, and march out on the Chancellorsville road, attacking and destroying whatever force might bar his way. Sedgwick received the despatch about midnight, having already crossed the river by virtue of a preceding order directing him to take the Bowling Green road and "any other." He immediately changed his dispositions, and marched on Fredericksburg without loss of time. His instructions were: "You will leave your train behind you, except the mules carrying ammunition, and will march so as to be in the neighborhood of the general in command at

daylight. You will probably strike the rear of the forces commanded by General Lee, and, between you and the major-general commanding, the latter hopes to make a finish of his adversary."

The silence as to the fortified heights seemed to imply that the general-in-chief supposed that they had been stripped of troops since the morning; without that, the contest to be entered on at that position should have entered explicitly into the calculation in reference to the time allowed to Sedgwick to reach the neighborhood of Chancellorsville. Now, not a company had been withdrawn by the enemy from that strong position, which was still defended by Early's division, reënforced by a brigade.

The Sixth Corps was surrounded by a cordon of rebel pickets, whose firing gave warning of the march as soon as it began. Early, forewarned, prepared for an attack. Immediately, on entering Fredericksburg, Sedgwick sent four regiments to try the heights; they were received with a deadly fire, and were compelled to retire. The preparations for a final assault occupied the last hours of the night. It would appear that they were not moved with the promptness which circumstances demanded, for it was not till eleven o'clock in the morning that the two columns of attack charged the intrenchments. Colonel Spear of the Sixty-first Pennsylvania, who led the right, was killed. Colonel Johns of the Seventh Massachusetts, commanding the left, was severely wounded; but, in spite of the vigor of the defence, Marie's Heights were carried by main force. At the same time Howe's division carried the enemy's position on the left, and the whole line was ours, with a part of the artillery and a large number of prisoners.

Without loss of time, the troops reformed, and the

Sixth Corps advanced on the Chancellorsville road, leaving Gibbon's division of the Second Corps at Fredericksburg, as the order of General Hooker had directed. Those of the enemy who had retired in that direction were driven back without stopping to Salem Heights, in front of Banks Ford. There Brooks' division, which had the advance, met with a determined resistance. It was then about four o'clock in the afternoon (Sunday, May 3). We note the hour, for at this moment the army under the immediate command of Hooker was already inclosed behind the second intrenched line, and the battle there was virtually finished, entirely to the advantage of Lee.

Leaving in front of us what troops were necessary to hold us in our lines, in the cramped position which we occupied, hardly able to move, Lee sent MacLaws' division, strengthened by Mahone's brigade, against Sedgwick. These forces reached Salem in time to reënforce Wilcox's brigade, which, abandoning the guard of Banks Ford, had hurried on to bar the road against the Sixth Corps. The enemy was, at first, driven back from the heights he occupied, but, when his reënforcements reached him, he retook them, notwithstanding an obstinate resistance, forcing Brooks and Newton to fall back. Sedgwick's advance was arrested, when night came to put an end to the engagement.

Behold us now, on Monday, May 4. What has become of the plan so ably conceived, so happily executed in the beginning? That plan which would leave to Lee's army only the alternative of a shameful flight or certain destruction? Hooker lost the benefit of everything he had done up to that time when, on the 1st of May, he had abruptly stopped a series of fine offensive manœuvres, to take up a purely defensive attitude on his first meeting the enemy. From

that moment he no longer attacked. He simply stood on the defensive, and he defended himself badly.

On the 2d his right was swept away. That the Eleventh Corps, composing the right, had fought poorly or not at all; that some regiments had fled, leaving their arms stacked, or throwing them away so as to run faster, is a fact that must unfortunately be acknowledged. But would all this have happened if the Eleventh Corps had been prepared to receive the attack from the side on which it was absolutely defenceless? We must judge matters coolly. The facts prove that the attack had not been foreseen either by General Howard or by General Hooker. The latter visits and examines that part of the line in the morning, and when General Howard asks him if the dispositions made are satisfactory he replies in the affirmative, in the presence of General Devens, commanding the division placed on the extreme right. Only, on his return to headquarters, he sent a note to the commanders of the Eleventh and Twelfth Corps to direct them to "examine the ground and decide what positions they must take in the eventuality of an attack on the flank, in order to be prepared to receive the enemy from whatever direction he might present himself." That done, as if to clear his conscience, and without assuring himself that any modification was made of the defective dispositions of the Eleventh Corps, he stripped his lines himself by sending Sickles with two divisions to run after the tail of the enemy's column, when it had nearly all passed by. To support it, he detached a brigade from Slocum's command, another from that of Howard; then he ordered General Pleasonton to follow with his cavalry, and do the enemy, "who was marching in the direction of Gordonsville," all the injury he could. We know the result of it.

The following night is devoted partly to firing on ourselves. It might have been more profitably employed.

On the 3d the enemy continued to force back our right, and to press us strongly on our centre. He found before him only the Third and Twelfth Corps, each supported by a division of the Second. No combinations, no manœuvres. Each one defends himself as best he can, and in the position he is occupying, some by firing, others by the bayonet. And, all this time, one half the army remains inactive in the rear. The First, the Fifth, and the Eleventh (which must have been eager to make amends for the evening before) move only to fall back when the whole line retires to a position more crowded, and still more on the defensive.

Thus we find the army paralyzed at the very time when the capture of Fredericksburg Heights by Sedgwick, and his approach to the rear of Lee, should have been the signal to us for a redoubling of efforts, the decisive moment to throw the First Corps on the flank of Stuart, with the Fifth and the Eleventh Corps strike the centre of Lee, weakened by the loss of the troops he had been compelled to send against the Sixth Corps, and crush these forces between the two mills of iron and fire. Everything could yet have been saved; but all was lost. Hooker was no longer Hooker. The blow of the miserable piece of wood which had stretched him senseless across the sill of the Chancellorsville house had left him completely shattered, and as though there was a cloud over his faculties.

When General Warren, arriving from Salem, where he had assisted in the fight, came to report to Hooker, and asked him if there were any instructions to send to Sedgwick, Hooker replied, "None."

However, the Sixth Corps could not be left there in danger of being cut in pieces without a knowledge of the state of affairs. Warren took upon himself to write to Sedgwick: "We have drawn our lines in somewhat, and repulsed the last assault easily. General Hooker wishes that the Confederates would attack him to-morrow, if they so desire. He does not wish you to attack them as yet in force, unless he attacks at the same time. He says that you are too far from him for him to direct your movements. Look well to the safety of your corps, and keep your communications open with General Benham at Banks Ford, and with Fredericksburg. You may retire on either point, if you think it better to cross the river. Banks Ford would bring you within supporting distance of the rest of the army, and would be preferable to a retreat on Fredericksburg."

But when Sedgwick received that despatch (on the 4th) he had no longer any choice. Early advanced from the direction of Fredericksburg, reënforced by the troops which Lee, left free by Hooker's inaction, had sent to envelop the Sixth Corps. Threatened from two sides at once, Sedgwick was compelled to fight in a disadvantageous position. Howe's division, attacked from the direction of the river, defends itself vigorously, facing to the rear. After giving way a moment on the left, it gains the advantage, and ends by decidedly repelling the enemy, while, from the direction of the road, Brooks holds his position without much difficulty.

And, during that whole afternoon, we heard the cannon roaring without stirring ourselves, or even making any pretence of moving. Did Hooker, with six army corps, expect that Sedgwick, with seventeen or eighteen thousand men, was coming to deliver him

from the false position in which he had placed himself? Or, rather, did he have any other idea than that of re-crossing the Rappahannock without further fighting?

As soon as night came on, Sedgwick took advantage of it to draw back his three divisions on Banks Ford, and the morning's sun found the Sixth Corps safe and sound on the left bank of the river. Perhaps Lee, freed from all embarrassment in that direction, would have tried a general attack on us, with his whole force, if a rain in torrents, which came on in the afternoon, had not forcibly delayed his preparations until the following day. But Hooker did not wait for the attack which he had desired the evening before. In the night of the 5th the whole army recrossed the river, without hindrance, and, for the second time in five months, returned beaten to its encampment.

The victory cost the enemy only thirteen thousand men; defeat cost us seventeen thousand. The Third Corps and the Sixth, together, bore half the loss. The other half was shared principally between the Second, the Eleventh, and the Twelfth. As to the First and Fifth, they lost enough only to mention it.

Except the small force commanded by General Pleasonton, the cavalry had poorly performed its mission. Stoneman had scattered his column in every direction, without any appreciable result, except a lively alarm in the neighborhood of Richmond. Averill had not led his troops further than the Rapidan.

So that we were completely beaten — beaten on account of the general-in-chief, who, after having prepared for his army the best opportunity for being victorious which it had ever had, threw to the winds all his advantage. For one moment he had held the enemy in his hand; he had only, so to speak, to stretch it forth, to crush him; and he had not only allowed the

enemy to escape, but had delivered himself up to him, by falling backward in such a manner as to paralyze his own movements. By one fault after another, and one error after another, he lost the opportunity to repossess himself of fortune's favors, and condemned one-half of his army to a fatal inaction, even to the humiliating extremity of escaping by night from a position yet formidable, before forces decidedly inferior to his own.

"Heu nihil invitis fas quemquam fidere divis!"

CHAPTER XXII.

INVASION OF PENNSYLVANIA.

Position of Hooker after Chancellorsville — The President's letter — Lee's army in motion — March on Manassas and Centreville — Guerillas — Cavalry engagements — Entrance into Maryland — Welcome by the people — The enemy in Pennsylvania — Hooker relieved of his command — Meade appointed general commanding — Convent of St. Joseph at Emmittsburg — Bloody contest near Gettysburg — Death of General Reynolds — Report of General Hancock — Concentration of the two armies.

AFTER the battle of Chancellorsville, the position of General Hooker became very difficult. Already reduced by seventeen thousand men, his army lost, besides, the regiments whose terms expired at that time. At the end of the month he had only about eighty thousand men in his command. The enemy, on the contrary, was strongly reënforced. The corps of Longstreet had returned from the south of Virginia, and new troops had been sent to Lee, who now found his forces superior or at least equal to those of his adversary.

The same change had been wrought in the *morale* of the two armies. The Confederates, exalted by victory, full of confidence in themselves and in their generals, were ready to march to new triumphs with an enthusiasm which corresponded with the unanimity of opinions in the South. Our soldiers, humiliated by defeat, shaken in their confidence in themselves and in their commander, were depressed by the divisions they suspected to exist amongst their generals, and by those which the Copperhead party fomented with zeal in the Northern States.

The good feeling between the different corps was sensibly weakened. The Eleventh was the object of a general hue and cry, nobody stopping to ask if the condition in which Jackson's attack had surprised them did not offer some extenuating circumstances in its favor. Those who had suffered the most were not far from reproaching the others for the inaction to which they had been condemned; so quickly does injustice germinate in adversity. Finally, the Sixth Corps was keenly wounded in seeing its fine conduct and its rough battles of two days' duration systematically depreciated, with the object of throwing upon its commander the responsibility of a defeat which was not his work.

Materially, numerous details of reorganization had to be effected. The artillery was found to be out of all proportion with the infantry; the cavalry, on the contrary, had lost more than half its effective force, without profit and without glory. Pleasonton, who replaced Stoneman in the command, could not find five thousand men fit for service. To sum up, Hooker was in no condition to undertake anything, at least for some time. His position was perfectly characterized in a despatch of the President, dated May 14:—

"When I wrote you on the 7th, I was under the impression that perhaps by a prompt movement you might be able to draw some advantage from the supposed state of affairs; that the communications of the enemy were broken, and that his position would be found somewhat injured. Now, that idea has vanished since the enemy has reëstablished his communications, retaken his position, and received reënforcements. It no longer appears probable to me that you can gain anything by renewing the attempt to cross the Rappahannock. I will make no complaint if for some time you do nothing more than hold the enemy in check by

demonstrations, and occasionally by some cavalry expeditions, if they are practicable, while you are getting your army in good condition.

"However, if you clearly think that you can renew the attack with success, I will not hinder you. On this point, I ought to tell you that I have received, with much regret, information that many of your corps and division commanders do not give you their entire confidence. This would be ruinous, if true, and you ought, above everything, to assure yourself how this is, so as to have no doubt on the subject."

Reviews began again. In our division a solemn distribution of the Kearney cross was made to the soldiers and non-commissioned officers who had distinguished themselves the most during the war, in remembrance of the general whose name had remained the most popular in our ranks. Many regiments received new flags from their States; but nothing of all this effaced the grievous memory of an inexcusable defeat. What the army needed to renew its moral vigor and its material power was neither vain orders of the day, where, through the empty sounding phrases, it clearly distinguished the entire want of exactness in the allegations; nor useless reviews, where it noted principally the vacancies made in its ranks at Chancellorsville; nor sterile demonstrations below Fredericksburg, where the renewed passage of the river by the Sixth Corps seemed a pleasantry much too prolonged. The remedy necessary to restore its tone was a direct offensive taken by the enemy, above all an invasion of Maryland, menacing Washington and transferring operations to the soil of the free States. This was the method by which Lee, rather than Hooker, succeeded in restoring to us our *morale*.

On the 2d of June, the Thirty-eighth, having reached the term of its engagement, left the army, to return to

New York, where it would be discharged. The men coming from the Fifty-fifth were transferred to the Fortieth, and I was definitely assigned to the command of the Third Brigade, the one I had commanded for a short time, six months before. It had but four regiments: the Third and Fifth Michigan, the Seventeenth Maine, and the Fortieth New York. The latter, formed of the remains of six different organizations, reached at least the maximum of the regimental strength. Whipple's division had lost its general, killed at Chancellorsville; and, being greatly reduced in strength, was consolidated with the two others. I thus received the addition of the One Hundred and Tenth Pennsylvania to my brigade. For the campaign then commencing, the Third Corps had but two divisions: the first commanded by General Birney; the second by General Humphreys.

It was one o'clock in the afternoon of June 11 that the Third Corps received the order to march at once. At two o'clock we were under way.

The general commanding was henceforth relieved from all uncertainty. The evening before, our cavalry, having crossed the Rappahannock, had encountered the enemy's cavalry. A very lively engagement had ensued, the result of which had been to reveal to us Lee's presence at Culpeper with Longstreet's corps. That of Jackson, now commanded by General Ewell, had taken the advance towards the Shenandoah valley. There remained at Fredericksburg only Hill's corps, waiting to move in its turn, when the Army of the Potomac had left its position to oppose the menacing movements which were developing elsewhere. He did not have to wait long.

Hooker's first duty, in fact the only imperative instruction which he had received from the President

and from General Halleck, was, above all, to cover Washington and to protect Harper's Ferry. With this end he put a part of his forces in echelon to guard the line of the Rappahannock, and defend the fords, while with the rest he fell back on Manassas, along the Orange & Alexandria Railroad. But the enemy did not care to cross the Rappahannock. He continued his march towards the northwest, by way of the Shenandoah valley. Covering his right flank by the Blue Ridge, whose passes he occupied by his cavalry, he did not delay his advance on Winchester, where the garrison commanded by General Milroy made very slight opposition to his movements. A large part of them were left prisoners in his hands. Seven hundred men detached to Berryville had the same fate; the troops occupying Martinsburg fell back in haste on Harper's Ferry, and nothing was left to oppose the entrance of the Confederates into Maryland.

While these things were going on, Hooker regulated his movements by those of Lee. The long, fine days had returned. We passed through a country ruined by the war, devastated by the hand of man, but to which the springtime brought back life and youth. If we halted near any house, generally on the rounded summit of a hill, we found the dwelling abandoned and sacked. No doors, no windows, no furniture; the lawns cut to pieces by the wheels of the trains or of the artillery; the flower-beds polluted by dirty refuse; remnants of the huts which had been used for tent supports; but everywhere eternal Nature, smiling in her new dress, sowed the ruins with flowers, always ready to repair the evil, in the inexhaustible fertility of her transformations.

If we had now to suffer, it was no longer from the cold or the mud, but from the heat and the dust. We

left the banks of the Rappahannock to follow the railroad by the stations of Bealton and Catlett, where we camped. On the 15th, we marched by Manassas. It was a terrible day, under a burning sun, through a choking dust. We passed through great plains, sprinkled here and there with low thickets. Not a tree to shade us; and when we halted to allow the men in the ranks to take breath, and the stragglers to catch up, it was in open sunshine, and near some small brooklet with water warm and muddy.

Sunstrokes were numerous; suffocations more numerous yet. There were not enough ambulances to pick up those dropping along the road behind our columns, poor fellows struck down by these first summer heats. Nevertheless, we had to march. At Bristoe Station, at last, we found shade and water, on the banks of Broad Run. A part of those who had fallen behind came up to us there, and, rested and refreshed, we joined the Sixth Corps at Manassas Junction, about four o'clock in the afternoon.

At nine o'clock at night I received orders to march with my brigade to Bull Run, at the point where the railroad bridge had long before been burnt. The night was dark, but the position was recognized without difficulty, by the earthworks which still remained, by the burnt piles which yet appeared above the water, and by the line of intrenchments, behind which I disposed my regiments. This was the position in which, on the 21st of July, 1861, the right of Beauregard's army had awaited the attack of McDowell on that Sunday which was made memorable by the first disaster of the Army of the Potomac.

The next day was passed in that charming spot, which I recommend to all artists in search of a fine object for study. The little river, at that point, curves

around a steep slope. In that space, shaded by magnificent trees, covered with wild vines, carpeted with thick turf, the most picturesque subjects are to be found on all sides. The light played through the foliage; the shade was strongly marked; the heavens and the trees were reflected in the transparent water. In contact with that delightful nature one would prefer having, at least, only a palette and brush; guns sketch only in red.

On the 17th we camped on the plain before Centreville. From that point we drew near the mountains which separated us from the enemy. Near Gum Spring, where we remained five days, the country is very fine, and particularly favorable to the raising of horses and cattle. Here we found no longer pines, but great oaks and verdant meadows, watered by brooks running in the hollows.

What spoiled the beauty of the landscape for us was the abundance of guerillas, who swarmed through the whole country. It was not possible to forage for provisions of any kind except by armed squads. Quite a number of soldiers and two officers were carried off while wandering around alone. A party of these marauders even had the impudence to attack our wagons within two or three miles of camp, much to their discomfiture, however. They were immediately charged upon, pursued, and dispersed by a detachment of cavalry. This was not enough. We ought to have hanged all of them who fell into our hands.

On the 21st, there was an engagement at Aldie, in our vicinity. We heard the cannon thundering away during part of the day, without knowing what was going on.

It was Pleasonton, who, for the second time in three days, whipped the enemy's cavalry. Already, on the

19th, General Gregg, commanding a brigade, had dislodged the advanced forces of Stuart from their position at Aldie and forced them to fall back beyond Middleburg. But the first engagement had only shown what Lee's movements were; a second might, perhaps, produce more important results. A division of the Fifth Corps was put under General Pleasonton's orders, who, leaving two brigades at Middleburg, took with him only the third to support and reënforce his cavalry. On the 21st, the enemy was attacked with great vigor, beaten, and pursued through Upperville to Ashby's Gap in the Blue Ridge. There our force had to stop the pursuit before the artillery and intrenchments which defended the pass.

In that brilliant affair Pleasonton captured two guns, three caissons, and a number of rebel cavalry, among them eight or ten officers. Stuart's loss, besides, was considerable in killed and wounded left by him on the ground at Upperville. We thus learned that the enemy had only cavalry in Loudon valley. His infantry continued its march on the other side of the mountains towards Maryland.

On the 25th, the two corps of Hill and Longstreet crossed the Potomac at Williamsport. Ewell's corps had crossed before them, and, preceded by Imboden's cavalry, had pushed on to Chambersburg in Pennsylvania. The same day, our army, by a parallel movement, crossed to the left bank of the Potomac at Edward's Ferry. The field of hostilities was thus, for the second time, transferred to the free States. The Antietam trial was to be made over again; but this time it was to be much more decisive.

Fourteen hours of forced march brought us to the Monocacy River, where, without shelter, without supper, in a driving rain, we slept in the mud that sound sleep

which is known only to soldiers worn with fatigue. Near us was the same aqueduct which I had been ordered to defend with the Fifty-fifth during the first invasion of Maryland. We crossed it the next morning on the footpath, which runs along the canal without any protecting rail, while the artillery and the wagons passed over the river at a ford below us. We marched towards the enemy at Point of Rocks, Jefferson, and Middletown, where we arrived on the evening of the 27th. From there we turned back at a sharp angle to reach Frederick, and thence north to Taneytown.

In these small villages we marched by columns of companies, music at the head and flags flying. The national colors were in all the windows; cheers saluted our passage. This part of upper Maryland was loyally faithful to the cause of the Union, differing in that from the rest of the State, which remained with it only from necessity. In Baltimore they regarded us as enemies; here we were welcomed as liberators. At Frederick our march was almost triumphal. All the houses were draped; all the women were at the windows, waving their handkerchiefs; all the men were at their doors, waving their hats.

In the middle of the principal street a pretty child, ten or twelve years of age, left a group collected on the sill of a house of modest appearance. Her mother had just given her a large bouquet, pointing me out with her hand. The little girl came bravely forward in front of the horses, holding towards me her little arms, full of flowers. I leaned from my saddle to receive the fragrant present. And she said, with a rosy smile: "Good luck to you, general!" I thanked her to the best of my ability. I would have liked to have embraced the little messenger with her happy wishes; but the march could not halt for so small an affair.

When she rejoined her family, running along, I turned to kiss my hand to her in adieu. She nodded her head, and, blushing, hid it in her mother's bosom. "Well!" said I, riding on, "that little girl ought to bring me good fortune."

These encouragements cheered our hearts. They were as the voice of our country, of our common mother calling on us to defend her. Here we were amongst our own people. In talking of the Confederates, the inhabitants said, "the enemy," or "the rebels." It was not as in Virginia, where they said, "our men," "our army," thus identifying themselves with our adversaries. So that, on crossing the Potomac, the army appeared to be morally transformed. A generous indignation caused all patriotic chords to vibrate. What! Had the troopers of a Jenkins penetrated into Pennsylvania, entered Chambersburg, and levied contributions on the country, picking up all the horses and all the cattle that they could find! And the cowardly farmers, the timorous militia, instead of defending themselves, could do no better than run away, like a flock of sheep before a band of wolves. Ours the duty to do justice to these hordes of gray-jackets; ours the task to drive them back into their land of slaves: —

"Qu'un sang impur abreuve nos sillons!"

Such were the feelings of the army. We were no longer the defeated of yesterday; we felt ourselves predestined conquerors of the morrow. We were on the road to Gettysburg.

At Frederick, General Sickles rejoined us, and resumed command of the Third Corps, left, in his absence, to General Birney.

The country was of a splendid richness. What a contrast to the one we had just left! The crops were

ripening in the sunshine, covering the fields with their golden ears. The fences were still standing around the yellow wheat and the green clover. We left them standing, except on the borders of the woods or on the edge of the uncultivated fields. The roads were generally in good condition, excellent compared to the Virginia mud-holes.

But, while we were marching on pleasant and flowery roads, the general commanding found under his feet a thorny path. From the time when he had put his army in motion, Hooker had clashed continually with headquarters. Halleck and he had never been on very good terms, so that, when he took the command of the Army of the Potomac, he had asked the President to interpose to sustain him against a hostility which had been manifested on two occasions before, in reference to his nomination. Things went along in this way as best they could, until the battle of Chancellorsville, although at army headquarters they had the idea that it was enough for Hooker to recommend a measure for Halleck to oppose it. A victory would have given the predominance to the first; a defeat turned the balance in favor of the second.

From this time on, their respective communications showed the existing antagonism, which the sharpness of style did not tend to diminish. Hooker corresponded directly with the President and the Secretary of War. Halleck took offence at this, and the quarrel became more envenomed on all questions: in respect to instructions solicited from the President in regard to military operations; in reference to engineer officers withdrawn from the Army of the Potomac, to be sent elsewhere; in reference to reënforcements of cavalry asked for and refused; in reference to infantry coöperations thought necessary on one side and useless or im-

practicable on the other; and, above all, in reference to the defence of Harper's Ferry, which in Halleck's eyes was a point of vital interest to protect, while in Hooker's opinion it was a position to be evacuated as of small importance.

Between the one pulling one way and the other pulling the other, the President finally found the task too hard to endure, and on the 16th of June he wrote to General Hooker:—

"In order to prevent all misunderstanding, I now place you, in regard to General Halleck, in the strict military relation of a commander of one of the armies towards the commander-in-chief of all the armies. I never had any other intention; but, as it seems that the matter has been understood differently, I enjoin as follows: It is his duty to give orders, and yours to obey them."

Hooker had lost the game. On the 26th, in the morning, he wrote to General Halleck to ask authority to withdraw the troops stationed on Maryland Heights, above Harper's Ferry, who could be much more usefully employed in his army. The reply was, as might have been expected, that Maryland Heights had always been regarded as a point important to our side to retain; that great expense had been incurred and great works made to fortify them; and that the commander-in-chief (Halleck) could not consent to abandon them except in case of absolute necessity.

The next day, Hooker, pushed to the wall, spoke out plainly. He wrote:—

"I received your telegram in regard to Harper's Ferry. I find there ten thousand men fit for duty. There they are of no use. They cannot defend the river ford, and, as far as concerns Harper's Ferry, they are worse than useless. As to the fortifications made

by the troops, they will remain where they are if the troops are withdrawn. No enemy will take possession of them for themselves. Such is my opinion. All the public property could have been brought away to-night, and the garrison taken where it could render some service. Now it is only a mouthful for the enemy if they return. I ask that this despatch may be shown to the Secretary of War and to the President."

Then, a few hours later: —

"My first instructions order me to cover Harper's Ferry and Washington. Now the additional duty is imposed upon me to fight an enemy whose forces on my front are superior to mine. I respectfully but firmly ask that it may be understood that I am not able to fulfil that condition with the means at my disposal, and I ask to be instantly relieved from the position I am occupying."

General Hooker was taken at his word, and the next morning, June 28, the order was received which appointed General George G. Meade general commanding in his place.

What struck the army the most in this sudden measure was its inopportuneness, in the midst of decisive operations, and on the eve of a battle whose result would probably determine that of the war. Every one was astonished that, for the second time, the government was so completely wanting in what was suitable or advisable in an act of such importance, and what was said relative to McClellan was repeated as to Hooker. However, this time there was no delay or halt. No order was countermanded, no movement suspended. Each corps continued its march as if nothing new had occurred at headquarters. The army had changed its chief as a train on a railroad changes its conductor — while on the road.

One remark, however. As soon as Meade had taken the command, the ten thousand men stationed at Harper's Ferry, and peremptorily refused to Hooker, were promptly put under the orders of his successor. It was impossible for General Halleck to proclaim more forcibly the personal motives which had dictated his action in this affair.

On the 29th, we passed through Middleburg, where the army headquarters were at that time, and Taneytown, where we turned to the left, to camp on the road to Emmittsburg, a small village near which we passed the night of the next day.

Now we come to the 1st of July. We started out on our march early in the morning, but there was a delay of some hours. Then it was announced that we were about to fall back on Middleburg, and the troops began to move in that direction when the movement was suddenly stopped by the arrival of a despatch. General Howard sent from Gettysburg the information that the First and the Eleventh Corps had been severely engaged since morning, against superior forces; that General Reynolds, commanding the left wing, had been killed, and it was of the greatest importance that General Sickles should bring forward, as quickly as possible, whatever troops he had available. The appeal was so pressing that the submitting it to the decision of the commanding general was not to be thought of. It was a responsibility to be taken immediately. Sickles did not hesitate. Leaving two brigades and two batteries at Emmittsburg, he departed with his two divisions for Gettysburg. The brigades left behind were mine and the New Jersey brigade, commanded by Colonel Burling, in the absence of General Mott, wounded at Chancellorsville.

Burling was at one side of the village, and I at the

other, covering the different roads which crossed the mountains in the direction of the enemy. Our instructions were to hold them at all hazards, and to stop every turning movement against the rear of the three corps assembled at Gettysburg. Each one disposed his regiments accordingly, and, as, in case of an attack and uniting of the two brigades, the command devolved upon me by virtue of seniority, Colonel Burling came to consult with me upon all the contingencies to be provided against.

There is a large convent at Emmittsburg, with which is connected a school for young ladies, which has a reputation extending throughout the United States. It was on the domain of St. Joseph that I had placed my brigade. A small stream made part of the boundary line. I leave it to you to guess if the good sisters were not excited, on seeing the guns moving along under their windows and the regiments, bristling with bayonets, spreading out through their orchards. Nothing like it had ever troubled the calm of this holy retreat. When I arrived at a gallop in front of the principal door, the doorkeeper, who had ventured a few steps outside, completely lost her head. In her fright, she came near being trampled under foot by the horses of my staff, which she must have taken for the horses of the Apocalypse, — if, indeed, there are any horses in the Apocalypse, of which I am not sure. The superior, on the contrary, with whom I asked to speak in the parlor, came down calm and dignified. I had no need to reassure her. Her conversation betrayed neither fear nor even inquietude. She perfectly comprehended the necessities of war. When I asked her to send me up to the belfry, from which the whole surrounding country was visible, she sent for the chaplain, and ordered him to act as my guide.

The chaplain was an Italian priest, or, at least, of Italian origin, who did not sacrifice to the graces, and whose sermons would never have set the Hudson on fire. He led us through the dormitories and the class-rooms of the boarding-school, at that moment deserted, the superior having very wisely sent all the scholars to their relatives. There remained but five or six, belonging to Southern families, who had not heard from their friends in a long time.

We reached the belfry by a narrow and winding staircase. I went first. At the noise of my boots sounding on the steps, a rustling of dresses and murmuring of voices were heard above my head. There were eight or ten young nuns, who had mounted up there to enjoy the extraordinary spectacle of guns in battery, of stacked muskets, of sentinels walking back and forth with their arms in hand, of soldiers making coffee in the gardens, of horses ready saddled eating their oats under the apple trees; — all things of which they had not the least idea. We had cut off their retreat, and they were crowded against the windows, like frightened birds, asking Heaven to send them wings with which to fly away.

"Ah! sisters," I said to them, "I catch you in the very act of curiosity. After all, it is a very venial sin, and I am sure that the reverend father here present will freely give you absolution therefor."

The poor girls, much embarrassed, looked at each other, not knowing what to reply. The least timid ventured a smile. In their hearts, they were thinking of but one thing: to escape as soon as the officers accompanying me left the way clear.

"Permit me," I said, "to make one request of you. Ask St. Joseph to keep the rebels away from here; for, if they come before I get away, I do not know what will become of your beautiful convent."

They immediately disappeared, crowding each other along the staircase. I have never returned to Emmittsburg; but it would astonish me very little to hear that the two armies had gone to Gettysburg to fight, on account of the miracle performed by St. Joseph, interceding in favor of these pious damsels.

The night was quiet. Between two and three o'clock in the morning, the order came from army headquarters for us to join our corps immediately at Gettysburg. We were soon *en route*. The distance was seven or eight miles. It had rained, and the road was bad. The New Jersey brigade marched in advance, mine following; and we hurried along, foreseeing that a great battle was imminent. Half-way we met General Graham, sent to meet us, to lead us to our position. The whole army was, in fact, assembled at Gettysburg, except the Sixth Corps, which had not yet arrived.

There I learned that the day before (July 1) a long and bloody battle had been fought northwest of the city, on a chain of heights which bore the name of Seminary Hills. General Buford, who, in that direction, covered with his cavalry the Chambersburg and Mummasburg roads, was first attacked there by Hill's corps. During that attack, sustained with much ability and vigor, Reynolds arrived, bringing with him the First and the Eleventh Corps. Wadsworth's division, which came into line first, found itself immediately engaged. It was composed of but two brigades, and was opposed to Heth's division, which was composed of four; but their valor supplied the lack of numbers, and it not only maintained its position, but by two charges vigorously executed drove the enemy back to the other side of Willoughby Run, capturing nearly all those who had already passed that brook. Meredith's brigade brilliantly sustained its name of "Iron Brigade," and

counted General Archer amongst its prisoners. Cutler's brigade, on its side, surrounded two Mississippi regiments, and compelled them to surrender with their flags.

It was in this engagement, which he himself directed and arranged, that General Reynolds fell mortally wounded. This was a great loss to the army, which the circumstances made it particularly difficult to replace.

The two other divisions of the First Corps then arrived, and General Doubleday, on whom the command devolved, formed his line of battle on a greater scale. At the same time, the Confederates were again reënforced by the addition of Ewell's corps to that of Hill, while, on our side, the Eleventh Corps took position on the right of the First. Thus, from hour to hour, and almost from minute to minute, the battle assumed greater proportions, and extended along the line of the hills disputed so desperately. But the contest was not equal. The two corps of the enemy amounted in all to about sixty thousand men, while ours amounted to not even a third of that number.

General Howard, to whom the command fell by right of seniority, was not able to direct the battle as a whole. He simply ordered General Doubleday to fight on the left, while he (Howard) fought on the right, recommending him, at the same time, to endeavor to maintain himself at the Seminary. To General Wadsworth, whose division was the most advanced, he gave instructions to hold on as long as possible, and afterwards retire. The fighting was, then, very disconnected after Reynolds' death, owing to the want of direction. The two corps were separated by an interval which Doubleday in vain endeavored to fill. The reserve division was not enough. The enemy broke

through that opening, and with the less difficulty that the Eleventh Corps did not hold on long, but broke without great resistance.

The First Corps did not fall back until it saw itself nearly enveloped by the enemy, who were continually increasing in numbers. The losses were enormous. According to General Doubleday's report, of eighty-two hundred men, after six hours of fighting, there remained but twenty-four hundred and fifty. More than two-thirds were wanting at roll-call! Still, the remaining third effected its retreat in good order, even through the streets of Gettysburg, which the troops of Howard blocked up in terrible confusion. Early, profiting by the disorder, picked up thousands of prisoners. Decidedly, the Eleventh Corps was very unfortunate. It seemed as though the enemy had only to cast his net towards it, to fish out a stock of prisoners.

Sickles, answering the appeal which had been made to him, arrived too late to take part in the action. He found the First and Eleventh Corps, or what remained of it, assembled in a strong position, on a height facing the hills on the other side of Gettysburg from where the day's action had been fought. General Hancock had arrived, sent by General Meade, to see how matters were, and to take temporary command of the three corps. He established them firmly, examined the nature of the ground, and the suitability of the position for accepting battle, and sent a report on the subject to the general commanding, as directed. When General Slocum arrived in his turn with the Twelfth Corps, he turned the command over to him, as he had been ordered to do, and returned to headquarters, which were at Taneytown.

The friends of General Hancock have represented his report as the determining cause which had over-

come the hesitations of General Meade, and that which induced him to accept battle at Gettysburg. This is an error. This report was only a brief note on the position of the troops, and led to nothing conclusive. It was worded as follows: "We occupy a position in the cemetery which cannot be easily taken. However, it is a position easy to turn. When night comes, we can better determine what it is best to do. I think we can retire; if not, we can fight here, for the ground appears to be not unfavorable with good troops." The despatch did not contain a word more on that subject.

The truth is that General Meade did not have an intention of giving battle at Gettysburg rather than elsewhere. In this respect he held himself ready to act according to circumstances. The only plan which he had drawn up was the one of taking a defensive position on Pipe Creek, a stream which runs about twelve miles back of Gettysburg, and passes through Middleburg before emptying into the Monocacy. This line appeared to him to be advantageous, and, on the report of the engineer officers sent to examine it, he had already drawn up an order addressed to the different corps commanders to fall back there. But when Reynolds' engagement on the Seminary Heights had brought on the accidental concentration of four army corps at Gettysburg, in front of two-thirds of the Confederate army, General Meade did not hesitate to abandon his first design. Orders were hurried forward to all the forces not already at Gettysburg to report there as soon as possible. We have seen that the two brigades left at Emmittsburg were not forgotten.

General Lee, on his side, found himself constrained to take the same measures; and, during the whole

night, on every road, the cannon rolled on, and the troops marched, converging towards that point in Pennsylvania unknown the day before, on the morrow renowned, where the fortune of the war was about to be decided in the most terrible battle which the New World had ever seen.

CHAPTER XXIII.

GETTYSBURG.

Position of the two armies — Dangerous advance of the Third Corps — First attack on the extreme left — The fight of the Third Brigade — Double assault on the summit of Little Round Top — Caldwell's division in line — The enemy driven back — Graham in the peach orchard — General Humphreys — The left line driven in from one end to the other — Offensive return — The position recovered — Ewell's attack on the extreme right — Night spent in position — Renewal of the battle at Culp Hill — Interval — The scene of the action — Everything staked on one blow by the rebels — Account taken — Trophies of the Second Corps.

TEN roads and one railroad lead to Gettysburg. From the west, the Millerstown and Chambersburg; from the north, the Mummasburg, the Carlisle, and the Harrisburg (the State capital); from the east, the York and the Bosmantown; from the south, the Baltimore, the Taneytown, and Emmittsburg. This concentration of roads made the place important strategically, in regard to which General Lee was not mistaken. He would have established himself there, without striking a blow, if Buford with his cavalry had not opposed an obstinate resistance to Hill's column, advancing by the Chambersburg road, and if Reynolds, without doubt in order to give time to General Meade to arrive, had not endeavored to defend the Seminary Heights against the superior forces of the enemy.

This chain of hills, situated to the west of Gettysburg, runs from the north to the south. Forced at this point, and on the isolated hills which rise to the north, the First and the Eleventh Corps must fall back to the

south, on the Cemetery Hill, which they did. These heights rise gradually from the city. On the right, they turn backwards to end by a steep slope, known by the name of Culp Hill. This was our extreme right, occupied by Howard's corps and Wadsworth's division. On the left, the line turned to the south, and, falling off towards the centre, again rose, to end in a steeper and more abrupt crest, known as Little Round Top, which formed our extreme left. Along this line our forces were disposed as follows: Robinson's and Doubleday's divisions of the First Corps; the Second Corps, commanded by Hancock; and the Third, by Sickles. Behind the latter, the Fifth Corps, commanded by Sykes, had not yet taken position in line. The Sixth Corps, led by Sedgwick, having the longest distance to travel, could not join us until afternoon.

Thus our front, with a development three miles in length, had exactly the form of a fish-hook, the point formed by Culp Hill, the curve by the cemetery, and the shank by the chain of hills ending in Little Round Top. The enemy deployed his forces parallel to ours, on the Seminary Hills. Longstreet formed his right, Hill the centre, while on his left Ewell, occupying the city, turned around beyond it in front of both the cemetery and Culp's Hill. Such was the position of the two armies when, on the morning of July 2, Colonel Burling's and my brigade arrived from Emmittsburg.

The road which we followed runs along on the crest of a swell of ground between the two lines of hills, but not at an equal distance from both. We had to pass, at first, a few hundred yards along the right of Longstreet's front, as far as a house surrounded by a peach orchard, where the road obliques to the right, and, further on, passes the foot of the cemetery. We did

well to hurry along. We were still able to find the road free, except a few shots fired at us by the enemy's sharpshooters.

A crossroad to the right led us to the position occupied by the Third Corps, on the rocky slope of a hill, where it was much to be desired that the Confederates should come to attack us. Except the railroad with shelving banks, which did not exist here, our line recalled the one which the enemy occupied at Fredericksburg. It was not, then, without regret that about two o'clock in the afternoon we received the order to advance across the low, half-wooded ground, to the edge of a tall clump of trees, which presented to us none of the favorable conditions of defence of the position we abandoned. Our halt, besides, was not of long duration. Humphreys' division soon advanced its line along the Emmittsburg road; Graham's brigade of our division followed the movement, and took position on Humphreys' left, in the peach orchard, which was to play so large a part among the incidents of the battle. My brigade and Ward's turned to the left, on a line which extended from the peach orchard nearly to Little Round Top, facing the south, and forming, *en potence*, the extreme left of the army.

General Sickles had taken the responsibility of this change of position, without the authority of the general commanding. His object was to be able to oppose a front of two brigades to a turning movement which the enemy had already begun. But this inspiration showed more ardor to advance to meet the fight than a nice appreciation of the best means to sustain it. The new disposition of the Third Corps offered some great inconveniences and some great dangers. In the first place, it found itself isolated in advance of the battle front; for the Second Corps, which had no order to

follow the movement, remained behind, with an interval of about five hundred yards from Humphreys' right. Towards the left, the line forming a salient angle at the peach orchard became much thinner, in that it had been so much extended along the two faces. On this account, Ward's brigade and mine were not enough to connect, by a continuous line, the Emmittsburg road to Little Round Top. The space left open between Graham and me was occupied only by the Third Michigan, deployed as skirmishers, under the command of Colonel B. R. Pierce. On this side, Ward had not been able to extend to the steep hills where our extreme left was to rest. He had been compelled to rest his line on a rocky height, where his last regiment was separated from Little Round Top by an open interval. On the left, as on the right, the Third Corps was found thus in the air. At the centre, thrown forward as we have seen, it was necessarily feeble, like all salient angles presented to an attack, and received no strength from the shape of the ground.

Sickles had sent to ask the general-in-chief to come and examine for himself the new disposition. The latter, being very busy elsewhere, had been delayed in coming. When he arrived on the ground, it was already too late to change anything. The enemy was upon us. The only resource remaining was to take the necessary measures, as soon as possible, to draw from the Second and Fifth Corps the reënforcements which we would stand in need of.

As regards my brigade, the position was good. Two of my regiments, the Fifth Michigan and the One Hundred and Tenth Pennsylvania, were deployed on a hill-top sparsely covered with trees and rocks, at the foot of which ran a brook in a little muddy ravine. This ravine forked to my left on the edge of a wheat field,

the narrow extremity of which separated me from the Second Brigade. In the woods behind my line, I held two regiments in reserve, the Seventeenth Maine and the Fortieth New York, ready to throw them on the side of the wheat field, if the enemy endeavored to penetrate through there, or towards the peach orchard, if the Third Michigan could not maintain connection with the First Brigade.

Longstreet's Confederate corps, after having crossed the Emmittsburg road, advanced towards Little Round Top, with the evident intention of turning our left. The firing of his skirmishers marked out to us the route of his column, upon which two batteries of artillery placed behind the peach orchard opened with shell. We had not long to wait for a reply, and, as usual, the ball was opened on both sides by the cannon. We were very attentive to discover on what point the storm was to break.

Ward received the first shock. A burst of cheering, followed immediately by a violent musketry fire, told us that the rebels were charging across the ravine. The trees prevented us from seeing anything of the engagement, but the deafening noise of the firing told us well that it was an attack with the whole power of the enemy, and that our turn would not be long in coming. Soon an aid of General Birney brought me the order to send a regiment from the other side of the wheat field. The Seventeenth Maine hurried forward on the run, and took position behind a stone wall breast-high, so that the enemy would be subjected to an oblique fire, if Ward's line was threatened

A few minutes afterward, the Fortieth was sent in haste to oppose an attack, which was turning the left of the Second Brigade, and penetrating between it and Little Round Toq. The greatest danger of the moment

was there. I had then but two regiments in line of battle, and a third prolonging my line as skirmishers, when the avalanche rolled upon me. Hold on there, hard and firm! There is no reserve.

It was a hard fight. The Confederates appeared to have the devil in them. They had been told that they had before them nothing but militia assembled in haste. If that had been true, without disparaging the militia, I believe, from the manner in which the rebels rushed upon us, they would have been swept away in the twinkling of an eye. But, when they met us face to face, they quickly recognized the old troops of Hooker and Kearney, which was a very different affair. I must say, however, that they did not put any less spirit in their attack. Quite the contrary. On the other side, my men did not flinch. Like veterans, accustomed to make the best of every resource, they had sheltered themselves behind the rocks and trunks of trees which were on the line, and when their assailants descended into the ravine and crossed the creek they were received, at a distance of twenty yards, with a deadly volley, every shot of which was effective. The assault broken, those who were on the opposite slope began a rapid fire at a range still very short. On both sides, each one aimed at his man, and, notwithstanding every protection from the ground, men fell dead and wounded with frightful rapidity.

An aid came through a hail of bullets to ask another regiment from me. "Tell General Birney," I replied to him, showing him my line, "that I have not a man left who has not upon his hands all that he can do, and tell him that, far from being able to furnish reënforcements to any one, I shall be in need of them myself in less than a quarter of an hour."

In fact, the persistent pressure of the attack showed

clearly that we had a contest with superior forces. If they had attacked us entirely with the bayonet, we would have been swept away. Happily, the nature of the ground broke their lines, and enabled us to hold them at a distance by the rapidity and precision of our fire. I had never seen any men fight with equal obstinacy. One would have said that each believed the destiny of the Republic was attached to the desperate vigor of his efforts. So that we maintained our hold; but my line was melting away in its position. It seemed to me that nearly half were struck down. It remained to be seen how long the other half would hold out.

At this moment, Lieutenant Houghton, one of my aids, told me that a brigade of the Fifth Corps was lying in two lines behind us, awaiting the time to come into action. This was good news. But, as I went to assure myself of its accuracy, I saw these troops rise up and fall back hurriedly at the command of their officers. I galloped forward towards the nearest of them, and asked them, — "Where are you going?" — "We do not know." — "Who has given you orders to retire?" — "We do not know." They then filed out of the woods, towards the crossroad which led into the Emmittsburg pike. These regiments belonged to General Barnes' division. They were going with their brigade to fill the interval between our right and Graham's left.

I returned immediately to my men, advancing to the line of the Fifth Michigan, knowing well that nothing encourages soldiers as much as the presence of their superior officers in their midst. The position was becoming desperate. Ward's left had been broken in. The Fortieth New York, sent to its aid, had in vain charged the enemy vigorously, coming to bayonet's point; the Second Brigade had been forced to retire. The Seventeenth Maine, expected to stop the advance

of the enemy in that direction, had not been able to keep its position along the wall where it presented its flank to the troops attacking us. The latter, enfilading his right, compelled it to fall back to the other side of the wheat field. The One Hundred and Tenth Pennsylvania was holding on only in fragments. Major Jones, who commanded it, had just had his leg broken. The Fifth Michigan was much shaken by its enormous losses.

As I arrived near the colors, the color-bearer staggered, and fell back several paces. I called out, "Steady!" "I am wounded," he said, with a choking voice. — "Where?" — "In the throat." I leaned over my horse and put my hand on his shoulder: "It is nothing," said I, "I see no blood." He immediately retook his place, raising up the flag. The ball, which had really struck him in the neck, had bounded off his leather collar, and the shock had choked him for a moment.

Colonel Pulford, seeing the movement, darted to our side. He was on foot, and held a revolver in his hand. It was broken between his fingers without doing him any injury except a slight scratch.

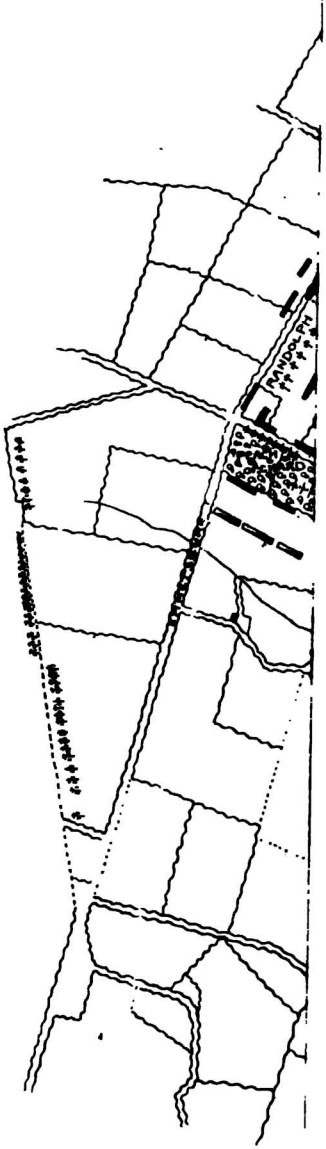
At this moment, an increase of the musketry fire announced the arrival of reënforcements from the other side of the wheat field. Captain Smith, inspector of my brigade, advanced to the edge of the woods to assure himself of it. He had made but a few steps when his horse turned on his hind legs, as if ready to fall. A ball had passed through the shoulder of the animal, and the leg of the rider. The latter, turning towards me, showed me, on the front of his boot, a round hole, from which the blood was running freely. "Go to the ambulance as quickly as possible," I told him. "Your horse is still able to take you there."

Captain Smith saluted me with perfect coolness, expressed to me the regret he felt in not being able to be of further service to me, and went off without hurrying.

I should have had near me at this time only my two aids, Lieutenants Houghton and Waldron, if, at this moment, Captain Piatt, my assistant adjutant-general, had not come to rejoin me. He had accompanied the Fortieth to the left of Ward's brigade, had charged with the regiment, and had had his horse killed under him. Affected by organic weakness in one leg, he ran great risk of remaining where he had been thrown, if he had not found very *à propos* the horse of Major Warner, who had just been severely wounded. He found his way thus to me, suffering in body, his clothes spotted with mud, but whole, except his boot heel, which had been carried away by a piece of shell.

Our position was no longer tenable; our ammunition was nearly exhausted, and already some of the men were searching the cartridge boxes of the dead for ammunition, when, at last, a brigade of the Second Corps came to relieve us. *They* did not lie down behind us. They advanced in good order and with a resolute step. I had only to show them my line, three-quarters demolished. They rushed forward. I learned afterward that it was the brigade of General Zook, who was killed among the first at the place where he relieved me.

However, the enemy, profiting by our movement in retreat, had advanced into the wheat field, on the edge of which I rallied what remained to me of the Fifth Michigan and the One Hundred and Tenth Pennsylvania. General Birney, who was near, immediately brought into line of battle the Seventeenth Maine and a New Jersey regiment of Burling's brigade. I hastened to complete the line with what troops I had at



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SCALE

hand, and we charged through the wheat field, driving the rebels back to the other side of the stone wall. It was the first charge of the day on that ground which saw so many more before night. It was also the last effort of my brigade. After the offensive return, I received orders to fall back, and during that movement I understood in what a hazardous position I had been placed without knowing it. My front, defended now by Zook's brigade, was outflanked on the left from the further side of the wheat field, and on the right by the way of the peach orchard. The fire of the enemy, coming from these two directions, was crossed behind us, almost in one line, where I lost another score of men. The Third Michigan had not yet rejoined me. It was in bringing it past that place that Colonel Pierce, having thus far escaped, was struck by a ball and seriously wounded.

Let us now look at some other episodes of the battle.

When the enemy had turned Ward's left, that was but the first step towards getting possession of Little Round Top. He pushed his forces on rapidly from that point, and began to climb the steep hill with so much the greater impunity that the summit had not as yet been occupied by us except by a squad of the signal service. Fortune willed, at that moment, that Warren, chief engineer on the staff, should arrive on this point, whence the view embraced the attack in its whole extent. A glance told him the imminence of the danger, and he ran to Barnes' division of the Fifth Corps, on its way to reënforce us. He took upon himself to detach from it a brigade commanded by Colonel Vincent, and to hurry it, on the run, to the summit of Little Round Top, which Hood's Texans were also endeavoring to reach from the other side.

Both the parties arrived at the crest at nearly the same time. They both understood the vital importance of the position. So, without stopping to fire, they rushed upon each other with the bayonet. In that hand-to-hand contest, with equal courage, the solid muscles of the North prevailed over the hot blood of the South. Our men were victorious, and the position was saved; not without, however, a continuation of a deadly fire from the assailants against General Weed's brigade, which had joined that of Colonel Vincent, and on Hazlitt's battery, which the men had succeeded, with unheard-of efforts, in dragging up to the top, through woods and over rocks. Finally, a bayonet charge of the Twentieth Maine, under the lead of Colonel Chamberlain, swept the ground of the enemy. The possession of Little Round Top cost us dearly. Weed, Vincent, and Hazlitt paid their lives for it. And how many more!

The battle rolled back thus upon the position occupied at first by Ward's brigade, and where Caldwell's division of the Second Corps met the rebels in the woods and in the wheat field. Colonel Cross, who commanded the left brigade, was killed there. Colonel Brook, commanding the centre, was wounded. We have already seen that General Zook had just been killed, while leading the right. Nevertheless, Caldwell's division drove the enemy back of the ravine where the attack had commenced, and two brigades of regulars of Ayres' division of the Fifth Corps completed the line to Little Round Top, thus closing the interval by which General Hood had profited to turn the left of our division. The ground lost on this side was thus recovered when another change came upon the face of affairs.

When Hood had pushed his right against Little

Round Top, MacLaws, who followed him closely, had reënforced the attack, which I had to sustain, and during which the two brigades of Tilton and Sweitzer of the Fifth Corps had come up to take position on my right. As soon as the action had begun on this side, the enemy, who only waited for this, charged upon the peach orchard, where Graham occupied with his brigade the point of the angle of which I have already spoken. On the right of Graham, General Humphreys had only two weak brigades, the third having been sent to reenforce the left.

The resistance was stubborn; but the position was poor. What could one brigade do against MacLaws' left and Hill's right, which were attacking it at the same time? He had to give way. While disputing the ground foot by foot, General Graham fell, struck by a bullet and a piece of shell. He could not be carried off and remained a prisoner in the enemy's hands.

In this critical moment, General Sickles had his leg carried away. He dismounted from his horse, had his leg bound above the knee with a handkerchief, and left the field of battle on a litter, leaving the command to General Birney.

The position of General Humphreys was gravely compromised. The rebels, on dislodging Graham from the peach orchard, had outflanked his left, and they were moving against him to attack him in front at the same time. Then, with splendid coolness and under a terrible fire, he effected a change of front to the rear, without ceasing to carry on the combat. His right held on to the Emmittsburg road; his left extended towards Little Round Top, in the direction where Birney wished to form a new line. This dangerous movement could not have been carried out except with troops extremely firm and at the cost of great sacrifices. Humphreys effected

it without confusion, but nearly one-half of his men remained on the field. His right was protected by two regiments of Gibbon's division, which prevented the enemy from penetrating from that direction.

The idea of forming a second line was not practicable. Birney had neither the time nor the means with the remains of his two torn divisions. The enemy, in breaking through at the peach orchard, had completely destroyed the salient angle of the general line. While continuing the terrible fight against Humphreys, he took the two brigades of Tilton and Sweitzer in flank and rear, and they were immediately obliged to retire. Their falling back compelled that of Caldwell's division, which, in its turn, left uncovered the right of Ayres' two brigades. Thus everything gave way on the double line where Sickles forced the battle. Carried away at first on the left, afterward regained, now lost in its whole length, it was not destined to remain in the enemy's hands.

The losses of the Confederates were, at least, equal to ours; but the battle had been conducted on their side with much more harmony. Hence the advantage gained by them. When, however, towards sundown, they advanced to throw themselves against the line of the Cemetery Heights, they were not only repulsed, but also driven out of the ground which they had already gained, on one side by General Crawford, at the head of the Pennsylvania reserves, and on the other by General Hancock, reënforced by the troops of the First and Twelfth Corps.

This was not, however, the last combat of that bloody day. So many troops had been drawn from the right to reënforce the left that from the cemetery to Culp's Hill several points were found to be completely stripped. Ewell, profiting by this, endeavored to carry

the position with the divisions of Early and Johnson. And he came very near succeeding. At the cemetery he had before him only the Eleventh Corps, which could not prevent the assailants from coming up to the line of the guns. Happily, Hancock had hurriedly sent forward Carroll's brigade, which came up in time to repulse the attack at the instant when the artillerymen were about to be cut down at their guns. At Culp's Hill there was left only Wadsworth's division, much used up by the attack of the night before, and a brigade of the Twelfth Corps, commanded by General Greene. They were not able to cover the whole ground, and General Johnson succeeded in getting a hold, for that night, in some works thrown up at our extreme right.

On withdrawing from the battle by detachments, our division had assembled in a field near the Taneytown road. The ammunition wagons came up promptly, and, before doing anything else, the cartridge boxes were filled. Then, at the close of the day, fires were lighted, so that the men could get something to eat. We were still ignorant of the day's result, but we well knew what it had cost us. There remained only to find out how many of the missing would rejoin us during the night.

General Birney was with us. He had had a horse killed under him, and, in a moment of despondency, he said to me, in a low voice, that he wished he had shared the fate of his horse. He believed the day lost; he counted up his friends, dead and wounded; he saw his command half destroyed, and, thinking of the Republic, he trembled for it, if the army were beaten. These dark thoughts were dispersed when his young brother, Fitz-Hugh Birney, who was serving on his staff, came to bring him the news of the last success of Hancock and Crawford. Then they made a list of the

officers who had been unfortunate in the lottery of battle. The list was long. In the Second Brigade Colonel Wheeler of the Twentieth Indiana had been killed. In another regiment, I regret not to find which in my memoranda, Colonel Ellis, the lieutenant-colonel, and the major had all met the same fate.

Lieutenant Raphall, aid to Ward, lost his right arm. He was a young man from New York, as jovial as he was brave. One of his comrades went to visit him at the ambulance, with a full heart and with tears in his eyes. He found Raphall, who had just undergone amputation, philosophically smoking his pipe, and telling stories to his fellow-sufferers to make a dead man laugh.

This recalls to me that General Howard, having lost his left arm at the battle of Fair Oaks, was waiting in the ambulance his turn for amputation when he met Kearney, who, some years before, had lost his right arm in Mexico. The latter, to comfort his wounded friend, could think of nothing better than to propose a bargain with him. "My dear Howard," said he, "if you will agree to it, we can save some money hereafter. We will buy our gloves together, and the right of each pair shall be yours, and the left mine." But before Howard was well enough to wear his glove, poor Kearney was no longer in need of any.

When each one of us had related what he knew of the occurrences of the day, I looked around amongst my regiments. The Fifth Michigan had suffered the most. It had lost six more than half of the number it had in action. The Third Michigan, which had fought only as skirmishers, was naturally the one which came out the least injured of any. In fine, a clear third of my brigade was lost.

And probably we would have to renew the battle on

the morrow, for it still remained indecisive. All the efforts of the day were concentrated on one object: on one side, to carry the advanced position where Sickles had placed the Third Corps; on the other, to hold it. To lose it and retake it twice was well enough while the battle lasted. But to remain there, in order to renew the trial the dangers of which had been demonstrated, would have been a grave fault. General Meade did not commit that fault. He brought the army back to the position where he had intended to await the attack of the Confederates, and the morning of the 3d of July found us disposed in regular line on the Cemetery Heights. The arrival of the Sixth Corps had even promised to extend our front to Round Top, a hill lying on the prolongation of the line of Little Round Top, which it commands.

This time the action commenced on the extreme right. We have seen that Ewell had succeeded in effecting a lodgement in our lines at Culp's Hill. The most pressing duty was to dislodge him from that position before he had time to establish himself there more solidly. At daylight some new batteries which Meade had caused to be put in position opened a very sharp fire on the intruders. Then Williams' and Geary's divisions of the Twelfth Corps charged the position. It was retaken after a sharp fight, in which Shaler's brigade of the Sixth Corps also took part. That done, the retrenchments at this point were reformed, and we waited for the grand effort, the final act.

At one o'clock in the afternoon a fierce cannonade broke forth without any warning along the whole Confederate line, which appeared to be overstocked with artillery. They had, in fact, put in line in front of the Seminary Heights from a hundred and thirty to a hundred and forty pieces. On our side we had eighty to

reply to them, the disposition of our lines not leaving us room in which to put more. There were thus more than two hundred guns which from both heights were sending balls and shells with dreadful explosions through the thick clouds of white smoke floating in the breeze. We had, of course, many times heard the thunder of artillery, but never with a noise so deafening. It was as though the great voice of the two armies was bursting forth in violent defiance, in furious anger. And our men were thinking: "Well! we are going to have it out to-day!"

This lasted about two hours, two hours during which the iron hail did not cease to fall in the centre of our line, occupied by Hays', Gibbon's, Doubleday's, and Birney's divisions. All our men were lying down, which, nevertheless, did not prevent the hellish cannonade from doing us a great deal of damage. I lost seventy-six men from my command, and the battery near which I was had eighteen horses killed.

Towards three o'clock in the afternoon, the firing relaxed sensibly on our side, General Hunt, commanding the artillery, thinking that the advantage gained did not compensate for such a prodigal expenditure of ammunition. The enemy supposed he had silenced or dismounted a part of our pieces. The moment had come. He came out from the woods where he had formed for the attack, and debouched openly on the plain.

It was a splendid sight. The skirmishers, at regular intervals, advanced first, covering the whole front of the attacking body. Behind them, Pickett's division formed in two lines, having on his left Heth's division, and on his right Wilcox's Brigade in column of regiments. They were fully fifteen to eighteen thousand men. They advanced towards us, and our men awaited their approach.

When they were in easy reach of case shot, our artillery opened on them a crushing fire, which mowed down their ranks, but did not stop them. On the contrary, they came on the faster, only obliquing to the left, under the fierce play of projectiles on their right by eight batteries, under the direction of Major MacGilvray. And our men still looked on them advancing, counting the gaps made in their ranks, and feeling that they were getting full revenge for Fredericksburg.

The first line had arrived at about one hundred and fifty yards from the line of the Second Corps, when the front of Hays' and Gibbon's divisions burst into a sheet of flame, and redoubled the carnage by a rolling fire, which was the signal for the Confederates to charge. Everything rushed forward. The ranks were melted together and formed thenceforth but a raging mass of men running, rolling, and tumbling forward, and through which the cannon opened great lanes. The officers, swords uplifted, marched in the front ranks; the colonels guided to the front their regiments torn by canister. Their yells were heard above the noise of the artillery and musketry; and they came on like waves against a rocky shore. It was their last effort.

They struck first on two regiments of Webb's brigade, covered by a light stone wall. They threw themselves against the obstacle with impetuosity, beating down the troops which defended it, and with a few bounds were amongst the guns. Our men, dislodged from the first line, ran to join the regiments of the second line, and turned together against the assailants. During some minutes they fought there over the pieces, with gunshots, with bayonet, with buts of muskets, with ramrods, and the ground was literally covered with dead and wounded.

To the left of the point of attack, Stannard was

placed with a brigade of Doubleday's division. Profiting by his position, which was the most salient on that part of the line, he changed front forward, and opened a deadly fire on the right flank of the assailants. Almost immediately, the left of Gibbon made a similar movement. Then, under the direction of General Hancock, present in the action, the whole force threw itself on the enemy's column. It was the *coup de grace.* Attacked in their turn on one side, turned on the other, almost surrounded, the remnant of Pickett's division threw down their arms and surrendered.

Heth's division had not been able to break the right of the Second Corps. It had been itself broken against the resistance of Hays, and also left a multitude of prisoners in our hands.

All who thought that they could get away took the backward course through a fire of canister, which again brought down the half of them to the ground. I saw places where, being crushed together, the dead were absolutely left piled one upon the other.

Wilcox's Confederate brigade, which seemed to be held in reserve on the right of Pickett's division, then advanced in its turn, perhaps to protect the fugitives by a diversion. But the artillery fire was enough to stop it, and a last charge of two regiments of Stannard sufficed to disperse it and take from it a goodly number of prisoners.

Thus was ended the battle of Gettysburg, the partial engagement of July 1 to our disadvantage, continued with desperate fighting on the 2d, without definite result, and finished on the 3d by a decisive victory. During these three days, our loss was, in round numbers, twenty-three thousand men, of whom six thousand six hundred were prisoners or missing. That of the enemy was about thirty thousand men, more than thirteen thou-

sand of whom were prisoners. In killed and wounded the loss was about equal, between sixteen and seventeen thousand on each side.

Proportionately to the number engaged, our total loss was more than a third, the Sixth Corps not being engaged. The loss of the Confederates, all of whose three corps took part in the battle, must have been three-sevenths of their army.

In the great charge of the last day, three Confederate generals were killed: Armistead, Barksdale, and Garnett. A fourth, Kemper, was severely wounded. On our side, Hancock and Gibbon were wounded. But they had the moral balm of a victory to hasten the healing of their wounds. In the victory which threw the rebels back into Virginia, more than four thousand prisoners and twenty-seven flags remained in the hands of the Second Corps.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE PURSUIT.

The field of battle by moonlight — The wounded and the dead — Pursuit of the enemy — French's division added to the Third Corps — Political intrusions — Difficult position of General Meade — Council of war — General disappointment — The war carried again into Virginia — Battle of Manassas Gap — Lost opportunity — General French — Once more on the Rappahannock.

BETWEEN eight and nine o'clock in the evening, as the last glimmers of daylight disappeared behind us, I received an order to go down into the flat, and occupy the field of battle with two brigades in line. That of Colonel Madill was added to mine for that purpose. General Ward, who temporarily commanded the division, remained in reserve with the third.

The most profound calm reigned now, where a few hours before so furious a tempest had raged. The moon, with her smiling face, mounted up in the starry heavéns, as at Chancellorsville. Her pale light shone equally upon the living and the dead, the little flowers blooming in the grass as well as upon the torn bodies lying in the pools of clotted blood. Dead bodies were everywhere. On no field of battle have I ever seen them in such numbers. The greater part of my line was strewn with them, and, when the arms were stacked and the men asleep, one was unable to say, in that mingling of living and dead, which would awake the next morning and which would not.

Beyond the line of the advanced sentinels, the wounded still lay where they had fallen, calling for

assistance or asking for water. Their cries died away without any reply in the silence of the night, for the enemy was close by, and it was a dangerous undertaking to risk advancing into the space which separated us. In making an attempt, an officer of my staff drew three shots, which whistled unpleasantly near his ears. All labors of charity were necessarily put off till the next morning. It is sad to think that this was a sentence of death to numbers of the unfortunate. Mournful thoughts did not hinder the tired soldiers from sleeping. Everything was soon forgotten in a dreamless slumber.

At dawn of day, when I awakened, the first object which struck my eyes was a young sergeant stretched out on his back, his head resting on a flat stone, serving for a pillow. His position was natural, even graceful. One knee lightly raised, his hands crossed on his breast, a smile on his lips, his eyes closed, he appeared to sleep, and dream, perhaps, of her who awaited his return in the distant Green Mountains. — He was dead. Wounded, he had sought out this spot in which to die. His haversack was near him. He had taken out of it a little book, on which his last looks had been cast, for the book was still open in his stiffened fingers. It was the New Testament; on the first leaf, a light hand had traced, in pencil, some letters, rubbed out, which one might think were a name. I have kept the volume, and, on the white page, to the unknown name I have added, "Died at Gettysburg, July 3, 1863."

During the night, the enemy had drawn back his pickets to the other side of the Emmittsburg road, and left us free to assist the wounded. The appearance of litters and ambulance wagons strengthened them, by giving them hope. They related their engagements of the evening before, and their sufferings during the

night. One of them, pointing out the dead lying around him, said: "This one lived only till sundown; — that one lasted until about midnight. — There is one who was still groaning but an hour ago."

The gray-jackets abounded on one side; the boys in blue, more numerous, on the other, indicating the movements of the troops during the battle. There where they were mingled together, all enmity had ceased when the contest was over, and the canteen passed impartially to all lips.

The greater part of the dead were terribly lacerated, for it was here particularly that the artillery had done its dreadful work. There were the dead, with heads carried away, breasts torn open, limbs gone, entrails protruding on the ground.

Continuing my walk, I came near a large, isolated rock. It might have been eight or ten feet high, and fifteen or twenty feet broad. Rounding on the side towards the enemy, but flat as a wall on the opposite side, it had served as an advanced post for one of our companies, probably belonging to Stannard's brigade. What had happened there? Had they been surprised by the rapid advance of the enemy? Had they tried to shelter themselves behind that stone during the fight? Had the firing of canister by our guns rendered retreat impossible? Had they refused to surrender? No one, to my knowledge, escaped to tell. Whatever was the cause, there were twenty lying there cut down by lead and steel, and amongst the pile I recognized the uniform of an officer and the chevrons of a sergeant.

When I returned to the centre of my line, the ambulances were at work, and squads detailed from each regiment picked up the arms which were scattered by thousands over the field. A little later, my command

was relieved, and again took its position of the evening before.

Some reconnoissances sent out to look for the enemy had not far to go to find him. His pickets were still on the edge of the woods in front of the Seminary Heights. We afterwards learned that he expected, during the whole day, that we would attack him, hoping to get his revenge. But General Meade, content with his victory, would not take the risk of compromising it by leaving his position before Lee had abandoned his, in which he acted wisely, whatever may have been said to the contrary.

The afternoon was thus spent in first picking up our wounded and afterwards those of the enemy. The ambulance wagons were hardly enough for the work. The litter-bearers placed the wounded along on our lines, where they had to await their turn to be taken to the rear. We did what we could to make the delay as short as possible, for many of them were brave Southern boys, some having enlisted because they honestly believed it was their duty, others torn by force from their families, to be embodied in the rebel army by the inexorable conscription. After the defeat, they were resigned, without boasting, and expressed but one wish : that the war should terminate as soon as possible, since the triumph of the North appeared to be but a question of time.

I recall to mind a young man from Florida, who told me his history. His name was Perkins, and he was scarcely twenty years old. The only son of aged parents, he had in vain endeavored to escape service. Tracked everywhere by the agents of the Richmond government, he had been forced to take up the musket, and had done his duty so well that he had been rapidly promoted to sergeant. In the last charge of the day

before, he had had his left heel carried away by a piece of shell, and his right hand shattered by a canister shot. One amputation, at least, probably two, was what he had to expect; and yet he did not complain. But when he spoke of his aged parents awaiting his return, and of the sad condition in which he would reënter the paternal home, his smile was more heart-breaking than any complaint. In order that his wounds might be sooner dressed, one of my aids, Lieutenant Houghton, let him have his horse, at the risk of marching on foot if we moved before the animal was returned.

The next night we passed in the rain. It always rains on the day after a great battle. On the morning following we discovered the enemy to be in full retreat. Seeing that the attack he expected did not come off, and fearing for the safety of his communications with the Potomac, General Lee could do nothing else but retire through the mountains, which he did, during the night of the 4th and 5th of July. Then only began that disorder in his columns, and that confusion, the picture of which has been somewhat exaggerated; an almost inevitable consequence, besides, to that kind of movement. Our cavalry began to harass him on his flanks, while the Sixth Corps, having remained intact, pressed on his rearguard.

The difficulties that General Sedgwick met in the pass of Fairfield, where the enemy had intrenched, probably made General Meade fear that a direct pursuit would entail too great a loss of time in the mountains. So, instead of following Lee in the valley of the Cumberland, he decided to march on a parallel line, to the east of the South Mountains. He thus continued to keep between Washington and the Confederate army; but the road was much longer, and it was very doubtful whether he could overtake his adversary before the

latter had repassed the Potomac. In any event, in order to hold him back, General French, who was at Frederick with a part of the garrison of Harper's Ferry, received orders to send a force of cavalry to destroy the bridge of boats which the Confederates had left at Williamsport. The different army corps were only moved out in succession. The last of them left Gettysburg on the 7th, after having buried the dead.

On the 8th we passed through Frederick, occupied by the Seventh New York militia. The march of the 9th brought us to Turner's Gap, where the fight of South Mountain had served as a prelude to the battle of Antietam. There, French's division was assigned to the Third Corps, which, since the late battle, had counted no more than six or seven thousand men. They were troops new to the Army of the Potomac. While we were fighting in Virginia, they had guarded the railroads, and garrisoned Harper's Ferry, Winchester, and Martinsburg, where they had made but a poor show, when Ewell had presented himself. Amongst us they took the place of those whom we had left on the field of battle of Chancellorsville and Gettysburg; but they did not replace those. What the Third Corps gained in numbers it lost in homogeneity. On this account the new-comers were never fully naturalized in the corps. The veterans of Sickles, refractory to the union, maintained their autonomy by the designation universally adopted amongst them: "The Third Corps as we understand it."

General French took command by right of seniority. He was no stranger to us, having already served in our army. But the manner in which he exercised his new authority was not calculated to render him popular. On the other hand, at this time, generals were sent to us whose choice was as unjust as it was maladroit.

Was this the time to send hurriedly to the army, with the stars of brigadier-generals, men utter strangers to the military career, men whose overweening vanity had led them to seek for duties of which they had not the most rudimentary notions? When we had just saved the country, by a sacrifice of one-third of our number, the glorious vacancies left in our ranks, instead of being filled by officers who for two years had not ceased to suffer and to fight, who had offered their lives on so many battlefields, who a hundred times had given proof of courage and capacity, — was it just, was it honorable, to reserve a part of these vacancies to favor or to corruption, and to bring forth from the bar-rooms of New York some political intriguer to command heroic soldiers? The plague of politics was again manifested, and the government displayed its feebleness before the eyes of the whole world, by sacrificing to political influence those who had earned their grades by services in the field.

It appeared as though on the morrow after Gettysburg General Meade was strong enough to maintain the rights of those to whom he owed the honor of the victory and the prestige of success. But General Meade was himself struggling with difficulties, which absorbed all his attention. His promotion to the command of the army was not made without creating jealousies, more or less secret, amongst the corps commanders, his colleagues of yesterday, his subordinates to-day. He was not one of those formed to take the ascendancy over men by that greatness of character for whom power is an easy instrument, and who appear born to command. On the other hand, although his personal valor and his military capacity were incontestable, his services had not been so brilliant as to eclipse those of his rivals. He was, besides, more

reserved than audacious, more modest than presumptuous, on which account he treated his corps commanders rather as friends than as inferiors.

In taking command of the army, he had been able to say, in all sincerity, that he had not expected it or sought for it; that he took it with a distrust in his own ability, but that he relied on the cordial assistance of his companions in arms to aid him in fulfilling all the duties of the important trust confided to him. Animated by these sentiments, in the night of the 2d and 3d, and in that of the 3d and 4th of July, that is to say, during and after the battle of Gettysburg, he had consulted his generals as to what appeared to them the best course to pursue. This he did also on the 12th, when we found ourselves facing the Confederates near Williamsport.

They had reached that point long before us, and, although their bridge of boats had been destroyed, they would have passed the Potomac at the ford without difficulty if the heavy rains had not raised the river too high. This mishap held them three days. If it allowed us to overtake them, it also gave them time to intrench in a strong position. General Meade made the dispositions to attack the enemy in his works. Personally, he would have desired to finish his work, and complete his victory, by destroying the army of Lee. The President encouraged him therein through General Halleck, who, on his side, pushed forward all the reënforcements he had at his disposal. Only these reënforcements were purely illusory. They were New York militia, who, according to General Couch's report, "marched as though they were ready to stop at the least appearance of danger before them," or Pennsylvania militia, who, after the enemy had left, refused to go further than the State line, or, again, the nine-months

men, commanded by a lawyer, and who demanded before marching that they should be put under the command of a soldier.

It was not on such reënforcements that Meade could rely. Reduced to its own numbers, would the Army of the Potomac be sufficient for the task? This was the question. On one side it was argued that the enemy, demoralized by his defeat, and short of ammunition, was incapable of offering a prolonged resistance. But these were conjectures rather than facts. Where our cavalry had attacked him, he had received it in a manner to relieve it from the desire of persisting in the attempt. And, then, he was behind intrenchments difficult to approach, which rendered the issue of an assault very doubtful.

But, however that might have been, I think it would have been better to have attacked. Our men were full of ardor, and asked only to make a finish of it. That fact made it worth the trouble to make a strong effort, and to take a new risk. In any event, there was everything to gain and nothing to lose. If we succeeded, the road to Richmond was opened before us; if we failed, the road to Washington was still closed to them. Even putting the worst face on matters, we could have fallen back to South Mountain, and they never could have forced the defiles, should they make the effort, which would be very doubtful. The most probable result would have been that, content with having repulsed our last attack, the advantage they would have from being able to cross the river in entire security would have satisfied them.

General Meade must have come to this conclusion in the morning of the 12th of July, for at an early hour a circular sent out from headquarters ordered the army to get ready to attack. At nine o'clock the movement

began. At eleven we drew near the enemy's lines. Our forces were drawn up in line of battle and in columns, with artillery in the intervals. But a few troops remained to be put in position. There followed a delay, during which the rain began to fall, and did not cease during the rest of the day. In fine, the attack was put off till the morrow.

During the night the general commanding, oppressed with the weight of the responsibility bearing upon him, convoked his corps commanders in a council of war. There were present Sedgwick, Slocum, Sykes, French, Pleasonton, and Warren (commanding the engineers). Hays represented the Second Corps, in the absence of Hancock and Gibbon, both wounded; Wadsworth the First Corps, in place of Newton, sick.

General Meade briefly laid before them the state of affairs, and what he knew of the condition of the enemy's forces; and then he asked them to give him their opinion as to the advisability of attacking the next morning. Five of them advised clearly against it; the other four in favor of it. It must be remarked, on this point, that of the five negative votes four were from the generals holding the highest positions in service and by rank, that is to say, of those to whom the faults and the eventual retirement of Meade offered some chance of profit. I state the fact, without drawing any conclusions, though really one might ask if it is not inherent in our poor human nature to instinctively lean towards the side where our interests lie.

The generals wishing to fight had nothing personally to gain in the question. The opinion of Howard was without weight, because the behavior of his troops at Gettysburg had not been such as to regain the confidence which they had lost at Chancellorsville. Wadsworth, who was only there to take the place of another,

could not exert a sensible influence on the deliberation. Pleasonton was as yet assigned only temporarily to the command of the cavalry. Warren, as chief of engineers, had but a consulting voice. So that the discussion was rather hurried than full. Sedgwick, Slocum, Sykes, and French relied more on the preponderance of their votes than on the strength of their arguments. They stated in general terms that we had gained a great victory, and that we ought not to run the risk of compromising the results; that, if our army was routed, there was nothing behind it to cover Washington and Baltimore. One of them even advanced the opinion that the enemy would attack us, if we did not attack him, and that we would, in that case, have the advantage of the defensive.

This, as will be seen, was not conclusive. Warren easily demonstrated that an attack, if repulsed, would not result at all in the destruction of our army; while a victorious attack would necessarily bring on the destruction of Lee's army. The advantage remained with us to act on the defensive, in any event, whether behind Antietam Creek or in the passes of South Mountain. As to the idea that Lee, beaten, driven back to the Potomac, and only seeking the opportunity to return to Virginia, might come out and attack us if we left him alone, there was really no occasion to waste time in arguing that point. General Meade closed the discussion, by declaring that he was in favor of attacking; that he had come to Williamsport to fight the enemy, and that he saw no convincing reason to do differently; that, however, in face of the formal opposition of his chiefs of corps, he would not assume the exclusive responsibility of giving battle.

There was one point to which I do not see that any allusion was made. I mean the possibility of turning

the enemy's position. Pleasonton must have known something about it. In his "History of the Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac," Swinton says, positively, that the position of Lee along Marsh Creek might have been turned. "By throwing his right forward on the Conecocheague, Meade would have drawn his army out of that difficult region of woods and hills where he found himself, and where all the advantages of position were greatly in favor of the Confederates, and would have placed himself on ground where he would have occupied the heights commanding the river. Then he would have extended beyond the Confederate left, *which was in the air.* In that position, Meade would have attacked with the advantages as much in his favor as in the other position they were against him." But it does not appear that this very important question was taken into consideration.

The next day passed away without anything new occurring. However, although Meade had followed the opinions of his corps commanders, he had not definitely abandoned his project. He had only put off its execution for one day, in hopes of seeing the arrival of the fantastical reënforcements, which the telegraph announced to him, almost from hour to hour. The night having come without their appearance, he returned to his first determination, and issued all the orders necessary for a general attack at daylight. Accordingly, on the 14th, at sunrise, we marched against the enemy's intrenchments. They were vacant. The enemy had succeeded in reëstablishing his bridge of boats, and Hill's and Longstreet's corps had crossed over under cover of the night. Ewell's corps had crossed at a ford, a little higher up.

The cavalry, thrown forward immediately, was in time to capture two thousand prisoners, two guns, a few

flags, and a quantity of arms. General Pettigrew, who commanded the rearguard of the Confederates, was killed in the fight. This was all remaining in our hands of that Virginia army which we had thought utterly in our power.

If our disappointment was great, that of the country was greater still. During several days, the public feeling had been very much excited by a triumphal series of great news. On the 3d, the victory of Gettysburg had put an end to the invasion of Pennsylvania; on the 4th, the anniversary day of national independence, Vicksburg, the citadel of the South on the Mississippi, had fallen under the blows of General Grant, and on the 8th Port Hudson had surrendered to Banks. The navigation of the "Father of Waters" was at last reopened to us throughout its entire length, and the rebel Confederacy found itself cut in twain. What news was there left to hear? The destruction of Lee's forces. They counted upon it; they considered it certain; and behold, suddenly the news broke upon them that the rebel army had escaped, for the second time, from the soil which ought to have swallowed it up.

On the 7th, the President had written this note to General Halleck: "Vicksburg surrendered to General Grant on the 4th of July. Now, if General Meade can complete the work so gloriously carried on so far, by the literal and complete destruction of Lee's army, the rebellion is finished." And on the same day Meade received his appointment as brigadier-general in the regular army. Then came successively a series of telegrams from General Halleck, concluding thus, "Make a finish of the enemy before he crosses the Potomac; do not let him escape!"

On the 14th, the tenor of the despatch was completely changed: "I hardly need say to you that the escape of

Lee's army without another battle has greatly displeased the President, and you must make an active and energetic pursuit, to do away with the impression that he has not been sufficiently pressed up to this time."

General Meade replied immediately, "Having done my duty conscientiously, and to the best of my ability, the censure of the President, conveyed in your despatch of to-day, is, in my judgment, so undeserved that I feel compelled to respectfully ask to be immediately relieved from the command of the army."

As a matter of course, this request was not granted. The victor of Gettysburg could not thus be put aside on the very morrow of his triumph, and generals capable of commanding the army did not spring up so quickly on the banks of the Potomac that it was easy to replace them. Nevertheless, there remained an unfavorable impression in public opinion, which, without stopping to inquire the cause, saw only the result, namely: that Meade had let Lee escape, and everything had to be commenced over again.

As at the former invasion of Maryland, Lee retired by the valley of the Shenandoah without hurrying; and, like McClellan, but much more rapidly, Meade marched on a parallel line, by way of the Loudon valley, following the eastern slope of the Blue Ridge. On the 15th, we crossed the battlefield of Antietam, on our way to Harper's Ferry. We looked over that ground, taken and retaken five times successively on the morning of the 17th of September. The little church still showed the holes made by the balls, which had not left a door or window. Its roof, broken in, hung in pieces. All the trees of the neighboring woods were literally riddled with balls. In the surrounding fields, little mounds of earth, and a few pieces of board with names

on them half effaced, marked the places of the forgotten dead. The village of Sharpsburg still showed the scars of war, on the sides of its houses.

On the 17th, we crossed the Potomac at Harper's Ferry, and, turning Loudon Heights below the mouth of the Shenandoah, we pursued our route in the direction of Upperville, where we camped on the 20th. There we halted for a day; we had marched too fast. Meade regulated his march by that of his adversary, watching for an occasion to strike him in the flank, on the other side of the mountains.

This occasion presented itself on the 22d. The Confederate army, marching in a long column up the valley of the Shenandoah, had to pass before Manassas Gap, whose mouth, near Front Royal, it had covered by but a feeble division. That day, the Second, the Third, and the Fifth Corps were at the other end of the Gap. They received orders to throw themselves rapidly on the enemy, sweep away the few troops found there, and cut his column in two. Nothing was easier. The Third Corps entered the pass first. Unfortunately, the Third Corps had fallen into the hands of an incapable general, and, of his two division commanders, Birney was absent, and Humphreys, promoted to major-general and to the position of chief of the staff of the army, was replaced by General Prince, an officer who had served, I believe, in North Carolina. No one knew anything about him. As to the division just added to the corps, it was not considered as yet, except as a memorandum. It must have been somewhere behind. I have forgotten, or never knew, who commanded it at that time.

We penetrated into the pass without finding anything in front of us, which did not prevent General French from taking so many precautions that for a long time we thought it was not a question of forcing the passage,

but of defending it. We passed the night near a farm-house some distance in the mountains.

On the morning of the 23d, I received orders to form my brigade in line of battle on an uneven plateau, on the right of the line; then, after a while, the direction having been rectified by General French himself, marched directly forward. At the same time, Ward crossed the destroyed railroad, and obliqued to the left with the two other brigades. At the other side of the plateau, I found myself facing a ravine deeply cut down between two steep slopes, covered with a fine thicket. We passed this obstacle by breaking by the right of divisions to the front, and, when we had surmounted the opposite slope, the line was promptly reëstablished on a second and higher plateau. From that position I could see distinctly that the other brigades had turned to the left as well as the Second Division, in the same direction as the gaps, the bend of which I was about to pass. The order of march, "directly forward," was so explicit that I concluded the object of my isolated movement must be to cover the gorge, in which the railroad ran in a straight line. However, in the doubt, I placed myself, with my officers and my guidon, on the most prominent point, and ordered a halt, to see if new orders would not be sent to me. Ward's right was at the bottom of the pass. Between the road which he was following and the foot of the mountain was a vacancy, which seemed to me to be my place, and I did not understand why they should leave me behind, instead of having me occupy it, following the general movement.

Our line was moving away now in the prolongation of my left. The skirmishers ascended the slope of a mountain, less elevated, and not so sharp as the others. When they arrived near the summit, the border of the

woods which stretched out before them was spotted with puffs of white smoke, which told me that the advance posts of the enemy were opening fire on them. They replied immediately with spirit; then, in a few minutes, an officer on horseback passed in front of them at a gallop, returned towards the centre, and the whole line burst forward on a run towards the woods, which they swept in a flash. The line of battle then passed a roll of ground, behind which I lost it from view.

At this instant a staff officer was remarked who was coming towards us at a gallop. He brought me the order that I had expected, and explained to me that, in directing me to march straight ahead, it had been forgotten to add that it was only a precaution to have me take my distance, to avoid the crowding together towards the centre of the line of which I formed the turning wing. In any event, the movement was badly arranged. Since the enemy did not occupy the elbow of the pass, the simplest way would have been to form the front in line of battle beyond that point and without wheeling. But, if they must absolutely lose time in useless evolutions, they should have been executed correctly and caused, at least, two brigades to wheel by battalion in a body.

We descended from the plateau to take position on the right of the Second Division, which separated us from Ward. The movement appeared to come to a halt without anybody knowing why. The Seventeenth Maine was detached to sustain a battery at the left of the road, where, however, were placed all the troops except my brigade and the Twentieth Indiana, deployed there as skirmishers before my arrival. The One Hundred and Tenth Pennsylvania was posted in advance of a group of houses on our front. Separated from my division, I did not know what they wished to do; but it

appeared to me that, whatever it might be, they did not know how to get about it. Finally, they advanced.

One brigade of the Second Division was selected to dislodge the enemy from the nearest hill-top. That brigade was one commanded by one of the political generals recently sent to the army, and, naturally, he did not know the first thing about his new profession. An aid came to bring him the order to form his regiments in double column on the centre, to ascend the hill, and to deploy them in line of battle on approaching the summit. The improvised general repeated the order to himself, but did not understand it any better. — "Very well; double column — yes — on the centre." — He repeated the words to himself, looking for some one to help him out, when he saw, a few paces distant, Colonel Brewster of the Seventy-third New York. Brewster was a brave soldier and a good officer supplanted in the command of the brigade by this chief, who knew less than the poorest of his corporals. "Colonel," said the general, calling him near, "you heard what *the man* said?" (He meant the aide-de-camp). "Yes," replied Brewster. "Well! Do it, then, do it." On his part he saw it done, and, wishing to show that if he were ignorant he was not a coward, he followed the movement and went on caracoling his horse under fire. He returned with a ball in his foot and another in his hip, and we never saw him again.

A regiment of the Third Division was sent to me as a reënforcement. It was full in numbers, almost as large alone as my whole brigade; but it had never been under fire, and I believed it to be more prudent to leave it in reserve than to put it in line.

We continued to drive the enemy back out of the pass, but slowly and without engaging other troops than

a brigade and a line of skirmishers. The latter, seeing that there was only skirmishing going on, took things easily. One could see them, while keeping up their fire, regale themselves on blackberries, which the uncultivated fields yielded abundantly at that season of the year.

The sun went down at this state of affairs, and General French put off serious business until the morrow. Now, in the morning, the enemy's army had passed beyond Manassas Gap, and the few troops we had before us had gone on to join his rearguard. We went on to the mouth of the pass, from where we could enjoy for a short time a magnificent view of the valley; after which we made a half-wheel to the right, and returned to the point from which we had started.

A few days afterward, finding myself in command of the pickets, I had to receive my instructions directly from General French. I found a large man with a red nose, a flushed face, a bald forehead, a dull look. Near him, a glass and a bottle of whiskey appeared to be on the table *en permanence*. He made me sit down, said a few words to me on the official object of my visit, and, making continual grimaces, the effect of a nervous affection, began on a subject which he appeared to have at heart. The occasion lost by his unskilfulness at Manassas Gap had been the subject of comment not at all flattering, and the general commanding had been very much disappointed. French endeavored then to justify himself on all occasions. He began by complimenting me on what I had done at his extreme right, which seemed to me less flattering than surprising, seeing I had done nothing at all. The only regiment engaged on my side was the Twentieth Indiana, which did not belong to me, and, in my brigade, I had lost but one man, killed by chance. Without waiting my reply, he

launched into a confused dissertation on the fine things he considered that he had accomplished on this occasion. His great argument consisted in this: that, except one brigade, he had used nothing but skirmishers to sweep the pass, and that, by keeping his troops back, he had prevented the enemy from knowing where they were. He returned continually to this point, and interrupted himself at each instant to say to me, "Do you see the point? Do you understand the point?" What I understood very clearly was that his ideas were very much confused. He did not appear to suspect that his system of skirmishers was just the unskilfulness which, by causing us to lose precious time, prevented our cutting in two the long column of Lee, or, at least, of cutting off his rearguard. He kept me for a long time in order to go over the same things, and, as I put my foot in the stirrup at the entrance to his tent, he kept repeating, "You understand the point, do you not?"

Poor Third Corps! Your best days were over.

On the 26th, we arrived at Warrenton, where General Birney returned to take command of the division. The Confederates having halted at Culpeper, our army was again posted along the Rappahannock. On the 31st, the right of our position was assigned to the Third Corps, and Birney's division pitched its tents around White Sulphur Springs. The pursuit was over.

CHAPTER XXV.

OPERATIONS DURING THE LATTER PART OF 1863.

White Sulphur Springs — The Vallandigham affair — Plots of the Copperheads — Bloody riots in New York — Attitude of Governor Horatio Seymour — Western regiments sent to enforce the law — Reënforcements hurried to Tennessee — Advance on Culpeper — The Sharpshooters — Movement to the rear — The engagement at Auburn — Battle of Bristoe Station — Remarks — Visit of General Sickles — Battle at Rappahannock Station — Engagement at Kelly's Ford — March in line of battle — Mr. John Minor Botts between two racks — Mine Run affair — Death labels — Raid on Richmond.

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS is, as denoted by its name, a sulphur spring of great clearness. It is a few miles from Warrenton, in a beautiful country where the wooded hills, the green meadows, and the cultivated fields agreeably vary the landscape. Before the war, it was every summer one of the chosen rendezvous of Southern society. The planters liked to take their families and meet each other there, and, under pretext of taking the waters, to play heavily, drink hard, and get excited over politics. A large hotel offered them hospitality (well paid for), in the centre of a semicircle, formed by two rows of small cottages, for use of the families. All this in the midst of fine shade, in the centre of which the spring burst forth in a reservoir covered by a columned rotunda. But since that time the war had passed that way. Of the great architectural structure nothing remained but a heap of ruins, from the midst of which arose some columns blackened by the flames, and some pieces of walls half crumbled away. General Birney established his headquarters in

the garden. A short distance away, and near the Warrenton road, a clump of great oaks extends its shade in the midst of a field. There I pitched my tent, and for six weeks, except the usual drill, we were able to give ourselves up, without being disturbed, to the leisure life of the country.

It was not the government, it was the Copperhead party which gave us this leisure. In this way: this party, closely affiliated to the cause of the rebellion, had not ceased, since the commencement of the war, to contrive every possible hindrance to the government. Compelled, at first, to bend before the patriotic enthusiasm which had fired the free States, it had since become audacious, and by its manœuvres it had obtained successes, much to be lamented, in the elections of the preceding autumn.

One of its most violent and unscrupulous leaders was a certain Vallandigham, representative of one of the Ohio districts. He had, in Congress, constantly opposed every war measure, and, when the session had closed, he went into the country, to continue his seditious diatribes against the national government. On the 1st of May, 1863, he ventured on a public speech, in which, after having heaped up beyond measure every injurious and lying accusation which he could invent against the administration, he finished by calling on the people directly to disobedience and sedition, in reference to an order of General Burnside, directed against those who aided and assisted the enemy.

General Burnside, who then commanded that military department, caused the arrest of Vallandigham, and brought him before a court-martial at Cincinnati. A writ of habeas corpus was immediately produced in favor of the prisoner. But this privilege had been suspended by a proclamation of the President, in the

month of September preceding, and Congress had fully sanctioned that measure, based on the explicit terms of the Constitution, in case of insurrection or invasion. The general refused to obey the writ, and his refusal was judicially approved. The military commission declared the accused guilty, and condemned him to imprisonment in one of the fortresses of the United States. The President, always indulgent, mitigated the sentence by ordering that the condemned should be sent into the enemy's lines, and forbidden to re-enter the loyal States before the conclusion of the war.

At this the whole Copperhead party broke out in loud cries, and was furiously eager to avert the palm of martyrdom from its disciple. A great meeting was called at Albany, the capital of the State of New York, to that effect. Without appearing in person, Governor Seymour wrote a letter to it, denouncing the action of the government; the orators of the second class were loud in their condemnation of the government, and finally adopted some resolutions which were sent to the President. He condescended to reply to them, in a communication as moderate in manner as conclusive in matter. This victorious refutation of the argument inspired by treason did not prevent the agitation from spreading in the Democratic party, which, in Ohio, chose Vallandigham for its candidate for Governor.

The new levy ordered by Congress, and the preparations for the conscription for the States which had not filled their quotas with volunteers, furnished another opportunity to the allies of the rebels to annoy the government by unworthy means. Any pretext served them. The drawing was to begin in New York, on July 11, eight days after the victory at Gettysburg, when Lee, still at bay, was on the left bank of the Potomac. The drawing went on peaceably enough on

Saturday. The next day, seeing that, contrary to their expectations and notwithstanding their excitement, the people submitted to the measure, as legal and necessary, plotters stirred up all the foul parts of the city, to bring out from there the scum of the European population. The moment was favorable. New York was stripped of troops and of militia. Everything which could aid in driving back the invasion had been sent away to Pennsylvania and Maryland. There remained the police alone to fight the riot.

Urged on by the hope of impunity, by the temptation of pillage, by underhand encouragement, the cursed brood, on Monday, came out from its dens, armed for pillage, murder, and fire. The conscription offices were attacked, sacked, and given up to flames. Then the bands of savages, spreading through the streets, began their work, hanging colored men, pursuing the officers employed in the conscription or partisans of the administration pointed out to them for attack. They broke open the houses of individuals which seemed to promise them rich plunder, and burnt public buildings, among others an orphan asylum. For three days the city was delivered over to a horrible and bloody bacchanalian riot, in which the women and the children were engaged in thieving and even in murder.

The police did its duty bravely; it charged the rioters everywhere, wherever they assembled in force, and protected, as much as was within its power, both persons and property. But, to put an end to this ignoble anarchy, it was necessary to await the return of the militia, recalled in haste to the defence of their families and their firesides. Then the repression was prompt and energetic. After the street fights, the police was able to state that twelve hundred of these rioting robbers were buried. By adding to this number the secret

burials which escaped the search, the very large number of wounded cared for in their families and in the hospitals, and the convictions afterward in the courts, it would be found that the punishment was equal to the crime. Under the democratic polity, society does not depend on the government to defend it. It knows how to protect itself.

The Governor, Horatio Seymour, whose attitude and conduct towards the national government had been of a nature to encourage the riot, much more than to prevent it, thought only, in concert with his party, how he could turn the event to its profit, in order to prevent the conscription. Under pretext of finding out if some error had not crept into the account of the contingent furnished by the State, and of previously submitting the question of the constitutionality of the law to the judiciary, he asked the President that the resumption of the drawing should be indefinitely adjourned. The object of this attempt is easily seen. It was designed to dry up the sources of the reënforcements necessary to the armies, to diminish if not to annul the results of the victories of Gettysburg and Vicksburg, and, while the Confederate government was renewing its forces by a levy *en masse*, to reduce ours by stopping the conscription and by discouraging volunteer enrolments. Such were the means by which the peace Democrats in the North hoped to bring about either a definite establishment of a Southern Confederacy, or a formation of a new Union, based on the subjection of the free States to the power of the slave States.

The President refused to accede to the request, in a communication giving his reasons, dated August 7. On the next day, the Governor insisted on producing documents prepared for the case by Judge Waterbury. The resumption of the drawing was nevertheless ordered

for August 19, and, to prevent the possibility of new violence on the part of the partisans of the rebellion, several regiments of the Army of the Potomac were sent to New York. Among the number were the Third and the Fifth Michigan, whose departure reduced my brigade still more considerably, although the Ninety-ninth Pennsylvania was transferred to me to replace them. Some other troops were taken from some of the other divisions. They chose preferably those belonging to the Western States. Their presence was enough to prevent all opposition.

At the same time, a considerable detachment was drawn from the Army of the Potomac to send to South Carolina. The result was that offensive operations had to be temporarily suspended.

Along in the middle of September, General Meade received advice that Longstreet had left Lee's army to go to Tennessee. As he was preparing to immediately resume the campaign, it was announced to him from Washington that the Eleventh and Twelfth Corps were to be hurried off to the West, under the command of General Hooker. They soon departed, and ceased thereafter to form part of the Army of the Potomac.

The five remaining corps, including the cavalry, could not furnish an effective force of more than fifty to sixty thousand men, in the absence of the troops sent to the State of New York, and who had not yet returned. Nevertheless, Meade did not judge it necessary to await their return, and on September 15 the army was put in motion. The cavalry crossed the Rappahannock first. We followed closely. On our approach, Lee abandoned Culpeper, and fell back with his whole force, behind the Rapidan, where we were forced to halt before the strong position he had taken.

There the regiments that had been absent several

months rejoined us. You need not ask if there was not a joyful reunion. The Third and Fifth Michigan were welcomed in the brigade with endless cheers, to which they replied with no less enthusiasm. After so many battles that they had fought together, they were rejoiced to be again side by side for the battles remaining to be fought. It appeared, besides, that among them the time lost for war had been profitably employed otherwise. Colonel Pierce, recovered from his wound, told me that, during the ten or twelve days his regiment had stopped at Troy, thirty of his men had married. Now they could sing the popular couplet: —

> Nos amours ont duré toute une semaine.
> Ah! que du bonheur les instants sont courts!

I trust that husbands and wives found each other after the war was over, and that the young Trojan lasses were not left behind, as was the spouse of pious Æneas.

The Ninety-ninth Pennsylvania returned to the Second Brigade, to which it had always belonged; but it was replaced in mine by the First Battalion of sharpshooters, and as, at the same time, the Seventeenth Maine received an accession of two hundred recruits, the number of my command was brought up to thirty-two hundred men, of whom more than two thousand were present in the ranks.

The sharpshooters formed a special organization in the army. There were but two battalions raised in the whole United States by Colonel Berdan, composed exclusively of the best marksmen, who had to make proof of their skill before being admitted to the ranks. Their uniform was dark green, with horn buttons; their arms, Sharp's breech-loading rifles. Fighting always as sharpshooters, they had a firmness of hand and correctness

of aim which rendered them particularly dangerous. At a distance which the rifled Springfield could not reach, their deadly balls struck the mark almost with certainty. Some few of them were armed at their own expense with long telescope rifles, and for them distance appeared to be annihilated. From these facts one can judge of the number of victims which the sharpshooters must have made in the ranks of the enemy.

Culpeper, which we have so often mentioned, is a small city, or rather a large village, where there are a few pretty houses. Everything was, at this time, in disorder; the stores were closed; the inhabitants had disappeared. We found there only a very few negroes, either too young or too old to run away, and left there because they were not worth the trouble of taking away. We remained camped in that neighborhood until October 10.

On the 6th, official information of a movement of Stuart's cavalry in the rear of our positions had already put us on the alert. Reconnoissances had been sent out in different directions, and on the 8th we were held ready to march at the shortest notice. The suspicion of a manœuvre of Lee to turn our right became a certainty when, on the 10th, the advance posts of the Second Division were attacked at James City by the cavalry which covered the flank of the principal column of the Confederates. Then General Meade understood that the intention of his adversary was to cut his communications with Washington. The army fell back immediately on the Rappahannock. The Third Corps covered the retreat.

We had hardly started in our turn, on the morning of the 11th, when a brigade of the enemy's cavalry presented itself on our left flank. The division was formed in line of battle immediately, but the battalion

of sharpshooters sufficed to cause the immediate disappearance of the horsemen who threatened us. Although our march was delayed by some confusion amongst the ammunition wagons and ambulances at the passage of Hazel River, we arrived in the afternoon on the heights which commanded Beverly Ford. From there we might have been witnesses of a cavalry combat on the plain if, after the first charge, all the details had not been lost in a thick cloud of dust, in the midst of which both friends and enemies disappeared in an instant. So that I can say nothing about it except that it was General Buford who opened the way through Stuart's troopers, endeavoring in vain to bar the passage. At nine o'clock in the evening we passed over a bridge of boats, which the pontoniers took up from the water behind us. At midnight a portion of our troops bivouacked behind Freeman's Ford.

Thwarted in his plans on the south bank of the Rappahannock, General Lee concluded to make a new trial on the north bank. He took up his movement again by way of Sulphur Springs, where General Gregg, at the head of a brigade of cavalry, was not strong enough to dispute his passage. But the resulting engagement unmasked the march of the enemy. From that time on, it was a race between the two armies, in which the advantage was not very much on our side. This is the manner of it: from Warrenton the two corps of Hill and Ewell, which composed all of Lee's forces, directed their march towards Bristoe Station by different roads, counting on coming together there to strike us in flank. If Meade had foreseen the movement, or if he had been advised of it in time, nothing would have been easier than for him to have received the attack at that point and in a favorable position, and it is quite likely that the enemy, having come out

for wool, would have gone back shorn. Unfortunately, in the persuasion that Lee was endeavoring to precede us to Centreville, in order to put himself in a good position between us and Washington, the general commanding continued his retreating movement without stopping.

That day (October 13) we had passed ahead of the Second Corps, commanded at that time by General Warren, who took French's place as rearguard. Towards three o'clock in the afternoon we were about to reach the village of Auburn when the head of our column was unexpectedly welcomed by musket shots, near a wood whose border crossed the road in front of us. French, who marched with our division, had neglected to have the ground in front of the column reconnoitred by an advance guard. We were thus ignorant of what force confronted us. The First Brigade, commanded by Colonel Collis, was formed rapidly to the right. Mine, which followed, was developed in two lines to the left, while a section of artillery opened on the woods, from which a lively fire was maintained upon us.

These dispositions taken, the order was given to the first line to charge. This was done briskly. On my side, the Fifth Michigan and the First Battalion of sharpshooters dashed forward on the run. The enemy had not time to give us a volley. We were upon him in an instant, and the woods were swept with little resistance. We found there only a brigade of dismounted cavalry. The rebels ran to their horses and disappeared, leaving in our hands only their dead and a few prisoners.

We had halted on the edge of a steep ravine, at the bottom of which ran a brook over a stony bed. Beyond the ravine there was an open plain, in rear of a farm-

house, whose front bordered the road beneath us. A few farm buildings were in the fields, five or six hundred yards further off. There appeared a group of horsemen, among whom was an officer affectedly caracoling his horse, stopping from time to time to examine our movements with a field glass. "Who will bring down that too inquisitive officer for me?" I asked of the sharpshooters nearest to me. "We will try, colonel," they replied. They chose one of their number, who advanced a few steps, and adjusted his sight with care. He fired. After a few seconds of watching, we saw the horse stagger, as if about to fall, then balance himself on three legs. The ball had struck the horse, instead of the horseman, who did not wait for a second trial of the range of the weapon, or of the skill of the marksman. The whole group disappeared with him behind a wall, and we saw no more of them.

During this time, our dead had been buried, and our wounded taken to the ambulances. The column resumed its line of march, preceded this time by an advance guard.

The next day, having crossed Bull Run, we had just taken position in the afternoon, on the height in front of Centreville, when a violent cannonade broke out at Bristoe Station, which we had passed a few hours before. The Second Corps had come in collision with the enemy. Early in the morning, it had found itself in contact, on one side with Ewell's advance guard, and on the other with Stuart's cavalry. But the latter had not been able to stop its march, nor the former to delay it by skirmishing with Caldwell's division, which brought up the rear.

At Bristoe Station, affairs took on a more serious aspect. The Fifth Corps, which Warren had counted on finding there, had gone on without waiting for him,

when Hill's column presented itself. The latter immediately took measures to cut off the Second Corps, so as to throw it back on Ewell, and surround and destroy it between the two. But Warren guarded against the danger, with a promptness of decision and a rapidity of action which could not be too highly praised. He threw forward Hay's division behind a railroad embankment, which protected our men as an intrenchment, while he disposed Webb's division to receive the shock. So, when the enemy advanced in line of battle, he was welcomed with such a fire, both of musketry and artillery, that his ranks were soon thrown in disorder. Without giving him time to reform, Warren pursued him with the bayonet at his back, and ended by carrying away from him five pieces of artillery, two flags, and five hundred prisoners. When Caldwell's division rejoined the other two, the affair was over; Hill was driven back, and Ewell, pursuing his road by Greenwich, had not yet appeared.

From the heights where Warren joined us, during the night, we could follow with our eyes the different phases of the combat. It was the first time that this young general had commanded a corps in action. This beginning did him much honor.

I have often asked myself the question, why the army remained motionless while Warren, left to himself, had to contend alone against forces much superior to his own; and why General Meade did not profit by this first success, to return against the enemy with all his forces, and give him battle in a position which was not disadvantageous, and which fully filled the permanent requirement of always covering Washington. It is certain that, in this whole retrograde movement from Culpeper to Centreville, Meade adopted the most prudent course, and the safest; but it must be said it was not

the most glorious. It completely upset Lee's plan, which was to turn our positions, and plant himself across our communications with Washingthon. The question is whether he would have made as much by that manœuvre as he expected.

It must be remarked that success would have put him in a shape identical with our own. In placing himself between us and Washington, he put us between him and Richmond. I am well aware that he would have willingly left the road to the Confederate capital entirely free to us, if the road to the federal capital were abandoned to him. But he could not reckon on that. The exchange would have been too much in his favor. Suppose we had allowed him to do so at Culpeper. In what respect would his position have been better than ours? We had our backs to the Rapidan; he had his to the Rappahannock. Our forces were, at least, as numerous as his, and our veteran soldiers equal to his.

What if he had continued to march to the north? As we had the interior line, we could not fail to overtake him. He arrived at Warrenton before us, which did not prevent our preceding him at Bristoe Station, when he presented himself there. There, too, we could have awaited him as we did at Auburn or Greenwich, and obtained a victory much more important than the success of Warren, which was more brilliant than fruitful.

Admit, finally, that, persisting in refusing battle, Lee had preceded us at Centreville. He would have been in a formidable position. But how would he subsist his army there? For us, the Potomac, of which we were masters, was always an open way by which to replenish. Hunger, which brings the wolf out of the woods, would then force the enemy from his position, to fight us under conditions which would be so much

the worse for him in proportion as he was away from his base and his communications were difficult.

As to marching on Washington with two army corps, without any possible means of crossing the Potomac immediately, and when we were at his heels, that is an hypothesis which it is not necessary to stop to consider.

In fine, it would have been more profitable, it would certainly have been more glorious, to give battle to the Confederates, on any point whatever of the road travelled over, than to undertake to run a race with them for celerity of movement. General Meade himself so expressed himself before the Congressional committee; but one does not always do what he wishes, above all in war, and, in his uncertainty as to the aim and the movements of his adversary, he determined to follow the line of conduct which offered the least risk.

However that might be, General Lee, seeing his plans foiled, had nothing to do but return on his steps. As much to delay our pursuit as to get some result from his excursion, on retiring, he destroyed the railroad from Bristoe Station to the Rappahannock, for a distance of about twenty-five miles.

On the next day, the 15th, Sickles arrived at the camp of our division at Fairfax Station. Led by his ardor, he came to ask to resume his command, thinking that a battle was imminent. The general-in-chief thought, not without reason, that he was not yet able to endure the hardships of service and fulfil all the duties incumbent on the position he asked for amongst us. He could walk only on a crutch, and could not yet support the pressure of an artificial leg. The welcome given him by his two old divisions went far to console him for his disappointment.

The fact of his arrival at the Station was scarcely known when all his Gettysburg regiments formed with-

out arms, in double line, along the road he must take to reach General Birney's headquarters. The latter had gone to meet the maimed hero, with a wagon drawn by four horses. Their appearance was the signal for a thunder of acclamations, such as I have seldom heard. The wagon passed at a walk, from one end to the other of the line; explosions of hurrahs burst forth on the passage of the carriage, and were kept up long after it was at a distance. Caps were thrown into the air; and the welcome was most enthusiastic. And when the general had entered Birney's tent, surrounded by the brigade commanders, the men assembled around in throngs, for a long time giving expression to their joy.

It must be acknowledged that this reception was not only a manifestation in honor of the old corps commander, but also a protest against the successor given to us. In war, soldiers know how to appreciate the value of their generals. It is not by becoming addicted to some vulgar vice forbidden amongst themselves, or by making of his authority an instrument of intrigues, that one acquires their confidence, but simply by being worthy of commanding. Be just, and you can be severe without arousing any resentment, even amongst those who may deserve punishment. Be partial, and your indulgence for some, with your severity towards others, will bring the contempt of all. At the bottom of his heart, the soldier always has a feeling of uprightness, which governs the judgment he passes on his chiefs. His greatest welfare hangs directly upon it, for often his life may depend on an order well or badly inspired. This is why poor generals spoil good soldiers, and good generals reform poor soldiers.

The same men fight very differently, according to who commands them. If they have confidence in their commander, they will dash upon the enemy with an

enthusiasm without reserve, for they know that the regiment will not be compromised without necessity, and that, if they must die, their death will at least be useful to the cause to which they are devoted. But if they feel that they are poorly led, and if they are afraid of being sacrificed without result, from lack of judgment or by an intellect obscured by the fumes of whiskey, their enthusiasm gives place to indecision. They will go through fire in obedience to discipline, and to save their *amour propre;* and if they encounter a stubborn resistance, where they would have gone in and forced a position without counting their losses, one may be assured that they will fall back, blaming the chief, whom their mistrust makes responsible for the check. It is, then, not surprising that when soldiers find the occasion they will show forth somewhat noisily their interest in the general assigned to them.

Heavy rains, making the fords of Bull Run impassable, kept us three days near Centreville. The enemy profited by it, to destroy the railroad, burning the ties and bending the rails which they could not carry away. We had then to repair the destruction before retaking the offensive beyond the Rappahannock, where Lee had retired. The work was done with remarkable rapidity. A fortnight sufficed to complete it. As the work advanced, we changed camp, and oftener still as far as our division was concerned. General French appeared to take pleasure in having us move. The hurrahs for General Sickles yet sounded in his ears.

At Bristoe Station, Broad Run was crossed and recrossed three times by our men, with the water to their waists. At Catlett Station, we were continually moved without any cause or reason, sometimes in the middle of the night. In such case, General French remained invisible in his tent, where no one was admitted to

disturb his mysterious slumbers. One night, General Birney, tired of his fantasies, neglected to obey. He appealed to Philip sober, who, when morning came, did not venture to ask why his orders of the evening before had not been obeyed — if he even remembered having given the orders.

On November 6, the railroad being completed, General Meade resolved to retake the offensive by forcing the passage of the Rappahannock at two points at once. The Fifth and the Sixth Corps were ordered to attack at the point where the railroad crosses the river; the First, Second, and Third Corps, at Kelly's Ford, a few miles below. The movement commenced at daylight on the 7th.

The right column encountered the greatest opposition. A division of Ewell's corps held a strong position at that point, defended by a redoubt and intrenchments, protected by the fire of several batteries of artillery. A vigorous charge of two brigades of the Sixth Corps, commanded by General Russell, decided the matter. The redoubt was carried. With it the enemy lost fifteen hundred prisoners and four guns, without counting the dead and wounded.

At Kelly's Ford, the obstacles were less serious. The attack was intrusted to my brigade, which, for that occasion, was reënforced by the Twentieth Indiana, and the Second Battalion of sharpshooters. We arrived on the wooded heights, which command the river, without giving the alarm to the enemy. It was not until they saw us descending to the river banks that they ran to throw themselves into the intrenchments which defended the ford, at the same time advancing a battery; but General Birney had already put some guns in position above a bend in the river, which took it while in motion, and compelled it to turn away from them.

Then it presented its side to some other guns in position on my right, which were only awaiting this opportunity to open fire. Assaulted from both sides at once, it was soon reduced to silence, and compelled to retire.

During the cannonade I had thrown forward the sharpshooters, commanded by Colonel Tripp, to the edge of the river, and behind them my other regiments, whom I held massed in rear of a roll in the ground near by. Colonel Tripp had improvised some protection for two or three of his companies, on the most elevated part of the bank, from which they kept up so deadly a fire on the opposite intrenchments that the enemy did not dare to show himself, except occasionally for a chance shot. Profiting by this advantage, the rest of the battalion entered resolutely into the water. This was the signal. I pushed forward behind them, followed by the Fortieth New York, the Twentieth Indiana, the Third and the Fifth Michigan, and the One Hundred and Tenth Pennsylvania. Even before I had reached the opposite bank, my skirmishers, led by Lieutenants Aschmann and Garrison, had carried the first line of rifle-pits, and planted their flags on the parapets. The second line did not hold out long; then, without stopping, we advanced on the village on the run. The enemy, who did not expect us there so soon, offered little resistance, and surrendered with a good grace.

They were principally North Carolina troops, who appeared to me to be more glad than sorry to throw down their arms and accoutrements in order to run to the rear. After this, there remained only a light work in form of a demilune, isolated in the middle of a field. It was occupied by fifty men, who preferred to let themselves be taken to flying across the open ground. This affair did not cost us a hundred men, and brought us in more than five hundred prisoners. Personally, it

brought me the honor, along with General Russell, of being mentioned in the order of the day of the army, wherein we received the thanks of the general commanding, and an expression of the thanks of the President.

The greater part of the enemy's forces had retired into a wood, which it abandoned during the night. The next day there was no opposition to our march, and towards noon the whole army was reunited on the plain of Brandy Station. The pursuit began immediately in order of battle. The country was admirably fitted for it. It is almost the only part of Virginia where the open land extends to any distance without obstacles. So that this grand military deployment offered one of the finest spectacles which could be imagined. Let one picture to himself two army corps marching on the centre, in line of battle, in mass, the artillery in the intervals and on the roads, the flanks covered by two divisions in column, the skirmishers in advance, the cavalry on the two wings; the reserves covering the wagons in the rear; and all this mass of humanity in perfect order, rising or falling gradually according to the undulations of the plain, with the noise of the cannon, which did not cease throwing projectiles on the rearguard of the Confederates in retreat. Such was the moving picture which was given us to enjoy during that whole afternoon.

The enemy persistently refused the battle we continued to offer him. He only halted after having passed the Rapidan. Our respective positions were thus the same that they had been a month before.

The rebels had reckoned that we would halt on the line of the Rappahannock. In that persuasion, they had begun to build their winter quarters, without imagining that they might be at work for our benefit. Such

was, however, the fact. We found brick and lumber in abundance, and even barracks almost finished, in the camps so hurriedly abandoned by them. This was so much valuable material for us, of which we immediately made good use.

My brigade now encamped on the land of Mr. John Minor Botts, a Virginian, who had played a marked rôle in the old Whig party. He had adroitly manœuvred his bark in the midst of the political storms which immediately preceded the tardy secession of his State. Since then, he had made an opposition to the Richmond government, temperate in reality, but sufficiently noisy in manner to be able to take advantage of it with us, as an evidence of Union sentiments.

This able man had found means to feed at both racks. As soon as he saw us on his vast property, of which a part, it was said, was only a deposit left in his hands, by means of pretended sales, by rebels serving in the armies of the Confederacy, his first care was, naturally, to make as much as possible out of the circumstances. He immediately sought General Meade. He told him, in moving terms, of the persecutions to which he had been subjected on the part of the Confederates, and the devastations his property had had to suffer. On these grounds he demanded the protection of the general commanding, and finished by asking in regard to an indemnity for the losses caused by our troops. General Meade willingly acceded to his requests, and, as my headquarters were the nearest to the house, I received orders to call on Mr. Botts, and agree with him as to what could be done.

To my great surprise, I found a house surrounded by grounds in good order, and where no mark of the war was apparent, except in the reduction of the household service. The white fences were intact. Inside of them

the sheep grazed, the turkeys gobbled, the chickens clucked, the geese ate the grass, and the plump ducks slept with their bills under their wings. This was a rural sight which we had long before lost the habit of seeing in Virginia. My aids were not less surprised than myself, and it appeared to us that, however great a victim the honorable Mr. Botts had been, he had nevertheless succeeded in saving some valuable remains from the shipwreck. A stairway of several steps led us to a piazza, covered by the projection of a Greek front, supported by high columns. The door was opened to us, and we passed into the house.

The parlor where we were received was furnished without taste, but solidly comfortable, and where nothing was wanting. On the wall a few of the pretentious daubs which the want of artistic intelligence of the South accepts as pictures were growing yellow. In fine, everything appeared to be in its usual condition, and nothing indicated that the cheap carpets had been soiled by the boots of the soldiery. The master of the house soon made his appearance, with the air that Marius must have borne when confronted by the legionary who was ordered to put him to death; but when I had made him acquainted with the object of my visit, modifying his expression, he took the initiative, and began his oration.

As I had not come there for flowers of rhetoric, but on the matter of trees cut down and fences burned, I hastened to give a more practical turn to the conversation. We had not the less to listen to the reading of a letter destined for the *Richmond Examiner*, and in which Mr. Botts complained bitterly of the excesses committed by the Confederate army to his prejudice. He inveighed particularly in the letter against General Stuart, who, little susceptible to the charms of elo-

quence, had, it appeared, caused the arrest of the orator, in order to rid himself of his complaints, which were either too long or too strong. But where Mr. Botts lacked cunning was in the communication to me of the reclamation for damages and injuries addressed to the rebel government. It appeared to me that to hold out one hand to Richmond and the other to Washington might be adroit; but to let me know of it was, at least, useless, especially when certain damages, which I knew had been the work of the enemy, were unjustly laid to the charge of our troops.

The conclusion was: firstly, we were to furnish a detail of a hundred men, with wagons, to put up the fences, protected by which the flocks of Mr. Botts could graze; that afterwards a special commission was appointed to assess the damage and present a report on the question of indemnity. As I left the army a few days later, I am ignorant of what happened.

In the month of September preceding, a question had been raised in reference to my position in the army, by a colonel aspiring to take my place. The question was whether the regulations authorized my retention on the rolls after the transfer of the men of the Fifty-fifth to the Fortieth, and the discharge of the Thirty-eighth, regiments, which I had successively commanded. Although the question had been decided in my favor, explicitly at army headquarters, and implicitly at the War Department, which had not given heed to the demand, I believed that I had done enough to get out of a contested position, by a promotion to the grade of brigadier-general, which had been asked for me five times within a year, by all my superiors. Consequently, on the 13th of November, the campaign being finished, and the army getting ready to go into winter quarters, I wrote to the adjutant-general to that effect.

The President had decided at that time to put off all promotions until after the assembling of Congress. It followed that my order of muster out as colonel preceded by several weeks my nomination as brigadier-general. This interval, lengthened by the habitual delays of confirmation by the Senate, gave me the privilege of passing in New York and Washington a winter much more agreeable than it would have been under a tent.

I will add here that, a few days after my departure, the army crossed the Rapidan, in accordance with a well conceived plan of General Meade, to envelop Ewell's corps, separately encamped, several miles away from Hill's. The undertaking was resultless, on account of several mishaps, notably the mistakes of General French, who, on the first day, delayed the march of the army considerably by his slowness in reaching the point assigned to him, and, on the second day, wandered so far from the road that he brought up against the enemy's line, instead of making connection with the Second Corps, as he had been ordered to do. This untoward event cost us seven hundred men in the Third Corps, amongst whom was Colonel Tripp, of the sharpshooters, who was killed in the engagement. The two corps of the enemy, whom we should have surprised, and fought separately, united immediately, and fortified so strongly and so thoroughly that on the third day the attack was recognized as too hazardous to be attempted.

An instance of moving significance took place there. On the morning of the 20th, Warren was to attack the rebel right with the Second Corps, reënforced by two divisions of the Third. When, at daylight, the men, formed in line of battle, saw in front of them the marshy borders of Mine Run, the tangled abatis of

fallen trees, and the intrenchments, in front of which the enemy's artillery crossed its fire, knowing that the impossible was asked from them, they thought of Fredericksburg, and, without excitement or murmurs, each one wrote his name, his age, and his place of birth on a little square of paper, which he pinned on his breast.

There is nothing more affecting in its heroic simplicity than this silent and resigned protest of soldiers ordered to death uselessly, who know it, and who yet, ready to immolate themselves to duty, confine their protest to pencilling beforehand their modest epitaphs.

Happily, General Warren did not allow the sacrifice to be made. Despising the disparaging criticisms to which he was exposing himself, he took it upon himself to suspend the assault, and sent one of his aids to explain the reasons to the general commanding. The latter immediately countermanded the orders under which Sedgwick was to attack the left and Birney the centre of the enemy's positions. The opportunity was lost; the advanced season did not allow the undertaking of any more new operations. The army recrossed the Rapidan, to take up again, and this time permanently, its Culpeper winter quarters.

This period of inaction was only broken by several cavalry movements, the most important of which, towards the end of February, was an attempt to deliver those of our prisoners whom the barbarism of the rebel government had abandoned to all the tortures of cold and hunger, on an island in the James, in front of Richmond. General Kilpatrick, who commanded the expedition, penetrated to the second line of the defences of the rebel capital, but could go no further. A part of the force, led by Colonel Dahlgren, had been led astray far from its road by the treason of a guide, and be-

trayed into an ambuscade, where a large number were killed, wounded, or taken prisoners. The guide was hanged to a tree, with a stout rope; but the death of that wretch did not restore to life the young colonel, whose body lay among the dead. As to the prisoners, they were sent far distant to the south, where they were to perish by thousands, victims to unheard-of barbarities, of which I will give an account elsewhere.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ULYSSES S. GRANT, LIEUTENANT-GENERAL.

Condition of the rebellion at the beginning of 1864 — General Grant in the West — The capture of Vicksburg — Capitulation of Port Hudson — Victory of Missionary Ridge — Grant appointed lieutenant-general — His portrait — His stay at Washington — Reorganization of the Army of the Potomac — Official statement of the land forces of the United States — How I came to be appointed to the command of the garrison and defences of New York.

THE year 1864 was recognized everywhere as the one which must decide the result of the war. In the North, as in the South, all agreed on this point.

During three years the rebellion had not ceased to gradually fall back further and further from the accomplishment of its designs. In the West it had been driven out of the central States, and, in consequence of defeat after defeat, having lost the line of the Mississippi, it had been cut in two so completely that for the use of the government at Richmond the States and Territories beyond the river were afterward as though they did not exist. In the East, where it had concentrated its best forces, and where its best generals had not found their equals in ability amongst their opponents, even its successes had been but negative, more onerous on them than our reverses had been on us. In fact, the Army of the Potomac had been for the Confederates the stone of Sisyphus. Twice had they rolled it back, once from the borders of the James to those of the Antietam, and again from the banks of the Rappahannock to the heights of Gettysburg, only

to be twice overwhelmed. The third time their force had failed them half-way, near Centreville; and now they were worn out with holding their enemy on the Rapidan, whence he was always threatening to spring upon their capital.

How long could their resistance endure? A year at the most. For these reasons: —

The South was at the end of its resources, and it was not in the power of a few speculators interested in English blockade-runners to renew them. Supported by her negroes, she had made war, and could yet do so, without money or credit; but not without armies. She had still two armies remaining, who were all that the levy *en masse* could furnish. Behind them there was no more population to recruit from or renew them. Already, to fill up its ranks, the revolutionary government of Richmond had, according to the strong expression of Grant, "robbed the cradle and the grave." It had forced into the ranks even old men and children. This might suffice for still another campaign; but afterwards? These gone, — and men are quickly used up, — all that was possible was done. The rebellion, then, had only a last hand to play.

In order that they might try one more chance, they must maintain the war until after the presidential election, which took place in November; for the military campaign of the rebels in arms in the South had to correspond with the electoral campaign of their Northern allies. There was entire coöperation, united action, between the two wings. So that, if the first gained any advantage in the field, the second would magnify the account, using every means to that effect, which the usual agitation customary in times of general election would enable them to do to advantage. By uniting certain selfish interests, and rallying those whose ambi-

tion had been disappointed, by exciting personal discontent, they could have great effect upon the people by giving rise to a feeling of weariness of the war, aversion to new sacrifices, and lead them to a bartering away of principles by the lure of so-called compromises. If, by such operations as these, cunningly carried on, they could succeed in getting accepted, as Democratic candidate for the Presidency, a man imbued with their views, all the resources of the opposition would come into their hands, and the election might assure the triumph of their ideas.

This triumph would have been either the supremacy of the South in a new union, reconstituted to their profit, or a distinct confederation, composed at least of the cotton States, if the North refused to release the Central States. In either case, it brought ruin to the Republic, humiliation to democratic ideas, the putting back of civilization, and the destruction of liberty.

In the North very different views prevailed. During three years the blood of her citizens had flowed in streams on the fields of battle, and the public credit was stretched to fill the yawning gulf of expenditure. It was time to make a finish, not by a shameful and useless compromise, but by a final and unconditional triumph. To accomplish this it was necessary, as much as possible, to reform abuses, repair errors, and correct the faults which had too long prolonged the war. The armies must be strengthened and restored to life by freeing them from the enervating influence of the creatures of intrigue and politics, and made more effective by giving them only capable and meritorious generals to command them. Above all, a man must be called to the supreme command of all the land forces, in position to support his authority by the greatness of his services and the brilliancy of his success, and capa-

ble of directing the operations of the different armies with a unity which had heretofore been wanting.

One man only united all these conditions: General U. S. Grant. During the course of two years his name had continually grown greater in renown by the continued successes of the Western armies. The battles he had fought had had a character of vigor and great tenacity; the victories he had won had always been fruitful in great results. He had conceived extraordinary enterprises, and executed wonderful works. In this respect, the history of Grant's campaigns on the Mississippi will remain as the most curious illustration of the American character and American genius applied to the art of war. What we did in the East under his command did not afford anything new or particularly different from what is done in the wars of the old world.

In the month of July, 1863, the taking of Vicksburg put the seal to his renown. Vicksburg was a position which nature and art had made so strong that it was generally regarded as impregnable, and such was its importance that Jefferson Davis himself had publicly announced that it should be held at all hazards, if he had to employ all the forces and all the resources of the Confederacy. As the place was inapproachable from the front, other combinations than a direct attack were necessary to reduce it. Sherman was sent at first to take it in reverse, by way of the Yazoo River, and he failed. Grant undertook then to cut a canal, which should connect two bends of the Mississippi, in order to send through them the gunboats out of reach of the enemy's guns. He had to give up the attempt.

His plan was to lead his army by the right bank of the river, some sixty miles below the citadel of the South, cross the river near Bruinsburg, plant himself

entirely in the enemy's country, and, following up the left bank, to attack the place by its only vulnerable side. It was very fine and very bold in conception. It was still finer and still bolder in execution.

Not having been able to make his canal project successful, Grant resolved to send his gunboats down the river, past the Vicksburg batteries. Admiral Porter was a man well fitted to conduct this bold enterprise. He succeeded in a dark night, without any loss except that of one steamer, and injuries, more or less serious, to a few of the others. Now Grant could carry out his plans.

At Port Gibson, where he crossed the river with his army, he met the enemy and whipped him. At Grand Gulf he forced him to retire, driving him under the fire of his gunboats, and then pursued him to the rear of Vicksburg. On the 12th of May he obtained another victory, at Raymond; on the 14th, General Johnston is beaten, and the city of Jackson, capital of the State of Mississippi, falls into Grant's hands, with twenty guns. General Pemberton is beaten in his turn, on the 16th, at Baker's Creek, where he loses four thousand men and twenty-nine guns. On the next day, the 17th, at the passage of Big Black River, he sustains a new loss, of twenty-six hundred men and seventeen pieces of artillery. On the 18th he retires to Vicksburg, which is then immediately invested. Six weeks later, in spite of the vain efforts of Johnston to relieve him, Pemberton, short of provisions and ammunition, was himself forced to surrender to the conqueror, and to deliver up to him, with the place, nearly thirty-two thousand prisoners, two hundred and thirty-four pieces of artillery, and seventy thousand muskets. As a necessary consequence of this triumph of Grant's, Port Hudson surrendered four days later, adding seven thousand men

and fifty pieces of artillery to the material losses of the enemy, who had besides, in the same week, left thirty thousand men on the field of battle at Gettysburg.

This series of operations carried on with as much perseverance as energy; these obstacles overcome on all sides; these operations carried on by every means; these battles following battles; these victories leading to victories; and this continuance of efforts, never satisfied while anything remains to be done: all this is General Grant.

In the month of October, having replaced General Rosecrans at Chattanooga, Tennessee, he found himself in front of General Bragg, whose forces were intrenched in a formidable position on Missionary Ridge. As soon as his army had been sufficiently reënforced by the arrival of Sherman, whom he had called from Vicksburg, and of Hooker, who brought him the Eleventh and Twelfth Corps detached from the Army of the Potomac, he marched out to the attack of this new opponent on the heights, where the latter believed he was impregnable. Not only did he dislodge him, but he threw him back in full rout to Dalton, in Georgia, inflicting upon him a disastrous loss of eighteen thousand men and a large number of guns.

After this new victory, gained on November 25, Grant meditated already the capture of Atlanta, and that brilliant campaign through the whole of Georgia, which was, at a later date, a subject of astonishment and admiration in the old as well as in the new world. But he had to leave to General Sherman the execution of that grand conception, for he had been called to Washington, to a still more arduous task.

The grade of lieutenant-general did not exist in the American army. It had been conferred, only exceptionally and by brevet, on General Scott, the conqueror

of Mexico. On March 2, 1864, Congress reëstablished it in favor of General Grant, and the President added to it that of commander-in-chief of all the armies of the United States.

It was at the same time recompensing him for great services rendered and laying him under obligations to render still greater. General Grant accepted the position. The people experienced a profound joy and an absolute confidence. They understood that the direction of the war, intrusted to such hands, was the decree of death, in a short time, to the rebellion.

I had the opportunity, for the first time, to meet General Grant in Washington, on this occasion. All his pictures, spread throughout the world by photography and engraving, resemble him. He is a man rather below than above medium height. His bearing is simple; his deportment reserved as are his manners. His sobriety of language has passed into a proverb. Never has man better followed the maxim that, if "speech is of silver, silence is golden." As in all popular heroes, people have endeavored to find something extraordinary in his features. But what is really seen there is an expression of tranquil firmness, something like the consciousness of force in repose. His features are regular; his forehead broad. In his clear and intelligent eyes the glance betrays generally a cold clearness.

It follows, as a matter of course, that, on his arrival in Washington, he was the lion of the day, the man whom every one wished to see, whose hand every one wished to grasp. The Americans are terribly enthusiastic towards whoever is the object of their enthusiasm. They cause him to undergo moral and physical trials which only a constitution robust both in body and mind can endure. There were nothing but deputations —

sometimes they deputed themselves — with the accompaniment of forced harangues; individual presentations and hand-shaking; serenades by night; receptions by day, etc. General Grant no longer belonged to himself; they left him neither respite nor repose. So he had no sooner arrived at Washington than he was in haste to depart. The great task which had been intrusted to him was nearer his heart than all the ovations. He was in haste to put all his time to profit in preparing to accomplish it.

The war was now concentrated on two points where the last two armies of the rebellion were lying. In the West, that of Johnston, fortified at Dalton, on the borders of Georgia; in the East, that of Lee, intrenched in Virginia, behind the line of the Rapidan. Both had been reënforced by all the contingents it had been possible to send to them. The Confederacy had drained its last drop of blood to swell its last stake. Against Johnston, Grant pitted Sherman, at the head of all the forces available between the Alleghanies and the Mississippi. He established his own headquarters with the Army of the Potomac, left still under the command of General Meade. He knew that it was that army which must give the finishing stroke to the rebellion, and he neglected nothing to assure to it all the chances possible in this duel to the death. The War Department, for its part, put everything in motion to fully coöperate to the same end.

The five corps of the Army of the Potomac were consolidated into three, under the command of the three generals recommended more than all the others by their services, their experience, and their capacity: Hancock, Warren, and Sedgwick.

Hancock was placed at the head of the Second Corps, composed of four divisions: those of Barlow and Gibbon,

belonging to the old organization, and those of Birney and Mott, taken from the Third Corps, which ceased to exist as an organization.

Warren continued to command the Fifth Corps, in which was incorporated what remained of the First Corps; the whole formed in four divisions, commanded by Generals Griffin, Robinson, Crawford, and Wadsworth.

The command of Sedgwick, composed, as heretofore, of the Sixth Corps, comprised in addition the old division brought to the Third Corps by French. It consisted of three divisions, commanded by Wright, Getty, and Prince.

Finally, the Ninth Corps, commanded by Burnside, was recalled from Tennessee, to coöperate with the Army of the Potomac, in which it was soon to be incorporated. It had three divisions, under the orders of Generals Potter, Wilcox, and Crittenden, to which was added a fourth, composed entirely of colored troops, and commanded by General Ferrero.

These four army corps, together with the cavalry corps (henceforth under the command of General Sheridan, brought from the West to take that important position), formed an effective force of about one hundred and forty thousand men. It was much larger than Lee could bring against us, but the latter had the advantage of the defensive, to which the nature of the country in Virginia offers inexhaustible resources.

Besides the Army of the Potomac, General Grant had for his operations against Richmond two other auxiliary armies, which were to act in coöperation with it. One, about thirty thousand strong, was assembled at Fortress Monroe, under the command of General Butler. It was to ascend the James, directly threaten Richmond, and, by establishing itself at City Point, in-

tercept all the reënforcements that Lee could draw from the Carolinas. The other, commanded by General Sigel, and numbering about seventeen to eighteen thousand men, occupied Virginia, beyond the Blue Ridge. His mission was to protect the Shenandoah valley, threaten Lee's communications with the West, and stop all aid which might be sent him from that quarter. Banks, in Louisiana, and Steele, in Arkansas, received each his special instructions. In Tennessee, Sherman, who united under his command the three armies of the Cumberland, the Tennessee, and the Ohio, had had his plan drawn up for a long time. The campaign was to open in all quarters, by the simultaneous movement of the armies.

As the truth of the statements as to the great proportions of the war has been called in question by the press in Europe, I will take from the report of the Secretary of War the official account of the forces which the United States had on foot on the 1st of May, 1864.

The total number, including the troops of all arms, — but, of course, not including the militia, — amounted to *nine hundred and seventy thousand seven hundred and ten men*, distributed as follows: —

Present under arms	662,345
On detached service in the different departments	109,348
In the army hospitals	41,266
In the general hospitals, or at home wounded	75,978
Absent on leave, or prisoners of war	66,290
Absent without leave	15,483
Total	970,710

The *six hundred and sixty-two thousand three hundred and forty-five men* present under arms were distributed as follows: —

Department of Washington	42,124
Army of the Potomac	141,160
Department of Virginia and North Carolina	59,139
" of the South	18,165
" " Gulf	61,866
" " Arkansas	23,666
" " Tennessee	74,074
" " Missouri	15,770
" " Northwest	5,295
" " Kansas	4,798
" " Cumberland	119,948
" " Ohio	35,416
" " North	9,546
" " Western Virginia	30,782
" " East	2,828
" " Susquehanna	2,970
" " Middle	5,627
" " New Mexico	3,454
" " Pacific	5,141
Headquarters of the military division of the Mississippi	476
Total	662,345

My name had been sent in to the Senate for promotion on January 5, but, the Senate being occupied with more important matters, I was not confirmed until April 8, too late to obtain an immediate command in the army.

On May 2, I received my commission at New York, where I had gone to wait for it. A few days later, I met, on Broadway, an officer of my acquaintance, who accosted me, asking me if I had seen General Peck. — "He is in the city for twenty-four hours," he said to me, "and he would be very glad to shake hands with you. I have just left him on the way to General Dix's quarters, where he must be at this moment."

The pleasant memories of the friendly relations which attached me to the general under whose orders I had served my first campaign made it at once a duty and a pleasure to call on him. I immediately made my way to headquarters, without suspecting that destiny had

anything to do with the sentiment which took me there. I found General Peck there. Our interview was most cordial. After the first greetings, our memories inevitably turned backward; my old brigade commander had just expressed in the most generous terms his appreciation of my services in the Peninsula, when General Dix interrupted him. "Ah!" said he, "here is the man you were looking after."

The remark related to a subject of conversation discussed before my arrival, and of which I was ignorant.

"That is true," replied General Peck; "and you could not find a better one."

Then General Dix, turning towards me, said, "You have received your commission of brigadier-general?"

"Four or five days ago."

"And you are awaiting orders?"

"Yes, general."

"Ah, well! You will not wait long."

He struck the bell. The orderly appeared.

"Ask Colonel Van Buren to step here."

General Peck smiled, and I looked in vain for an explanation of the enigma, when the chief of staff entered the room.

"Colonel," said General Dix, "will you please draw up an order assigning to General de Trobriand the command of the garrison and defences of New York. As soon as you have delivered it to him, he will enter on his duties, in order that General Stannard can report without delay at his new position."

A quarter of an hour afterward, General Stannard turned over to me the command in which I succeeded him. He was in a hurry to join the army, and find new opportunity to distinguish himself, as he had done at Gettysburg, little thinking that he would soon return leaving an arm before Petersburg.

The measure taken so hurriedly by General Dix was approved by the War Department, and I was retained at the First Division of the Department of the East.

The command which was intrusted to me would have been, in time of peace, the most enviable of all to which I could have aspired. It was a very important position for an officer of my grade, for it embraced fourteen forts and batteries, armed with eighteen hundred pieces of artillery, and defended by three regiments of regulars, a regiment of militia, enrolled for garrison service, and several companies of artillery. The government accorded me in this a mark of its confidence, so much greater in that, born a Frenchman, I was an American by naturalization only. Notwithstanding, this kind of service would have been more suitable for some general necessarily kept away from the army by his wounds or by the shattered state of his health. As for me, who had never had a scratch, and whose health had never been more robust than since I had paid my tribute to the pestilential climate of the Peninsula, — it would have been a much more appropriate place for me to have been making the campaign than to be passing the days in my office, signing reports, or on a steam yacht, visiting the forts from the outer bay, at Sandy Hook, to the entrance of the sound, at Throgg's Neck.

However, whether for good or for evil, it was not given to me to take part in the opening scenes of General Grant's campaign in Virginia. I will therefore limit my account of that campaign to a summary relation of that series of battles and terrible conflicts which mark the march of the Army of the Potomac from the banks of the Rapidan to those of the Appomattox before Petersburg.

CHAPTER XXVII.

BATTLE AFTER BATTLE.

Battle of the Wilderness — Volleys *à outrance* in the thickets — The diverse fortunes — Death of General Wadsworth — Fight in the midst of the flames — Result — Battle of Spottsylvania — Death of General Sedgwick — Attack on the intrenchments — Success of the Second Corps — Twenty hours of conflict — Night movements — Continued battles — Engagement on the North Anna — Cavalry expedition — Sheridan under the walls of Richmond — Death of General Stuart — Battle of Cold Harbor — Account rendered of one month of campaign.

On May 4, 1864, the Army of the Potomac crossed the Rapidan, without opposition, below the enemy's positions, and, turning the Confederates' right, entered into that almost impracticable region known by the name of the Wilderness. Grant's design was to get in the rear of Lee, but the latter did not give him the time. He immediately left his intrenched positions, not to fall back on Richmond, but to fall directly on the army, which, in its march, presented its flank to him. Ewell's and Hill's corps advanced by two parallel roads, and at five o'clock in the morning struck the centre of the Fifth Corps (Warren). The attack suspended the movement, and the battle was commenced with great vigor on both sides. Ewell's advance guard was at first repulsed and driven back; but, reënforcements soon reaching him, he retook the offensive, and the Fifth Corps, which was engaged alone, lost all the ground it had gained and more. Hancock, who had the advance, and who was already considerably beyond Chancellorsville, was hurriedly recalled to form on Warren's left. Sedgwick,

who brought up the rear, was already in position on the right.

Some hours passed away in each party feeling of each other in this labyrinth of thick woods, where often one could see nothing until he touched it. This gave Hancock time to arrive and stop Hill's advance. The battle there was still violent and desperate. The first general who was killed was Alexander Hays, who had replaced me in the command of my old brigade. During three or four hours the Second Corps fought furiously, without succeeding in forcing the enemy to fall back from the midst of the thicket, where a bayonet charge could not be made, nor artillery used. The night separated the combatants in the position where they had begun the fight. It was to be renewed in the morning. Only the battle was to take on still greater proportions, in consequence of the arrival of Burnside on one side and Longstreet on the other.

Lee attacked first at daylight on the 6th, on Sedgwick's right. The attack was repulsed without great trouble, and almost immediately, Warren and Hancock having advanced their front, the battle extended along the whole line. Bear in mind that it was in no respect like any other battle. The men fought, as it were, feeling their way. On that rough *terrain*, rocky, hilly, covered everywhere with a network of low vegetation and dwarf trees, no precision of movement was possible. The general direction of the two armies was well enough defined, but the dispositions in detail necessarily escaped the control of the superior officers. The colonels even could rarely overlook at once all the companies of their regiments, and in the brigades it was difficult for the right to know what was going on at the left, and vice versa. They advanced through the woods with difficulty. The adversaries came upon each other

twenty or thirty paces apart, — further than that, they could not see each other, — and on both sides they fired desperately until they saw no one in front of them. Were the lines broken, or were they mingled together? That could hardly be told. Wounded men of Birney's division were taken prisoners while going to the rear, by a regiment of the enemy, which had wandered astray. I have the fact from officers who came near meeting the same fate, and who could not tell me how the regiment had got into that position, or how it got out.

One can understand that the battle was fought everywhere with so much the more desperation that what was happening at one point was not known, and was consequently without influence, elsewhere. Those who had the best of it found a thousand hindrances to their pursuing their advantage; and those who had the worst of it found a thousand facilities for escaping.

Notwithstanding everything, when, at five o'clock in the morning, Hancock threw forward the two divisions of Mott and Birney, supported by Getty's division of the Sixth Corps and Wadsworth's division of the Fifth, the attack was pushed with so much vigor that Hill's corps, on which it fell, was broken and thrown back in disorder to near Parker's store, a distance of more than a mile and a half. Unhappily, Longstreet came up at this moment, and, in spite of every effort, the Second Corps could not get any further. Soon even, pressed more and more by superior forces, it lost ground, and ended by being forced back to its first position, leaving among the dead General Wadsworth, one of the bravest soldiers, one of the noblest citizens, and one of the best men whose loss the country has had to lament during this war. Not far from Wadsworth dying lay Longstreet, severely wounded.

On the centre and on the right, the battle went on

without any great result on either side. The force of the fighting was not at that point, but more to the left, where it was soon to recommence with a new fury. Lee had himself taken command of Longstreet's corps, and, when he had rallied Hill's corps, he threw the two together against the improvised intrenchments of the Second Corps, along a crossroad called the Brock road. The assailants were stopped, at first, by a fierce fire, which did great damage in their ranks ; but soon a fire caught in the woods ; the wind carried the smoke and flames against the end of our line, which was soon enveloped. The enemy took advantage of the accident to charge home at that point. Then they literally fought in the midst of the fire, the flames licking the legs of the combatants. The Confederates were successful in forcing the intrenchments, when the prompt arrival of a brigade commanded by General Carroll repulsed them with so much vigor that the attack was abandoned, after having cost the assailants terrible losses, as evidenced by the number of dead and wounded left on the ground.

The day ended as it had begun, by an attack by Ewell on the right of the Sixth Corps. This time, it was more serious, and succeeded better than before. Two brigades were beaten, and the two generals commanding them, Seymour and Shaler, were captured while bravely striving to rally their men. However, the evil was soon repaired, and the enemy was forced to fall back without having gained anything at that point, except a quantity of prisoners.

This two-days battle left the victory undecided between the two armies. Meade had succeeded in maintaining his position against the repeated attacks of the enemy. Lee had succeeded in inflicting on us a greater loss than his own. On our side, in fact, it amounted to

about eighteen thousand men, while, according to their reports, the Confederates' was scarcely more than half that number. Total loss, from twenty-eight to thirty thousand; and this was but the commencement.

The next day, May 7, Grant was ready to continue the battle; but Lee had enough for the time being. He had retired behind his intrenchments, where it would have been a mistake to attack him. The first plan was then resumed, and, when night came on, the army was put in motion for Spottsylvania Court House. The enemy, who was on the alert, was soon aware of the movement. He immediately began his march by a road parallel to the one we were following. As the distance he marched over was less for him than for us, he reached the goal first. So that at eight o'clock in the morning, when Robinson's division, which led the column, debouched from the woods upon the open fields near Spottsylvania, it found itself confronted by Longstreet's corps, and was thrown into disorder. Its commander, struck in the knee by a ball, lost a leg in the fight. Soon Griffin's, Crawford's, and Cutler's divisions, coming hurriedly on the ground in succession, in their turn drove back the enemy to a height where he had just taken position. There they halted, to await the Second Corps, which was closely following the Fifth. Hancock having been retained by General Meade to cover the general movement, Sedgwick came up first, but several hours late.

Whatever were the other military qualities of General Sedgwick, it could not be said that he was distinguished by the quickness of his *coup d'œil* or the promptness of his decisions. So that he allowed the whole afternoon to pass away in partial demonstrations, rather feeling of the enemy than endeavoring to dislodge him. The latter profited by the respite, to straighten his skilfully

chosen position, so that on the 9th the two armies were found confronting each other.

This day passed away in preparations and in movements to install the corps in the following order: on the left, Burnside; in the centre, Sedgwick and Warren; on the right, Hancock. Except this, the operations were limited to the fire of sharpshooters, which unfortunately lost to us General Sedgwick, killed while he personally overlooked the placing of a battery of several pieces in position. His death was much mourned in the Sixth Corps, where he was greatly beloved, and in the army, where he was esteemed as much for the nobleness of his character, and for his patriotic devotion, as for his abilities as a soldier.

On the 10th the day began by an advance movement of Hancock. After having crossed a branch of the Po without difficulty, he continued his march, and had already struck the enemy's lines when two of his divisions were recalled to take part in an assault along Warren's front. Shortly after, Barlow's division, left alone in front of much superior forces, was obliged to fall back, and ended by rejoining the other two, when there occurred one of those unhappy attacks which often during the war cost us so dearly and brought us so little.

It was always the same story: — Formidable positions bristling with artillery, covered with intrenchments, protected by inextricable abatis, defended by a solid and numerous army. The result was what might have been foreseen. Twice the columns of attack of the Fifth and Second Corps were sprung forward through all the obstacles; twice were they driven back, bruised, cut up, leaving, in the two attempts, from five to six thousand men dead or wounded, on the ground they had not been able to wrest from the enemy. Among the dead was General Rice, a fine and brave officer of the Fifth Corps.

At one point only, in front of the Sixth Corps, a brigade, commanded by General Upton, penetrated the intrenchments, and with the assistance of a second brigade, led by General Russell, captured a thousand prisoners and a few guns. But the failure of the principal attack did not allow the advantage to be followed up, and the troops who had been so successful had to return to our lines when night came on.

Seven days had passed since the Army of the Potomac had entered on the campaign by crossing the Rapidan; seven days of continual and desperate fighting. This bloody week had not brought victory, and it had cost us 29,410 men.

The enemy's position at Spottsylvania had, it seemed, been chosen and made ready at the time of the Chancellorsville campaign, which explains the strength and importance of his intrenchments. However, some vulnerable place must be found. Having failed at one point did not prove that we could not succeed at another. At all events, Grant resolved to make the attempt without delay.

On the 11th, Hancock received orders to leave his position on the right wing, during the night, to form in order of attack between Burnside and Wright, who had succeeded Sedgwick in the command of the Sixth Corps. In a dark night, and during a pouring rain, the movement was promptly executed, and, when the first glimmer commenced to light up the gray mist spread through the atmosphere, the Second Corps was ready in the following order: Birney's division, deployed in two lines and supported by Mott's division (these two divisions were the remains of the old Third Corps); then Barlow's division, also in two lines, but by battalion, in mass; finally, Gibbon's division, in reserve.

At a given signal all moved silently forward. Where

they would find the enemy they did not know; under what conditions they were about to attack him they knew no better. But they marched forward noiselessly, with hurried step, and hoping for a surprise. Suddenly they come upon the rebel pickets; they pass over them without firing a shot. The intrenchments are before them, forming a salient angle, and as though asleep in the haze. Then, by a spontaneous burst, in spite of all the orders of the officers for silence, they break into a resounding hurrah, and rush forward on the run. In a moment they are on the enemy's lines, and, in spite of a sharp fire, they leap over them in a few bounds and fall on the defendants with the bayonet. The fight breast to breast was fierce but of short duration. The Confederates were as if inclosed between the traverses in the interior of their intrenchments. Under that avalanche of steel which rolled upon their heads, the bravest could not fight long. They had to die or surrender. They surrendered. Johnson's whole division of Ewell's corps remained in our hands, with twenty or thirty pieces of artillery, and as many flags. General Johnson himself and General Stewart were among the prisoners.

The Second Corps, animated by its success, advanced promptly within the intrenchments carried from the enemy, easily driving back through the woods the force it found before it, until it struck a second line of intrenchments, before which it was compelled to halt, and soon to fall back, under the increasing pressure of the forces pushed rapidly by the enemy to this point. The angle then became the theatre and object of a furious strife.

The fight had become general along the whole line, but, in spite of the attacks of Warren on one side and Burnside on the other, Lee, protected by his intrenchments, was able to continue to strip one part of his

front, to mass the reënforcements on the principal point, and to reëstablish his lost position at all hazards. Meade understood this, and on his side hastened to strongly sustain the Second Corps. Wright arrived first to Hancock's aid, followed by two of Warren's divisions.

The battle continued during the whole day, on the one side to retake and on the other to hold this corner of the works contested with unparalleled desperation. Five times the Confederates returned to the charge. One assault repulsed, they rallied at a short distance, reformed with new troops, and again rushed on the double intrenchments, where our men received the shock with an unshakable firmness.

The narrow crest was alight with the flash of the guns, through which the bayonets were crossed, fierce cries were heard, and where the opposing flags nearly touched each other; and when the human wave was broken against the immovable obstacle, it retired, leaving behind it a heap of bloody corpses clothed in gray. Night came on and the fight still continued. It lasted nearly twenty hours, at the end of which the enemy, finally discouraged as much as exhausted, abandoned the strife, and retired behind a second line of defence, connected with what remained of the first.

General Grant was then able to appreciate how much more arduous the war was in Virginia than anywhere else, and how much greater efforts and greater sacrifices were necessary to win victory in front of his new adversaries than before those over whom he had triumphed in the West. But, if the labors and dangers of the task were of a nature to astonish him, his was not a character to be turned from his purpose. Far from yielding, he became more firm against the obstacles, and, with that obstinate perseverance that nothing could turn

from his goal, during seven days still he sought an opportunity to force the enemy out of his intrenchments. At the same time, to fill up in part a loss of nearly forty thousand men, the result of eight days' fighting, he asked for reënforcements, which were sent to him from Washington.

In order to show how little the week following the seven days of privations, trials, and battles was a week of repose for the troops, I borrow the following passages from the notes of Mr. Swinton, at that time correspondent of the New York *Times* in the Army of the Potomac: —

"May 13. — The battle of the 12th having ended by the retreat of Lee behind an interior line, it was resolved to endeavor to turn his right. In this design, during the night of the 13th, the Fifth Corps received orders to march from the extreme right to the extreme left, in order to attack, in concert with Burnside's corps, on the 14th, at four o'clock in the morning. The bad weather had broken up the roads considerably, and, as the night was of an Egyptian darkness, the march was made only with the greatest difficulty. The river Ny had to be crossed at a ford. On the other side of the river there was no road. They were obliged to cross some fields and a piece of woods where a road was to be cut with the axe. When they were half-way to their destination, so heavy a fog arose that even the numerous fires which had been lighted to guide them ceased to be visible. The men, exhausted by fatigue, wet through in fording the river, and tramping in the mud up to their knees in the darkness, fell asleep all along the road. In addition, the place where the troops were to take position was completely unknown, and, when light appeared and the head of the column arrived on the left of Burnside's corps, near the Fredericksburg

turnpike, the only troops present to execute the projected attack were twelve hundred worn-out men of Griffin's division. It was seven o'clock before General Cutler was able to get together about thirteen hundred men.

"May 14. — The fire of the skirmishers began at six o'clock in the morning. In the southeast was a high hill which completely commanded Warren's position. As this appeared to be occupied only by a few cavalry, a small force of regulars was sent to get possession of it. The horsemen retired, and, while our regulars intrenched, Upton's brigade of the Sixth Corps (which had followed the Fifth) came to relieve them. They had not completely established themselves before a considerable body of the enemy's infantry, from the village of Spottsylvania, advanced against them. The brigade was swept away, and General Meade, who had come to visit the ground, was near being captured. The Sixth Corps then coming up, in the afternoon this important position was retaken and reoccupied, for it is certain that the enemy did not abandon it.

"May 15 and 16. — The removal of the Fifth and the Sixth Corps for this movement left the Second on the extreme right of the line. But on the 15th Hancock had to send Barlow's and Gibbon's divisions on the Fredericksburg road, so that Birney was left to cover Burnside's right, at the end of the general line. As to the other corps, the day passed away in putting everything in order, and gathering together the stragglers, opening the roads and in incessant skirmishing. A new base was established at Acquia Creek, where the wounded and the sick were sent, and from which provisions and forage, of which the army was in need, were brought.

"May 17.— Hancock received orders to lead his com-

mand out of the works which he carried on the 12th, and attack the enemy to-morrow, at daylight, in the intrenchments which he occupies in front of that position. The Sixth Corps is to form on Hancock's right, and assault the enemy's line at the same time. The Ninth Corps is to take part in the attack. Marching by night is yet very difficult.

"May 18.— The troops were in position before daylight. It was hoped to surprise the enemy sleeping; but he had his eyes open, and was protected by acres of impenetrable abatis. At four o'clock Gibbon's and Barlow's divisions moved to the attack in line of brigades. The artillery was posted and intrenched in the first line, and fired over the troops during the engagement. Our troops were received by a fire of both artillery and musketry, which swept the approaches and made great havoc in their ranks. Nevertheless, they continued to advance to the edge of the abatis, which, in connection with a deadly fire, stopped further progress. Many brilliant efforts were made to penetrate the enemy's lines, but without success. At ten o'clock in the morning, the attack showing no chance of succeeding, General Meade suspended the movement."

After so many attempts, as costly as useless, it was necessary to do what might easily have been done in the first place: dislodge Lee from his position without direct attack, but simply by a march by the flank. On the 19th the movement was got ready, when the rebels suddenly took the offensive, to cut our communications with Fredericksburg. Their column was composed of Jackson's old soldiers, now commanded by Ewell, and they found before them only the regiments of heavy artillery, serving as infantry, which General Tyler was bringing from Washington. These brave men had never been under fire, but, if they were as inexperienced

as recruits, they had the bravery of veterans. They marched to meet the enemy with admirable bearing, and repulsed him completely, after a very serious conflict, in which their losses were so much the greater that they exposed themselves the more with a heroic awkwardness. In that engagement they gained instantly their footing in the Army of the Potomac, and the congratulations of the general commanding, who was pleased to bear witness to their good conduct by an order of the day issued especially on their account.

Delayed by this incident for twenty-four hours, the movement of the army did not begin until May 20. It was successfully made to the North Anna River, the passage of which was forced by Hancock, by dislodging the enemy from some works which defended it, while Warren, established without opposition on the south bank, some miles above, brilliantly repulsed the forces of the enemy sent against him. But it was then discovered that Lee had got the start of us, and taken a strong position between the Second and the Fifth Corps. The rough experience of Spottsylvania had somewhat cooled General Grant in regard to direct attacks against fortified positions. Without incurring new sacrifices, he withdrew to the north bank the three corps which had crossed to the other side. This operation was completed without the enemy's knowledge, on the night of May 26, and the army, inclining towards the southeast, took its march towards the Pamunkey. On the evening of the 27th it had passed the river near Hanovertown, where Sheridan, with his cavalry, rejoined it.

On May 9, Sheridan, whose services could not be made useful in the country where the army was then operating, had been sent, with three divisions of cavalry, to cut Lee's communications, and destroy the railroads,

burn the bridges, and threaten the rebel capital itself. He had accomplished all this to the letter, with as much vigor as ability. He had first occupied the station of Beaver Dam, on the North Anna. There he had intercepted several rebel convoys, one of which included four hundred prisoners on the road to Richmond, whom he freed. He had burnt the cars, destroyed the locomotives, consigned to the flames a million and a half of rations, and destroyed ten miles of the railroad. As he had burned the bridge of Beaver Dam, on the North Anna, he did the same for that of Ground Squirrel, on the South Anna. At Ashland Station he burned the depot, a large amount of supplies stored there, six miles of railroad, two bridges, several public buildings, a locomotive, and three trains. During all these operations, the enemy's cavalry had not ceased to harass him; but he had everywhere driven it off with loss, without interrupting his work of destruction. Finally, a few miles from Richmond, near the Yellow Tavern, Stuart having collected his whole force to bar his passage, Sheridan did not hesitate to attack him. The fight was strongly contested on both sides; but the Confederates were beaten, and Stuart lost his life. His death was an irreparable loss to the Confederate government, which had never had a cavalry general equal to him, and never found one to replace him.

As soon as he was free of his adversary, Sheridan marched straight on the fortifications of Richmond.

General Custer, charging at the head of his brigade, penetrated the first line, capturing there a section of artillery and a hundred prisoners. The second line being too strong to carry, Sheridan retired on the Chickahominy, where he burned the railroad bridge. After taking a little rest at Haxall's Landing, and having received from General Butler the provisions he required,

he took the road to meet the Army of the Potomac, which he successfully joined near the Pamunkey.

Lee had no trouble in getting ahead of us, and once more he presented himself to bar the road to Richmond, on the banks of the Chickahominy. Reconnoissances sent out to look for him found him, as usual, solidly established in an intrenched position, from which we could not undertake to dislodge him without resolving beforehand to submit to dreadful sacrifices. On the other hand, it was impossible to risk the passage of the river without having first driven the enemy back on Richmond, and, besides, his proximity to that city prevented any new attempt to interpose by a turning movement between the Confederate capital and the army defending it. The dangerous mistakes of Fredericksburg and Spottsylvania were again resorted to, and General Meade ordered a first attack.

The troops designated were the Sixth Corps, and a reënforcement of sixteen thousand men which had come from Butler's army, under the command of General W. F. Smith. On the 1st of June, at four o'clock in the morning, the two corps charged with great spirit, crossed a wide open ground under a deadly fire, and, at a cost of two thousand men, forced the enemy's line on the edge of a thick wood. But when they tried to penetrate further they struck a second line, much stronger, before which they had to halt. The two corps kept the position they had carried, and where they had made six hundred prisoners. The best result of this engagement was to assure us the possession of Cold Harbor, a place which derived all its importance from the convergence at that point of several main roads.

This half-success encouraged General Meade to attempt more. On the 3d, at daybreak, the whole line

charged across the marshy land, through the abatis and the thickets, and soon after the whole line fell back, repulsed at all points. On the left only, Barlow had entered the enemy's works, and Gibbon reached the parapet, which did not prevent both being driven back, with a loss so much the heavier in that they had advanced so far.

In this unfortunate affair, the enemy could not have lost more than two thousand men. Our loss was thirteen thousand. The number sufficiently shows the bravery displayed by the assailants. They did all that was possible; but the impossible was asked of them!

A month had passed, to a day, since the Army of the Potomac had opened the campaign by crossing the Rapidan. During these thirty-one days and thirty-one nights, it had had severe privations to undergo, fatigues without number to endure, battles terrible and numerous to fight. It had surmounted everything by an indomitable energy, and by a bravery which nothing could discourage. Finally, at the cost of enormous sacrifices, it had reached the Chickahominy, a few miles from Richmond, in that region already too well known by McClellan's disastrous campaign. Can it be said that the result was worth to us all it cost? I think not. More could have been gained, at a much less expense; for along the whole road lay the bodies of our soldiers, — many without burial, — and the military hospitals were overflowing with the sick and wounded. The official reports made the extent of our losses more than sixty thousand men, and yet we were very far from having attained our goal. Besides, both the government and the people began to be alarmed at the sacrifices.

General Grant himself must have been troubled, and thought thereafter to modify a plan of campaign which

had deceived his expectations and disappointed his hopes. As much and more than any one else, he understood that he could have led the army to its present position, sparing the greater part of the blood shed. He had advanced only by a series of turning movements on the enemy's right. Now, he could have easily made them, without delivering the deadly assaults which had cost us so much, wherever the enemy had barred our passage. But it did not enter into his plans to drive back Lee's army to the walls of Richmond intact. His object was first to destroy it; if that could not be done, to so enfeeble and demoralize it, by such a succession of terrible blows, that he would only be able to have the remains of it to put behind the fortifications of the Confederate capital. What he sought, above all, was to force his adversary to some great battle, where he could crush him under the double superiority of numbers and tactics.

But Lee was not the general to so expose himself. Once only had he assumed the offensive to fall on the flank of our army in march, because in the Wilderness the nature of the country offered him advantages quite exceptional. He had, however, failed; and from that day had obstinately confined himself to a prudent defensive, in works long prepared. In that respect, the topographical disposition of the country presented inexhaustible resources. Besides, in prevision of the conflict of which it might be the theatre, this region had been studied with care, and the best positions to stop the march of an army on Richmond had not only been determined on, but prepared by works at least sketched out. Lee ably availed himself of these advantages, and this forced his adversary to sacrifice more than he had counted on, in order to accomplish his designs.

In the impossibility of bringing the Confederate gen-

eral to an open battle, Grant had endeavored to demolish the hostle army by terrible blows, behind the intrenchments, the disadvantages of which to us might be compensated by the superiority of our forces and of our resources. If his calculations were not realized, neither can it be said that they had completely failed, since the operations of the month of May cost the enemy a clear third of the forces he had on the Rapidan. The proportion of our losses was greater; it was nearly two-fifths of the army with which we had opened the campaign; but it was a question of reserved resources, and, as the rebellion had put absolutely all in the field, its armies must be worn out before ours in all respects, and it must give up from exhaustion in a short time.

The two auxiliary armies of the James and of Western Virginia had not rendered the services to General Grant which he expected from them. General Butler, having debarked without opposition at Bermuda Hundred, at the confluence of the Appomattox and the James, had been content to cover himself with intrenchments, after having burnt a few bridges, destroyed a few pieces of railroad, and attacked, without success, a rebel force established at Drury's Bluff. The enemy had had no trouble in inclosing him in that position by a line of contravallation, so that the reënforcements brought by Beauregard from the two Carolinas had a clear road, and could be used either to defend Richmond or to enlarge Lee's army.

General Sigel, in his field, had managed so poorly that on May 15 he had been beaten at New Market, and driven as far as Cedar Creek, leaving the passage open for other reënforcements, also bound for Lee's army. Thus all the accessory combinations of General Grant failed. Sigel, relieved from his command, was replaced by General Hunter, and one-half of Butler's

forces, become useless in the corner in which they were inclosed, were employed to reënforce the Army of the Potomac, which they joined in time to take part in the battle of Cold Harbor.

In the West everything was going on well. General Sherman, commander-in-chief of the united armies of the Cumberland, the Tennessee, and the Ohio, had driven Johnston back from position to position, from Dalton as far as Kenesaw.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

IN FRONT OF PETERSBURG.

Passage of the James — First attack on Petersburg — My return to the army — City Point — General Ingalls — A night at headquarters — General Hancock — Losses of my brigade during two months' campaign — Losses of the Second Corps — Fortnight of extra duty — The colored troops — Early's expedition against Washington — Between the cup and the lip there is room for: a hanging — First Deep Bottom expedition — Hurried return.

In consequence of the check at Cold Harbor, a restlessness was becoming general among the people, which the government in vain pretended not to notice. After so many bloody conflicts, after so many heavy sacrifices, the enemy still presented to us an undaunted front. On seeing the army halted on the banks of the Chickahominy, it was asked if Grant was about to renew again those operations around Richmond which had succeeded so poorly under McClellan. Public opinion, shaken in its confidence, already began to listen to the sinister interpretations of the opposition journals, when, in the last half of June, it learned that the lieutenant-general had boldly crossed the James, and laid siege before Petersburg.

The time had passed when the commander-in-chief, directing or *not directing* the armies from his cabinet, subordinated all the movements of the army to the incessantly repeated order: "Cover Washington and Harper's Ferry;" when the President, interpreting literally his constitutional command of all land and naval forces, interfered in the plans of the campaign at

the pleasure of his individual counsellors. This was completely changed. General Grant had no one but himself to consult, for, while accepting the whole responsibility, he had reserved to himself complete liberty of action.

When he unexpectedly transferred the theatre of operations across the James, public opinion fluctuated, wavering between what it had to fear and what to hope. I imagine that at Washington there was much less indecision; they at first saw but one effect of that great movement: the capital uncovered; and the government, which had not made a study of military strategy, was very ill at ease at no longer having its grand army between the rebels and itself.

This passage of the James was, however, a very fine movement, as ably executed as it was boldly conceived. It inaugurated a new phase in the campaign. Up to this time, Grant was content to "hammer away" incessantly at the enemy, as he said himself, changing his base as he advanced, transferring successively his depots of supplies from Washington to Acquia Creek, from there to Port Royal on the Rappahannock, thence to White House on the Pamunkey, and now from White House to City Point on the James. Henceforth, the battering not having produced the expected effect, Grant was about to try the resources of military science, and give precedence to strategic combinations.

In the first place, he took his measures so well to conceal his intentions from the enemy that the latter did not recognize the character of the movement until it was already executed. Warren was ordered to occupy Lee's attention by the menace of an advance on Richmond from the direction of White Oak swamp, while Smith (W. F.) reëmbarked from White House to return

to Bermuda Hundred, and Hancock, with the Second Corps, would be transferred to the right bank of the James by a flotilla of large steamers collected at Wilcox Landing for that purpose. At the same time, a bridge of boats was thrown across a little below, where there were thirteen fathoms of water in the channel, and where the river was more than two thousand feet broad. The Fifth and Sixth Corps crossed over on the bridge.

Grant hoped to get hold of Petersburg by a *coup de main*. If he had succeeded, the fall of Richmond would have soon followed in all probability. Unfortunately, delays occurred and *contretemps* which caused the opportunity to fail and completely modified the course of events. General Smith (W. F.), after having carried the first line, which was defended by militia only, did not know how to take advantage of his first success. Proceeding methodically and cautiously, where it was, above all, necessary to act with vigor and promptness, he put off the serious work until the next morning. Hancock, in his turn, debarked on the right bank, did not receive the order to march on Petersburg until he had been delayed to wait for rations which were behindhand, and went astray in his march owing to false indications on a map which had been sent to him as correct. In short, he lost precious hours in the afternoon of June 15, and on the morning of the 16th it was too late; Lee's troops had arrived.

Nevertheless, the intrenchments thrown up hastily by the enemy were not so formidable that they might not be carried. In the morning, a fresh attack, with Birney's and Gibbon's divisions, met with some success, but with no decisive results. In the afternoon, the Ninth Corps having arrived, the attempt was renewed on a greater scale, and it ended by carrying the line at

sundown, after a hard fight and considerable loss. On the next morning, a new assault, always by the Second Corps, supported by the Ninth. The enemy lost more ground and a redoubt of importance. In the evening, he succeeded in surprising the intrenchments which Burnside had taken from him. All these fights were not without cost; the loss of that day alone, on our side, amounted to four thousand men.

The Confederates defended the ground step by step, with such determination, only to gain the time necessary to finish a stronger and better selected line, on the hills immediately around the city. They retired to these lines in the following night, and during the whole of the 18th they sustained in them a series of attacks which met with no success. From that day, the siege of Petersburg was resolved upon, and regular works were begun.

It must be remarked that this siege was not a siege, properly speaking. The place was never even invested. It lies twenty-two miles south of Richmond, on the right bank of the Appomattox, eight miles southwest of City Point, where that river empties into the James, and where the new base of supplies of the army was naturally established. So that we had turned Richmond to put ourselves across a part of the enemy's communications with the South, and directly threaten the rest. These communications were: the railroads to Norfolk, Weldon, and Lynchburg, and the Jerusalem and Boydton roads, — all ending at Petersburg. Besides these, the Confederate capital had only the James River canal, to the west, and the Dansville railroad, to the south. The latter did not extend beyond the limits of Virginia, but it crossed the Lynchburg railroad at Burksville, which doubled its resources. If, then, we succeeded in enveloping Petersburg only on the right bank of the

Appomattox, the population and the Confederate army would be reduced to draw all their supplies from Richmond by a single-track railroad. To accomplish that was our effort; to prevent it, the enemy's: that was the point towards which all the operations of the siege were directed for nine months. On the day on which we finally succeeded, Petersburg and Richmond fell at the same blow, and the whole structure of the rebellion crumbled with these two cities. I have now to relate by what long series of efforts, labors, and battles we at last accomplished this great triumph.

On June 27, at the request of General Meade, I was finally relieved from my command at New York, with orders to rejoin the Army of the Potomac as soon as my successor arrived to take my place. Many days passed away while I waited for him, which by so much delayed my departure. I did not reach Fortress Monroe, where I was to meet my servants, my horses, and my baggage, until July 9. But the transport on which they were shipped, they told me, was detained at New York for twenty-four hours after the appointed time. What was I to do in the meantime? There had formerly been a hotel under the walls of the fortress, but it was now turned into a hospital. There was nothing to be found but sutlers' tents and a restaurant where one might get something to eat but no place to sleep, the daily service of the military steamers being made directly from Washington to City Point, and making connection with the Baltimore steamers, so that those going either way were never obliged to pass a night at the fortress. Fortunately for me, the French steam corvette *Phlégéthon* was anchored in the bay, and I was able to ask her commander, Maudet, whom I had met in New York, for hospitality, which he rendered me in the most cordial manner. Thanks to him and to

his officers, three days of waiting passed off in the most agreeable manner in the world for me.

My baggage having arrived, I left on the evening of the 12th for City Point, where I arrived about four o'clock in the afternoon. Steamboats and sailing vessels, transports and lighters of all kinds, encumbered the river near the improvised wharves on which they were still working. Higher up, towards Richmond, the eye could distinguish at a distance the turrets of the monitors, which appeared to stand out of the water, and the gunboats, on which enormous pivot guns were visible. The river bank, rising up high, had been cleared and levelled, so as to make room for storehouses for supplies, and for a station for the railroad. All this had sprung out of the earth as if by magic, in less than a month. The railroad ran behind the docks; the locomotives were running back and forth, leaving long plumes of smoke, and on the ground trails of coals and sparks of fire. All was activity and movement. Legions of negroes were discharging the ships, wheeling dirt, sawing the timber, and driving piles. Groups of soldiers crowded around the sutlers' tents; horsemen in squadrons went down to the river to water their horses. And, on the upper plateau, huts of different forms and sizes overlooked the whole scene below. A great village of wood and cloth was erected there, where a few weeks before were but two or three houses.

The largest of these, and one which must have been a fine dwelling, now held the offices of General R. Ingalls, Quartermaster-General of the army. It was General Ingalls who, since the opening of the campaign, had changed our depots successively to four different points, and that with so much order and precision that rations had not been wanting to the army for a day. As the last train had departed when I debarked at City

Point, I would have been forced to pass a very disagreeable night if General Ingalls had not very obligingly put at my disposal a light wagon, which carried me that same evening to headquarters in front of Petersburg.

General Meade did me the honor to welcome me as an old acquaintance whom he was very glad to see. I had just finished explaining to him by what train of circumstances I had been kept in New York and at Fortress Monroe when Colonel Chanal presented himself at the door of the tent. The colonel belonged to the artillery corps in the French army. He had come to America on an official mission, to study our different systems of arms, and especially our innovations in artillery. This mission had brought him to the Army of the Potomac, where his studies were soon completed by practical observations. We had already made each other's acquaintance on his arrival at New York. So that, when General Meade finished the conversation by inviting me to pass the night at headquarters, I accepted with pleasure the offer of a place under the tent of Colonel Chanal.

On leaving General Meade, I found that I was among friends, as the greater part of the officers of the staff were personally known to me. In war the sharing together of the same dangers and privations establishes more prompt and cordial relations than common occupations or pleasures do in other walks of life. Every one welcomed me, asked me the news from New York and Washington, what was said here, and what was being done there, giving me in return accounts of our friends, both those who survived and those whom death had taken.

The hour for retiring came; but under Colonel Chanal's tent the watch was much prolonged, around a

supper seasoned with appetite, and accompanied, in place of music, by the continual crackling of the picket firing. As I asked for information in regard to the cause of this unusual noise at that hour, "It is," they told me, "Burnside, who is protecting the works of his mine." I learned then that General Burnside, whose front was very near the enemy's works, had undertaken to blow up a redoubt by means of a mine. From what I heard about it, it seemed to me that the enterprise inspired little confidence, and that generally it was regarded rather as a subject for pleasantry than an object of interest.

The next morning, early, I mounted on horseback to report to General Hancock, after having thanked General Meade for having assigned me to the Second Corps, the one, above all, to which I preferred to be attached. The weather was magnificent, and the sun very warm, even at that early hour. A part of the troops were in motion, and raised thick clouds of dust, through which we could scarcely breathe. It was, however, only a change of position of a division in the immediate neighborhood of the house where General Hancock had established his headquarters. I could, then, easily find him, to present to him the order of which I was the bearer.

General Hancock is one of the handsomest men in the United States army. He is tall in stature, robust in figure, with movements of easy dignity. His head, shaded by thick hair of a light chestnut color, strikes one favorably from the first by the regularity of his features and the engaging expression which is habitual to him. His manners are generally very polite. His voice is pleasant, and his speech as agreeable as his looks. Such is Hancock in repose. In action he is entirely different. Dignity gives way to activity; his

features become animated, his voice loud, his eyes are on fire, his blood kindles, and his bearing is that of a man carried away by passion, — the character of his bravery. It is this, I think, which renders him much less fit for an independent command than to act under orders. We will see in the course of our narrative that, after having distinguished himself above all others at the head of a division or an army corps, he was much less fortunate in independent operations which were intrusted to him. Brilliant in the second rank, he did not shine so brightly when occupying the first. Was it a question of execution? he was admirable. If it was necessary to plan and direct, he was no longer equal to the occasion. This is often the case amongst soldiers. Like Benedeck, Hancock could have performed marvels at Solferino at the head of a corps, and as commander-in-chief lose the army at Sadowa.

His popularity was as great, perhaps greater than that of any other officer of his rank. This is easily explained: firstly, by the brilliancy of his service, and also by the particular care he always took to have it known. The correspondents of the principal journals yielded, like every one else, to his captivating bearing and manners; information was freely given them in the form of reports by the general, — often, without doubt, to avoid all error, — their correspondence was submitted to his inspection, so that the result was sometimes partialities of which they were hardly conscious.

For, the truth must be told, General Hancock had his partialities; and if some were justified by the real merits and the capacity of those who were the objects of them, others were, on the contrary, inexplicable by any military consideration, and were connected with political aims, in which the general allowed himself to be drawn too easily. But, not to speak of persons, his

first two divisions were much closer to his affections than the third, which came from the old Third Corps. And yet no one will ever think that that division brought him less honor than the two others. By a close examination it could be easily proved that it did him greater services than the second.

For my part, I was far from suspecting anything of the sort during my first interview. General Hancock's welcome was most cordial. He did all I could wish, by assigning me to my old division, and, like so many others, I was under the spell when I left him to present myself to General Birney.

I shall never forget with what radiant cordiality Birney stretched out his hand when he saw me at his tent door. "At last you are back again," he said to me. "We have been expecting you for some time. I need not tell you with what pleasure I see you amongst us again."

The pleasure was mutual, for I felt like a traveller who returns home after a long absence. Through the tent door I saw passing back and forth some well known officers of the staff. Soon General Mott entered. We sat down in the shade of the great trees which sheltered headquarters, and I listened, with an interest easy to understand, to the details of some of the battles in which the division had recently taken part. It had been in some severe ones, — so severe that the Fourth Division (formerly Humphrey's) had been consolidated with the Third, which put Mott for the time being at the head of a brigade. Pierce, promoted to brigadier-general, now commanded the brigade which I had commanded at Gettysburg. There remained the brigade of General Ward, who left the army at Spottsylvania, and was not to return. This command was assigned to me.

I had already commanded it by intervals when I was connected with it, first as colonel of the Fifty-fifth, and afterward of the Thirty-eighth; but there had been great changes in it since that time. Then it was composed of six regiments; now it had ten, without, however, having any more men fit for duty, the last campaign had so largely reduced their numbers. Here is the official account of the losses of the brigade during only two months, from May 5 to July 5: —

FIRST BRIGADE, THIRD DIVISION, SECOND CORPS.

Denomination.	Killed.	Wounded.	Missing.	Total.
Officers	22	73	8	103
Non-commissioned officers and privates	252	1438	293	1983
Total				2086

The loss was three-quarters, calculating the effective, at the opening of the campaign, at twenty-eight hundred men, which is a large reckoning, that number much exceeding former averages. This proportion agreed, however, with the condition of the brigade when I took the command. Notwithstanding the return of a large number of convalescents, and after the addition of five new regiments, two-thirds of the effective was still absent. Out of sixty-nine hundred and seventy-six men I could put into line only about two thousand.

The losses of the other divisions were in like proportion. I have always heard that those of the Second Corps were estimated at twenty-four thousand men. Certainly they exceeded twenty thousand, and the reënforcements received did not raise its effective force above twelve thousand. In this effective, in consequence of the consolidation of the Fourth Division with the Third, the latter had nearly one-half. My brigade was the strongest in the corps, and I doubt if there was

another in the whole army which could report twenty-four hundred and forty-four men present for duty.

These figures by themselves are so eloquent that it is useless to add a word. On comparing them with those of European wars, one will appreciate what kind of a war we were carrying on in America.

During a fortnight the Second Corps laid down the musket for the spade and the pick. As it was in reserve since an unfortunate attempt to turn the right of the enemy's lines, — a movement in which the Third Division had suffered the most, — the details for work were taken from it by right. We had first to cut down and level the intrenchments raised by the Confederates; then to make covered ways by which the troops could move, and ammunition and rations be carried to the front of our lines, without being exposed to the observation, and, consequently, to the fire, of the enemy. As the work was carried on principally by night, we were troubled very little; but, even if little dangerous, this kind of service is not very pleasant.

Our line extended, at this time, to Jerusalem plank road, between the Norfolk railroad, which was in our possession, and the Weldon railroad, of which we were to take possession before long. Our works ended at this point by a redoubt, marked out, but not finished, but sufficient, however, to hold the road, and sweep a broad ravine, along which our rifle-pits were prolonged in return. The pickets of the enemy, covered by rifle-pits, were exceedingly close, and would have been able to trouble very much the workings of our guns by our cannoneers. But, in accordance with a tacit agreement, the fire of the skirmishers was suspended, so that on both sides these passed back and forth openly, while the firing was carried on only at night, to guard against surprise.

It was quite different along the front of the Ninth Corps, which held on the right of the Fifth. Along that part of the line, the exchange of artillery and musketry fire was carried on day and night without interruption. The working of the mine might have accounted for part of this, but other reasons were the prevailing ones for this reciprocal bitterness. Two Maryland brigades, one Union, the other Confederate, were opposed to each other, and one can understand that between enemies from the same State there could be no compromise. In addition, there were in Burnside's command some colored troops, against whom the soldiers of the South showed a particular animosity. The colored troops returned their hatred in full measure. The causes were not far to seek. Without speaking of their national hatred towards those who were holding their race in slavery, and treating their brethren in bondage like a kind of cattle, all their resentment was more than justified by the odious cruelties of which those of them who fell into the enemy's hands were the victims. For instance, in the month of April preceding, a rebel general by the name of Forrest having carried Fort Pillow, as much by trickery as by force, the whole garrison, composed almost entirely of colored troops, had been massacred with an inhuman refinement of cruelty. Neither sex nor age was spared, and the Southern brutes, drunk with blood, finished their work by including the whites themselves in the revolting butchery. Since that time, the black troops took less prisoners, knowing what awaited themselves if they were captured, and urged each other on to battle by the cry, "Remember Fort Pillow!" So, when, during an evening, at the time when the regiments were relieved in the intrenchments, an increase of cannon and musketry fire was heard on the front of

the Ninth Corps, it was generally remarked: "The colored troops are taking their turn in the intrenchments."

The labor of completing and strengthening our lines was not the only reason which delayed their extension to the Weldon railroad. Some new movements were taking place near Washington, of which we awaited the issue. Along in the early part of July, General Lee, profiting by the field being left open to the north of Richmond, had sent a corps of twelve to fifteen thousand men into the Shenandoah valley, under command of General Early. The latter had the field of operations to himself, for the reason that General Hunter, after having penetrated the country as far as Lynchburg, had been compelled to retire before superior forces, and to take his line of retreat through Western Virginia. Early, finding nothing in front of him, advanced rapidly on Winchester and Martinsburg, from which place Sigel retired at his approach, to the north of the Potomac. Early, continuing on his way, crossed the river, entered Frederick without opposition, and prepared to march directly on Washington.

The object of this vigorous demonstration was to compel us to let go our hold on Petersburg. Twice already Lee had succeeded, by a similar manœuvre, in sending our army north of the Potomac, and, although the operation was conducted on a smaller scale, he hoped that Grant would be in a hurry to fly to the relief of the menaced capital, and that he would thus lose the fruit of two months' hard campaigning. But he was counting without his host. Halleck was no longer at the head of the armies, and Grant was not a man to whom the administration pretended to prescribe what he had to do, or whom it could direct according to its whims.

The general-in-chief took the matter coolly. He measured with a calm eye the extent of this invasion on a small scale, and contented himself by sending on the Sixth Corps to meet it. Wright's troops arrived at Washington the morning after leaving City Point. At the same time, the Nineteenth Corps, coming from New Orleans, under the command of General Emory, entered the James, and anchored in front of Fortress Monroe. There it received orders to continue on up the Chesapeake, and, instead of reënforcing the army before Petersburg, to join the Sixth Corps at Washington.

When Early, advancing from Frederick, arrived on the Monocacy, the passage was disputed by the division of General Ricketts, which had preceded the others, and by some worthless troops which General Wallace had assembled in haste. The enemy succeeded in driving them back on Baltimore; but when he presented himself in front of Georgetown he found that Wright had arrived before him. He had nothing to do but retire as fast as possible, which he did, pursued by the Sixth Corps as far as the valley of the Shenandoah, where he did not halt until he was a long distance from the Potomac. It was thought that they were free from him, but, as he threatened to renew his attempt, the two army corps were left for a long time to guard Washington. This protective measure was happily completed by uniting, under one command, four little military departments which surrounded the capital but did not defend it. United in one hand, it was to be hoped they would render more service than they would create embarrassment. Hitherto it had been directly the contrary.

Lee's plan, then, had failed; but he might attempt to renew it, by sending reënforcements to Early. Grant

resolved to prevent this by menacing Richmond, on the left bank of the James, or at least by destroying the bridge of boats which the enemy had at Chapin's Bluff to maintain his communications from one bank to the other. This expedition was intrusted to Hancock, reenforced by two divisions of cavalry led by Sheridan.

On July 26, we received orders to be ready to march with four days' rations, and a hundred rounds of ammunition to a man, forty of which would go in the ammunition wagons. No quartermaster train would follow us, except a few wagons with intrenching tools, and twenty ambulances to a division, which betokened some hard work. Where were we going? We knew nothing of our destination when we started, at five o'clock in the afternoon. Mott commanded the division, Birney having been promoted a few days before to the command of the Tenth Corps, which formed part of Butler's forces.

On reaching the City Point road, we marched in front of a double gallows, on which the night before two wagoners of the Seventy-second New York had been hanged, under circumstances which will give some idea of the discipline which ruled in the Army of the Potomac. The term of service of the regiment had expired. It was about to leave the army. The two teamsters had been mustered out like the others, when, on the eve of departure, they conceived the fatal idea of going to spend the night at an isolated farmhouse some distance away, where a woman, still young, lived alone, and whom, it appeared, they thought engaging. They reached the place late in the evening, and succeeded in inducing her to open the door on some pretext. As soon as they were within, they attacked the woman, and treated her person with shameful violence. "She will not dare," they thought, "to tell the secret." And besides,

as the regiment was to leave the next day, they would be far away before she could make complaint. In that they deceived themselves. At daylight, the outraged woman was at headquarters, and entered her complaint before the provost-marshal. Search was immediately made. Suspicions were naturally directed towards the mustered-out regiment, where, in fact, the guilty ones were soon discovered. On seeing their comrades depart to return home, they must have had bitter reflections on the danger of yielding to the impulses of passion. Perhaps they too had families awaiting their return. But it was too late. The court-martial was merciless. Between the cup and the lips there was room for a hanging. They were executed in full view of the enemy's lines, to show the rebels how justice was done amongst us. I do not say that the example was not a good one; but, the time of service expired, on the eve of seeing their kin — it was hard.

At nightfall we left the City Point railroad to cross the Appomattox, on the bridge of boats which connected our position with Butler's at Bermuda Hundred. The march continued the whole night; sometimes in the woods, sometimes through the fields. Fires, kept up along the road by cavalry soldiers, marked out the way for us. At dawn, somewhat tired, we crossed the James, at Jones' Neck, on a bridge of boats. At six o'clock my skirmishers were in contact with the enemy.

The enemy's troops were some which Lee had sent to dislodge, or at least hold in check, a brigade of Butler's, intrenched on the left bank of the river, near Deep Bottom. General Foster, who was in command, had successfully repulsed several attacks when we came to assist him. His adversaries turned promptly against us, and took position on the borders of a wood, which commanded the plain where we were. Miles' brigade

and mine were deployed in advance, each of us covering his division. On my right, the Fortieth New York; on my centre, the One Hundred and Forty-first Pennsylvania, and the Second Battalion of sharpshooters advanced without serious opposition to the position assigned to them, around two farmhouses of some importance. But on my left the Ninety-ninth and Hundred and Tenth Pennsylvania had just entered into a field of corn, where they were received by a fusillade from the wood in front of them. The fire becoming hotter from that quarter, I sent the Seventy-third New York to reënforce them. They then continued their advance, and had just dislodged the skirmishers of the enemy, who were in the corn, when the One Hundred and Tenth, which connected on the left with the other brigade, observed four guns in position within a short distance. Their fire was immediately turned obliquely on the artillerymen, while the Ninety-ninth and the Seventy-third, continuing to engage the infantry, obliqued towards the left to draw nearer the cannon.

Meanwhile Miles, profiting by a hollow of the ground, rapidly disposed four of his regiments for a charge, which was quickly made. The four guns were taken. Some other pieces, less exposed, took position in front of me, and began to burst their shells and throw their solid shot amongst my four regiments in reserve. Two of our batteries hurried up to silence them, and compelled the enemy to withdraw into the woods, where their infantry also soon disappeared.

About nine o'clock the affair was over. My regiments were able to get a little rest, after a night march and a morning of skirmishing, while some other troops were thrown forward in pursuit of the enemy, who, however, did not retire far. He had simply fallen back into a second line of intrenchments, behind a stream of water

called Bailey's Creek. To attack him in front appeared to General Hancock too hazardous. The cavalry was sent to find out what was the chance for a turning movement. While waiting, necessary precautions were taken not to be turned ourselves, and my brigade was ordered to cover the right flank of the expeditionary corps.

We passed the night in this manner. On the morning of the 28th, Lee had already sent considerable forces against us, whose attack General Sheridan had to sustain. He successfully repulsed it; but henceforth it could no longer be a question of reaching Chapin's Bluff, still less of surprising Richmond. That evening, at dark, as soon as Miles had relieved me, I marched to join General Mott near the bridge of boats.

The division was ordered to return that same night to the front of Petersburg, and receive instructions there from General Ord. Barlow's and Gibbon's divisions were to remain at Deep Bottom twenty-four hours longer.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE MINE.

Universality of Yankee genius — The mine dug by Colonel Pleasants — Project of assault — General Burnside's plan — Unfortunate modifications — Lots drawn — Last preparations —The match goes out — The explosion — The crater — Terrible fiasco — The double investigation — Different conclusions —The true cause of the want of success.

General Ord had recently arrived from the West, where he had served up to this time. General Grant, knowing him to be an officer of merit, had transferred him to General Butler's army, where he took the place of General W. F. Smith, as commander of the Eighteenth Corps. For the time being he occupied the right of our lines, in front of Petersburg. His headquarters were on the top of a hill, whence the view embraced a part of our intrenchments, and glimpses as far as the city of Petersburg, of which the steeples and some of the edifices could be seen. There we learned the cause of our sudden recall from Deep Bottom.

The mine dug under the direction of Burnside was finished and charged. The firing of it was fixed for the next day, July 30, and was to be followed immediately by a charge of the Ninth Corps, with the support of the Eighteenth. For this reason our division had been recalled, to relieve the troops of General Ord in the trenches.

A few details on the manner in which this work was carried out may be interesting here.

The engineer officers took no part in it. This will, without doubt, appear more extraordinary in Europe than

in America. One must remember the universality of the Yankee genius, and that the men of that race, as intelligent as they are enterprising, are accustumed to undertake the most diverse tasks. No people ever attached themselves less to one single pursuit. Their principle is that intelligence can do everything. Thus they advance faster to success. Everywhere except in the United States the capabilities of the mind are marked off in categories. Aptitudes are considered as exclusive, and every one chooses his career according to his supposed bent. This is a great error.

Organizations well developed are capable of performing very different tasks. The same man, perhaps, may be at the same time a thinker and a man of action, a man of law and a man of war, a philosopher and a manufacturer, a merchant and an artist, a mathematician and a poet. He may not have all his faculties equally developed; but they are not exclusive of others. The Yankee understands this, and tries everything, ready if he fails in one pursuit to essay another. That is why he always ends by succeeding.

It is not that he is better endowed by nature than other men; it is due to education. In his infancy he has not been put into the swaddling-clothes of traditions and prejudices; opinions ready made are not imposed upon him; neither the government nor the church has weighed down upon his young intelligence. He has grown up in free air; he has learned to rely, above all, upon himself, and he knows that on his own value depends the place he will take in the midst of a people amongst whom everything starts from the initiative of the individual. Hence the breadth of all his faculties, and the variety of practical knowledge which makes such varied use of them.

But to return to the mine: the first notion of it

occurred to Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Pleasants, an old civil engineer, now commanding the Forty-eighth Pennsylvania. The most advanced point of our lines was upon the lower part of a hillside crowned by a sort of redoubt, behind which the cemetery hill commanded the city of Petersburg. Within our lines, in a deep ravine, ran the track of the Norfolk railroad, which was hidden from the enemy's view by our works. This formation of the ground suggested to Colonel Pleasants the idea of opening a horizontal gallery under the enemy's works. He proposed it to General Potter, his division commander, who in turn submitted it to General Burnside. The latter approved of it without hesitation, and the next morning Colonel Pleasants set to work.

The first thing to do was to get the exact distance from the mouth of the mine to the redoubt which it was intended to blow up. The instruments necessary were at headquarters, but the use of them could not be obtained. The chief engineers of the army and other authorities declared *ex cathedra* that the project was senseless and foolish; that a mine as long as that had never been dug; that it could not be done; that the men would be stifled by the lack of air or crushed by the falling-in of the earth, etc. It resulted from this that the general commanding did not approve of the undertaking, but only tolerated it. One sees by this that *l'esprit de corps* is the same in every country. With specialists, the thing which has not been done cannot be done, and, if you propose to them any innovation not found in their books, nine times out of ten they will tell you that it is impossible or absurd.

General Burnside, who persisted in his idea, sent to Washington for an old theodolite, which, however, enabled Colonel Pleasants to determine that the length

of the direct gallery must be five hundred and ten feet, at the end of which lateral galleries, curving in an arc of a circle, must be dug to the right and left, each thirty-eight feet long. It follows, of course, that all assistance was refused by the engineer corps, which did not wish to take any part in an enterprise of which it had proclaimed the absurdity. Following suit, the superior officers of the army were greatly amused by the pleasantry.

Colonel Pleasants, left to himself without other encouragement than that of Burnside and Potter, continued his work with an unshakable perseverance. He was refused timber; he sent for it to a sawmill out of the lines. They refused him mining picks; he had the common picks in the division fixed over. They refused him wheelbarrows; he had the earth carried out in cracker boxes bound with iron taken from old fish barrels. So that he was equal to every requirement without employing a person outside of his own regiment of four hundred men, mostly recruited from among the miners in Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania.

One important point was to conceal the removed earth from the view of the enemy, who, if suspecting anything, might send some men to the tops of the trees on the hill, and discover the works, which it was important to conceal from him. For that reason, every morning, before daylight, the pioneers covered over the earth brought out of the mine during the night with branches of trees. The amount of earth removed was in all as much as eighteen thousand cubic feet.

The work, begun June 25, was finished on July 23, without accident, in spite of all predictions and of all derision. It was then necessary to change the tone. The fact must be recognized that the thing was serious. That which had been declared impossible was done.

The explosion, if it succeeded, and if we knew how to get the benefit of it, must deliver Petersburg to us.

The Deep Bottom expedition had given us the most favorable opportunity possible. In fact, General Lee, uncertain as to its real importance, and trusting to the protection of his lines, had sent more than half of his forces to the other side of the James. Hancock would keep them there with his two divisions; he would take advantage of the night, to return before Petersburg, and when, on the next morning, the rebels should discover his retreat of the night before, the assault would be made before they would have time to return across the river.

Everything, then, seemed to promise success, provided that the assault should be made with vigor and in unison. That was the great point, and, unhappily, the one as to which the measures taken gave rise to serious apprehensions. The choice of the Ninth Corps to lead the attack was far from being the best that could have been made. That corps, which had rendered good service in North Corolina, in the Army of the Potomac, and in Tennessee, had been so reduced by these various campaigns that it had been necessary to renew it almost entirely. Troops of all sorts, mostly newly raised, had been incorporated in it; which had not prevented their doing their duty in the positions where they had been placed.

Since their arrival before Petersburg, they had peculiarly suffered. In the affairs of June 17 and 18, they had lost three thousand men, and during the whole following month they had been subjected to a fatiguing and perilous service in the trenches, where the picket fire had cost them eleven hundred and fifty men. These incessant fatigues, and the habit of always keeping themselves under cover of the intrenchments, were not

of a nature to predispose their divisions to push with vigor an open attack. It would have been much better to have trusted the assault to more hardy troops, such as those of the Second or the Fifth Corps. For myself, I am convinced that if Hancock or Warren had had charge of the affair we would have carried everything in a few hours. But Burnside, who had taken the lead in having the mine dug, held it as a point of honor to complete the work.

However, it was not without taking account of the real condition of his command. So he had concluded to put at the head of the column of attack his fourth division, composed of colored troops, who, more numerous and less fatigued than the others, were, taking all things into consideration, the ones on whom he could best depend. Immediately after the explosion, these two brigades were to pass through the opening made in the enemy's works, in two columns; the one to turn to the right, and the other to the left; sweep the inner side of the enemy's intrenchments and cover the flanks of the three other divisions, who would charge directly for the summit of the hill. After them would advance the Eighteenth Corps, and our success was assured. For it must be remembered that Lee, having sent five divisions to the north of the James, had but three left at Petersburg. Once established on the hill, the city was ours; the enemy was cut in two; the left, with its back to the Appomattox, would find itself surrounded, and the right could do nothing but make a prompt retreat, leaving us all the guns in the intrenchments.

Such was the plan which General Burnside submitted in writing for the approval of General Meade, on July 26. As a plan it would be difficult to find anything to object to it. As to its execution, it remained to see how the Ninth Corps would do the work, and how gen-

eral officers of the corps would act. But the moment it was decided to intrust the execution to General Burnside, as he knew better than any one else the true condition of his troops and how to make the best use of them, it would have been wise to leave the details to him, and not interfere with the particular measures he had prepared long before. By not understanding this, General Meade committed an error which became the source of many others, and incurred also a direct share in the responsibility for the want of success. This error was in ordering the commander of the Ninth Corps to substitute one of his white divisions for the colored one in the part assigned to the latter. The general commanding communicated this decision directly to General Burnside, on July 28.

The latter states "that a long conversation succeeded, in which I explained to General Meade the condition of my white divisions. I insisted on the importance, in my opinion, of placing the colored division in advance, because I thought that at that time it would make the charge better than any of the three others. I reminded him that the latter had been in the trenches for forty days, immediately in front of the enemy, where a man could not show his head above the parapet without drawing out several shots; that during all this time they had been in the habit of coming out of the lines by covered ways, and taking all possible means to protect themselves against the enemy's fire; that, nevertheless, their losses had been continual, and had amounted to some thirty to sixty men a day; that the soldiers had not been able even to cook their meals, which had to be prepared in the rear and brought to them; that, not having been able to wash their clothes, they had not changed them, and, finally, they were not in a fit condition to make a vigorous charge," etc.

To these reasons Meade objected "that, without having any reason to believe that the colored troops would not do their duty as well as the white, yet, inasmuch as they formed a new division which had never been under fire, and that the work to be done was such as to demand the best troops, he judged it inadmissible to intrust it to a division whose courage had not been proved."

Evidently, the reasons were good on both sides; but what conclusion should have been drawn from them? Clearly, that the Ninth Corps, both black and white divisions, were equally unsuitable for the work to be done, and that it should be intrusted to others. This conclusion, so simple and so logical, did not appear, however, to present itself to the mind of either general, and, as neither succeeded in convincing the other, General Meade announced that he should refer the decision to the lieutenant-general.

General Grant, on being consulted, decided in favor of the superior officer, against the inferior. So that the question was decided more as a matter of discipline than as to what was the most suitable. The result showed that, and General Grant himself recognized it by saying before the court of inquiry: "General Burnside wished to put his colored division in advance, and I believe that, if he had done so, success would have followed. However, I agreed with General Meade in his objections to the proposal. He made the point that if we put the only colored division we had in the advance, and the affair turned out badly, it would be said, and with a show of reason, that we killed off those troops because we cared nothing about them."

The thought of considering "they said" on such an occasion is a circumstance curious and to be noted. One can guess by that the influence of the electoral campaign in the North. Neither Grant nor Meade

wished to run the risk of furnishing to the opposition an arm which they would use against the reëlection of President Lincoln. In any other circumstances, it is not to be believed they would have regarded any such consideration.

The final decision was announced to General Burnside on the 29th, twelve or fifteen hours before the time fixed for the explosion. It was a cause of great disappointment and embarrassment to him. Which of the three divisions should he choose to replace the fourth? Such was his hesitation that, to get out of it, he resorted to the strange expedient of putting the result to lot. The lot, which is of course blind, and sometimes is pleased to give us some severe lessons, fell upon the very division which, if it was not worse than the others, was certainly worse commanded. From that instant all chance of success was gone. Petersburg would escape our grasp for yet a long time.

The whole night was devoted to the last preparations, the attacking divisions forming at their posts as they were relieved in the trenches. Our division, which had been massed in the woods, out of sight of the enemy, during the whole day, took the place of the Eighteenth and a part of the Tenth Corps, in that part of the lines which extended from Burnside's right to the Appomattox. My brigade was the nearest to the mine, from which it was separated by a curtain of woods. My right occupied Fort Stedman, armed with ten guns, and near which were twelve mortars. My left was so near the enemy that the sharpshooters distributed along my front in a trench could easily throw stones into his advanced works. The least noise in one line was heard in the other, so that on our arrival we were saluted with a shower of shells, which did us no particular injury.

The hour set for the mine explosion was half-past three in the morning. I have stated that the principal gallery of the mine ended in a transverse gallery in the shape of an arc of a circle. In the walls of the latter eight narrow passages were made, facing each other (four on each side), leading to eight chambers, each containing a thousand pounds of powder — in all, eight thousand pounds. That would make a fine explosion. So from three o'clock every one was up, the officers watch in hand, eyes fixed on the fated redan, or in that direction.

There were about two hundred men in that work, sleeping tranquilly a sleep from which they would awake in eternity. Perhaps they were dreaming of returning to their families, of the joys of the domestic fireside, at the instant when, beneath them, Colonel Pleasants (what irony in that name) was applying the fire to the match along with which they were about to consume the last minutes of their existence. Upon the parapet the motionless sentinels were watching the pale lights which began to brighten the horizon in the east. Silence reigned everywhere, but in our lines all eyes were open; in those of the enemy, nearly all were closed.

From half after three the minutes were counted. — It is still too dark, it was said. — At four o'clock it was daylight; nothing stirred as yet; at a quarter past four a murmur of impatience ran through the ranks. — What has happend? Has there been a counter-order? or an accident? Has the assault been deferred?

It had happened that the match, which was ninety feet long, had gone out at a splice about half-way of its length. It was necessary to be certain of it, and the risk was great. If the explosion took place, whoever was in the gallery was lost. Two intrepid men, Lieu-

tenant Jacob Douty and Sergeant Henry Rees, volunteered to see what was the cause of the delay, and to relight the match. Both returned safe and sound. The redoubt had a respite of a quarter of an hour.

Suddenly the earth trembled under our feet. An enormous mass sprang into the air. A mass without form or shape, full of red flames, and carried on a bed of lightning flashes, mounted towards heaven with a detonation of thunder. It spread out like a sheaf, like an immense mushroom whose stem seemed to be of fire and its head of smoke. Then everything appeared to break up and fall back in a rain of earth mixed with rocks, with beams, timbers, and mangled human bodies, leaving floating in the air a cloud of white smoke, which rose up in the heavens, and a cloud of gray dust, which fell slowly towards the earth. The redan had disappeared. In its place had opened a gaping gulf more than two hundred feet long by fifty wide, and twenty-five to thirty feet deep.

Immediately, as though the eruption of a volcano had poured out a torrent of lava upon our lines, they were on fire from one end to the other. All our batteries opened at once on the enemy's intrenchments. The projectiles whistled, roared, burst. Through the deafening noise of the artillery firing was heard a cry, and the first division advanced to the assault.

It had nothing in front of it. The Confederate troops occupying the lines to the right and the left in the immediate vicinity of the mine had fled precipitately through fright and fear of further explosions. The others, stupefied, endeavored to see what was going on while awaiting orders. The way was completely open to the summit of the hill, which was protected by no other line of works.

The column marched directly to the crater, and,

instead of turning around it to pursue its way, it descended into it, in the midst of the torn-up earth. Once at the bottom, finding itself sheltered, it remained there. A part spread out to the right and the left behind the abandoned works. The general commanding (Ledlie) the division had remained within our lines, in a bomb-proof.

The second division, delayed at first by the obstructions, was soon mixed up with the other. Several regiments descended into the crater, the greater part extended towards the right without going beyond it. Only one brigade succeeded in making its way through, so as to advance beyond. It found itself then engaged in ground cut up by trenches, by covered ways, by sheltered pits dug in the ground. Worse than that, the enemy, recovering from his surprise, had already profited by the time we had lost, to place his guns in position, and form his infantry so as to throw a concentrated fire upon the opening made in his works. After having, with difficulty, advanced over the natural obstacles, the brigade, more than half in confusion, seeing that it was neither supported nor reënforced, was compelled to fall back with loss.

The third division had not even made a like attempt. In mingling with the first, it had simply increased the confusion, and crowded together on the left.

Time was flying; the opportunity was fast escaping us; the chances of success were disappearing as we were looking on. Nothing could force the troops, crowded together in the crater, or lying down behind the intrenchments, to leave their positions. The officers of spirit amongst them exhausted themselves in vain efforts. The men would not move. Some officers ordered without purpose, and moved around without doing anything. The greater part remained, like the

men, motionless in a state of paralysis. The mine had been blown up two hours, and our forces had not made any advance.

Towards seven o'clock the colored division received orders to advance in its turn. The blacks advanced resolutely, passed over the passive mass of white troops, not a company of whom followed them, and, although their ranks were necessarily broken by the obstacle, they charged under a deadly fire of artillery and musketry, which reached them from all sides at once. They even reached the enemy, took from him two hundred and fifty prisoners, captured a flag, and recovered one of ours taken by him. But they were not sustained. They were driven back by a counter-charge, and returned, running in confusion, to our lines, where, by this time, a large number of the white troops were eager to return with them.

Until then the Confederates had limited their efforts to defending the hill. Encouraged by the feeble attempts which we had made to reach it, and by the ease with which these efforts had been repulsed, they began to draw near along the intrenchments, and endeavor to retake from us the part of the lines they had abandoned. Their guns covered with their fire the space which separated the crater from our lines, where their mortars rained shell and shot. The troops which had taken shelter there found themselves so much the worse off that the cross fire of the skirmishers rendered the rear communication more difficult.

At this time, General Meade, seeing the day lost without hope of recovery, sent orders to retreat. General Burnside endeavored in vain to obtain a suspension of the order. He still hoped, with more obstinacy than reason, not only to maintain himself on the enemy's line until night, but even to carry the hill.

About noon the renewed order was promptly communicated to the troops concerned, without any manner prescribed of executing it. It was found that at this same instant the enemy, after having failed in several attempts, came out in force from a ravine where he had rallied his forces, and advanced to retake the crater. In a moment it was a general *devil take the hindmost*, a confused rush, in which those who could run fast enough and escape the rebel fire returned to our lines. Those who endeavored to resist, or were delayed, were taken prisoners.

Thus passed away the finest opportunity which could have been given us to capture Petersburg, since the day when General W. F. Smith had presented himself in front of it before the arrival of the troops of General Lee. This terrible fiasco cost us forty-four hundred men, much more, certainly, than a complete success would have done, if the operation had been conducted as it should have been, and if the Ninth Corps had fought as it ought to have fought. All the supporting troops found themselves in a situation in which it was not possible to do anything. The Eighteenth Corps had not an opportunity to move. A few regiments passed beyond the abandoned intrenchments, to take possession of the skirmishers' rifle-pits, where they held their position with difficulty for a short time. Ayres' division of the Fifth Corps, massed on the left, stood with its arms ready, with no opportunity to use them.

The enemy did not withdraw a man from in front of Mott's division, to assist in repelling the assault. It was not necessary. General Hancock, nevertheless, wished to be certain of the fact, and ordered a demonstration on the front of each brigade. It was sufficient for one of my regiments to leap over the parapet, to draw out a volley, which cut down one officer and fif-

teen men. Colonel McAllister resorted to a ruse. He caused the bugle to be sounded, and at the order "Forward!" his men, as arranged beforehand, showed their caps on the points of their bayonets, above the intrenchments. The fire drawn by this trick left no doubt as to the presence of the rebels in force in that part of their lines.

A double investigation of this unfortunate affair was made — one by the Congressional committee, the other by a court of inquiry. The conclusions drawn by the two bodies were very different. The Congressional committee declared: —

"That, in its opinion, the cause of the disastrous result of the assault of July 30 ought mainly to be attributed to the fact that the plans and suggestions of the general (Burnside) who had devoted his attention so long to this subject, who had brought the project of mining the enemy's works to a favorable issue, and who had chosen and drilled his troops with care, to assure every advantage which could be drawn from the explosion of the mine, had been completely put aside by a general (Meade) who had shown no confidence in the work while it was going on, who had given it no assistance or declared approval, and who had assumed entire direction and control of it only when it had been completed, and the time arrived to reap all the advantages which could be derived from it."

The court of inquiry was in somewhat of a delicate position. It was composed of General Hancock, president, and of General Ayres of the Fifth Corps, and General Miles of the Second Corps. The judge-advocate, or, to speak more accurately, the reporter, was Colonel Schriver, attached as inspector-general to the army staff. I am very far from wishing to throw any doubt on the impartiality of any member of the court of

inquiry, but they might have been called upon, under certain circumstances, officially to censure the conduct of their general-in-chief, a position somewhat embarrassing for an inferior in regard to a superior. Their inquiry, moreover, conducted from a point of view entirely practical, was more particularly directed to finding out the facts than the original causes. From their report the causes of the want of success were as follows : —

" First, the want of judgment in the formation of the troops to advance, the movement having been made mostly by the flank instead of by the front. General Meade's order directed that columns of assault should be employed to take the cemetery hill, and that suitable passages through our works should be prepared for them. The opinion of the court is that, properly speaking, no columns of assault were formed. The troops should have been formed on the open ground in front of the point of attack, and parallel to the line of the enemy's works. The witnesses prove that one or several columns could have passed by the crater, and by its left, without any previous preparation of the ground ; second, the stopping of the troops at the crater instead of advancing to the crest, although at the time the fire of the enemy was of no importance ; third, the poor use made of officers of pioneers, of working parties, and of materials and tools for their service in the Ninth Corps ; fourth, certain portions of the assaulting columns were not suitably led ; fifth, the lack of a competent leader of high rank on the scene of operations, to order matters according as circumstances demanded.

" If failure had not resulted from the above causes, and if the crest had been occupied, success would still have been put in jeopardy, from not having prepared in time, in the lines of the Ninth Corps, suitable de-

bouches for the troops, and especially for the light artillery, as prescribed by the orders of General Meade."

In conclusion, the court of inquiry ascribed the direct responsibility of the failure to General Burnside, commanding the Ninth Corps, Generals Ledlie, Ferrero, and Wilcox, commanding the First, the Fourth, and the Third Divisions, and Colonel Bliss, commanding the First Brigade of the Second Division; specifying the portion of blame and the responsibility attaching to each.

In comparing these two verdicts, one can easily see that, if they differ from each other, they are not contradictory. Either may be right without the other being wrong. The committee of Congress, composed of members who were not at all military men, did not enter into questions of detail, but paid attention principally to the primary causes. The court of inquiry, on the contrary, being composed of military men, did not go back to the original causes, but applied itself exclusively to considering the question from a military point of view.

Between the two conclusions, the first, the greatest, the true cause found no place. The committee could not have known it; the court of inquiry found no place for it. This cause, to which all the others were subsidiary, I have already indicated: it was the employment of the Ninth Corps to lead the assault. Had it been left in the trenches with the Eighteenth Corps, and had the Second and Fifth been put in advance, Petersburg was ours on the 30th of July, before noon.

CHAPTER XXX.

SUMMER HARVESTS.

General theory of the siege of Petersburg — The pick and the musket — Second expedition to Deep Bottom — Death of Colonel Chaplain — The trials of a regiment — The mark of death — Presentiments — Return to the trenches — Contest for the Weldon railroad — General Warren's succees — Unfortunate affair of General Hancock at Ream's Station — Fort Hell — Origin of the name — Nocturnal *coup de main* — Muskets, cannons, and mortars — Southern deserters — Victories of Sheridan, Sherman, and Farragut.

THE unfortunate affair of July 30 closed the series of direct attacks against Petersburg. They had cost us more than twenty thousand men. It was full time to adopt a different method. So that, after that, operations were exclusively directed against the communications remaining open between the city and the South. The communications were three in number: the Weldon railroad, the Boydton plank road, and the Lynchburg railroad. I cite them in the order in which they occurred on our left. As they diverged more and more from each other as their distance from the city increased, the constant effort of the enemy was to keep our lines at as great a distance as possible from the city. The result of this was that, instead of simply covering Petersburg by a semi-circular line of defences, resting on the Appomattox at its two extremities, the enemy pushed his intrenchments in a concave line more than seven miles from the city, on Hatcher's Run, a creek which was found to play an important part in the last operations of the campaign.

This explains the fact, apparently strange, why the

nearer we approached our end the further we were from the place we were trying to capture. To every movement for extending our lines, we found a corresponding extension of the enemy's lines already made in the same direction. Their lines were always stretched out to extend beyond our left, the more effectually to cover the Boydton road, and especially to keep us as far as possible from the Lynchburg railroad, the last line of supplies remaining to Lee's army except via Richmond.

It will be easily seen that the longer the lines were stretched out the less was the proportional number of the troops to defend them. A portion behind which had at first been massed an army corps we now occupied by a division, and the space formerly occupied by a division must now be left to a brigade. To enable us to do this, and prevent all surprise, it was necessary to materially strengthen the intrenchments. On both sides enormous works were made. The troops ceased fighting only to fortify themselves, and the musket was laid down only to take up the pick. So that, finally, the two armies faced each other by a very formidable front of closed redoubts, redans, demi-lunes, and batteries. These works, not far apart, were connected by a continuous curtain of intrenchments, protected by *chevaux-de-frise*, or abatis of branches of trees sharpened and bound together by iron wire. They supported each other and crossed their fire at all points.

It became evident, after a while, that the question would necessarily be decided along Hatcher's Run, beyond the extreme Confederate right. They were therefore compelled to have a force constantly at their disposal, to defend themselves outside of their lines, as it was necessary for us to have one to attack them there. In this respect the advantage was entirely on

our side, for, as I have elsewhere explained, Grant could always repair his losses, while Lee could no longer do so. The latter could hardly draw a man from the exhausted South ; the former had still vast resources in reserve, in the North, as witness the new levy of five hundred thousand men ordered by the President on July 18, in virtue of the power conferred on him by Congress.

It will be now understood what was the object of the campaign during the last five months of 1864. After having given this general view, I will resume the narrative of the successive operations by means of which the result was accomplished.

We have seen, by the last expedition to Deep Bottom, that Grant could, at will, force his opponent to strip his lines in front of Petersburg. It was sufficient for him to throw a corps on the left bank of the James for Lee to immediately divide his forces, and send a part to that side. It must be borne in mind that Deep Bottom was only ten miles from Richmond ; that, if the first defences were forced, the bridge of boats at Drury's Bluff, by which the Confederates communicated with the left bank, was lost, and, in that case, we could reach their capital without their having any way of opposing us. So that they were compelled, whatever they did, to hurry to Chapin's Bluff, to oppose any menace of an advance in that direction. Grant then pushed his extreme left towards new positions to occupy, and of these two simultaneous attacks, made twenty miles apart, one or the other must succeed. In this manner the Weldon railroad was taken.

This time, however, the expedition to the north of the James was made on a much larger scale than the former one. General Grant provided for the chance that Lee might send insufficient forces to protect his

lines to the north of the James, in order to better protect the railroad. In that case, the demonstration would be changed to a serious attack against Richmond. Accordingly, the Tenth Corps was added to the Second, as well as a division of cavalry, the whole under the command of General Hancock.

On the 12th of August, at two o'clock in the afternoon, we set out, under a torrid sun and stifling heat, for City Point, where we arrived in the evening. Our ulterior destination had been kept secret. In order to deceive the enemy, the next morning we embarked on steam transports, which descended the river a short distance, and then halted, as if to wait for troops delayed. It was generally supposed that we were going further. We were deceived ourselves. But at nine o'clock in the evening, when it had become dark, all the steamers turned about and ascended the river. When we passed by City Point, every one understood that we were bound for Deep Bottom.

At daylight my brigade debarked the first near the bridge of boats, over which, at that moment, was defiling our artillery, coming by way of Bermuda Hundred, and also our wagons and ambulances. We advanced immediately upon the woods where, a fortnight before, Miles had captured a battery from the enemy. Four of my regiments cleaned out the thickets, driving before them the enemy's skirmishers, while with six others I established my force in some works thrown up the month previous by the First Division. The latter, which had had some difficulty in debarking, joined us shortly after, and took position on our right. It was to attack the enemy in the fortified position which had once before stopped us behind Bailey's Creek.

In consequence of delays in debarking, the attack could not be made until five o'clock in the afternoon,

which deprived it of all the advantages of a surprise. At that instant a violent storm broke forth, so that the thunder, together with the artillery and infantry fire, made a fine racket; unfortunately, more noise than anything else, Barlow having assaulted with a brigade containing in its ranks many new recruits. Night came on without our having gained any other advantage than that of drawing to that point the greater part of the enemy's forces, which enabled General Birney, now commanding the Tenth Corps, to capture four guns on another part of the line.

The 15th passed away in vain efforts to turn the Confederate left. The Tenth Corps, supported by the cavalry, was charged with this movement. As a reënforcement, the second brigade of our division had been placed under the orders of General Birney. Finally, to aid his success by a diversion, Mott was ordered to make a false attack on the enemy's right. Our line had been considerably advanced since the evening. It extended now to the foot of a cleared hill, the summit of which was occupied by the rebels. Along my front were some fields of corn, the stalks still standing. I threw forward a few regiments, which drove back the enemy's skirmishers, and drew towards this point a brisk fire both of artillery and musketry, without, however, doing us much damage. The demonstration was renewed in the afternoon, but the hours passed away without anything being heard from the right, and the second day brought us no better results than the first.

It was then decided that Birney, not having been able to turn the enemy's left, should attack in his front the next morning. During the night, our troops were disposed to act according to circumstances. In the morning, the rifle-pits were carried at a dash, and Terry's division penetrated the intrenchments, where it

captured several hundred prisoners and three flags. But the necessary reënforcement had long before reached the enemy. He took the offensive in his turn, and recovered the lost ground. Our second brigade took a very active part in the engagement, in which Colonel Craig, commanding it, was killed. It is always a thankless mission to have to reënforce a corps in action. The general commanding on the ground gladly seizes the opportunity to spare his own troops at the expense of the troops assisting, and, in fine, the latter finish generally by having a greater share in the blows given than in the honors of the combat.

General Gregg, at the head of the cavalry, had the same fortune as General Birney. Supported by Miles' brigade, he drove back the enemy on the Charles City road, and was afterward driven back in his turn, losing all the ground he had gained.

Along my front, action was limited to skirmishers' fire and demonstrations, in one of which the Twentieth Indiana captured two enormous mortars, which the enemy had been compelled to abandon on our left. These mortars had been placed there to fire their fifteen-inch shells at our gunboats. All around were magazines dug in the ground, full of ammunition. It being impossible to transport the ammunition, we blew it up, which was done without accident. General Chambliss, commanding a rebel brigade, had been killed in the morning. He was buried in our lines, but I have never known how his body happened to be there.

On the morning of the 17th, Colonel Chaplain, commanding the First Regiment of Maine artillery, was mortally wounded on my picket line. This regiment was one of those which had been sent from Washington to reënforce the army during the first part of the campaign, and which had so brilliantly distinguished it-

self in its first engagement at Spottsylvania. It was then sixteen hundred strong. It lost more than a quarter in that affair. The baptism of fire cost it dearly. Arrived in front of Petersburg, there were still more than a thousand men in its ranks, when, on the 16th of June, it received an order to charge the enemy's intrenchments at the front, where Fort Stedman was afterward built. The assault had no possible chance of success. It had to cross an open space, three times as great as that generally assigned to charges of this sort. Nevertheless, these brave men advanced in good order, with their guns on their shoulders, closing their ranks cut up by shell and musketry. They went as far as it was possible to go, melting away to the sight, in a stream of blood, and strewing the ground with their dead and wounded. They were soon forced to halt. They started out more than a thousand, they returned less than four hundred. The affair lasted from twelve to fifteen minutes. The enemy had not lost a man, while they left behind them more than six hundred, of whom thirty were officers.

These deplorable mistakes took place only too often during the war. It may have been that a corps commander too readily accepted the erroneous report of a volunteer officer of his staff. Eager for success, he gave the order to charge, without himself verifying the condition of affairs. The general of division has not always the moral courage to venture to object to such an order. The brigade commander, clearly seeing that it is a question of the useless destruction of one or more of his regiments, can take it upon himself to comment upon it to his immediate superior, who will probably reply: — "I know that as well as you do; but what can I do about it? The order is peremptory; it must be obeyed." It *is* obeyed, and a regiment is massacred.

Colonel Chaplain escaped in the butchery; but it struck him a mortal blow, from which he did not recover. His men belonged to the same neighborhood with him. He had organized them; he had led them from the forests of Maine. They were his great family. When he saw them sacrificed under his eyes by a fantasy as deadly as useless, a melancholy discouragement took hold on him. Sombre presentiments besieged him. He was surrounded by phantoms. He answered to the call on August 17, when the ball of a rebel skirmisher struck him down on my picket line.

I regretted his death without being surprised at it, as I expected it. He was a *doomed man* to me from the first day I had seen him on taking command of the brigade. I designate in this way those on whom death has put his mark beforehand. If you ask me in what consists this mark, I would find it difficult to reply. One can scarcely define what is almost indefinable, a thing which is felt rather than perceived. This fatal seal is imprinted rather on the general manner than on the features. Its imprint is fugitive, and yet appears sometimes in the looks, at the bottom of which one divines the trembling of the soul soon about to depart; sometimes in the smile, in which appear the fleeting shadows of a cloud which does not belong to the earth; sometimes in certain movements as if worn out, in certain languid acts in which is betrayed the symptoms of a task which reaches its end. Sometimes, on the contrary, the finger of death is shown by a feverish energy without reason, forced laughter, jerky movements. You perceive there a cord too tightly stretched, the vital cord, which must soon break. One would say that nature is expending hurriedly forces which are soon to become useless.

I am far from contending that all those who are

about to die are *marked*. On the contrary, the immense majority march on to death without the least previous indication of the fate awaiting them. I state only a fact which experience demonstrated to me; namely, that a small number of men carry the unmistakable mark of the near approach of the death awaiting them. I will also add that they are not themselves conscious of it, and that the number of those who can read these mysterious signs is very limited. Sometimes, in the evening, in camp, I have tried to describe the mark to officers around me. I do not remember ever having convinced any one of the truth of my theory.

One rainy day, I was conversing in my tent with Captain Wilson, assistant adjutant-general of my brigade. We were then marching on Fredericksburg. Lieutenant-Colonel Gilluly, commanding the Fifth Michigan, entered. He came simply on some detail of service, which was arranged in five minutes. When he had gone out, "Now," said I to my incredulous captain, "here is an opportunity to make a trial of my theory. Colonel Gilluly is marked."

The captain evidently thought nothing of it. But in the first battle Colonel Gilluly was killed before Fredericksburg, while bravely leading his regiment in a charge.

Of all those on whom I have recognized the mark, — and they are many, — one only may have escaped death. He was the colonel of a Pennsylvania regiment. He was shot through the body, and lay for several weeks on the threshold of eternity. He had not recovered the last time I heard of him.

This mark is entirely distinct from a presentiment. The latter is to the victim himself. It is an inexplicable revelation, but an acknowledged fact. There are

so many incontestable examples on record that it would be idle to add any more here. In my opinion, veritable presentiments announce death as certainly as the setting of the sun announces the coming of the night. Thank God, there are few organizations which are subject to it. People in general are not at all susceptible to it.

A sergeant had finished his three years of service before Petersburg. Not wishing to reënlist immediately, he took his discharge, and, his own master henceforth, he bade good-bye to his comrades, the last evening he was to remain in camp. During the night came an order to prepare for an attack. At daylight the regiment was in line.

"Well!" exclaimed the sergeant, gayly, "it shall not be said that the regiment went into a charge under my eyes without my accompanying it."

He grasped a musket, and took his place in the ranks, and was killed. It was the last thing in the world of which he thought.

I return to my brigade, which I left skirmishing with the enemy on Bailey's Creek.

The firing soon ceased on both sides, in consequence of a truce of some hours, to bury the dead and to take off the wounded. During this time a rainstorm descended impartially on both Federals and Confederates. Thunder took the place of the artillery, and the wind roared in the great sonorous pines above the heads of our regiments, poorly sheltered at their feet. Night came on without any mingling of firing in this aërial concert.

The rain continued to fall during the greater part of the next day (the 18th). Towards five o'clock in the afternoon, the artillery gave a signal of a new engagement. This time it was the enemy who took the offensive against the Tenth Corps. In a few moments,

great cheering announced a charge in force in that direction. The firing soon became very violent, and, from one to another, soon extended to my line. The rebels exactly repeated on us what we had tried on them : an attack on the right, and demonstrations on the left. The attempt did not succeed on either side. Repulsed with loss everywhere, they retired to their lines much faster than they had come out of them.

Two hours later, General Mott received orders to immediately return to Petersburg with his division. It was a night of marching, in place of a night of sleep, on which we had counted. We understood that something new had happened on the Weldon railroad, and we marched rapidly towards Bermuda Hundred. General Hancock kept the rest of his forces two days longer to the north of the James, in order to compel the enemy not to withdraw from there. His expedition against Richmond having failed, it was to be hoped that the effort of Warren, at the other extremity of our lines, would succeed.

That was, in fact, the result. Our division, being the strongest in the Second Corps, had been recalled from Deep Bottom to relieve the Ninth Corps in the trenches, and allow it to join the Fifth Corps in the desperate fight in which it was engaged. The day before General Warren had succeeded, without much difficulty, in reaching the railroad which it was designed to take from the enemy. But, as soon as he tried to march towards Petersburg, he met a large force of the enemy in line of battle, to dispute the ground with him. The fight began immediately. A flank attack threw Warren's left division in disorder ; but the line was promptly rectified, and finally he remained master of the position, where, during the night, he began to cover his front with intrenchments.

However, the railroad was of so much importance to the enemy that he made desperate efforts to recover possession of it. General Lee sent all the forces he could draw from his lines, and, on the next day (the 19th), a violent attack broke in Warren's right, driving back Crawford's division, and threatened to roll up the whole corps. But, while falling back, the troops continued an obstinate resistance, and, although more than two thousand had fallen into the hands of the enemy, they succeeded in holding possession of the railroad until the arrival of two divisions of the Ninth Corps. Relieved then from the terrible pressure which it had found so difficult to resist, Warren immediately resumed the offensive. The Confederates, in their turn, subjected to an attack on two sides, gave way and regained their intrenchments in full flight.

General Warren was not deceived by the inaction of the enemy during the 20th. He profited by it to fortify his position and prepare for a new attack, for which, indeed, he did not have long to wait. It was made on the 21st. The Confederates had, in the first place, struck the left of the Fifth Corps, and then the right. They could now try only the front, which they did. Supported by a strong artillery fire, they charged resolutely but unsuccessfully. A united move on our left was still worse for them. On that side, Warren had disposed his troops in echelon. The enemy's column was cut to pieces, and the remnant escaped only after leaving five hundred prisoners in our hands. This decisive success secured us from that time undisputed possession of the Weldon railroad. We had paid a good price for it, in the loss of four thousand men.

The morning of the victory gained by General Warren, General Hancock arrived from Deep Bottom with his two divisions. He was immediately sent to take

position in rear of the Fifth Corps, and, as the enemy acknowledged his defeat, General Hancock received the mission to destroy the track as far as Rowanty Creek, ten to twelve miles in our rear.

The First Division was now commanded by General Miles. General Barlow, who had been twice severely wounded, and whose health was seriously affected by the fatigues of the last campaign, had received leave of absence for six or eight months, to go to Europe to reëstablish it. The Second Division remained under command of General Gibbon.

The troops of these two divisions followed up their work of the destruction of the railroad without hindrance as far as Ream's Station, five or six miles from the Fifth Corps. There were some intrenchments which had been thrown up before, where Miles established himself on the 24th, while Gibbon continued to destroy the railroad towards Rowanty Creek. The cavalry having then given notice of the approach of a large body of rebels, Hancock recalled his Second Division, and awaited the attack with his forces united behind the intrenchments. The enemy charged twice on Miles' division, which held the right, and was twice repulsed with considerable loss.

This double repulse shook the assailants, but only irritated their commander, Gen. A. P. Hill, who was resolved to succeed over forces much inferior to his own and separated from the rest of the army. He opened the third attack by an increased fire from all his guns, and pushed forward Heth's division to assault in column. At this charge he broke the line, and, getting inside, threw the whole into confusion. Gibbon's division, still in position, might restore affairs, or at least prevent a rout. But Gibbon's division had in its ranks a large number of conscripts and substitutes

recently arrived in the army. The greater part of them were miserable cowards, compelled to serve in spite of themselves, or tempted to enlist by the allurements of a large bounty. When Hancock gave the order to charge the enemy and retake the twelve guns already captured, it was impossible to make them move. They cowered down under the shelter of the works, sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other, thinking only to shelter themselves from the firing, and they finished by allowing themselves to be captured in a mass, without making the least resistance. The remainder of the division, demoralized by such a miserable defection, made a very poor figure. If they fought at all, it was so little, or so poorly that it is not worth mentioning.

In contrast with this poltroonery, the cavalry which accompanied the expedition fought, dismounted, with great bravery, and delayed the progress of the enemy by its efforts. At the same time, Miles, with intrepid coolness, was everywhere rallying his regiments. He thus succeeded in bringing back two or three, with which he retook three guns, and formed the nucleus of a new line, to which the others rallied.

In the night Hancock withdrew, with a loss of twenty-four hundred men. Hill, on his side, retreated at the same time. His losses in the two first attacks had been very heavy; but he carried off as trophies nine guns and seventeen hundred prisoners. This unfortunate affair of Ream's Station deeply tarnished the honor of the Second Division, without elevating that of the First. It brought Miles, who had distinguished himself very much, the commission of major-general.

During these different engagements we had remained in the trenches, except MacAllister's brigade, sent to Hancock's assistance, and which, in consequence of a

mistake in the orders received while on the road, had not been able to arrive in time. My front extended from the cut of the Norfolk railroad to the Jerusalem plank road. It included on the right a closed work, called Fort Rice, in the centre several batteries of cannon and mortars, and on the left a work already quite large, and which was to be made much larger. According to the rule adopted, to give to each separate work the name of a superior officer killed on the field of battle, this work was officially baptized, "Fort Sedgwick." But before that it had already received a popular baptism. In the army and throughout the country it was known as "Fort Hell," and no other name was ever given to it except in official reports.[1]

It has always been supposed — and that very naturally — that this name arose from the fact that, being the point where the lines were nearest each other, it was where the fire was hottest. But I have heard another explanation given. At the time when it was only sketched out as a battery, an officer commanding the working details had thought to give it his own name, and, of his own authority, had hung up on a tree a paper to that effect. A general officer, happening to pass along that way, saw with surprise the name of this unknown person, and said, as if he had read it incorrectly, "Fort — what is that?" he called out. The matter was explained to him. When, as a commentary, he shrugged his shoulders and said, "Fort Hell!" and passed on. The word, strongly uttered, was heard by a few soldiers, who did not allow it to be

[1] The word *hell* in English is much more forcible than the word *enfer* in French. It carries with it the idea of an oath, on which account the strictly pious are scandalized in hearing it, and, in order to express the sense, the ladies have recourse to a periphrase. On that account it is popular among the soldiers.

forgotten. It had an enthusiastic success. From the Fifth Corps it spread through the army; from the army amongst the people, by means of the correspondents of the newspapers. Fort Hell it was, and Fort Hell it remained until the last.

Any way, whatever was the origin of the name, it was fully deserved. It was across the Jerusalem plank road, where the intrenched picket line of the enemy was thrown forward to a ruined house, of which but two chimneys remained standing. The rise of ground on which were those ruins was less than a hundred yards from the fort, which compelled us to keep our rifle-pits for our pickets at the foot of the epaulements in the abatis. Those of the enemy were in front of the chimneys, so near to us that, in case of an attack, our cannoneers would have had much trouble to save their pieces. It is true that for the present the traditions of the Fifth Corps were kept by us, so that not a shot was fired on either side. The good understanding between the pickets went so far that during the evenings there was a regular trading of the tobacco of the Confederates for the coffee of the Federals. Coffee was an abundant and daily ration for our men. To the Southern soldier, who had had none since the war began, it was a delicious luxury. They met each other without arms, in a little ravine near a spring from which they drank in common. They traded the New York for the Richmond journals, and often they drank their coffee together, while making their barter. The most severe orders were necessary to suppress those polite attentions, and break up these clandestine meetings.

But firing might begin at any moment, and I sometimes thought it would be better for us to open first. The presence of the enemy's pickets so close to us as the chimneys offered serious inconveniences and real

dangers. After an examination of the position, I came to the conclusion that I could carry the picket line by a *coup de main*, if General Hancock would let me do it. I spoke of it to General Mott, who immediately approved of the idea. I took him over the ground to explain my plan, and he agreed to make the proposal. On September 8, General Hancock came himself to pass along my line and examine the point of attack. The dispositions which I had submitted to him were approved; the execution was fixed for the night of the 9th to the 10th.

I chose, for this night surprise, three of my regiments. On the left of the fort, the Twentieth Indiana, Colonel Meikel, was to form in mass, without noise, behind a swell of ground, to charge from there with the bayonet upon the whole salient part of the enemy's picket line covering the destroyed house. On his left, the Second Battalion of sharpshooters was to sweep the rifle-pit as far as a marked point, reverse the works, and connect that point by new pits to the end of a piece of woods already occupied by our pickets. To the right of the road, the Ninety-ninth Pennsylvania, Colonel Biles, was to do the same thing for the other end of the line. By capturing from the enemy this salient curve of his pickets, we threw him back to his natural position, and established ours parallel to our principal line. The two colonels charged with the enterprise were the only persons intrusted with the secret, when, during the day, I verbally informed them of my intentions. Not till ten o'clock in the evening did I send them, in confidence, written orders to take their commands to the points selected. The remainder of the brigade was under arms, in perfect silence, without knowing what was to be done.

A little before midnight, I left General Mott at my

headquarters, and went out on the line with my staff officers. I found every one there behind the parapets, with fires out. They were awaiting the hour appointed for moving, which was one o'clock in the morning.

The moon had been down for an hour; the darkness was profound; there was complete silence along the whole line, and the fires of the enemy's pickets were gradually being extinguished. Soon a black mass in motion was dimly seen in front of the fort. Suddenly a shot, followed by twenty others, lighted up the rifle-pits. A dull sound of the feet of men charging on the run, — a clamor formed by a thousand cries, — voices threatening, furious, frightened, mingling with the crackling of musketry fire, — confused sounds of fighting hand to hand, — the thunders of artillery above all the rest, — all this filled the air at once.

Is was the affair of a quarter of an hour. The enemy, surprised, overwhelmed by the human torrent which rushed upon him, gave way, and abandoned to us, not only the section attacked, but still more of his line, both to the right and to the left. The works were quickly turned by the companies provided with picks and shovels, and we were solidly established in the rifle-pits, which the enemy was not able to recapture from us.

Colonel Meikel was among the killed. He was a young officer of great merit and daring bravery. His loss was keenly felt in the brigade, and amongst all who had been brought in contact with him.

From that night on, there was no longer any question of truce or polite attentions between the two lines. There was, on the contrary, a *fusillade à outrance*, which hindered us very much the following night about completing the connection of our works. The work could be completed only by rolling up large gabions to

cover those of the working party who were not protected by deep enough trenches. Evidently, the enemy took very much to heart what he called "a Yankee trick played by a Frenchman." It was not possible to go around inside of our works without danger. I lost twenty-two men there in one day. All the embrasures had to be masked by thick curtains, which were only opened at the time of firing. A cap could not be shown anywhere above the parapet without instantly drawing a ball, for the sharpshooters on both sides were of dangerous address. I saw a sergeant killed near me, while looking between the gabions. The ball struck him above the eyes.

Then, indeed, did Fort Hell fully justify its name. When the artillery fire opened, although I had twenty-four guns and eight mortars along my front in batteries, the fire of the enemy was concentrated preferably on Fort Hell. The regiments occupying the fort protected themselves well enough against the shells by means of broad trenches roofed over with logs, whose slope was covered with beaten earth to the depth of two or three feet. But it was not sufficient protection against mortar shells. These projectiles, of an enormous weight, falling vertically from a great height, broke through everything; where they burst amongst the soldiers they might work great destruction, which happened two or three times. So that, as soon as a mortar shell was noted, night or day, the men came out of their bomb-proofs, and, with eyes aloft, watched the course of the projectile. They were able to calculate exactly the place where it was about to fall, and, in a few leaps, protected themselves against all danger from its explosion. When the mortar fire ceased, they returned to their bomb-proofs.

In artillery firing, our gunners were notably superior

to those of the enemy. The field batteries had been reduced from six guns to four. I had several batteries on my line, and I have often been a witness to the remarkable accuracy of their fire. I have seen "with my own eyes" a lieutenant of the Third New York Independent battery, named Fitz Gerald, knock down a rebel flag three times in six shots, at a distance of six hundred and forty yards, with a twelve-pounder, smooth-bored gun, loaded with solid shot.

My headquarters resembled a small intrenched camp. It lay in rear of a covered way, in a bunch of pines, which overlooked the brigade lines. The enemy was often pleased to send us there a few shots, and the musket balls were striking against the trees from morning to night, and especially from night to morning. So that we were compelled to protect our tents, those of the pioneers, and the horse sheds, by high parapets, which reduced the number of accidents to an insignificant figure.

The exchange of musketry and artillery firing continued, without interruption, during the month of September. On two or three occasions the pickets endeavored to put a stop to it, and renew the pacific bearing and peaceful intercourse interrupted by the nocturnal *coup de main* against the chimneys. But the Confederate officers would only permit a half-hour of truce daily, at sundown, the time of relieving pickets on both sides. Their main object in keeping up this continual firing was to stop, as much as possible, the desertion which was thinning their ranks in a ratio more and more disquieting. There was not a night when some of their men did not come into my lines, either singly or by squads. The greater part were Floridians, belonging to the troops of General Finnigan; so many that, one evening, some of my advanced

posts perpetrated the joke of sending my compliments to the Florida general, with a request to come over and take command of his brigade, the greater part of whom were on our side.

These desertions, which took place more or less on the different points where the proximity of the two lines and the shape of the ground furnished more easy opportunities, were caused less perhaps from the wearing effect, physically, of the laborious service around Petersburg, than from the moral discouragement arising from our great successes on all other points.

On August 7 General Sheridan had taken the place of General Hunter, in the command of the military department, including all the troops, in the vicinity of Washington. Outside of the garrisons, he had under his orders the Sixth and Nineteenth Corps, to whom must be added the troops of Western Virginia, and two divisions of cavalry, sent from the Army of the Potomac. These forces, united, made up an army of thirty thousand infantry and ten thousand cavalry.

Sheridan had at first to obey his instructions, which directed him to keep on the defensive, to cover Maryland and Pennsylvania, which Early continued to threaten. But soon the necessity of driving back the enemy far from the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad became so manifest that General Grant decided to go and see his lieutenant, in order to judge for himself what the chances of success were for an offensive movement. "I visited General Sheridan at Charlestown" (near Harper's Ferry), "and he showed me so clearly the position of the two armies, and what he proposed to do, the instant he was authorized to do it; he expressed such entire confidence in success, that I saw clearly that there was nothing to say to him, and the only orders I gave him were, 'Go in!'" And he

did go in, so successfully that the lieutenant-general has never thereafter had any need of visiting him before giving him orders.

On September 19 Sheridan attacked the enemy near Winchester, and, after a desperate battle, carried the position, and remained master of the ground, with two thousand five hundred prisoners, five guns, and nine colors. General Russell, commanding a division of the Sixth Corps, was killed in the battle, while on the enemy's side fell Generals Rodes and Godwin.

Early, beaten at Winchester, retreated thirty miles up the valley, and took position at Fisher's Hill, where Sheridan quickly followed him. On the 22d, the position, although very strong, was carried by assault. The Confederates, in full rout, left in the hands of the victor sixteen pieces of artillery and a large number of prisoners. Sheridan pursued with great vigor beyond Harrisonburg and Staunton to the passes in the Blue Ridge. He returned to take position behind Cedar Creek, after having completely destroyed the provisions and forage in that part of the valley and the country around, in order to deprive the enemy of the large amount of supplies which he had up to that time drawn from there, and to prevent his being able to subsist his army there in the future. The destruction embraced more than two thousand barns full of grain and forage, and more than seventy mills full of wheat and flour. Four thousand head of cattle were driven off by the troops, and three thousand sheep were issued as rations.

I will add here, in order not to return to the subject further on, that, Early having undertaken to resume the offensive on October 9, his cavalry, beaten and pursued by ours, lost in the attempt eleven pieces of

artillery and three hundred and fifty prisoners. Finally, on the 19th of the same month, the enemy, having been reënforced by a division of infantry and six hundred horsemen, succeeded, by a night march, and favored by a thick fog, in turning the left of our position on Cedar Creek. The surprise was complete. At daylight our left and centre, attacked unexpectedly, were compelled to fall back in confusion, protected, however, by the Sixth Corps, which, being on the right, had been able to form hastily, and which now retreated in good order.

General Sheridan was at this time absent, at Winchester. He was returning, on horseback, when the sound of artillery firing reached his ears, and caused him to hasten his pace to the utmost of his horse's speed. Towards ten o'clock, between Newtown and Middletown, he found his army rallied and his lines being reformed in a good position, thanks to the energetic and judicious measures of General Wright, who commanded in his absence. His presence was enough to restore to his troops both ardor and confidence. He rode along the lines, received everywhere with enthusiasm, and, almost without modifying the dispositions made by his lieutenant, he gave orders to renew the battle.

Ashamed of their rout of the morning, and burning to make amends, the troops charged on the enemy with irresistible force. They carried everything before them, chased the enemy through Middletown, and did not halt in the pursuit, with the bayonet at his flanks, until they had retaken all the ground lost in the morning. Besides the guns captured by him in the morning, Early lost twenty-three others in the afternoon, so that really, in the afternoon battle, he lost forty-one pieces of artillery. Our cavalry continued to harass his

routed columns as far as Mount Jackson, increasing hourly the number of prisoners, already great, and capturing a large part of the wagon train.

This brilliant victory put an end to the diversions of the enemy in the Shenandoah valley. The remains of Early's corps were recalled to Petersburg, and the Sixth Corps was able to retake its position with the Army of the Potomac. Two more divisions were detached from Sheridan's army, one to reënforce General Butler, and the other to occupy Savannah when Sherman should arrive there.

General Sherman had in his field pursued the uninterrupted series of his successes. By a course of able manœuvres and brilliant battles he had reached Atlanta, where his victorious forces had entered the city on September 2. This was, as all knew, the objective point of his campaign. There he was master of a network of railroads of vital importance to the enemy. The different lines were destroyed by his cavalry. At this time he gave his army two months in which to rest, before leading them through Georgia to the Atlantic coast.

There were still other victories during the month of September, which I cannot undertake to enumerate without taking me too far from the Army of the Potomac. One of the most important was the capture of the three forts which defended the entrance to Mobile Bay, and the destruction of the enemy's war vessels found there, by the naval division of Admiral Farragut, with the assistance of the land forces commanded by General Gordon Granger. One hundred and four pieces of artillery and fifteen hundred prisoners were the fruits of that expedition.

Each one of these victories was saluted before Petersburg by a nocturnal salvo of a hundred guns loaded

with shell. This disagreeable awakening sounded in the ears of the rebels as the death-knell of their hopes. This was the reason why so many of them concluded not to risk their lives for a cause henceforth hopeless.

CHAPTER XXXI.

OCTOBER VINTAGE.

General Butler's success north of the James — Line advanced to the Peeble's house — Return to Fort Hell — Misfortunes of a Virginian family — General Birney's death — Arrival of recruits at the army — Dearth of officers — Political prejudices — Too free talk — Expedition to Hatcher's Run — Battle of October 27 — Line broken — How the break was repaired — Cavalry on foot — Night retreat — The wounded — General Hancock leaves the army.

THE latter days of September were marked by different movements, whose meaning could not be doubtful. The Tenth Corps was replaced in the trenches by the First and Second Divisions of the Second Corps, which thus found itself occupying alone the line from the Appomattox to the Jerusalem plank road. The line of our works was like a second line of skirmishers, the regiments occupying in force only the forts, whose cross fire was thought sufficient to stop any attempt which might be made by the enemy. My front was extended to the right as far as a new redoubt, to which the name of Fort Meikel was given. To the left, a division of the Ninth Corps and one of the Fifth filled the interval between the Jerusalem road and the Weldon railroad. So that we had four divisions free on that part of the line.

We were not long in learning where the Tenth Corps had gone. On the evening of the 28th, a telegram from General Grant informed the army that in the morning General Ord, commanding the Eighteenth Corps, had carried, by assault, Fort Harrison and the whole line of

fortifications in front of Chapin's Bluff. At the same time, General Birney, at the head of the Tenth Corps, had carried the New Market road, near Bailey's Creek. General Butler had succeeded where General Hancock had twice failed. He captured the position, with fifteen guns and several hundred prisoners. This step forward was a most menacing one for Richmond. Butler received orders to establish himself there solidly, and no effort of the enemy could dislodge him.

It was time to try again the plan which had given us possession of the Weldon railroad, and push our lines towards Hatcher's Run. While the reënforcements sent by Lee to the north of the James were being worn out in costly and useless assaults against Butler, General Meade sent his four disposable divisions to his left. September 30, they met the enemy intrenched at Peeble's house, near the Poplar Grove Church. Griffin charged, and carried the redoubt, with the rifle-pits covering it; Ayres, in like manner, carried a less important work on a neighboring road. The two divisions of the Ninth Corps, now commanded by General Parke, were less fortunate. While continuing the movement further towards the left, they were attacked by a force of the enemy, which drove them back in disorder on the Fifth Corps. The position taken by the latter was held, however. To better assure the position at all events, Mott's division was called in. A part of Gibbon's division relieved us in the trenches, and the City Point military railroad, the extension of which followed parallel to our lines, rapidly transported us to General Warren's headquarters. Arriving by the first train, I met General Meade, who ordered a staff officer to guide me to Peeble's house, where the two other brigades soon joined me. The weather was bad; rain fell in torrents; it was a most disagreeable night.

The next morning, October 2, three divisions were ordered to carry the advanced works, whose line was prolonged beyond Peeble's house. The movement was made in good order, but without a battle, the enemy having evacuated the positions where we expected to find him. The whole line then advanced across some difficult and very wooded ground.

The general movement pivoted on the right, and, as our division held the left, my brigade, forming the extremity of the turning flank, had much trouble to keep in line. We had to get through the thickets after the style of wild-boars; but, by breaking the branches to make way, we arrived, without delaying the line, in front of a farmhouse, where the enemy's skirmishers awaited us. Easily dislodged, they continued to fall back, firing, as far as a second line of fortifications. This line, armed with cannon, and well built on a hill, the approach to which was across open ground, extended much further than we had supposed. So that, instead of being able to turn it, we were ourselves rather exposed to being struck on our flank. Four of my regiments were promptly formed in a refused line to prepare for any movement. But the enemy was probably not strong enough to try that experiment. Besides, his attention was occupied by Pierce's brigade, which was feeling of his line to find out its strength.

The object of the reconnoissance being fully accomplished, operations were not pushed further. The following days were employed in extending our intrenchments, and in constructing a number of redoubts, the work on which was well advanced when, on the 5th, we were relieved by the colored division of General Ferrero. We took up our march for Fort Hell again; but now only four of my regiments were put in the first line. The six others camped in reserve in the woods in

front of the Chevers house, where I was happy to find a shelter more substantial than a tent.

The house had been abandoned by its owner, who lived in Petersburg. He had carried off all the furniture, and left only one old white-haired negro with his wife, hardly less aged than himself.

The division headquarters were close by, in a more imposing house than the one which was still occupied by the family of the owner. The owner was a well preserved old man, whose son, an officer in the Confederate army, had been captured, and was then in the prison at Point Lookout, on the Chesapeake. The wife and two daughters of the prisoner had remained at the Jones house, with the grandfather.

I made the acquaintance of the old planter at the time when a temporary absence of General Mott gave me the command of the division.

The family was in a most pitiful condition. Mr. William Jones owned seven hundred and forty acres of land around his dwelling, and four houses in Petersburg. So that a few months before he had been a rich man. He had numerous slaves, and flocks still more numerous; his crops were ripening in the sun, and promised an abundant harvest, when, at the end of the month of June, the war brought the armies to the Jerusalem plank road. Everything was swallowed up at once before his eyes. Wheat, oats, corn, were cut to pieces under the horses' hoofs; cattle, sheep, hogs, fowls were carried off; negro men and women ran away; and between one day and the next the planter found himself without servants, almost without provisions, and without money; for, as to his Petersburg houses, it would be a long time before they would be of any avail to him.

When I took General Mott's place at headquarters

the destitution of the family was complete. The division commissary and the officers' mess literally provided them with food. The mother prepared the meals in their chamber, and the orderlies helped the grandfather with good-will, bringing him his water and wood. The old man bore misfortunes with a philosophy somewhat callous, and appeared almost to forget it when, in the evening, a whist party gave him the opportunity to show his ability as a player, of which he was proud.

But his stoicism had still greater trials to bear. The youngest of his granddaughters, fifteen to sixteen years of age, was attacked by typhoid fever. She died October 15, without having lacked either care or medicine. The division service had provided for everything. After her death, the staff officers clubbed together to buy a mahogany coffin, which they sent for to City Point. The younger officers did more: they themselves bore the body to the grave. The young girl, delivered from the miseries of life, was buried at the foot of the garden, in the inclosure of the little family cemetery, and a chaplain conducted the funeral services over the remains.

Another very sad incident is connected with my temporary sojourn at the Jones house. — October 19 I received the following despatch over the telegraph wires, which put the army headquarters in communication with all the others: "General Birney died yesterday at Philadelphia, at half after ten in the evening." The blow was so much the greater that it was unexpected. Birney was one of the best friends I had in the army. Placed under his orders during fifteen months, I had been able to appreciate his personal qualities and military merits. He had died from care, worn out by three years of campaigning, during which

the energy of his will and the ardor of his patriotism alone had been able to sustain him to the end against the weakness of his physical constitution. As long as he was able to stand, he had remained at his post. Two weeks before his death, in the last engagements, where he had highly distinguished himself, he had left his bed to be put on horseback. The artificial force which he had found to enable him to lead his corps to the battle deserted him after the victory. Mortally affected, he finally consented to return to his home, only when it was too late. He had scarcely reached Philadelphia when he died, in the midst of his family, still young, without living to see the triumph of the cause to which he had sacrificed his fortune and his life.

The sad impression of the Jones house on my mind could not cause me to forget that at that time the absence of General Mott brought to me the honor of commanding the Second Corps — during twelve hours, on two occasions. General Gibbon was away on leave of absence. General Hancock went to pass one day at the extreme left, with General Meade, and another to the north of the James, with General Butler. Accustomed to do everything with a military punctuality, he notified me that during his absence the command of the corps would devolve on me, by virtue of seniority. It is useless to add that never was a command so easy for me to fill. The enemy did not gratify me by the slightest demonstration, and I had not even a paper to sign, General Hancock having returned at nightfall to sign the report and other official papers.

The conscripts and substitutes continued to reach us in great numbers, notwithstanding the frequent desertions on the way, in consequence of the culpable negligence with which that branch of the service was con-

ducted. The escorts were taken from the most miserable troops, those which were good for nothing except to guard the depots. They were generally regiments enlisted for a hundred days, without instruction, without uniform, and without discipline. Instead of preventing abuses and repressing disorders, they were only eager to profit by them, to fleece the recruits, who, having received their bounty, generally had their pockets well filled. The officers were scarcely better than the soldiers. Their good-will was purchased by money, and, by offering a sum large enough, it was not difficult to obtain facilities for desertions. So that, on the average, we received at the army only about sixty to seventy per cent. of the detachments forwarded to us. Therefore, in order to repair the waste from the last levy of five hundred thousand men, the President, in the month of December following, was compelled to make an additional call for three hundred thousand more.

Nevertheless, as I said, the recruits reached us in large numbers. We have seen by the affair of Ream's Station what they were worth on their arrival. However, they could be quickly drilled and made useful if the war should be prolonged a few months.

By an unfortunate coincidence, it happened that a decision of the Secretary of War took away from us a large number of officers. The question was if the acceptance of a promotion above the grade of sergeant altered the terms of the original enlistment; for instance: if one who had enlisted for three years as a soldier, and had become an officer during that time, had a right to his discharge at the expiration of these years, when the regiment to which he belonged remained in the army, reënlisted or filled up by an accession of a sufficient number of recruits. The question was an-

swered affirmatively. Many officers took advantage of it to return home. Some left the service finally, others proposed to themselves to return with an advance in rank, obtained from the Governor of their State by personal application, family influence, or by taking an active part in the last work of the electoral campaign in favor of Lincoln. The latter were deceived in their calculations. The dearth of officers, resulting from their departure, made necessary a large number of promotions, entirely to the advantage of those who remained, and especially to those sergeants who had proved their bravery and capacity. When those who had gone off wished to return, it was too late, the places were taken, and the war was finished without them.

On the return of General Mott, I resumed command of my brigade. Only eighteen days intervened before the presidential election, and, as we awaited the event with an interest easy to imagine, political preferences were shown much more openly than usual in the army. A majority of not less than five to one was already assured to Mr. Lincoln ; but General McClellan still had quite a number of partisans, particularly among the artillery officers, he having created and organized that corps at the beginning of the war.

One day, I met one of them in General Hancock's tent. He was colonel and chief of artillery of the Ninth Corps. Naturally, the conversation turned on politics, and became so much the more animated that the colonel and I did not agree on a single point. A partisan of slavery and of compromise, he developed such extraordinary theories against emancipation, against the policy of the government, and against the war, that I could not refrain from expressing to him my astonishment in seeing him occupying a position amongst us so completely at variance with his opinions.

During the discussion, General Hancock, who leaned very near the Democratic party, preserved a diplomatic silence. He was strongly of the opinion that, if he had wished, he might have himself been the candidate opposed to Lincoln. It appeared that some politicians, friends of his, had, at the time, made some vague overtures to him on the subject, overtures which he had wisely declined. He had not pronounced for either side, making some general remarks, emphasized by gestures of the head, desiring to run with the hare and hold with the hounds.

Unfortunately, I commented with some force on the consideration due General McClellan as a statesman and as a soldier. I was treading there on delicate ground. I passed along rapidly, and, taking up the Peninsular campaign, I quickly touched on the battle of Williamsburg. Carried away by too great confidence in the liberality of the general, and in his personal impartiality as to well known facts, I recalled Hooker, abandoned during the whole morning without support; the general-in-chief remaining behind in Yorktown; his arrival in the evening, when everything was over; his ignorance of what had happened — alas! and the famous despatch wherein mention was made of Hancock, without a word about Hooker, Kearney, or Peck.

"Not that I intend for a moment to underrate in the least the importance of your part in the battle," I added, addressing myself to Hancock, plainly annoyed. "In that respect there can be but one voice, and, as much as any one can, I appreciate how much your brilliant action on that occasion did you honor. But I appeal to yourself: what can be thought of a general-in-chief capable of such conduct, and of such injustice towards three generals out of four?"

I must acknowledge, the peroration failed to have

any effect. The fourth general was little affected by the fact that I recognized the justice of his treatment, as soon as I spoke of the injustice of which the others had been the victims. I had touched a sore spot; the oil I poured upon it did not allay the irritation.

"I understand," said General Hancock, breaking up the session. "You are all alike in the old Third Corps. In your eyes, you have done everything in this war, and all others nothing."

I protested in vain; wounded vanity does not reason. I saw plainly that, by a few words too freely spoken, I had not only lost the good-will of my corps commander, but had also revived his prejudices against the whole Third Division. The opportunity to prove it was not long in coming.

Three days after, on October 25, Mott's division, relieved in the trenches by Miles' troops, was massed for the night back of the lines, not far from Gibbon. All detached men who were not absolutely indispensable where they were detailed were armed, and temporarily returned to the ranks. No wagon was to accompany the expedition. The generals themselves received advice to carry their blankets on their led horses; pack mules carried the provisions for the staff. All this meant battle, and we understood that a new movement was to be made on Hatcher's Run.

On the 26th, a march of a few hours brought us in the afternoon one mile back of Fort Dushane, on the Weldon railroad, where we passed the night.

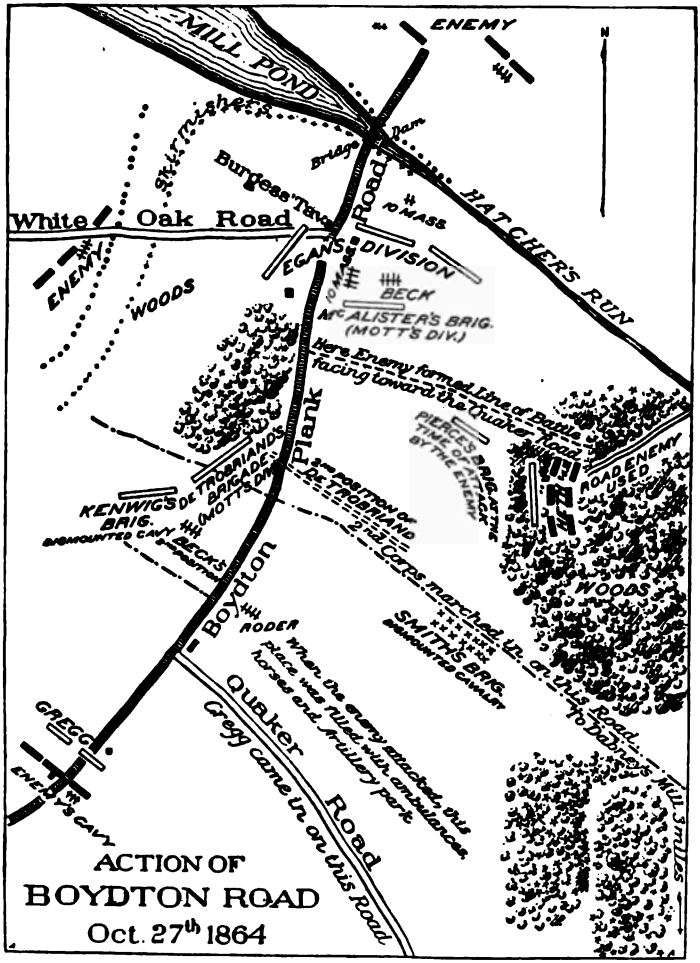
On the 27th, before daylight, we were on our way. The Second Division had the advance. We followed by a side road, known as the Vanghan road.

The object of the movement was: to find the extreme point of the enemy's fortifications, which, almost certainly, must be on Hatcher's Run; to turn them, so

as to take his line in flank and in reverse, and, while a part of our force should drive the enemy towards Petersburg, to push with the balance for the Lynchburg railroad, in order to cut this last line of communication. In the execution of this plan, the greater part of the Ninth Corps was to threaten in front the right of the works which had stopped us on the 2d of October; Warren, with two divisions of the Fifth Corps, was ordered to attack the line in the rear, while Hancock, with two divisions of the Second Corps, operated further on, on the left, against the Boydton road first, and afterward against the Lynchburg railroad. This was our first turning movement against Petersburg. The ground was new to us. In calculating the chances of success, a large part was left for the unforeseen.

The march of the Second Corps was very rapid. At seven o'clock in the morning the Second Division encountered the advance posts of the enemy in front of Hatcher's Run, drove them back to the creek without halting, and easily forced the passage, carrying an unimportant work at that point. I was then sent forward to cover the movement of the turning column towards Dabney's mill. In front of us, the Confederate skirmishers occupied a large field on a crossroad, which was to serve us as a place of assembly for the greater part of our forces. The Seventy-third New York and the Second Battalion of sharpshooters quickly dislodged them, and, the rearguard of the column having passed behind us, we arrived at the sawmill, through the woods, without further molestation.

At noon we had reached the Boydton road, having a few lively skirmishes between our flankers and the enemy's advance pickets. The country was absolutely covered with woods. It was impossible to deploy, and the whole corps, marching by the flank, could do nothing



From Gen. Walker's "History of the Second Army Corps."

but follow the narrow and muddy wood road which led from the sawmill to the high-road. But there the country was cleared up, waste land and fields bordered the road both to the right and to the left, which allowed us to take a regular position. The Second Division moved in advance, ready to attack the embankment of Burgess mill, where the enemy appeared to be in no great force. It was reënforced by our Third Brigade, commanded by Colonel MacAllister. Four of my regiments, the Seventy-third, the Eighty-sixth, and the One Hundred and Twenty-fourth New York, and the battalion of sharpshooters covered our left flank, along on the further side of thick woods on the edge of a wide clearing. With the six others, the Ninety-ninth, the One Hundred and Tenth Pennsylvania, the Twentieth Indiana, the Fortieth New York, the First and the Seventeenth Maine, I was formed across the Boydton road, fronting south, to protect the rear of our line. And, lastly, General Pierce's brigade was deployed in the woods, on a line with MacAllister's.

These dispositions were scarcely made when General Hancock received orders to stop his movement at the place where we were. The cause was the delay of the Fifth Corps to take the position assigned to it on the right of Pierce. The attack of the Ninth Corps had not taken place, in consequence of obstacles judged insurmountable. The two divisions of the Fifth Corps had effected their turning movement, but with much more difficulty than had been expected. The roughness of the ground and the density of the thickets had delayed their march along Hatcher's Run, the opposite bank of which was crowned with intrenchments. These intrenchments, in return of the principal line, extended from the angle they made near the creek, to beyond Burgess mill, where our division had halted.

The enemy, whose skirmishers swarmed everywhere through the woods to find out what we were about, were not slow to perceive the opening left on our right. With his perfect knowledge of the locality, it was not difficult for him to send forward a considerable force without its being perceived. The attack fell without warning on the flank of the Second Brigade, from the same quarter where it expected every moment to see Crawford's division. It can be imagined what was the result.

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon, when the firing, at first, led us to suppose that Crawford had encountered the enemy on his road. But the firing increased in violence, and rapidly approached, mingled with noisy shoutings. There was no mistake now. Our line had been broken or flanked, and the enemy was driving back the Second Brigade upon us in disorder.

At this instant, General Mott, fearing for the safety of the sawmill road, sent the Seventeenth Maine to take position there in haste, under guidance of one of his staff officers.

The rebels, continuing their advance, captured two guns, and came upon the Second Division. But there they found our Third Brigade, which, it will be remembered, had been sent to reënforce the Second Division. MacAllister, with great promptness and coolness, had already changed front to the rear. He received the shock without being shaken. The force of Hill's charge was broken before the fine resistance of his regiments.

In order to attack our troops, the enemy had been obliged to come out of the woods, and cross the end of the open field, at the foot of which a countermarch by battalion on the run had already placed my reserve in a good position. The moment was critical. If Mac-

Allister's line had given way under the increasing pressure of the enemy, the Second Division was in great danger of being cut off and surrounded, in which case it was lost. In order to prevent this catastrophe, General Hancock had but my five regiments. They received orders to charge.

The column which was attacking the Third Brigade presented its flank to us. As the distance was considerable, and time pressed, my men opened fire while marching. The balls went faster than they did. A part of the rebels turned promptly against us, and the fire became very brisk. In the beginning, my guidon bearer was knocked off his horse, which was disembowelled by a shell. In less than five minutes, three staff officers fell wounded around me. One of my friends and aids, Lieutenant Bonnaffon, was shot through the leg; Captain Bell was shot through the lungs; Lieutenant Lockwood was struck in the foot. The latter two belonged to the division staff. On seeing me charge, they rushed to join in the fray.

We advanced rapidly on the enemy, who, attacked thus both on the front and flank, hesitated, and gave way the moment we reached him. MacAllister, relieved, immediately took the offensive in concert with Smythe of the Second Division, and we swept everything before us. General Mott having then sent me the order to resume my first position, leaving only a line of pickets in front, I returned, taking along the two guns recaptured from the enemy by the First Maine, a flag, and two hundred prisoners. But, on the other hand, I left on the field eighteen officers and a hundred and seventy men.

Repulsed on this side, the enemy immediately turned his attention towards our left, which he hoped to take in the flank. He found there my four detached regiments

defending the border of a wood, which could be approached only across open ground. He made the attempt two or three times, but, meeting a strong resistance, pushed further to the left with all his cavalry, and soon encountered Gregg with his cavalry. Both sides dismounted, and a sharp engagement ensued in the woods for more than two hours. Gregg's division fought with great tenacity, and could not be broken or driven back by all the enemy's efforts.

The battle ceased only at nightfall. General Hampton, on the Confederate side, had five brigades with him. In stopping them with an inferior force, our dismounted cavalry rendered good service, for, if they had given way, our line would have been taken in reverse, and we would have had so much the more trouble to retire without any mishap in that the Fifth Corps had not joined us. Our ammunition was nearly exhausted; it was difficult to replenish, in consequence of the distance back to the ammunition wagons. In the position which I occupied, shells had reached us, coming from three directions at once, giving evidence, on the part of the enemy, of an intention to make a combined attack on us at daylight the next morning. These different considerations determined General Hancock to retire during the night.

Between seven and eight o'clock he sent for me. I found him dictating orders in a covered wagon, fitted up like an office. The wound that he had received at Gettysburg had not entirely healed, so that he was obliged to take some repose after the fatigue of a day passed on horseback. The rain was then falling in torrents, and the night was already of an inky blackness.

"General," he said to me, when I presented myself, "I have called you to intrust you with a delicate mis-

sion, in which I rely both on your prudence and your energy. The Second Corps will withdraw at ten o'clock. Naturally, the Second Division will begin the movement in retreat, followed by the Third. I leave you with the general command of the pickets, both infantry and cavalry. I must have three hours advance; you will not withdraw any part of your line before one o'clock in the morning. In such a night as this, it is not probable that the enemy will perceive our movements, or that he will try to interfere with us; but, if any attempt is made, you will have to take the necessary measures to protect the rearguard of the column against any attack. The withdrawal of the pickets will perhaps not be so easy. Manage so as not to leave any part behind, and to so combine your movements as to promptly concentrate your forces at a given point. It is important that you should have them well in hand, in order to repulse any attack which may be made against your retreating line. Whatever happens, your rallying point is the sawmill, where the Second Division will halt, at least until daylight. Endeavor to reach that point without delay, and to bring your whole force with you. After which you will only have to rejoin your division, and send the regiments which do not belong to you to their respective brigades."

These instructions were so clear and precise that I had not a question to ask. I thanked the general for the confidence he placed in me, and departed to visit the line myself before the movement commenced.

I took one of my staff officers with me, who had been over the ground during the day, and, followed by an orderly, I passed into the pine woods, which it was necessary to go through in order to reach the picket line in a direct course. But, when the last glimmers of the fires had disappeared behind us, we found ourselves

enshrouded in darkness, doubly opaque under the green canopy. It was impossible to distinguish anything. Invisible branches whipped us in the face; at every step we struck against the slender pine trees. The horses refused to go on in the inextricable labyrinth. They turned about, throwing themselves to the right and left, and soon caused us to lose all sense of direction. In order to remain together, we had to speak continually, for, if we had kept silent, we should have found ourselves instantly separated from each other. At last, after turning and returning without knowing which way to go, we ended by coming across a reddish glimmer of light, which led us to a battery of artillery posted on the edge of the woods.

We there found, very *à propos*, Colonel Burns, commanding the Seventy-third New York. Having been for several hours without communication with the brigade, he was coming to me to make report of the engagement of the four regiments on picket, and to ask for ammunition, which they would probably need at daylight. Meeting Colonel Burns in this manner made it much easier for me to send my orders along the whole line, and, well informed as to the position of affairs, I returned to General Hancock, whom I found sitting on a log, before a campfire.

The Second Division defiled in silence, with bayonets in the scabbard, the muskets under the arm, and the blankets rolled over the shoulders. The Third Division began its movement in its turn, silently and with the same precautions. The last regiments disappeared in the woods, along the sawmill road, and I remained alone by the fire with my staff officers and my orderlies.

Alone? — No. There were still here and there stragglers delayed, I do not know why, and wounded left behind, for reasons I too well knew. After the

battle, as many were carried away as possible. But, during Gregg's engagement, some shells having burst among the ambulances, they had been withdrawn further from the battlefield, and the transport of the wounded went on much more slowly. When the ambulances had carried their sad burdens to a distance, the movement in retreat prevented their return. There remained only the litters which followed the columns in their turn. Many unfortunates had been thus abandoned in the woods. Others lay along the edge of the road, and, suspecting the fate which awaited them, prayed us with moanings to take them with us. I heard soldiers saying, "Do not trouble yourselves; be a little patient. The ambulances are going to return; we are here to wait for them." They well knew that there was nothing of the sort, but they endeavored to spare the poor creatures a few hours of anguish. Perhaps they also wished to spare themselves the painful emotion of hearing their mournful supplications.

Quite near us, a young soldier had dragged himself under a cart, to be sheltered from the rain. He had had his leg shot through or broken by a ball. Whenever any one passed near him, he raised himself up on his elbow, and asked in an injured voice, "Are not the ambulances coming?" "Right away," they answered him; and hurried on in order not to hear any more. Some of the experiences of war are as sad as others are glorious.

The fires continued to burn all along the line. They were carefully kept up in order to deceive the enemy, and to make him believe the troops were still present, where really there was no one. The watches were consulted from time to time. The hours passed slowly; nothing was stirring along the Confederate lines, or, at least, so it appeared to us, for at that hour they were

massing fifteen thousand troops in our front to give us a disagreeable reveille, when Aurora with her rosy fingers — but, at that time, they were to find in our lines only the ashes of our extinguished fires.

At one o'clock in the morning, the order to retire was sent along the line. One by one, the companies and regiments came out of the woods from different directions, and noiselessly assembled on the road. Not a shot indicated that the movement had been discovered. Every one came out without accident, except one company, of twenty-four men and two officers, who went astray in the woods, and were near entering the enemy's lines. They explained their mistake by saying that they were a part of a detachment sent out to relieve the pickets. The explanation seemed so natural that it turned aside suspicions, to which their capture might have given rise.

It was nearly two o'clock when we withdrew in our turn. Passing the troops massed at the sawmill, we crossed Hatcher's Run a little further along, taking with us a large number of stragglers. At seven o'clock in the morning, we had rejoined the division, and I reported to General Hancock the withdrawal of the pickets without fight or accident. This good result was due in great part to the active and earnest efforts of Colonel Rivers, commanding the Eleventh Massachusetts, who was on duty as officer of the day of the division.

I have related the affair of October 27 with a fulness of detail, because the general commanding does not appear to have appreciated the incidents as I saw them. When a landscape-painter finds his subject for a painting in nature, on transferring it to his canvas, he puts in the lights and shades as pleases him. General Hancock's report was treated somewhat in this

manner, and, in the division of the light and shade, the relief was for the Second Division, and the background for the Third, especially as to what concerned my brigade. The general wished, doubtless, to restore the reputation of the men of Ream's Station, while giving a lesson in modesty to those of the old Third Corps, "who believed they had always done everything." One fact is certain, that the Second Division did not lose half as many men as the Third.

However, it is right, in such case, to bear in mind the lying and exaggerated reports which might lead a corps commander, and even a division commander, to an involuntary error. I had an example of this myself on this occasion. It will be noticed that all my regiments had been engaged excepting one. The Seventeenth Maine, whose colonel was absent that day, had been detached from my command to cover a point of the sawmill road which was thought to be threatened. The next morning, I learned with satisfaction that the regiment had vigorously repulsed the enemy when he had shown himself. This came from a report addressed to General Mott, by his inspector-general, W., who had been ordered to guide the detachment. He had disposed it in such and such a manner; he had done this and that. He only regretted one thing: that he had not had more troops, in order to cut off the rebels from retreating, etc. Some days later, Colonel West having returned, I thought I ought to express to him my satisfaction at the good conduct of his regiment. He looked at me an instant with a surprised air, as if to be sure that I was not rallying him. Then, with frankness, he said, "But, General, my regiment did not see an enemy or fire a cartridge!"

It was true. The author of the report was an officer capable of great bravery; but he was less scrupulous

than brave, and, profiting by a position in which he was out of view, he had represented as facts what was only a might-have-been. His gasconade profited him as he wished. He was only a major; this fine imaginary tale brought him the commission of lieutenant-colonel.

It must be said: these things happened too often in the army. In general, those who are the most boastful are those who do the least, and *vice versa.* So that rewards are far from being in porportion to merit. *Humbug* is decidedly more profitable. How many rapid promotions I have seen from no other cause! So that many deserving officers ended by resorting to it in order to have justice rendered to their services, which otherwise would have been overlooked or misconstrued.

General Hancock left the army a few days after the unsuccessful operations against the Boydton road. He was ordered to Washington, to organize a new army corps, which was to be composed entirely of men who had already been in service. But neither the prestige of his name nor the advantages offered were enough to make the project successful. But few regiments were raised, which never entered the field. So that from the month of November General Hancock disappeared, no more to return, from the scene where he had justly achieved a brilliant reputation as general of division and commander of a corps.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

Presidential campaign of 1864 — Cleveland convention — Baltimore convention — Platforms — Nomination of Mr. Lincoln — Chicago convention — Democratic profession of faith — The question of prisoners of war — Barbarities of the rebel government — Nomination of General McClellan — Desperate manœuvres — Election — The army vote — Counter-stroke by the Confederates — Thanksgiving.

WHILE military operations were being carried on in front of Petersburg with an indomitable perseverance, electoral operations were carried on in the North with an indefatigable activity. The nearer the day of election came, the greater the ardor of the two parties in the strife. On their side, the Republicans wished the war to continue until the extinction of the rebellion, and the reëstablishment of a Union consummated by victory and ennobled by the immediate abolition of slavery. The Democrats, on the other hand, demanded the suspension of the war, by a compromise with the rebellion, and the conditional restoration of a Union subject to the pretended rights of the South, implying every reserve in favor of the maintenance of slavery. The first were desirous of reaping the fruits of former sacrifices by means of new sacrifices; the latter wished to accept the total loss of the bloodshed, and the treasure expended, and incur no more. One party would form no alliance with treason; the other would make an alliance with hell itself if it were to their interest. The inspiration of the Republicans was an enlightened patriotism; the moving Democratic idea was a short-sighted egotism.

At the beginning of the presidential campaign, the Republican party had been threatened with a compromising division. The radical fraction, pushed on by the impatience of revolutionists, and influenced by personal rancor, made a call for a convention, to be held at Cleveland, May 31, to meet before the time of the regular convention, whose ruling motive was directed expressly against the reëlection of President Lincoln. The call, addressed, as usual in such a case, "to all independent men, jealous of their liberties, and of the national grandeur," was made for two reasons: in the first place, the present administration had abused beyond measure its facilities for patronage, resulting from the organization of an army of a million of men. And, in addition, at the next election, the doctrine that one man should hold but one presidential term should be adhered to as an inflexible principle. "A rule having almost acquired the force of a law, by the consecration of time." Which was not true. The history of the United States demonstrated that. In the second place, the Republican convention called for the 8th of June, at Baltimore, was not really a national convention. Why? Because it would hold its sessions too near the centre of administration. So that another convention must be called, at a more central point, as much to make the expense light on the purse of its members as to preserve their consciences.

Never in the history of the United States had a more transparent political manœuvre been built upon such a poverty of reasons. The common-sense of the people was not deceived by it for an instant, and the Cleveland convention was a complete failure. If there had been a germ of life in it, the letter of acceptance of its candidate for the Presidency would have been sufficient to destroy it immediately. General Fremont

therein declared, in plain terms, that if any other candidate than Mr. Lincoln were nominated at Baltimore, he would not stand in the way of a fusion in favor of his rival; but if it were Mr. Lincoln who obtained the nomination, "there would be no other alternative except to organize all the elements of conscientious opposition against him, in order to prevent the misfortune of his reëlection." Now, it must be remembered that General Fremont, having charge of the department of Missouri, in 1861, had raised such a disturbance by the abusive acts of his administration that the government had been compelled to remove him after a few months. *Inde iræ!* His old popularity, shaken since that time by his hostile attitude towards the administration, did not survive this last manifestation, full of personal rancor, and, finally, there was no course left to him to extricate himself from the false step which he had taken, except to rally around President Lincoln, withdrawing from his own candidacy.

The Republican convention assembled at Baltimore on the day appointed. It was composed of delegates from all the Northern States, and from some districts of Tennessee, Louisiana, and Arkansas, numbering more than five hundred men. Its platform was clearly expressed in the following resolutions: —

"Resolved, That it is the highest duty of every American citizen to maintain, against all their enemies, the integrity of the Union, and the paramount authority of the Constitution and laws of the United States; and that, laying aside all differences of political opinion, we pledge ourselves, as Union men, animated by a common sentiment, and aiming at a common object, to do everything in our power to aid the government in quelling, by force of arms, the rebellion now raging against its authority, and in bringing to the punish-

ment due to their crimes the rebels and traitors arrayed against it.

"Resolved, That we approve the determination of the government of the United States not to compromise with rebels, or to offer any terms of peace, except such as may be based upon an unconditional surrender of their hostility, and a return to their just allegiance to the Constitution and laws of the United States, and that we call upon the government to maintain this position, and to prosecute the war with the utmost possible vigor to the complete suppression of the rebellion, in full reliance in the self-sacrificing patriotism, the heroic valor, and the undying devotion of the American people to their country and its free institutions.

"Resolved, That, as slavery was the cause and now constitutes the strength of the rebellion, and as it must be always and everywhere hostile to the principles of republican government, justice and the national safety demand its utter and complete extirpation from the soil of the Republic; — and that, while we uphold and maintain the acts and proclamations by which the government, in its own defence, had aimed a death-blow at this gigantic evil, we are in favor furthermore of such an amendment to the Constitution, to be made by the people in conformity with its provisions, as shall terminate and forever prohibit the existence of slavery within the limits of the jurisdiction of the United States."

On the first ballot, Mr. Lincoln received four hundred and ninety-seven votes, and the nomination was made unanimous by acclamation.

It cannot be said that, during its existence, the administration of Mr. Lincoln had been without spot. Doubtless it had tolerated, more or less willingly, a certain number of abuses; but the people took into the account the immense difficulties, the multiplied compli-

cations with which the government had to struggle in the midst of events without precedent. In the presence of the great things it had accomplished, the public conscience had no thought of bringing up against it the things it might have done. Besides, as Mr. Lincoln himself said, with the good-sense and wit which characterized him, "The people were of the opinion of the Dutch farmer, who thought it was not the time to trade horses while crossing the stream."

The Democratic convention had been appointed for June 22; but the leaders of that party, embarrassed by the strifes in its own ranks, desirous of diminishing the blow about to fall upon them as much as possible, and thinking they must have delay to compose their differences, postponed the meeting of the convention until August 29. Until then they made the best of their time to bring odium upon the administration by every means in their power. Their Southern allies came to their assistance, by intrigues in default of victories. Under pretext of propositions for peace, there were underhanded plottings on the Canadian border, by means of rebel agents, in order to make it appear that Mr. Lincoln refused to honorably conclude the war before the extermination of the South. These manœuvres came to an end, after having made more or less noise, without producing the desired result. Nevertheless, the partisans of peace at any price, led by Mr. Vallandigham, gained enough ground to control the convention when it assembled at Chicago.

Horatio Seymour, Governor of New York, who had become noted for his factious opposition to the government, was appointed President. Vallandigham was appointed chairman of the committee to draw up the platform. The sentiments of the convention were expressed in the following resolution: —

"Resolved, That this convention does explicitly declare, as the sense of the American people, that, after four years of failure to restore the Union by the experiment of war, — during which, under the pretence of military necessity or war power higher than the Constitution, the Constitution itself has been disregarded in every part, and public liberty and private right alike trodden down, and the material prosperity of the country essentially impaired, — justice, humanity, liberty, and the public welfare demand that individual efforts be made for a cessation of hostilities, with a view to an ultimate convention of the States, or other peaceable means, to the end that, at the earliest practicable moment, peace may be restored on the basis of the Federal Union of the States."

The remaining resolutions were nothing but violent denunciations of all the acts of the government, perverted even to the point that it was denounced for having suppressed the liberty of the press, at the very time when the Democratic papers were filled with the most unbridled abuse of the President and his administration, without let or hindrance, and when the most violent language was poured forth on all the stages erected for party meetings.

One of these resolutions reproached the government for not having done its duty towards those of our soldiers who were prisoners of war. It may be well to remark that if the Confederate government had not shown the grossest bad faith, not one of our soldiers would have remained a prisoner in its hands, for on the 7th of May, in consequence of the release on parole of the rebel forces captured at Vicksburg and Port Hudson, the balance was in our favor to the number of thirty-three thousand five hundred and ninety-six. But Jefferson Davis and his officials persisted in

stopping or delaying the exchanges under all sorts of pretexts, with the object, in the first place, of making it impossible for our unfortunate soldiers to take up arms again, on account of their sufferings and privations. In order not to be suspected of exaggeration on this subject, I will limit myself to borrowing textually a few passages from the official report made by a special committee of Congress.

"The evidence proves, without any possible doubt, the deliberate purpose on the part of the rebel authorities, put in practice and long persisted in, to subject those of our soldiers who had the misfortune to fall in their hands to a system of treatment the result of which was to reduce many of the survivors returning to us to a condition, physical and moral, which no language can completely describe. Nearly all the patients now in the hospital of the Naval Academy at Annapolis, and in one in the western part of Baltimore, have received the most attentive and intelligent care for more than three weeks, and many among them for a still longer time. Nevertheless, they still present the exact appearance of living skeletons, being literally skin and bones. Numbers of them are lamed for life, having had their limbs frozen while exposed to the severities of winter at Belle Isle, forced to lie on the naked ground, without tents or blankets, many without overcoats or even coats. . . .

"It is stated by witnesses that it was a general practice among those who captured prisoners to rob them of everything of value, — money, blankets, clothes, — for which they received in exchange only a few worn-out rags almost worthless."

Example : Lieutenant Fisher, of General Mott's staff, was made prisoner at Deep Bottom, while carrying an order. The colonel of the Twenty-seventh regiment

of the rebel Virginia cavalry robbed him of his gold watch, his money, and pocket-book. The subalterns, following the example of their chief, took from him his hat and his boots, and he was compelled to march with naked feet and bare head where his escort led him, too happy to save his uniform. If he had not been an officer, they would probably have left him only his pantaloons and shirt.

"Witnesses declare that often, on rising in the morning from their couch, on the naked ground, they found many of their comrades had died of cold during the night. In regard to the food furnished our men by the rebel authorities, it was proved that the ration for each was entirely insufficient in quantity to keep a child in good health, even if it had been of good quality, which it was not. It consisted habitually of, at the most, two small pieces of coarse corn bread, in which the cob was ground up with the corn, mixed together, and badly cooked; and only occasionally about two ounces of meat, so bad as to be scarcely eatable; once in a while, a few wormy beans.

"Those who had been allowed to receive clothes and blankets, sent by our government for their use, were obliged to sell them to their guards or others, at whatever price they could get, in order to support life by an addition to their diet.

"Besides this insufficiency of food, clothing, and shelter, our soldiers who were prisoners were subjected to the most cruel treatment on the part of those who guarded them. They were insulted and shamefully maltreated on nearly every occasion. Many of them were shot down without mercy, for having failed to obey the demands of their jailors, sometimes for having violated rules of which they knew nothing. When they were crowded together in great numbers in buildings,

the sentinels fired on them and killed them when they showed themselves at the windows to breathe a little fresh air. One man, whose comrade on the battlefield and in captivity had been fortunate enough to be included among those exchanged, was killed in his room while he was waving an adieu to his friend. Witnesses testify to other cases of murder, equally without justification.

"A part of our exchanged prisoners have returned to us without coats, or hats, or shoes, or stockings. The committee is powerless to give you a correct idea of the sad and miserable condition of the men they have seen in the hospitals they have visited. In spite of all the care bestowed upon them, they are dying every day, and your committee were witnesses to the mournful spectacle of the death of one of them. All declared that the state to which they are reduced is caused solely by the barbarous treatment to which they were subjected on the part of the enemy during their captivity; the surgeons having charge of them have not the least doubt that the declarations of their patients are true in all respects."

My pen refuses to reproduce here the horrible details of this long martyrology, which the commitee closes by photographs of the principal victims. These photographs, reproduced by engraving, render all comment superfluous for those who have seen them. In comparison with the abominable hells where our prisoners were tortured by the instruments of Jefferson Davis, the Siberian mines are a place of peace and comfort. At Andersonville as many as thirty-five thousand were tumbled in and heaped up inside of a stockade in the open air, without shelter, without blankets, nearly without clothing. There they died at the rate of a hundred

a day, not to speak of those who there lost their reason through stress of hunger and suffering.

And the Democratic party at Chicago made common cause with their assassins! And made it a reproach to our government that it had not performed its duty towards these prisoners of war! And, in its audacious hypocrisy, offered its sympathy to our soldiers and sailors! But liberty is admirable in that it confounds impudence and unveils hypocrisy. The good-sense of a free people takes account of the falsehoods, and always ends by giving the verdict to the truth. Allow free speech and a free press, and let the people judge. The world will take the right road.

When the Chicago convention proceeded to the nomination of a candidate for the Presidency, the name of McClellan brought on a violent debate, which was prolonged during the entire day. On the next day he had but one hundred and sixty-two out of two hundred and twenty-eight votes. The general was guilty of having fought the rebellion by arms, although he had done everything not to succeed. But he had a majority which was finally raised to two hundred and two votes, and he was nominated.

A portion of the Democratic party which had pronounced in favor of the war, and which still kept its patriotic sentiments, was confounded by the spirit of the convention, and by the general tone of the speeches made there. In order to counteract it, or, at least, to diminish the effect, the War Democrats, as they were called, procured from McClellan, in his letter of acceptance, a declaration in favor of a vigorous renewal of the war, in case all peaceful efforts, first tried, should fail. The result was to irritate the *peace men at any price* without having any influence on *those for war at all hazards*.

General McClellan had been well chosen by the plotters, who thought only of their own gain in case of success. He was a man without a just sentiment of personal dignity and without force of character. In this whole affair, he played the rôle of a pliable instrument, and lent himself readily to whatever was required of him. If he had reached the White House, it is probable that he would have been a President without firmness, floating in all currents and turning in all eddies.

For those who were studying the signs of the times, the State elections during the month of September and October indicated already the result of the presidential election. Vermont, Maine, Ohio, Indiana, Pennsylvania, all gave considerable majorities to the Republican candidate. Even Maryland voted on that side. The allies of the South, brought to their last resources, then had recourse to desperate manœuvres. On October 19, a band of robbers, in their interest, made an irruption from Canada, and carried off the money from the bank of St. Albans, in Vermont. A conspiracy was organized in the North to overturn the administration by violence. The leaders, who belonged to the peace Democrats, were arrested, and the plot failed, not without making it necessary to send General Butler to New York with troops from his army, to prevent any disorder, and assure full liberty to vote on election day.

At last the 8th of November arrived. Never did greater quietness mark a more important election. Every citizen voted freely as he wished, and the result was that Mr. Lincoln was reëlected President by the vote of all the States but three: New Jersey, Delaware, and Kentucky, who gave to General McClellan the alms of a few votes. The majority of Mr. Lincoln on the popular vote was the largest that any President had

ever received before him. It amounted to more than four hundred thousand votes.

The army furnished an important contingent; among the officers and soldiers, those only took part in the election whom the laws of their States authorized to vote. No attempt of any kind was made to influence the soldiers on the part of the government. The only efforts at proselyting came from the Democratic party, who sent electoral agents to us, with their pockets stuffed with printed bulletins in favor of McClellan, and appeals "for our old general." But these efforts were generally poorly received, and sometimes the reception accorded to the apostles of the Chicago profession of faith was of a kind to disgust them with their mission.

Such was the case of one of the too zealous preachers while I was temporarily commanding the division. He had come to the army on a pass from the Governor of Connecticut. An unhappy inspiration led him to my headquarters, where he found shelter under the chaplain's tent, and was entertained at the officers' table. He soon unmasked his batteries by making seditious remarks before the members of the staff. Repulsed in this quarter, he tried his fortune among the soldiers of the provost-guard, to whom he held forth in language so grossly insulting to the President of the Republic, and so transparent in its encouragement for treason, that his auditors seized him and took him to their captain. On hearing the cause, Captain Brennan shut up the orator in the stockade, which was used for a prison, in order that an autumn night passed in the open air might calm the intemperance of his zeal. The next morning, the Democratic commercial traveller was hurried off to the provost-marshal of the army, who returned him to Washington, doubtless very much disgusted with the result of his electoral excursion.

In the Army of the Potomac, the vote was seven to one in favor of Lincoln. The Western armies gave him a still greater majority. In my brigade, only one regiment, the Fortieth New York, gave to McClellan a number of votes worth noting. Among all the others he obtained only an inconsiderable minority. The Seventeenth Maine voted unanimously against him.

The people welcomed the result of the election as the beginning of the end, and the allies of the rebellion were cast down by the blow.

To the rebels themselves the stroke was terrible. The success of the Chicago candidate was their last hope, *spes ultima Trojæ!* We had heard from their lines the cry, "Hurrah for McClellan!" Which, as may be thought, did not increase the popularity of the Democratic candidate among us. On such occasions, our men replied by a unanimous shout, "Hurrah for Lincoln!" A bad sign for our adversaries.

Three days before election, they attempted a nocturnal *coup de main*, whose success — if it were successful — would at the last moment spur up the zeal of their allies in the North. The plan was divulged in some way or other, for on the 5th of November, between nine and ten o'clock in the evening, I received orders to put my brigade under arms and form in line, behind the works, my five regiments in reserve. Towards midnight, there suddenly broke forth a violent firing at my right, which extended along the front of my pickets. The artillery opened fire immediately on both sides; the cannon lighted up the lines by the flashing of their fire, and the mortars streaked the heavens with a shower of falling stars. It was Hampton's legion, composed of South Carolina troops, which threw itself on the position occupied by our Third Brigade. The sudden impetus of the attack carried at first our rifle-pits and a

little part of the works; but, before the assailants could effect a lodgement, MacAllister was upon them with two or three of his regiments. An obstinate although short combat ensued. The enemy, beaten back, regained his lines as soon as possible, leaving in our hands fifty or more prisoners, and a number of dead and wounded on the ground. The abortive attack cost Lee one hundred and fifty to two hundred men, and did not gain a vote for McClellan.

From and after the reëlection of Lincoln, the number of desertions from the Confederate ranks sensibly increased. Many came into our lines; many others took every occasion to abandon the army and secretly return home. In order to pursue and bring back an army of refractory soldiers and deserters, the Richmond government had to distribute pretty much everywhere another army of military employés, which was necessarily a source of weakness. At a number of points, and especially in North Carolina, the deserters went back into the mountains armed, where the rebel government did not dare to search for them. They lived there until the end of the war at the expense of the inhabitants, upon whom they levied contributions without mercy, organized in numerous bands resembling brigands rather than soldiers. We may well think that the rural populations whom they victimized were thoroughly disgusted with the Southern Confederacy.

The only bonds of cohesion which henceforth kept together the armies of Hood before Sherman and the army of Lee in front of Meade was that of discipline and the point of honor of fidelity to the flag. In neither army did any illusion prevail as to the near result of the war.

Mahone's division, composed principally of troops from Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi, among whom

desertions were most frequent, was replaced before Fort Hell by the Carolinians and Virginians of Anderson, who inspired more confidence. These movements gave rise to repeated rumors that the evacuation of Petersburg was liable to happen at any moment. The deserters themselves appeared to believe this, so that vigilance was redoubled everywhere. On several occasions the army was put under arms during the night, ready to start in pursuit of the enemy on the first information as to the abandonment of the lines.

It is quite possible that General Lee thought of leaving. But, if he did have the idea, he felt that he was watched too closely to be able to put it into execution without running the risk of irreparable disaster. So that he remained unto the end fast in his position, pressed more and more, but always opposing an obstinate resistance, while the breezes from the west brought to him the sounds of the crushing defeats, in the midst of which Hood's army melted away.

General Grant had wisely judged when he had said that the Confederacy was but an empty shell, whose whole resistance was on the outside. Before the end of the year it came to pass that the shell was crushed on one side and somewhat broken on the other.

It was, then, with good heart and with good appetite that the Army of the Potomac celebrated Thanksgiving day, for which the population of several States had sent from New York cargoes of provisions of every kind. The City Point railroad brought us mountains of eatables, fowls of all kinds, pastry of all sorts, preserves of every nature. Turkeys and the traditional plum puddings figured there above all in sumptuous abundance, many having on them the card with the name of the giver. Sheridan's and Butler's armies were included in this act of popular generosity, so well arranged that

there was not, from the banks of the Potomac to those of the James and Appomattox, a soldier who did not share in the feast.

These details may appear insignificant to those who have not been through the trials of war, and have never had a place left vacant at their firesides for one absent under the flag; but those who have campaigned at a distance for several years will understand the significance of these tokens of remembrance, sent by the family of the poor as well as of the rich, to the soldiers who were fighting for the common cause. They will not be astonished that the gift filled our hearts with thankfulness.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE LAST WINTER.

General Humphreys — A raid to the south of Virginia — Cloth pontoons — How a railroad is destroyed — A winter's night — Exodus of negroes — Murder punished by fire — Military executions — Renewed operations on Hatcher's Run — Last extension of our lines — General Grant's chessboard — Sherman's march — Victories in Tennessee — Cavalry raids — Capture of Fort Fisher — Schofield in North Carolina — Sherman's arrival at Goldsborough — Sheridan at work — His return to the Army of the Potomac.

NOVEMBER 26, General Humphreys took command of the Second Corps, succeeding General Hancock. His name has already appeared in our narrative, principally in giving the account of the battles of Fredericksburg and Gettysburg, where he played a conspicuous part in very critical circumstances. Since then General Meade had attached him to his headquarters as chief of staff, a position more useful than brilliant. The command of a corps exhibited much better his qualities as a soldier, and if it was an advantage to him to have us under his orders, it was a good fortune to us to have him for a commander.

General Humphreys bore little resemblance to his predecessor. Physically, he was rather small and somewhat spare. His head is that of a thinker and worker. The habit of observation has developed in his face the impression of a natural keenness, the expression of which gives emphasis to his language when he speaks, and his silence when he listens. His manners are simple, pleasant, and with no shade of affectation. Never did any man in his position think less of being valued

otherwise than by his services. Thus, in his conversation, devoid of useless words, it was generally felt that he ordinarily kept back more than he uttered.

He was an officer of the greatest merit, belonging to the corps of engineers. While acting as such, having charge before the war of a scientific survey of the course and the mouths of the Mississippi, he wrote a treatise on the subject so remarkable that Congress had it printed, and it is to-day a source of valuable information for the world of science.

As commander of a corps, his clearness of perception and the perspicacity of his *coup d'œil* were powerfully aided by a perfect coolness under fire. His calm bravery and insensibility to danger left him always in full possession of his faculties. The only thing which could affect his self-possession was an unexecuted order or movement badly carried out in time of action. Then he broke forth so much the more violently in that ordinarily his feelings were restrained. To give vent to it, the general had recourse to flaming outbreaks in which all the vigor known or unknown of the English language burst forth like a bomb. After which, manifestly relieved, he resumed his usual calm demeanor. The atmosphere became serene again; the storm had passed. And, to conclude, General Humphreys was recognizable among all the officers of the army by a narrow necktie, of a brilliant red, which he always wore.

Our new chief had scarcely taken command when we left Fort Hell and its vicinity, this time to return no more. We changed position with the Ninth Corps, and our three divisions were placed on the extreme left, around the Peeble's house. It was December 1, and winter had already announced its presence by several hard frosts. The men set to work like beavers to build winter huts. Labor lost. On the 7th, our division was

on the road with the Fifth Corps, for an expedition commanded by General Warren. We carried six days' rations, and a hundred rounds per man. We took very little besides; the ambulances alone followed the column, with a few ammunition wagons and a few wagons for the commissary stores. As usual, Gregg's cavalry was with us.

I will not say that we left our new quarters without regret, before having used them; but all traces of annoyance vanished with the dispersion of the morning fog, especially when it became evident that, instead of a new extension of the lines to the left, we were to make an excursion to a new part of the country. The weather had become more mild; it was one of those autumn days in which it is a pleasure to march, and the spirit is exuberant. We turned our backs on Petersburg, which was not unpleasant to us; we advanced into a country in which the marks of war showed less and less, and which had the charm of novelty to us. Here is a line, however, marked out across the road with little piles of fences in front as posts for skirmishers. This is where the Third Brigade, marching to the aid of Hancock at Ream's Station, received an order, through a mistake, to halt. Here we are at the woods where the dismounted cavalry delayed as well as they could the advance of the rebels, while further along Miles reformed the disordered infantry. We passed beyond the scene of conflict; we met no more reminders; we are in a new region.

At sunset we had made twenty miles, and had not met the enemy. In front of us was the Nottoway, a small river, quite deep, and running in capricious windings, under the shade of great trees, bordered by wide fields. A little further along there had been a bridge, but the cavalry had just set it on fire, according to

orders, and Warren himself overlooked the laying of cloth pontoons, to enable us to cross to the further bank before night.

I do not remember to have spoken about these cloth pontoons, so easily transported and so useful on expeditions where streams are met with. They are cut out and sewed together in the form of a flat-boat. In order to use them, the cloth is stretched over a frame-work of wood, which can be put together and taken apart easily. When in the water, they carry the flooring for a bridge as well as the wood pontoons; nothing being easier than to empty from time to time the little water soaking through them. When we move on, the framework is taken to pieces, the cloth rolled up, and everything put into boxes, much lighter and easier to transport than the ordinary pontoons, which require a strong team for each boat.

Our second day's march led us by the court house of Sussex County and the village called Commans' Well, near Jarrett's Station on the Weldon railroad. That was the goal of our expedition.

The railroad not having been destroyed beyond Ream's Station, the enemy had found means to make it still quite useful. His wagons followed out the Boydton road, and reached the end of the railroad by crossroads, where they were able to load up with supplies. These wagon trains, which were under protection of their cavalry, were of great help to them. Our mission was to put an end to this traffic. This is why we pushed south so rapidly. We came to destroy twenty miles of railroad at such a distance from Petersburg that henceforth it would be impossible for the enemy to get supplies from this source.

The work of destruction commenced immediately. The cavalry set about it by moonlight; then the divis-

lons of the Fifth Corps took up the work the latter half of the night. In the morning we took our turn. The work was performed as follows: The whole division formed in line of battle, without intervals, along the railroad, and stacked arms. The soldiers then ranged along the side of the rails. At the command, *ready*, every man bent over and seized the end of the tie in front of him with both hands. At the second command, the first regiment near a break or end raises with a common effort the ties and rails. All the others do the same thing successively, and the iron road, with its support, is raised up on one side and overturned, rolling along like a long ribbon. That done, the rails are broken apart, and the ties piled up in square heaps. On each pile, filled in with dry wood and brushwood, five or six rails are placed across each other, and then the pile is set on fire. The intense heat softens the iron, which soon bends by the weight of its two unsupported ends, and the rails, being no longer square, cannot be used again until rerolled.

All this was very quickly done. In less than twenty-four hours, we destroyed in this manner about twenty miles of railroad, although a part of the troops remained always under arms, to receive the enemy if he should present himself. On drawing near Hicksford, the enemy's cavalry was met. But it was not in any great force, and was driven to the other side of the Meherin, where the destruction of the railroad ceased. The expedition having fully succeeded, General Warren gave orders to return the next morning.

I shall long remember that night. The rain, which had begun to fall in the evening, soon changed to sleet, and the ground was covered with a coat of ice, thickening from hour to hour.

The trees bent and the branches were broken under

the weight. The wind, cold and damp, groaned amongst the pines like a complaint from suffering nature. The temperature lowered still more before morning, and, finally, a sun pale and as though himself frozen shone over a landscape of sugar candy. It was as beautiful as an opera decoration, and fantastic as a fairy tale, but exceedingly uncomfortable. Those who involuntarily stood around on the ice or sunk in the mud-holes were not much disposed to admire the marvellous delicacy of the twigs under their transparent envelope. Other incidents, moreover, occurred to withdraw all minds from the contemplation of nature.

During our march on Hicksford, the negroes of the country around were on the alert, and, foreseeing our return, had packed up their clothes, made ready some provisions, and prepared for flight. They had vedettes out to watch for our appearance, so that, as soon as the column was put in motion to return to Petersburg, they began to join us from all sides. They came in bands, bundles over the shoulder, the young assisting the old, the children in their mothers' arms, and in the gayest costumes. To do honor to their liberators, they had put on whatever their incongruous wardrobes contained that was finest. All the fashions which had obtained for two generations were represented. There was the Bolivar hat, with large wings, and the stove-pipe, with almost imperceptible brim; the frock coat of the time of the Restoration, and the coat with the codfish tail, of the reign of Louis Philippe; the pantaloon *à la hussarde*, and the knee-breeches; boots and pumps; the wool blouse and the ruffled shirt. Among the women, the hoops of the second empire were displayed alongside the narrow scabbard of the first; printed calico and white muslin. And what hats! and what caps! and flowers, and even feathers! An improvised carni-

val in the woods of Virginia. When the rations were distributed, there was room for the children and old *aunties* in the quartermaster's wagons. (The female slaves were never recognized as wives or mothers, since they were not married, and their children belonged to the master. For the same reason, the negroes never rose above the dignity of *uncle*. Uncle Tom; Aunt Sarah.) Every one who was well and young followed on foot.

Now, after the comedy comes the tragedy.

At Sussex Court House, the rumor spread among the troops that the farmers round about were acting as guerillas, riding around our vicinity to pick up stragglers, and that a number of the latter had been murdered in the farmhouses. The information was brought to us by negroes, who offered to prove it by leading us to different places where the victims had been secretly buried during the night. Detachments were sent out to verify the facts, which were found to be true. They found the bodies, the throat cut, the head crushed in by blows of an axe, and the breast pierced by a knife. The punishment began at the same hour. The court house was burned, with the neighboring buildings; then the plantation of a rebel colonel, on which three of our men had been assassinated; also a number of others along our road, including the barns and cotton-gins, and the haystacks standing in the fields. Nothing was left except the negro huts to serve as shelter to the families of the murderers. The last destruction was that of a large tavern near Nottoway, where guerillas were concealed in the cellar.

The next day, during a glacial cold, in the rear of our lines, we made our camp, where we were to pass a part of the winter.

This time of repose was noted only for the frequent

military executions amongst the substitutes, who made a speculation of desertion, after having pocketed the bounty. In some divisions they hanged them, as unworthy to die the death of a soldier. General Miles kept the gibbet erected for a long time before his headquarters, as a warning to all parties. In our division, two men only were shot, and each time a temporary absence of General Mott left to me the disagreeable duty of presiding at the ceremony.

These matters are arranged in the United States very much as they are in France. The three brigades, drawn up in two lines, form the three sides of a square, the fourth side of which is reserved for the execution. These arrangements made, the first line faces to the rear, and the condemned marches between the two ranks, preceded by the music, which plays a funeral march. The provost guard acts as an escort, and bears before him the coffin in which his dead body will presently be placed. The platoon detached for the execution closes the column. When it has passed, the first line faces about.

The funeral procession conducts the condemned to the edge of the grave, already dug. After the reading of the sentence, repeated at the same time in front of each regiment, by the adjutant, the condemned is seated, with his eyes blindfolded, upon a board at the foot of his open coffin, into which he falls backward when shot at the signal given by the provost-marshal. If he still breathes, two shots are held in reserve, which are fired at the same time, one at the head and one at the heart.

The troops are then formed in column to march before the body, and the music, which a moment before was a plaintive lamentation, in a minor key, passes without a halt to a major key, playing gayly the *allegro*

for a quickstep. In war, no more time is given up to sentiment than is absolutely necessary.

The remainder of the winter passed away without bringing us any other event of note except a second attempt against the enemy's right and the Lynchburg railroad. The operation was scarcely more than a repetition of the one which had failed in October, except that the posts were differently distributed. This time the Fifth Corps was on the turning wing, and the Second at the centre of the line.

On February 5, we started early in the morning, by the Vaughan road. General Humphreys was ordered to force the passage of Hatcher's Run. The cavalry not having succeeded in doing it, I was charged with the duty. The Second Division, which was in advance, halted to let my brigade pass and take position on the right. On arriving at the creek, I found some unimportant works, behind which the rebels were posted in small numbers. But the ford had been destroyed, and the bed of the creek so encumbered with obstacles that it was impossible for the horses and difficult for the men to surmount them. While my sharpshooters occupied the enemy in front, I crossed on foot over the barriers of the dam, with two of my regiments, the Ninety-ninth and the One Hundred and Tenth Pennsylvania, and the position was carried on the run. My other regiments immediately joined me, while the pioneers made a temporary bridge for the cavalry and artillery. The enemy was then pursued beyond the sawmill road by the Fortieth New York, and the One Hundred and Fifth Pennsylvania (placed temporarily under my orders). With the remainder of my brigade, I rapidly threw up a semi-circular line of intrenchments, covering at once the Vaughan road and that leading to Armstrong's mill on the Run.

We worked with a will, and the Second Brigade lengthened the line upon my left to make connection with the Fifth Corps, which had not yet appeared when the enemy made a violent attack between the Third Brigade and the Second Division, at that time commanded by General Smythe. This was, as we have seen, his favorite method. Profiting very cunningly by his knowledge of the smallest accidents of the ground, and of the groping manner of moving, to which the nature of the country, covered with woods and swamps, compelled us, he would throw himself into some interval left open carelessly or necessarily. Then, attacking vigorously the isolated portion of our troops, he struck it on the flank, and too often succeeded in rolling it up in disorder as far as he could go without being stopped. This was exactly what had taken place on October 27. On this occasion, however, the manœuvre was far from obtaining the same success. Between Smythe and MacAllister, the assailants were so roughly received that, after returning to the charge several times, they retired discomfited to their intrenchments, without having been able to break our line at any point. So that General Humphreys remained master, with two of his divisions, of all the ground which he had been ordered to occupy.

On the next day the Fifth Corps did not do so well. Warren, in developing his movement, more extended than that of Hancock, struck against considerable rebel forces. Crawford's division was driven back in disorder on Ayres, who had the same fate. The intrenchments we had thrown up the evening before were of great help in reforming his troops and stopping the enemy, who otherwise might have driven us back to the other side of the creek.

The remainder of the month of February was devoted

to strongly intrenching the captured position, and covering it with an immense abatis, stretching out to our picket line, a breadth of a thousand to twelve hundred yards; and, finally, in preparing to strike the decisive blow when the moment should arrive. All this brought us to the 25th of March.

But, while holding the Army of the Potomac in comparative inactivity, General Grant was only taking his measures to beat down the Southern Confederacy into such a ruin that nothing would remain standing after the fall of Petersburg and Richmond. From his headquarters at City Point, he directed the operations of the armies simultaneously and at all points. Electricity and steam were at his disposal to transmit his orders in all directions, and, upon the immense chessboard of the war, he moved his pieces with an *ensemble* whose combinations must end in checkmate.

We left Sherman at Atlanta, which he entered victoriously on September 2. In the original plan conceived by General Grant, this important place was to be the base of an expedition across Georgia, supposing that Hood's army should continue to fall back in that direction. But it happened quite otherwise, the rebels having turned back to the North, in order to force Sherman to retrace his steps on the long line of communication which he had to defend as far as Chattanooga. Sherman pursued them at first without abandoning Atlanta; but, soon comprehending that the defence of so extended a line would infallibly paralyze the execution of the projected plan, he conceived the bold idea of freeing himself from every fetter, by leaving the protection of Tennessee to General Thomas, and himself advancing through the heart of Georgia, independent of all base of operations and supplies. On October 11, he telegraphed to General Grant: —

"Hood is now on the river Coosa, to the south of Rome. He has pushed an army corps on to my road at Acworth, and I have been compelled to follow him. I hold Atlanta with the Twentieth Corps, and I have strong detachments along my line, which reduces my active force to a comparatively small army. We cannot remain here on the defensive. With his twenty-five thousand men, and the daring cavalry which he has, the enemy can always cut my railroad. I would infinitely prefer to make a ruin of the road and the country from Chattanooga to Atlanta, including the latter city, send back my wounded and my sick, and, with my active army, march across Georgia to the sea, desolating everything. Hood may march upon Tennessee and Kentucky; but I believe that he will be compelled to follow me. Instead of being on the defensive, I will have the offensive; instead of trying to guess what he intends to do, he will have to guess my plans. This is in war a full difference of twenty-five per cent. I may reach Savannah, Charleston, or the mouth of the Chattahoochee."

Grant had foreseen Hood's movements, and, the same day, before receiving Sherman's despatch, had predicted that if he cut loose from Atlanta he would find nothing before him but the old men, children, and the troops left for railroad guard. "Hood will probably march on Nashville, with the idea that by advancing to the North he can do us more harm than we can do the rebels by penetrating the South." The lieutenant-general would have preferred that an end should have been made of Hood first, in the fear that Thomas was not strong enough to stop him. But, on receipt of the telegram, he replied, "If you are convinced that the march to the sea can be made while holding firmly the line of the Tennessee River, you may make it, destroying the whole line of railroad south of Dalton or Chattanooga if you think it

best." Between Atlanta and City Point the correspondence was exchanged in less than an hour. It would have taken longer for a mounted orderly to carry an order from one end of our lines before Petersburg to the other.

Sherman set to work immediately to complete the necessary preparations. He sent General Schofield with the Fourth and the Twenty-third Corps to join General Thomas, in order to make him fully able to defend Tennessee, reserving to himself four other corps and a division of cavalry. He cut and demolished the whole network of railroad terminating at Atlanta; he delivered to the flames all the depots, magazines, material, and public property of every sort contained in the city, and, on November 14, by the light of this conflagration, he began that famous march which will always be known in history as "Sherman's march to the sea." His army plunged into the heart of the South, like a caravan into the depths of the desert; the horizon closed down upon it, and during a month there was utter silence as to its fate, until one day it reappeared on the Atlantic coast. Like a river of lava, it had devoured everything in its passage.

During this time, according to the prevision of Grant, Hood had arrived in Tennessee, where his presence was signalled by the burning of Johnsonville by Forrest, and the destruction of a great depot of supplies. Continuing his march to Franklin, he found there General Schofield in position to bar his passage. On November 30 he endeavored to dislodge him by a general attack. The battle was desperate and bloody. He lost there more than six thousand men, among whom were six generals killed, six wounded, and one made prisoner. Our loss was only twenty-five hundred men.

After such an advantage, Schofield might have held his

position. He preferred to abandon it during the night, to unite his forces with those of General Thomas, and, by drawing the enemy further away into the interior, render his ruin more certain and irreparable. In fact, Hood followed him to Nashville. On December 15 General Thomas, having received the reënforcements he expected, and remounted his cavalry, in his turn took the offensive. The battle lasted two days, and ended in the complete rout of the enemy, who, among other crushing losses, left in our hands the greater part of his artillery and his trains. The rebel general escaped with difficulty from Tennessee, with the remains of his army fearfully reduced during his retreat.

Thus broken in by these hammer blows, the shell of the rebellion was also pierced by the gimlet. The departure of Sherman and the victory of Thomas were the signal for a series of raids which cut up the Confederacy in every direction, destroying a large part of its interior means of communication and its depots of supplies. During the whole winter General Grant directed the most diverse operations, upon the most distant points, with an extraordinary vigor and activity. He sapped the edifice on all sides at once to produce a general falling-in, the day of which was rapidly approaching.

In the month of December it was General Grierson departing from Memphis at the head of a column of cavalry, breaking the Mobile and Ohio railroads and the Mississippi Central, destroying the material and supplies, burning the depots and the bridges, and capturing a convoy of English arms intended for Hood; then it was General Stoneman sweeping the forces of Breckenridge before him out of eastern Tennessee, capturing his artillery and trains, destroying the salt works at Saltville, and reducing Wytheville, with its factories

and storehouses, to ashes. — Other expeditions of the same kind were equally successful; two or three failed; but a few slight checks did not stop the general march of our success.

Sherman, master of Savannah, was getting ready to resume his march, this time coming towards us, across the two Carolinas. Grant resolved to send an expedition to meet him, with the double object of opening a new base of supplies, and, at the same time, capturing from the rebel government the only port left to it for communication with the outer world. This was Wilmington. In consequence of the exceptional difficulties which the disposition of the mouths of the river presented, we had never been able to seal it hermetically. The cruisers, it is true, had made many prizes there, but many blockade-runners escaped them, and the English smugglers, organized on a vast scale at Nassau, introduced through this port provisions, ammunition, and arms for the rebel government.

A powerful squadron assembled in haste in Hampton Roads, before Fortress Monroe, under command of Admiral D. D. Porter. The coöperation of a land force being necessary to get possession of the forts, General Grant furnished six thousand five hundred men from the Army of the James, intended to be under the command of General Weitzel, an officer belonging to the engineers. But General Butler took upon himself to go with the troops and lead the expedition. December 25, he debarked a part of his force near Fort Fisher, and, after a reconnoissance, in which General Weitzel believed he was justified in declaring the fort impregnable, the troops were reëmbarked on the 27th, and the expedition returned to Fortress Monroe, contrary to the express instructions of the lieutenant-general. The latter believing that the pitiful result was to

be attributed solely to the military incapacity of Butler, and the want of judgment or energy of Weitzel, in a few days, sent the same troops back, reënforced by a brigade of one thousand five hundred men, this time giving the command to General A. H. Terry. The bombardment recommenced, and the fort was carried by assault, after a desperate combat, in which the marines of the fleet took a part. The other works were abandoned by the enemy. This important success cost us scarcely more than six hundred men, killed and wounded. It cost General Butler his command, to which General Ord succeeded.

The port was closed; the city was to be taken. In order not to reduce his forces before Petersburg and Richmond, General Grant called on General Schofield, with the Twenty-third Corps, whose presence was no longer necessary in Tennessee since the discomfiture of Hood. At the end of January, Schofield took command of the Department of North Carolina, and established his forces at Fort Fisher and Newburn. In February, he captured Wilmington and its defences, after two days' engagement. Conformably to his instructions, he marched on Goldsborough, of which he took possession on the 21st, after some sharp engagements. Sherman's arrival was now provided for; he would find twenty days' rations for sixty thousand men, and twenty days' forage for twenty thousand horses.

And he soon came, scarcely delayed at all by the forces that the enemy had been able to concentrate against him, under command of General Joe Johnston. He had left Savannah on February 1, and resumed his victorious march. On the 17th, capturing Columbia, capital of South Carolina, he had forced the evacuation of Charleston, which was at last in our hands. The fire was henceforth extinct on the hearthstone of the rebellion.

Sherman, in passing, had put his foot upon it. From Columbia he had directed his course towards Goldsborough via Fayetteville, where he arrived on the 12th of March, and where he had opened his first communications with Schofield by Cape Fear River. Johnston had in vain put himself across Sherman's path, in order to prevent the junction of the two armies. At Bentonville, as at Averysborough, he had been beaten and thrown back on Smithfield.

In this *ensemble* of combined operations, whose circle was closing in more and more around Richmond, Sheridan could not be left inactive. His rôle was to march on Lynchburg with his cavalry, and destroy all the western communications of the Confederate capital, while drawing near Sherman, so as to join him if circumstances were favorable. This raid was to coöperate with three others; the first from Eastern Tennessee, with four or five thousand cavalry; the second from Vicksburg, with seven or eight thousand horsemen; the third from Eastport, in Mississippi, with ten thousand horsemen; without taking account of an advance against Mobile, and the interior of Alabama, by thirty-eight thousand men of different arms, under the command of General Canby. "That will be enough," said General Grant, "to leave nothing of the rebellion standing on its feet."

Sheridan left Winchester February 27, at the head of ten thousand cavalry. As was his usual way, he did things up in grand style. On his approach, Early had retired from Staunton to Waynesborough, in an intrenched position. Sheridan followed him, and, on March 2, attacked him with a rush, and carried everything before him, and remained master of the fortified position, with sixteen hundred prisoners, eleven pieces of artillery, their teams and caissons, two hundred wagons loaded

with subsistence stores, and seventeen colors. Pursuing his course, he was the next day at Charlottesville, where he began the work of destruction. Bridges of iron and bridges of wood, canal locks and embankments, railroads and plank roads, — everything which might be useful to the enemy was burnt or destroyed. In order to turn him from his course, the rebels were forced to themselves deliver to the flames the two bridges over which he intended to cross the James. Not being able to advance further south, Sheridan decided to join Meade instead of Sherman. Without ceasing to destroy everything in his road, he took the direction of White House on the Pamunkey, where he found a force of infantry sent to meet him with the provisions of which he was in need. After a few days of repose, he crossed the James, and, on the 27th of March, joined the Army of the Potomac, in front of Petersburg, in time to take the most brilliant part in the great events, the hour for which had struck.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE GREAT STROKE.

Capture and recapture of Fort Steadman — Desperate combats along the lines of rifle-pits—General MacAllister — The conscripts under fire — The One Hundred and Twenty-fourth New York and the Fifty-ninth Alabama — General Lee's plans — General Grant's instructions — Opinions in the army — First movements — The battle of White Oak road — The battle of Five Forks — Warren and Sheridan — A night of engagements — The last assaults — Meeting General Grant—Death of General A. P. Hill. — *Venit summa dies.*

At the first glimpse of light in the morning of March 25, I was awakened by a violent cannonade mingled with distant rolling of musketry. I sprang from my camp-bed in order to hasten outside. A few staff officers were already up, listening, and hurrying to put on their uniforms. We could not be mistaken. It was an attack by the enemy in force against some point in our lines in front of Petersburg. — "Everybody arise! saddle the horses, and have the brigade instantly under arms!" — The order was hardly executed when an aid from General Mott arrived at a gallop. — The enemy has surprised Fort Steadman, on the front of the Ninth Corps. He has captured two or three batteries, and pushed his skirmishers on to the City Point railroad. The division must hold itself ready to move at a moment's notice. A part of the Fifth Corps has already moved.

In a few minutes the tents were down, the baggage loaded in the wagons, the troops formed in line, arms stacked, and we awaited orders. The cannonade was still going on, and the musketry fire rolled continuously.

At nine o'clock an orderly brought me a despatch: "Hartranft's division of the Ninth Corps has retaken Fort Steadman and the adjoining batteries. The enemy has left two thousand prisoners in our hands. His loss in killed and wounded must be as much more."

Now for our turn on the left. It was nearly noon when General Humphreys came with General Mott to establish himself at the Smith house, where my headquarters were, to be near the line. General Meade, convinced with good reason that the enemy must have weakened his lines in the vicinity of Hatcher's Run in order to furnish troops for his attack on Fort Steadman, had given orders to capture all the enemy's fortified picket lines in front of the Sixth and the Second Corps, after which we should push on further if opportunity offered.

Miles, who held the right, attacked first, and was completely successful. In my turn, I threw forward the Twentieth Indiana and the Seventy-third New York, which, under command of Colonel Andrews, carried all the rifle-pits in front of us and sent me in a hundred prisoners. MacAllister followed immediately, and was not less successful at first; but he very soon had more to do than any of us. In consequence of the slowness of the Second Division to follow the movement, and of the shape of the ground, his left was in the air. The enemy took advantage of this to attack at this point, and retook his rifle-pits. The Eleventh Massachusetts and the One Hundred and Twentieth New York returned promptly to the charge, and dislodged the rebels for the second time. The sharpness of the engagement revealing a determination on the part of the enemy to regain the lost ground, I hurried forward the One Hundred and Twenty-fourth New York, and followed soon with the rest of the brigade.

We did not arrive a moment too soon. The head of my column had scarcely passed over a marshy creek crossing the road when the enemy began to send a shower of shells, with a precision showing a close study, on his part, of the distance of the ground. At the same time, a firing, coming closer and closer, mingled with repeated cheers, told us that the rebels were again charging the Third Brigade, with increasing success. The left of the Seventy-third New York was even carried away when the First Maine, led by Colonel Shepherd, charged on the run to stop this reverse movement, with the aid of the One Hundred and Tenth Pennsylvania. The charge of those two regiments, by giving the others time to come into line, held in our possession all that the Twentieth Indiana and the Seventy-third New York had captured from the enemy two hours before. Then MacAllister, feeling himself strongly supported on his right, retook the offensive, and his brigade returned for the third time into the pits so obstinately contested.

MacAllister is a character truly original. From what I have related of his services in front of the enemy, the reader would doubtless be led to imagine him as hard fighters are generally represented, — still young, with loud voice, fierce moustache, lofty step, etc. Nothing could be further from the truth. MacAllister is a good *pater familias*, having passed his fortieth year. His voice is soft and calm ; never, never on any occasion is it raised to the pitch of an oath or anything resembling it. Not only is his moustache not twisted, but his face is as closely shaven as that of an honest pastor. Everything about him has the air of simplicity and modesty. His habits are those of an anchorite. A temperance man, he never touches liquor of any kind, not even beer. Tolerant as to others, rigid for himself,

he preaches by example only. His staff had full liberty to use moderately the liquors he refused himself, and it seemed perfectly a matter of course to him, when we visited him, that his adjutant, Major Frinkelmeyer, should offer us "the stirrup cup."

As punctual in his religious habits as he was sincere in his belief, he had Protestant religious services regularly on Sunday at his headquarters. The most pleasant attention we could pay him was, on that day, to listen to the sermon of his chaplain.

His habitual kind-heartedness for the soldier did not affect his discipline. When he personally intervened in a punishment, he seldom failed to accompany it with a reprimand, the tenor and tone of which recalled to the culprit the scoldings he had received from his mother in his childhood. So that the soldiers among themselves called him affectionately "Mother MacAllister." But when the day of battle came the mother led on her children as a lioness her cubs. Because he was a most exemplary man, MacAllister was none the less the most energetic soldier.

But to return to the enemy, who, although driven back, did not yet give up the struggle. Between my brigade and the First Division, the ground was low and marshy, covered with a thicket of brush, where the rebels had not thought it necessary to establish a line of rifle-pits. It was here that they made a new effort. My right, composed of the Fortieth New York and the Ninety-ninth Pennsylvania, the two regiments having the most conscripts in their ranks, rested there. The greater part of them were that day for the first time under fire. It was well to have an eye on them. The uproar in the woods and the noise still heard along the front of the First Division must have shaken their nerves. Nevertheless, they showed a bold front, not

being directly engaged. But when they saw the enemy, driven from Miles' front, rush upon them with the dash which characterized the old soldiers of Lee; when they heard the balls whistling around their ears and falling on the trees like hail, they began to drop to the rear in a lively manner, with the back bent, and hustling each other, hesitating about obeying the earnest appeals of the officers and the storming of the sergeants; in fine, more desirous of sheltering themselves against the storm of lead than of openly taking flight. I cannot tell what might have happened if the road by which we had come up had not been thirty or forty paces back and parallel to that part of the line. I had there my staff and orderlies, who ran down any one attempting to pass the line. Stopped by these cavalry charges in detail, the conscripts made so comical an appearance that, while lavishing the most highly colored epithets upon them, we could not help laughing. The laughter, I believe, had more effect upon them than the oaths and the blows with the flat of the sabre, and we led them back to their positions with so much less difficulty that none of us was struck, and that, the old soldiers having held firmly, the attack, weakened by their resistance, had passed further along across the marsh.

In that direction, the One Hundred and Twenty-fourth New York had been left a little in the rear, behind a swell of ground. All the men were lying down, so as not to be seen by the enemy. On issuing from the woods, the rebels, finding before them only a handful of skirmishers in retreat, did not hesitate to pursue them. This was what Colonel Weygant had foreseen, and he had taken his measures accordingly. He allowed the assailants to advance as closely as possible without discovering his men. When they were but about forty paces off, the whole regiment rose as one man, fired a

deadly volley, and, without reloading, charged with the bayonet. It was all done in a turn of the hand. The enemy were surrounded without having time to recover themselves. It was the Fifty-ninth Alabama, which laid down its arms, when its flag had fallen into our hands by the death of its defenders. The commander was among the number. Colonel Weygant had managed the affair so well that our loss was insignificant.

The loss in the brigade was comparatively heavier in officers than in non-commissioned officers and soldiers. Colonel Andrews of the Twentieth Indiana was shot through the arm, which did not prevent his remaining at his post until the end of the day. Colonel Biles of the Ninety-ninth Pennsylvania was wounded in the hip. In the One Hundred and Tenth, Major Hamilton, commanding the regiment, had scarcely been carried off, nearly crushed by the fall of a limb of a tree, when Captain Stuart, his successor in command, fell mortally wounded. In revenge, the brigade made a large number of prisoners, and buried in its front fifty-six dead rebels, which implied at least four hundred wounded along that short section of the line. These figures give an idea of what that first day of the grand fortnight of battles which completed his ruin must have cost the enemy — in addition even to the four thousand men sacrificed by him in the short-lived surprise of Fort Steadman.

It was much more than a serious check to General Lee; it was a complete failure of the plans on which his last hopes depended. In the position in which the victorious arrival of General Sherman at Goldsborough placed him, there remained but one resource by which to prolong further the contest; this was to abandon Richmond and Petersburg, and, by uniting his army to

that of Johnston, transfer the theatre of war to the very heart of the agonizing Confederacy.

In taking the initiative, by an attack against our right, so as to cut our communications with City Point, Lee had for an object to bring about the concentration of all our forces in that direction. Profiting then by our distance from the course he must take, he would make his retreat by the Lynchburg railroad, and the roads which follow along the right bank of the Appomattox, which he could not do in the face of two army corps, massed near Hatcher's Run. He had taken his measures and made his preparations. We have seen how he failed at the beginning of his efforts. Not only was Fort Steadman immediately retaken, without displacing any of our troops, but that portion of his lines which he wished above all to have secure was pressed much more closely by the capture of the fortified picket line which covered it.

Lee's initiative did not advance or retard by a day the general movement of our army. The date for commencing the movement had been fixed at the 29th of March, in the explicit instructions sent on the 24th to Generals Meade, Ord, and Sheridan. Nothing was changed or modified after the 25th. The principal dispositions were as follows : —

" 1. General Ord will move on the night of the 27th, to cross the James, and join the Army of the Potomac, with three divisions, two of white and one of colored troops. He will leave the latter under the orders of General Parke, commanding the Ninth Corps, and will hold himself in reserve on the left of the army, with the two other divisions.

" 2. On the morning of the 29th, the army will march to the left, with the twofold object of forcing the enemy from his position in front of Petersburg, by a turning

movement, and of assuring the success of the cavalry under the command of General Sheridan, who will start at the same time to cut the Lynchburg and the Danville railroads. The two army corps (the Second and the Fifth) will march first, in two columns, by the two roads which cross Hatcher's Run the nearest to our lines.

"3. General Parke will remain in command of the lines in front of Petersburg, and will defend City Point with the entire Ninth Corps, one colored division from the Army of the James, the dismounted cavalry, the engineer troops, and the headquarters guards. If the Sixth Corps should also be moved out, the Ninth will not extend beyond the works at the Weldon railroad.

"4. In the absence of General Ord, General Weitzel will have command of the troops left to the north of the James. He must exercise the utmost vigilance on his front, and profit by every favorable occasion which may be left him to penetrate the enemy's lines. Every success of this kind must be followed up with great promptness, abandoning all that part of our positions, except the closed redoubts.

"5. The extremely wooded nature of the country in which the army is about to operate rendering impracticable the use of a large amount of artillery, the number of pieces will be reduced to four or six per division, at the option of the generals commanding (Meade, Ord, and Sheridan).

"6. All the troops, without exception, will carry four days' rations in their haversacks, and eight days' in the wagons. Each man will carry sixty rounds of ammunition; a like amount will follow in the wagons."

These instructions ended by the following recommendations: "A large part of the armies operating against Richmond is left behind. The enemy, know-

ing this, may consider it as his only chance to strip his works, leaving therein only a slight line, while he will throw the rest upon our troops in motion, to afterward return to his positions. It cannot be too strongly urged upon the commanders of the troops left in the trenches not to allow this to be done without taking advantage of it. If the enemy advances out of his lines to attack, that fact alone may be considered as almost conclusive proof of a sufficient enfeebling of his works. You will particularly enjoin upon the commanders of corps which may be attacked not to await the orders of the general commanding the army to which they belong, but to act promptly, advising their superior officer of their action. You will enjoin the chiefs of division to the same effect, for the case where other members of their corps may be engaged. I especially dwell on the importance of following up every advantage gained over the enemy."

General Sheridan, having to operate separately, received official instructions which circumstances rendered useless.

The hour for the decisive blow had arrived. We received the news with the greatest satisfaction. For some time we had begun to fear lest that honor, at least in part, would be taken from us. The rapid progress of Sherman towards the North, and his arrival at Goldsborough, while giving us great joy, was not without causing us some inquietude in the sense that, if he joined us before the fall of Richmond, the glory of the Army of the Potomac would be, in that event, half obscured. The desperate character of our battles, the greatness and persistence of our efforts, the immensity of our losses, our constancy as inalterable in adverse as in good fortune, — all these would become dim in the face of the easy triumphs of the Western armies through

Georgia and the two Carolinas. It would be said the Army of the Potomac was not able to make an end of the rebel army in Virginia, and, in order to take Richmond, it was necessary that the Western army should come from the banks of the Mississippi, to help it to victory on its own ground. But thank God! we did not have to suffer the humiliation, after our four years of battle, sufferings, and privation, of losing the glorious fruit when it was within our grasp.

Well, on the 29th of March, 1865, we left our camps no more to return to them. Never had the soldiers taken up their arms with a firmer grasp; never had the officers given their commands in a more stirring voice. Forward! March! We felt in the air the magnetism of the dawn of the day of supreme triumph. We departed joyfully, and crossed Hatcher's Run without meeting the enemy. The Second Corps was promptly formed in line of battle in front of the fortified line, which turned towards the northwest, following the course of the river, while the Fifth Corps, marching further to the left, drove in the advance posts of the enemy on the Boydton road as far as the White Oak road, in front of Burgess mill. Grant and Meade came up promptly behind us, and their presence was an indication that something decisive was contemplated.

As the enemy did not present himself, we advanced to meet him through the woods; but he did not come out of his works. It was at another point that he was preparing to prevent our attack. At nine o'clock in the evening we were installed in a line of works constructed and abandoned by the rebels. The two divisions of General Ord had come into the line between the Sixth and the Second Corps, which allowed General Humphreys to extend, without a break, beyond the Boydton

road, to the same point where he had fought on the 27th of October preceding.

In the night all operations were stopped by detestable weather. The rain, falling in torrents, soaked the ground, so that the roads were impracticable for artillery and ammunition wagons. It was necessary to repair them as well as possible by covering the ruts with branches of trees or "corduroying," or by opening new roads through the forest. This work occupied part of the troops, while the others, with marvellous rapidity, threw up temporary intrenchments to guard against any possible attack by the enemy.

The 30th was thus lost for the offensive, but not for the defensive. General Lee set actively to work to mass on his right all the force of which he could dispose without absolutely stripping that heavy defensive line which General Grant had forced him to extend for a length of more than thirty miles. These tactics had served him twice, perhaps they might for the third time.

On the 31st, at two o'clock in the morning, the weather having somewhat improved, the order was given to us to march by the left flank. The Second Division, now commanded by General William Hays, extended along the line which the brigades of Pierce and MacAllister completed. My brigade was in reserve behind the First Division, which Miles had already massed along the Boydton road. Warren, who had remained there up to this time, pushed his corps further out against the White Oak road, where the Confederates had assembled the greater part of their forces. It was at this point that they awaited the moment to strike. The appearance of General Winthrop's brigade, which was skirmishing in the advance, was the signal to them to leave their intrenchments and throw

themselves on the division of Ayres, which had the advance. The blow was so violent that the division fell back, not without disorder, upon Crawford's division, which was in its turn shaken. But Warren had made his dispositions in this favorite manœuvre of the Confederates. His three divisions were formed in echelon, so that the impetuous rush of the assailants was diminished on the first, became feeble as it struck the second, and died out against the third. Griffin remained firm as a rock, and the broken mass fell rolling back.

All this happened close to us. Not a hurrah, not a volley was fired which we did not hear distinctly. But the woods interposed as a curtain, and we could see nothing. Under such circumstances, it is very exciting to listen. Thus we were silent when we saw the First Division, in front of us, leap over the parapet which covered it and disappear in the woods in the direction of the battle. At the same time, one of General Humphreys' aids brought me the order to follow.

I was to sustain Miles; but he did not give us the opportunity to come to his assistance. With his accustomed promptness, he fell upon the flank of the enemy's column, already retiring from Griffin's front. Between the two, the Confederates were beaten and driven back in a lively manner to their intrenchments on the White Oak road, which a large part of them did not succeed in reaching. We took many prisoners, and the greater part of their wounded remained in our hands. The Fifty-sixth Virginia was said to have been captured almost entire by Chamberlain's brigade of the Fifth Corps.

Miles, continuing his advance, soon left an interval between his right and the Boydton road, which I received orders to fill as it enlarged. In this movement, gradually made, I had to change position twice in less

than an hour, and I left behind me two lines of intrenchments almost finished, so much quickness had my men acquired in this kind of work. When Miles ceased his movement, the sun being already low, our last position of the day was solidly established under a very brisk artillery fire. The enemy's skirmishers had been driven back behind the principal line, from which our men prevented their advancing a second time.

At about four miles from the point which the Fifth Corps had reached, the White Oak road was crossed by other roads, making an intersection known as Five Forks. It was too important a point not to be sharply contested. The enemy had accordingly intrenched and occupied it. The evening before, Sheridan, on arriving at Dinwiddie, had sent Merritt to examine the point, and the latter had found it occupied by a force too large to be handled by the cavalry at his disposal.

Dinwiddie Court House is, as its name implies, a county seat. The Boydton road passes through it seven to eight miles to the rear and left of the position then occupied by the Second Corps. Five Forks forms almost an isosceles triangle with these two points, the vertex of which is at Burgess mill, and the two sides formed the one by the White Oak road, from the east to the west, and the one, from northeast to southwest, by the Boydton road. From Five Forks to Dinwiddie, the base is formed by a road describing a concave curve forking, near its centre, in both directions.

On the 31st, while the enemy was engaged with Warren in front of the White Oak road, Sheridan, pushing his cavalry further on the left, seized the occasion, and took possession of Five Forks, without meeting much resistance. But when the troops, driven back by the Fifth Corps, had returned to their intrenchments, eager to repair their check, they poured out in the direction

of Sheridan, and, having joined their cavalry, attacked him so sharply that he was compelled to give way before numbers, and retire to Dinwiddie. He fell back, contesting every step of the way, the most of the time his cavalry fighting dismounted, leaving one-fourth of his men as horse-holders. Arriving near Dinwiddie, Sheridan, profiting by some intrenchments which were there, closed up and concentrated his line, and, facing the enemy, received him so warmly that he could make no further advance. Night coming on, Lee recalled his two divisions to Five Forks.

The Fifth Corps came very near cutting off their retreat. As soon as Sheridan's position was known at headquarters, orders had been hurried to Warren to march to his aid. Unfortunately, the order did not reach him until after dark, causing delay in the movement. Nevertheless, Ayres' division, hurried forward first by the Boydton road, would doubtless have reached Dinwiddie almost as quickly as by daylight if the destruction of a bridge over Gravelly Run had not stopped him. He had to rebuild the bridge, which delayed him some hours. So that when Ayres, having taken a crossroad to the right, came out from the road from Dinwiddie to Five Forks at daylight, he found there our cavalry. The enemy had already retired, also escaping Warren, who came up with his two other divisions. The pursuit, begun by the cavalry, was continued in connection with the infantry, the two corps having united under the command of General Sheridan.

The cavalry struck directly at Five Forks, and, by a number of vigorous charges, drove the enemy into his intrenchments. At the same time, Sheridan sent the Fifth Corps forward on the right, so as to turn the Confederates' left, and strike them on the flank and rear, while General Merritt should attract their attention on

the other flank by active demonstrations. As they had not met Warren, they thought him still in the vicinity of the Boydton road, and, having had to do thus far with the cavalry alone, which pressed upon their front and extended beyond their right, they saw in Merritt's movements only the development of a turning attack, against which it was important above all to guard.

However, behind this curtain of cavalry moving noisily, Warren was silently making his prescribed manœuvre. Ayres and Crawford in the front, each with two brigades deployed in two lines, and the third in rear with the same formation, Griffin marched in reserve on the turning wing by battalions in mass. The whole corps advanced, taking its direction by the sun, moving with a steady step, over a thousand obstacles, down into the ravines and over the hillocks, through the fields and the thick woods.

In order still better to cover the movement, General McKenzie, who had just rejoined the army with a cavalry reënforcement, received orders to sweep the White Oak road, between Five Forks and the point where it struck the right of Lee's lines. He found some force of the enemy, which he drove back towards the Boydton road, thus providing against any attack on Warren's right.

The Fifth Corps came upon the left of the Confederate force isolated at Five Forks, about four o'clock in the afternoon. Ayres, who was the nearest to the enemy, immediately changed front, and, after having driven in the pickets, came upon the intrenchments, forming a right angle with the principal line for a distance of more than a hundred yards The division immediately charged with the bayonet, and carried the works, capturing more than a thousand prisoners.

This change of front and attack were executed so

promptly that Crawford, having a much more extended arc of a circle to pass over, had not been able to keep the line. Griffin threw himself into the interval, and, connecting with Ayres, captured on his front fifteen hundred prisoners. When Crawford, in his turn, had finished his movement, he found he was in the only road by which the enemy could retreat, so that the latter, finding himself attacked on three sides at once, had no other resource than to lay down his arms.

A part of the enemy still held a traverse intrenched on their extreme right. The troops, somewhat disorganized by the battle at the end of a long and severe march, hesitated before this new obstacle, and lost time skirmishing. General Warren, coming up, went to the front, and called on them, both by voice and gesture, to follow him. The whole force immediately moved forward on a bayonet charge. The intrenchment was carried and its defenders made prisoners. Of the two Confederate divisions of Pickett and Bushrod Johnson, hardly a handful succeeded in escaping, pursued with the sabre at their backs by the cavalry of Merritt and McKenzie. This victory was so much the more brilliant that it cost less than a thousand men, while the enemy lost five thousand prisoners, without counting the dead and wounded, the artillery and colors left in our hands. The attack made by the enemy at Five Forks had the same result as that of Fort Steadman, six days before; a moment of ephemeral success followed by a crushing defeat. In the thinned-out ranks of the defenders of Petersburg, the loss of twelve thousand men made a terrible gap.

The battle was scarcely over when General Warren sent for orders to General Sheridan, and received in reply: "Major-General Warren, commanding the Fifth Corps, is relieved of his command; he will report imme-

diately to Lieutenant-General Grant, commanding the armies of the United States, for orders." This news, spread everywhere along with that of the victory, caused a general surprise, and gave rise to different conjectures. Even to-day it seems to me that the matter is not entirely clear. In his official report, General Sheridan explains the step in these terms: "General Warren did not exert himself to get up his corps as rapidly as he might have done, and his manner gave me the impression that he wished the sun to go down before dispositions for the attack could be completed." Then, speaking of the battle, "During the engagement portions of his line gave way when not exposed to a heavy fire, and simply from a want of confidence on the part of the troops, which General Warren did not exert himself to inspire." To these imputations General Warren replied by a detailed justification of his military conduct on the occasion. It is probable that the real cause is to be sought elsewhere: perhaps in some details in the first personal contact between these two generals, who had never met before. In such a case, the edgewise meeting of some crooked atoms might be sufficient to arouse irritability without cause between men who, if they knew each other better, would become attached by mutual esteem. On a field of battle, in the heat of action, the first impressions are made stronger, instead of being softened down, and the least sting may be changed to a wound. However it may have been on this occasion, Warren was transferred to the Department of the Mississippi, Griffin took his place at the head of the Fifth Corps, and the incident was forgotten in the shock of armies and the whirlwind of events.

During the series of battles from Five Forks to Dinwiddie, and from Dinwiddie to Five Forks, the left of

the Second Corps, of which I formed a part, was almost continually in motion. General Humphreys governed his movements by those of the Fifth Corps. Before morning, when Warren moved out to go to Sheridan's assistance, we had fallen back to the return intrenchments which covered the Boydton road. In the afternoon, my brigade had been retired to the rear line, on the side towards the sawmill, where the firing, frequently increased in sharpness, gave reason to fear an attack in force. When Sheridan returned to Five Forks, we hastened to retake our position of the night before.

It was dark when we arrived, and the head of my column filed rapidly along the intrenchments, when a great clamor, prolonged by hurrahs, arose suddenly near us. Our movement was stopped, ranks closed up, the clicking of gun-locks ran along the whole line, and the gun-barrels were thrust over the parapet. All eyes peered into the darkness to discover the moving mass of the assailants ; all ears were stretched to catch the sound of their footsteps ; but there was no movement, and the cheering died away. As, besides, our pickets did not come in, I sent some men to find out the meaning of the noise, and we soon learned that these resounding cheers were the rejoicing of the enemy over the entire destruction of Sheridan's forces, cavalry, infantry, artillery wagons, etc. We knew what the facts were. The illusion was of short duration, for the truth was soon told them by our advance posts, and the dull silence of discouragement succeeded to the noisy outburst of enthusiasm.

The silence, however, did not last long. My brigade was scarcely established in its position on the right of the First Division when I received orders to push on a partial attack in front, in order to be assured whether

the enemy continued to hold his lines in force, or if he had weakened sufficiently to permit me to enter. I immediately called on Colonel Burns of the Seventy-third New York. Burns was the man to take charge of the business. Wrong-headed and good-hearted, like most Irishmen a desperate fighter; but clear of perception, and of good judgment, and steady in time of peril; better under fire than anywhere else. Besides his own regiment, I put two others under his orders, both well commanded: the One Hundred and Twenty-fourth New York, under Lieutenant-Colonel Weygant; and the other, One Hundred and Tenth Pennsylvania, under Captain F. Stewart. The three regiments were formed in line in front of the parapet; the seven others were stretched out to fill the space left vacant.

Night attacks are almost impracticable in the woods. The darkness is deeper; difficulties multiply at every step; officers and men are lost to view in an instant; the ranks get mingled together, are broken and scattered; trees stop the men sometimes as obstacles, but much oftener as shelter from the balls. The force starts out in line of battle; it reaches its point of attack in a column in disorder, and at the first volley from the enemy it decamps in confusion. I had therefore preferred as point of attack a cleared field which stretched in front of us to the enemy's pickets. The moon, half obscured and low down in the heavens, permits me to follow their movements for some time.

The line advanced silently and in good order, not a man left behind. Soon it disappeared in the obscurity, and we remained in suspense for several minutes. Then a flash through the obscurity, a report of a shot, other flashes and other reports.

The line continued to advance without reply. Then the whole border of the woods crackled from one end

to the other. Finally, a brilliant jet of flame crossed the field and lighted up the heavens like a flash of lightning; a loud thunder-clap shook the atmosphere, followed by the cry, Forward! given in chorus like an echo; and the three regiments charged the enemy's rifle-pits on the run.

From that moment there was only a great tumult of gun shots, shouts, and tramping through the dead wood and broken branches. The rifle-pits had been carried, of course; but behind them was found a thick wood, obstructed with fallen trees. The men engaged in this thicket had no longer even the uncertain light of the moon to direct them, as she had sunk below the horizon. It being impossible to go further, they posted themselves as advantageously as possible, continuing the firing as well as they could on the rebels scattered around them.

The briskness of the firing sufficiently demonstrated that the enemy had not stripped his line in front of us. The object of the reconnoissance being accomplished, General Mott sent me orders to retire the three regiments.

They came out of the woods leisurely, and reformed their line along the borders of the open field. Then, certain of leaving no one behind, they retreated with the same precision as if they had been on the drill ground. They retired thus, continually under fire, at the same pace and in the same order in which they had advanced. In front of the breastworks, where the balls were still flying and where some of them knew that I was present, they halted until Colonel Burns was certain that the position behind the parapet was free. Then only did they, at his command, leap over it.

The engagement was of itself of no importance. We gained but a few prisoners by it, and we lost about

thirty men and a captain of the One Hundred and Twenty-fourth, who was killed. But I have thought it well to relate the details, in order to show what soldiers our volunteers had become, and how their officers commanded them in the latter days of the war.

This engagement was a signal for a series of similar attacks, which succeeded each other without cessation during the rest of the night. As soon as one was over, another began on a different point. Towards Hatcher's Run and Petersburg they were strongly supported by the artillery. From a distance we surveyed the luminous course of the shells as they passed each other in the air, and listened to the deep sound of the guns which kept the two armies on the alert. The soldiers said to each other: "Things are moving; it will be warm to-morrow."

After the battle of Five Forks, General Grant had but one fear: this was that the enemy would take advantage of the night to evacuate his works. This is the reason that he kept up a continual attack along the whole line, ready to throw the troops in pursuit if he should not succeed in keeping the enemy close in his intrenchments, and also why he sent Miles to reënforce Sheridan at Five Forks, in case General Lee should endeavor to pass over him by retreating along the White Oak road.

The First Division having been sent out, I received orders at two o'clock in the morning (April 2) to take my brigade back immediately on the Boydton road. The order was accompanied by the official information that at four o'clock the Sixth Corps and the Ninth were to assault, the one in front of Fort Fisher (Peeble's house), and the other in front of Fort Hell (now Fort Sedgwick). The great day had arrived.

We filed through the woods. An aid led me to the po-

sition I was to occupy in the intrenchments which cover the road and cross it behind the Rainie house, where General Humphreys had his headquarters. Five batteries were there, the guns in position, the teams in rear, the ammunition wagons open, the artillerymen at their posts. Great fires lighted up the scene. I disposed my first two regiments between the batteries furthest off. Where was the third? Had it got lost in the marshy ground we had passed over? Had it passed by the point where we left the road? My aids were sent out in search.

At this moment a desperate firing broke out in the woods in front of us, and exactly in front of the batteries which were not yet protected. I turned the command over to the senior of the two colonels, with a few rapid instructions, and went in search of the missing troops. I met groups of stragglers joining the two regiments in position. — "Where are the others?" — "They are coming, general. We got lost in the swamp; now they have found the road." All right. But time presses; I gallop to meet them on the open ground between the road and the batteries.

What fine soldiers were those cannoneers! Shells rained around them; balls whistled everywhere through the air, telling them that the enemy was very near. If our men gave way, the rebels would not be long in falling on the guns. Nevertheless, they stood there as calm as their pieces, apparently indifferent to what was passing in the woods. The officers and gunners were looking over the parapets, watching for the moment when the enemy should appear in the open ground, to sweep them with canister.

One of my aids, Lieutenant Keene, joined me at a gallop, reporting that three regiments were in the works farther along the line. When the attack was

made, they had thrown themselves there to cover the guns left at that point without infantry support. The other regiments were in line at the entrance into the woods, awaiting orders. I ordered him to go and bring them on the double quick to fill the vacant space. — Keene departed. He had not gone twenty steps when his hat was carried away by a shell. The blood gushed forth from his nose. Somewhat stunned, he felt of his head, shook himself together; then, settling in his stirrups, went on his way, as if nothing had happened.

When my last regiments came up, the attack lost ground rapidly. The firing became more distant, and soon died away in the depths of the forest.

Where did that attack come from? What troops had repulsed it? How and by what roads had the enemy been able to penetrate so far in rear of the intrenchments I had hardly left? I never learned. It was one of those incidents which often occur in the confusion of great battles. Perhaps the explanation might be found in some brigade or division report. But, in the midst of the brilliant events of that day, it disappeared like a brook in the ocean.

At the first glimpse of daylight, the interrupted movement was completed, and my brigade took the position which had been assigned to it, with a reënforcement of four hundred and fifty convalescents of the First Division, placed temporarily under my command.

The great uproar of artillery from Petersburg had reached its highest point when punctually at four o'clock in the morning Parke and Wright threw forward their assaulting columns. Parke forced the first line of the enemy where Port Mahone was; but, since the famous affair of the mine, the enemy had made a second line, equally strong, at some distance in the rear, and the Ninth Corps was stopped there. Wright car-

ried everything before him in front of Fort Fisher, the Sixth Corps having penetrated the vast *enceinte*, so long impenetrable. Ord succeeded also in breaking through near Hatcher's Run, with two divisions of the Twenty-fourth Corps, commanded by Gibbon. The two corps, united, turned their faces to the right, towards Petersburg. Two closed redoubts were found in the plain. Gibbon captured both, but not without the most intrepid resistance from one of them.

All that portion of Lee's army which was in front of the Second Corps, seeing its road to the city cut off, retreated in the direction of Sutherland Station, on the Lynchburg railroad. The guns disappeared rapidly from the embrasures, while the men filed out on the run behind the intrenchments. Deployed as we were on a long line, a third of which was in return, some time was necessary for us to form in column on the Boydton road. When we reached Burgess mill, the enemy had disappeared.

However, he was not to escape us completely. At the first news of the successful assault, Sheridan had hastened to send back his first division to Humphreys. Miles returned in haste by way of the White Oak road, when, the current of retreating rebels passing in his reach, he began an energetic pursuit along the Claiborne road. He struck them near the station, where they, at first, made an obstinate resistance. But Sheridan came up, overlapping their right. They gave way and fled in the greatest disorder, by the road running along the Appomattox, abandoning their guns and losing a large number of prisoners.

In the meanwhile, we left behind us the fine fortifications with which the rebel engineers had covered the approaches to Burgess mill, and hurried on towards Petersburg by the Boydton road, now completely open.

It was a beautiful day. The spring sun laughed amongst the new foliage. Heaven and earth appeared to rejoice in our triumph. The men, forgetting the fatigues of the last days and the sleepless nights, marched with a joyous step, running and laughing with each other. On the right and on the left, our flankers picked up prisoners, who surrendered with a good grace, and took their place between our regiments without showing any ill-temper. They knew that the war was finished by a blow, and were far from regretting it.

On approaching the city, we passed out of the woods to cross a wide plain. We had arrived near a house of poor appearance, situated about fifty yards from the road, when an electric movement ran through the ranks. Attention! There is General Grant! Every one straightened himself up, adjusted his equipments. The general, seated on a front veranda, his legendary cigar in his mouth, looked on us passing by, probably thinking of something entirely different. The door was like the entrance to a beehive. Staff officers were crowding around; horsemen were coming and going on a gallop. All was motion and life around the lieutenant-general. He alone preserved his habitual calm; but through that apparent impassibility shone the pride of triumph and of satisfaction for the task accomplished.

Everything, however, was not yet over. The cannon were heard grumbling, and between us and Petersburg there was still a line of works important enough to at least give the enemy time to collect himself. In order to strengthen his position, he had even endeavored to recapture some positions from the Ninth Corps. It was in one of these offensive efforts, unsuccessful though vigorously made, that General A. P. Hill was killed. He had played a great part in the war, and had served the cause of secession with as much constancy as ability.

He perished with it, and was buried in the same winding-sheet.[1]

The remainder of the day passed in putting the artillery in position, and in connecting our movements with those of the Sixth and the Twenty-fourth Corps, so as to carry the city by assault, if the enemy persisted in defending it. But he had no such idea. General Lee wished only to gain the night, the protector of disorderly retreats.

This memorable day was Sunday. While at Petersburg the last rampart of the rebellion was falling in pieces, its president was in Richmond, calling in vain on the Lord of Hosts. Mr. Jefferson Davis was at St. Paul's Church, where he received a despatch, the tenor of which did not permit him to hear the end of the religious service. It was the *Venit summa dies* of the Southern Confederacy. Twelve hours were left to its government to pack up and leave.

[1] A. P. Hill was killed near the Boydton road, after the lines were broken by the Sixth Corps, by some soldiers away from their commands. — *Trans.*

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE DENOUEMENT.

Evacuation of Petersburg and Richmond — The pursuit — Arrival at Jetersville — The Confederates at Amelia Court House — Engagements of the rearguard — Fight at Deatonsville — Captures and trophies — A great cast of the net — Death of General Read — Opinion of a Confederate sergeant — The baggage — Meeting General Sheridan — High Bridge — The last battle of the Second Corps — Communications between Grant and Lee — The *coup de grace* — The Confederate army lays down its arms — Final tableau.

DURING the night of the 2d to the 3d of April, General Lee evacuated Petersburg and Richmond simultaneously. All the troops he had left were assembled at Chesterfield Court House, a central point, at nearly equal distance from both cities, and from there, in the morning, they began their movement to join Johnston's army in North Carolina. This was their only chance of escaping utter destruction. General Grant, who was well aware of this, was ready. The pursuit began immediately, so that the occupation of the two cities was left principally to the Twenty-fifth Corps, composed of colored troops. The division placed temporarily under the orders of Parke was put in charge of Petersburg, and the two others, under Weitzel, took possession of Richmond.

The last and supreme humiliation of these arrogant despisers of humanity! At the very seat itself of their overturned government, their property and their lives were under the protection of the black man, to whom they had refused a place in the great human family. At this last hour of the great iniquity, the characters of

both the oppressor and the oppressed were made manifest without disguise. The associates of Jefferson Davis delivered to the flames the city they could no longer defend, and which the flames would have utterly devoured but for the colored soldiers of Weitzel, who saved two-thirds of it. The whole business quarter, the richest and most thickly inhabited, was reduced to ashes. Its piled-up ruins will for a long time tell what were the men who sacrificed their country to their depraved ambitions, with the sole object of perpetuating their barbarous rule over a soil torn from American civilization.

The route selected by General Lee was, on leaving Chesterfield, to cross the Appomattox at Good's bridge, in order to strike the Danville railroad at Amelia Court House. From there he hoped to precede us at Burksville, the point of intersection with the Lynchburg railroad; if he succeeded in passing that point before we were able to oppose him, he was nearly certain to effect a junction with Johnston, who was stretching out his left from Smithfield to meet him. The common objective, then, was Burksville. Pursuers and pursued hurried in that direction with an equal ardor. In that race the advantages were balanced, for, if the Confederates had ten or twelve hours advance of us, our route was shorter than theirs by a distance nearly equivalent to the difference in time.

The two armies started on the race by parallel roads, Lee to the north and Grant to the south of the Appomattox. Sheridan, who had remained during the evening before not far from Five Forks, took the lead, with all his cavalry, followed by the Fifth Corps, which had camped at Sutherland. The Second Corps marched at daylight by the Appomattox river road, and the Sixth followed closely. — General Ord, with the greater part

of the Army of the James, marched along the line of the Lynchburg railroad, which the Ninth Corps was ordered to protect behind him.

Thus General Grant had divided his forces into two columns, and, while Ord pushed towards Burksville, Sheridan and Meade took a straight line to strike the Danville railroad a little farther to the north, at Jetersville Station.

Sheridan arrived there first, during the 4th, at the time when Lee had just reached Amelia Court House, and, as he was considerably in advance of Meade, he intrenched in order to give Meade plenty of time to join him. We had been somewhat delayed in our march by the necessity of repairing the roads, or of leaving the artillery and trains behind. In spite of all possible diligence, it was not until the afternoon of the 5th that we reached Jetersville. But, during these twenty-four hours, Lee had not thought himself strong enough to engage in a doubtful battle against the sixteen or eighteen thousand men who barred his way.

Everything was turning against him. Adverse fortune struck him a hard blow in depriving him of the provisions on which he had relied to supply his army. A large train ordered from Danville on the 2d was to wait for him at Amelia Court House. It happened that the rebel government, having need of the cars for its hurried removal, had ordered the conductor to take them on to Richmond. He did not understand that they wished the empty cars, and, without unloading, continued on his way, taking the rations with him.

Lee's soldiers, on leaving Petersburg, had hardly a day's rations with them. The greater part had eaten nothing for twenty-four hours when they arrived at Amelia Court House. They employed the day of the 5th in foraging to pick up what they could find in the

neighborhood ; a very insufficient resource, in a country more than impoverished. And, by this delay, the last chance of joining Johnston was lost.

During the night of the 5th to 6th, the Confederates were compelled to start on their road ; we were upon them. Already in the afternoon, General Davies, with a brigade of cavalry, had captured five pieces of artillery, and burned a hundred and eighty wagons, at Paine's crossroads. The rebels hurried forward as fast as the increasing difficulties permitted, for forage was lacking to them as well as provisions, and the animals were feeble from hunger, as well as the men. Now their only hope was to reach Farmville before us, so as by a détour to regain the direction towards North Carolina, or to reach Lynchburg, where they had a supply of provisions. But the nearer the stag approaches the end of his course, the more ardently does the pack hurry on his trail. At daylight the whole army was put in motion.

The cavalry, supported by the Sixth Corps, resumed its march parallel to the enemy's column. Griffin, passing by Amelia Court House, which had been evacuated, kept to the left, upon the flank of the Confederates, while Humphreys pressed closely upon their rearguard. Finally, Ord, reaching Burksville, marched rapidly upon Farmville, in order to destroy the bridge at that point, towards which Lee was pushing the head of his column with equal haste.

It was about nine o'clock in the morning when our division caught up with the rearguard of the enemy, near Salt Sulphur Spring. General Mott communicated his instructions to me while my regiments were rapidly advancing. Ten minutes after, we were engaged with the enemy. The Twentieth Indiana, deployed as skirmishers and supported by the One Hundred and

Twenty-fourth New York, had rapidly ascended a hill, and begun to drive the rebels, who fell back along the Deatonsville road.

We advanced firing, with a rapid step, when Mott, wishing to examine for himself the dispositions I had made, came to join me on the skirmish line. — "Everything goes along finely," he said. "Push on vigorously, and try to reach the wagons which are a short distance away. If you capture them, it is quite probable you may find a commission of major-general." — He had hardly stepped back four paces when the sound of a ball striking against leather made me turn my head. I remarked a hurried movement among the staff officers. Several leaped from their horses, and, in the midst of a group, I saw the general stretched on the ground. A ball had gone through his leg, passing between the two bones below the knee. When he saw me near him, he raised himself on his elbow to say to me: — "You have command of the division. You already know your instructions; I have nothing to add. Carry them out vigorously. Good-luck and good-bye." — He was carried off on a litter, suffering less from physical pain than from moral disappointment at not being able to assist at the denouement of the drama in which he had played for four years a part as meritorious as distinguished.

The movement was continued without interruption. The First Brigade, now commanded by Colonel Shephard of the First Maine, and strengthened by two regiments, continued to advance in line of battle, behind its skirmishing line, whose dash gave the enemy no time to halt. The rebels were pressed so closely that, a favorable position presenting itself to them to make a stand around a large farmhouse, they were driven from it before they were able to cover themselves with a slight barricade hurriedly sketched out.

However, a little further on, there was a halt. A body of Confederate cavalry had placed a battery in a good position to sweep a piece of open ground, extending to the right of the road. The First Division was hurrying up on that side, but, marching from Jetersville by a longer road than ours, it had not been able to join us, and our skirmishers alone prolonged our line of battle. To assist them, I ordered forward a section of the Eleventh New York battery. A lively cannonade followed, to such good purpose that soon guns and horsemen disappeared before them.

During the engagement, General Humphreys had come up on the line. We dismounted in order to advance out of the woods by a road running along a slope from which the movements of the enemy could be better discovered. We must have been noticed, for the balls began to whistle about our ears with a persistency which certainly was not due to chance. But, as General Humphreys paid no attention to them, it was not my place to notice them. He asked me as to the exact position of my three brigades, consulted a topographical sketch which he held in his hand, explained to me where the road led to, where we had a good opportunity to strike the rear of the enemy's train, and above all the guns of the rearguard, which he was particularly desirous of capturing. Finally, satisfied on all points, "I think," said he, in a calm voice, "we had better get further to the rear."

We retraced our steps without accident.

Now we are at work again. The chase recommences. A new line, hurriedly made and feebly defended, is again carried by the skirmishers. A hundred yards further on, the hill is crowned by a slope strengthened by fences and felled trees, behind which appears a well filled line. Here the skirmishers are not enough. The

line of battle is formed along a covered hedge, under fire from invisible artillery, which is searching us with shell from beyond the crest where the infantry awaits us. In a few minutes, six regiments are ready to charge: the Seventy-third and Eighty-sixth New York, the One Hundred and Fifth and One Hundred and Tenth Pennsylvania, the First and the Seventeenth Maine. At the command all dash forward at once. The strife is to see who will pass ahead of the others, and first plant the colors on the enemy's intrenchments. No one remains behind. The wounded fall; they will be picked up afterward. The first thing was to strike the enemy.

It was a beautiful sight. The six flags advanced in line as though carried by six human waves, which ascended without halting until they had extinguished and submerged the flaming dyke which was raised in front of them.

And, with no other delay than the time required to collect two or three hundred prisoners, and reform the ranks, continually following the retreating enemy, we arrived at Deatonsville. There the First Brigade gave way to the Second. Nearly all the regiments had emptied their cartridge-boxes on the skirmish line, where they had been since morning.

From this point on, the First Division marched in line with us on the right of the road, and advanced at a good pace. Now it was a question of not allowing ourselves to be left behind. So that, without waiting for the First Brigade to replenish its ammunition, I pushed the Second Brigade to the front in line of battle and supported closely by the Third.

We went on at a fine rate. Twenty-eight wagons and five guns had already fallen into our hands. At each capture the ardor of the chase increased. The men no

longer halted even to load. When an obstacle presented itself, behind which the enemy made a pretence of standing, the skirmishers ran upon them with cheers; the regiments nearest dashed forward, and the position was carried before even the rest of the line knew what was going on.

Towards sundown, General Pierce, on emerging from a thick wood, found himself in front of an abrupt hill crowned by a slope, behind which the enemy in force opposed a determined resistance. The cause was soon known. On the crest of the hill, which was reached by a winding slope, the road turned sharply to the left, and was thus parallel to our front. The enemy's trains were still defiling there, and it was to save them that the entire rearguard opposed us. But there was no intrenchment which could hold against the determination of our men when they saw the wagons. The crest of the hill was carried at the instant when the last carriages had passed. While falling back, the escorting troops still defended them. Pierce rapidly changed front on his left regiment, while the Third Brigade came up in haste to have its share of the spoils.

The line had but just passed a large farmhouse at the highest point of the hill, when an unexpected sight was presented to it. At the bottom of a narrow valley, divided throughout its length by a small stream, called Sailor's Creek, more than two hundred wagons were hurrying pell-mell to cross the stream upon a bridge half destroyed. The Second Brigade, in which was the One Hundred and Twentieth New York, fell upon the prey with enthusiastic cries. Two of these regiments, the Seventeenth Maine and the Fifty-seventh Pennsylvania, even crossed over the creek in pursuit of the enemy, and only stopped at the summit of

the opposite hill. The First Division, which, on account of the change in the direction of the road, had been obliged to make a long détour, nevertheless arrived in time to take part in the fray.

The day was fine. Besides the wagons captured to the number of two hundred and seventy, my two brigades, which were engaged, had taken from the enemy six guns, an artillery guidon, eight flags, and from five to six hundred prisoners. Miles' division had likewise its trophies. These, however, were the least of our successes.

While Humphreys was pushing on and demolishing the rearguard of the rebels piecemeal, Sheridan took the advance of the Sixth Corps, looking for a place where he could strike a terrible blow in the rebel flank: *leo quærens quem devoret!* He hurled one of his divisions of cavalry to the attack; the enemy halted to cover in force the point threatened; the fight was carried on with vigor, while a second division passed on to renew the combat at a point a little further along, and then a third division in like manner. While the enemy's infantry halted to fight, the trains continued on their way, leaving behind the greater part of their protecting force. The column was broken up into sections, and the moment must come when it would be cut off. That was what happened. Three divisions of cavalry, led by Custer, Crook, and Devin, struck the trains upon Sailor's Creek, a few miles above the point where we had captured a part. They destroyed four hundred wagons *en bloc*, captured sixteen pieces of artillery, and made a large number of prisoners.

Between Sheridan, in front, and Humphreys, in rear, was Ewell's Confederate corps, delayed by the incessant cavalry charges, whose object was to give time for the Sixth Corps to arrive. Wright was, indeed, not far

away, and soon his first division, commanded by General Seymour, struck the rebel force along the road, while the second, commanded by General Wheaton, extended around the left flank of the enemy's column. The latter made frequent and vigorous attacks in reply. But when it had to halt before the fire, assailed on all sides at once, crushed as in a vice between the cavalry and the infantry, it had no other resource but to lay down its arms. This great haul of the net brought in six to seven thousand prisoners, General Ewell himself and five or six other general officers among them.

And this was not all. To complete the disaster to Lee's army, his advance guard received the same day an important check. We left him advancing rapidly on Farmville, towards which the Army of the James was directing its course. General Ord, fearful of not arriving in time, sent forward two regiments of infantry and a squadron of cavalry, under command of General Read, to stop the enemy by burning the bridge. Read arrived too late to carry out his instructions. The head of the enemy's column had already crossed the river. However, knowing how important it was to delay the enemy, he did not hesitate to attack, notwithstanding the enormous disproportion of force. He contested the gound step by step, with a heroic intrepidity, while Ord hurried forward at the sound of the musketry. He was killed at the head of his two decimated regiments; but the sacrifice of his life had the full result for which he hoped. The Army of the James soon appeared, and the rebels, halted at Farmville, could only turn off in an endeavor to reach Lynchburg.

This battle of the 6th of April, known generally under the name of the battle of Sailor's Creek, gave the *coup de grace* to Lee's army. Worn out by fatigue and hunger, exposed to every privation and every dis-

couragement, these twenty-six to twenty-eight thousand men were no longer in condition to defend themselves. A portion was without arms; the remainder was only capable henceforth of those spasmodic efforts in which a mortal agony is extinguished.

Among the prisoners we had made in the evening was a young sergeant whose intelligence had been noted by some officers of my staff. I sent for him and conversed some time with him. His replies can be given in a few words: "General, I can tell you nothing which you do not well know. The Army of Northern Virginia no longer exists. What remains cannot escape you. It must end in that manner, and, since it cannot be otherwise, we do not regret that the day long foreseen has arrived. On the contrary, we are all rejoiced that the war is finished. If we had been consulted, it would have ended many months ago, but the government chose to hold out to the end.

"I was taken by the conscription, like the rest; for of those who volunteered at the beginning of the war very few now remain. For six or eight months back, our men have deserted by thousands. Those who remain have been held by a sentiment of honor only. They did not wish to disgrace themselves by deserting their flag. They have done their duty to the best of their ability. As to the Southern Confederacy, although they would have liked to have seen it triumph, they lost all hope of it long since.

"Personally, I care little for slavery, and it is all the same to me whether the negroes be free or not. I belong to a family of farmers who sometimes hired black labor, but who owned no slaves. Now, when we employ them, we will pay them instead of their masters; that is all the difference. As to politics, I have never taken any part. I know very well that the war was brought

on principally for the benefit of the planters; but what could we do? when one is on board of a ship, he must do what he can to keep it afloat. The Confederacy has ruined the South by the war; our hope is now that the Union will raise her out of her ruin by peace."

When I had dismissed the prisoner, he halted a few steps away, hesitated an instant, then, turning towards me, said: —

"General, your kindness has encouraged me to ask a favor of you. There are a half-dozen of us here, who have found nothing to eat since day before yesterday. If you could give us each a cracker, that would help us to wait, and we would be very thankful."

We were not very bountifully supplied ourselves; in fact, we were very far from it. But the sergeant did not return to his comrades empty-handed.

One thing struck me particularly in the contents of the wagons fallen into our hands; it was the quantity of heavy and useless articles with which they were loaded. Cooking-utensils, frying-pans, stewpans, kettles, were plentiful, along with trunks and chests half empty or filled with useless papers and worn-out rags. Discipline must have become very much relaxed, or the comfortable habits of the officers deeply fixed, to induce them to load down the transportation of an army whose safety depended on its celerity, with such *impedimenta*. It seemed to me that the surplus of useless trains hastened the loss of the rebel army by retarding its movements and scattering its active force. When a ship threatens to founder, they throw the freight into the sea. Lee's army refused to lighten itself in this way, and was engulfed with its cargo.

During the night of the 6th and the 7th, the enemy continued his movements. At daylight, Humphreys was already in pursuit. In the rapidity of the march, I

passed by a crossroad I should have taken, and soon, having some suspicions on the subject, I halted, while my aids sought for information. A general, followed by some staff officers and an escort of cavalry, came up by the road near which I had halted. Those around me said, "It is Sheridan!" which excited my curiosity. I had seen the general once or twice only, but without ever having had an opportunity to exchange a word with him.

General Sheridan is of medium height, stout, and vigorous; with a soldierly air. He at that time wore his hair brushed up and his moustache *au naturel;* his eyes are black and bright; his look denotes great quickness of perception and of temperament. His features are regular; his open countenance denotes a frank decision of character. Such is the impression I have of this meeting, the first time I ever had an interview with him.

He halted near me, saluting me, calling me by my name as if we had been old acquaintances, and, as soon as I had made known to him my doubt as to which road I ought to take, in a few words he put before me very clearly my line of march. Wright was marching on this line; Humphreys on that; Griffin must be found so far away. At such an hour we would reach High Bridge, where we could strike the enemy, etc. My brigade, then, should take the road that I had passed, and which would bring me out at such a cross-road, where I would meet such and such troops. All this was told so clearly that I could not doubt the perfect accuracy of his information. The general had in his head not only the general character of the movements of the army, but also the details. I left him immediately, in order to repair the delay of some minutes, and at the hour announced we reached High Bridge.

This is a magnificent viaduct of twenty-one arches, crossing the valley of the Appomattox from one hill to the other. It is designed both for the Lynchburg railroad and for the inhabitants who wish to cross on foot or in carriage from one side to the other. When we presented ourselves at one end, the enemy, who had just crossed over, was setting fire to the other. We had to throw a pontoon bridge across the river. General Humphreys determined to profit by this delay to save the viaduct, the second arch of which was already on fire. A strong detachment, armed with axes borrowed from the different regiments, hurried to the fire, under the direction of some engineer officers. The upper bridge, on which was the railroad, was saved by the sacrifice of a third span, and the lower bridge was open for our trains, after some slight repairs.

The Second Division crossed over first. General Barlow, who had returned to the army three or four days before, was in command. The enemy's rearguard was still on the hills. Barlow sent against him the brigade of General Smythe, who was killed in the engagement. He was a gallant officer, very much beloved in the Second Corps. His death closed the long list of the victims of the war among the general officers. One of the last ones killed was General Winthrop of the Fifth Corps.

Barlow had scarcely reached the further bank when he was sent to Farmville, from which a detachment of the enemy retired at his approach, after having burned the bridge, and more than one hundred wagons, which he could take no farther. General Humphreys, with my division and that of Miles, continued energetically to pursue the greater part of the Confederates by the road to Appomattox Court House. We came up with them five or six miles further on, in a strong position,

where they had already covered themselves with intrenchments and awaited our approach. I had the left, and Miles the right. The skirmishers deployed in advance met everywhere a stubborn resistance, and, from the extent and solidity of the enemy's line, it became evident that we had before us all that remained of Lee's army. The day was passing away. In the impossibility of turning either flank of the position, a charge was ordered of three regiments of the First Division. It was repulsed with loss. We had to do with too strong a force.

All the remainder of the army was some distance away, on the other side of the Appomattox. The cavalry and the Fifth Corps were on the road via Prince Edward's Court House. The Sixth Corps and the Twenty-fourth were still at Farmville, where the bridge was not rebuilt until night; and the Third Division had not yet rejoined us. We were thus compelled to put off the renewal of the attack until the next day. But the enemy did not wait. He commenced his march during the night, and the grand chase again began, with eagerness, at daylight.

We advanced in three columns, picking up all that was left behind by the Confederate army. This remnant was breaking up more and more, leaving its stragglers in the woods, in the fields, and along the roadside. Animals and men were yielding to exhaustion. The wagons were left in the ruts; the cannon abandoned in the thickets or buried in holes, hurriedly dug, that the negroes hastened to point out to us. The places were marked for those who should be charged with the duty of bringing off the pieces, and, without halting, we pushed forward, "on a hot trail," like hounds who are coming upon their quarry.

As for men, we captured them everywhere. Our

advance had been so rapid in the Second Corps that the trains had not been able to join us. We were without rations; fortunately, we had a few cattle left, and some provisions in the country around. To secure them, one regiment from each brigade was detailed for foraging. Lee's soldiers were also searching the country for provisions, but in isolated groups. Wherever they met our detachments, they surrendered with eagerness rather than repugnance. They had had enough of the war, and henceforth were less rebels than the Virginia sheep, which it became necessary to pursue *à outrance*, and even to shoot when they refused to surrender.

In the afternoon, a few horsemen in gray appeared in front of us. They had halted in the middle of the road, before a farmhouse, and waved a white handkerchief in the air as a flag of truce. General Humphreys was promptly notified, and received a communication written for General Grant. The letter having been forwarded, our movement continued with more ardor than ever. — "Hurry up," the men in the ranks said. "Lee is going to surrender!"

The evening before, in fact, General Grant had written to General Lee the following note, dated Farmville, April 7: —

"GENERAL, — The results of the last week must convince you of the hopelessness of further resistance on the part of the Army of Northern Virginia in this struggle. I feel that it is so, and regard it as my duty to shift from myself the responsibility of any further effusion of blood, by asking of you the surrender of that portion of the Confederate States Army known as the Army of Northern Virginia."

The reply was received at eight o'clock in the morning: —

"GENERAL, — I have received your note of this date. Though not entertaining the opinion you express on the hopelessness of further resistance on the part of the Army of Northern Virginia, I reciprocate your

desire to avoid useless effusion of blood, and therefore, before considering your proposition, ask the terms you will offer on condition of its surrender."

General Grant wrote immediately: —

"GENERAL, — Your note of last evening, in reply to mine of same date, asking the condition on which I will accept the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia, is just received. In reply, I would say that, peace being my great desire, there is but one condition I would insist upon, namely: that the men and officers surrendered shall be disqualified for taking up arms again against the government of the United States until properly exchanged. I will meet you, or will designate officers to meet any officers you may name for the same purpose, at any point agreeable to you, for the purpose of arranging definitely the terms upon which the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia will be received."

General Lee believed that, outside of his army, he could yet make a last effort in favor of that rebel confederation to which he had so long devoted his military genius. He sent the following communication in the night of April 8 to 9: —

"GENERAL, — I received at a late hour your note of to-day. In mine of yesterday, I did not intend to propose the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia, but to ask the terms of your proposition. To be frank, I do not think the emergency has arisen for the surrender of this army; but, as the restoration of peace should be the sole object of all, I desire to know whether your proposal would lead to that end. I cannot, therefore, meet you with a view to surrender the Army of Northern Virginia; but, as far as your proposal may affect the Confederate States forces under my command, and lead to the restoration of peace, I should be pleased to meet you at 10 o'clock A.M. to-morrow, on the old stage road to Richmond, between the picket lines of the two armies."

This letter seems scarcely in accordance with the personal character of General Lee. In order to frankly assert that "the emergency had not arisen to call for the surrender of this army," he must have been poorly informed as to what had transpired on his front a few hours before. Sheridan, always indefatigable, had by a forced march reached Appomattox Station before

his enemy, and captured four trains of cars loaded with provisions, and sent on by the railroad from Lynchburg. When the advance troops of the rebels came up, our cavalry, placed across the road, had charged them and driven them back to the Court House. So that the disorganized remains of the rebel forces were enveloped on all sides: held in front by Sheridan's cavalry, which Ord's infantry was hastening to join; threatened on the flank by the Fifth Corps; closely pressed on the rear by the Second Corps, followed by the Sixth; and, finally, held on the north, the only point left open, by the James River.

It is difficult to explain why General Lee did not do at that time what he was compelled to do a dozen hours later. It could hardly have been hope, for on the evening before his generals had represented to him the absolute uselessness of further sacrifices. Under such circumstances, the little tricks of diplomacy and the carefully involved style of protocols are very little in accord with the character of a general who holds a sword; above all, when he has so used it as to ennoble his defeat, and command the esteem of his adversaries. If he had surrendered on the evening of the 8th, General Lee would have spared his men the blood uselessly shed on the morning of the 9th, and he would have spared himself the announcement contained in the following refusal of General Grant: —

"GENERAL, — Your note of yesterday is received. I have no authority to treat on the subject of peace. The meeting proposed for 10 A. M. to-day could lead to no good. I will state, however, general, that I am equally anxious for peace with yourself, and the whole North entertains the same feeling. The terms upon which peace can be had are well understood. By the South laying down their arms, they will hasten that most desirable event, save thousands of human lives, and hundreds of millions of property not yet destroyed. Sincerely hoping that all our difficulties may be settled without the loss of another life, I subscribe myself," etc.

APRIL 9, 1865. — Forward again early in the morning, always on the heels of the enemy's rearguard, composed of Longstreet's corps, now that Ewell's has been wiped out. A vigorous cannonade and a musketry fire are heard from three or four miles in advance. Instinctively everybody cries: "There is Sheridan! Bully for Sheridan!"

This was the last convulsive effort of the rebel army in the throes of death. By the first glimmer of daylight, Lee, knowing that he had nothing but cavalry in front of him, endeavored to pass over it; Sheridan had foreseen this. He had dismounted his men, and, deploying them in heavy line of skirmishers, contested the ground foot by foot, falling back slowly until the infantry of General Ord came into line behind him. Then, all the cavalry, running to their horses, formed at a gallop to charge the enemy in flank at the instant when the Army of the James attacked him in front. The Fifth Corps was formed in line between Sheridan and Humphreys; the circle of steel had closed about it, and the army of Lee had nothing else to do but either to surrender or perish drowned in its own blood. It surrendered. The white flag was shown along its lines, and General Grant received the following note from General Lee: —

"GENERAL, — I received your note of this morning on the picket line, whither I had come to meet you, and ascertain definitely what terms were embraced in your proposal of yesterday with reference to the surrender of this army. I now ask an interview in accordance with the offer contained in your letter of yesterday for that purpose."

The interview was granted, and the two generals met in a house at Appomattox Court House.

Immediately an order from General Meade announced to us that, on account of the situation of affairs, hostilities were suspended for one hour. Con-

sequently, our divisions were massed on the right and left of the road. Half an hour after, we were advised that the truce was prolonged till two o'clock in the afternoon.

At exactly two o'clock our division moved out. But my first brigade had not made a quarter of a mile when I again received orders to halt. Before us, back of a narrow curtain of woods, stretched out an open space, which was all that separated us from the enemy's pickets, who were quiet at their posts. The place was called Clover Hill.

Soon a carriage is signalled, drawn by four horses, with a white flag floating over it. Everybody hurried to the borders of the road. What can that be? Civilians in frock coats and with chimney-pot hats! Pshaw! It is soon made known that it is Judge Ould and a Colonel Hearth, commissioners for the exchange of prisoners for the Confederates. Since entrance to our lines is permitted them, everything is doubtless settled. Cheers began to break out along the line. These gentlemen salute and pass on.

The carriage having gone on its road, impatience rises to fever heat. What has happened! Nothing settled yet? It is to gain time. There must be some trick intended. We had better finish the affair before night. If they do not wish to surrender, all right! Let us go in at once.

All at once a tempest of hurrahs shook the air along the front of our line. General Meade is coming at a gallop from Appomattox Court House. He has raised his cap and uttered a few words: LEE HAS SURRENDERED! Without having heard, everybody has guessed it. Mad hurrahs fill the air like the rolling of thunder, in the fields, in the woods, along the roads, and are prolonged in echo amongst the trains, which in the distance are following the Sixth Corps.

General Meade leaves the road and passes through my division. The men swarm out to meet him, surrounding his horse. Hurrah for General Meade! Again, Hurrah! and on all sides, Hurrah! The enthusiasm gains the officers of his staff, who cry out like all the rest, waving their hats. Caps fly into the air; the colors are waved and salute, shaking their glorious rags in the breeze; all the musicians fill the air with the joyous notes of "Yankee Doodle" and the sonorous strains of "Hail, Columbia!"

Those who witnessed the explosion of that scene of enthusiasm will never lose the remembrance of it. To tell of it is possible; but it is not possible for pen to reproduce it, and no description can induce the electric thrill of the occasion in the soul of the reader.

All the hopes of four years at last realized; all the fears dissipated, all perils disappeared; all the privations, all the sufferings, all the misery ended; the intoxication of triumph; the joy at the near return to the domestic hearth, — for all this, one single burst of enthusiasm did not suffice. So the hurrahs and the cries of joy were prolonged until night.

After General Meade, each one of us had his share; generals of division and generals of brigade each received a noisy ovation, and had to reply, will he, nill he, with a speech.

Certainly, as much as any one else, I had had enough of the war. I had been in it long enough, and seen enough of its hardships, to know the cost of its glories. As much as any one, I wished for peace, especially in the evil days, — peace by triumph, understand me. And yet, strangely enough, I could not keep from feeling the unreasonable sentiment that everything was *too soon* over, and that, for my part, I could have endured a little more. Thus are we fash-

ioned. When we have attained our goal, we are not very far from regretting the ardent emotions of the strife, in the tranquil security of victory. There is in this something of the *meminisse juvabit* of the poet. But, after all, who can know? Would I have had the same regrets if I had at the time known that my commission of major-general was to date from that day?

The conditions accorded by General Grant were generous. With true greatness of soul, while securing the fruits of his victory, he applied himself to softening the bitterness of defeat for the adversaries he held at his mercy. Unconditional Surrender Grant (this is the interpretation given by the soldiers to the initials U. S.) departed from his old habits, to honor a rival struck down by the fortune of war, and — as he himself says in his report — "these enemies, whose manly vigor, however unworthy the cause, has accomplished prodigies of valor."

These are the terms offered by General Grant and accepted by General Lee: —

"Rolls of all the officers and men to be made in duplicate; one copy to be given to an officer to be designated by me, the other to be retained by such officer or officers as you may designate. The officers to give their individual paroles not to take up arms against the government of the United States until properly exchanged. And each company or regimental commander to sign a like parole for the men of his command. The arms, artillery, and public property to be packed and stacked and turned over to the officers appointed by me to receive them. This will not embrace the side-arms of the officers, or the private horses or baggage. This done, each officer and man will be allowed to return to his home, not to be disturbed by the

United States authority so long as they observe their paroles and the laws in force where they may reside."

Griffin, with the Fifth Corps, Gibbon, with two divisions of the Twenty-fourth, and McKenzie, with his cavalry command, were appointed to assist in the last formalities, and take charge of the arms, munitions of war, and wagons of the rebels. After a day of repose, all the rest of the army moved out to await at Burksville the speedy crumbling of the last remains of the Confederacy of the South, a necessary consequence of the capture of Richmond and the destruction of Lee's forces.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

CONCLUSION.

THE existence of the rebellion depended so completely on the fate of Lee's army that, when the latter succumbed, the former disappeared. Johnston surrendered to Sherman, Dick Taylor and Kirby Smith to Canby, and there remained no longer a rebel soldier in the whole extent of the ex-Southern Confederacy.

The man who had been its president, beset on every side, fled, not knowing where to go to conceal his proscribed head. The roads were cut off, the communications intercepted by the expeditions of General Canby, who had just captured Mobile with two corps, and of General Wilson, who, at the head of more than twelve thousand cavalrymen, had passed like a rocket across Alabama and part of Georgia, forcing the fortified city of Selma, destroying Tuscaloosa, capturing Montgomery, taking Columbus and West Point by assault, and finally entering Macon, to receive there the submission of the Georgia militia and five Confederate generals.

In that fiery expedition of one month, — from March 20 to April 20, — he had taken prisoners by thousands, captured cannon by hundreds, destroyed bridges, railroads, arsenals, manufactories of arms and machinery, naval foundries, depots of provisions and of every sort of supplies. He had nothing else to do but to send detachments in every direction in pursuit of Jefferson Davis, who was overtaken and captured by one of them on the 11th of May. Everybody knows the incidents

of that miserable Odyssey, begun under the sinister plan of burning Richmond, and terminated in the mud, under a grotesque disguise of a woman.

Mr. Lincoln was assassinated, April 14. A detestable cause must have recourse to detestable means. The war which had been carried on upon the fields of battle and in the camps where the honor of the South had taken refuge was not enough for the Richmond government. Its familiars and its agents had organized to burn our great hotels and our public places most frequented, and, calling even the yellow fever to its aid, had introduced into the North loads of clothing impregnated with pestilential emanations. These infamous plots having failed in their execution, the men who had charge of the great strife of democracy against oligarchy, of liberty against slavery, were especially devoted to the pistol and the poniard, in the dark council rooms whose ramifications extended even to Paris.

This was the result : —

The noble mission of Abraham Lincoln in this world was crowned with martyrdom ; the glorious immortality of the hero-martyr was sealed with his own blood by the ball of an assassin.

The Army of the Potomac left Burksville on the 2d of May, for Washington. On the 6th, it passed through Richmond in triumph, and Fredericksburg on the 10th. On the 23d, it marched in great state before President Johnson and the higher authorities, amid the plaudits of a vast concourse of people assembled in the capital to witness that great review. The next day, a part of Sherman's army had its turn, before departing for Kentucky. Then the disbanding began ; and in a few months the armies of the Republic returned to a pacified country as many citizens as before it had counted volunteer soldiers in its ranks. The number amounted

to 800,963. Amongst these, the regular army easily found enough men to fill its almost vacant ranks, and to complete the increase of its permanent force by the creation of new regiments.

The number of Confederate forces who laid down their arms and were dismissed to their homes on parole was 174,223, to whom must be added 98,802 prisoners of war confined in the North, which brings the total of the troops of the Southern Confederacy released on parole to 273,025. But it must be noted that, at the time of the overthrow of the armies of Lee, Johnston, and Taylor, a great many detachments were scattered over the immense extent of the country, to pursue delinquents, guard the depots, watch the railroads, etc., and that the most of them disbanded, to return directly home to their families. It is said that a great part of the troops of Kirby Smith in Texas dispersed in this manner, after having pillaged the public property. In estimating this number at twenty-seven thousand in addition to those regularly surrendered, we find that the rebellion had still three hundred thousand men enrolled, without taking into account the deserters at the time when it laid down its arms.

It had put into the field a little more than eleven hundred thousand men during the war, and, according to the best information obtained from the Confederates themselves, it had lost during these four years between six and seven hundred thousand men killed or wounded, which makes a number of dead at least equal to the Union armies, that is to say, as we have seen, double in proportion to the number of the armies, and triple in proportion to population.

In fine:—

By reducing the contingents furnished by all the levies to the uniform proportion of three years to each

man, the total number of men enrolled in the service of the United States amounted to 2,154,311.

Of this number, the report of the provost-marshal-general shows that 280,789 men lost their lives, of whom about eight thousand were officers. And of the rest, 1,057,423 were treated in the general hospitals for wounds or diseases.

We see how the greatness of the sacrifices was measured by the grandeur of the cause demanding them.

The United States of America fought to maintain their national integrity, for the consecration of their free institutions, and for the supremacy of the government *of* the people, *by* the people, — that is to say, for the great principles of progress and of liberty, which are the natural tendency of modern societies and the legitimate aspirations of civilized nations. Such a cause is worth all sacrifices. By sustaining it at any cost, the United States have done more than accomplish a work of power and of patriotism; for their triumph is a victory for humanity.